Organisational culture, knowledge and learning: A case study of workplace learning in a high performance centre

By

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Abstract

This aim of this thesis was to critically examine the features of an elite performance centre in facilitating coaches' professional learning experiences. In response to existing coach development literature that is negative about the formal education experiences coaches encounter, contemporary research has suggested a conceptual and practical shift towards professional learning (e.g. learning as form of social practice), which in turn has led to a greater focus on the workplace as a legitimate site for the development of professional knowledge. A focus on workplace learning requires an understanding of the social, structural, and cultural factors that facilitate or inhibit coach learning. Drawing on an ethnographic case study approach, 6 professional coaches and 3 administrative staff within an Olympic High Performance centre participated in the project over an 8 month period. Utilising a constructivist version of grounded theory, the findings build upon current understandings of coach education, suggested learning experiences are a condition of the interrelationship between negotiated personal engagement, workplace structures, and contextual mediating conditions. This relationship is captured within the model 'Negotiated Community Transitions', characterising coaches' as individuals that move and participate across communities, each with its own distinct culture. As such, the coaching workplace is portrayed as a contested and fluid landscape.

Dedications

This thesis is dedicated to

My fiancé and best friend Claire Wait
(You listened to my endless ramblings)

&

My Mother and Father
(For getting me to where I am today)

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Conference presentations

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List of acronyms

Abbreviation	Description
CAQDAS	Computer assisted qualitative data analysis software
CBAS	Coach Behavioural Assessment System
CGTM	Constructed ground theory method
CHAT	Cultural historical activity theory
CoP	Communities of practice
DSN	Dynamic social networks
GTM	Grounded theory method
LIW	Learning in and for Interagency Working
NCTAF	National Commission on Teaching and America's Future
OHPI	Olympic high performance centre
PARN	Professional Associations Research Network
PLC	Professional learning community
RCT	Randomised control trial
TLC	Teaching and learning cultures
TLRP	Teach and learning research project

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

At the heart of a profession is a body of specialised knowledge that must be communicated to both practitioners and clients (Day & Townsend, 2009). Indeed the Australian Council of Professions describes professions as *"possessing special knowledge and skills in a widely recognised, organised body of learning derived from education and training"* (taken from Armour et al., 2010). Yet, while there is agreement concerning the characteristics that define a profession, organisations charged with disseminating professional knowledge are challenged in terms of how the learning process is enacted, facilitated and also impeded. Contemporary research has highlighted how factors such as personal biography, organisational culture, and membership within multiple communities mediate valuable workplace learning experiences (Fuller et al., 2005). However, what is not known is the manner in which these processes are interrelated, or indeed the mechanisms that underpin them. As such, it remains unclear how such collaborative and social learning processes can best occur (Billett and Choy, 2013), and by what means such understanding can be used to inform current educational pathways.

The aim of the study reported in this dissertation was to examine the workplace learning culture of performance coaches operating in a high performance centre. As such, the study looked to attend to gaps in both workplace learning and coach education literature, utilising a broader perspective of culture in regard to learning than is currently present in many contemporary situated learning perspectives (Hodkinson et al., 2008). The investigation took the form of an 8-month ethnographic case study of an Olympic High performance Institute (OHPI), where participant observations and constructivist interviews were utilised for data collection. The theoretical perspective of the study was social constructivist, which guided the use of a constructed grounded theory method (CGTM) of data analysis.

This introductory chapter presents an overview of the dissertation. Initially, it outlines the background of the study by drawing on pertinent themes within the field. In so doing, it identifies gaps in the literature and key research which underpins the basis of the study. Following this, the focus of the research is addressed, involving a short discussion of

relevant theoretical perspectives adopted within the study. The research questions are then presented. Thereafter, the research process is briefly outlined with an overview of the methodology employed. The researcher background is then discussed alongside the implications of insider research. Finally, the chapter concludes by highlighting the significance and originality of the study, and outlining the structure of the thesis to follow.

1.1. Background

The concept of learning has traditionally been associated with formal education. Features of which include, classroom based, educator led, quantitative assessment, and certification (Eraut, 2000). Yet the last two decades has seen an increased focus on informal sites of learning and in particular, the context of the workplace as a legitimate site for formal and informal professional development (Tynjala, 2008). As such, an increasing number of 'workplace learning' studies have addressed processes of knowledge development and change in the occurrences of day-to-day activities of organisational work (Fenwick, 2008). As new understandings of learning within this context have emerged, fields such as organisational and management studies, sociology of work, labour studies, and adult education have examined how the relationship between individual agency, social structures, and culture mediate, or inhibit, these learning experiences (Billett, 2008; 2006; Hodkinson et al., 2008; Colley, 2012; Tynjala, 2008). The impetus behind the reconceptualising of learning/education (e.g. from the classroom to the workplace) can in part be attributed to the significant changes in society following the shifting economic climate and the propagation of a global knowledge economy (Billett et al., 2005). Indeed, by its very nature the content of work is changing, tending towards shorter life cycles as new technological and operational processes become more prevalent (Jacobs and Park, 2009). As such, effective practitioners can be characterised as motivated, competent and knowledgeable individuals (Smith and Sadler-Smith, 2006; Billett and Pavlova, 2005). Thus, continuous career-long learning is an important feature for both individual and organisational function within the 'knowledge economy'.

As the study of workplace learning has become increasingly legitimised, research continues to describe how professionals learn through observation and experience in situ. Whilst early conceptualisations tended to focus on individual, and largely formal classroom based training (Hart, 2011), this view of learning was expanded to encompass

both formal and informal (unplanned) approaches to learning. Certainly it is noted that the most frequently discussed dimension of workplace learning pertains to two distinct characterisations of learning. There exist various debates regarding the planned versus unplanned, formal versus informal, non-formal versus incidental, and on-the-job versus off-the-job qualities of workplace learning experiences (Jacobs and Park, 2009; Elkjaer and Wahlgren, 2006; Clarke, 2005; Billett, 2001). That said, critics have argued that solely relying on such characterisations of different learning situations is conceptually restrictive, calling for more holistic characterisations of learning in this context (Billett, 2002; Hodkinson and Bloomer, 2002). More contemporary theories of workplace learning have therefore recognised the participatory and community aspects of this concept, where learning is viewed as a process of cultural mediation, socialisation, and individual agency (Billett and Choy, 2013; Hodkinson et al., 2008; 2007). Within these perspectives workplace learning is the outcome of both learner intentionality and learning affordance. As such, workplace structures are seen to mediate individual participation in relation to culture, traditions, cliques, and social norms (Billett, 2004), whilst individuals elect to engage in practices that best suit their needs, securing learning opportunities or ignoring those not valued (Billett and Choy, 2013). Therefore understanding the processes through which learning opportunities are afforded, and how decisions regarding engagement are made, is crucial in understanding learning through participation in workplace activities. As such, learning in this context can be characterised as a complex and interdependent process of social participation.

However, accompanying these developments has been the maintenance of the mistakenly prevalent assumption that all learning required for successful occupational performance must be both specified in advance, and imparted via formalised means (Hager, 2011). The result has been that across various levels of vocational preparation (i.e. shadowing, mentoring, and work placements), there has been the desire to make formal training more reflective of occupational practice (Eraut and Hirsh, 2007), despite the belief by some that exact alignment is not possible (Hager, 2011). As such, within many organisations workplace learning practices have become conditions of an 'audit society' or 'managerial state', meaning individual autonomy is restricted by managerially controlled professional development (Colley, 2012). Within this organisational culture, learning once again becomes a product rather than a process, quantified via national standards and competency

levels. Workplace learning in this guise therefore exists to ensure organisational accountability rather than provide learners with relevant and needs led learning opportunities (Colley. 2012). It is therefore understandable that often professionals place greater value on the opportunity to engage socially with colleagues whilst on formal training courses, over the content of the courses themselves (Solomon et al., 2008). The dominance of an audit culture has made professional development technicised and quantifiable. Such a circumstance disarms the autonomy of the individual and creates the possibility that non-learning in the workplace is a possibility when accessed via more formalised means (Colley, 2012).

It is in this context that sport organisations are challenged in providing valued and effective professional development pathways for practitioners (Mallet et al., 2009). As a burgeoning profession, access to a specialised knowledge base through a clear professional development pathway is a criteria that must be met (Armour, 2011). However, arguments have been made that the 'blank spaces' within coaching literature has left the field open to *'accusations of theoretical imprecision, assumption, and speculation'* (Bowes and Jones, 2006, p. 235). As such, coaching literature has come under scrutiny, with questions raised as to whether the level and depth of critical scholarship demanded of a professional occupations currently exists (Armour, 2004). Therefore questions still prevail about the ways in which coaches engage in learning activities. The following section will explore the nature of this knowledge base in greater detail.

1.2 Coach learning, education, and professional knowledge development

Despite global coach development initiatives (e.g. the UK Coaching Certificate and the USAs National Coaching Certification Program) and increased research within the field it has been argued that coach learning lacks a clear conceptual knowledge base (Nelson et al., 2006; Cassidy et al., 2006). Cushion et al's (2010) recent review of coach learning and development suggests that serendipitous lines of inquiry by researchers have done little to abate the issue. As such, personal and methodological interests have directed the lens of research where pragmatic and conceptual concerns should. What is more, Nelson et al (2006) contend that the issue is conflated further by a lack of definitional clarity. For example, terms such as 'coach learning', 'coach education', 'coach training', 'coach development', 'continuing professional development', and 'coaching certificate', are often

used concurrently and interchangeably throughout coaching literature (Cushion et al., 2010). It has been argued that the multitude of terms, often used simultaneously, are conceptually restrictive when attempting to consider how it is that coaches learn (Nelson et al., 2006). Terms such as 'certificate' and 'training' are viewed as conceptually restraining given their associations with formal and certified modes of education. Instead, some academics have proposed that the term 'coach learning' be used to encapsulate a comprehensive view of coaches' development, for as Côte (2006, p. 221) contends, coach learning *extends far beyond any formal training programme'*. In broader educational literature however, the application of the term 'learning' has also been challenged. For Biesta (2013, p. 63), the notion designates a process that 'is in itself neutral or empty with regard to content, direction, and purpose'. As such, whilst the term learning captures the process, it is insufficient in capturing the outcome of the activity. Instead, it is argued that 'education' is a more worthy title, in that it characterises a process of transformative socialisation. With this in mind, coach education is perhaps a more useful notion in locating the learning and professional development of coaches within broader learning research.

Adding to this lack of a concise conceptual understanding is a paucity of empirical research addressing the nuances of how coaches learn, why coaches learn, and how this learning might be best facilitated (Cropley et al., 2012; Nelson et al., 2006) To date, the majority of coaching literature has been preoccupied with behavioural analyses, technical knowledge and bio-scientific discourses (Cassidy et al., 2006; Gilbert & Trudel, 2004; Potrac et al., 2000; Gilbert & Trudel, 1999; Abraham and Collins, 1998). Whilst scholarship in this light has produced valuable insights, it has been argued that it fails to adequately draw upon the experiences and needs of coaching practitioners, address the many contexts within which they operate, and utilise appropriate learning theories (Cassidy et al., 2006; Cassidy and Rossi, 2006). A consequence of this has been swaths of coach education and professional development programmes regarded as largely ineffectual, where coaches attribute their knowledge to personal experience within their field over formal education courses (Rynne et al., 2010). This has led to a growing interest in the 'nature' of coaching, an emerging body of work that draws upon sociological understandings of human behaviour (Cassidy et al., 2004). In light of this, coaches' are no longer viewed as 'merely technicians' that engage in simple didactic knowledge transfer,

but as practitioners that operate within a dynamic sociocultural process (Cushion et al, 2010). Coaching is thus viewed as idiosyncratic in nature; as for Cushion (2003, p. 216) it is a *'complex multivariate, interpersonal, and contested' process, 'contested at the levels of meaning, value and practice'*. As such, if this is the reality of coaching, coach education must also reflect this, namely through recognising the value of learning in-situ.

That being said, despite recognising the need to address the sociological features within the complex social practice of sports coaching, wider debate exists as to the scope of this complexity, and thus the grounding of epistemology within this process (Jones et al., 2014; Grecic & Collins, 2013). Drawing on sociology has offered an opportunity to reconceptualise the coaching process as a pedagogical activity, thus intertwined with the acts of 'teaching' and 'learning', and therefore subject to the situational constraints and complex characteristics of this process (Cushion, 2007; Jones, 2006). However, for some academics this notion is impractical, a characterisation that is 'over-egging the pudding' (Lyle, 2007) and thus proposes a process of 'unmanageable complexity' (North, 2013, p.290). Proponents of this perspective have called for a greater appreciation of process and structure within coaching, where academic attention should be focused on reducing complexity into useful and practical coaching points (North, 2013; Abraham and Collins, 2011). The opposing perspectives place greater significance on either the agency of the coach, or the structure of the process, in characterising the coaching process. Jones et al (2014) however, remind us that each perspective respects the need to acknowledge both aspects. Coaching can therefore be considered a socio-cultural 'learning' activity located within specific contexts. To move beyond critiques of complexity and modelling and offer a more practical characterisation of the coaching process, contemporary studies must explore the context of the coaching workplace.

In summary, the present represents a critical time for sports coaching as there is a growing impetus for organisations/NGBs to provide valued and effective professional development opportunities to practitioners. In order to achieve this there is a need to address the current limitations that exist within formalised coach education, and attend to the identified gaps between theory and practice. Such a move needs to be supported by a clarification of what is intended by the term 'coach education', and through a characterisation of the coaching education process that considers the importance of both agency and social structure. The

rationale for this study was therefore; to examine the learning experiences of elite performance coaches so that a move towards achieving these goals might be achieved.

1.3 Focus of the Research

Whilst it can be argued that the number of empirical studies examining the effectiveness of coach education and professional development remains limited (Nelson et al., 2013), it can also be argued that what little evidence exists highlights a less than ideal state of affairs. As suggested earlier within the chapter, existing literature explicates how sports coach's professional development is rarely attributed to professional knowledge development (Lemyre et al., 2007; Jones et al., 2003; Jones and Armour, 2003; Abraham et al., 2006; Gilbert and Trudel, 1999). Lyle (2007) would argue that this situation is compounded by the fact that coach educators are often unaware of the frameworks that could underpin and guide their practices. Indeed, a response to this deficiency has been the academic promotion of a variety of theoretically informed pedagogical approaches to coach education and CPD. These proposals have included the use of inquiry/problem-based programmes (Jones and Turner, 2006), competency-based programmes (Demers et al., 2006), mentoring schemes (Griffiths and Armour, 2012; Walsh and Chambers. 2015), and the fostering and implementation of communities of practice (CoPs) (Culver et al., 2009; Culver and Trudel, 2008). Broadly speaking, it would appear that contemporary approaches to coach education are beginning to examine learning strategies in situ.

In broader learning research there has been a shift in the focus of educational research from learning 'for' work to learning 'in' work (Billett et al., 2005). Rooted in situated learning theory, learning is viewed as an embodied, contextual, and culturally influenced experience, starkly different to the formalised learning approach taken by current coach education and professional development pathways (Piggott, 2012). It is proposed that an interdependent relationship exists between personal agency, organisational structure and culture, thus influencing individual engagement within the learning activities afforded by the workplace (Billett, 2006). For Billett personal agency is seen as central to the construction (and reproduction) of culture via an individual's conception of, and participation in, vocational practice, whilst itself being shaped by historical, ontogenetic (biography) and social factors. In this light an individual's workplace learning can be said to develop ontogenetically, shape and maintain culture, and be subject to the very

affordances of that culture. However, whilst such understandings are useful in capturing the learning process, it remains unclear how such collaborative and social learning processes can best occur (Billett and Choy, 2013), and by what means such understanding can be used to inform current coach education pathways. Therefore, in recognising that coaches develop the majority of their vocational knowledge from practical workplace experience (Rynne et al., 2010), an analysis of their workplace learning offers the opportunity to better comprehend the complex nature of coach learning.

In summary, this chapter has identified an increasing interest in understanding the development of coaches' professional knowledge. However, despite this interest there appears to be a weak conceptual knowledge base from which to guide an education/professional development framework. This situation is compounded by a paucity of empirical research addressing the complex nature of coaching, specifically the wider social and cultural aspects of the learning identified across broader learning literature. This thesis aims to attend these gaps in the coaching literature by addressing the following research question:

What can be learnt from a workplace learning analysis of elite performance coaches in understanding their professional development?

In order to address this question the following sub-questions are posed:

- *How does individual agency influence learning engagement within the context of performance coach development?*
- *What role does personal biography play in the shaping of learning dispositions?*
- *What is the impact of organisational culture on individual learning engagement?*
- *What policy and structural changes are needed for sustained professional learning of performance coaches?*
- *How does participation in multiple communities' (cultures) impact upon individual learning?*

1.4 The Research Process

The methodology and methods of data collection are to be outlined fully within the methodology chapter, but a brief preliminary overview is given here. In addressing the

research questions the study utilised an interpretive case study design within the domain of ethnographic research (Cohen et al., 2000). A high-performance training centre utilised by a major Olympic sport in the UK forms the 'case' of the study, where the elite coaches and administrative staff working within that centre were identified as the key informants. Importantly, the high performance centre and NGB were purposively sampled due to my personal history within the associated sport. As such, this offered readily available access, alongside an insider's viewpoint into the workplace learning of high performance coaches within this context. The nature of this study aligns itself with the objectives of the ethnographic approach. Indeed, the aim of the effective ethnographer is to immerse oneself within the culture of interest so that they might give an insider's experience of events (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). In order to address the socio-cultural tenets of this thesis, such an approach was vital.

The study adopted a social constructivist perspective, thus rendering interpretations as co-constructed understandings of elite coaches' workplace learning experiences. The duration of the investigation was 8 months, covering a complete training and competition cycle within the associated sport. During that time data was collected through the use of participant observation and interviews guided by those observations. Throughout the initial stages of the study it seemed most appropriate to adopt a flexible structure towards data collection as to not promote methodological tunnel vision (Maxwell, 2005). To this end a similar approach to that taken by Cushion (2001) in his ethnographic review of the coaching process within football was taken. Participant observation informed the initial phase of data collection, thus informing me of any theoretical and conceptual issues to be addressed in later interviews. The data analysis was undertaken utilising Charmaz's (2006) conception of a 'Constructed Grounded Theory'. Utilising this approach, 'core' categories were constructed, characterising the socio-cultural processes which underpinned coaches' workplace learning experiences.

1.5 Researcher Background

The act of academic inquiry is not a neutral one, nor are we as researchers neutral in our undertaking of it (Cohen et al., 2011; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). Indeed, our dispositions shape the way in which we approach the world and subsequently the questions we ask of it. As such, within social science literature there is often the inclination to

acknowledge the researchers active role within the process (Charmaz, 2011; Findlay, 2002). Certainly as the research process progressed I became increasingly aware that my history, biography, and lived experiences played a significant role in the constitution of the research questions, and importantly the choices made in addressing them. For example, the origins of the research questions can be traced to my experiences as an athlete, of formal coach education programmes, and of studying within higher education. As an athlete, it is seen as a logical progression to engage in coaching at some level. In my early twenties I undertook a number of formal coaching courses, inspired by the need to acquire 'drills' and 'tips' to aid my coaching practice. However, as I progressed through these courses I found that I was taking less and less from these weekend long activities, and that the drills I had be given offered little relevance to practice (Nelson et al., 2013). Although I was now heralded a 'certified' coach, I felt that I was not prepared to deliver what I considered coaching to be. Put simply, the accumulation of drills in a piecemeal fashion did little to prepare me for coaching in different settings, with athletes who had vastly different needs, understandings, attitudes, and backgrounds.

In response to these early and confusing experiences I began to question other more experienced coaches around me. They too shared my frustrations with formal coach education programmes, attributing their knowledge to simple trial and error, practical experience, and most notably collaboration with colleagues (Rynne et al., 2010; Erickson et al., 2008). This notion satisfied my initial frustrations, but raised others. For instance, as an athlete my experience was of a culture premised on competitive isolation, where fears over *'they might steal my ideas/athletes'* were rife amongst coaches. As such, I found my predilections guiding the questions I asked (Mruck and Breuer, 2003) as I wondered 'how then do coaches' engage in quality collaborative learning within such a contested environment? Concurrent to this I began an undergraduate degree in Coach Education and Sports Development, exposing me to peers and literature that both supported and challenged my perceptions of coach education. For example, the literature regarding coaching practice could was broadly separated into two categories; those papers which detailed quantifiable coaching behaviours (Abraham and Collins, 1998), and those that addresses the sociological aspects of the practice (Cushion et al., 2003). It was with the latter I found the most comfort in reconciling my pedagogic understandings, encouraged to

better understand the roles personal history, biography, and community membership played in shaping a coach's professional knowledge.

In reflecting on the research process used in this study, I believe that my history and biography provided a significant advantage in examining the workplace learning experiences of sports coaches. I would argue that my 'insider' perspective as an athlete and a coach, combined with strong associations to the research case, provided me with the opportunity to engage with the study sample (coaches and administrative staff) across the performative, technical, social and administrative aspects of elite coaching. Furthermore, the presence of a shared identity and an appreciation of the idiosyncratic features of this context (i.e. language, sporting norms) provided me with a privileged perspective (Corbin Dwyer and Buckle, 2009) in understanding the behaviours, politics, and cultures embedded within coaching practice. That being said, I am also aware that whilst this position offers strength to the study, it can also be argued that it presents an area of weakness. Within the literature there is the assumptions that outsiders can more readily read societies unconscious grammars, i.e. there is the propensity for an insider to overlook familiar or routine behaviours (O'Rielly, 2012; Unluer, 2012). As such, it could be suggested that the insider lacks the critical curiosity required to unpick the phenomena of interest. In response to this intimation I chose to follow O'Reilly's (2012) positioning of the subjective researcher:

> *"All ethnographers are to some extent outsiders and to some extent insiders: all must strive to make the strange familiar, and the familiar strange: must constantly question, immerse and distance in the ongoing process of producing ethnographic insights." (p.98)*

With this in mind I argue that detailed reflection and a close awareness of my own personal biases and perspectives provides not only a clear audit trail of the research process, but illustrates how my subjective interpretations became part of the research data.

1.6 Originality and Significance of the study

The expanding conceptualisations of learning have resulted in changes in the understanding of professional knowledge development, and how CPD should best be

implemented. The appreciation of learning as a socially and contextually relevant endeavour has brought about a growing acknowledgement for the different sites and contexts which facilitate coach learning, namely the workplace (Rynne et al., 2010; 2006) Yet to date, attempts by researchers both in coaching and other vocations (i.e. teaching) to implement 'in-work' learning practices has proven largely ineffectual (i.e. formalised mentoring and CoPs). As such, there has been a call for learning to be considered as more than merely situated, where a larger more comprehensive viewpoint is needed to address the socio-cultural factors which mediate learning (Billett, 2008). However, as has been discussed, current understandings of learning through work are insufficient in capturing the contributions of social, cultural and historical sources within this pedagogical process (Billet, 2013). To this end, researchers and national governing bodies (NGBs) have been continually challenged to capture and acknowledge learning in this manner. This thesis therefore offers an original contribution to knowledge on two counts, methodologically and theoretically. Methodologically this study answers the call for longitudinal in-depth studies of the workplace, so that we might better understand the mechanisms and processes through which learning is mediated in this context (Stoder and Cushion, 2014; Berg and Chung, 2008 Kitto et al., 2013; Rynne et al., 2010). Theoretically, the study builds upon the current understandings of learning 'in-situ', specifically within the context of the workplace. Through a consideration of learning with reference to both Billett's (2008) theory of relational interdependence, and wider cultural learning (theories) perspectives (Hodkinson et al., 2008; Bourdieu, 1977) this study offers valuable insight into the mechanisms through which culture is constructed/reconstructed, and informs learning behaviours.

The significance of this study lies in addressing the dearth of empirical research that examines workplace learning within elite sports coaching contexts. This study addresses a recognised gap in the research and provides a case study upon which further investigation can be built. In so doing, progress can be made towards the generation of contingent generalisations (Tripp, 1999), through which effective education and professional development pathways can be informed. It is also important to note that in studying this context, the implications of this study are not solely limited to the field in which its participants lie. An argument can be made that through the identification of a workplace influenced by socio-cultural factors, the study's findings can be related to any workplace

in which there is the opportunity to engage in social learning behaviours. Therefore the findings of this thesis offers insight that might better inform wider learning literature of the mechanisms and processes which influence the learning relationship between agency, structure, and culture.

1.7 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is organised over six chapters. Chapter one has identified and addressed the research problem, posed the research questions, briefly outlined the methodology, identified the significance of the research outputs, and acknowledge the positioning of the researcher throughout the study. Chapter 2 discusses and critiques the literature relevant in undertaking this study. Chapter three discussed and justifies the methodology adopted in undertaking this study, and highlighted the methods of data collection and analysis utilised. This chapter also explores issues of ethics, trustworthiness and reflexivity. Chapter four presents the core themes identified within the analysis, providing a storyline of my interpretations of sports coaches' workplace learning experiences. Chapter five presents a discussion of these findings in relation to relevant and contemporary literature. Chapter six concludes the thesis by offering the study's conclusions, the implications of the research, and the identification of avenues for further study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to examine pertinent literature in addressing the aims of this study. Importantly, it should be noted that identified literature is drawn from a wide professional field including: education, organisational management, nursing and sport coaching. Whilst aware of the limitations of borrowing from other fields (Oswick et al., 2011), it is argued that the underlying features of these occupations (i.e. dynamic social contexts) provide a platform from which to consider the workplace culture of high performance sport coaches.

The chapter utilised a systematic literature review approach as a means of locating, appraising and critiquing the evidence most appropriate in addressing the research questions. This was conducted over two phases (first a scoping phase followed by a relativist review) and is discussed below. In contrast to a traditional narrative review, where one aims to garner an initial unguided impression of a topic, a systematic review adopts explicit procedures and search terms in targeting an evidence base (Bryman, 2012). Popular within health and medical research given the need for evidence-based policy (Victor, 2009), this methodology is generally aligned with 'gold standard' research (i.e. randomised control trials) (Clegg, 2005). Originating within the bio-medical field, the epistemological and ontological positions of this approach characterise knowledge as the comparable and quantifiable output of scientifically rigorous experimentation. Systematic reviews therefore focus on addressing the 'what works?' question. That being said, within the social sciences questions are often framed by context (i.e. what works, in what circumstances, and how?) meaning such an approach is not always suitable (Griffiths and Armour 2013b). Indeed, coaching literature is a case in point as context often varies between sports, professional status, location, and performance level.

In this situation it is more appropriate to adopt an approach that seeks to present an overview of a potentially broad and diverse body of literature, such as that achieved within a scoping review (Pham et al., 2014). Interestingly, both systematic and scoping reviews use similar terminology in characterising their process, namely rigor and relevance, though the application of these terms differs between methods. For example, where systematic

reviews judge the quality of studies via a hierarchical model, with RCTs at the top, scoping reviews address a wide range of methodologies and research designs in addressing relevance and context (Davis et al., 2009). As such, scoping reviews are a systematic means of questioning the 'who, where, and how?' thus providing a manner by which to consider the influence of context on practical developments. The table that follows details the initial results of the scoping review undertaken within this study. The selection criteria were defined through consideration of the research questions, the population of interest, and the context of the study (Higgins and Green, 2008). As such, the following search terms were identified; *coach* (key term all others will be compared to), learning, education, continu* professional development*, and *workplace*. The use of the symbol * served as a truncation tool, a symbol used to stand in for a word ending. For example, the use of coach* within a database search would also return words such as 'coaching' and 'coaches'. As such, this served to ensure the retrieval of all possible variations of a search term. It is important to note that all databases allow truncation, but the symbols used may vary.

	Sports Discus	Zetoc	Web of Science	ERIC
	Returns	Returns	Returns	Returns
Learning AND coach*	793	775	1244	198
Education AND coach*	3961	1285	2421	2726
Continu* professional development AND coach*	2	8	79	1
Workplace AND coach*	69	119	193	108

Table 1: First systematic protocol utilising initial terms

As table 1 demonstrates the initial criteria were too broad, resulting in an unmanageable number of returns. The key search term was therefore adapted to better target pertinent literature. The term *coach** was replaced with *elite coach**, to target literature relating to the elite and professional population the thesis examines. Table 2 illustrates the second systematic protocol and the resultant returns.

	Sports Discus		Zetoc		Web of Science		ERIC	
	Returns	Relevant, abstract read and available	Returns	Relevant, abstract read and available	Returns	Relevant, abstract read and available	Returns	Relevant, abstract read and available
Learning AND elite coach*	65	**7**	11	**2**	41	**5**	12	**4**
Education AND elite coach*	426	**11**	23	**2**	143	**7**	27	**4**
Continu* professional development AND elite coach*	0	**0**	0	**0**	4	**1**	0	**0**
Workplace AND elite coach*	7	**0**	0	**0**	4	**0**	0	**0**

Table 2: Second systematic protocol utilising initial terms (Available returns excluding duplicate N= 13)

Certainly, as proposed a scoping review proved useful in mapping out an area where a dearth of evidence exists (Davis et al., 2009) as can be seen within the coaching literature. Indeed, 13 returns provide inadequate source material for a comprehensive review, meaning there is a need to inform the methodology of this study through incorporation of a wider knowledge base. In addressing this notion the thesis was informed by the tenets of a realist review, that being a synthesis of research that examines the *relationships between context, processes, outcomes, and the theories which underpin them* (Griffith and Armour, 2013b). A realist review therefore provides the means to examine literature from broader fields in relation to the research questions through consideration of context (culture), processes (collaboration, social interactions) and outcomes (learning or lack thereof) involved. With this in mind it was decided that *education, organisational management,* and *nursing* literature would also inform the literature utilised in addressing the research questions. The incorporation of these broader fields within the literature review was justified by the wealth of scholarship available within these domains that was directly

relevant to the search criteria of scoping review. For example, within nursing there has been substantive work undertaken in examining the workplace learning experiences of practitioners within clinical training settings. As such, considerations of these in-situ learning studies offer valuable insight in answering the research questions of this study.

The chapter comprises four main sections. First the definitions and features of professional learning and continued professional development are discussed. The second section introduces learning theories, discussing the pedagogic features of each. The third section highlights the development of participatory models of learning and their utility in characterizing learning within the workplace. The fourth and final section then considers the notion of professional development within sports coaching.

2.1 Professional Learning and Development

Across professional occupations, professional development activities are conceived as supporting the development of quality practitioners (Friedman and Philips, 2004). These activities are designed to both maintain and enhance professional knowledge and skill, providing organisations with a workforce that is competent, reflexive and adaptable (Friedman et al., 2000). Regarded as an important process, high-quality CPD is said to be at the centre of professional advancement (Guskey, 2000). Indeed, a survey conducted by the Professional Associations Research Network (PARN) found that 62% of 162 respondent organisations were found to have a CPD policy and framework (Friedman and Philips, 2004). An additional 6% were found to have another form of post-qualification training (medical professions), whilst 5% were in the process of developing their CPD pathway. More recently, in a report by PARN (2013) it was suggested that as much as 87% of professional bodies now have some form of CPD, where 70% utilise a form of measurement procedure. In account of this evidence it can be suggested that a sizeable proportion of professional organisations are committed to CPD.

In keeping with this practice the burgeoning profession of sport coaching has 'borrowed' from economic and industrial vocations in their need for benchmarked standards, professional development, and formal accreditation (Taylor and Garratt, 2010). In doing so coach education has followed the traditional model of institutionalised knowledge development, reducing coaching practice into components of basic skill learning, devoid of

social or contextual relevance (Nelson et al., 2013). As such, a wealth of research has indicated that traditional means of coach education are largely ineffectual, with high performance coaches placing little to no value in these experiences when relating formal education to their knowledge development (Rynne et al., 2010; Trudel & Gilbert, 2006; Cushion et al., 2003). The evidence suggests therefore that coaches' value knowledge gained via experience within the workplace over that, which can be gained via formal accreditation.

The characterisation of coaching as a knowable sequence of events (Potrac, et al., 2002; Denison, 2007) has led to a coach education system that all too often disregards the impacts of society and culture on individual development (Poczwardowski et al., 2002). Indeed, sociology and psychology have long purported the significance social norms, traditions, and cultures have as determinants of human behaviour (Poczwardowski et al., 2006). Contemporary research embraces the notion that learning is a social practice, and therefore subject to the same ramifications as other social processes. The dispositions of the individual impact upon the way they approach the social world, the relationships they make and the construction of their morals (Frith, 2007). Therefore if learning were to be considered in the same light it would seem appropriate to view it as subject to the same social factors. Interestingly, recent studies have identified how coach education has begun to acknowledge coaches learning within the workplace, where situated learning approaches have been utilised as a response to the limitations of its formal courses.

Within other occupations, such as teaching and the medical industry, there has been a shift in the focus of education research. Following the recent economic recession, changes in commerce have left the requirements for work in a state of constant change, bringing about a focus on learning 'in' work as opposed to learning 'for' work (Billet at el., 2005). The boundaries of education have shifted from the confines of the classroom to encompass the workplace. What is more, workplace learning theorists have argued that the most relevant environment for the development of relevant occupational learning is the workplace itself (Billet et al., 2005), however, as it stands workplaces are rarely structured with this intention (Eraut, 2004). The workplace itself is an environment that remains under researched (Eraut, 2004), and acknowledgment of a 'coaching workplace' is rarely addressed (Rynne et al., 2010). There is therefore a need to critically examine the key concepts related to workplace learning.

The emergence of a global knowledge economy has placed significant importance on the maintenance and development of professional learning across a variety of professions (Dall'Alba and Sandberg, 2006). As such, CPD programmes have been used to maintain professional competences via career long learning, (Jones and Fear, 1994). These programmes are prolific throughout banking, medicine, law, and other professional bodies (Watkins, 1999), leading some to contend that the sign of a true profession is a developed and accessible continued educational pathway (Brunetti, 1998). Yet, despite this acceptance, and a wealth of supporting literature, researchers and organisations alike suggest the term 'CPD' remains inadequately delineated (Friedman et al., 2008; Dall'Alba and Sandberg, 2006, Friedman and Philips, 2004). For instance, CPD has been characterised as a system (Knight 2002), a process (Garet et al., 2001), and a personal endeavour (Bailey et al., 2001). Within teaching, Days' (1999) definition of the process is most often cited (Rose and Reynolds, 2007). Day suggests that CPD consists of:

> *"All natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school, which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purpose of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues throughout each phase of their teaching lives." (p.4)*

Within sports coaching academics tend to rely on educational literature in defining the notion of CPD (Cushion et al., 2010). Nelson et al (2006) suggest that CPD within sports coaching should be considered as "all types of professional learning undertaken by coaches beyond initial certification" (p.255). In considering the evidence it is clear that CPD is characterised a number of different ways, thus making it difficult to definitively characterise its purpose or process. In attempting to address this problem, Friedman and Philips (2004, p. 362) appraised the promotional CPD literature to arrive at six potential descriptions:

> *'Lifelong learning for professionals; a means of personal development; a means for individual professionals to ensure a measure of control and security on the often precarious modern workplace; a means of assuring a wary public that professionals are indeed up-to-date, given the rapid pace of technological advancement; a means whereby professional associations can verify that the standards of their professionals are being upheld; a means for employers to garner a competent, adaptable workforce'.*

Although useful as an organising framework from which to examine different approaches to CPD, a greater conceptual focus would be more useful in guiding future research and policy development. For instance, the many definitions of CPD promise to deliver learning strategies capable of fostering personal development, creating reflective and adaptable employees that are empowered to take control of their own learning. However, Friedman and Phillips (2004) warn that an emphasis on the personal could conflict with the ability for CPD to act as a means of training professionals for specific job roles. That being said, the incorporation of professional associations and public wariness adds stakeholders' perspectives to the process. This could be seen as disempowering the professional, as CPD in this light acts not to develop their career, but satiate the needs of needs of others. The many claims of CPD can therefore be seen as proposing different conceptions of learning's purpose when related to professional work.

In spite of the definitional and conceptual variation surrounding CPD, a commonly accepted account can be found in nursing (Murphy et al., 2006), education (Friedman et al., 2008; Friedman and Philips, 2004) and business literature (Hawkins and Smith, 2013):

> *'The systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skill and the development of personal qualities necessary for the execution of professional and technical duties throughout the practitioner's working life'*
> *(Cited in Friedman and Phillips, 2004, p. 363).*

Indeed, up to 40% of professional associations within the UK are said to subscribe to this definition, encompassing a focus on both the organisational competencies and personal qualities previously deliberated (Friedman et al., 2000). The Institute of Continuing Professional Development (ICPD, 2011) has however adopted, and adapted this definition,

removing the notion of 'personal qualities' in exchange for 'competencies'. This could be construed as a de-personalisation of the concept, negating the factors of emotional attachment and personal engagement that Day and Sachs (2004) suggest are crucial to professional learning, and accounted for within the initial definition. The definitional and objective concerns within CPD form an unstable conceptual base upon which conflicting methods of implementation and evaluations are based. The following sections shall explore the very notion of professional practice, the characteristics of effective CPD, and the models and evaluation frameworks that make up professional development activities and assessments.

In reviewing the practices of CPD Dall'Alba and Sandberg (2006) remind us that we must first consider the very notion of professional practice. In their critical review of the stage model approach to CPD, that being the gradual progression through stages of skill acquisition, the authors suggested that contemporary theories of professional development largely ascribed to the view of knowledge as acquirable packets of information. Jean Lave (1993) suggested that this understanding characterised practice as a 'container' for particular forms of social interaction, in this case the use of professional skill. The container of social practice can then be characterised as an objective structure, compromising the contextual rules and social norms of a given circumstance. This would constitute any specific workplace. This viewpoint, McDermott (1993) contends, allows content and practice to be viewed as two separate concepts, justifying the studying of each independently. This de-contextualised content can then be formalised within a curriculum and transmitted via traditional formal education (Fox, 1997), where it is assumed once educated, professionals will be able to function within the appropriate container. This perspective of separating knowledge from context is reflective of the approach utilised by current coach education providers. Indeed, as identified within the introduction there is a wealth of coaching research that has acknowledged the de-contextualized nature of coaching professional development (Nelson et al., 2013; Gilbert and Trudel, 2006).

However, over the past two decades this container view of practice has been refuted by researchers on two counts (Billett, 2006; 2001; Lave and Wenger, 1998). Firstly they contend that practice cannot be separated from content in this manner, as practice involves the interdependent relationship between the practitioner and the context of practice; and secondly, that practice cannot be conceptualised as a fixed container given the dynamic

social workplace professionals operate within. In fact, empirical evidence goes as far as to suggest that practice varies substantially across cultures and contexts (Billett, 2006; 2001). Moreover, there are those that believe that considering learning as merely discreet knowledge transfer inhibits the very process of facilitating change in attitude or understanding (Dall'Alba and Sandberg, 2006). With that in mind, one would expect contemporary CPD to be designed around this appreciation for social learning theories yet research suggests this is not the case (Armour, 2010; Armour and Yelling, 2004).

Within coaching literature it is acknowledged that there is a dearth of empirical research evaluating the structure, content and provision of coach learning and CPD (Cushion et al., 2010; Werthner and Trudel, 2009). As such there is a need to 'borrow' from other professions, specifically that of teaching. Such a move is practical given the re-conceptualisation of coaching from an act of behavioural instruction, to that of educational activity (Jones, 2006). Indeed, this perspective is supported by a body of work which recognizes the foundations of coaching within the teaching and learning interface (Armour, 2010; Jones, 2007). What is more, it can be argued that teaching and coaching literature share similar concerns regarding learning and professional development. Côte and Gilbert (2009) note that with a greater depth and history of research, teaching and physical education literature long ago acknowledged the problem of identifying a sound conceptual knowledge base. Indeed, it was only 20 years ago that O'Sullivan and Doutis (2004) concluded the *"concept of expertise in teaching remains highly ambiguous"*, arguing that through failure to *"captivate the essence of teaching, we may not have a legitimate phenomenon to study"* (p. 179). This situation bears striking similarity to the current standing of coaching and it burgeoning professionalization. As such, it is argued that researchers and coach education providers should engage with the opportunity to learn from the development history of teaching.

2.1.1 CPD within the Teaching Profession

Driven by educational reforms, teacher skill development has become a pivotal vehicle in the move towards higher academic standards in both the UK and USA (Armour and Yelling, 2004; Garet et al., 2001). Moreover, within the UK, research such as Day's (1999) persuasive argument that school development and teacher development are inextricably linked, has brought about DfEE (2001) (Department for Education and Employment)

documentation on professional development strategies for schools (Learning and Teaching: A Strategy for Professional Development). Further supported by government legislation, the 'Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998' and the 'Education Act 2002', has ensured CPD has a firm footing within the career pathways of today's teachers. Armour and Yelling (2004) remind us however, that underlying this political reform is the assumption that regimented, regulated and funded CPD will ensure an increase in standards across teachers and pupils; though this is an argument that to-date lacks a robust evidence base (Wayne et al., 2008; Garet et al., 2001).

Contemporary policy documents are based on the notion that a definitive framework for the effective implementation of CPD can be created. An example of this can be seen in the Hay McBer (2000) report 'Research into Teacher Effectiveness'. The report provides a strategy for *'modernising the teaching profession by supporting a whole range of management processes deployed within schools'* (p.4) through the recognition of three teacher controlled factors which influence pupil progression. Of the three factors, teaching skills, classroom climate and professional characteristics, the later was said to be the central component, displaying influence over the other two. These professional characteristics were said to regard teacher *'self-image and values; traits, or the way a teacher habitually approaches situations; and, at the deepest level, the motivation that drives performance'* (Scales et al., 2012, p.13). As such, the findings supported a growing body of research that had begun to recognise the importance of emotional commitment, personal biographies (Fernandez-Balboa, 2001; Erben, 1998), and to a greater extent the culture of teaching, on engagement with professional learning (Day, 1999). Indeed, in the USA the 'National Board of Professional Teaching Standards' focuses on the professional characteristics of their certified teachers by examining learning dispositions (NBPTS, 2010). They propose five core dispositions of effective teachers; commitment to students, subject mastery, responsibility for managing and monitoring student improvement, engagement with experiential and reflective learning, and membership of learning communities. Whilst the identification of such teacher characteristics is useful in locating teacher CPD within wider education literature, they cannot be said to provide a blueprint for effective teaching practice or development. Instead it is perhaps better to consider these as characteristics of competent teachers, which can be utilised to inform the development of teacher CPD.

The identification of effective characteristics within teaching has been followed by a wealth of research looking to identify the defining principles of effective CPD. However, given the diversity of teacher needs and dispositions it has been suggested that perhaps the identification of a definitive CPD framework is unlikely (Armour and Duncombe, 2004; Guskey, 2003). Indeed, within the literature CPD has been characterized as most effective when it is ongoing (Day, 1999), active (Armour and Yelling, 2007), collaborative (Armour et al., 2012; King and Newman, 2001), reflexive (McArdle and Coutts, 2010), and designed to meet the needs of teachers and students (Kerr, 2010). Though despite the identification of various positive characterising attributes, the literature also suggests that a link between teachers CPD and student performance remains largely illusive (Borko, 2004; Armour and Yelling, 2004; Garet et al., 2001). Garet et al (2001) suggest a solution to this disparity in their empirical comparison of 1,027 maths and science teachers from the USA, which observes a variety of professional development characteristics. They argue that for professional learning to be effective, teachers must look to expand their own professional growth, whilst also focusing on the learning needs of their students. They identified three core features within professional development activities that had a significantly positive effect on self-reported knowledge and skill; *'(a) focus on content knowledge; (b) opportunities for active learning; and (c) coherence with other learning activities'* (p. 915). Indeed, Armour and Yelling's (2007) work supports this proposition as they found that in light of inadequate learning opportunities teachers actively crafted informal self-guided learning activities within their normal working days. It could therefore be suggested that CPD is most effective when relevant subject matter is offered alongside the opportunity to actively engage with CPD activities that are integrated into normal teaching practice.

In addition to three core features, Garet et al (2001) identified three structural components that impact upon learning practice; *'(a) the form of the activity (e.g., workshop vs. study group); (b) collective participation of teachers from the same school, grade, or subject; and (c) the duration of the activity'* (p.916). This review of style and duration lead the authors to distinguish between two forms of CPD, 'traditional' and 'reform'. Traditional CPD can be identified as those learning activities' experienced off-site, or outside of the teacher's classroom, within the specific time constraints of a conference or training weekend (Armour and Ferguson, 2011). Reform approaches differ in that they tend to

occur within the working school day, usually taking the form of a study group, mentoring relationship or collective learning experience (Armour and Yelling, 2004). Yet despite a growing consensus that reform activities appear to be more responsive to teachers' needs, traditional approaches appear to still dominate CPD provision (Borko, 2004; Hustler et al., 2003). Indeed, Armour (2006) has questioned the persistent use of traditional approaches, given that their de-contextualised and sporadic nature contradicts a wealth of literature on learning theory. For example, in a report by WestEd (2000) titled, 'Teachers who learn, kids who teach', an exemplary CPD approach was accredited with the academic turnaround of 8 schools in the USA. The crucial component within this CPD programme was the promotion of a collaborative reform based learning environment. As such, it can be argued that CPD is most effective when it is embedded within teaching practice.

2.1.2 Models of CPD: What works and in what circumstances?

As suggested previously, some researchers believe that an effective CPD framework is inconceivable given the socially and contextually dynamic nature of teaching (Guskey, 2003). Guskey (1994) for example suggests that in fact what is required is a situationally specific mix of CPD characteristics for different teachers in different contexts. Cognitive psychologists on the other hand do not ascribe to Guskey's belief that effective professional development frameworks are implausible, proposing a variety of stage orientated models for vocations such as business, law and teaching (Dall'Alba and Sandberg, 2006; Ericsson and Smith, 1991). Whilst many of the models vary in the number of stages one moves through, and indeed on the nature of each stage, all share the characteristic that sequential stages represent increasing levels of knowledge and skill acquisition. These stages are differentiated from one another in terms of knowledge, skill complexity and cognitive thought processing (Dreyfus, 2004). Indeed, within teaching Feiman-Nemser and Remillard (1996) cite that stage models tend to follow the pattern of (1) survival and discovery, (2) followed by experimentation and consolidation, and (3) finally mastery and stabilisation. Traditionally, stage models are based upon the notion that professional skill constitutes procedural knowledge, (Sandberg, 2000) Declarative knowledge (Deadrick et al., 1997) and personal attitudes (Dall'Alba and Sandberg, 2006), which are disseminated in a manner similar to that of the container view (of knowledge) discussed previously. Within this thinking, declarative knowledge is concerned with facts such as game rules, aims or terminology, whilst procedural knowledge relates to

understanding used to perform actions (i.e. practical skills) (Kirk and MacPhail, 2002). This formalised, and usually curriculum led process, works under the auspice that professional knowledge is progressively accumulated at various levels (beginner, intermediate, expert), until applied within context (Dall'Alba and Barnacle 2005).

As with the container view of knowledge, stage models view skill as the accumulation of a fixed body of knowledge, an already illustrated point of contention for many (Dall'Alba and Barnacle 2005; Billett, 2001). Despite this they have experienced widespread use within teaching, nursing (Benner, 2004; Worthy, 1996) and business (DiBello et al., 2011), the most prolific being the Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) stage model. Initially developed in 1986, as a response to the idea that human thought may be replicated within artificial intelligence (AI), the model viewed skilful action as the accumulation of rules that must be followed in order to fulfil a task. They challenged the belief in suggesting that explicit rule orientated decision making occurs at a basic skill level, where advanced levels are dependent more on personal experience, attitude and emotion (Dreyfus, 2004). As such, advanced levels of skill could not be articulated through rules alone, nullifying the potential for AI replication of human thought. Advanced levels of skill are thus seen to comprise tacit knowledge, described by Eraut (2000) as *'that which we know but cannot tell'* (p.118). This innate skill forms an individuals' craft knowledge (Howells, 2002), or the art of their vocation, which cannot be so easily reduced to stages.

In a study of airline pilots, car drivers, and chess players, Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) identified five separate skill levels (novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, and expert), where each level must be attained before progression towards the next. A crucial component within the model was the fact that not all practitioners were capable of achieving expert status, adding a vital human element to an otherwise mechanical way of thinking. Unlike early stage models based upon the development of linear 'computer expertise', defined element by element from the ground up, the Dreyfus model was said to account for a human understanding of the situation and the relevance of sequencing across time (Benner et al., 2009). Importantly the model was not context free but context dependent, where expert status could not be achieved through context-free knowledge alone. For example, a pilot could not be characterised as an expert without accumulating substantial time in the air, despite possessing the relevant procedural knowledge to fly. A defining characteristic of the model was the suggestion that where novice and lower level

practitioners approached tasks in a deliberative fashion, expert and high-level individuals reacted intuitively based upon previous experiences and *'what normally works'* (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986, p. 31). A diagram of this model is presented below.

Table 1.   Five Stages of Skill Acquisition

Skill Level	Components	Perspective	Decision	Commitment
1. Novice	Context free	None	Analytic	Detached
2. Advanced beginner	Context free and situational	None	Analytic	Detached
3. Competent	Context free and situational	Chosen	Analytic	Detached understanding and deciding; involved outcome
4. Proficient	Context free and situational	Experienced	Analytic	Involved understanding; detached deciding
5. Expert	Context free and situational	Experienced	Intuitive	Involved

Figure1: Five stages of skill acquisition, Taken from Dreyfus (2004, p.81)

Whilst regarded as a significant development over previous stage models given its regard for the intuitive aspect of professional skill, criticisms remained. Kyriakides et al (2009) contend that there exists no empirical evidence that skill progression occurs in a stepwise manner. What is more, Dall'Alba and Sandberg (2006) contend the model fails to address the understanding of professional skill as an embodied concept, where understanding is embedded within the subjective act of 'doing'. This is said to stem from the simplification of skill learning as a journey through sequential stages, a move that veils the larger social and contextual aspects of the learning process. As such, they argue that the Dreyfus model directs attention away from the skill that is being learned in favour of the tiered stages, and presents a dualistic understanding of learning in terms of cognitive content and practical activity.

This viewpoint is reflective of more contemporary perspectives of learning theory, as Dall'Alba and Sandberg (2006) use Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (1962) 'lived body' metaphor to convey knowledge as knowing, acting and being, through dynamic and inter-subjective practices. As such, learning is viewed a complex and active process, context and person dependent. The authors' thinking is therefore clearly grounded within situated and socially influenced learning theory. In fact, they contend that this embodied understanding eliminates the cognition-practice dualism, in favour of regarding professional skill in terms of an individual's understanding of, and in practice. This conjecture is supported by the presentation of interview data taken from two third year medical students, which demonstrates how practice is understood and enacted in a variety of ways, even at a single

skill level. As such, they propose an alternative model of professional development, which operates on horizontal and vertical planes. The horizontal dimension refers to skill progression (from practical experience), and the vertical dimension regards to the embodied understanding of practice (understanding of, and in practice). This second dimension, created via their critique of stage models, draws on 'situated' learning theories (Lave and Wenger's community of practice, Engeström's activity theory) to explain how social, historical, and cultural factors impact upon an individual's skill learning trajectory. The following example of a medical student's educational experience is given to demonstrate the models function:

> *'Max may become increasingly frustrated by patients who continually seek assistance in ways that he regards as falling outside medical care. He may be confronted and challenged by interactions with colleagues who provide medical care to such patients, leading to a transformation of his understanding of what medical practice entails. As Max begins to embody and become fluent in performing a more inclusive medical practice, his development would be shown along both the horizontal and vertical axes' (p. 401).*

This example sees CPD as more than specific skill development, observing that nature or how skill is understood, engaged with, and influenced by a variety of factors (social, contextual, personal, etc.). This manner of thinking is indicative of the shift in learning theory beyond simple cognitive processing. Such thinking is useful when trying to conceptualise the limitations of traditional coach education. As such, it can be said that there is a need to address the wider socio-cultural, contextual, and personal factors that shape the learning process.

2.1.3 Social Constructivism and Professional Learning Communities

To consider professional learning as an embodied learning experience, over merely discreet knowledge transfer, calls for a reformation of professional learning and consideration for the management of workplace practices. Indeed, a shift in the understanding of learning theory has been noted (Kirk and Macdonald, 1998; Ertmer and Newby, 1993). As stated previously, researchers have long believed that practice is impacted upon by socio-cultural and contextual factors. Whilst the majority of CPD

programmes still adhere to formal classroom based practices (Goodall et al., 2005), learning theory in general has begun a move towards a social constructivist perspective (Kirk and Macdonald, 1998). A derivative of interpretivism (Schwandt, 2000), this sociological theory of knowledge can be traced to the work of John Dewey (1902) and Lev Vygotsky (1978), where social phenomena and situation specific meanings are created by social actors (Schwandt, 2000) within specific contexts (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). As such, professional practice can be seen as created, re-created, and maintained within the workplace through interaction with environmental factors and other learners (colleagues).

Despite the learning theories absence from contemporary CPD programmes, determined through the continued reliance on traditional forms of CPD, professional development literature does acknowledge the utility of a constructivist perspective (Armour, 2010; Armour and Yelling, 2007; Knight, 2002) In their empirical two-year review of CPD for physical education teachers within England, Armour and Yelling (2007) cited the increasing interest in constructivism as an avenue to promote a more socially inclusive model/theory of CPD. Their findings suggested that teacher's associated CPD with *'going on a course'* (p.177) that was often *'bolted on'* (p.196) to the act of teaching. These out of context experiences, combined with teacher's preconceptions of enforced CPD, generally produced tentative learning experiences that floundered when applied to the real world. However, the participants were found to learn in a variety of ways, valuing interactions with colleagues as a learning experience above all others. These interactions manifested themselves in what Armour and Yelling (2007) refer to as 'Professional Learning Communities' (PLCs), a concept based on collaboration and shared goals (i.e. learning, becoming better teachers, improving student learning). Emerging as a derivative of Lave and Wenger's (1991) community of practice (COP) theory, PLCs have garnered significant interest within teaching literature (Lieberman and Miller, 2008; Keay, 2006; Borko, 2004). As such, it can be argued that PLCs are a recognized avenue through which to promote teacher learning and development via a constructivist understanding of learning.

Referred to by many names, teacher networks (Lieberman and Wood, 2001), collegial (Little, 2002) and discourse communities (Putman and Borko, 2000), research has over the last two decades made a sound case for the use of PLCs as a professional development tool. Indeed, James et al's (2007) review of the 'Teaching and Learning Research Project'

in the UK, attributes collaborative classroom based teacher learning to the promotion of learning autonomy within students. In China, PLCs effectively linked professional learning to the day-to-day activities of teachers across 27 schools, bypassing resource dependent traditional CPD, whilst still resulting in positive teacher skill development (Sargent and Hannum, 2009). Further support can be found in the aforementioned WestEd (2000) (USA) report, where a substantial increase in student standards was attributed to the implementation of a PLC for teachers. Importantly thought it should be noted that PLCs are not without their shortcomings. In a recent study of Greek, Irish, and British PE teacher CPD, Armour et al (2012) suggested that PLCs provided the opportunity to continuously learn in and through practice. However, the authors also noted that in certain instances PLCs had the propensity to restrict newcomer teachers to the periphery of the community within a disempowering position (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Whilst this practice forms the vehicle for learning within this approach, that of moving from the periphery to the centre of a community over time, such peripheral participation is not always a positive experience (Evans et al., 2006). As Armour et al's (2012) study illustrates, newcomers sometimes experienced difficulties in accessing PLCs to any real depth, thus restricting the learning opportunities afforded them. This is indicative of a major criticism of Lave and Wenger's (1991) CoP model, specifically the notion that power is unequal within a community structure. As such a hierarchy of learning and affordance can be created. This concept will be examined in greater detail in a later section of this chapter. The evidence suggests that the use of PLC's can provide a framework through which to overcome the limitations of tradition CPD practices. This offers valuable insight to coach education providers, however it should be noted that further research is needed to fully understand the utility of these learning communities

2.1.4 Policy Implications

Contemporary research provides resounding support for Armour and Yelling's (2007) conjecture that learning communities should play a leading role in the provision of CPD for teachers. Already within the USA frameworks on how such a change might be implemented have been created, outlining policy implications and potential new skill development protocols. A report by Fulton and Britton (2011) reviewed the findings of a two year study by The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future

(NCTAF), to this end. As such, the following transformative framework was suggested to support this move towards professional community based CPD:

- School staffing policies need to promote learning teams/networks through provision of appropriate time and space for their creation and maintenance. PLC facilitator roles also need to be created to ensure the effective functioning of these teams.
- Policies should include head teachers so they become knowledgeable and effective team members themselves, and therefore effective leaders within the PLCs.
- Policies should embrace online networking tools to support and expand learning networks.
- Research must continue to investigate collaborative learning practices and their impact on student learning.

Indeed, reports from the extensive 'Teaching Learning and Research Project' TLRP within the UK have made similar suggestions towards the future of pedagogy, policy and institutional practices. The programme operated from 1999 to 2009 with aims to perform and promote educational research that could enhance the learning experience of both teachers and students. Both David et al (2009) and James et al (2007) contend that data from the TLRP suggests that an evidence-based collaborative approach may be a powerful tool for enhancing teaching quality. Importantly, in keeping with Guskey's propositions, collaboration via networks (a change in teaching behaviour) was found to be most effective when it lead to tangible outcomes (Gallagher et al., 2008). The evidence therefore suggests that for PLCs (teaching networks) to become an effective component of the CPD process, policy and school structures need to provide an environment that promotes their usage. In addition, the outcomes of these networks need to be witnessed by participants to allow for changes in teaching practice to occur.

That being said, the reformation of CPD for teachers is by no means straight forward, or indeed at a point where it can be effectively implemented. The defining point to be taken from the NCTAF study is that research must continue to investigate collaborative learning practices so that the nature of what makes them effective, can be better understood. The reason for this can be seen when considering Garet et al's (2008) study on behalf of the US Department of Education, the only study found at the time of this review that looked to

empirically link collaborative learning practices to student outcomes within a CPD framework. Within the study 270 second-grade teachers were assigned one of two interventions, or became a control. Treatment A involved teachers attending 48 hours (over an academic year) worth of traditional formal CPD (seminars), whilst treatment B supplemented this with reform based in-school coaching (PLCs). A 'half-time' coach assigned to all schools participating within the study facilitated the in-school coaching, providing support and advice on newly learnt practices, and also promoted a collaborative learning community between colleagues (a PLC). Coaches were instructed to spend up to two hours with teachers a week, where teachers averaged up to 72 hours' worth of coaching over the entire academic year. Despite teachers from treatments A and B scoring notably higher on teaching knowledge tests than those in the control group, with effect sizes of R=0.35 and 0.39 respectively, the results demonstrated no significant difference This increase in teacher knowledge, whilst admittedly none significant, did not translate into an improvement in student reading scores with none significant effect sizes of R=0.08 and 0.03 respectively. As such, the slight increase in teacher knowledge could not be attributed to the either form of CPD meaning no causal claims could be made.

The results echo the previously addressed issue that little systematic research exists linking CPD to student outcomes (Pedder and Opfer, 2010; Armour and Yelling, 2004; Garet et al., 2001), and can be interpreted in a number of ways. Desimone (2009) would contend that the complexity of teachers learning experiences makes the measurement of CPD effectiveness through causal studies a struggle. It could also be suggested that the effective use of PLCs remains unknown to researchers. Importantly, Garet et al's work (2001; 2008) found no significant different between traditional versus in-school (reform) CPD activities regarding their effectiveness as learning tools, suggesting that a difference in approach alone is not the only issue of contention. There is perhaps a need to address the wider social and cultural aspects that shape learning within a given context. Indeed, Richmond and Manokore (2010) have suggested that PLCs function best when the culture of teacher learning is supported and spread throughout the school, state, and beliefs of key stakeholders. As such, coach education should take note of the possible restriction wider social and cultural beliefs may place on attempts to influence education pathways.

The goal of this section within the chapter is to highlight those areas where sports coaching can learn from the professional development history of teaching. It has been suggested that

CPD within education remains a contested subject, where many claim to understand the concept but with strikingly different perspectives on its definition and purpose. That said, the evidence suggests that teachers value reform based in situ CPD over traditional approaches, as the location of practice within context is more relevant to their development needs (Kennedy, 2005). In addition, it has been argued that PLCs, whilst in need of further research, provide a practical means through which to facilitate teacher development. The utility of these notions for sports coach education is in recognising that any developmental strategy must be underpinned by learning theories that can help shape and direct policy, processes and practice. The following sections therefore expand upon the central tenets of professional knowledge development and CPD; namely by examining the learning theories that underpin these principles.

2.2 Learning Theories

The concept of learning is one that is familiar to all, yet also one where no single definition is regarded as conclusive or correct. Tyler (1949) suggests that *'Learning takes place through the active behaviour of the student: it is what he does that he learns, not what the teacher does'* (p.63). Put plainly, learning is grounded within the actions of the learner, not the teacher. Wakefield (1996) offers further insight, suggesting that learning can be described as the relatively permanent change in the behaviour of an individual based on their experiences or discoveries. Thus learning can be seen as a process of adaptation, where experience and discovery lead to a new understanding of the world. Schunk (2004, p.2) adds support to this supposition, defining learning as *"an enduring change in behaviour, or the capacity to behave in a given fashion, which results from practice or other forms of experience"*. Learning can be thus seen as the development or modification of existing understandings, enabling knowledge to be applied to new situations. To say that learning is relatively permanent is to emphasise that behaviour and beliefs are flexible and not genetically pre-programmed in form or function. These definitions highlight the notion that learning can occur in a number of ways, and is thus subject to various social, cultural, and contextual factors. For this reason researchers have long been trying to capture and thus better understand the process of learning. The following section shall review traditional and contemporary perspectives on learning; including behaviourism; cognitivism; constructivism; learning as acquisition and participation; informal learning; learning organisations; and the development of a workplace pedagogy.

2.2.1 Behaviourism

The desire to understand the process of learning can be traced back to the debates of the great philosophers Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, yet it was not until the 1890's that a systematic approach to the subject was taken (Petri and Mishkin, 1994). Early studies began by investigating animal intelligences, such as Pavlov's famous experiment on the conditioning of salivating dogs (Dembo, 1994), and Thorndike's (1898) study of behaviour reinforcement using cats. Similar thinking was then applied to humans, best demonstrated by Watson and Rayner's (1920) paper 'Conditioning emotional reactions', a study better known as 'the little Albert experiment'. Pavlov's concept of classical conditioning was used to make a small child (Little Albert) fear a white rat, thereby justifying Watson's conjecture that psychology was *'purely [an] objective branch of natural science'* where its goals were *'prediction and control'* (Watson, 1913, p. 158). As such, learning became labelled as a process of stimulus and response, labelled by Harris (2000) as an outside-in view of learning.

Behaviourism reigned as the dominant learning theory until the 1960's (Petri and Mishkin, 1994) proliferated by perhaps the most famous behaviourist Burrhus Skinner and his notions of conditioning based utopian societies (Skinner, 1948). Skinner proposed a society known as 'Walden 2', where societal control was to be achieved through the scientific application of behavioural principles. However, the ideas attached to Skinners' work, and indeed behaviourism as a whole have been heavily criticised. Gamble (1999) argued that Skinners' fundamental thesis was that individual traits are shaped from above by social forces, thus creating an environment where the goal is to create frictionless socialized individuals that function with others as a unit. As such, society was portrayed as a super-efficient anthill, where individualized practice or behaviour is disregarded. Further critiques contended that behaviourism cannot account for all types of learning, namely the development of language given it disregards the activities of the mind (Chomsky, 1959). Learners are thus seen as passive participants within a process that fails to acknowledge learning as an embodied concept, a viewpoint that cannot account for the dispositions of the individual and their effect on the learning process, or the mental processes required for the understanding of language. What is more, the concept does not recognize the effects of environment on shaping and guiding human behaviour. Such a critique is reflective of the criticisms addressed within the traditional CPD afforded teachers and coaches. It can

therefore be argued that behaviourism lacks the facilities to address the complex and messy reality of the learning process (Jorg, 2009).

2.2.2 Cognitivism

The reductionist view of learning as proliferated within behaviourism has been heavily criticised by suggestions that its mechanical and non-humanistic assumptions fail to fully explain the learning of complex skills such as speech (Pulliam & Patten, 1999; Petri and Mishkin, 1994). The inability of behaviourists to a adequately explain certain social behaviours led researchers such as Noam Chomsky (1959) to call for the recognition of higher mental functioning that could better explain these learning processes. What followed was the cognitive revolution (Miller, 2003), led by figures such as the cognitive psychologist Jean Piaget. Piaget defined himself as a 'Genetic Epistemologist' with a drive to discover the very roots of knowledge (Piaget, 1971). To this end he suggested a four-stage theory of cognitive development, suggesting that as children mature they develop an increasing capacity to comprehend the world around them (Wood, 1998). Piaget saw human beings as more than respondents to environmental stimuli, suggesting that they are in fact actively involved in the interpretation of information based on previous personal prescriptions, referred to as schema (Ormrod, 1998). As such, these mental constructs, or schemas, can be seen as maintained or redefined based on the mental processing of information and experience.

However, this memorising of 'schemata' is a point of common criticism directed towards cognitivism, and one addressed previously within the review of CPD (Nelson et al., 2013; Gilbert and Trudel, 2006). The stocking of the mind with de-contextualised facts is the forbearer of the containerised view of knowledge. As such, cognitivism like behaviourism can be characterised as simply putting 'stuff' into the empty vessels that are learners' minds (Bereiter, 2002). Indeed, it has been recognized within the literature that cognitivist forms of thinking underpin traditional means of education and professional development, that being the transmission of expert teacher knowledge to unskilled learner (Swanwick, 2005, Nicholls, 1997). The fundamental problem with this perspective of acquiring knowledge is that the content of learning, the embodiment of the individual, and the context of what is being learnt, is disregarded. This form of instruction is reflective of the instruction offered within traditional sports coaching education and CPD. Therefore it can

be said that cognitivism as a perspective cannot adequately inform the learning needs of sports coaches.

2.2.3 Constructivism

Despite Piaget's influence within the cognitive revolution, the author considered himself to be a constructionist (Fischer and Kaplan, 2003). In this light he expanded his viewpoint beyond the cognitivist realm of thought management to consider knowledge as constructed via subjective interactions with reality. This in fact was the resurrection of a perspective first proposed by Frederic Bartlett (1932), suggesting that transformations within the recollection of stories were due to the constructed processing of new information based on pre-existing knowledge structures. Yet constructivism failed to attract further attention until the1970's (Spivey, 1987). It should be noted that Piaget was not alone in the rediscovery of this learning philosophy; researcher's Lev Vygotsky, John Dewey and David Kolb shared constructivist thinking. The world of educational research had found an alternative lens to the objective foci of behaviourist and cognitivist perspectives (Jonassen, 1991), where constructivism viewed reality not as external to the learner, but as interpreted in relation to the experiences of that learner (Cooper, 1993).

Constructivism itself however exists in many forms, each grounded within the interactionist philosophy, but with an emphasis on different components of that interaction (Ackermann, 2001; Bodner et al., 2001). Piaget for example can be considered a cognitive/individual constructivist given his focus on personal constructions of cognitive models (Powell and Kalina, 2009). He therefore saw knowledge as not passively received, but actively built by the cognising individual (Geelan, 1997). Seymour Papert, a colleague of Piaget's, proposed 'constructionism' as a development of Piaget's work. Papert contended that his theory shared the belief that knowledge structures are built *'through [the] progressive internalisation of actions'* (Papert and Harel, 1991, p.1), yet added to it a recognition of context and the tangible artefacts within it. This has led some to suggest Papert's theory is more pragmatic given its mediation of actions through contextual artefacts (Akermann, 2001). Another branch of constructivism which champions the relevance of context in learning, but with less attention on the tools of interaction, is the previously addressed 'social constructivism'. Often characterised as the father of social constructivism (Jones and Brader-Araje, 2002), Lev Vygotsky (1978) proposed that

learning occurs via the socio-cultural mediation of actions. However, it is perhaps more appropriate to view social constructivism as the culmination of Vygotsky's, Dewey's and Kolb's thinking given its focus on collaborative (experiential) learning within a given context, that is itself subject to and creator of culture. Importantly this notion of cultural importance has influenced a cultural perspective on learning and will be addressed later in the chapter. The previous sections have highlighted several competing views of learning that have been debated by academics with regards to the situated and cognitive aspects of the process. The following section discusses Anna Sfard's (1998) attempt to aside these debates and theoretical convictions, to draw attention to the discourse around learning and what that discourse entails.

2.2.4 Learning as Acquisition or Participation?

In response to the competing views of learning Anna Sfard (1998) suggests the comprehension of learning via the use of two metaphors, participation and acquisition. Learning as acquisition involves the accumulation of packets of abstracted knowledge for use in generalisation, a viewpoint illustrative of cognitivist thinking. With this, a heavy focus is placed on the 'ownership' of knowledge. Participation however, takes place in the context of cultural learning via social mediation. This metaphor sees knowledge not as a possession, but as an outcome of social participation in communities via apprenticeship or guided learning. In this light the constructivist perspective can be addressed wholly, with participation addressed in terms of context, social interaction, mediating artefacts, and culture.

Sfard's metaphors have proven useful in comprehending two divergent perspectives on learning, suggesting that 'each (metaphor) has something to offer that the other cannot provide' (Sfard, 1998:10). Whilst she makes no claim of preference between one or another, what we are left with has been described as a troubling and dualistic view of learning that often distorts our understanding of the field (Hodkinson, 2005). Indeed, at the start of the millennium this 'paradigm war' (Hodkinson et al, 2008; Cobb and Bowers, 1999) was at its height, characterised by an epistemological debate between Greeno (1997), Anderson et al (1997), and Cobb and Bowers (1999). Both James Greeno and John Anderson advocated the potential merits of participatory learning, which they termed 'situated learning', yet argued that claims made by researchers adopting this perspective

were often unfounded, lacking the concrete objectiveness of cognitive studies. Cobb and Bowers (1999) criticised the positivist stance of both, contending that cognitivist thinking skews characterisations of any meaning making or learning research produces. Indeed, the main criticism of the cognitivist stance is the movement's lack of ecological validity (Wertz, 1993). Put simply, thinking in this manner distorts understandings of human nature, disregarding the social context of learning. The gradual recognition of this fact was made evident within the previous review of CPD, yet despite the acknowledged limitations (de-contextualised nature etc), Beckett and Hager (2002) contend that cognitivism remains 'the standard paradigm'. Indeed the perpetuation of didactic teaching methods within both the traditional CPD and traditional education institutions is testament to this (Hager, 2005; 2004).

Hodkinson et al (2008) importantly note that there is a 'strand' within situated learning that focuses not on schooling, but on life both in the workplace and outside of formal education. These anthropological and sociological approaches' address a more embodied view of learning, looking at how one learns a vocation and immerses themselves within the workplace community. This is starkly different to the focus on conceptual change and cognition that dominates traditional schooling. This is not to say that classroom based learning is to be disregarded. As Hodkinson et al (2008) recalls, the reports from the TLC project (Transforming Learning Cultures in Further Education) strongly supported the notion that overtly formal academic courses allowed for embodied learning via informal opportunities. In essence, despite the formality of the situation, learning could still be experienced in terms of a wider socio-cultural context. To this end, workplace-learning theorists have sought to address the limitations of institutionalised development courses by exploring the inner-workings of the 'emerging participatory paradigm' (Hager, 2004). Therefore in order to truly engage in an analysis of workplace learning there is a need to acknowledge the resultant theories and models that currently dominate the field of study. As such, the following sections of the chapter examine theories that *'present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relationships among variables'* (Kerlinger 1986, p.9), followed later by an identification of contemporary participatory models that look to explain the application of these learning theories. The following section begins the examination of learning theories by discussing the differentiation of formal and informal learning practices.

2.2.5 Informal Learning

In studying workplace learning there is need to acknowledge the differentiation between 'formal' and 'informal' learning (Lee et al., 2004). Certainly Stevens et al (2001) in their discussion of workplace and organisational learning, contend that fundamental to understanding workplace learning is this distinction between *activities generally covered by the term "training", away from the job, formal learning experiences, generally delivered by professional trainers and ... "informal learning" on or close to the job, through experience'* (p. 13). Interestingly, in as far as it is an antonym, informal learning is often characterised in relation to the formal learning features that it lacks (Hager, 2012). Within the literature these features are identified as a specified curriculum, the designation of a teacher or educator, and the assessment and certification of learners (Manuti et al., 2015; Biesta et al., 2011). As such, informal learning acknowledges the acquisition of knowledge within a setting that does not constitute an organised programme. In this light learning is seen as dependent upon critical moments (Beckett and Hager, 2002), where individual's curiosity, efficacy, and agency guide learning engagement. The term 'informal learning' is by no means a recent conception, having been used prolifically throughout adult education research in providing a contrast to the formal learning experienced within educational institutions (Eraut, 2004). Its recognition of the social effects upon learning alongside the impact of individual agency on these experiences, characterise a process that can occur within the spaces surrounding overtly formal activities (Eraut, 2004 Conlon, 2003; Marsick and Volpe, 1999). Much of the research in this field has investigated the presence of informal learning within the workplace (Kyndt et al., 2009; Conlon, 2003; Eraut, 2007; 2004) where it is estimated that up to 80 percent of vocational knowledge is attained via this form of learning practice (Marsick and Watkins, 1990). Other suggest the figure closer to 90 percent (Conlon, 2003); the salient point being that people gain new knowledge more often from informal activities rather than formal training.

In examining influential factors within informal workplace learning Eraut (2004) delineates his work as based largely on theoretical assumption, as any cause and effect models are unlikely to translate across a variety of working contexts. This is understandable when observing a process that is largely subjective, often difficult to identify and measure, and largely reactive and unplanned (Eraut, 2004; 2000). As with other situated learning approaches, factors such as personal biography, age, agency and

history are deemed to influence engagement with workplace learning activities (Berg and Chung, 2008). However, empirical studies have produced conflicting results. Tikkanen's (2002) and Kremer (2005) found that less experienced and younger employees were more likely to engage in informal learning at work, whilst Livingstone's (2001) research suggested the same for older more experienced workers. Interestingly however, the study also suggested that younger employees looked to colleagues when engaging in informal learning, whilst older employees chose more individual learning activities. If this is in fact the case within common workplaces it could have implications on the structuring of informal learning models based around personal characteristics.

Despite significant support for the utility of informal learning in supplementing professional knowledge and development, relatively little is known about how it can be fostered and supported (Manuti et al., 2015). That being said, frameworks are proposed within the literature. Eraut (2004) proposed a model that looked to address the specifics of a given workplace via two triangles, one depicting the work context for learning and another the main factors that influence learning within context. A diagram of this model is presented below.
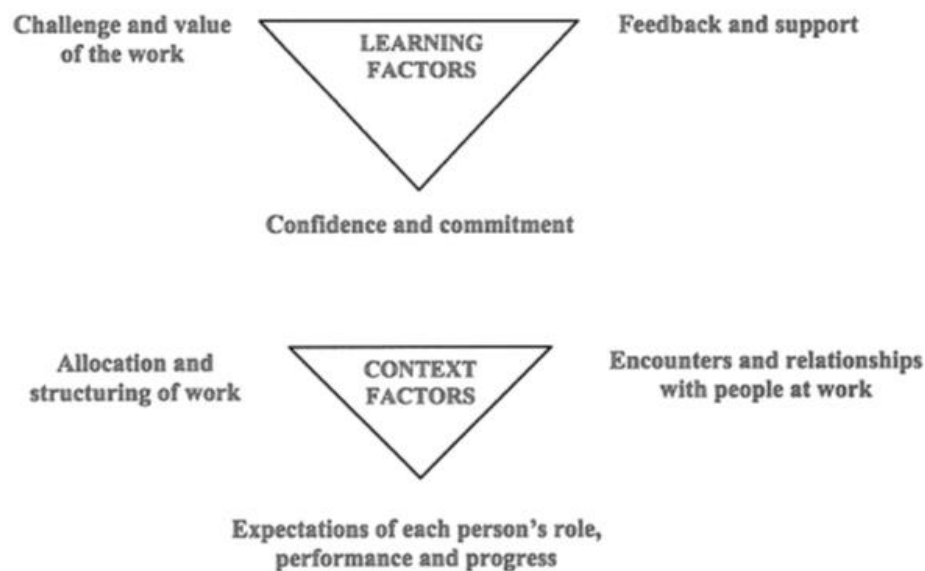
Figure 2: Factors that affect learning in the workplace, Taken from Eraut (2004, p.269).

In regards to learning factors, confidence was found to be of overwhelming importance, and cited to arise from completion of work task and challenges. Yet the confidence to

engage in these challenges was influenced by the support afforded by the workplace, thus creating a triangular relationship of learning factors. The second triangle mirrors the first, yet focuses on the broader contextual factors of the process. This triangle linked allocation and structuring of work, relationships with people at work, and expectations of peoples role performance and progress. Eraut (2004) detailed the influence of these contextual factors in relation to newly qualified nurses and trainee engineers. They suggested that the allocation of work was central to employee progress, influencing both the difficulty of the challenge and the extent to which it is individual or collaborative, and the opportunity to meet and observe people with more or different expertise. Communication of expected performance was found to be precariously weak in some instances, as was constructive feedback. This was purported linked to the formation of personal relationships and workplace climate, making this factor a learning restraint in this instance. As such, it can be suggested that factors such as workplace culture need more attention in terms of comprehending how they facilitate social relationships, collaboration, and the climate of a given workplace. Indeed, the influence of emotions as shaped by culture has already been linked to informal workplace learning engagement (Colley, 2012).

Marsick and Watkins (1990) propose another model by which to frame workplace learning, with a specific purpose of enhancing incidental and informal learning. Grounded in the works of John Dewey (1938) and Argyris and Schon (1978; 1974), within this model learning is depicted as growing out of everyday activity whilst working and living within a given context. The model illustrates a process by which meaning making is seen as an ebb and flow as people progress towards understanding. It is suggested that with each new experience, individuals may go back and re-address previous understandings. Ultimately the model demonstrates that people diagnose or frame experiences they encounter, where context refines the interpretation of that experience. However, whilst context is recognised, the components which form its constituent parts remain obscure, limiting the models illustration of events when compared to Eraut's (2004). Despite this limitation, Marsick and Watkins (2001) acknowledge a variety of contextual factors that can influence learning within their written work (such as time, money, people from whom to learn, availability of resources) possibly calling for third generation of the model.

It is important to note however that informal learning is a contested subject. For example, when attempting to explicitly define the differences between informal and formal learning,

Colley et al (2003) found 20 separate criteria utilised to classify informal learning. Whilst it was noted that there existed significant overlap across many of the terms, there was enough disparity found to confuse the issue. Indeed, such a finding is consistent with Hodkinson's (2011) contention that often what *'would be classified as informal by one group of writers [academics] would be seen as formal by another'* (p.85). Further debate can be found regarding the notion of 'structure' within informal learning. Whilst generally regarded as unstructured or loosely structured (Eraut, 2004; Marsick and Watkins, 2001), it has been argued that all workplace learning is structured by the cultural norms and practices of a given workplace (Billett, 2002; 2006). Indeed those factors suggested to influence informal learning such as social relationships and agency, are subject to cultural norms and practices of a workplace (Billett, 2003). As such, there exists confusion surrounding the boundaries of formal and informal learning. In response, Colley et al., (2003) argue that the distinctions between formal and informal learning are largely meaningless, preferring to regard learning in general as consisting of both formal and informal attributes. Thus the process, location, purpose and content of learning are viewed as containing measures of (in)formality, where the nature and balance of these attributes shape learning. As such it is the nature of these attributes and their interdependence that determines the effectiveness of learning in a given context. This conception is therefore particularly useful in comprehending working contexts where formal and informal learning practices overlap (Livingstone, 2008) such as within teaching and coaching.

In considering the future research directions of this field Hager (2012) warns us of the limitations facing the development of informal learning and moves to formalize it within a structure. It is an academics nature to convert the unknown into explicit knowledge, yet the tacit nature of the knowledge learnt makes recognition and indeed measurement of informal learning difficult. Indeed there are questions about whether the structuring of informal learning takes away from its utility as a learning experience. The likelihood is that 'thick' tacit versions of activity will be understood via 'thin' explicit descriptions, and this must be recognised (Eraut, 2004). In considering the boundary confusion between formal and informal learning, it is perhaps better to conclude that learning is a complex social practice located within a setting that has integrated formal and informal components. The significant issue is therefore not to delineate the boundary, but understand the relationship between dimensions of formality and informality that are shaped by factors

such as culture, organisational beliefs, traditions and personal dispositions (Manuti et al., 2015; Malcolm et al., 2003; Conlon 2003). Such concepts allude to what Berg and Chung (2008) refer to as the 'iceberg' of informal learning, where it has been argued that more longitudinal/ethnographic studies are needed to comprehend the components of effective learning.

2.2.6 Learning Organisations

The past decade has seen a marked increase in the recognition of the workplace as a legitimate site of learning (Unwin et al., 2007; Billett, 2002; Boud and Garrick, 1999). Spurred by the informal/formal learning debate, researchers have sought to address 'how' and 'what' is being learnt within the workplace (Lee et al., 2004), questioning its ability to enable or restrict learning (Fuller and Unwin, 2002). Indeed, when one adds to this the pragmatic concerns of employers regarding industry costs on employee skill development (Billett, 2000), alongside the paucity of learning transfer taken from educational institutions, the need to create a model of workplace learning is clear. Early frameworks were developed in conjunction with the acceptance of situated views on learning, where perhaps one of the earliest was the proposition of learning organisations.

Developed in the 1980's the concept of learning organisations and its principles are rooted in action learning and management studies (Garrett, 1999). Whilst recognized as an accepted theory, the topic was initially refuted due to its characterisation of organisations as identifiable organisms that displayed characteristics similar to that of individuals (Falconer, 2006). This anthropomorphic viewpoint was contested by Argyris and Schon (1996), who proposed that the concept of organisational learning should be seen as a metaphor, rather than the description of an independent entity. As a result, research has tended to address the role of individuals within organisations, questioning the integration and aggregation of their learning as a whole (Berends et al., 2003).

Regardless of these conceptual difficulties there remains clear empirical evidence in support of learning within organisations via dynamic social interactions between individuals and the organisational structure (Akgun et al., 2003; Sole and Edmonson, 2002). As a dynamic and integrative concept, individual, team, and corporate values are thought to be unified via critical and analytic thinking. Thus the competitive advantage and

innovative learning of such organisations is achieved via the collective learning culture and wealth of knowledge held by an organisation (Matlay, 2000). However, the process by which to create innovative and sustained learning organisations remains unpredictable and difficult to foster (Pedler, 2002), calling for an organisational framework that can be readily applied to real life contexts.

Early theoretical approaches were concerned with the manner by which knowledge was acquired, such as Argyris and Schon's (1978) double-loop learning notion. An expansion of single-loop learning, where trial-and-error situations result in the consolidation or correction of existing organisational processes (Matlay, 2000), double-loop learning enhances an organisations creative capacity through second-order change (Senge, 1990). Double loop learning thus goes beyond trial and error thinking, incorporating critical reflection of how employees may be inadvertently adding to organisational problems. Therefore cognitive processes and insights could be said to generate new frames of reference and effective decision-making processes (Argyris, 1994). Whilst the theory appears promising, double-loop learning is said to be rare in the practice of large organisations (Senge, 1990), as single-loop learning reinforces a manager's control within a workplace (Matlay, 1998). For this theory to be employed, agency needed to be afforded to employees so that they could generate new practices within the organisations.

Peter Senge (1990) addresses this limitation within his inclusive five disciplines theory. His theory suggested that a learning organisation could attain a competitive advantage from continued learning, both individual and collective. The five disciplines are systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning. Senge proposes that people put aside their existing mental models, learn to be open with others (personal mastery), understand how their company really works (systems thinking), form a plan everyone can agree on (shared vision), and then work together to achieve that vision (team learning). The theory offered principles that interested a wide audience (policy-makers, academics, business leaders and managers) through its promise of impact upon educational, training, and human resource development paradigms (Matlay, 1998). The idea of building a shared vision within a team directed towards personal mastery and the development of more sophisticated mental models, certainly adheres to the notion that learning is a social process, allowing for the development of creative and contextually educated employees.

However, despite 20 years of development researchers still consider the theories and practices of learning organisations to be unclear and difficult to apply within real world contexts (Matlay, 2000). Thomas and Allen (2006) suggest that difficulties arise from the focus of organisational literature on individual learning processes. Conversely organisational learning is based on a concept of collective learning, a notion premised on the belief that individual knowledge will cumulatively add to an organisations collective knowledge. However it is suggested that there is only a functional equivalence between collective and individual learning concepts. What is more, Mirvis (1996) suggests conceptual refinement is required, as there is a lack of study regarding collective learning from an experiential and heuristic standpoint. Wang and Ahmed (2003) contend that problems are further confounded by the fields strong research bias towards a scientific approach to management, where a focus on systematic thinking and continuous improvement are the research goals. Such approaches have proved limited when applied to industrial contexts (Lorente et al., 1999), leading Wang and Ahmed (2003) to compose a substantive literature review of organisational learning theory with a view towards clarifying future research directions.

The review identified that in an effort to provide a holistic break down of the organisational learning concepts, researchers have addressed five main conceptual approaches (potentially adding to the current confusion surrounding learning organisation frameworks). These approaches include, individual learning, systematic focuses, culture (or metaphor), knowledge management, and continuous improvement. Individual learning, as cited previously, is one of the most prolific focuses, where the review supports the concerns of Allen and Thomas (2006). Whilst collective learning requires individual learning, the mere occurrence of individual learning does not guarantee collective processes, or if they will provide positive contributions to an organisation (Kumaraswamy and Chitale, 2011). Theoretical models must therefore ensure they are not simplistic extensions of individualised strategies that negate organisational complexities (Matlay, 2000). The systematic focus is credited for its recognition of inter-organisational learning, however its lack of flexibility and creativity does not accurately represent the actions of the agentic individuals that compromise a workforce. Whilst a cultural focus has been used to shape values, behaviours, and employee attitudes (O'Rielly and Chatman, 1996), its relationship to organisational performance has only been tentatively explored (Wang and

Ahmed, 2003), calling for further empirical research to develop this concept within learning organisations. A knowledge management focus concerns knowledge creation, dissemination, and refinement through collective action. This is reflective of triple-loop learning processes, whereby individuals and organisations reflect upon the manner by which they are learning. This potential for organisations to understand and best utilise their knowledge however, requires an understanding of organisational culture, a component that shapes/allows triple-loop learning (Issacs, 1993). Indeed, Lee and Cole (2003) propose that culture can act as a form of social control mechanism. That being said, depending on whether it fosters innovation and critical awareness, or if instead, it instils a system that impinges upon those that do not conform, culture can ultimately stimulate or impinge the creation and sharing of organisational knowledge (Donate and Guadamillas, 2010). The continuous improvement focus has led to total quality management (TQM), a philosophy and set of practices that promotes incremental innovation, of which learning is a by-product (Barrow, 1993). However, this concept once again focuses on the facilitation of individual learning in the hope that collective learning will follow.

What is clear is that the literature regarding learning organisations is expansive, where no concise definition or framework exists. Future research needs to clarify the very definition of what is meant by the term learning organisation, and address the languaging issues that exist (such as the use of culture and metaphor to regard the same research focus). The limitations identified by Wang and Ahmed (2003) call for future work to address triple-loop learning principles, where the notion of organisational culture can be used to address the entire collective learning process. Current frameworks, and their focus on individual learning, reflect the issues of perspective identified within critiques of current situated learning theories (Hodkinson et al., 2008). As such, the focus of organisational learning is on the culture of that organisation, and assumed to be reflected within the individual. However, the sheer fact that it remains difficult to foster and maintain learning organisations is proof enough that such a circumstance cannot be expected. As it stands the purpose of the task is not being met by the pedagogy, that being the method and understanding of education, which exists within the organisational workplace (that of a focus on individual learning). Indeed, many researchers believe that the future of the field is to empirically link organisational performance to the learning of that organisation (Allen and Thomas, 2006; Yeo, 2002). However, until organisational culture is used to connect

individual, collective, and management levels, goals towards organisational improvement will remain unmet. What is needed first is a comprehension of 'how' and 'what' is being learnt within the workplace, and to consider the factors that influence this. To achieve this research needs to address the pedagogy within the workplace alongside the ramifications individual and organisational culture has on this pedagogy. Within the context of this study, organisational learning literature highlights the importance of considering cultural aspects of learning within the workplace, where the one cannot assume pockets of individual learning will facilitate group learning.

2.2.7 The Development of a 'Workplace' Pedagogy

Fuller and Unwin (2002) proposed in their early work that any attempts to conceptualise pedagogy within the workplace would operate around five basic theoretical models: (i) the transmission model, reflective of traditional formal learning methods, and criticised for its ignorance of experiential learning; (ii) The acquisition of tacit skills via informal learning, strongly supported by Eraut (2000), who suggests these experiences occur in the spaces around events with an overtly formal purpose; (iii) Social learning theory, constructed from Lave and Wenger's (1991) 'communities of practice' approach, where learning is viewed as a process of participation within situationally relevant and social practices; (iv) The competency based model, which detaches outcomes from the learning process, seeing a facilitator or guide walk a learner through a list of competences to be achieved; (v) And finally Engeström's activity theory (2001), where learning is again seen as social, yet culturally influenced. The difference to social learning theory can be seen in the central role afforded to teachers in this model, reclaiming a structural element to the learning experienced (Fuller and Unwin, 2002). However these theories appear to be tentative models of pedagogical practices within the workplace, rather than a theory encompassing the entire pedagogical process. That being said, Fuller and Unwin (2002) acknowledged the limitations of their proposition, confirming that the lens of each model could obscure the understanding of another.

Stephen Billett (2002b), a leading workplace learning theorist, addressed one such limitation in his critique of workplace learning discourses, notably the identification of workplace learning as informal. Billett regards learning within the workplace as merely a different set of participatory practices to those experienced within educational institutions,

where distinguishing between levels of formality serves no purpose (Billett, 2002; 2002a). Indeed, to conceive of workplace learning as informal or unstructured is wholly inaccurate. Billett contends that they are structured by the cultural norms and goals of a particular workplace, where activities can exist solely to achieved organisational goals or ensure continuation of practice (Billett, 2000; 2001). A focus on the informal has already produced research that is contested by many, such as the LDSA (Learning and Skill Development Agency) report by Doyle and Hughes (2004). The report implies that learning at work is entirely based on human agency, a process that floats free of context. However, Rainbird et al (2004) remind us of the contextual power relations that exist within the hierarchy of the workplace, a factor that surely impacts upon the social interactions within it. Agency is therefore likely to be subject to context, shaped by the circumstance, occupational status, and culture of a workplace, all of which impact upon an employee's engagement with learning.

In line with this thinking Billett proposed a basic foundation upon which a workplace pedagogy could be built, doing so by first using Vygotskian-constructivist theory to support the notion that individuals' learning derives intra-psychologically; that is, through interactions between the individual, others and the social world, and through artefacts and tools in social spaces. He therefore argues that learning is shaped via a sociogeneses between culture and history, manifested within a specific context (2003; 2001b). As such, the knowledge required for goal directed practice (i.e. paid vocational activities) could be seen as dependent upon social interactions and individual participation. Therefore the initial element to Billett's conceptualisation of a workplace pedagogy was participation, specifically guided participation, as Billett's (1998) early investigations demonstrated that guided learning strategies enhanced the learning taken from the workplace (Billett et al., 1998). Billett (2002) thus proposed the foundation of a workplace pedagogy, as workplace learning is subject to the following: (i) intentional and unintentional guided learning accessed as part of everyday activities; (ii) how a workplace affords opportunities and access to learning experiences; (iii) and how individuals elect to engage in these experiences. Bases (ii) and (iii), affordance and agentic engagement, were regarded as reciprocally interdependent processes, where engagement can open doors to previously unseen learning experiences, therefore requiring new levels of engagement. Billett suggests that the basis of this engagement is located in relations between the workplace's

invitational qualities and individuals' interest as shaped by their ontogeny, that being their personal, albeit socially derived history. Learning within the workplace is thus seen as an everyday practice supplemented by structured opportunities, where quality of the learning experience is governed by support and access to these opportunities. Crucially agency can be seen to play a defining role, dictating the learning opportunities individuals choose to engage with, and subsequently the learning taken from them, whilst also shaping future opportunities.

Whilst Billett narrowed his conceptualisation of pedagogy around employee engagement, Unwin et al (2007) approached the task via analysis of internal and external contextual factors said to affect all organisations. A review of employees from within the steel industry and their workplace experiences, were used to generate four discernible and interrelated pedagogical dimensions (data taken from Fuller and Unwin, 2004). Firstly, each of the companies observed operated within parameters shaped by external contextual factors such as the nature of the product market, government regulations, and raw materials. Secondly, internal structures governed affordances, taken from Billett's (2002) notion of workplaces invitational qualities, which are said to dictate participation in goal directed activities. Thirdly, these affordances, and the extent to which employees are encouraged to share knowledge, are notably stronger in companies whose business goals are 'longer-term', making them more able to withstand external forces of change. Fourthly, and in collaboration with Billett's interest in employee ontogenesis, engagement in workplace affordances and the subsequent creation of new ones, was said to be partly reflective of employee biographies and identities. Unwin et al acknowledged Billet's contentions over the importance of agency, but offer a more holistic viewpoint of workplace learning. Agency is therefore not central to their thinking, but part of a wider more dynamic working environment.

Unwin et al (2007) acknowledge that their aim is not to ignore the importance of individual agency, but comprehend it in terms of an organic premise individuals are both responsible for shaping, and are shaped by. Yet to do so one must comprehend the influences personal ontogeny and different contextual factors have on the development of agency. Billett's (2008; 2006) recent work has made moves towards this understanding, addressing the inter-psychological components of learning within the workplace, namely the immediate social experience in relation to the individual's appropriation of that

experience. He proposes that a relation-interdependence exists not just between the affordances of the workplace and engagement, but between the contributions and agency of the individual and social. Therefore the social experiences are seen as important for articulating and providing access to workplace activities. However, personal factors such as individuals' capacities, subjectivities and agency shape how workers interpret and engage with what they experience, and consequently, how they learn and remake practice throughout their working life. Therefore, Billett feels learning throughout working life needs to be seen as a relational concept between the individual and social structures, with the relationship being mediated by the personal agency and intentionality of the individual. Billett is not alone in his believe that the social needs to individualised. Siebert et al's (2009) investigation of postgraduate students workplace experiences found that individualised study plans satisfied the needs of the workplace whilst satiating the agentic needs of the individual.

Billett's move towards a greater focus on the individual is not just conceptual. He built his proposition around an empirical study of coal miners, process workers, and call centre operators, where despite claims of dissatisfaction workers expressed high levels of commitment and interest. Billet suggests that whilst participants claim dissatisfaction, they want to achieve, and be seen to work well by their peers. It was thus interpreted that employees *'engage in this work in ways that exercise their agency, yet are directed by their subjectivities (e.g., approval of peers) and identity (e.g., seen as being a good team worker)'* (Billet, 2006, p. 64). In this light it can be seen that vocational practice is also subject to the extrinsic values of an individual (status, standing amongst peers). Hence, Billett calls for future research to address workplace pedagogy in terms that include participants' interests, identities and subjectivities, and their active role in the workplace's construal, construction and remaking (Billett, 2008).

Whilst current conceptualisations of workplace pedagogy offer divergent avenues from future research, a salient and universally supported proposition has been made. Early research looked to develop a pathway that offered transferability of skills between workspaces (Billett, 2001), yet current thinking suggests expectations of this are unrealistic (Billett, 2003). Aside from scientific procedures, it is suggested that in fact it may be patterns of participatory practice that are transferred (Unwin et al., 2007; Edwards, 2005). In conceptualising expectations of transfer in this light, research might refocus its attention

on situational performance over explicit skill performance, where the subjectivities of the individual and the relational workplace context might be of interest. By moving past simple skill performance, the power dynamics of the workplace can be addressed linking the individual and the context (Bierma, 2002). With regards to professional development considerations, professional practice should not be restricted to solely intentional participatory practices enacted within the workplace. There is a need to account for the socio-cultural and contextual factors that intersect with individual's personal dispositions. This would allow education providers to better comprehend individual's reciprocity and intentionality towards engagement in workplace learning practices.

The aim of this section of the chapter was to examine the landscape of learning theories in order to 'present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relationships among variables' (Kerlinger 1986, p.9). As such, these theories are suppositions, or a system of ideas intended to explain something, especially one based on general principles independent of the thing to be explained. The following section looks to expand upon this by examining models of learning and the application of these theories. As such, these models represent purposeful representations of reality with regards to learning.

2.3 Learning as Participation: Models of Learning

Under the metaphor 'learning as participation', learning is embodied by socio-cultural and situated theoretical understandings (Paavola and Hakkarainen, 2005). As such, models of learning within this perspective challenge the conception of human nature, as learning is recognised to consist of more than the internalised mental processing of knowledge. Situated learning theorists capture learning within models that consider learning to be a process located within all human interaction. Therefore, as we actively engage in various social practices within historical and social contexts, we give meaning to what we do and learn (Wenger, 1998). Put plainly, situated and participatory perspectives of learning examine complex social systems. Importantly however, there is a need to recognise that across these participatory based learning conceptions, crucial components such as structure, culture, personal history, and agency bear varying importance and in some cases meanings. To this end various models have been developed. The following sections shall examine four of these models, Communities of Practice, Activity Theory, Relational Interdependence, and Cultural learning theory.

2.3.1 Communities of Practice

In the early nineties Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger challenged the traditional didactic view of teaching and learning through their conceptualisation of a learning theory grounded in social activity (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Their perspective saw learning as a process encompassing active participants, identity construction, and social participation within community based shared endeavours (Wenger, 1998). Characterising Sfard's (1998) participation metaphor, Lave and Wenger looked to challenge cognitive theory by conceptualising learners as actors whose reciprocal practices in situ resulted in the development of shared meanings and understanding (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). This perspective embedded the learner within context, where learning was achieved through progressive apprenticeship within a community directed towards a shared goal. This learning-by-doing was only possible through social interaction, which must be preceded by a desire to join, or exist within a particular community (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Learning was thus seen as an integral component of social practice, where learning is the inevitable outcome of intentional participation within social practice. As a result the relationships, processes, and experiences of that community shape the interactions and learning experienced (Fuller et al., 2005). What Lave and Wenger perceived to be a fundamental component of social practice lead to their concept of a COP (community of practice); namely a group of individuals engaged within a 'joint enterprise' via 'mutual engagement' and utilising a 'shared repertoire'. In essence, the authors proposed that people who share an interest could naturally engage in collective learning and evolve a group identity.

The apprenticeship notion was captured firmly in Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of 'legitimate peripheral participation' (LPP), whereby learners are regarded as 'newcomers' and 'old-timers'. Newcomers in this sense are seen to be on the peripheral of a community, engaging in lower key tasks that are of benefit to that community, and over time allow for full membership. However, it is at this point critiques begin to fester. Wenger's (1998) suggestion that LPP is a manner by which membership can be renewed fails to explain whether old-timers continue to learn within the community, or if their learning is different to that of the newcomers (Fuller and Unwin, 2005). This approach therefore fails to explain continued learning at work, or the development of new practices over time. Fuller et al (2005) note that Lave and Wenger attempted to address this limitation at the closing

stages of their 1991 book, via a reference to Goody's (1989: cited in Lave and Wenger, 1991) study on the introduction of masters (old-timers) to new communities. This is followed by the acknowledgement that masters had to resultantly reconsider their productive activities. This manner of thinking lead to Wenger's (1998) later work on LLP as a method by which membership can be renewed via *'catching up'* (p.102). However, again little is done to differentiate the potential differences in learning experienced newcomers and old-timers or the extent to which each party's engagement is peripheral.

Other weaknesses are also apparent when considering the theories accountability, or lack of, regarding prior learning or identities constructed outside of the community (Handley et al., 2006). A CoP is tied to communal practice, and therefore a specific context or situation. As such learners are considered as enmeshed components of a system, where history and biography go unnoticed (Hutchins, 1991). In this sense learners are seen to act within a single community without the influence of personal history on their experiences. Whilst there are those that suggest Lave and Wenger do attempt to locate the individual within the learning process (Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2003), albeit in a loose fashion, Wenger's (1998) categorisation of the learner via the cipher (Ariel) does little to highlight the individuality of community members. An empirical study by Fuller et al (2005) highlights this limitation, where workers experiences of the past are shown to influence engagement within a new workplace, and go as far as to alter the community itself. Therefore it can be said that COP is ill equipped to account for the impact individual biography plays in social learning experiences.

This failure to account for the individual raises issues of personal agency, and is compounded by the approaches lack of recognition for organisational structure (Fuller et al., 2005). Lave and Wenger (1991) do recognise the potential threat newcomers pose to their older peers, where the displacement of the old with the new brings tension to a community. Yet, in the majority of their textual examples, communities are displayed as stable and welcoming environments. This benign appearance is clearly not reflective of a dynamic, social, and capitally drive workplace (Rainbird et al., 2001). As such, power relations, and their recognition within Lave and Wenger's model has been a greatly refuted topic. Contu and Willmott (2003) contend that the majority of CoP research downplays the relevance of power. However, Lave and Wenger (1991, p. 42) did go as far as to state that the *'unequal relations of power must be included more systematically in our analysis'*. In

lieu of this fact researchers' called for studies that displayed the power relations inherent in the bestowing of peripheral activities upon novices from a 'master's' standpoint (Contu and Willmott, 2003). Yet what recent literature reviews suggest is that power whilst acknowledged, remains relatively unexplored (Mork et al., 2010; Fuller et al., 2005).

A final point of relevance is the singularity attached to the notion of 'a community'. Whilst theoretical studies such as Handley's (2006) have postulated the potential for multiple intersecting communities, the scale of the concept inadvertently restricts a researcher's viewpoint. Engeström et al (1995) use this narrowed lens as a means to promote an alternative learning theory. Activity theory, said to have evolved from an individual focus to that of a system (Engeström, 2001), capitalises on the limitations of CoP through its recognition of *'internal contradictions, multiple perspectives and voices and interacting [ions] with other activity systems'* (Fuller et al., 2005. p. 53). The notion of contradictions accounts for the possibility that a system may not function effectively as participants and goals change, a circumstance not entertained within CoP. Indeed this approach goes beyond learning 'within' communities, suggesting that it is in fact 'across' multiple interacting communities (or activity systems) (Engeström, 2001; 2008). This interpretation of activity characterises Engeström's (1987; 1999) concept of expansive learning, where systematic reflection becomes a tool for radical transformative learning. This can lead to change within, and between components of that system, causing participants to deviate from the established practices. Indeed, this notion of transformative learning is by no means new. Rooted in constructivist thinking, Mezirow (2004, p.222) suggested *"the way learners interpret and reinterpret their sense experience is, central to making meaning and hence learning"*. As such, when an individual experiences learning, they have in essence, 'transformed' their view of themselves and their world, and thus how they are to interact with others and their environment.

Aside from the limitations addressed, the community of practice concept has enjoyed applications across a variety of contexts including business (Fuller and Unwin, 2002), education (Laksov et al., 2008) and even medicine (Mork et al., 2010). Indeed researchers have commented on the benefits this theory has offered in characterising workplace learning as situated (Fuller and Unwin, 2002) and how LPP has furthered the understanding of apprenticeship and novice learning (Fuller et al., 2005). Indeed, whilst the concept is useful in delineating social and participatory learning within communities,

the inability to account for power relations and membership within multiple communities perhaps makes CoP's unsuitable to capture professional learning within a coach's workplace.

2.3.2 Activity Theory

The failure of CoP to adequately account for the individual raises issues of personal agency, which, is compounded by the models lack of structure. Yrjo Engeström uses this very critique in the promotion of an alternative model of situated learning (Engeström, 2001). Engeström's activity theory goes beyond the singular community that forms the basis of Lave and Wenger's work, in favour of multiple interrelated and enduring CoP's which often take the form of institutions (Engeström, 2008; 2004; Engeström et al., 1995). The notion of a community is replaced with the term 'activity system', whereby behaviour within the system is regarded as the result of individual goal-directed activity (Engeström et al., 1995). Having evolved from an individual focus to that of a system (Engeström, 2001), the ability to conceptualise multiple and interacting systems of activity (i.e. employees and work groups for example) addresses the organisational structure CoP's fail to explore (Fuller et al., 2005). Engeström's theory achieves this via an analysis of internal contradictions and multiple perspectives across a network of interacting systems. Roth et al., (2009) suggest that society as a whole can be thought of as a network of interacting systems in which people and artefacts (such as language) are exchanged through participation. Systems of activity can be seen to interact in two ways: (1) The outcome of one system is taken up by another (i.e. the movement of graduate students to a workforce), and (2) when one activity system becomes the goal of another. The notion of contradictions accounts for the possibility that a system may not function effectively as participants and goals change, calling for regular and systematic reflection of practice within a system. This interpretation of activity characterises the defining component of this theory, that being the concept of expansive learning where systematic reflection becomes a tool for radical transformative learning (Engeström, 1999; 1987). An illustration of intersecting activity systems is provided below.
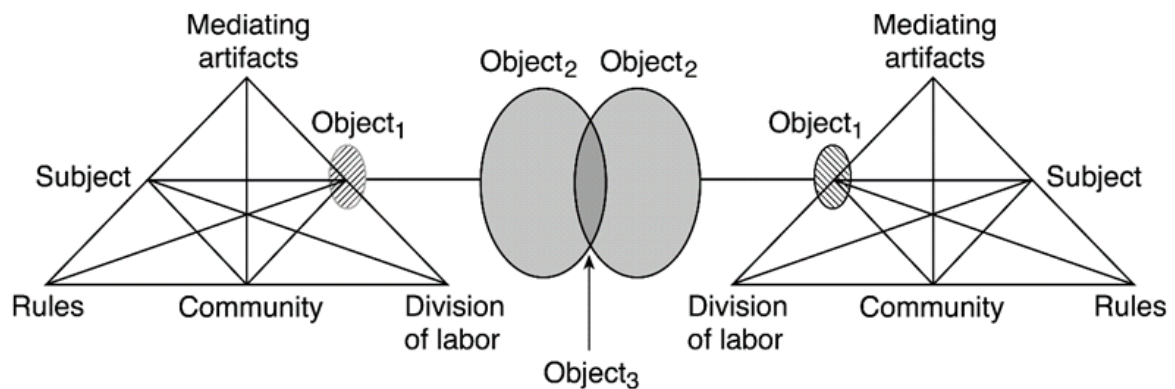
Figure 3: Third generation of activity theory model, intersecting systems of activity. Taken from Engeström (2001, p.136)

The notion of expansive learning owes its conception to the academic culmination of four key figures within the Russian cultural-historical school and their ideas surrounding learning theory (Engeström and Sannino, 2010). The theory began its development via Lev Vygotsky's (1978) work on the cultural mediation of actions and his proposed 'zone of proximal development', that being the gap between what a learner has already mastered and what they can achieve when provided with support by a more competent other. Engeström suggests this is the space for expansive transition from action to activity (Engeström and Sannino, 2010; Engeström, 2000). Vygotsky's work was then taken further by his understudy Leont'ev (1981) (in Engeström, 1995), where his demonstration of the division of labour amongst communities was used to characterise expansive learning as the movement from actions to activity (whereby an action has a half-life and predetermined ending, yet a collective activity is itself reproducing). Il'enkov (1982) then incorporated the notion of contradictions, viewed as historically evolving tensions that drive change within a system. Vasily Davydov (1988) completed the theories genesis by identifying the learning sequence required for the abstract notions of action to develop into concrete activity. The culmination of these understandings allowed Vygotsky and his peers to view human activity as the mediation of actions via interactions with culturally and historically relevant tools and signs.

From this Engeström developed what is now referred to as 'activity theory' or 'cultural-historical activity theory'. By way of five principles Engeström outlined the functionality of his theory, pointing towards the mechanism by which systems change over time,

expansive learning. The first states that a *'collective, artefact-mediated and object-orientated activity system, seen in its network relations to other activity systems, is taken as the prime unit of analysis'* (Engeström, 2001, p. 136). Thus the system is viewed as a whole, where tools and artefacts, the signs, language, and machines that mediate activity are viewed in relation to how the object is understood. The second principle expands upon the first, suggesting that the division of labour within a system produces multiple viewpoints, varied cultural beliefs, traditions and interests. A system therefore carries *'multiple layers and strands of history engraven in its artefacts, rules and conventions'* (Engeström, 2001, p. 136), providing a source of innovation or potential contradiction within a system. This identification of 'historicity' defines the third principle, where activity systems are shaped over time, meaning their successes and failures can only truly be understood in relation to the history of a system. The fourth principle pertains to contradictions, *"sources of change and development… [They] are historically accumulating structural tensions within and between activity systems"* (Engeström, 2001, p. 137). Importantly, these contradictions represent disturbances and conflicts, but also opportunities for innovative responses to activity. The fifth and final principle is that of expansive learning transformations. For Engeström (2001) *"An expansive transformation is accomplished when the object and motive of the activity are reconceptualised to embrace a radically wider horizon of possibilities than in the previous mode of activity"* (p. 137). Put plainly, an expansive transformation is achieved when the object or motive of the activity system are reconsidered to wider possibilities than those captured under the previous modes of activity.

Engeström's concept hinges upon the notion that systems of activity undergo transformative cycles that are influenced by contradictions within a system(s), and are characterised as the driving force for change (Warmington, 2008). These contradictions create a need for, and begin the process of the aforementioned fifth principal, expansive learning. This allows for transformative practices to occur and the development of alternative workplace practices (Warmington, 2008). For example, the introduction of a new technology can conflict with the previously defined division of labour within a system, creating a disturbance that can potentially result in new practice (Dewey, 1997), or a confliction that might impede the functionality of an activity system.

An example of this can be seen in Warmington's (2009) book chapter review of 'Learning in and for Interagency Working' (LIW), a four-year study that tested activity theory as a model for work-based professional learning and ensured responsive collaboration. The study demonstrated how conflicting and contradictory rules impacted upon and shaped the object of an organisations activity system (the object being the goal or target within that system). Subsequently, the process led to the development of new occupational practices thus demonstrating expansive learning. Latter in the study, notions of horizontal and vertical learning were identified as fundamental in the learning of all participants. Horizontal learning was characterised as learning across agencies, whilst vertical learning represented that which occurred across different hierarchical levels. This demonstrated a relationship between varying levels of management and ground level staff, where status dictated the working/learning environment. This notion resonates with the arguments made by Dall'Alba and Sandberg (2006) earlier in the chapter, which states that learning develops along horizontal levels of understanding 'from practice' and vertical levels of understanding 'in and of' practice. Engeström emphasises the important of horizontal learning within organisations through notions of 'boundary-crossing' between work groups and teams, and 'multi-voiced dialogue' in ensuring expansive learning (Engeström, 1995). For example within the LIW study this was witnessed between individuals from different professional backgrounds and the collaborative creation of new practice. However, the LIW study also suggests that such learning processes are less likely to occur unless vertical learning has been fostered across boundaries zones (Warmmington et al., 2004), a belief that would call for collaboration between organisational higher ups and ground level coaches should such a theory be applied within this study.

Engeström and Sannino (2010) contend that despite Felstead et al's (2005) characterisation of expansive learning as an extension of Sfard's participatory learning, the theory deserves its own metaphor; that of expansion. This very concept has seen Yrjo Engeström's activity theory applied across many fields, yet for its tenure to continue activity theory must address the limitations critics have identified. Engeström's (2008) approach looked to account for previous theoretical shortcomings via its ability to address power (Daniels and Warmmington, 2007; Blackler and McDonald, 2000). Though activity theory does recognise institutional structures and the power differentials inherent, no attention is given to the individual within this theoretical perspective (Hodkinson et al., 2008). By failing to

address the 'who' within its system, activity theory falls victim to the same failings of COP, where power, and indeed the learning opportunities, are assumed as equal for all individuals (Blunden, 2007). In response to this Engeström and Sannino (2010), contends that agency is the most important outcome of expansive learning, where the next move for activity theory is to conceptualise and characterise empirically the forms of agency involved in the expansive learning process. As such it is hoped that desirable forms of agency could be cultivated via formative interventions, yet at this point assumptions are entirely speculative.

Engeström's work within corporate industry is testament to the notion that socially constructed forms of learning are now accepted and form the base upon which situated learning sits (Culver et al., 2009; Schwandt, 2000; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). However, all too often the term 'social' is characterised as a component of the situation, not the individual (Hodkinson et al., 2008). What is created is a theoretical gap, whereby the impact of individual agency is not considered in relation to the social context. This has left current learning theories ill equipped to comprehend the significance of the individual throughout socially constructed learning. It must be recognised that learning is an 'embodied' experience. Therefore theory must consider the body as more than a crude input device, explaining learning in terms of a mutual relationship between 'thinking' and 'doing' (Rambusch and Ziemke, 2005). Research within philosophy has already begun to explore this connection, where it is proposed that cognition is a continuous process, caged within contextual boundaries (Nunez et al., 1999). As such, cognition cannot be understood without recognition of the importance of contextual factors. In response to this Billet (2006, p. 53) has suggested a need for an *interdependence between the social and cultural, and individuals' contributions to learning'*. In regards to professional development, activity theory though useful in simplistically characterising behaviour within social systems, is insufficient to completely capture the complexities involved in rich learning situations. This suggests the framework is not practical in unpicking the nuances of workplace learning.

2.3.3 Relational Interdependence

Following his work on workplace pedagogy and the formation of a workplace curriculum, Stephen Billett proposed a theory of relational interdependence between social and

individual agency throughout working life. Billet (2002) demonstrated the importance of agency, and subsequently sparked his interest in the notion of interdependency in a paper titled Workplace pedagogic practices: Co-participation and learning (Billett, 2006). The paper observed coal-miners, process workers, and call centre operators across a series of interviews questioning workplace practices, colleagues, and satisfaction. It was noted that workers often expressed dissatisfaction with the affordances of their workplace (conditions, learning opportunities etc), whilst in the same instance claiming high levels of commitment and interest in their work (a fact support by researcher observations). Billet suggests that whilst participants claimed dissatisfaction, they wanted to achieve, and be seen to work well by their peers. It was thus interpreted that employees *'engage in this work in ways that exercise their agency, yet are directed by their subjectivities (e.g., approval of peers) and identity (e.g., seen as being a good team worker)'* (Billet, 2006, p. 64). In this light it can be seen that vocational practice is also subject to the extrinsic values of an individual (status, standing amongst peers). This is not to say that extrinsic motivations are the most important components of an individual's engagement within the workplace, but more to demonstrate the potential for individual agency to impact within a social context.

As such Billett contends that earlier thinking, even his own, position the relations between in the individual and the social inadequately. Suggesting they are reciprocal (Rogoff, 1995), co-constructed (Valsiner, 1994), or co-participatory (Billett, 2002), can privilege one over another (Mallet et al., 2008), and fails to recognise the role individual ontogenies play in the recreation of culture (Billett, 2006). What he therefore suggests is consideration for the role of individual agency, the manner by which it is shaped over time, how it is influenced by social affordances, and its role in the perceptions of what is experienced socially (Billett, 2008; 2006). Billet builds his theory around Valsiner's work, suggesting that learning is an inter-psychological process negotiated between the individual and social courses. From this he deduced that:

> *'(a) Individual intentionality and agency have complex social geneses, thereby (b) requiring a more social conception of the individual, and (c) a relational interdependence between the socially constructed individual and the social world is central to understanding ontogenetic development and the remaking of culture.'* (Billet, 2006, p.54)

Human agency is thus seen as central to the construction (and reproduction) of culture via an individual's conception of, and participation in, vocational practice, whilst itself being shaped by historical, ontogenetic, and social factors. In this light individual learning can said to develop ontogenetically, shape and maintain culture, and be subject to the very affordances of that culture.

Billett's (2008; 2006) theoretical move towards individualising the social, and socialising the individual is not an endeavour he takes alone. Valsiner's work on personal cultures and Hodkinson et al's (2008) cultural learning look to achieve the same goal, albeit with somewhat different methods. However, it should be noted that thinking in this manner is by no means new, as over a century ago Baldwin (1898) proposed that an individual's internalisation of their experiences were subject to autonomy, where autonomy was itself socially constituted. Despite its early conception the topic has long been refuted, particularly within the fields of psychology and sociology (Billett, 2006). Indeed, Valsiner's (2007; 2005) suggestion as to the importance of the individual within cultural psychology, was attacked by Ratner (2000), who felt that Valsiner's preoccupation with the personal negated culture from a social standpoint. Whilst Valsiner's assertion that culture is a set of suggestions that individuals can freely accept, reject, or modify as they wish does go against current psychological thinking, current social learning theory supports this notion (Billett, 2008; 2006; Hodkinson et al., 2008; 2007).

Central to the Billett's theory of relational interdependence is agency, itself shaped by individual ontogeny. Hodkinson et al's (2004) review of the ESRC research project 'Improving incentives to learning in the workplace', demonstrates the importance of this. Their review of qualitative interview data suggested four overlapping dimensions an individual brings with them to the workplace; (1) workers bring prior knowledge and skills to the workplace, which contributes to future learning, (2) workers habitus, including dispositions and aspirations regarding career and learning, influence their construction and engagement with learning opportunities, (3) that these values and dispositions influence the (re)production of workplace culture, and (4) that belonging to a workplace/community aids in the creation of habitus and worker identity. In this light employees are seen as more than reserves of knowledge who role is to contribute towards the good of the system, but as individuals who selectively shape social encounters via agency negotiated within the social context.

Billett's relational interdependence theory has already found its way into elite coaching literature. Rynne et al's (2010) study of Australian high performance coaches, and Mallett et al's (2008) paper on the workplace learning of elite football coaches, both incorporated the theory as a lens through which to view workplace-learning practices. The justification for viewing the workplace through this lens was to '*theorise a relationship between individual learning processes (related to agency) and collective processes (relating to structure)*' (Rynne et al., 2010, pp 318). This therefore gave scope to address individual differences in perspective and disposition across coaches within that workplace (Fenwick, 2001). The conclusions of Rynne et al's (2010) paper cited a range of workplace learning affordances, such as the opportunity to engage with other members of staff and novel workplace experiences, yet highlighted that individual agency was the tool by which such affordances were interpreted (and thus engaged with). It was also noted that within this workplace community there existed barriers, enablers and goals (personal and organisation), all of which were interrelated when addressed in terms of vocational learning and practice. This second point was supported by Mallett et al (2008), where a highly contested workplace was engaged with differently throughout coaches' careers, suggesting that the relationship between agency and the social affordances fluctuates throughout a coach's career. As such the reasoning behind this fluctuation could be a potential avenue for future work.

Billett's theory of relational interdependence has contributed to the understanding of how learning might be characterised as the outcome of personally dependent bases in relation to contextually specific learning affordances. Through this it is possible to understand how workplace practices contribute to the (re)creation and maintenance of culture, which in turn have the propensity to mediate employee's agency towards learning engagement. Indeed, Billett's work reflects a growing acceptance that learning be considered as more than merely situated and that a greater appreciation for the socio-cultural components of learning behaviour is needed. A similar perspective has been considered with education literature and shall be discussed in the following section.

2.3.4 Cultural Learning

In a similar light to Stephen Billett, Hodkinson et al's (2008) propose a theoretical model that takes into consideration the role of culture in shaping and reshaping workplace

learning practices. However, where Billett is concerned with locating the individual within the social process, Hodkinson et al (2008, 2007) looked to address multiple limitations within current learning theories. Drawing on data from the TLC research project (Transforming learning cultures in further education), findings suggested that individual actor dispositions, vocational and academic cultures, and wider social and cultural values impact upon learning, could not adequately be explained via existing theory (James and Biesta, 2007). As such they proposed an alternative view of learning based around a cultural perspective.

Central to Hodkinson et al's (2007) understanding of learning cultures was the relationship between the individual as a learner, and the social world as a learning context. This was achieved by addressing the cognitive-constructivist learning debate previously discussed, where the authors looked not to rectify the conflicts between either, but address the disparity between the two. As such, the authors identified four main concerns with current learning theory: (1) Individual learning is not always understood as embodied and social (Hodkinson, 2005). (2) Individual learning is often de-contextualised. (3) Learning theory often fails to fully incorporate wider social and institutional structures. (4) Learning theory often fails to fully incorporate the significance of power. Whilst some situated approaches do recognize power differentials within their models, often individual agency is neglected (i.e. lave and Wenger, 1991; Engeström, 2001). As such, Hodkinson et al (2008; 2007) regard the partial effectiveness of existing theories on two counts. Firstly, the lack of a holistic approach that addresses the dualisms between mind and body, individual and social, and structure and agency, and secondly, that a focus on either the individual or the context tends to privilege one over the other. Hodkinson refers to this as issues of scale, where the lens of an adopted theory offers partial visions of what is being investigated. Thus, culture is put forward as a mechanism by which each dualism can be addressed within an appropriately inclusive scale.

In addressing learning cultures as an object of study researchers must first clarify what is meant by the term culture. A notoriously difficult word to define, Hodkinson et al (2008) adopt an anthropological definition, whereby culture is thought of as produced and reproduced by human activity, though not exclusively group activity. However, to consider culture as activity alone cannot account for individual agency. To this end Hodkinson et al (2008, p. 33) suggest considering *'Bourdieu's notions of field and habitus [to] help*

overcome the either-or of subjectivist (agency) and objectivist (structure) readings of culture'. By considering habitus as a set of changing dispositions (regarding social structure) that exist through and within humans, alongside field, a setting where agents and their activity is located (Bourdieu 1977), culture can be observed as social practices, communications and interactions. As such the individual, or learner, can be seen to be both influenced by and co-creator of the culture within a particular field of activity.

This is reflective of the intentions of Billett's theory of relational interdependence, however Hodkinson and colleagues take the notion further by considering culture in relation to fields of activity, that being the location of the learning (Hodkinson et al., 2008; 2007; James et al., 2007). In adopting Bourdieu's concept, Hodkinson et al (2008) view the world as consisting of multiple fields, whose boundaries are imprecise and overlapping. These fields are then considered to consist of forces, social and historical, that influence the learning culture. Put plainly, any learning culture is subject to the forces from one or more fields, and is therefore constructed and reconstructed in relation to this. Indeed within coaching literature it has been acknowledge that coaches belong to multiple communities or fields, where they must negotiate their movement from one to another (Griffiths and Armour, 2012; 2013).

Many authors have claimed that learning is a cultural phenomenon, as in Vygotsky's work on the cultural mediation of actions (1987), and Engeström's (2001) cultural historical activity theory (CHAT) for example. Yet it is felt that such approaches do not adequately account for a cultural theory of learning (Hodkinson et al, 2008). The redefinition of this notion by Hodkinson et al (2008; 2007) and James and Biesta (2007) puts a research focus on learning from an individual and social perspective, thereby ensuring perspective cannot lead to the negation of one or the other. Central to this new cultural learning theory is 'learning as becoming', a process where within any situation there is deemed to be the opportunity to learn. What these opportunities are, and the manner of engagement with them, is dependent upon the learning culture of the field or fields, and the social position and habitus of the learners (Hodkinson et al., 2008). This participation thus (re)constructs an individual's habitus developing their dispositions as a learner. As such individuals are seen as 'becoming', whether it's becoming a student or becoming an employee, in a process that is bigger than any given situation, individual habitus, or learning culture, yet dependent upon a relationship between all three.

Hodkinson et al (2008) suggests that their thinking is intentionally heuristic so that the future study of learning theory may refocus on two often neglected questions. The first question asks *'what can be done to enhance the likelihood of valuable learning in any such culture?'* (p.44). In a recent study into the learning cultures of further education, Hodkinson et al (2007b) suggested that learning is likely to be more effective if the forces that interact within the field of a learning culture, such as the interests of individuals and the goals of a workplace, are in synergy. Indeed, within organisational management literature Donate and Guadamillas (2010) have found similar results, where organisations that fostered a consistent culture of innovation demonstrated higher levels of employee knowledge sharing. As such, those learning cultures marked as dysfunctional as a result of conflicting interests or conflict is said to be less effective. This result supports the suppositions of Engeström's (2008) activity theory, where expansive learning accounts for change within a system (conflict) leads to system that cannot best achieve its goal. The second question is *'what is/should be the valuable learning in any particular learning culture, or for any particular learner or group of learners?'* (p.44). This is effectively a question of effectiveness versus worth, as the worth of knowledge is subjective to the individual or group. Therefore the effectiveness of learning should be considered from the position of both employee and employer. This can in turn be linked back to the first questions, as perspectives that match would be seen as an indication of synergetic thinking and aid effective learning within a workplace.

Learning theories, particularly the cognitive approaches', have often been preoccupied by the idea of learning- transfer (Cobbs and Bowers, 1999). Hodkinson et al (2008) suggest the notion of transfer is unhelpful in comprehending learning, as to consider knowledge as transferable is to suggest that it is acquirable as per Sfards metaphor. Thinking of leaning in this manner is unhelpful, indeed Haskell (2001) states that *'research findings over the past nine decades clearly show that as individuals, and as educational institutions, we have failed to achieve transfer of learning at any significant level'* (p. xiii). In response to this Hodkinson suggests that if learning is considered as 'becoming', certain limitations to learning can be addressed. In becoming a student or an employee, individual dispositions are developed. Therefore when an individual enters a new culture or workplace their dispositions may or may not assist their continued growth as a learner. If future research better allows us to understand this idea of 'becoming', then the transition between learning

cultures can be tailored towards effective learning. From this review it is clear that contemporary approaches to learning acknowledge the role of socio-cultural factors in guiding learning experiences.

This section of the chapter has examined the utility of contemporary models of learning in regards to critically examining the workplace learning of elite sports coaches. The following sections shall expand upon the discussion of these models by considering the current professional development landscape within sports coaching to date.

2.4 Professional Development within Coaching

What has been addressed so far outlines the main themes within workplace learning and learning theory in general. To this end the status quo within each field has been discussed, whilst also demonstrating what coaching research can learn from other professions such as teaching. That being said, whilst it is acknowledged that little research into the CPD of sports coaches' exists (Armour, 2011), the frequency of studies into the 'effective' learning of coaches has been growing since the 1970's (Gilbert and Trudel, 2004). Indeed, Armour's (2010) book chapter on the professionalisation of coaching suggests that the key to improving coaching lies within the professional development opportunities afforded practitioners.

2.4.1 Coaching Expertise and Knowledge

Abraham and Collins (1998) cited that early research into coaching expertise operated along behaviourist lines of thought, where certain behaviours and/or verbal cues were analysed via tick-box and frequency methods. The most renowned model was that created by Smith et al (1977), named the Coach Behavioural Assessment System (CBAS). The system set a precedent for the identification of coaching expertise and was used prolifically throughout the 80's and 90's in basketball, football, and athletics (Abraham and Collins, 1998). What was produced were recommendations on the use of feedback, positive reinforcement and encouragement, all pertinent observations, yet with too narrow a focus to be viewed as encapsulating coaching expertise. Indeed, researchers subsequently called for the simplification of coaching practice to extend beyond basic behaviourism and replication of procedural knowledge (Cushion et al., 2003). In this light, Abraham and Collins (1998, p.68) characterise expertise as:

"Not a function of increasing or decreasing certain behaviours. Rather it is knowledge of making correct decisions within the constraints of the session. Thus coaching is not   a behaviour to be copied but a cognitive skill to be taught".

What this suggests is that coaching is not simply the reproduction of rote-learned practices, but the application of reasoned knowledge and understanding within the appropriate context.

In its haste to become recognised as a true profession coaching has 'borrowed' from others, implementing formal accreditations and benchmarked standards the likes of those seen in business and medicine (Taylor and Garratt, 2010). To this end large-scale formal certification programmes have been set up internationally (Wright et al., 2007; Cushion et al., 2003) in a bid to foster this development. Sharing key characteristics, these programmes tend to be: (1) taught mainly within classrooms; (2) structured across sequential levels of coaching knowledge; and (3) taught in accordance within a clearly defined curriculum for each level (Wright et al., 2007). The similarities between these programmes and the stage models of CPD addressed previously are clear to see, as providers of coach education are ascribing to the 'acquisition' view of professional learning (Nelson et al., 2006). However, in following the path of other professions coaching has mirrored the results of its inspirers, namely no perceived connection between CPD (and formal coach education) and improved practice (Gilbert and Trudel, 2006).

In fact these results are found prolifically throughout coaching literature. Gilbert and Trudel's (2004) systematic review of coaching science research between 1970 and 2001 demonstrated a substantial theoretical gap between research and the practical application of coaches CPD. Lemyre et al's (2007) review of five empirical studies into the development of expert coaches' knowledge found that all studies expressed a disparity between coaches' perceived importance of formal training and the development of their coaching knowledge. Jones et al's (2004) book, 'Sports Coaching Cultures: From Practice to Theory', detailed eight in-depth interviews with expert coaches that suggested observations and/or discussions with other coaches provided a greater impact on career progression than formal courses. Rynne et al's (2010) study of professional coaches at the Australian SIS (State Institute of Sport) adds further support, contending that coaches'

greatest acquisitions of knowledge are taken form interactions with colleagues, and via the reflection and redefinition of past experiences and perceptions. Indeed, considering what has been learnt over the past forty years of educational research (detailed previously), these findings reflect what has been seen within other professions such as teaching, namely that coaching does not have an agreed knowledge base that can be disseminated via formal means.

2.4.2 Current Coach Education

The limitations of behaviourist and cognitivist influences on learning are well documented within coaching literature. Often criticised for both content and design (Rynne et al, 2010), coach education courses tend to follow tiered progressions of procedural knowledge (Cushion et al., 2003; Abraham and Collins, 1998). Described by Cushion et al (2003) as the 'rational approach' to coach education, courses and their content remain de-contextualised (Piggott, 2012; Lemyre et al., 2007) where vast quantities of knowledge is bestowed upon coaches over relatively short periods of time (Gilbert et al., 2009). As Côte and Gilbert (2009) note, sport coaching does in fact call for the retention of procedural and technical knowledge, however it is the ability to apply knowledge within contextually specific circumstances that delineates an effective coach. That being the case, Jones and Turner (2006) would contend that the problem solving and creative skills required from coaches' is not being fostered within contemporary education programmes. This creates the very real possibility that courses are creating practitioners unfit for practice (Cushion et al., 2003). In other words, coaches appear to be prepared from rationalised and progressive situations that do not accurately reflect upon the dynamics of an often irrational coaching process. The social pressures at play within this field make factors such as power, ego and *'hidden hierarchical structures'* crucial components in the learning experiences of coaches (Cushion et al., 2010, p.2). As a consequence, coaching effectiveness is not dependent upon the efficient application of sequentially tiered learning, but on the nature of interactions between themselves, other social actors and their workplace (Cushion et al., 2006). A wealth of research has contended that coaches' do not simply assimilate content knowledge to their specific contexts (Gilbert et al., 2009). Questions can then be asked as to why knowledge acquisition and accreditation remains the sole source of professionally recognised coaching qualification.

Research does in fact offer multiple answers to these questions. Fielding-Lloyd and Mean (2011) reminds us that education course design is a process of 'gate-keeping', where political relations are carefully monitored, thus ensuring power and control remains with those who possess it. In other words governing bodies primarily seek to preserve their own interests. Should this be the case, it would be of significance to investigate the culture of a governing body, questioning the affordances or limitations this may have on the learning experiences of its coaches as to date no research has done so. Adding to this, Gilbert et al (2009) suggest that 'one-shot' certification courses swamp learners with as much information as possible, providing relevant knowledge but in a manner that is difficult to retain. Whilst this may be a cost effective way of providing large amounts of information, the disparity between theory and practice means courses are falling short of their goals. Perhaps the most fitting answer lies within the structured nature of formal education, which thus provides an easily documented and comparable learning pathway (Lemyre et al., 2007). The challenge remains that observing coaches' day-to-day activities, including interactions with others, remains difficult (Lemyre et al., 2007). To this end coach education must embrace situated learning frameworks and the related theory as a means of bridging this gap. Certainly, an appreciation of cultural influences on learning provides a view towards spanning this gap, by providing a framework that can comprehend coach learning holistically. What's more, such a move could potentially attend to Cushion et al's (2003) contention that the structured nature of coaching courses renders them incompatible with the experientially conceived habitus of coaches.

2.4.3 Research towards the Development of Coach Education

As it stands, coaching research has begun to heed the calls of many and attempted to learn from the development history of teaching (Armour, 2010; Cushion et al., 2010). In an effort to account for the limitations of current development programmes, and in recognition of the importance coaches' place on experiential learning, contemporary research has explored the use of learning communities as professional development tools. In borrowing from the 'reform camp' of teacher CPD, Gilbert et al (2009) suggest coaches could potentially engage in three types of social network. The first of these is referred to as 'Networks of Practice', where coaches exchange information with others they might not know well or have regular contact with. The growth of social media has seen networks of this nature grow in popularity (Lemyre et al., 2007), however limited research exists as to

its impact on coach development (Wright et al., 2007). The second potential arrangement is that of an 'Informal Knowledge Network', where individuals who do not necessarily work together interact, but whose close relationship allows them to share information. The third type of network, and that which has garnered the most attention within coaching literature, is the previously discussed community of practice, where individuals who share a concern or passion regularly interact to deepen their knowledge and expertise (Wenger et al., 2002).

2.4.4 Learning Communities within Coaching

Following the success of studies such as the WestEd report, where a PLC was utilised to promote teacher development, researchers have investigated the effectiveness of coaches' CoPs. However, in the same manner as Garet et al's (2008) empirical study of traditional versus reform (incorporating a PLC) CPD, the results remain largely inconclusive. In their book chapter, 'Cultivating coaches' communities of practice', Culver and Trudel (2006) refer to two of their own studies on the subject. The first regards the observation of an athletic club for six months, where Diane Culver's and six of the clubs coaches' interactions were monitored to see whether a CoP naturally arose. Importantly, the researcher was not acting as a facilitator but as a psychology/pedagogy consultant, whom when prompted by coaches discussed potential solutions to problems. The findings suggested that a true CoP had not been fostered, concluding that unless experiences are tailored to sustain the sharing of knowledge, CoPs will remain ineffective. The second study investigated an intervention within an alpine skiing club, where this time Culver became a facilitator at coaching meetings, attempting to direct and support experiential learning within a community of coaches. Initial results indicated that the CoP contributed to coaches' development, however follow-up interviews during a later ski season concluded that without the researcher's leadership and the structure of the intervention the CoP had dissolved.

What is more, this trend is reflected throughout much of the research into the development of coaches' CoPs. In another paper by Culver and Trudel (2008), 'Clarifying the concept of communities of practice in sport', the authors reflect on data from the unpublished PhD thesis of Nicola Lemyre as a means of highlighting the importance of CoP facilitators. In one study, Lemyre acted as a full participant and facilitator of a CoP within a Karate dojo.

However, the hierarchical nature of the sport thwarted the researcher's attempts to employ a CoP. The second study saw Lemyre attempt to facilitate another CoP between a high school's volleyball and basketball coaches via the use of 'reflective conversations' amongst coaches. However, yet again a CoP was difficult to sustain, as once the study had concluded other CoP members did not maintain the researchers role of facilitator. Culver and Trudel (2008) use these results to highlight the importance of competent CoP facilitators in providing what they call 'scaffolding for learning'. What can be taken from these studies is the suggestion that the crucial component required for the effective functioning of a CoP is a competent facilitator who structures the environment to promote collaborative learning.

Interestingly however, Gilbert et al (2009) suggest that the changes facilitators instigate and the success of such change, i.e. routine-wise and in terms of participant attitudes, relate to the culture of a context or situation. Indeed, a study by Culver et al (2009) can be used to illustrate this statement. The findings document the attempt of a technical-director within a youth baseball league in his bid to create a CoP. The notoriously competitive league and its coaches were at first reluctant to share knowledge with those they viewed as rivals, yet with time the competitive and reclusive culture of the league was overcome and an inclusive learning environment began to emerge. However, the CoP broke down following the departure of the leagues 'visionary leader', returning the league to its more traditional competitive nature. One could suggest that the problem lies within the theoretical framework of CoPs and their previously discussed shortcomings. That being said, Lyle and Cushion (2010) note that within high performance coaching environments there are often highly contested power dynamics and 'fights for survival'. As such, this fosters differential access to resources and knowledge amongst community members. The restrictive lens the CoP approach offers limits the viewpoint of the researcher to that of the immediate context, meaning the required cultural change, or indeed analysis, cannot be assessed via this approach alone.

Despite the promise CPD literature portrays regarding learning communities or networks, the narrow focus of these approaches perhaps explains why evidence of their impact remains relatively sparse (Gilbert et al., 2009). That said, there is a need to recognise the difference between teaching and coaching in the contested nature of the coaching environment. Indeed, as the examples given demonstrate coaches are working often

'against' other coaches such that their athletes prevail over other. This highlights the broader social and cultural factors at play in understanding coach education. This once again supports the need for an approach that can regard the larger aspects of situated learning as well as that of the individual, such as that of a cultural approach to learning. This is not to suggest that a cultural approach will solve the problems of CoPs, but present the opportunity to undertake an appropriate analysis of events.

2.4.5 Mentoring as a CPD Tool

Within the fields of nursing (Ali and Panther, 2008) and education (Zeek et al., 2001) mentoring has long been embraced as a means of persuing professional development. Coaching literature too has considered the utility of the method of development in educating the coaching workforce (Jones et al., 2009; Cushion et al., 2003). As such, in examine sports coach education it is important to consider the history and implications of the professional development tool. In actuality, when considering the dominant role observations and social learning plays in the development of coaching knowledge, as proposed by the coaches themselves, mentoring would appear to be already firmly in operation (Lemyre et al., 2007; Cushion et al., 2003). Mentoring in this light *'appears largely unstructured, informal and uneven in terms of quality and outcome, uncritical in style, and, from the evidence serves to reproduce the existing culture, power relations, and importantly, existing coaching practice'* (Cushion et al., 2003, p. 223). It could therefore be proposed that the outcomes of this 'natural' mentoring (Cushion et al., 2010) are uncertain, where negative traditions, such as coach rivalry and reclusiveness, are perpetuated. That being said, support for this practice is high amongst coaches themselves (Cushion, 2006), and Colley et al (2003) go as far as to suggest that mentoring offers the most tangible approach yet in bridging the formal-informal learning divide. As such, control of these experiences is suggested by a number of authors (Trudel and Gilbert, 2006; Cushion, 2006; Werthner and Trudel, 2006) as a means of formalising an inherently informal learning experience.

That being said, research suggests that the adoption of mentoring within a formal structure is not a straightforward process. As Cushion et al (2010) remind us, the circumstances surrounding natural mentoring are altogether more complex than one might expect. Based upon the informal pairing of two individuals with a shared interest (Jones et al., 2009), the

process is generally mentee lead, unplanned but with an intention to learn, and structured only by the social context (Cushion et al., 2010). The success of this natural process has been noted in both coaching and other domains (Jones et al., 2009; Bloom et al., 1998), sparking the movement towards the formalisation of mentoring programmes within coach education. Termed 'engagement' mentoring (Colley, 2000), the formalised practice is pigeonholed within institutional structure, where a narrow set of outcomes and high levels of monitoring characterise the process (Cushion et al., 2010). The set-up is certainly different, and the differentiation extends further when addressing the mentors themselves. Cushion et al (2010, p. 33) contend mentoring relationships in this form are *'marked by social distance, competing value systems, and more intense power differentials'* than one would see in natural mentoring. The characterisation of the mentor as 'expert' creates what Colley (2003) would regard as a didactic empowerment process, where power/knowledge is passed from mentor to mentee. The criticisms of didactic teaching have already been made, and again the assumption that knowledge is simply transferable is made within this process. Ultimately the process is one that bares little similarity to the social activity that inspired it.

This critique acts not to demonise formalised mentoring as a fruitless endeavour, more to suggest that as a process it remains relatively misunderstood. Griffiths and Armour (2012) cite that recent studies have begun to view mentoring as more than simple didactic interactions in favour or multiple dyads of reciprocal learning, thereby viewing mentoring as a process of social and participatory learning. That being said, empirical evidence of its effectiveness is notably sparse. In fact, multiple reviews of the subject have come to the same conclusion. In a paper by Enrich et al (2004), a structured analysis of 300 mentoring based research articles found the majority of literature pertained to descriptions of, and the value in, mentoring activities. More still, Cushion et al., (2010) cite that systematic reviews within nursing and business have arrived at the same conclusion, suggesting a lack of experimental data as the culprit. To this end Colley et al., (2003, p.1) contend that *'existing research evidence scarcely justifies [mentoring's] use on such a massive scale'*, with Jones et al., (2009) suggesting that many of the claims made within mentoring literature are generally unfounded.

Indeed, these results can already be seen within the formalisation of mentoring in sports coaching. In a recent study, Griffiths and Armour (2012) performed a 12-month

longitudinal observation of the mentoring experiences of 18 volunteer coaches and 6 volunteer mentors. The results of the study indicated that sustained learning interactions were not created via an imposed formal mentoring framework, as neither party viewed mentoring as a priority. In spite of the studies focus on non-professionals and the projects inability to effectively implement a successful mentoring framework, there are pertinent observations to be made. In fact, it is the studies failure to successfully implement formalised mentoring that is important. Griffiths and Armour (2012) suggested that the experiences of the coaches and their mentors were conditions of three dimensions: personal interplay, context and learning culture. As such, they argue that there is a need to view mentoring as more than an interaction between individual and context, where either is viewed solely in relation to the other, in favour of an embodied experience that is shaped by the culture in which the practice takes place. The authors specifically embrace Hodkinson et al's (2008) cultural view of learning, arguing that it allows researchers to observe the multiple social settings coaches operate within, in terms of how these impact upon their perceptions, behaviours and dispositions towards practice (in this case formalised mentoring). This therefore provides a window of analysis outside of the mentoring structure itself, expanding the researcher's lens of focus, whilst potentially explaining the lack of evidence in support of mentoring's capabilities.

Interestingly, this can be linked to the suppositions of Cushion et al's (2010) review of coach learning and development. They suggest that the multiple reports of mentoring's perceived strengths and weaknesses leaves differentiation between cause and effect difficult. Namely, are the results observed subject to the mentoring structure itself, or other factors? Griffiths and Armour's (2012) use of a cultural perspective on learning provides the opportunities to observe the other factors that often go unnoticed. As seen in other CPD practices, mentoring has a notoriously poor evaluation history. Indeed, when reviewing mentoring across a variety of professions Enrich et al (2004) found that programme evaluation if completed at all, was often vague and imprecise, consisting generally of participant testimonials and opinions. As such the theoretical foundations of this CPD practice are left weak, where outcomes cannot accurately be linked to specifics within the programme.

2.5 Chapter Conclusions

The review of literature has identified the complexity involved in capturing the learning process. What is apparent is that a great many gaps exist within the current literature, and that coaching, in borrowing from other professions has inherited certain limitations within its coach education framework. The links between the CPD within teaching and that of coaching are clear, where frameworks such as the stage model approach to skill development can be seen as mirrored with the sequentially tiered coaching qualifications that make up coaching accreditation. However, it has been demonstrated that learning theory has moved beyond cognitive models of development, towards more socially constructed forms of learning which recognise the role of individual agency in guiding learning engagement and experience. Nonetheless, the inability of research to empirically link the use of reform based CPD practices (PLC's, CoP's and mentoring relationships) to effective professional development has led to a gap between theory and practice. As such, there is a need to investigate the learning experiences of coaches, particularly within the workplace, so that the characteristics of effective learning can be better understood by researchers and learning facilitators alike.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Chapter 2 provided a succinct overview of the current literature relevant in addressing the research questions. The following chapter will introduce and discuss the major philosophical and methodological traditions utilised within social science research, and provide a critical justification for the use of a constructivist perspective within this thesis. However, before this is done it is useful to provide an overview of the research questions to be addressed. The aim of the study was to examine how learning culture impacts upon the workplace learning experiences of professional sports coaches, in a bid to further the current understandings of professional learning. The value of this focus is to address contemporary learning theories that highlight the social and situated nature of knowledge construction within the context of sports coaching. Moreover, the study seeks to address the previously discussed limitations within coach education.

As the literature review has identified, there is a growing interest in examining the nature of coaching via sociological understandings of human behaviour. As such, coaching has been portrayed as a complex and dynamic socio-cultural process. Within this idiosyncratic practice, it has been identified that factors such as organisational structure, learner histories and biographies, individual agency, membership within multiple communities, and the cultural context, all mediate sports coaches learning engagement. However, despite this interest there appears to be a weak conceptual knowledge base from which to inform the education and professional development of this workforce. As such, this thesis aims to attend to this issue by addressing the following research questions:

What can be learnt from a workplace learning analysis of elite performance coaches in understanding their professional development?

In order to address this question the following sub-questions are posed:

- *How does individual agency influence learning engagement within the context of performance coach development?*

- *What role does personal biography play in the shaping of learning dispositions?*

- *What is the impact of organisational culture on individual learning engagement?*

- *What policy and structural changes are needed for sustained professional learning of performance coaches?*

- *How does participation in multiple communities' (cultures) impact upon individual learning?*

Procedural sub-questions were utilised to break the central research question down into clear constituent parts (Creswell, 2007), thus ensuring a structured and in-depth analysis of the field could be undertaken.

Drawing on the work of Denzin and Lincoln (2005), this chapter is divided into two distinct parts in order to ensure the stages of inquiry are transparent to the reader. The first section begins by reviewing the major methodological traditions, before providing a rationale behind the paradigmatic approach taken in answering the research questions. The research approach is then discussed and the participants introduced. The second component of the chapter then outlines the methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation employed, and discusses the trustworthiness of the research. The chapter then concludes with a summary of the research methodology used in addressing the research questions.

3.1 Paradigm Rational

It is important to acknowledge that any form of inquiry is guided by a collection of beliefs and conventions that act to influence what should be studied, how it should be studied, and in what way should it be interpreted (Bryman, 2012). Indeed, Sparkes (1992, p. 11) proclaims that *'the individual research act does not take place in a vacuum but in the context of invisible colleagues'*. These 'invisible colleagues' represent shared conceptions amongst researchers regarding the questions asked, methods used, and techniques adopted in all forms of academic inquiry. Proliferated by Thomas Kuhn (1996) in his book 'The Structure of Scientific Revolution', these shared conceptions are more commonly referred to as 'paradigms'. Acknowledged as human constructions, paradigms are the product of life histories (Sparkes, 1992), constructed using *'the most informed and sophisticated views that's its proponents have been able to devise'* (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 108). In

this manner they shape our basic beliefs about the world in which we live, guiding human behaviour in the process (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) characterise the term as a net within which a researcher's ontological, epistemological, and methodological premises lie, the contents of which determine how one approaches the path of inquiry.

Ontological assumptions question the very nature of reality (Guba and Lincoln, 2005; Guba and Lincoln, 1994), existence, and the subject matter that we as researchers wish to observe (Sparkes, 1992). In this manner they inform individuals of what there is that can be *'known'*, identifying *'what falls within and outside the limits of legitimate inquiry'* (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 108). For example, where a 'realist' view of reality questions only that which is objectively tangible within an independent reality, a 'relativist' perspective postulates multiple subjectively constructed realities (Coll and Chapman, 2000). Linked to ontology is the notion of epistemology, that being the philosophy of knowledge (Krauss, 2005), or put simply the relationship between the inquirer and what is known (Guba and Lincoln, 2004). An objectivist stance on this point views knowledge as independent of the researcher, where facts are discovered via detached observation and measurements of phenomena. A subjectivist perspective however has an altogether different view, tying the researcher to the process as the subjective co-creator of research findings. Knowledge is thus seen as the combination of meaning making attached to phenomena, and negotiations between researcher and participant (Krauss, 2005). Interestingly, the answer one gives to what Guba and Lincoln (2004) refer to as 'the epistemological question' is constrained by their answer to 'the ontological question'. As they put it:

> *'Not just any relationship can now be postulated. So if, for example, a "real" reality is assumed, then the posture of the knower must be one of objective detachment or value freedom in order to be able to discover "how things really are" and "how things really work"'* (Guba and Lincoln, 2004, p. 22).

With this in mind a researcher could not then adhere to the notion that reality exists in multiple socially constructed forms, whilst also viewing knowledge with objective detachment. Put another way, if we were to accept that the reality of coach learning is

unique to the individual and the social context, it would not be logical to expect that a universal rule governing this experience exists.

Methodologically researchers are often challenged concerning a study's guiding paradigm. In deciding how to find out that which is believed can be known, a researcher is confronted by what Gage (1989) regards as 'the paradigm wars', a debate between qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Proponents of opposing paradigms have criticised each other's approaches', contending that *"methods must be fitted to a predetermined methodology"* (Lincoln and Guba, 2004, p. 22). Though many support this supposition, suggesting that specific paradigms operate within a particular style or method (Silverman, 2000; Wiersman, 2000), it has been argued that method selection should take place irrespective of epistemological concern, that being how one defines knowledge (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Patton, 2002; Sparkes, 1992). Indeed, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) argue that an epistemological position should not dictate specific data collection or analytic strategies. Instead, inquiry should be led by a 'needs based' or 'contingency approach', where if the need arises, qualitative researchers can employ methods routinely synonymous with quantitative approaches. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) develop this idea further by describing the qualitative researcher as the *'bricoleur and the quilt maker'* (p.4). The authors suggest that the interpretive bricoleur continually re/invents strategies for interpreting reality, producing a *"pieced-together set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation"* (p.4). Thus under the guide of bricoleur the qualitative researcher is able to be pragmatic, strategic, and reflective in their approach. As such, the following sections outline a review of the paradigmatic landscape, and thus the positions available to the researcher. As both Grix (2004) and Seale (1999) have argued, the research process is enhanced by engaging with philosophical and methodological debates in the pursuit of quality. As such, it is important to identify and compare between the methodological traditions prevalent within social science. This allows for the comparative merits of each approach to be considered in relation to the implications it may bear on findings. Therefore, the underlying assumptions of each philosophical approach are considered in detail in the section that follows.

3.2 Interpretive Research Paradigms

At a fundamental level it can be suggested that all inquiry is in fact interpretive in nature, as a researchers beliefs about the world shape the questions they ask of it (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). In continuing this thinking Denzin and Lincoln (2005) propose that four major interpretive paradigms exist; Positivism, Post-positivism, Interpretivism/Constructivism, and Criticalism. Though a number of other paradigms are also discussed in wider literature, such as feminism, post-structuralism and post-modernism (Olesen, 2011), these have been classed as derivatives of the major approaches (Guba and Lincoln, 2004). Each paradigm has its own ontological, epistemological, and methodological beliefs, which as discussed, has led to tensions between advocates of opposing approaches (Pring 2000; Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

Positivism, first discussed by philosopher Auguste Comte in the 19th century, encompasses the analytic and empirical sciences, whilst generally adhering to quantitative experimental methods of data collection (Cohen et al., 2007; Sale et al., 2007). Ontologically this paradigm contends that there is only one truth within an independent and apprehensible reality, thus allowing researchers to capture 'how things really are'. Epistemologically the investigator and the object of inquiry are seen as independent of one another (dualist), allowing for investigation without outside influence. The researcher is thus seen as 'outside' that which is being researched, as influence in the direction of either party is seen as a threat to validity (Sale et al., 2007; Guba and Lincoln, 2004). Denscombe (1998) notes the attraction of adopting this paradigm given its sense of *'scientific respectability'* (p.176) and goal of seeking causal relationships that are generalisable to entire populations. For example, the use of randomized control trials have are often classed as the gold standard within scientific methodology given its purportedly unbiased perspective (Kaptchuk, 2001). That being said, many studies conducted within this paradigm are critiqued on this very point, as their alienation of context in relation to that which is being investigated pays little attention to the social world.

Post-positivism represents a response to the criticisms placed upon the positivist standpoint in recent decades (Guba and Lincoln, 2004). Thus post-positivism holds that only partially object accounts of the world can be produced. Ontologically the paradigm mirrors the beliefs of its predecessor as it too assumes a realist reality. However the

approach goes further, suggesting that human apprehension of such a reality shall forever remain imperfect as all attempts at measurement are inherently flawed methodologically and intellectually (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Guba and Lincoln, 2004). An ontology of critical realism is therefore adopted, where any suppositions about reality are subject to the widest possible criticisms in order to achieve the truest, yet not complete, answer. Epistemologically the separation of researcher and phenomena is largely abandoned, although objectivity remains a *'regulatory ideal'* (Guba and Lincoln, 2004, p. 25). Special emphasis is resultantly placed upon professional peers and journals, where repeated findings or data that coincides with dominant thinking is taken as true, yet always fallible. The methods employed remain largely experimental/manipulative; though, critical multiplism (triangulation) is employed in the hope that qualitative data inclusion can give a semblance of context to the research findings.

The critical paradigm differs to those discussed above in that it rejects the view that knowledge is contemporaneous, or indeed solely the product of human interaction. Reality is assumed to be apprehensible, but virtual in that it has been shaped over time by social, political, economic, and ethical factors (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). These factors can therefore be viewed as structures that immutably impact upon the world, whether they represent religious tradition or cultural norms. Epistemologically knowledge is seen in a similar light to the interpretivist tradition, yet value mediated. The transactional nature of inquiry in this form requires a methodology of dialectical dialogue between researcher and participant. This provides the platform for ignorance and misappropriations to be highlighted, as *'Critical inquiry [is not] a research that seeks merely to understand [it is] a research that challenges ... that [takes up a view] of conflict and oppression ... that seeks to bring about change'* (Crotty, 1998. p.112). For this reason the approach has seen prolific use is feminist, Marxist and anti-racist studies (Cohen et al., 2011).

In education the interpretive-constructivist paradigm has been described as an approach that recognises reality as socially constructed and contingent on the actions of social actors (Mertens. 1998; Howe, 2003). The relativist ontology it adopts and the nature of this perspective has already been discussed in detail within the literature review (see Constructivism). This ideographic approach contends that the social world cannot be characterised by universal laws or explained via causal relationships (De Villiers, 2005; Smith, 1992). Instead multiple truths are postulated, each based on personal constructions

of reality (Sale et al., 2002). The detached stance of positivism is dismissed as it is argued that behaviour can only truly be understood via 'a shared frame of reference' (Cohen et al, 2011), achieved by placing the researcher 'inside' that which is being researched. The purpose of research within this paradigm is to understand meaning, as *'to understand a particular social action (e.g. friendship, voting, marrying, teaching), the inquirer must grasp the meanings that constitute that action'* (Schwandt, 2000, p.189). The methods used to achieve this are generally qualitative in nature (i.e. unstructured interviews, participant observations), allowing researchers to interpret participant's values, experiences and actions (MacDonald et al., 2002). Thus it can be said that the interpretivist viewpoint is one where knowledge is deemed to be a matter of interpretation, both the researchers and the participants. As such, epistemological and ontological concerns align with the notion that knowledge is a social construction located within multiple realities. It is important to note that the literature often uses the term 'social constructivism' and 'constructivism' interchangeably (Petit and Huault, 2008; Schwandt, 2000). For clarity, within this thesis the term social constructivism shall be utilised and understood as a perspective that focuses on how meaning is negotiated and constructed in relation to individual's social, historical, and cultural lives.

In reviewing the coaching literature it was apparent that a significant proportion of research within the field had utilised objective quantitatively driven approaches (positivist/post-positivist). Gilbert and Trudel (2004) claim that as much as 80% of academic papers on coaching between 1970 and 2001 fell into this category. For Kahan (1999), such approaches are insensitive to the intricacies of coaching and the dynamic context within which the practice lies. Lyle (1999) states:

> *Too many studies have adopted a quantitative survey approach (where) the need for the control of variables and reliable operationalisation of constructs has militated against a more insightful and interpretive investigation of values, behaviours and context (p.30).*

Contemporary research suggests that inquiry of this nature has significantly contributed to the failure of coaching literature to effectively impact upon coach education (Lyle and Cushion, 2010; Cushion et al., 2003; Abraham and Collins, 1998). That said, a conceptual shift in the way researchers examine coaching has been noted. Rather than adopt a 'paint-

by-numbers' approach to understanding coaching, researchers have begun to address the ambiguity and complexity inherent within the coaching process (Potrac et al., 2000; Jones and Wallace, 2005). Indeed, Cushion et al (2003) argue that in order to further the current understanding of coaching, research must appreciate that it is both and individual and social process, *"inextricably linked to both the constraints and opportunities of human interaction"* (p.216). Thus it could be argued the paradigmatic approach of a study should suit not just the research question, but be sensitive to the context of that being investigated. Therefore, in examining the workplace learning of elite performance coaches there is a need to adopt a methodology that captures coaches' subjectivities in relation to a variety of social, cultural, and contextual factors. In regards to the paradigms that have been reviewed, the social constructivist perspective appeared to be appropriate in addressing the aims of this study

In summary the social constructivist paradigm was utilised in this thesis as it was deemed to provide the most appropriate framework for examining the impact of culture on learning within a coaching workplace. The study can therefore be characterised as utilising an emergent design, a context dependent framework and inductive analytic procedures (Creswell, 2007). Within the study, I the researcher adopted a 'situated' position, interpreting data that was co-constructed with the research participants in order understand the phenomena of interest.

3.3 Research Design

In order to investigate 'What can be learnt from a workplace learning analysis of elite performance coaches in understanding their professional development?' a research design that addressed both the real life context of coaching and the wider socio-cultural factors was required. To this end an ethnographic case study was adopted. Defined by Merriam and Simpson (2000) as a *"sociocultural analysis of a single social unit or phenomenon"* (p. 109), the approach was deemed to be the most appropriate for this study. An ethnographic approach to the case (the OHPI) was taken in order to interpret the culture within that workplace, so that its impact on the learning experienced therein could be observed. For the purpose of this study, culture is viewed as *"embodied in the signs, symbols, and language"* as well as the *"knowledge people have acquired that in turn structures their worldview and their behaviour"* (Merriam et al., 2002, p. 236). As

ethnographic and case study methodologies are considered meritorious in their own rights, the following section shall examine the impact of each within this thesis.

3.3.1 An Ethnographic approach

In a broad sense, ethnography can be thought of as a style of research that seeks to investigate the social meanings and activities of people in a given 'field' or setting (Brewer, 2000). That said, when attempting to delineate these objectives the supporting literature diverges. For Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) ethnography is a method, allowing for the capture of any data that is present. The authors characterise this as:

> *[a] Researcher participating, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews, collecting documents and artefacts… in fact, gathering whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of inquiry (p. 3)*

Wolcott (1980) however, argues that ethnography should be distinguished by its cultural focus and not by its nature as a research technique. Patton (2002) supports this proposition, drawing on the Greek origins of the word 'ethnos'. From this, it is considered that any human group interacting together over a period of time will develop a culture, where ethnographic study provides a cultural description of 'peoplehood'. Watson's (1994) conception of the approach draws on the naturalistic qualities of ethnography, viewing it as an extension of *"what we do all the time as human beings"* (p.8). An analogy can be made between the principles of ethnography and the day-to-day act of *"reading signals and ambiguous messages in confusing circumstances, whilst maintaining a network of relationships"* (p.8). Considering the array of definitions, Fetterman (1989, p.12) is justified in considering the approach to be one that is *'not always orderly',* often *'serendipitous',* and inherently down to *'a lot of hard work and old-fashioned luck'.* Despite an array of definitions, the literature finds consensus is addressing the benefits of 'perspective' gained when adopting an ethnographic theoretical lens. Put another way, the emphasis of ethnography is on understanding the workings of an organisation, institution, or group from the perspectives of the individuals within (Fine et al., 2009; Bryman, 2001).

Within critical theory literature academics have questioned relativist views of culture as different-but-equal (Carspecken, 1996), arguing for the need to recognise culture as dynamic, complex, and imbalanced in regards to power relations. Certainly this contention is reflective of the competitive and contested nature of both performance coaching (Cushion et al., 2003) and workplace interactions in general (Rainbird et al., 2004). To this end, it is recommended that a critical ethnographic viewpoint be adopted, looking beyond the status quo to disturb neutrality and taken-for-granted assumptions, thus *"bringing to light underlying and obscure operations of power and control"* (Madison, 2011, p.5). Furthermore, critical ethnography views interpretations of culture as shaped by the dispositions of the researcher, the research participants, and the dominant communities in play. With that in mind, it is perhaps best to characterise the ethnographic approach taken within this thesis as 'critical', for as has been done in nursing (Vandenberg and Hall, 2011) and education (Carspecken, 1996), this thesis looks to understand disparity and power relations within a contested workplace culture.

Criticisms of ethnographic research centre on issues of objectivity and representation, though advocates of the approach make no claim towards objectivity (Le Compte and Schendul 1999). Instead ethnographic study is intrinsically subjective, where the disembodied and omniscient observer must be abandoned. Stacey (1996, p.261) expands on this notion cautioning that *'intervening in an organisation always affects it'*. Therefore producing an objective representation of phenomena cannot be expected. Instead, ethnographic study allows a researcher to *'draw an audience into a collective experience'* where *'a version of the truth is presented for that collective to judge'* (Butler, 1997, p.928). Ethnographic cross-cultural examinations of 'Eastern' societies have drawn criticism in relation to cultural imperialism. This comes from the notion that the author, or 'western observer', adopts a *"privileged gaze that reproduces authorial omniscience"* (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1998, p.123). Critiques of the privileged observer have also been made in regard to feminist studies. Clough (1992) argues that from a feminist standpoint, one can see the standard realist accounts of ethnography as incorporating unconscious fantasies and desires concerning race, gender or class. Denzin and Lincoln (1998, p.28) recognise these issues of representation as the product of *'the ever-present contradiction between the concern for validity and certainty in the text'* and the *'knowledge that all texts are socially, historically, politically and culturally located'*. It is therefore useful to consider

Nandhakumar and Jones' (1997, p.126) concern regarding the authorial position of the ethnographer, where *'whatever is chosen will inevitably reflect the researcher's own biases'*. Thus, in order address concerns over representation, researchers are encouraged to acknowledge and incorporate the meanings participants attach to their experiences when interpreting events. As such, within this study reflexivity was utilised as a methodological tool to minimise potential research bias. Member checking, peer debriefing, and a constant internal dialogue throughout field-notes facilitated this consideration of perspective and bias. These components are discussed in greater detail in sections 3.16 and 3.20 respectively.

The ethnographic approach provides academic inquiry with a window through which to examine the culture of a particular group, society, organisation or institution (Fetterman, 1998). As such the approach seems most appropriate in addressing the research questions of this thesis. In addition, the literature review addressed the notion that contemporary learning theories are limited in their scope and ability to adequately conceptualise social learning. It has been suggested that a cultural understanding of learning could account for these shortcomings (Hodkinson et al., 2008). Already within the fields of coaching and workplace learning there have been calls for longitudinal studies that might address factors beyond agency and structure, such as the wider culture aspects of behaviour (Rynne et al., 2010; Berg and Chung, 2008). This thesis aimed to fill this research gap by engaging in a prolonged critical ethnographic investigation of an elite coaching workplace, whilst being cautious to represent events from the perspectives of those coaches.

3.3.2 A Case Study Approach

Regarded as the principle means by which inquiry is conducted within the social sciences (Thomas, 2011), case study research can be broadly characterised as an examination *"of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstance"* (Stake, 1995, p.xi). However, despite the popularity of this design framework, the literature suggests that there is little in the way of a concise organisational structure for practitioners to follow (Thomas, 2011; Gerring, 2004). De Vaus (2001, p.219) articulates this point stating, *"Most research texts either ignore case studies or confuse them with other types of research"*. Certainly though this is not the product of a lack of methodological discussion. Over the past 30 years a number of texts

have addressed the approach with myriad names, labels and interpretations. Stenhouse (1985) identifies four types of case study: ethnographic, evaluative, educational, and action research. Yin (2009) proposes three forms: exploratory (a pilot study), descriptive (a narrative of the experience) and explanatory (theory testing). Stake (1995) also identified three types of the method, however describes them as: Intrinsic (focused on the uniqueness of the case), instrumental (examining a specific case in relation to external factors), and collective (multiple illustrative cases). The array of meanings and typologies has lead Thomas (2011, p.511) to argue that the case study is in a position of *'methodological limbo'*. Indeed, when attempting to summarise this methodological landscape Bassey (1999) warns that:

> *"To draw such comparisons is a dangerous game, for I cannot be sure I have correctly elicited what these writes have meant by the terms they have used, and dare I say it, neither can we be sure that these writers themselves had clear, unambiguous concepts in their minds and managed to express them clearly" (p.35).*

The statement highlights the potential problems faced when attempting to achieve methodological coherency. Thomas's (2011, p.511) suggestion that a case study be *"presented as classifiable by its purposes"* was useful in dealing with this issue. Thus Bassey's (1999) typology of a case study was utilised as it differentiates between 3 categories on very point. The categories are: Theory seeking/testing case studies (issue specific), storytelling case studies (narrative/descriptive accounts of a specific case), and evaluative case studies (examinations of systems to determine their usefulness). As the research question calls for a narrative account of the workplace learning within a specific organisation, it can be suggested that the purpose of this study is consistent with Bassey's story telling case study.

The issue of generalisability is discussed later within this chapter, though as a frequent point of criticism directed towards the case study design it is relevant to address it *here also. As Flyvbjerg (2006) contends, the general consensus within the literature is that "you cannot generalise from a single case"* and more to the point *"social science is all about generalising"* (p.219). Whilst some academics contest this statement (Yin, 2009; De Vaus, 2001; Gomm et al., 2000) it can be said that validity within a case study cannot be

derived from its representativeness given the lack of representative sample. As such, the ability to generalise from any results is questioned. However, for Thomas (2010) the potential for the case study design lies with the idea of 'exemplary knowledge'. The author defines the notion as:

> "[An] example viewed and heard in the context of another's experience (another's horizon) but used in the context of one's own (where the horizon changes): the example is not taken to be representative, typical or standard, nor is it exemplary in the sense of being a model or an exemplar" (p.11).

Put another way, exemplary knowledge does not produce assertions of enduring value that are context-free (generalisations), but illustrates similar features that can be applied to other contexts. The notion of exemplary knowledge is similar to Tripp's (1985) work on 'qualitative generalisations'. The author argued that through explicating the salient features within a case, cases with similar features might be compared to aid personal understanding. Tripp delineated two forms of salient features: 'comparable' features (sex, age, ability and socio-economic of participants) and 'comprehensive' features (particular circumstances deemed relevant to the events/case). In recognition of this, all such features are reported in this chapter.

Patton (2002) notes that the practical challenges of conducting research often requires that the researcher be pragmatic with regards to accessibility and convenience when looking for data that can best answer the research questions. Indeed this was a contributory factor to the selection of the OHPI (Olympic High Performance Institute) as a case, though it was the richness of information available that led to this selection. As the use of such case studies can be seen as reflective of purposive or theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2006), it can be argued that the use of the case study design is also a theoretical choice regarding sampling.

3.4 Grounded Theory Method

Developed in the 1960's by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, the Grounded Theory Method (GTM) represented a resolution between the different epistemological positions of positivistic methodological training (Glaser) and pragmatist philosophies (Strauss) (Charmaz, 2000). The popularity of the approach is such that Titscher et al (2000)

estimates that around two out of every three published qualitative papers claims to employ GTM. It has been remarked that the approach has become the *"paradigm of choice"* (Miller and Fredericks, 1999, p.538) for qualitative researchers, and has been *"a major – perhaps the major – contributor to the acceptance of the legitimacy of qualitative methods in applied social research"* (Thomas and James, 2006, P.767).

In recent years, the use of GTM within a social constructivist framework has been considered by a number of authors (Charmaz, 2006; 2000, Clark, 2005; Mills et al, 2006). A constructivist approach to GTM recognises the researcher as an active participant in the research process, where meaning is a co-construction interpreted through the interrelationship of researcher and participant (Mills et al., 2006). This adaptation of GTM has been referred to by Mills et al (2006) as an 'evolved' grounded theory, where the acknowledgment of the researcher's active involvement offers an interpretive portrayal of the social world that cannot be achieved via traditional and objective grounded theory.

The 'constructivist' redirection of GTM can be considered as a development of Glaser and Strauss's (1967) 'traditional' approach; an approach shaped by the positivist histories of the authors, and the goal of applying scientific rigor to qualitative inquiry (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007). Requiring that the researcher assume the role objective observer, traditional GTM can be characterised as an unbiased analytic procedure, where theory is thought to 'emerge' from within the data for the researcher to 'discover'. As such, there is an underlying assumption that a fixed 'truth' exists, just waiting to be uncovered. Interestingly, soon after their 1967 seminal text, the authors' paths diverged as Strauss pursued a modified form of GTM (Corbin, 1991). In considering this, Mills et al (2006a) suggest that the metaphor of a 'methodological spiral' be used to represent variations of GTM, as variations are not the outcome of *'binary opposition'* (p.3). Thus, in moving along the methodological spiral variations of GTM are a condition of the epistemological and ontological positions of the researcher. Strauss and Corbin (1998) depart along this methodological spiral from Glaserian GTM towards a more relativist pragmatic position, placing their version of GTM between post-positivism and constructivism (Mills et al., 2006a). Within their approach the interplay of researcher and respondent is addressed emphasising, *"that it is not possible to be completely free of bias"* (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 97). Charmaz (2006) ventures further along the methodological spiral, explicitly naming her work constructivist grounded theory. Her work again resituates the role of the

researcher, recognising them as co-constructor of meaning alongside the participants. Charmaz's work can be characterised via a transactional/interactionary relationship between researcher and respondent, framing knowledge as a co-construction (between researcher and participant), and through the recognition of reality as a temporal, cultural, and structurally influenced phenomena.

Mills et al's (2006) metaphor proved useful in considering the methodological tenets of GTM and its diversifications. Interestingly, the split between Glaser and Strauss can be traced to a division that exists amongst researchers espousing one approach to GTM over another. What have occurred are studies that follow either Glaserian or Straussian methodological procedures (Charmaz, 2000). This desire for procedural orthodoxy is curious considering that Glaser (1999), Strauss and Corbin (1998) all emphasise the importance of methodological flexibly, claiming GTM *"is not a recipe book to be applied to research"* (p. xi). Indeed, Piantanida et al (2004) contend that GTM offers a broad set of parameters, which argue against the notion of a *'pristine'* and *'singular'* model of GTM (p. 330). As such, Charmaz (2006) accepts Glaser and Strauss's (1967) invitation for *"other theorists to codify and publish their own methods for generating theory"* (p.8) with her constructivist GTM. For Charmaz (2006) the strength of GTM lies not in prescriptive procedures, but in flexible guidelines for constructing *"theories grounded in the data themselves"* (p.2). The use of Mills et al's (2006) methodological spiral, has allowed me to question my own ontological and epistemological position in relation to the many conceptualisations of GTM. Within this spiral the authors propose that Glaser is located at one end, Charmaz at the other, and Strauss and Corbin somewhere between the two. As such, in considering the spiral researchers are able to find a methodological approach that aligns with their epistemological and ontological orientations. As such, the adoption of a constructivist GTM rang true with the objectives of this thesis.

A notable criticism found within the literature, pertains the procedural nature of the GTM approach (Thomas and James, 2006). Eisner (1993) articulates the point stating that *'consensus achieved through procedural objectivity provides no purchase on reality'* (p.53). That being said, the procedural rules of grounded theory are attractive as they signpost a comprehensive path through qualitative inquiry (Thomas and James, 2006). The appeal of the method for use in this study came from the practicality of the approach in dealing with complex phenomena, and from the ability to generate understanding that is

grounded in the experiences of the population being researched. As such, the method gives structure to large amounts of data and guides researchers inexperienced in qualitative methods.

The grounded theory method aims to provide an explicit strategy for data collection and analysis to produce an inductively driven theory of social processes (Tweed and Charmaz, 2012). Such an approach contrasts traditional deductive thinking, where one moves from theory (hypothesis) to data testing, by assuming that from data/experience theory can emerge. Indeed, this disparity is a point of debate across the sciences. For Popper (1956) it is not possible to logically justify induction, as one cannot separate the past from current observations. As such, there can be no observation without theory, as perception is itself shaped by expectations, our previous experiences, and a wealth of accumulated knowledge (Bendassolli, 2013). Some researchers would therefore advocate that one enters the field without engagement in a literature review, as knowledge of extant theories is likely to impede the emergence of theory from the data (Glaser, 1998). That being said, one cannot unlearn that which is already known (McGhee, 2007), therefore it is perhaps more appropriate to acknowledge ones position and manage potential bias through reflexive practice. As Jenkins (2002, p.376) suggests, in 'double distancing' oneself from their research (reflexively), a researcher might take a *"second step away from the object of their research"* so that they might be more than objective, recognising their inherent assumptions. For Timmerman and Tavory (2012) such an approach is perhaps better known as abductive analysis. The authors argue for researcher's to enter the field with the *"deepest and broadest theoretical base possible and develop their theoretical repertoires throughout the research process"* (p.180). Thus, the authors argue that instead of theories emerging from data, novel theories might emerge through careful consideration of methodology and analysis, supported by a researcher's cultivated theoretical expertise.

Thus in truly engaging in a constructivist grounded theory I acknowledge my position as an insider researcher, with a pre-existing conceptual understanding of the field. As such, my interpretations can only be considered partial representations of knowledge constructed between participants and myself. Nonetheless, I do not decry my position and instead acknowledge Strauss and Corbin's (1998) contention that *'Familiarity with relevant literature can enhance sensitivity to subtle nuances in data'* (p. 49).

3.5 Trustworthiness in the study

A variety of conceptions of qualitative research exist, with competing claims as to what counts as good quality work. Indeed, in order to contribute to the current understanding of psychological phenomena, Sparkes (1998, p. 365) contends that one must appreciate, encourage, and embrace with *'theoretical tolerance and respect'* these varied methodologies. Whilst agreeing with this point, Seale (1999) cautions that there is no conclusive criteria as to ensure 'quality' research, and that one must consider key philosophical disputes over terms such as 'validity', 'reliability' and generalisability'. Characterised by Kvale (1995) as the 'holy trinity' of methodological rigor, many researchers reject the epistemological assumptions that underlie these scientific principles (Seidman, 1998; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Indeed, recently Gutierrez and Penuel (2014) have argued that rigor be derived through a works relevance to practice, that being the capacity of the output to organise present and future concerns within social systems. As such, rigorous investigation is achieved through *"emphasis on what is happening in the day-to-day life of participants in those systems"* as this *"helps make visible the structural and historically existing contradictions inherent in complex activity"* (p.20). Certainly then it can be argued that the sustained and direct engagement of ethnographic study within this context provides such rigor and relevance through practice.

The traditional conceptions of 'validity', 'reliability' and 'generalisability' require naive realism and linear causality, concepts that do not align with the constructivist positioning of this thesis. Therefore alternative criteria are employed: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In considering these notions, Elo et al (2014) offer a checklist for researchers addressing the trustworthiness of a qualitative study. The central tenet of the checklist is that qualitative content analysis studies should be critically robust at the levels of preparation, organising (analysis), and reporting. An example of this checklist is presented on the following page. As such, consideration of this checklist informed the discussion of the terms credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability that follows.

Phase of the study	Questions to check
Preparation phase	**Data collection method** • How do I collect the most suitable data for my content analysis? • Is this method the best available to answer the target research question? • Should I use either descriptive or semi-structured questions? • Self-awareness: what are my skills as a researcher? • How do I pre-test my data collection method? **Sampling strategy** • What is the best sampling method for my study? • Who are the best informants for my study? • What criteria should be used to select the participants? • Is my sample appropriate? • Is my data well saturated? **Selecting the unit of analysis** • What is the unit of analysis? • Is the unit of analysis too narrow or too broad?
Organising phase	**Categorisation and abstraction** • How should the concepts or categories be created? • Is there still too many concepts? • Is there any overlap between categories? **Interpretation** • What is the degree of interpretation in the analysis? • How do I ensure that the data accurately represent the information that the participants provided? **Representativeness** • How to I check the trustworthiness of the analysis process? • How do I check the representativeness of the data as a whole?
Reporting phase	**Reporting results** • Are the results reported systematically and logically? • How are connections between the data and results reported? • Is the content /structure of concepts presented in an understandable way? • Can the reader evaluate the transferability of the results (are the data, sampling method, and participants described in a detailed manner)? • How well do the categories cover the data? • Are there similarities within and differences between categories? **Reporting analysis process** • Is there a full description of the analysis process? • Is the trustworthiness of the content analysis discussed based on some criteria?

Table 1: Checklist for Researchers Attempting to Improve the Trustworthiness of a Content Analysis Study, Taken from Elo et al., (2014)

3.5.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the *'truth value'* of the data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.285) and the researcher's ability to demonstrate this truthfulness. In order to achieve this, the research must demonstrate that the constructed themes are sufficiently saturated and represent credible reconstructions of participant's experiences (Merrian, 1998).

Prolonged emersion within the field served to provide credibility by allowing the researcher to become part of the culture with the OHPI. This was achieved through the building of rapport and trust, thus providing a greater sense of the reality coaches' experience. Methodological triangulation was also adopted to provide a more rounded picture of complex phenomena that singular approaches could afford (Cohen et al., 2011). Member checking (Denscombe, 2007), or respondent validation (Silverman, 2006), was utilised to ensure that an accurate interpretation of events had been taken from interviews and observations. This was achieved by relating the constructed themes back to the research participants for verification. The final measure of ensuring credibility was 'peer debriefing' with academic colleagues (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This ensured that the aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the researcher's mind could be identified.

3.5.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the capacity for the results of one study to be related to those from another study of a similar nature (Shenton, 2004). Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that this is only possible in a limited manner when dealing with qualitative studies, as is found in this thesis. The relatively small and purposively targeted sample within studies such as this one, make it difficult to generalise between cases. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that researchers within the qualitative paradigm construct theories which incorporate working hypothesises laden with thick descriptions of context and circumstance. From this is it is suggested that interpretations of meaning may be applied across similar contexts. Indeed, this is indicative of the 'qualitative generalisations' (Tripp, 1985) discussed earlier within the chapter, where comparable salient features provide a foundation upon which the interpretations of this thesis can be considered transferable.

3.5.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the rigor of a study and confirming the coherence of the internal processes (Bradley, 1993). Put plainly, this pertains to the consistency of the study's findings. Within qualitative studies the literature suggests that this is achieved by demonstrating a systematic process has be taken to address the research questions (Cohen et al., 2011; Patton, 2002). To achieve this, observation data included expanded notes and an audit trail. This allows readers to reflexively track the data and construction of theories. Observation data was thus recorded on two levels; first at the level of description and then at the level of reflection. This second level was conducted in the evenings following the day's observations. Initial notes were expanded upon, filling in the gaps between simpler descriptions of events. This also presented the opportunity to list concerns surrounding difficulties faced by the researcher, a move that further acknowledges the potential personal biases whilst justifying the decisions that were made.

3.5.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the notion that the study's findings reflect the interpretations of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher (Shenton, 2004). To address this criterion, I the researcher, have addressed my own personal predispositions in relation to the study's results, rather than decry their existence (Seidman, 2006). Confirmability has also been addressed through the identification of a clear audit trail and the triangulation of methods in an attempt to reduce researcher bias.

3.6 The Case Study

As described in chapter 1, the participants within this study were the employed performance coaches and support staff of an OHPI (Olympic High Performance Centre) within the sport of athletics. The rationale and method of case selection is discussed later in the chapter (Section 3.7 Sampling). In the context of this study, the data collection began at the start of a new Olympic cycle (a four year cycle) within a recently developed centralised institution. Prior to this study the Olympic sports organisation utilised three separate institutions positioned across the UK. The change to this structure was instigated by the Performance director, who confirmed that the move both mirrored the centralised performance hubs adopted by British cycling and the AIS, and resolved funding issues via

a consolidation of resources. Through past experiences as an athlete, and via connections within the sport, I was made aware of the changes to the Olympic sports organisation and given access to the site. It was then determined that the features of the institution suggested that the case would provide the opportunity to address the research questions of this thesis. The location of the OHPI within the UK shall be referred to as 'Northwich' throughout this thesis.

It is also important to note that certain features of the OHPI, specifically at this point in time, made it a particularly interesting case. As previously mentioned, the study began during the formative moments of a new organisational regime. A new Head Coach had been promoted from within the organisation, and governmental funding cuts had reduced the employed coaching workforce by half. In addition to this, the role of Performance Director was also reinstated for the forthcoming Olympic cycle, a role that in previous incarnations never existed alongside a Head Coach. As such, the case represented a significant opportunity to assess the implications of post-Olympic transitions, new organisational structures, and quadrennial funding cycles on the learning experience of professional coaches. The following illustration outlines the organisational structure of the OHPI in relation to the positioning of key locations and staff within the facility. This serves to delineate the positioning and roles of the OHPI staff, and highlight the place of the researcher within the organisational structure.
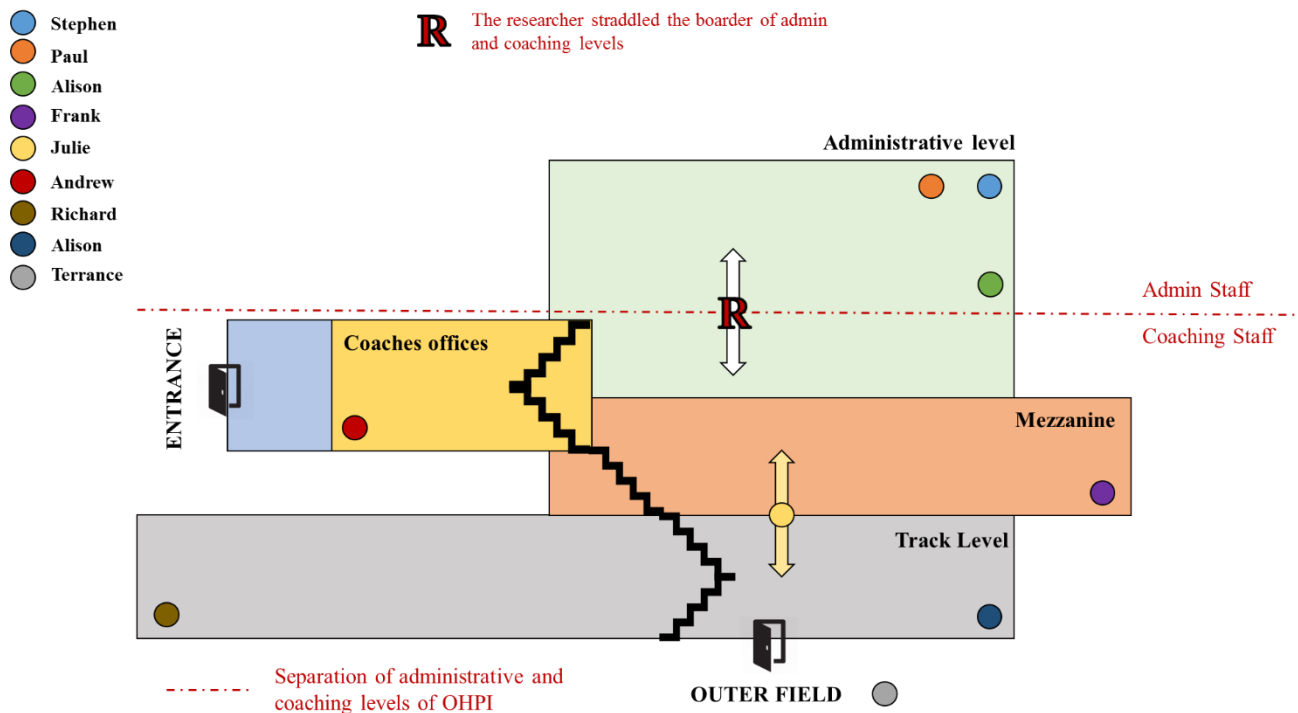
Figure 4: Illustration of OHPI organisational structure in relation to the positioning of key locations and staff

Within the new centralised performance hub, the OHPI, the Head Coach and Performance Director planned to implement a new ideal within the workplace, namely that of collaborative learning between coaches and colleagues. As the performance director stated:

> *"It's about us [the organisation] ultimately collectively winning more medals.*
> *The performance measurement here isn't whether you have coached an athlete*
> *to winning a medal or improved a performance, or whether you have been the*
> *therapist or the physiologist to the athlete who wins the medals, it's about the*
> *whole [the organisation]. It's about athletes getting better, and us effectively*
> *supporting athletes getting better through our coaches getting better through*
> *collaboration and collective thought." (Stephen)*

As such the OHPI as a case represented an opportunity to address the research questions within a context that accurately portrayed the complexity of coaches' lives, practices, and workplaces. It is important to note that the sport in question (athletics) is by its very nature individualised, often requiring that coaches act in direct competition with one another. As such, the findings of the study may not be comparable to team sport training facilities where competition amongst staff is likely to be lessened.

3.7 Pilot Study

Prior to the main data collection phase, pilot observations and interviews were conducted with 2 professional coaches based at an institution similar to that utilised within the main study. This similarity was determined in relation to the structure and function of the facility. It should be noted that this institution ceased to function in this role following the centralisation of the Olympic Organisation at a later date. The coaches were known to myself through mutual social acquaintances, and observed over a two-week period for up to 4 hours a day. Interviews were also conducted during this time. The purpose of this activity was to assess the data collection techniques, and judge the suitability of grounded theory for data analysis. For example, the pilot study served as a testing ground for the suitability for the use of CAQDAS (Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software), which proved vital in organising and handling the large amounts of textual data produced within the study. The observations and interviews were recorded using field-notes and a digital recorder respectively, and transcribed verbatim (The observation protocol is described in detail later in the chapter p.106). Following this, conceptual categories were constructed and discussed with my PhD supervisor.

From feedback given in these discussions the structure of how field-notes were recorded was altered as to achieve 'theoretical relevance' (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). It became apparent that descriptive accounts of the coaches training sessions were being taken, and the social processes of the coaches' interactions were being missed. For example, it was noted that *'throughout this first week I have only really been writing down training sessions, describing coaches practical behaviours'* (field-note). Thus the field-note template was altered to require that the researcher consider the social processes underlying what was being observed at specific points during the observations. From a practical standpoint, the use of a piloting phase also enabled me to become familiar with the interview process (Developing rapport, utilising probing questions and reading body language).

From a conceptual standpoint the pilot study illustrated the importance of personal dispositions in the agentic behaviour of coaches (illustrated on the following page).

Pilot study field-note –Stewart (Coach)
Code name/Observed process: **Personal dispositions as shaping agency**
The coaches were recently approached to attend an NGB (national governing body) run coaching conference. *Stewart's response highlighted the role of personal dispositions in shaping agentic behaviour. Stewart declined to attend the conference on the basis that such events complicate the coaching process beyond what is necessary, alluding to his general disinterest in such events. He in fact states, 'I'd rather just be down the track coaching and asking questions and working other coaches that way, you know, I guess my brain just works differently'. Having been an athlete himself, it could be suggested that Stewart's bringing of prior abilities and experience to the workplace shape his perception of this learning opportunity resulting in his disengagement.* **Questions:** *How do coaching philosophy/dispositions impact on coaches' formation/use of learning opportunities?* *How are these personal dispositions constructed?*

Pilot study field-note: Stewart, personal dispositions as shaping agency.

These dispositions, shaped by an individual's history and biology, mediated their engagement with both formal and informal learning activities. It was therefore decided that the initial interviews of the main study would serve to uncover these dispositions and examine how they are constructed. This is an example of the role reflexivity played within this study, a point discussed in greater detail later in the chapter.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

In accordance with The University of Birmingham's Ethics Committee, ethical approval was obtained for both the pilot study and the main study on the 1st of January 2013. All participants were provided with an information sheet detailing the aspects of the study and signed an informed consent form (A copy of these can be found in the Appendices 2 and 3). The consent form and information sheet provided details of the data collection methods and assured participants of anonymity in all verbal and written presentations of the results.

Further to this, participants' were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any point during the research process and that their identity would be anonymised throughout the research process.

3.9 Sampling: Purposive, Initial and Theoretical

As outlined in the introduction chapter, the OHPI (Olympic High Performance Centre) was purposively sampled because it was an accessible elite level sporting institution in the UK. A non-probability approach, Bryman (2012) describes *'the goal of purposive sampling [as] to sample cases/participants in a strategic way, so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions'* (p.418). With the case identified it was necessary to consider the sampling strategy to be used within the case itself. In other words, which members of the institutional workforce would be targeted in addressing the research questions? As described earlier in this chapter, the study adopted Charmaz's (2006) conception of a constructivist grounded theory method (CGTM). The central tenets of CGTM influenced decisions made regarding the population sampled and the data to be collected. The approach calls for the inductive creation of theory around a central phenomenon, arrived at via the concurrent collection/analysis of data relating to emergent themes. Thus, the researcher is required to continually return to the field, beginning with a broad 'initial' sample, before returning with a narrower 'theoretical' one. This characterised the sampling procedure adopted in this study, a procedure that has already been used to investigate cultural issues such as bullying and socialisation within nursing (Price, 2009; Strandmark and Hallberg, 2007).

It is important to delineate what initial and theoretical sampling means within the logic of CGTM. Where the initial sampling strategy might address the research questions, or reflect the distribution of populations, theoretical sampling represents action guided by the emergence of themes within the early stages of data collection. Thus theoretical sampling is not something that can be planned for, but is guided by the initial criteria used to identify people, cases, and locations. Charmaz (2006) clarifies this notion, suggesting that *'initial sampling in grounded theory is where you start whereas theoretical sampling directs you where to go'* (p.100). The sampling process within this study was structured across two phases; the first was a broad initial phase, and the second was a concurrent theoretical phase lasting till the emergent themes were considered saturated. The aim of

Phase 1 was to identify background information on the coaches, such as their historical and biological dispositions, and explicate the coaches' understandings of the OHPI as a learning organisation. The aim of the Phase 2 was to theoretically target those events that could explicate the impact of culture on the learning experienced within the OHPI. This phase would then serve to (re)define the initial conceptual categories. For example, during the initial phase 'entrenched cultures' were identified as mediating coaches' engagement with colleagues (Entrenched cultures were seen as values, beliefs and traditions grounded within the participant's histories, the sporting context and the OHPI as a field). Thus in Phase 2 interviews with coaches targeted the creation and maintenance of these entrenched cultures. This is congruent with 'discriminate sampling', a process within grounded theory that seeks to examine whether a conceptual category can be sufficiently saturated by targeting persons, or events, for verifying the story line or relationships between categories (Coyne, 1997). From this it can be said that the sampling strategy used within this study aligns with the logic of the CGTM.

3.10 Participants

6 participant coaches were formally approached via email as to their availability and provided with the informed consent documents once they agreed to partake. All of the coaches worked with between 5 to 10 athletes. Subject to the funding status of their athletes the coaches had access to specialist support personnel (i.e. strength and conditioning coaches, physiotherapists and nutritionists). As additional personnel were considered to be workplace colleagues' the Centre Manager, the Performance Director and the Head Coach were also approached to take part in the study. Of the 9 participants within the study, 7 were male and 2 were female (1 coach and the Centre Manager). The age range was with from 37 to 62 years of age. Each coach held at least a level 3 coaching qualification within their respective disciplines. It should also be noted that all coaches were athletes themselves prior to entering into coaching, four having reached international levels. In terms of coaching experience, the average number of years between the participants was n = 14 years. It should be noted that when the sporting organisation sampled within this study was first approached, the initial proposal targeted the organisations 14 employed professional coaches. However, in the time it took for access and ethical approval to be granted the organisation had undergone the restructuring

discussed in chapter 1. As such, with a reduced workforce the sample was reconfigured to that discussed above.

3.11 Vignettes of Participants

The aim of this section is to introduce the participants that informed my experience throughout the ethnographic study, and illustrate their standing within the dynamics of the OHPI as a workplace. In doing so, vignettes of participants are utilised to illustrate how participants were identified to me, taking into consideration how they managed their social positions and practices throughout the study. Indeed, as Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) note, vignettes provide significance to the data and help explain the context within which they were noted. Importantly, is should be understood that as a narrative, this presents to the reader a clear picture of the interpretative point the author intends telling by the vignette (Erickson, 1986 cited in Northcott, 2001, p.18). Therefore, the vignettes offer an insight into my interpretation and perception of participants so that readers might better understand the inferences made throughout the thesis. It is important to note that these vignettes represent sections of field-notes compiled to illustrate my interpreted perspective of the participants.

3.11.1 Frank – Coach

Frank is a 43 year-old ex-international athlete who has worked for the organisation for approximately 5 years. Regarding himself as a 'failed' athlete, Frank retired due to injury and frustration and began coaching soon after. Whilst he has been coaching for 20 plus years, Frank's major success as a coach has been relatively recent. As a result he has only been a paid professional coach in the last five years, earning a living prior to this period as an actor. Frank is a level 3 qualified coach. Frank is a very boisterous character, never entering or leaving a room without being noticed. He prides himself on this characteristic and states that he both 'reads people well' and 'meets them on their level'. The other staff members are aware of this nature and attribute it to his past as a dramatic actor. Whilst Frank regards this as his strength, other members of staff have criticised this behaviour stating, "You're not always sure whether he's saying what he really thinks, or just saying what you want to hear". Frank works occasionally with a young volunteer coach called Grant. He manufactured this informal mentoring relationship as a way of getting the help the organisation and other employees do not give him. Interestingly, Frank has been

critical of the American coaches (Richard and Terrace) from the outset of the study, stating from past experience that they don't know how to work in a British system and that as 'consultants' they are paid twice the salary of the other coaches, a fact he feels undermines the British coaches.

3.11.2 Andrew – Coach

Andrew is regarded as the stalwart 'old guard' of the institute, having been employed by the organisation for the previous 18 years. Andrew is the member of the workforce who is always full of interesting stories from 'back in the day', and can often be found entertaining groups of athletes and support staff in the corridors and stairway with funny anecdotes. Andrew is very laid back, described by Stephen the Performance manager as 'almost horizontal'. It is no surprise that Andrew is often late, and as the study progressed I began to add ten minutes to every arrangement we made. More often than not I was still there before him. Andrew lives 50 miles away from the OHPI and maintains his main training group at the location. As such, he spends three mornings a week away from the institute and expressed no desire to change his routine regardless of what 'management' wanted. Some members of staff, Frank in particular, were frustrated by this circumstance, as he felt it indicated Andrew was clearly not committed to OHPI and the organisational goals of collaboration. Interestingly, despite early reservations regarding the American coaches working within the institute, Andrew formed a useful generative relationship with Richard, once of the few noted within the study.

3.11.3 Richard – Coach

Richard is a 46 year old for American coach, and was the first coach to be employed within the new Olympic cycle. Previously awarded 'world coach of the year', Richard is well known in his field and regarded as a great acquisition for the organisation. That being said, some coaches have described him as a 'hangover' form the previous regime, as an individual who no longer works for the organisation employed him. Indeed, Richard often joked that the man he signed up to work for is now in a different country. Importantly, Richard is employed as a contractor, which means he is paid significantly more than the British coaches. Whilst this is not supposed to be general knowledge, within a small staff it is, and is a source of tension. Richard is extremely hard working and is often the first to the OHPI and the last to leave. He prides himself on having worked hard to get to where he is,

and openly admits that he has a chip on his shoulder about how easy a life the British coaches have had, as there are not professionally paid roles like the one he has now back in American. From the onset of the OHPI and instigation of the new regime, the goal was for Richard to mentor Stewart as they coach the same disciple. This has however not worked out and is another source of contention amongst staff.

3.11.4 Terrance - Coach

Terrance, 42 years old, is the other American coach employed within the OHPI, and was the second person employed during this Olympic cycle. That being said, he like Richard was employed by an individual who no longer works for the organisation. As such, he too is a 'hangover' from a previous regime, paid far more due to his role as contractor, and thus a further instigator of tension amongst staff. Having coached multiple Olympic medallists, Terrance considers that his role is to fill a gap currently within the organisational setup, providing a knowledge base they are at present missing. Indeed, his air of superiority has caused issues between himself and some of the British coaches, as he believes they do not work on the same level (most notably Frank). Terrance was the one coach within this study that never truly opened up to me as an individual, free to talk to me during practical sessions, but rarely one on one. Indeed, like Paul, Terrance left the organisation after only four months. As such I was only ever able to get one short interview with him completed. His reasons for departing were a conflict of interests and timetables going forward between himself and the aspirations of the organisation. Richard however, plainly stated *'he just couldn't work in this system so he took himself out it'* (field note, April).

3.11.5 Julie - Coach

Julie was a late addition to the coaching staff, not being employed till four months into the study. That being said she had worked for the organisation for four years during the previous Olympic cycle. However, following the funding cuts she was made redundant and remained unemployed for 6 months. Julie is also an ex-international athlete having only retired from competitive sport four years previously before immediately starting a career in coaching. At 38 she is the youngest participant within the study and the only female coach. Julie is referred to as an assistant coach, though technically she is employed on the same pay level as the other British coaches. She often brings up this point as she

clearly does not want to be seen as inferior to the others and occasionally this makes her role as assistant confusing.

3.11.6 Stewart – Coach

Stewart is considered as the up-and-comer of the organisation, recently an apprentice coach (under the previous regime), and his appointment as an institute coach over other possible candidates was both a surprise to some, and a confirmation of his potential to others. At 39 years old, Stewart is the second youngest participant within the study. A key relationship within the story of the OHPI was that of Stewart and Richard's, as it was a strategic plan of Stephen's (Performance director) for the experienced veteran (Richard) to mentor the young gun (Stewart). However, this relationship proved untenable, and appeared to be a defining feature of the OHPI, utilised by many coaches to demonstrate that the collaborative culture was not taking effect. In a similar fashion to Julie, Stewart too wants to shed the title of apprentice and often worried about the perceptions of others on his ability.

3.11.7 Stephen – Performance Director

Stephen is the performance director, a role that did not exist under the previous Olympic regime but has been reinstated for this cycle. Coming from a medical background he has worked within the organisation for 8 years, though this is the first time he has undertaken a role outside of medical support. As such he has no practical coaching qualifications or experience, a fact many of the coaches feel makes him ill-suited to the job. Prior to Paul's eventual departure it was not clear how his and Stephen's roles were different, as each was considered to be head of the OHPI. At a basic level it appeared that Paul worked alongside the coaches whilst Stephen dealt with the administrative aspects. Interestingly, when outside of the staff offices Stephen constantly comes across as rushed or busy, and tends to appear uncomfortable whenever caught off guard in the hall or stairway by either myself or the coaches. Despite constantly stipulating that the coaches need guidance (leadership) throughout the study, he appeared to have little direct contact with them outside of formal meetings (i.e. team selection meetings). Stephen is 45 years old.

3.11.8 Paul – Head Coach

Paul is the oldest member of the staff at 62 and had worked for the organisation for the previous 8 years. Following multiple Olympic successes, he was promoted from Head Coach of the Paralympic program to Head Coach of the Olympic program. Paul is well liked by the coaches as he is reportedly starkly different the previous position holder who supposedly ruled with an iron fist. That being said, Paul is criticised for his laid back attitude by coaches and administrative staff alike, where the running joke is how he has yet to have a monthly review meeting with all the coaches after 4 months. Paul is supposed to function as the line manager for the coaches, and therefore responsible for fostering the collaboration between staff members. Midway through the fourth month of the study Paul announced he was stepping down from his role for family reasons. A month later he was unveiled as the Head Coach of a rival organisation. It is of no surprise that this circumstance caused tensions within the OHPI.

3.11.9 Alison – Centre Manager

Alison, 48 years old, was the last addition to the staff of the OHPI, not being employed until month five, a month after Paul's departure. Again she has been previously employed by the organisation for 12 years but was made redundant at the end of the previous Olympic cycle. Stephen (Performance director) stated that funding cuts restricted staff numbers and until Paul's vacant salary freed up some finances, they were unable to employ Alison. Her role within the OHPI is to be the connection between the coaches and the organisational management (Stephen), and do the day-to-day running of the OHPI. Administrative tasks keep her in her office for most of the day. As such, Alison has little contact with the coaches except to function as the informal agony aunt of the institute, listening to coaches' problems and the disputes that existed within the institute. This generally related to coaches invading the spaces of others and dealing with the tension between Richard and Stewart.

3.12 Data Collection

The study used interviews and participant observations to collect the data needed to address the research questions. The following section outlines the choices behind, and the use of, these data collection methods.

3.12.1 Interviews

Regarded to be the 'pivotal source' of data within social science research (Hiller and DiLuzio, 2004), the emphasis within the methodological literature has been on the mechanics and organisation of this method. In general the process requires that participant's retrospectively reflect on past experiences and events, offering personal explanations and understandings of them. Within this 'traditional' view, emphasis is placed upon the role of the researcher as 'instrument' (Marshall and Rossman, 1995), where the aim is to *'elicit the perceptions, meanings, and experiences of participants and provide rich descriptions of them'* (Williamson, 2006, p.89). Utilising a question and answers framework (structured, semi-structured or unstructured), the participant is seen as a *'repository of answers'* (Hiller & DiLuzio, 2004, p 3) from whom a researcher can simply mine the information they require.

Recently however, constructivists have taken a different approach, showing the interview as a collaborative, meaning-making experience involving both the interviewer and the interviewee (Charmaz, 2006; Hiller and DiLuzio, 2004; Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). Meaning is thus seen as co-constructed via the interaction of researcher and participant. Murphy and Dingwall's (2004) metaphor of a 'chain of transformation' is useful in characterising this relationship. The author suggests that data is twice subjected to transformation. Firstly on the part of the researchers choice of questions, and secondly by the way a participant extracts meaning from their own personal experience and then repackage that information for the researcher. What is more, within a constructivist study it is necessary to acknowledge that this repackaging is subject to both the social interaction and the context of the interview itself. Interviewing as part of a constructivist study can therefore be thought of an 'active interview', and thus markedly different to the passive traditional conception (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). The interviews conducted within this study can therefore be characterised as active and reciprocal in nature, producing socially and textually negotiated narratives that were co-authored between researcher and participant.

Building on the constructivist perspective, it is important to note that both the interviewer and the interviewee approach the process with different historical and biological dispositions (Hodkinson, 2005). As a result, both the interviewer and interviewee approach

the process from their own interpretive communities, thus influencing how data is understood and interpreted.

The interview procedure was open-ended, emergent and unbounded, relying heavily upon follow up questions of 'how', 'what' and 'why' (Charmaz, 2006). Whilst this does bare resemblance to semi-structured interviewing, the underlying difference was a focus on allowing the 'story' to unfold, but with intent to probe beyond semantics, questioning the latent meanings, values and ideologies of the participant. This was achieved via 'intermediate questions', aimed at eliciting aims, intentions, reasons and significance (Charmaz, 2006). As such, the initial questions served to direct the conversation towards a particular topic, whilst the intermediate questions provide the scope for unanticipated material to emerge within the interview. The following excerpt illustrates how one of the studies procedural sub question s was translated to participants in this manner during Phase 1:

Procedural sub-questions	Initial open-ended questions	Intermediate questions
What role does personal biography play in the shaping of learning dispositions?	Tell me about your coach education (CE) experiences to date?	As you look back on your CE experiences, tell me about what experiences were positive and what were negative? *Probe for examples. Require evidence of impact.*
		Why do you do you think these experiences were positive/negative?

Procedural sub questions translated to participants in interview: Phase 1

The interviews lasted between 45 to 60 minutes and took place at either a communal drinks area outside of the workplace, or on occasion within the coaches' own office space. That said the initial research design was to conduct interviews at the most convenient location for any given coach within their workplace. This was an effort to account for the sometimes frantic, and often changing, schedules of these elite coaches. However, this

approach was abandoned in the second month of the study when the researcher experienced the impact of 'micro-geographies' on the interview process. According to Elwood and Martin (2000):

'The micro-geographies of interview locations situate a participant with respect to other actors and to his or her own multiple identities and roles, affecting the information that is communicated in the interview as well as power dynamics of the interview itself' (p.652).

Whist potentially beneficial, what was experienced were the contradictory implications of this circumstance:

"Well that was not a well-managed interview, in thinking about it Stewart was not comfortable and in the end it just descended into a 'yes no' conversation. I think sitting by the offices like we were, meant he became conscious that what he was saying could possibly be overheard, meaning he did not want to talk too much on the topics I brought up. A learning experience – it was not the right location; we used it because it was easy and quick, but the costs far outweighed the benefits" (Field note, February).

In this instance the respondent was concerned about presenting what could possibly be construed as negative or dissenting views within earshot of his colleagues. What is more, this also presented a previously unaddressed ethical consideration, requiring the interviews to be moved to a convenient location outside of the workplace.

3.12.2 Participant Observation

Regarded as the mainstay of the ethnographic approach (Angrosino, 2005), participant observation has been described by Patton (2002) as an 'omnibus' data collection strategy, combining direct participation, observation, introspection, and natural interviewing. Indeed, Brewer (2000) contends that observation provides the foundation upon which all research is based, whether it is observing chemicals in a lab or rats navigating a maze. For the ethnographic researcher it is the process of *'data gathering by means of participation in the daily life of informants in their natural settings… in order to discover their interpretations, social meanings and activities'* (Brewer, 2000, p. 59). The intent behind

this immersion within the field of study is to provide the researcher with a lived experience of what informants naturally do and feel, sharing the everyday experiences of those they are studying. Indeed, this definition suggests the approach is most suited to the investigation required by this thesis, allowing for the nature of coach learning to be addressed within its natural setting. That said, there are caveats to this method. The researcher as data collection instrument is obliged to be somewhat 'schizophrenic' according to Merriam (1998); required to observe as if they were an insider, whilst remaining detached enough to act as analytic outsider. This Cohen et al (2011) contend, makes the approach the most 'subtly intrusive' form of observation, for researchers must become empathetic members of a group to gain access to insiders activities, though still perform in their role as researcher. That being said, in order to achieve this certain personal qualities are required, likely only to be developed via experience (Brewer, 2000). As such, the early stages of the observation period acted as a form of trial and error phase, within which I the researcher learned how to shed the title of researcher and became an accepted insider.

Direct contact with the participants allowed me to develop an understanding of the context and relationships that exist within the coaching workplace. This Patton (2002) contends is a crucial component in the understanding of phenomena as a whole, or in this case, the wider aspects of coach learning. What is more, observations in this light provided the opportunity to witness those processes that had escaped the conscious awareness of participants, or those behaviours that might otherwise not be mentioned in interviews (Kawulich, 2005). The critiques of participant observation concern the notions of reflexivity and the validity of interpretations. Certainly it is noted that any observable situation is open to bias (Dewalt and Dewalt, 2011), thus it is necessarily to attempt to control this bias without assuming the objective position of the positivist researcher. Cohen et al's (2011) suggest that observation data should include expanded notes, an audit trail, and early interpretive analyses (memos) as a means of increasing study reliability. In response to this, observation data was recorded on two levels; first at the level of description and then at the level of reflection. This second level was conducted in the evenings following the day's observations. Initial notes were expanded upon, filling in the gaps between simpler descriptions of events. This also presented the opportunity to list

concerns surrounding difficulties faced by the researcher, a move that further acknowledged potential personal biases, whilst justifying the decisions that were made.

The observation data was recorded using field-notes, textual reproductions of the researcher's day-to-day writings around observations and reflections concerning the OHPI (Atkinson, 1992). Characterised as the very essence of ethnographic study (Emerson et al., 2011), these inscriptions of social discourse and behaviour represent the textual evidence of a researchers time within the field (Geertz, 1973). Intended to provide descriptive accounts of people, events, and dialogue, the act is one that must be regarded as more that simply mirroring reality. Rather, the level of description should reflect the particular purposes and convictions of those involved (Van Maanen, 2011). Indeed, at an early stage field-notes represent the active process of interpretation and meaning making (Emerson et al., 2011). Interestingly, Wolfinger (2002) suggests that the strategy of inscription will influence the ensuing data, as this determines the tacit knowledge used in the depiction of that observed. Therefore in the act of conducted an ethnography that best answers the research questions it is important to delineate the strategy by which field-notes have been written. Within the literature two forms of approach are prevalent, 'a comprehensive review' and 'a salience hierarchy' (Tjore, 2006; Emerson et al., 2011, Wolfinger, 2002). A salience hierarchy involves researchers recording those observations they deem most noteworthy, particularly useful when examining unique or obscure phenomena. However, as the research questions in this study do not concern deviant or special cases, a comprehensive review strategy was employed. In this approach I recounted entire segments of time spent in the field, often describing events that might otherwise seem too mundane to annotate. The utility if this approach is that such data may later turn out to be valuable, providing the ethnographer with comparative material. An example of this can be seen in the following excerpt.

Observation Memo: Demonstration of comprehensive review approach

A comprehensive review generally takes the form of a systematic list of concerns. Spradley (1980) suggests that a researcher note: Spaces: the physical place or places; Actors: the people involved; Activities: a set of related acts people do; Objects: the physical things present; Acts: single actions that people do; Events: a set of related activities that people carry out; Time: the sequencing that takes place over time; Goals: the things people are trying to accomplish; and Feelings: the emotions felt and expressed. Spradley's framework is useful for delineating the social context, however, Charmaz (2006) suggests that field-notes within a grounded theory study need portray processual and phenomenal data, as opposed to a thick description of the settings. Thus within the logic of GTM a researcher would need to place emphasis of significant processes that occurred within the settings, recognise participants specific use of language, progressively focus notes on key analytic ideas, and detail participant anecdotes and understandings. Thus grounded theory ethnographers are said to produce conceptual renderings of actions

and events. As this thesis aims to employ a CGTM to data analysis, there is a need for data that allows for a processual understanding of coach learning. Yet, as Patton (2002) contends phenomena can only truly be understood holistically through a comprehension of context. Therefore it was decided that the central tenets of both Spradley and Charmaz's frameworks would be utilised within the taking of field-notes. A copy of the field-note template can be found in Appendix 4.

3.13 Research timeline

Given the complexity and extended duration of an ethnographic study, a timeline delineating the individual research actions undertaken has been provided below. This illustration also highlights the temporal positioning of the most significant events experienced throughout the course of the investigation. It should be noted that these events are included as they characterised significant transitions within the functioning of the OHPI.

Timeline of research actions and significant events within the OHPI

Phase 1 off Data Collection

Phase 2 off Data Collection

Studies opening interviews

Studies closing interviews

Julie joins coaching staff
01/04/2013

Peter resigned from OHPI
15/04/2013

2013 | January | February | March | April | May | June | July | August

First day of study, introduced to Head coach and Performance Director
05/01/2013

Terrance quits job and returns to the USA
30/04/2013

3.14 Data Analysis

As discussed earlier within the chapter, a constructivist grounded theory approach to data collection and analysis was utilised within this study. One of the fundamental tenets of this method is the continuous interplay between data collection and analysis (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). As such, the researcher engages in an iterative process of constant comparison, moving back and forth between data collection, analysis and interpretation.

The utility of this method is that it provides a 'flexible' and 'adaptive' approach to generating and making use of data (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007), structuring the research process in a manner that *"looks beyond the obvious and [provides] a path to reach imaginative interpretations"* (Charmaz, 2006, p. 181). To clarify the nature of this process a schematic representation of the grounded theory method is illustrated below:

Data Collection	Constant Comparative Methods

| Literature Review Interviews Observations | Theoretical Sensitivity ↕ Theoretical sampling ↕ Theoretical Sufficiency | **Coding** Open ↓ Focused ↓ Theoretical | Comparing Data ↓ Developing codes regarding conceptual focus ↓ Writing theory | **Theoretical Memos** Conceptual Personal Methodological |
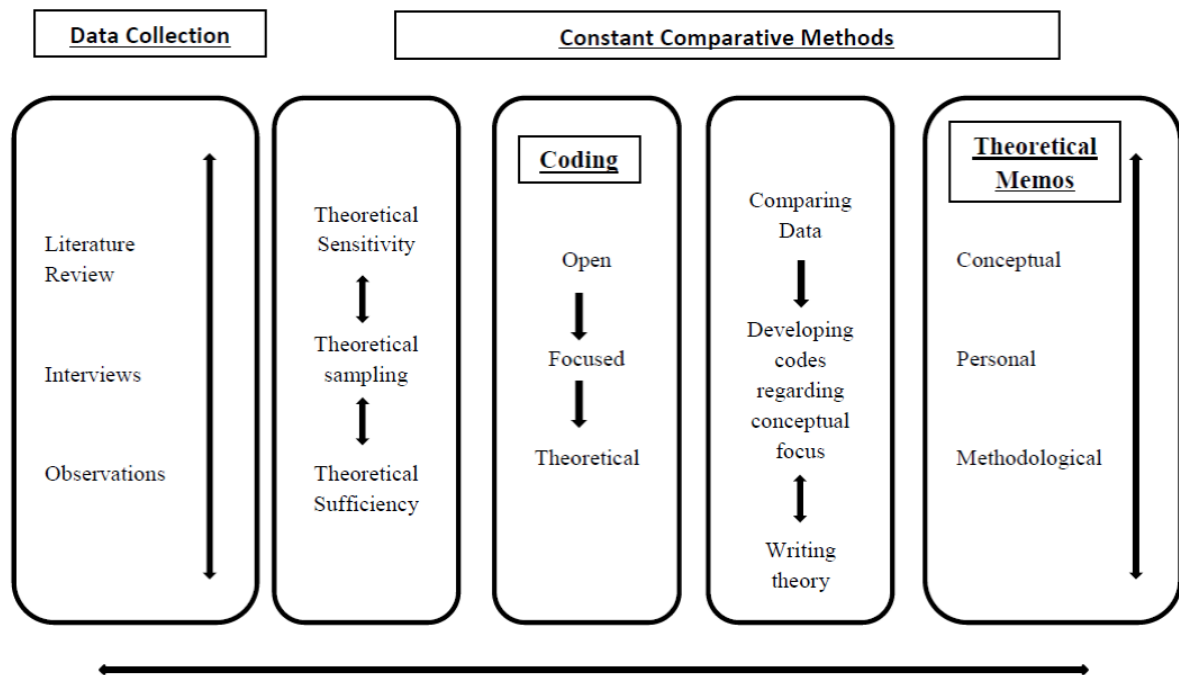
Figure 5: Schematic of grounded theory process. Adapted from Chalmers, R. (1998) Unpublished PhD Thesis, The University of Western Australia.

The data analysis began once the interviews and observations (field-notes) had been collated and transcribed. This was done through applying a coding process to the texts. Within grounded theory, coding involves the interpretation of data by assigning segments of text with characterising labels, thus creating the analytic framework for interpretation (Charmaz, 2014). As such, these codes represent what Star (2007) regards as 'transitional objects', connecting fragments of data with the interpreted abstractions we as researchers draw from them. The coding process undertaken, as characterised by Charmaz (2014) was a two phase approach, first labelling each line or segment to capture meaning, followed by a more focused gathering of those codes most significant or frequent within the data. This process is iterative in that the researcher is constantly moving between the data and the constructed codes/categories, thus characterising the constant comparative method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Indeed, the analyst is constantly comparing the already coded data with an appreciation of the already coded incidents (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007).

There were three levels of coding analysis adopted in this study, open, focused, and theoretical. The following section provides greater detail on each level alongside examples from the data to ensure reader clarity. Importantly, whilst each level is presented sequentially, the process was not one of discrete analysis, but rather a continuous interaction between the three.

3.15 Open Coding

The initial level of coding within a grounded theory study is termed open coding, requiring close reading and interrogation of the data line-by-line (Charmaz, 2008). As such, the data was broken down into actions, events and processes to help define the implicit meanings and processes within. Importantly, the language used in this practice was indicative of the actions within data, utilising 'in vivo codes' when possible as to not apply any preconceived themes or understandings to data that might not necessarily fit such connections (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007). Indeed, in this manner the study conformed to a central principle within grounded theory research, that of identifying emerging concepts that appear to best *"fit the data"* (Strauss 1987, p.28). In further supporting this notion, gerunds were employed to 'code for processes' (Charmaz, 2014), allowing the researcher to define actions and envision the associated links. The contrast to this would be to code for specific topics or themes, an approach that allows for the synthesis of data, but can result in forced conceptual links and understandings that do not tackle the latent processes involved (Charmaz, 2011). As such, by addressing action via the use of gerunds the researcher was able to maintain an understanding that lay close to the original data.

The following illustration is an example of the open coding process and a component within the identification of the code *'Existing and self-imposed support networks'*. The segment refers to the notion that coaches maintain and function within pre-existing social support networks, where often enforced organisational learning practices act to provide another, and in this case unwanted, layer of learning support. As such this was found to influence coaches' propensity to engage with certain social learning opportunities.

Narrative Data	Open codes
(Stewart) Um, I don't know really, I don't know how that is going to work. What I will say is that there are a lot of things that are happening just naturally. For example, I basically	Confusion over collaboration with OHPI colleagues Created mentoring relationship, Agentic behaviour

mentor Leon as a coach. So Leon still competes, he's coming back from a knee surgery and he had an outdoor season this year, but you know, he's starting to look areas outside of that as well. So I decided to coach around five people in the top end group, and then he coaches around ten people in his group with me kind of overseeing it and mentoring him. You know, it's interesting because these things have naturally developed … this is not something that we planned or sort of set out to do, but it's really working, for us anyway… Leon actually coaches all through last year and had a really successful year with his group, and now he has obviously got the opportunity to take on some faster athletes, so again it's another opportunity for him to sort of step up and I'm going to try and help him through that process. Because if there are then kids in that group, and they are young talented individuals then one of them could pop out and be somebody that we really sort of take up. So it's interesting because it's naturally occurring, and it's not just me. I mean, I look at Richard and Graham a similar sort of situation, and then you have Frank and Grant. You know, although we got rid of the apprenticeship programme it seems to me that, that sort of scheme has continued on in a much more successful way. Um, and it's not forced that the beauty of it. And the reason why it's been so success is because the guys aren't being paid, they are volunteering their time so they want to be there, they want to learn. I mean it naturally selects the right individuals of work and learn with or from, especially Leon, I mean I can't speak for the other guys because I don't know them too well, but I know that Leon has been tremendously successful in his development as a coach.	Taking control of situation

Natural development of valuable learning opportunity
Unplanned

Recognising talent of those around
Accessing member outside of OHPI

Facilitating the learning/development of others

Recognising relevance of naturally occurring relationships
Taking example from other colleagues
Lose of apprentice programme- missed learning affordance
Nonprofessional contributions show enthusiasm,
Volunteer workforce
Natural selection of suited personalities

Pride in helping young coach |
| **(Researcher)** Would you say that it is then useful for you as well, in terms of you being the mentor now? | Enjoying learning in the act of teaching, consolidating thinking, beliefs, and processes. |
| **(Stewart)** I actually enjoy the process immensely and it's good to have someone to talk through the stuff we're doing because it consolidates your own though process, the stuff that you already know or are learning there and then. It consolidates | Shared belief systems, assigning value
Maintained connection to pre-existing learning/social support |

your own belief systems and philosophies and the rest of it, you know, and I still use mentors above me. I'm still in contact with Kevin and Dan on a very, very consistent basis so, I am still getting mentored myself I guess, while doing it for someone else myself. So I am kind of in the middle of a triangle I guess.	Multiple networks
	Acknowledging organisations desire to foster collaboration
(Researcher) So you maintain your existing support networks I guess, the ones you had before the institute came into effect?	
	Justifying non engagement due to personal differences
(Stewart) So I have sat down and discussed this with Stephen, one of the things that Stephen was trying to foster was collaboration between the existing coaches, and from what we discussed at the end of this year it was clear that it was absolutely not possible for this to happen because of the different nature of our philosophies and the way we work [coaches], I made it very clear that we should firm up the relationship that I have with Dan and Kevin because they are more from the school of philosophy that I learnt my trade in, so they are more appropriate for me to learn from that from the people that are currently around in the organisation. So to go back to the start, there hasn't been a lot of collaboration between me rest, and me and the other coaches, but there has been collaboration between others and people outside of the institute, like my old mentors and me.	Desire to 'firm up' and maintain comfortable existing support.
	Shared history- where he learnt his trade
	Reiterating lack of collaboration with rest of staff

Open coding example, Stewart, Interview 3.

Throughout the open coding phase, the analysis was supported by the concurrent production and reproduction of theoretical memos. For Morse (1994, p. 39) *"writing memos is key to recording insight and facilitates, at an early stage, the development of theory"*. Thus the use of memos served to provide structure to earlier interpretations, providing the opportunity to consider the intricacies of the data rather than just summarising material. Additionally, memos also served to offer direction for future data collection phases. Indeed, Glaser (1978) has argued that to negate this component of analysis is to miss out on performing an analysis actually grounded within theory. Theoretical memos therefore served to facilitate the generation of theoretical and conceptual ideas grounded in data, guarding against merely conjectural insights. The

following illustration details a theoretical memo relating to the aforementioned open coding example.

<table>
<tr><td>Theoretical memo – Stewart (Coach), Interview 3

Code name/Observed process: **Existing social support networks**</td></tr>
<tr><td>For coaches the formation and maintenance of existing social support networks appears to play a significant role in the development of their professional knowledge. Stewart for example demonstrates highly agentic behaviour in the developing and maintaining a network of like-minded individuals. Indeed, other coaches (Richard and Frank) have also sought support from individuals outside of the OHPI in lieu of collaboration within colleagues.

Questions:

What is the role of time in the creation of networks?

Is it too early to judge the utility of possible networks/relationships within the OHPI?

Is attempting to enforce collaboration just adding another layer of unwanted 'learning' support to coaches' working lives?

How do coaching philosophy/dispositions impact on coaches' formation/use of social support?</td></tr>
</table>

Example of theoretical memo – Stewart (Coach), Interview 3

3.16 Focused Coding

Following the initial coding phase a more focused approach was utilised. Within a traditional grounded theory study this would involve axial coding, where the aim is to strategically reassemble the data 'split' or 'fractured' within the initial coding phase (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). As such, a researcher would engage in a process of removing redundant codes and gathering those most dominant and analogous around the axis of a conceptual relationship (Saldana, 2013). Within this process data analysis requires that text be converted to concepts, aligning data on a conceptual level over a descriptive one. In achieving this, Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest the use of an action paradigm model, focusing conceptualisations around,

> *"The preconditions that give rise to [them]; the context (its specific set of properties) in which it is embedded; the action/interactional strategies by*

which it is handled, managed, carried out; and the consequences of those
strategies." (p.97)

With this in mind, it can be construed that the utility of such an approach is to provide a readily applicable and practical structure to data analysis and interpretation. That being said, a number of researchers have objected to the artificial restrictions this 'mechanical' approach applies to data analysis (Charmaz, 2006; Urquhart; 2001; Kendall; 1999). Most notably, Glaser (1992) is strongly critical of the notion that researchers are forcing pre constructed-categories onto data, thus negating the utility of the constant comparative method, as concepts can no longer be seen as emergent. Whilst for some authors the use of such stringent approach captures the strength of grounded theory research in producing well-structured theory (Kelle, 2005), it is also apparent that axial coding may limit what and how researchers learn about their fields of study, thus limiting the scope of the codes they can construct (Charmaz, 2006). In recognising these concerns this study drew on Charmaz's (2006) conception of 'focused coding'. Still adhering to the notion of 'reassembling' the previously deconstructed data, focus coding asks that the researcher move beyond latent descriptions of events, to consider the codes that make the most analytical sense in capturing the meaning within the data. It is important to note that this was not an entirely linear process, as what Charmaz (1996, p.40) refers to as *"Aha! Now I understand"* moments prompted a return to earlier data with fresh eyes. As such, the following interview transcript illustrates the progression from initial codes to focused codes to identify the key processes involved in coaches learning behaviours.

Narrative Data	Focused codes
(Stewart) Um, I don't know really, I don't know how that is going to work. What I will say is that there are a lot of things that are happening just naturally. For example, I basically mentor Leon as a coach. So Leon still competes, he's coming back from a knee surgery and he had an outdoor season this year, but you know, he's starting to look areas outside of that as well. So I decided to coach around five people in the top end group, and then he coaches around ten people in his group with me kind of overseeing it and mentoring him. You know, it's interesting because these things have naturally developed …	Recognising the importance of natural development

this is not something that we planned or sort of set out to do, but it's really working, for us anyway… Leon actually coaches all through last year and had a really successful year with his group, and now he has obviously got the opportunity to take on some faster athletes, so again it's another opportunity for him to sort of step up and I'm going to try and help him through that process. Because if there are then kids in that group, and they are young talented individuals then one of them could pop out and be somebody that we really sort of take up. So it's interesting because it's naturally occurring, and it's not just me. I mean, I look at Richard and Graham a similar sort of situation, and then you have Frank and Grant. You know, although we got rid of the apprenticeship programme it seems to me that, that sort of scheme has continued on in a much more successful way. Um, and it's not forced that the beauty of it. And the reason why it's been so success is because the guys aren't being paid, they are volunteering their time so they want to be there, they want to learn. I mean it naturally selects the right individuals of work and learn with or from, especially Leon, I mean I can't speak for the other guys because I don't know them too well, but I know that Leon has been tremendously successful in his development as a coach.	Justifying behaviour based on existing practice

Valuing unforced learning driven relationships

Consolidating and expanding understandings with others |
(Researcher) Would you say that it is then useful for you as well, in terms of you being the mentor now?	Engaging multiple networks/groups
(Stewart) I actually enjoy the process immensely and it's good to have someone to talk through the stuff we're doing because it consolidates your own though process, the stuff that you already know or are learning there and then. It consolidates your own belief systems and philosophies and the rest of it, you know, and I still use mentors above me. I'm still in contact with Kevin and Dan on a very, very consistent basis so, I am still getting mentored myself I guess, while doing it for someone else myself. So I am kind of in the middle of a triangle I guess.	
(Researcher) So you maintain your existing support networks I	Resisting forced and incompatible relationships

| guess, the ones you had before the institute came into effect? | |
| (Stewart) So I have sat down and discussed this with Stephen, one of the things that Stephen was trying to foster was collaboration between the existing coaches, and from what we discussed at the end of this year it was clear that it was absolutely not possible for this to happen because of the different nature of our philosophies and the way we work [coaches], I made it very clear that we should firm up the relationship that I have with Dan and Kevin because they are more from the school of philosophy that I learnt my trade in, so they are more appropriate for me to learn from that from the people that are currently around in the organisation. So to go back to the start, there hasn't been a lot of collaboration between me rest, and me and the other coaches, but there has been collaboration between others and people outside of the institute, like my old mentors and me. | |

Focused coding example, Stewart, Interview 3.

Throughout the focused coding phase of the analysis the researcher again utilised theoretical memos to record, refine and compare early theoretical conceptualisations. Such memos provided the space to engage in the constant comparative style of grounded theory, and illustrated the development of the meaning making process. The following example details the theoretical memo created in the development of the category *'Existing and self-imposed support networks'*. It should be noted that this memo comprises the thinking developed around multiple data sources (observation, memos, and field-notes) including the aforementioned interview transcripts.

Theoretical memo – Development of 'focused' code **'Existing and self-imposed support networks'**
This code recognises the importance of social networks in coaches learning and development, whilst considering the impact of agency and social structures on their decision regarding the creation and utilisation of such networks.
For coaches the formation and maintenance of existing social support networks was a significant feature of their learning experiences. Interestingly, the nature of these relationships appears to be a significant factor in determining coaches' engagement with learning opportunities in the workplace. Some coaches have chosen to maintain and utilise support networks that predated the created of the OHPI. What is more, others have created new networks with individuals not employed within the NGB. These instances suggest that the instigation of organisationally 'enforced' collaboration with colleagues is potentially adding an additional and unwanted layer to coaches learning affordances. The evidence also suggests that the creation of generative support networks takes significant time and the performative culture of sport, and the workplace in general, might not be suitable to foster such relationships.

Example of theoretical memo utilised in the construction of core categories.

A full copy of the associated transcript and the focused coding procedure is provided in appendix 5.

3.17 Theoretical coding

The final phase of the analytic process was the theoretical coding phase. Within this process I considered *'possible relationships'* between the aforementioned focused codes (Charmaz, 2006, p, 63) in order to *'weave the fractured story back together'* (Glaser, 1978, p. 72). As such, thematic codes were produced, creating a coherent and theoretically driven analytical story that attempted to capture the workplace learning experiences of professional coaches (Charmaz, 2006). In supporting this process Glaser (1978) provides a list of 'coding families' that can be used to assist a researcher in relating codes and their properties. These families include the *"Six C's: Causes, Contexts, Contingencies, Consequences, Covariance's, and Conditions"* (p.74), and major sociological concepts such as 'identity', 'goals', 'family', 'culture' and 'context'. It is Glaser's intention that familiarity with these concepts sensitises the researcher to the integrative possibilities within the data. That being said, it has been argued that the need for familiarity with a variety of sociological and epistemological backgrounds makes the effective application of

this method difficult (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007; Kelle, 2005). What is more, it can be disputed that to adopt this approach is yet another manner of imposing predetermined thinking on data that might not necessarily fit such a mould. In addressing these concerns, this thesis takes note of Glaser's (2005) contention that the coding families are not exhaustive, as researchers are encouraged to consider new terms for existing families, and potentially suggest new families of integration. As such, the approach is utilised within this thesis to provide structure and guidance as opposed to ridged direction.

The theoretical coding process led to the creation of three core categories, 'Negotiating personal engagement', 'Structuring of the workplace'. And 'Mediating pre-conditions'. These core categories represent the foundation upon which my narrative interpretation of coaches' workplace learning experiences was built. Strauss and Corbin (1990) advocate writing a descriptive overview of the story line as a final conceptualisation of the core categories. As such, this serves to ensure each conceptual label fits the data in depicting a coherent story. Importantly, this process recognises Strauss and Corbin's (1994, p.281) contention that the researcher is obligated to "give voice" to participant stories, whilst being mindful that they reside within *"the context of their own inevitable interpretations".* The following memo provides an account of my understandings of coaches' workplace learning experiences within the OHPI.

Memo – Story-line, **Coaches' learning experiences within the OHPI**

For the coaches' within this study, the learning experienced within their workplace was the outcome of an interdependent process between social and structural factors that were located within a fluid contextual setting. This process can be characterised using three core conceptual categories. The first category, *'Negotiating Personal Engagement',* addresses the processes through which coaches construct a personalised understanding of their workplace. This in turn mediated their behaviour and engagement with opportunities to learn. As such, this category captures how coaches' negotiated the employment of their agency, which   their interpretations of, and engagement with, the learning affordances present within the OHPI. The focused codes that informed this category include; Expectations and identification of role boundaries, Negotiating social engagement with colleagues, Assessing value, Constructed Identity, and Personal/historical dispositions.

The second category identified within the analytic process, *'Structuring of the workplace',* addresses the structural processes observed within the OHPI which impacted upon coaches' workplace learning. This category captures how coaches learning experiences were located with a dynamic and fluid landscape. Indeed, the data suggests that the workplace is far from a benign entity, as implicit goals, beliefs, traditions and practices had the potential to guide learning behaviour. As such, this fluid environment provided a context that both afforded opportunities to learn/or not, and shaped how such opportunities were valued and engaged with by participants. The focused codes utilised in constructing this category included; Funding, Micro-geographies and Structuring and restructuring of leadership

The final category, *'Mediating Factors'* addresses the broader sociocultural processes that were found to mediate coaches' workplace learning. Interestingly, the influences of these social processes on learning were found to extend beyond either personal negotiations or the impositions of structural factors. The construction of this category sought to encapsulate the implications of 'Time', 'Existing or self-imposed support networks', Locations and fields of activity' and 'Prevailing Cultures', on coaches learning experience. As each process had both social and structural qualities it was felt that the bridging features of these processes warranted merit in their own right.

In summary, within the context of this study coaches learning engagement within the workplace constitutes a process of agentic negotiations between the individual and social structures, located within a context that is subject to a variety of mediating factors (including culture). Within this perspective agency is seen as the outcome of personal biographies, histories, constructed identities and membership within multiple communities. As such the invitational learning affordances of the workplace are construed and constructed in a manner that is personally and contextually dependent.

Memo: Story-line of coaches' learning experiences within the OHPI

Appendix 6 provides tables explicating the construction of core conceptual categories in relation to the relevant focused codes.

3.18 Data Management

Within this study data was managed using QSR's Nvivo software. The use of CAQDAS (computer assisted qualitative data analysis software) was useful in organising and handling the large amounts of textual data produced throughout the study. Indeed, the development of such software has been noted to provide researchers with a more accessible approach to exploring complex data connections than compared to traditional cut and paste methods (O'Reilly, 2009). For Charmaz (2011), the use of CAQDAS aligns well with the objectives of ethnographic grounded theory study. The author suggests the advantages include:

1. Ease of sorting, separating and categorizing data and codes.

2. The opportunity to engage in multiple levels of analysis at once, therefore adhering to the tenets of grounded theory.

3. Providing a clear audit trail of analysis and interpretation.

4. Management and organisation of emergent themes/codes.

It is important to note however, that there are caveats to this approach. The central concern regards the notion of researchers becoming too close to, or too distant from the original data, should the software design drive the analysis (Davis and Meyer, 2009; Bringer et al., 2006). In response to this assertion, this study takes note to Bringer et al's (2006) contention that

> *"Creating time and space to think about ideas, as well as having discussions with fellow researchers, is advocated as a necessity on grounded theory. Use of a computer program need not change these valuable activities"* (p.262)

As such an extensive audit trail has been detailed throughout this thesis so that the reader might better follow the creation of categories and comprehend subsequent interpretations.

3.19 Reflexivity

Within qualitative studies the researcher is often encouraged to consider their position within the research process (Russell and Kelly, 2002). This act of self-reflection is

regarded as reflexivity and has been proliferated as a method of legitimising the quality of qualitative research through recognising the subjectivities and potential biases of the researcher (Pillow, 2010; 2003; Jootun et al., 2009). Indeed, it has been argued that 'good' qualitative research, particular ethnographic studies, endeavour to show the hand of the researcher (Altheide and Johnson, 2011). Reflexivity thus represents a methodological tool by which researchers can *"better represent, legitimize, or call into question their data"* (Pillow, 2003, p.176). Importantly it should be noted that whilst reflexivity assumes researchers are inherently aware of their own subjectivities, identities and biases, these notions are often deeply engrained within a person's sense of self (Hennick et al., 2011). Therefore there is a need to actively engage in reflexive practice to bring forth a greater awareness of these issues. As such, in attempting to balance the potential benefits of researcher involvement, alongside the obligation to accurately represent participant voices (Russell and Kelly, 2002), this thesis employed reflexive practice to mediate decisions regarding direction, interpretation and deduction made throughout the study. The model of reflection utilised to facilitate the 'de-briefing' of reflexive practice within this thesis was Gibbs' reflective cycle (1988) and is illustrated below.
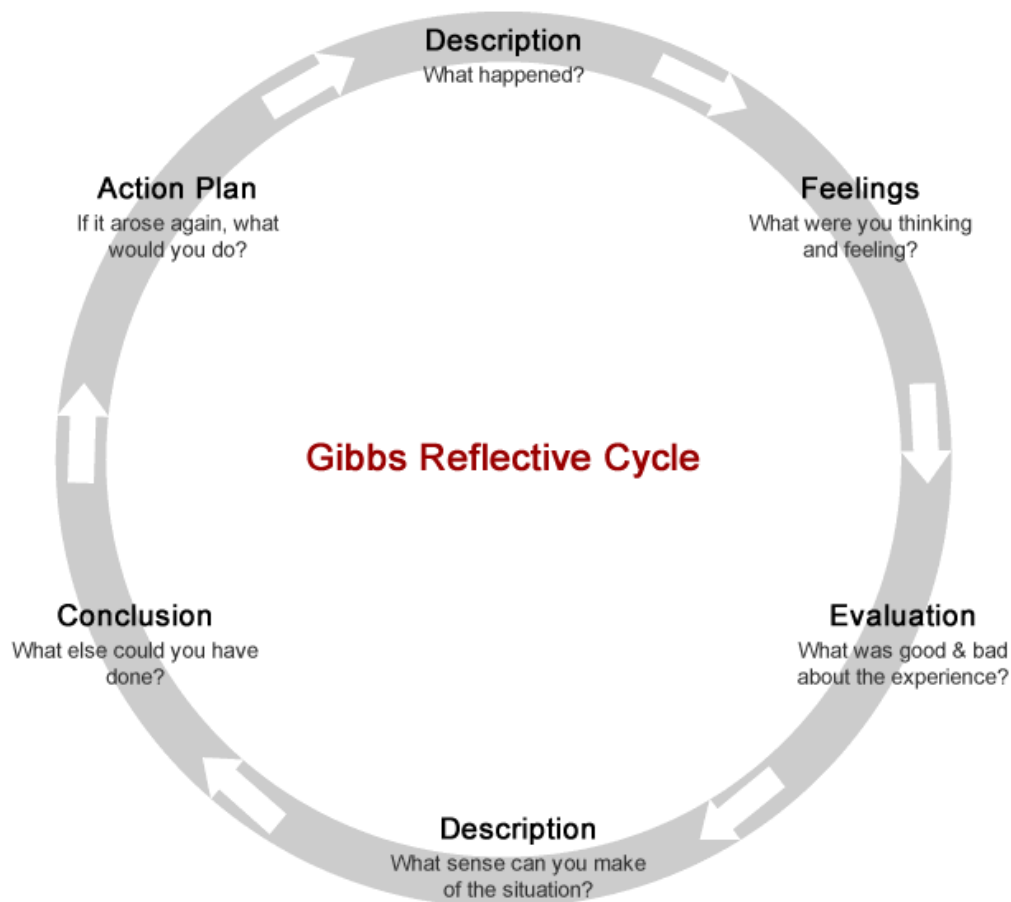
Figure 6: Gibbs' reflective cycle, Adapted from Gibbs (1988)

The utility of engaging in reflexive thinking of this manner is in recognising the inter-subjective elements that can influence the research process. Reflexivity can provide integrity and trustworthiness within a study as researchers recognise their predilections towards particular research contexts (Finlay, 2002). Indeed, as Mruck and Breuer (2003, p.1) contend, researchers inevitably *'through their personal and professional characteristics, by leaning on theories and methods available at a special time and place in their (sub-) cultures, disciplines and nations'* shape the structures of their work. Certainly, in reflexively considering my past experiences it is possible to identify how my interest in coach learning and education is inextricably tied to my positions as athlete, student and coach. Within these roles I was introduced to what Jones (2006) would regard as 'threshold concepts', those that do not simplify the idea of coach learning, and whilst daunting, must be undertaken in progressing towards greater understanding. As such, I was

drawn to question nature of coach education; specifically what is the role of individuality and sporting culture in shaping the learning experience?

It should however, be acknowledged that attempting to clarify taken-for-granted assumptions through reflexive engagement is, by definition, a challenging task. As such researchers are likely to only ever engage in partial understandings of their subjective involvement (Finlay, 2002). Reflexivity by its very nature requires more than mere reflection, it asks that we ground our thinking in the experiential and interpersonal nature of qualitative inquiry (Patton, 2014). As such, the following section demonstrates my 'imperfect' account of how reflexivity was employed as a methodological tool within this study.

My reflexive account begins at the juncture of what Patton (2014) regards as where 'reflexivity meets voice'. The notion of reflexivity requires that researchers acknowledge and own their perspective; therefore the voice of that perspective is crucial in explicating this viewpoint. For Kleinsasser (2000) *"the first person voice signals (to) the reader that the researcher views her or himself integral to the research"* (p.160). Indeed, as Patton (2014) suggests the perspective the researcher brings to a study is part of the context of the findings. As such, the human being within the research is recognised, specifically the role of the researcher as 'instrument' (Seidman, 2012), active in taking field-notions, asking questions, making decisions and reaching conclusions. As such, I chose to position myself within the research, conscious that self-awareness might 'sharpen that instrument' (Patton, 2014). That being said, throughout the research process I found this task difficult. In one instance I could easily locate myself as co-constructor of the research findings, and in another adopt the uncomfortable tendency to become the invisible academic within the methodology. A history of scientific report writing throughout secondary and undergraduate study had entrenched within me a need view methodology as a precise, measureable and irrefutable objective. However, this is clearly not the case. As Gray (2003, p.72) contends, *"Research into social and cultural processes and practices are subject to change. Indeed the tenet of ethnography, reflexivity, recognises this dynamic nature"*. As such, I endeavoured to clearly locate myself throughout the study, showing the 'ethnographers hand'. Through recognition of this I was able to overcome my narrative discomfort and better understand the nature of the study, and thus judge the credibility of the research in a more informed manner.

Nevertheless, reflexivity is more complex than simply writing in the first person. Within this context it refers to the relationship between myself the researcher, and the phenomena being examined. Indeed, as Silverman (2010) affirms reflexivity *"describes the self-organising character of all interaction so that any action provides its own context"* (p.437). Reflexivity is thus an iterative mechanism through which one can consider both the construction of meaning, and how that meaning shaped the continuation of the research process. Therefore self-questioning alone is not enough, to be reflexive one must consider how context informs practice. As outlined in chapter 1 (introduction) my history as an athlete made me very much an 'insider researcher', one that chooses to study a group to which they already belong (Breen, 2007). Indeed, as an international athlete (from the ages of 16 to 23) and coach, I had spent much of my time as a participant within the culture of the elite sport in question, based in high performance centres and surrounded by the population of coaches I would later choose to study. As such, I entered the location of study as an 'affiliated member' (Corbin Dwyer and Buckle, 2009), with strong predilections concerning the nature and quality of education within coaching. These views, conditioned by an *'apprenticeship of observation'* (Borg, 2004, p. 275), were further reinforced all through my academic study.

Throughout the data collection critical reflection on these experiences allowed me to develop a sensitive and informed understanding of the culture within the OHPI. This allowed me to identify and discuss issues that might otherwise have gone unrecognised. Indeed, with some coaches it was clear that my use of a common language and shared understandings of coaching, facilitated the exposure and discussion of sensitive topics. Frank for example specifically addressed this notion stating, *"I'm only telling you this because you've worked with me, you know my process, you understand why this is important"*. That being said, at an early stage of the study I was made aware that these predilections had the propensity to shape or guide the inquiry in unnatural ways; in others words, they were a potential antecedent for research bias. During a field-note transcription I noted that I had posed a question to Stewart in a manner that belayed my assumptions regarding a topic. In asking, *"Given the limitations in current coach education, how do you currently develop yourself?"* I articulated my belief that current education pathways were limited in their ability to support professional development. As such, I could not be sure that his response was not influenced by my position, or in fact if I was mining for a specific reply. As Corbin Dywer and Buckle (2009) warn, whilst a *"researcher might be*

part of the culture under study, he or she might not understand the subculture…This points to the need for bracketing assumptions" (p. 55). In this context it became increasingly important to raise critical questions of the influence my dispositions and experiences had on the study. Observation memos therefore served as a useful tool from which to audit the day's findings and interpretations. For example, in regards to a field-note in June 2013 I wrote:

> *How do my feelings regarding the competitive culture in sport and coaching*
> *impact on my interpretations of the culture within the OHPI? Am I looking for*
> *and picking out tell-tale signs, or letting the data tell the story?*

As such, I engaged in an *'internal dialogue'* that looked to ensure findings were rigorous and presented in as good an order as possible (Seale, 2002, p. 103).

In practical terms the role of insider researcher whilst affording a unique and informed perspective, requires that one adopt the "ultimate existential dual role" (Corbin Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). As such, researchers are likely to encounter role conflict, *"find[ing] themselves caught between loyalty tugs, behavioural claims, and identification dilemmas"* (p.70). Certainly this is a challenge I faced in striving to remain aware of the bigger picture beyond the dimensions of simply 'athlete' or 'coach'. The following observation memo details an instance of role confusion on my part and how it restricted my perspective of events.

Observation Memo – Team activity and researcher focus

11/04/2013 field-note excerpt

"I've just sat down to write my field-notes and realized that I actually don't have much to say. I was sitting here thinking it had been a good day when I realized that Stewart was nowhere to be seen, a key player in the activity I was supposed to be watching! I got distracted watching sport rather than observing the social processes I'm here to examine."

Today was a somewhat confusing experience. I was supposed to be observing a collaborative event/activity run by Richard and Stewart but found that I got lost in the moment and missed a lot of what was happening. It took me until I sat down to write my field notes to realise, but in striving to become a member of this community I momentarily forgot my role as researcher and was busy 'high-fiving' Richard on record-breaking times. The significance of today's activity was the opportunity to observe a circumstance where Richard and Stewart had to work collaboratively. This could potentially have provided significant insight into the strained relationship that exists between them; however, it took Paul to ask me where Stewart was for me to notice that Stewart had left the activity. In truth I was unable to remember at what point Stewart had left, what processes or events preceded it, and what impact it had on Richards's behaviour.

Observational memo detailing reflexive practice as a methodological tool

In addition to potentially obscuring my perspective as a researcher, I had to ensure that role conflict did not allow my status with the OHPI to be seen as aligned with any one coach over another. The memo below demonstrates this point.

Observation Memo – Richard and Stewart – Phase 2

12/05/2013 field-note excerpt

'After sitting in on a relay meeting today I was outside going over my notes and considering the processes that underlie certain coaches' behaviours, namely, the inability of Richard and Stewart to in the same vicinity of the training facility. Whilst lost in thought Richard approached me and asked if I could help start his group of athletes off whilst he got a better vantage point. I agreed and did the job. Moments later; Stewart shouts from across the field for me to do the same for his group, making the point audibly clear to everyone around. After helping, Stewart made a show of thanking me, stating, *"now you're part of the team".*'

As I had technically finished my data collection for the day and was packing up it would have been quite easy to forgo the writing up of the event described. Though, under later consideration it can be suggested that it is a valid insight into the power/identity struggle that exists between the two coaches, Richard and Stewart. Indeed the aforementioned distance between their training 'territories' is suggested to also be the result of this. Stewart's reaction seems to be a response to Richard's asking for me to help, potentially suggesting a form of ownership over the 'researcher'. Thus, he is not allowing Richard to 'claim me'. This is an interesting idea, but care need to be taken to ensure that I the researcher do not become a tool for coach to exert power over another. This could colour the view of participants towards me, alter my status within the OHPI and impact upon the data I have access to.

Observation Memo: Demonstration of dilemma around coach ownership of researcher

As I reflected on this experience I became concerned that my previous emotional and historical investment in the sport could potentially restrict the lens through which I viewed the study. In addressing this concern the literature suggests peer debriefing as a manner of disclosing and discussing one's 'blind spots' (Unluer, 2012; Flick, 2009). Indeed, regular academic supervision proved a practical tool in validating perspective and findings. From these discussions a constant question arose, *what are the social processes guiding these behaviours?* With this in mind, I chose to modify the observation tool (template) so that clarifying these social processes was reiterated throughout the data collection. As such, a list of Glaser's coding families was affixed to the field note template, highlighting the need to remain aware of context and the sociological components at play (A Field-note example is provided within Appendix 4).

Within the role of reflexive ethnographer, 'I' the researcher have endeavoured to consider my role as research instrument (Walcott, 1999), and understand how the characterisation

of 'insider' had the propensity to enable and restrict the research process (Findlay, 2002). As has been discussed, it was apparent that my use of a 'common' language, a shared knowledge of the coach/training process, and an adherence to the expected dress code (ie training attire, sports bags, the make of trainers worn), all facilitated my transition towards becoming an accepted member of the OHPI community. Indeed, this transition was most notable when in the second month of the study, a number of Richard's (coach) athletes began asking, *"So are you training with us now?"* That said, as research instrument the nature of my history and biography also had the potential to impede the research process. For example, in attempting to mirror the coaches being observed I had initially thought to use an Ipad to capture and record field notes (coaches used Ipads as an instant video and analysis tool in training). Indeed, at the time the device was a regular part of my academic routine, used to read papers, make notes and browser the Internet. However, instead of blending into the landscape, my persistent use of the electronic item only sought to highlight my unnatural presence within the OHPI, as I stood in the middle of the training centre desperately scribbling notes. With this, the decision was made to record field notes after the fact, rather than at the time of the observations. As such, the removal of this identifiably academic/outsider practice allowed me to blend more naturally into the routine behaviours of within the OHPI.

Within this study the outcome of reflexive engagement has been the recognition of my position as insider researcher so that I might untangle the personal from the theoretical, and better scrutinize epistemological concerns. I would argue, that having acknowledged the *"insider/outsider status of the researcher"* (Minichiello et al., 1995, p.182), a case has been made that explicit self-aware and analysis of my role as researcher (Finlay, 2002) serves to mediate for the bias within the study. As a methodological tool, reflexive engagement has been a difficult, testing, and ambiguous task. It is neither an admission of guilt nor an obtrusion of facts (Pillow, 2003), but at best a partial attempt to persuade both the reader and myself, that the perspectives given within this thesis hold value in furthering the understanding of coach education (Findlay, 2002). In this manner the thesis aligns itself with Seale's (1999) contention that

> *"It [quality research] requires a much more active and labour-intensive approach towards genuinely self-critical research, so that something of originality and value is created, with which, of course, people are then always*

free to disagree, but may be less inclined to do so because of the strength of the author's case" (p. 6).

3.19 Conclusion

This chapter has summarised the methodology used within this thesis. The study presented is a critical ethnographic case study of an Olympic High performance Institute (OHPI), where the participants were recruited via my historical ties to the sporting organisation. As a researcher I became submerged within the culture of the OHPI over an 8-month period, where organisational culture was investigated in relation to its impact upon coach learning. Participant observations and constructivist interviews were the sources of data collection. The triangulation of methods served to provide a rounded understanding of coaches' experiences' of learning within this workplace. The study adopted a social constructivist perspective, which guided the choice of data collection methods and the use of CGTM (constructed grounded theory method) for the data analysis. As such, the collection and analysis of data represents a co-constructed understanding of how organisational culture impacts upon coach learning.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine how learning culture impacts upon the workplace learning experiences of professional sports coaches, in a bid to further the current understandings of professional learning. As addressed within the methodology chapter, this study utilised a constructivist grounded theory method to collect and analyse data captured during an 8-month ethnographic study of an Olympic high performance centre. The data took the form of researcher field-notes, interview transcripts and theoretical memos. All data is present in italics or tables, and where direct quotes are followed by a pre-assigned anonymised name. It should be noted that quotes within field-notes are paraphrased representations of what participant said, recorded as close to the original content as possible. Through open, focused and theoretical coding, three main conceptual categories were constructed to illustrate coaches learning experiences within the workplace. A table detailing these categories and the associated sub-categories follows.

4.1 Core categories and associated sub-categories

Core Category	Sub-Categories		Description
1.Negotiating personal engagement	i.	Expectations and identification of role boundaries	*Defining the expectations and interpretation of job role.*
	ii.	Negotiating social engagement with colleagues	*Defining social boundaries.*
	iii.	Assessing value and meaningfulness	*Defining value in engagement with learning opportunities.*
	iv.	Constructed Identity	*Coaching identity can shape decisions to participate in learning activities. (Wages)*
	v.	Personal/historical dispositions	*Coaches' Personal dispositions were found to mediate their engagement with learning activities.*
2. Structuring of the workplace	i.	Funding	*Defining how funding structures influence workplace conditions.*
	ii.	Micro-geographies	*Coaches' personal territories influenced engagement and access to learning opportunities.*
	iii.	Structuring and restructuring of leadership	*A perceived 'leadership vacuum' left coaches unsupported.*
3. Mediating pre-conditions	i.	Cultures	*Existing and historically accumulated cultures influenced behaviour and the learning culture within the OHPI.*
	ii.	Time	*Coaches were very time poor, thus impacted ability to engage in learning.*
	iii.	Existing or self-directed support networks	*Coaches' have pre-existing support networks or create new networks that better suit their needs.*
	iv.	Location/fields of activity	*Locations/sites are subject to both individual fields of influence and multiple intersecting fields of influence.*

Table of findings: Core categories and associated sub-categories

Each of the thematic categories represents an abstract conceptualisation of dynamic and interrelated processes. The category titles have been constructed to 'render the data most effectively" (Charmaz, 2006, p 139), providing an understanding of the 'constructed' story. Further to this, these categories employ the use of gerunds where appropriate. Gerunds, the noun form of verbs, have been used by grounded theorists to build action right into the codes, thus allowing the reader to gain a sense of the social processes on display (Charmaz, 2012). For example if the category 'structuring of the workplace, was otherwise referred to as 'workplace structures', the connotations are much more passive and static.

The chapter is separated into three sections, each detailing one of the three main core categories. However, before these are addressed a brief introduction to The Olympic High Performance Institute (OHPI) is given alongside the proposed organisational goals as delineated by the performance director.

4.2 The Olympic High Performance Institute (OHPI)

As addressed within the introduction, I entered the OHPI at a time of significant organisational change. The start of the study coincided with the beginning of a new Olympic cycle, the appointment of a new head coach, the restructuring of the funded performance centres (nationally from two to one), and considerable alterations to the employed workforce. In addition to this, a performance director was also installed alongside the position of head coach, marking the first time such a role had existed within the organisational setup. As such, the study captured the formative moments of what was to be a 'fresh approach' to a new Olympic cycle under a new administrative staff.

The reasoning behind these changes were described by Stephen, the performance director, as an inevitable regression from many 'expensive' high performance centres, to one 'effective' institute for coaching. As he explained,

> *"Over the last ten, twelve years, whatever, we tried to setup various routes, 8 centres, then we went to four centres, then in the previous Olympic cycle we went to two centres, and now this Rio cycle we have gone to one centre in Northwich. Now what that really means is that if you believe that if the success, the things that generally contribute to athletes success are; they*

[athletes] have to have a great coach, they have to have genetically and all of the other elements to be successful, they need facilities that are reasonable and allow them to function, and they need support staff who have the correct skill sets, knowledge, experience, personalities to be able to complement the needs of the athletes and the coach. So our experiences tell us that there are very few people that have those combinations to be able to understand and be able to support athletes and coaches."

"This is what will lead to the winning of medals. The institute, because there was so few people with the right skills and knowledge and importantly personality, and because its wasteful to be travelling from one centre to another and all of those things, let's have a reasonable centre where athletes across most discipline's and events can train effectively with the dedicated coaches working together." (Interview, January 2013)

The quotations above illustrate how 'effectiveness' was as a clear goal of the new regime, where the previous spreading of resources was considered wasteful. In order to achieve this, it was suggested that the focus of the institute was to be on the whole, rather than the achievements of the individual.

"It's about us [the organisation] ultimately collectively winning more medals. The performance measurement here isn't whether you have coached an athlete to winning a medal or improved a performance, or whether you have been the therapist or the physiologist to the athlete who wins the medals, it's about the whole [the organisation]. It's about athletes getting better, and us effectively supporting athletes getting better through our coaches getting better through collaboration and collective thought." (Stephen)

"Let's make sure that we have the right coaches in position with the right knowledge, the right skills and the right experiences, and the right personalities. Then let's look at those coaches and their histories and interests and understanding and their needs, and how they apply themselves to training athletes. Then let's look at the athletes they are coaching, let's look at their histories, let's look at what's needed and all those things. Then lets makes sure

that we complement those needs and interests with appropriate people across the different supports sciences and medicines, and the institute is about pulling all of those people together, having the right people working together with an understanding of the collective goal and then managing and directing that with an emphasis on winning medals on the world, Olympic and Paralympics games." (Interview, January 2013)

Whilst the traditional goal of achieving medals at Olympic games remained at the forefront of the organisations aims, what was identified was a new and specific process towards achieving this; namely through *'collaboration and collective thought'*. As such, this represented an *'innovative'* change to the *'organisational message'*. Indeed, these points were confirmed by the Head coach Paul when asked about his aspirations for the OHPI,

"To create the environment where people feel comfortable enough to work together and to open themselves up to share their thoughts and experiences, and where people feel clear enough about the end goal and understand that they are not going to be one hundred percent measured by the performances of the athletes who they coach, but they are equally measured by their contribution to the centre and by their contribution to collective learning. That's my aim."

"I think that we are being quite innovative really, and that we need to be in making a change from the previous cycle [Olympic]. So the way we work is going to develop, for the better I hope…I think the message is that we are going to be a team, I mean we are a team already, but now that message is going to be made more clearer." (Paul, Interview, January 2013)

From these statements it can be suggested that the goals expressed by the Head Coach and Performance director align with the aspirations of a 'learning organisation', that being a term given to an institution that facilitates the learning of its members and continuously transforms itself (Yeo, 2005). It should be noted that whilst it is beyond the scope of this study to suggest this particular Olympic sport aspired to become a 'learning organisation', the notion is useful as a characterising reference.

In summary, what the OHPI represents is an attempt by the Performance director Stephen, and the Head Coach Paul, to maximise the effective use of coaching resources through the creation of an 'institute'. Through this, the organisation as a whole sought to foster a collaborative workplace for coaches to share and create knowledge, thus leading to an increase in the athletic performances of the supported athletes. The marked difference to traditional methods was the proposition that coaching success was to be judged not solely on the results of athlete performances but on the coaches' engagement with the ideals and aims of the institute.

4.3 Core Category 1: Negotiating Personal Engagement

The category Negotiating Personal Engagement discusses the processes through which coaches came to construct a personalised understanding of their workplace, which in turn mediated their behaviour and engagement with opportunities to learn. This theme was particularly insightful given the integration of new coaching staff alongside new organisational structures. The category was constructed to encapsulate the social processes identified in the following sub-categories:

- Expectations and identification of role boundaries
- Negotiating social engagement with colleagues
- Assessing value and meaningfulness
- Constructed identity
- Personal/historical dispositions

These sub-categories will now be explored in detail.

4.3.1 Expectations and identification of role boundaries

For the coaches' observed in this study the clarification of, and expectations around role boundaries was a central component in mediating workplace-learning engagement. The data illustrated that coaches' understandings of their 'role' shaped collaborative workplace practices and therefore opportunities to learn. From an organisational standpoint the perceived definitions of coaching roles was explained to the me on the first day of the study,

"Having just finished my first day I was about to get in my car when I get called back by one of the athletes, Stephen the Performance director was looking for me. I headed back inside and he was waiting by the door. He again went over what the idea was behind the institute. He said, 'the coaches are here to support the athletes by working together, learning together, we are a team'. He clearly passionate about this notion but it is clear that he is wary of it being misunderstood." (Field-note, January 2013).

That said, over the course of the study it was made apparent that the coaches' interpretations of their roles often deviated from the assumptions of the organisation. The following quotes characterise the array of views coaches' held:

"It's up to everyone employed in the institution to kinda find out and make it [their role] what they want it to be. In my head I know that [specific discipline] in this country is underperforming, so I'm here to apply strategic thinking and try and right it." (Stewart, Interview, January 2013)

"My role? My role is to be part of a collaborative, organic, and creative process. It [the institute] was going to be a place where people work together, between medical staff, and coach and athletes, but it hasn't worked out quite like that… so really I'm just here to look after my myself and athletes." (Frank, Interview, January 2013)

"So my role as an institute coach is to be available to work with, and be available to, athletes and coaches within my event, who come in from outside the institution." (Andrew, Interview, February 2013)

Though in some instances the coaches' understandings of their roles resonated with the organisations view, largely job descriptions were forgotten and coaches' '*made it what they wanted it to be'*. Whilst many of the coaches' confirmed that collaboration was outlined within their job descriptions, coaches' such as Stewart and Richard felt that it was not necessarily a 'requirement'. Indeed, it was noted that tied to the understanding of 'roles' were the coaches' perceptions of the OHPI and what it represented in its new and current form. Stewart in particular stated:

"I think that it is open to interpretation, its open to different event groups approaching it and seeing it as different things. I don't think that there is a strong consensus coming from above that 'this is what it means to us' and 'this is what you need to do as a coach."

"It's not a formal thing like you guys need to work together, it's just kind of was like it would be good if you started to build up a relationship... Erm, there is no sort of people coming across and saying you need to do this." (Interview, January 2013)

Stewart's comments illustrate a consensus that was found amongst the coaches, namely that little organisational direction had been given as to how coaches' would operate within the OHPI. When questioned on this issue, Frank stated 'we were left to get on with it once it [the new institute] started'. For Frank, the reasoning behind this circumstance lay in confusion over whom was actually *'leading'* the institution. The following excerpt from my field notes illustrates this notion:

"Today I watched the relay practice with Frank to get his opinion on the collaboration, or lack of, between Stewart and Richard. Both were taking a relay practice and the session consisted of athletes from both their training groups. The coaches appeared to generally be working with their own athletes, with little crossover between groups. In watching this Frank expressed his frustrations. 'So this is a major medal winning event for us and we are supposed to be working together and look at that, do you see two coaches working together?' when questioned on why it wasn't working Frank said, 'because they don't have to, look, where is the head coach and the performance director? I'll tell you. The performance director (Stephen) is upstairs doing paperwork and the head coach (Paul) is over there chatting to the athletes being their friends. Ok maybe both are jobs that need to be done, but who is working with the coaches?'" (Field-note, May)

Interestingly, the confusion surrounding the notion of who was leading the institution did not go unnoticed by the performance director, though it did take a major structural change for it to be identified. Midway through the study the head coach (Paul) left the

organisation. When reviewing the likelihood of replacing him Stephen commented that *'confusions between my role and his have led to inefficiencies in the running of this place'*. In response to this moves were made by the organisation to reaffirm the notion of collaboration within coaching roles. To this end a new coach was employed in the form of a *'general assistant'*, hoping to provide what Stephen described as *'the glue that draws people together and fosters the collaboration'*. The following quotation by Stephen explicates this in greater detail.

> *"We actually made a conscious decision, which probably won't just stop with Julie's role, there with be redefinitions of roles that actually further affirm that we are making it a formal thing that your job is to work with other people and to put them together, the same with all of the support staff. Their job is to work with coaches to take the knowledge and make sure that everything that they do is answering coach led questions. So it's going to happen with the coaches as well, and hopefully seeing the example of Julie will make the others [coaches] see that it can be done and its nothing to be scared of I guess. So then there will be a kind of a formality that says that you have to do this together because right now, that is missing. Without that formality, it may naturally evolve, but it would certainly be at a slower rate." (Stephen, Interview, February 2013)*

Despite this act little change was noted in the behaviour of coaches with regards to collaborative workplace learning. Julie, the assistant coach, noted that early fruitful learning experiences with the other coaches soon 'dried up'.

> *"It's been difficult, at first you know. Fresh from the meeting where Stephen told people I was here to assist and learn from them I was able to spend time with everyone and it was great. I learned a lot and got to observe and engage with lots of athletes. Pretty soon it slowed down though and now I only really get to work with Andrew and Frank... I think it's only because I've worked with them before in Walingbridge." (Julie, Interview, April 2013)*

In summary, the data suggests that role boundaries and expectations mediated workplace-learning engagement, and that more than job title alone determines the interpretation of 'role'. Through a combination of limited organisational direction and the influence of

wider mediating factors, coaches' constructed personal understandings of their roles. This in turn shaped how they chose to engage with colleagues, either exposing them to learning opportunities, or in this case limiting them.

4.3.2 Negotiating social engagement with colleagues

At the heart of situated or workplace learning lies the interpersonal relationship between colleagues (Carmeli, 2007). Within this study it was found that the nature of the interpersonal relationship between participants was a determinant in their engagement with one another and therefore the learning opportunities of the OHPI. Indeed the performance director Stephen stated that a major factor considered when employing coaches' to the OHPI was their interpersonal compatibility.

> *"Those were the type of people we wanted, open personalities, personalities conducive to effective learning and collaboration." (Stephen, Interview, January 2013)*

For a number of coaches strong interpersonal relationships allowed them to engage in generative conversations around the principles of coaching. Andrew explained how important those interactions were for him within the institute:

> *"If I'm honest it has been difficult coming up here [the institute], I commute every day, my family are still in ****, as well as my main training group. So I train them in the mornings back in ****and get here for around 12 most days. I couldn't expect them all to move here on my account. So when I am here there isn't really a whole lot for me to do, I mean my athletes aren't even here. I'll tell you what's good though, what has been good right is the time to sit and think, have little chats with people, Richard for one. I think we have a lot of different ideas about things and coaching and what not, but then we are from the same era and I guess we have the same sort of... sort of personality I guess. It's good to have conversations like that.*
>
> *Does that it make it worth it for you coming up here? (Researcher)*

Umm, most days I guess… yeah it is, having someone to bounce ideas off of and just hear the thinking behind changes in other events, I haven't had that kind of thing around for a few years I'd say. I've worked with new... development coaches I guess you'd call them, but the conversations are different, those ones are more led by me I'd say, where with Richard for example it's more level." (Interview, February 2013)

Andrew's situation was unique within the institution in that the majority of his athletes trained elsewhere. Therefore, for him these generative coaching conversations formed a pivotal function during his time at the OHPI. Interestingly Andrews experience suggests that interpersonal compatibility was dependant on more than interpersonal skills, extending to the historical dispositions of the individual.

Further evidence came from Julie who felt that such conversations would provide the building blocks for more involved collaborative workplace practices:

"I've had some pretty interesting conversations already with um, Frank and Andrew. So I come from a multi-event background so having their input in a way more specific way has gotten me thinking a bit differently and thinking of new things I'd like to try."

"It's been good, so far I have been able to observe them and hold a camera when needed and watch for things they want you know, things like that. So I'm hoping that it will self-propel and maybe I can help take parts of sessions, and maybe look after their groups when they are out of the institute and things like that." (Interview, April 2013)

Interestingly, from observations of Julie during these initial interactions with Frank and Andrew it became clear that she exercised sensitivity to the nature of the interpersonal required. In essence, Julie shaped her behaviour and thus the form of interpersonal relationships to illicit a desired response.

"Having watched two of her sessions today it became clear that Julie performed a role to get what see needed out of the other coaches, Andrew and Frank. This allowed her to become an engrossed member of that session, using

'in-terms' and engaging in 'in-jokes'. With Frank she played a more humorous and jovial character addressing, commenting, and questioning at will. With Andrew however she was very different, more displaced from the athletes and engaging him in conversation only really when prompted. When asked about it later she said, 'making this work I'm sure will be dependent on your approach to people, so I have to treat Richard completely different to Frank and so on'."
(Field-note, July)

The data also illustrated how poor interpersonal relationships, and the nature of how participants communicated, could act as barriers to workplace learning engagement. The following quotes illustrate this point:

"I've tried to work with him over the last couple of months because I thought it would be good to get an opinion from someone who has been that successful, but to be honest the way that he speak to me, as if I'm fresh off a course it's really not worth it. I don't need to be made feel like that" (Frank talking about Terrance, Field-note, March 2013)

"I think the big man [Stephen] wanted us to work together because we come from the same event, and he does know his stuff I'll give you that, but there's just some personally issues I can't quite get past with him" (Stewart talking about Richard, Field-note, April 2013)

"Do you know how long I have to spend emailing these people, arranging meetings, I'm at a desk in the same room… let's just have a conversation and let that be that so I can coach! It just seems crazy to me to try and do everything like that. I just want to stay out of it now." (Richard talking about communicating with the 'English' coaches', Field-note, April 2013)

In summary, the findings indicated that the nature of the interpersonal relationship between colleagues was a key factor in determining participant's engagement in workplace learning activities. As such, the compatibly of colleagues on a social level had the propensity to act as a barrier for learning engagement. Interestingly, the data suggests that interpersonal

relationships are the outcome of historical and social legacies as demonstrated by Julie's experience of positive/generative social relations with Frank and Andrew.

4.3.3 Assessing value and meaningfulness

Within the study, participant's intentionality towards learning engagement was also found to be tempered by the value judgements or the perceived meaningfulness they ascribed to learning activities and opportunities. For many of the coaches, these value judgements were informed by the legacy of their previous learning experiences. In the following quotations and field-notes participants demonstrated how their previous learning engagement informed their intentionality towards learning behaviours within the OHPI:

> *"To be honest I have had the most success [talking about valuable learning experiences] working with Frank and Andrew, but I think that's generally because I already have a working relationship with them from the past… and it's basically what I was doing as an apprentice. That's not what I am now for sure [an apprentice], but working with them is kind of like routine, something I do a bit more naturally, so I guess I may pursue that a bit more than other examples which are harder or more unknown… like trying to figure out of Terrance for example" (Field-note, April, Julie).*

> *"Andrew: As I have said before, Richard's knowledge and being able to tap into that has been pretty good for me. [Laughs] it helps to get something out of being up here [Northwich] and I look forward to those chats you see.*
> *Researcher: Do you actively seek out those opportunities with Richard/other coaches?*
> *Andrew: Um, I don't know, I suppose, I'd say yes. I guess I always have. It's something I think I have always done, my way of getting info I guess, staying up to date" (Andrew, Field-note, March 2013).*

> *"[Talking about guiding his learning/development] I like to think that Stephen (performance director) is ok with me doing what I have always done. So I have a track record of being successful, relatively of course, and doing things in a way that I have sort of led. So I have continued that… if it has worked in the*

past getting me to where I am I certainly think it has a place in the now"
(Stewart, Field-note, May).

However, the data also suggested that coaches' perceptions of what constituted a valuable or meaningful learning opportunity also had wider social, cultural and organisational connotations. Frank and Richard for example, explicitly stated that the nature of the OHPI influenced whether they perceived the organisations goal of collaborative learning-and-working as worthwhile/relevant to their practice. Interestingly, whilst Richard adamantly confirmed that his greatest 'eureka moments' came whilst working with friends and colleagues, within the context of the OHPI such behaviour was not a priority for him. As he explained:

> *"Of course I am not saying that I cannot work with and learn from people… as we have talked about before, of course I have had mentors and support and what not as I came through, but at this moment in time, here, that's not what I am being paid for. I was brought here as a consultant coach. Yes it was by someone who is not part of this system anymore, but I have a history of getting medals at big games. So you see, I'm not going to be measured in terms of how well I worked with Tom, Dick, or Harry, I'm going to be judged on whether these guy [athletes] win medals. So that's my priority, getting this bit done"*
> *(Interview, February 2013)*

Indeed, this notion of being measured in medals appeared to be a cultural and organisational undertone, which was prevalent throughout the OHPI. Indeed, it could be suggested that this was further reaffirmed by public opinion regarding medal winning performances detailed within the media. As Frank reiterated on a number of occasions, the overriding message within the OHPI was clear to those within the system:

> *"When no one is steering the ship what do you do, you do what everyone would do… focus on doing what you can do to cement your position. That's medals, times, heights etc… those things are measurable in that situation".*
> *(Interview, July 2013)*

"Let's not forget what Stephen's job is here, and why the previous head coach stepped down... medals! And not achieving the goal that was set for him in the last Olympic cycle. So I think it's safe to say that logically he will be measured the same way. What does that mean for us [the coaches']? I think it's a great idea to get people working together and try and create this community, I stand behind Stephen and bang the same drum, but as it stands that's not going to be the yardstick... ultimately we have to perform too." (Interview, July 2013)

From the data presented above it can be argued that this notion of being measured in medals played a significant role in how coaches chose to employ their agency towards collaborative activity, and thus learning, within the OHPI.

In summary, whilst coaches' recognised the importance of authentic and relevant learning opportunities for their professional development, their intentionality towards engagement in these activities was derived through coaches' negotiations of various social and cultural factors. These negotiations resulted in a perceived value of meaningfulness being attributed to the learning activity of opportunity, which dictated whether it became a worthwhile endeavour.

4.3.4 Constructed Identity

Within the study, the concept of constructed identity was identified as a crucial component in understanding participant attitudes towards collaborative engagement with colleagues. Within this context identity was viewed as a personal construction, bounded within the context of the workplace, the sport, and the ontogenetic histories of the coaches. This component of the individual then played a role in the negotiations between the coaches' agency and the learning opportunities present with the OHPI.

Throughout the study memoing was employed to create portraits of participant over time. The following theoretical memo characterises how the concept of constructed identity shaped Richard's interactions with colleagues.

Theoretical memo – Richard (Coach)

Code name/Observed process: **Personal Dispositions/Richard's identity 'I did it on my own'**

Previously nominated for world coach of the year, Richard is a multi-Olympic medal winning coach and has been employed by the organisation on a consultancy contract for the current Olympic cycle (2012-2016). From interviews Richard has made it clear that he feels his coaches philosophy often *'goes against the grain'*, and attributes his success to *'struggling to make it in a profession that doesn't pay'* and *'often doing so off my own back'*. His coaching identity is strongly grounded in these experiences. I feel that this is shaping the way he views his colleagues and is resultantly impacting upon his attitude towards collaboration and interaction with them. The following quote is taken from an interview that investigated his career pathway and characterises this point:

"I got here from being a welder. I know strange, but in the states we don't get paid to coach like they do over here, you get paid by your athletes and by their sponsors. So when the athletes don't do well you don't get paid. So in the beginning I had to work and coach, and then go to school to become a better coach, and all the while I was living like 500 miles away from my family because I had to be in **** because that's where the group were [His athletes]. Even at the top level over there you have to pay for facilities and access, so we were restricted by what me, the athletes, the group could afford slash get to. When I really decided that I was going to coach I had to go find a school that did the stuff that I needed to become better, go and find the professors and talk to them about what I needed and how they thought I could get it. So now you see why I sometimes get mad, no let's say annoyed with the soap operas over here. These guys [the British coaches] have it so much easier over here, they b**** and moan about things, about not having stuff, well go and get it, that's what I did, it's what I had to do." (Richard).

Richard's identity is that of someone who has struggled to succeed, but done so by taking ownership of his own career development and learning. This shapes the way he interacts with his colleagues as his associated identity means that he expects others to behave in the manner he did, whilst he continues to operate as an isolated individual. During my time with him he alluded to this idea.

"Look I'll work with anybody, help anyone, but I'm not going to go around and babysit people. We are all adults and if people want my help they can come and ask for it."

Richards's identity therefore had the propensity to isolate him from the other coaches, creating a barrier between his journey to become a coach and theirs. This meant that he was disinclined to engage in general collaborative activities' with those he felt did not share the same 'identity'. This was confirmed by his reliance on Terrance for support within his sessions, as a fellow American coach Richard had stated that they shared history, understanding, and attitude.

As such this limited the learning opportunities Richard was exposed to, and restricted his input to the coaching community of the OHPI.

Questions:

The importance of being an 'American Coach' means that it would be useful to consider how experience of/within different cultures shapes coaches/individuals identity construction. How then is identity related to having been part of a different system/community?

Coaching identity was also seen to influence coaches' attitudes towards the learning resources within the OHPI, that being the use of other coaches, the support staff and the administration as knowledgably others. Stewart highlighted this point when talking about he felt the other coaches perceived him within the OHPI. Having been an apprentice coach during the previous regime, Stewarts desire to shed this 'inferior' identity meant that he was often cagey about interacting with some colleagues and exposing that he might not know something.

> *"I think that it's on and very case by case basis, but some people are blinded by the fact that I was an apprentice coach and are not willing to accept that I have stepped up and am now working at a different level. Whereas, other people have been very supportive of that transition. You know, I get different feelings off different individuals so what I feel is not really always consistent, but some people seem to be really supportive and are very aware of the level that I am now working at, where others are still, they don't fully understand, and that makes it hard to… not to work with them… but to really work with them you know what I mean? I guess I just feel that I have to be careful with some people because it gives off the wrong message."(Interview, January 2013)*

Further evidence came from Julie, who having also been an apprentice, wanted to been seen as elite in her own right and therefore act accordingly. In the following quotes she discusses how she managed her behaviour in order to maintain her constructed identity.

> *"I was an apprentice last year and then, I don't want to feel like that now… at the end of the day I'm still employed on the same level as all these guys [the other institute coaches'], I'm just called an assistant, so I don't want to be*

known as the apprentice if that makes sense because that's not my role. Yes I'm still learning, but you know all coaches can learn from each other so I don't want to feel like the only one trying to do this. I've coached top level athletes and the organisation recognised that, so that's who I am now."

"I just don't want to be seen as the tea girl. I mean hopefully I can be of use to them, and hopefully they see it as good ideas. Yeah, so that's why I have to sort of... not tread carefully, but be aware in terms of how I'm seen." (Interview, April 2013)

Indeed, these examples characterised the behaviour of experienced coaches also, namely, they too often guided their behaviours in relation to how they like to be seen over how they are in reality. For example, Frank often discussed with me a desire to engage in collaborative learning activities with Richard, whilst at the same time exclaiming to colleagues that he did not need his input in his work. As such, he appeared to be fostering a public image of autonomy and independence.

Even in situations where coaches' engaged in collaborative activities, identity influenced their perceptions of these activities and the learning opportunities within. The following field-note details how Terrance felt that his technical superiority made it difficult to learn/engage with colleagues of a different level of experience.

"I sat in on biomech support meeting today with Terrance, Andrew, Julie and an external bio-mechanist tasked with assessing the biomech needs of the coaches, before putting together an action plan. The meeting started with the notion that the coaches and the bio-mechanist might discuss their perceived needs, and through joint conversation/debate potentially uncover some new avenues to explore. In the first 15 minutes, Julie confessed to not having had much biomech support herself an athlete, and never really using it within her coaching practice. She proceeded to ask numerous questions with Terrance interceding, often on behalf of the bio-mechanist. After only about 30 minutes of meeting scheduled for an hour and a half, Terrance made his excuses (poor ones at that) and left the room. When I caught up with him later I managed to ask him about his sudden departure. After an extended discussion he revealed

'look it's pointless me sitting in there passing bull**** around the room like that, I know what I need, I've been doing it for years… I just don't have time to listen that sort of stuff, really to do what we do, they should know that by now'. From this account it is clear that Terrance removed himself from the situation given his perceived technical superiority. As such, he has removed himself from that learning activity/behaviour, limiting his exposure and modifying the quality that could then be taken from it. (Field-note, March)

To conclude, how coaches' perceived collaboration with colleagues and the learning resources available to them was dependent upon how they perceived their coaching practice and thus their identity within coaching. Consequently it can be argued that a coaches' constructed identity influenced their professional development in terms of the choices made towards engagement with colleagues, the nature of the engagement, and the duration of that engagement.

4.3.5 Personal and Historical Dispositions

As has been discussed earlier in the chapter, identity was found to influence coaches' attitudes towards collaborative engagement with colleagues. Central to the construction of coaches' identities were the biographies and prior histories of the coaches, regarded as their personal and historical dispositions. Within the literature personal dispositions are seen as shaped by past events and structures, with the ability to shape current practices and structures, whilst conditioning our very perceptions of these concepts (Bourdieu 1984). The data suggested that on entering the workplace coaches' brought with them a host of dispositions, values and identities, which directed how individuals' perceived and reacted to opportunities to learn.

For the many of the coaches it was clear that their personal dispositions directed their intentionality towards engagement with the learning affordances of the OHPI. Indeed for some it was easy to fall into a preconditioned routine given the aforementioned lack of organisational leadership:

"For me it's been good [the nature of the institute], I've liked the freedom to be able to do my own thing and do the things that come naturally" (Stewart, (Interview, June 2013).

Andrews's personal dispositions were manifested in the way that he approached the OHPI as a resource for learning. Given that his training group were based largely outside of the institute, his time spent coaching was considerably lower when compared to his colleagues. As such, Andrew utilised this additional time to engage a learning behaviours shaped by his historically accrued dispositions. The following theoretical memo details my thinking on this notion.

Theoretical memo – Andrew (Coach), Interview 2

Code name/Observed process: **Personal dispositions as guiding behaviour and engagement**

In our last interview Andrew explained how he first got into coaching and why:

"As an athlete you see I was with a coach who lets say wasn't you know, whatever, at the top, so I got to thinking I needed more and when I asked him about certain things like biomechanics I wasn't getting the kind of answers I wanted. Then I started reading different book and things, speaking to sports scientists that sort of things and was slowly starting to get the information I was missing. From then I basically began coaching myself, I stayed with the coach but the things I was learning I guess was leading what we did. It wasn't perfect of course, but if what we did worked we kept it in, if it didn't we moved on." (Interview, February 2013)

This experience helps to understand Andrew's behaviour, particularly with regards to the learning affordances of the workplace. Andrew values rich sources of information regarding bio-scientific notions and has commented during my observations that the institutes connection to the University of **** has been great for getting hold of things like journals and research papers. What is more, on many occasions I have come upon Andrew mid conversation with a member of the support staff (physio's and sport scientists) and heard:

*"Let me ask you about this…"… "There is a paper on the **** website that states the athlete fatigue can be reduced by this stretching regime, what do you think of that?" (Interview, February 2013)*

Though Andrew does interact in these 'generative conversations' with other coaches, they are certainly fewer in frequency than those with support staff. Indeed Julie has noted this point stating, *"When I can catch Andrew it's great, but often he is tied up in the office, nose in his computer screen".* The one exception however is with Richard, as Andrew excitedly point out to me one day: *"Did you know Richard has a Master's degree in sport science? He does all his athletes blood lactate tests himself…I'm telling you the guy knows his stuff."* It appears to me that Andrew's dispositions shaped by his experiences as a coach, impact upon the knowledge and learning he values. He seeks knowledge that is rich in bio-scientific content

and engages more readily with opportunities or colleagues he considers having such.

Questions:

How do dispositions shift over time, are they related to the construction/reconstruction of peoples identities?

Do coaches' dispositions restrict the compatibility of certain social/learning relationships?

If personal dispositions do guide learning engagement, how then should education providers approach learning provision for a diverse workforce?

Considering participant dispositions was particularly useful when trying to understand the nature of certain coaches' relationships within the OHPI, for example Richard and Stewart's. As both were employed to coach the same discipline, it was an organisational goal that the senior and more experienced coach, Richard, would informally mentor the 'young gun', Stewart. However the mentoring relationship proved to be untenable as Stewart explains:

> *"One of the things that Stephen has been trying to foster is collaboration between the existing coaches, and from what we discussed in my discussions with him recently it is clear that it was absolutely not possible for this to happen because of the different natures of our philosophies and the way we work [coaches]"*

> *"Why hasn't it worked? [Laughs] um, personally I think it's because we are too different. Don't get me wrong Richard is a good coach but it has to come to more than that... He's used to an American system, there is no team or group over there, it is all I."*

> *"We've had some good discussions but generally they don't seem to go two ways if you understand… they are quite prescriptive I guess you could say. It usually ends up him [Richard] telling me his interpretation of things and we leave it there." (Interview, January 2013)*

Stewarts experience as an apprentice coach during the previous Olympic cycle meant that his dispositions led him to value learning opportunities that were self-directed and active.

As such he looked to engage in learning opportunities that would guide and support his development rather than dictate it. As such an imposed mentorship under Richard was seen to hold little value.

> *"[Talking about the apprentice role] There was a bit of freedom and flexibility about it. There wasn't like a thing that this is your mentor, and this is the person you are supposed to work with. It was kind of like, you're an apprentice coach and you're going to be employed over the next three years, how do you want to learn, how do you want to progress? It was more of a guiding supporting thing you know. I think you know, that way we were all in charge of our own destinies a bit, and the people… some people didn't realise that and kind of stuck to where they were, didn't realise that it was up to them to manage upwards so to speak. For me that's perfect, I want to question things, I don't sit well with being told how to progress and that you have to work with this person etc." (Stewart, Interview, February 2013).*

Over the course of the study it was possible to observe that Richard's dispositions were the result of his background as a self-employed American coach. A career of autonomous control over his own actions, coaching and learning, meant that he was disinclined to readily engage others and to ask questions. He therefore struggled to willingly accommodate alternative points of view, meaning he could not engage in the learning activities preferable to coaches such as Stewart. One specific interaction with Frank illustrated this point:

> *"So you probably noticed that thing between me and Richard on Tuesday [argument] … so as you know at this time of year I work down in the [sandpit] with my guys, and its only for a few weeks of the year remember…but because that would mean Richard would have to move his group 40 feet closer to Stewart I couldn't do it, I mean he wouldn't move, wouldn't even talk about it. How professional is that? I'll talk to you after my session is all I get, well it's too late then, very accommodating. You see what I mean about team Richard now? He doesn't care about us." (Frank, Fieldnote, April)*

Researcher Note: When I spoke to Richard in the week following the incident he played it off rather coolly. It appeared that to him it had been not really a big deal. When I pressed regarding whether it had upset Frank he said 'I said I'd speak to him after, I was in the middle of a session, We've got important comps coming up and I'm not going to mess up my preparation so he can play in the sand'.

In summary, the dispositions of each coach acted to construct/reconstruct the cultural values and behaviours of the OHPI as a community, where each individual's behaviour proliferated a preferred culture. In the case of the OHPI this was generally a culture of individualism, where members focused not on collaborative workplace practices but on continuing engrained behaviours. In the evidence given, the learning dispositions of the coaches' could be conceived as a legacy shaped by their previous encounters throughout their career development

4.4 Category 2: Structuring of the Workplace

The category 'Structuring of the workplace' discusses the structural processes observed within the OHPI that impacted upon coaches' workplace learning. The data suggested that these processes' not only afforded opportunities to learn/or not, but also impacted upon how coaches' interpreted and reacted to these learning opportunities. The category was constructed to encapsulate the structural processes identified in the following sub-categories:

- Funding
- Territories and micro-geographies
- Structuring and restructuring of leadership

These sub-categories will now be explored in detail.

4.4.1 Funding

An interesting theme that was elevated during the coding process was the impact organisational funding played on the working lives of the coaches' of the OHPI. As has been discussed previously, I entered the field at the start of the 2012-2016 Olympic cycle, meaning that they were witness to what participants termed, 'the post-Olympic effect'. The changes that followed the beginning of a new four-year cycle were found to greatly impact upon the structure of the coaches' workplace. Indeed, fluctuating levels of government funding led to changes in both the organisational structure and coaching structure. This in turn had implications on the learning opportunities afforded by the OHPI. The Centre director Alison characterised the situation.

> *"So the things that had a significant effect were um, first of all were the funding cycles, the Olympic cycles, the uksport driven budgetary cycles and so on, they had a huge impact. So we came out of the end of a four-year cycle, we had to go through a review and an application for funding for the next four-year cycle through uksport. At the same time we were changing our senior management team, had changes in head coaches and other changes within senior management that naturally slowed things down, and or, well there were implications obviously from that. Um, we were going through a review process*

and the associated consultation period that meant that a large percentage of the employed staff were at threat of being made redundant within the first three to four months of the year. You can imagine how inhibitory that can be in terms of being able to move forward in terms of clarity." (Interview, May 2013)

Alison comments illustrate a 'fluid' workplace subject to re-evaluation and restructuring at regular intervals. As such, coaches' were required to negotiate a constantly changing landscape. A reduction in the funding budget, expected in the year following a home Olympic Games, forced the organisation to reduce the numbers of employed coaching staff. When the study first began the process of re-employment was near conclusion, but through retrospective interviews I was able to get some insight into this event.

The previous workforce of 14 employed coaches was reduced to 5 (later to become 6 with the employment of Julie), changing the workplace environment and thus the learning environment experienced by the coaches'. The following extracts illustrate these changes:

"It's was pretty tense around here as you can imagine, I'm not saying people were looking over their shoulders but when you have lots of people applying for the same jobs you get people kind of wandering around wondering if they are still going to be here in a few weeks"(Frank, Interview, January 2013).

"Before we all came back [from the Olympics] and started again there used to be this thing on a Friday evening, kind of like a coaches club. Someone, different people every so often, would book a lecture room and we'd get together for a few hours and chat about coaching things, science, ideas… and then got to the pub for a few drinks, the best bit [laughs]. Sometimes it would be things you thought were utter rubbish or you might just get some idea confirmed by others, but it was usually quite useful… it doesn't happen anymore, people just, I guess priorities changed, that and the guy who kept it alive, Tom, he was made redundant. It's been mentioned again a few times but generally people don't seem that interested." (Stewart, Interview, January 2013).

"Researcher: Do you think the funding cuts and redundancy situation affected how coaches' worked together?

Stephen (Performance Director): That's pretty much on the money. That wasn't, in the majority of cases, that wasn't sorted out till January this year, so the first three to four months, almost the athlete year was lost and almost confused and misdirected by a pretty difficult personnel challenge. It meant that we couldn't look forward to creating this collaborative working environment and having coaches learn from one another because it's pretty hard to think about learning and development when you're fighting for your job." (Interview, January 2013)

These accounts capture the reality of how changing structural features such as funding impacted upon the learning opportunities experienced by coaches' within this study. As Stephen and Frank infer, the initial atmosphere within the OHPI was not conducive to collaborative learning, as the nature of events meant coaches' focus was on aspects of their careers beyond learning and development. Indeed, this could explain the decline and disappearance of the 'coaches' club' as a learning tool, although another possible explanation is the redundancy of the employee who instigated it. That aside, what can be said is that funding cuts instigated changes to the organisational structure, which in turn led to a workplace environment with fewer learning opportunities.

Indeed for a number of coaches the funding cuts had a more direct impact on their workplace learning, namely by dismantling pre-existing social support networks. For example, in his previous role as an apprentice coach Stewart was engaged in an informal mentoring relationship with a senior event coach, Kevin. The redundancies led to Kevin losing his job and eventually becoming employed under a foreign NGB.

"So me and Kevin basically led a training group together, I was kind of coaching in my own right but also being led by Kevin at the same time, he was a support net I guess. The changes to the organisation I guess you'd call it blew that out of the water. Within 24 hours Kevin's situation changes and it was just me. Now I'm a big boy I can do the job and carry on, but losing the person that has supported you it's difficult, something's take longer. You know,

when you had a question or something on your mind we'd talk it out, consolidate it, that sort of thing.

Could you find someone else? (Researcher)

*Yeah I'm sure, but I guess I don't want to. [Laughs] I'd like to figure out a way to still use him but it difficult with the politics of him working for **** now."*
(Stewart, Interview, January 2013)

Stewart's experience illustrates how the simple removal of one employee can alter the learning experiences afforded to those around them. The loss of Kevin as a mentor greatly reduced Stewart's exposure to learning opportunities. Andrew also shared a similar experience, as under the new regime his assistant coach was not re-employed. Andrew expressed his frustration at not having a 'mentee' anymore:

"You get used to it, for four years I worked with Mark, sat next to him, had coffee, so you'd just look up and talk your stuff through. It helped firm up your own thinking, or philosophy, or whatever. So I'm annoyed that's gone."
(Interview, February 2013)

The data revealed that within this study, fluctuations in government funding had the propensity to alter the structure of the coaches' workplace in a manner that influenced their learning experiences. The regularity of these changes on a four-year cycle suggests that certainly within this context, coaches' are required to negotiate a fluid workplace environment, where the contestation over jobs can impinge upon the desire to collaborate with colleagues and potentially remove the social support networks coaches' rely on.

4.4.2 Territories and micro-Geographies

For the coaches' reported in this study the notion of territorial ownership was identified as a factor that tempered their engagement with colleagues. To meet the organisational goals set by the Performance Director (Stephen), it was critical that coaches openly shared and exchanged knowledge and ideas. However, perceived ownership of space was seen to impinge upon this process. As such, the term 'Micro-geographies' was utilised to capture

these organisational structures and their influence on shared social understandings of territorial boundaries.

In the initial three months of the study it was made clear that each coach and their associated training group occupied specific locations within the OHPI. Whilst these locations were generally tied to a coaches' discipline, they appeared to represent more than an easy place to base oneself, but a territory they could *occupy*, *personalise* and *control*. The following theoretical memo details my conception of this theme.

Theoretical memo – Stewart, Richard and Frank (Coaches)

Code name/Observed process: **Territorial ownership/geographies of the workplace**

The three coaches whose relationships appear to be significant sources of conflict and dysfunction within the OHPI all appear to adopt a form of territorial behaviour with regards to where they base their training group in the Centre. Indeed, this goes beyond simply having a workspace as each coach has a desk within a shared office, albeit rarely used. Importantly, whilst each of the three coaches occupies a space related to their discipline, the nature of the sport requires that all coaches use each part of the Centre at some point in their training regime. Indeed, it is openly known who occupies what space as Alison often refers to, *'Frank's area'* or *'that's where Stewart lives' (Interview, April)*. Some coaches also passively refer to their areas, Richard saying to me one day, *"Just meet us down by our place"* meaning his training groups 'corner'.

What is particularly interesting is the way in which coaches have 'marked' or 'personalised' areas to signify their control. Frank for example, utilises his area to store some of his own personal training equipment, or equipment specifically designed for the discipline he coaches, stating:

"The mezzanine is not mine by any means, but then you have to consider the equipment that is here, of course if you need to use this space that's fine, but you can't just expect to come and use my equipment, or be shoving it around… that will annoy me" (Field-note, May).

Stewart has a massage bed place off to the side of the track signifying his area, the bed even goes as far as to have Stewart's name written on the side in big bold writing. Indeed, it is a running joke within the institute that people are going to mess with him and move his bed, usually met with an unamused smile from Stewart as he passes of the remark.

The boundary of Richards's territory is particularly interesting as he coaches the same discipline as Stewart. However, whilst Richard was the first member employed within the OHPI, Stewart's history as an apprentice coach means he has occupied a space within the institute for a greater length of time. As such, Richard has positioned himself at the opposite

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end of the track to Stewart, in effect occupying the same real estate but from different ends. This has on occasion resulted in conflict when athletes from opposing groups have been training towards one another. Indeed, on day of the final closing interview with Stephen and confrontation occurred between the two groups as athlete squared off aggressively because of growing tension between the two groups. As such, the location of Richard's group as a newer occupant of the space means he is crossing boundaries and potentially inciting conflict. Indeed, this tension has even translated down to the athletes as shown.

The existence of territorially is perhaps propagated, or indeed reinforced by coaches earlier suggestions that they get 'measured in medals'. As such, the competitive nature of the workplace/sport would also be a contributing factor to this territoriality.

Questions:

Does the formation of boundaries impact on the social relationships that can be made? i.e. Stewart and Richard.

Does boundary crossing restrict the movement of coaches around the OHPI, limiting their ability to coach and develop themselves?

Should organisations be looking to stop territoriality amongst staff, especially in a high performance context?

How can/should organisations manage the addition of new members and the potential for boundary crossing?

Julie, the assistant coach whose role it was to foster collaboration between coaches, noted the difficulty these territorial boundaries presented and the notion that they were potentially an inevitability of the sport:

"I want to get people interacting, collaborating, and… that's one of the reasons I'm here, but it's difficult with the kind of territory games that get played. When your over there working with one group you have the jumpers looking over the balcony watching, if your down with the long distance guys the sprint groups are either side of you… it can sometimes feel like you're in the middle of an animal pen."

"Even at ******* (former high performance centre), you definitely saw pockets of you know, people isolating themselves, people were training at one end of the track and another group would train at the other end of the track and they wouldn't interact, and these people are coaching the same event and

they wouldn't talk, but actually if they shared their ideas they could be dangerous". (Interview, April 2013)

Indeed for Stewart this personal territory represented a form of isolation he craved, allowing himself to be distant from the other coaches of the OHPI. This was tied to his perceptions of 'successful' coaches, and a desire to not readily engage in questioning conversations with others.

"Sometimes the most successful coaches are the ones that manage to isolate themselves from distractions. So if we are talking about distractions, the institute can have distraction around it, so if you are not prepared to manage those distractions you… Also just being around the other coaches as well, um, sometimes as well there can be a distractions to have people around you and constantly asking you questions, erm, and you know challenging you and the rest of it but then it also makes you a better coach" (Stewart, Interview, June 2013).

For Alison, the Centre Manager, managing possible territorial conflicts was an important process in fostering the collaboration the organisation desired, and for maintaining the effective running of the institute. As she explained:

"We need them [the coaches'] to work together, to make sure that that happens properly if they are to develop and improve. Not um, not us having to intervene and say you have to do this and use this space and he can have this now, they are adults and they should be able to do that. Its worked most of the time and really well, but sometimes the only thing that happens is maybe something doesn't… well people have their routines and if someone gets knocked off a bit by someone doing something different, so for example a group coming inside when normally they would be outside. So generally there is a need to maybe manage that a bit better on our part because incidents like that can set us back." (Interview, May 2013)

Indeed, on occasion conflicts arose that acted to undermine the sharing and exchange of knowledge and ideas desired by the organisation. Interestingly, these conflicts were then

seen to impact upon the aforementioned 'social relationships between coaches', resultantly impacting upon coaches' decision's to engage with colleagues. An incident between Frank and Richard illustrates this point.

> *Field-note, April: After spending three weeks in a row watching what Frank called 'a somewhat unusual session' that required Frank's athletes train down by the sprinters, I got a text message from Frank telling me that the session had been moved to another venue and he'd have to catch up with me another day. A few days later he filled me in on the details.*

> *"Did you wonder why we were not doing that [session] in [the OHPI] anymore… it's because Richard won't let us that area of the track because he won't move 20 meters because he doesn't want to be near Stewart. So he does his drills where we would train across the track, so now we don't [do that session] there because we can't."*

> *Will I turn to Richard for help? No… because he doesn't give anything away, he's not going to put himself out for me. So when I have asked his opinion, and I have spent all of Saturday night with Richard buying him beers and what not, and he still didn't give me his opinion. Because he doesn't want to help me because he doesn't want me to be good, because he thinking like an American coach and he thinks 'I've got to look after my team, my interests, and my team is team Richard.* (Frank)

To conclude, the micro-geographies adopted by the coaches' within this study had the potential to impact upon workplace learning on two fronts. Firstly, the isolation of coaches in this manner did little to foster collaboration between coaches as the distance between them limited the opportunity for such learning experiences to occur naturally. Secondly, territorial boundaries are likely to be crossed in a close working environment, leading to potential conflicts over routine, social status and role. These conflicts then serve to impinge upon the quality of social relationships; a factor the data has already suggested is an important component of workplace learning.

4.4.3 Structuring and Restructuring of the leadership

A defining characteristic of the OHPI was that of a workplace in constant fluctuation. Indeed, the quadrennial Olympic cycles regularly restructured the management/administration of the sports organisation. As such, the leadership of the organisation was a feature of regular change, meaning coaches' were required to continuously negotiate new social structures. This process both shaped the affordance of learning activities and informed coaches' inclinations towards engagement with these activities. For example, it was noted that coaches' dispositions and routine practices were often grounded within the customs of the previous organisational regime. As such, the implementation of a new management structure had the propensity to impinge upon coaches' routine behaviours. This meant that certain learning activities or behaviours, which had become engrained in coaching practice, were lost or re-construed in a fashion that became unrecognisable to some. The following quotes characterise this circumstance:

"The line management was difficult because of the previous relationship with the past head coach where he also line managed the various different elements of different coaches and that was a very challenging working relationship that many people would describe that they were beaten with a stick as opposed to being supported and led with a carrot. Paul took a different approach, which led to people feeling more comfortable but not necessarily technically supported or positively technically challenged…The coaches have gotten so used to being led with a stick, so there is a learning curve to get used to under the new 'less strict' leadership… Instead of monthly meetings he has gone with a looser as and when approach" (Stephen, Interview, August 2013).

There are definitely times when you feel like you are walking around not really knowing what you should be doing. Things have changed so much from when [previous head coach] was in charge. There are moments when you crave that sort of thing again and someone putting you in touch with the right people, or different people I guess" (Julie, Interview, April 2013).

"Um, no its actually a massive contrast to the previous regime, I think really in the previous regime you could say that everything was quite autocratic

because of the personality of the person in charge. Um, this made it very, you know, he was a strong leader, very directive. So there was a kind-of certain way in which he was hands-on. He'd want to know why you were doing things, what decisions you were making, see if you could explain those decisions... influenced those decisions sometimes and overruled you others. Sometimes it was good because you got some great input but as with everything, sometimes it was restrictive. (Stewart, Interview, January 2013)

These examples demonstrate how the reformed context of the OHPI could impose barriers to the continuation of coaches existing learning behaviours and create uncertainly surrounding the conceptions of where new learning opportunities might arise. For example, as the data explains monthly formal review meetings were abandoned in favour of a more informal and passive process under Paul as the Head coach. As a result some coaches (Frank, Stewart) noted feeling 'unsupported' and 'unchallenged'. Indeed, as Frank contended:

"So we are eight month into this new scheme I guess you would say, and there has been no review, no sit down talk about my coaching, my progression, my career... I haven't even had a conversation about our past games [Olympics]. These things seems to have left with the people who are now in other countries [past management] and that's a shame" (Interview, July 2013).

Interestingly however, the change in leadership structure was also seen to provide some coaches (Stewart) with the space to pursue new and innovative learning resources.

"Whereas Paul and Stephen are more hands off, which for some people has created a problem because they find themselves in a sort of leadership vacuum, where they had or were used to being told what to do, it's actually for me I'm actually working a lot more better now with the freedom that is around me. You're a little more creative, a little more relaxed than anything else, free to create the support and pursue new support on your own terms" (Stewart, Interview, June 2013).

That being said, coaches largely found themselves within what Stewart termed a 'leadership vacuum'. This term was used to characterise the space between the administrative and coaching staff, as coaches reported that they felt without any clear support and guidance in their day-to-day routines. Indeed, this issue was compounded in the fourth month of the study when Paul (Head Coach) resigned from the organisation. The nature of his departure created significant unrest within the OHPI, creating circumstances where coaches concerns shifted from collaborative engagement to job uncertainty. Initially leaving for family reasons, it became clear a month later that he was to become the head coach of a competing national organisation. As Julie and Frank explained:

> *"When one of the guys who's idea this collaborative institute was ups and leaves, like that, you start to think what is wrong here, why don't they believe in it anymore… you think what are we doing?" (Interview, April 2013)*

> *"And it's like everything you get good professional senators and non-professional senators, and if he is really smart he can look after those relationships and get a lot by being a good manager and leader of people. Now if that person goes, and is not replaces you are in big trouble, you have a headless institute. Now when that happens you start getting the politics coming out, people looking out for number one, protecting their jobs, forgetting what was trying to be done here [create a community of learning coaches] (Frank)." (Interview, July 2013)*

In summary, the data suggests that the nature of the leadership structure (and restructuring) within the OHPI had a significant impact on coaches' workplace learning experiences. Changes in the leadership structure, whether governed by Olympic cycles or resignations, had the propensity to both constrain coaches existing learning behaviours and generate space for the creation of new learning opportunities. The facilitation of leadership was reported as a crucial component within this transitionary period, as coaches' reported feeling unsupported within a 'headless' institute, suggesting the role of leader or education facilitator is crucial within this context.

4.5 Category 3: Mediating Factors

The category 'Mediating Factors' discusses the broader sociocultural processes observed within the OHPI that were found to mediate coaches' workplace learning. The data within this category was found to extend beyond personal negotiations and the impositions of structural processes, to impact upon how coaches interpreted and responded to a variety of learning activities. The category encapsulates the following factors:

- Cultures
- Time
- Existing or self-directed support networks
- Locations and fields of activity

These sub-categories will now be explored in detail.

4.5.1 Cultures

Throughout the study, coaches' behaviour was seen to be influenced by variety of cultural messages entrenched within the fabric of the workplace context, the coaches, and the sport itself. These three dimensions of culture informed the 'learning culture' present within the OHPI, a feature through which coaches learning engagement was mediated in relation to both their personal negotiations and the learning opportunities of the workplace.

The first dimension through which culture influenced coaches learning experiences related to the culture of the individuals involved. The data suggested that on entering the workplace, coaches brought with them an individualised culture, bound within their dispositions and identities. For example, some coaches (Frank, Andrew and Julie) expressed a culture that suited engagement in collaborative workplace learning, whilst others favoured more isolated practices (Stewart, Terrance and Richard). The following theoretical memo explains my thinking on this notion:

Theoretical memo – (All Coaches)

Code name/Observed process: **Individual/personal cultures, the interplay and conflict**

Within the OHPI there appears to be two distinct groups in terms of coaches' individualised cultures, those that favour collaborative workplace practices/learning, and those that do not. For example, Frank and Andrew initially both reported that they were enthusiastic about the opportunity to engage in collaborative learning within the OHPI, prefacing this by drawing similarities between their past experiences and the new organisational aspirations (collaborative engagement). Both Frank and Andrew had been part of a previous high performance centre at another location, where a collaborative community of coaches had naturally developed amongst employed staff and volunteer coaches. As such, Frank and Andrew brought their engagement within that community into the OHPI in the form of their personal cultures. Interestingly, Julie had also been part of this former high performance centre, and combined with her experience as an apprentice coach (shadowing other coaches), also espoused a collaborative personal culture (evidenced by her role as collaborative inspirer).

A distinctly different individual culture can be seen from Stewart, Richard, and Terrance. Interestingly, despite also having been an apprentice coach during the previous Olympic cycle, Stewart's experience was notable different. As his apprenticeship was characterised by independent thinking and learning, Stewart purveys a more isolated personal culture. Indeed, it is worth noting that his apprenticeship was at a different location and alongside a separate community of coaches to Julie. What is more, this affinity for isolation is further propagated by Stewarts constructed identity of expert coach, that being one that does not need help or guidance. As such, he prides himself of the ability to succeed autonomously.

As has been noted previously, Richard and Terrance as American coaches have experience of operating within a starkly different national and cultural setting. Indeed, within the American system coaches are far more autonomous, dictating their coaching behaviours, relationships, and goals without the need for accountability to a national governing body. As Terrance stated, *"I think we [Richard and himself] are a bit more used to deciding what we do and do not do within our programmes, and like having to justify certain decisions to people like Stephen, or other coaches for example, can be a bit grating. Um I would say it has been a bit of a shock, maybe shock is the wrong word… it's been uncomfortable trying to fit into some else's way of doing things. Hopefully once it settles down and we can get back to our own routines" (Field-note, February).*

This example characterises the disparity between personal cultures that is present within the OHPI. As such, the opportunity to engage in collaborative/learning practices is mediated by coaches' intentionality to do so, as guided by their personal culture. Therefore, it can be argued that the learning opportunities present within the OHPI are in part enabled or constrained by the personal culture of the staff within.

Questions:

How does coaches' experience in different communities or cultures shape their own personal culture?

Does an individual's personal culture change over time based on experience within a given community (or various communities)?

The second dimension through which culture was noted to influence coaches learning experiences was via cultural messages entrenched within the context of the workplace. Most notable was the deep-rooted historical anti-Americanism felt by some coaches. As Stephen explained:

"You know, and then this is overlapped with a historical challenge associated with any coaches or any staff members who weren't British. So employing or contracting somebody from outside of the UK brought with it a series of challenges and perceptions and so on... we historically in the previous cycle employed some North American coaches to either coach and or be senior manager centre directors in our system that people had found challenging and that was therefore was not an easy route to follow. But if we are working on the basis that really there are very few people with the rights skills then you have to go and find the people. So we had to find a balance between bringing new people into the system and developing and supporting existing people with an understanding that ideally there would be as many British people and we would be demonstrating investment and development in education of British coaches and the British system... so again, having employed American coaches appears to have created some conflict in terms of cultural conflict you might say, but we hope that will dissipate over time" (Interview, August 2013)

This cultural conflict as Stephen referred to it, *"divided the workforce, where British and American coaches were clashing in the ways they expected to work"* (Stephen). Indeed, it was noted by administrative staff that current financial/employment climate (funding cuts, redundancies, and perceptions regarding assessment) compounded this issue. For some coaches this had a direct impact on the learning opportunities afforded them within the OHPI. For example, in attempting to reconcile concerns in his coaching practice, Frank wanted to utilise Richards's significant knowledge base to *'sound out'* where he could improve in the year to come. Being the most closely related coach to Frank's discipline, Richard was the ideal candidate for this task. However, despite persistent attempts to engage in generative conversation, Richard proved unwilling. As Frank explained:

"I've tried hundreds of times. Even when I sat with him in the bar all night, talking, trying to generate a bit of a relationship, buying him beers he still

didn't give me his opinion... why? because he doesn't want to help me, because he doesn't want me to be good, because he thinking like an American coach and he thinks 'I've got to look after my team, my interests, and my team is team Andrew". (Interview, July 2013)

As such, Frank was forced to look beyond the support available within the OHPI to fulfil his learning needs.

"What I've had to do is ask other coaches, a peer group away from here about what they think and where I went wrong last year, and this year I have made changes because of that... if that's the way it has to be, fine."(Interview, July 2013)

Through consideration of this data, it can be argued that the workplace culture, bounded within the histories and traditions of the organisation, had the propensity to mediate coaches' workplace learning experiences, where in the case of Frank, coaches' had to look beyond the confines of the OHPI to fulfil their learning needs.

The third cultural dimension through which the data suggested coaches learning experiences were mediated regarded the sporting culture itself. Within the context of this study, the sports organisation responsible for the OHPI sought to employ a culture supportive of collaborative social learning amongst its coaching staffs. However, the entrenched individualist and competitive culture of the sport involved largely undermined this goal. Indeed, in an interview conducted at the end of the study, Centre manager Alison conceded this notion.

"So we for example, thought that the performance coaches would all sit down together and talk about their training plans and experiences and what is useful for them, but the nature of the world is that the athletes are rivals, although all together we are one team, so there is a troubling juxtaposition there between what we have tried to achieve." (Interview, May 2013)

Despite coaches' *"agreeing to contribute to a collaborative coaching community"* (Stephen), my experience was that coaches' felt the nature of the sport subversively favoured behaviour that belied a culture of competitive isolation. Stewart's comments explained this notion well:

*"I think that erm…I think that it is an unrealistic goal to have as a target in a sport like ****, which is very individual in nature and has, [laughs] has coaches who are very individualised in the ways that they work as well. You know, they have different styles and philosophies and ideas, and I think that I have definitely gotten a lot more from, and learned more from, my support team (physiotherapists and bio mechanists) or whatever you want to call it, than I have with other coaches. For me that is completely to do with the nature of these elite talented coaches. Talented coaches are a lot like talented athletes in the way that they do things. They can have very bespoke ways of doing things, they like to be competitive, which I think is then hard to integrate."* (Interview, June 2013)

For Stewart the individuality of elite coaches combined with their innate competitive nature made it difficult to engage in collaborative learning with coaching colleagues. Interestingly, Stewart's reliance on members of staff with whom he was not directly competitive, indicated that simply working for the same organisation added a further competitive element to an already competitive relationship between coaches in a given sport. Further support for this notion was provided by Frank, who suggested that following employment within the OHPI, his previously fruitful learning relationship with Richard had deteriorated significantly:

"Richard is probably the most intellectually advanced coach in the world, no joke, and when he didn't work for this organisation he gave me everything… since he has worked for us, he has given me nothing. Bizarre, but what does that tell you? All of a sudden I became rival" (Frank, Interview, July 2013).

In summary, the data has suggested three dimensions through which entrenched and prevailing cultures collectively mediated the learning culture of the OHPI. As such, this shaped those learning behaviours and affordances valued by both the coaches and organisation within this context. Indeed, despite the organisations goal of fostering a collaborative working culture, the overall cultural message was that of competitive isolation. As Julie put it, the reality of the culture within the OHPI was as follows:

A lot of the coaches here do not want to hear what I have to offer because they do not respect or value what I have to say from a development perspective, and that is that. So in the end you just go stuff it, I've just got to do what I've got to do and do it really effectively and become indispensable and be ridiculously beyond belief professionally and look after number one". (Fieldnote, May 2013)

4.5.2 Time

For the coaches reported in this study time was clearly noted as a valuable commodity, playing an important role in how coaches' managed their actions within the workplace. In regards to learning, the majority of coaches' in this study were thus required to consider the cost-benefit aspects of engaging in these opportunities. For coaches, time was often described *'restricted', 'non-existent'* and *'precious'*; and for this reason was cited by coaches' and management alike as a barrier to learning engagement. The following extracts further illustrate this point.

"It's tough for the coaches because basically they have the whole year of coaching, and the whole seminar session starts in September and we are trying to get them to go on holiday and recover… so they are really time deficient. If they have any down time at the end of the season when their athletes are resting then that is when all of the conferences and seminars and things are happening, so it's tough for them. I think it's a tough existence for the coaches, not really having any time at home and things like that." (Alison – Centre Director) (Interview, May 2013)

"Time can be an issue from me definitely. I don't live here [near the institute] so I have to drive in and out maybe 50 miles a day, so if I have to make a decision between going to see my pregnant wife or staying late to do extra work with another coach, more times than not I'm going to choose my wife. It kind of sounds bad doesn't it because I know it's important, but I think it's going to be the same for a lot of people." (Frank, Interview, January 2013)

"I think that maybe 60 to 70 percent of my day is actually coaching and then the rest of it is you know spending time liaising with the medical people,

liaising with the science guys and various other meetings that we have, like this one [laughs]. And you know, dealing with the management side of things, chasing up competitions that sort of thing… it makes it difficult to carve out some time to just talk about coaching." (Stewart, Interview, January 2013)

I think if I had more time it would be easier to live up to Stephen's ideals for this place [collaboration], but the reality is that it doesn't really fit. Being an *****'s coach means is an all-in kind of job. We spend months of the year on camp or at a champs so the free time I do have, the last thing I want to do is think about coaching." (Richard, Fieldnote, March 2013)

"I think that moving forward if we are to achieve the goals of this institute then we need to consider how to create time for coaches to be collaborative. (Stephen, Interview, August 2013)

These accounts capture the reality of participant's everyday coaching practice. Beyond their immediate coaching responsibilities, coaches' are also involved in the administrative aspects of their sport, such as liaising with various support staff as Stewart suggests. It is also important to consider that coaches' lives extend beyond the confines of the workplace, where family and social commitments are also demanding of time. Coaches' as thus required to consider the value of workplace learning engagement in relation to a cost benefit exchange it provides. Although coaches' reported awareness that such learning engagement was important, the aforementioned theme of 'assessed value' in conjunction with a deficiency of time was a clear barrier.

4.5.3 Existing or Self-directed Support Networks

Both coaches and managerial staff (Performance director and Centre manager) recognised that social support networks were a key component in supporting coaches' learning and development. Indeed, the majority of the learning I observed within the OHPI came from such interactions. Attempts were made by the organisation to foster these relationships between institute coaches', most notably Richard and Stewart, though these were largely unsuccessful and characterised by disjointed and occasional interactions. Interestingly, where these relationships were most fruitful they had developed naturally and often predated the development of the institute as the following quotes demonstrate.

"It's been tricky and not wholly successful but there are instances where it's working. Because, so Andrew and Julie, the new assistant coach I think her title is, they have already worked really well together, with Frank as well. But then they have a history within the old performance centre system; I think Julie may have even worked with Andrew as an athlete." (Alison, Interview, May 2013)

"So as we've talked about before it's my role I guess to try and start these guys working together and build this idea of collaboration, but it's hard. Like I said it was easier to get people to work with me in week one, my week one, but now I'm just working with Frank and Andrew, that's really good don't get me wrong and I'm learning a lot, but there is more knowledge out there in the institute... why? Because I've known them for years I guess, once I retired (as an athlete) my first coaching job was in the Walingbridge performance centre in an office with those two, we had a long time to figure each other out. That's what I'm finding hard with the other coaches here but then there is always going to be a bedding in period I guess." (Julie, Interview, April 2013)

Julie's comments reiterate the earlier contention that social relationships are the outcome of historical and social legacies. As such it is suggested that time played a significant role in the development of coaches social support networks. Andrew's beliefs support this notion with his contention that, "it takes time to figure out what you can learn from this person, and it then takes more time to build a relationship". Indeed, within the time deficient context of the OHPI it was noted that beyond the practicalities of working with their training groups, coaches had little time engage one another informally and build positive social relationships. Alison noted in particular that in moving forward *"creating the space for these guys [coaches] to sit down together in the future and talk will be important"* as *"at the moment the trust to achieve what we want to achieve [collaboration] isn't there a lot of the time" (Interview, May 2013)*.

Beyond the organisations attempts to foster such networks, coaches within the OHPI were highly agentic in the creation and maintenance of new or pre-existing social support networks. The following theoretical memo details my observations and interpretations of the social support networks utilised by Frank, Richard and Stewart.

Theoretical memo – Frank, Richard and Stewart

Code name/Observed process: **Agency in creating/maintaining social support networks**

Some coaches have demonstrated highly agentic behaviour in developing and maintaining a support network of like-minded individuals. Frank, Richard and Stewart all sought support from individuals outside of the OHPI in lieu of collaboration within colleagues.

Stewart for example refuses to engage in a relationship with Richard on the grounds that they have 'significant personal differences'. Instead he utilises two persons from outside of the organisation, Kevin, a long time mentor from his days as an apprentice coach, and Leon, a young coach he mentors. Stewart's reasons for maintaining this network over creating a new one(s) within the OHPI are twofold. First, he believes that he already has the learning support he needs to continue to develop as a coach as he states, *"as far as I'm concerned I already have what I need to figure out the things I need to figure out"*. Put simply, he does not recognise any added value from creating new institutionally fostered networks when he has existing support in place. Secondly, Stewart believes that the contested natures of workplace, and the sport itself, make it difficult for certain coaches to work together.

"After Stewarts morning session I managed to tag along with him for lunch and ask him about the prevalence of institute coaches utilising mentoring relationships with volunteer coaches for support, over OHPI colleagues. For him the functionality of these relationships were that they were naturally occurring, organic in their creation. He felt 'it naturally selected the right individuals to work and learn with or from'. What is more he made a point of suggesting that perhaps individuals too closely related in terms of level and discipline could not get past the competitive edge." (Field-note, July)

The field-note excerpt reaffirms a previous statement Stewart had made in interview that "we [Richard and himself] each have two guys who are going to be competing for the same medal, so I think there will always be elements of trust and caution to consider. Indeed, Stewart has on occasion suggested that perhaps the nature of the sport itself is counterintuitive to collaborative working such as that proffered by the OHPI. Richard echoed this sentiment. Indeed, when asked about his use of a volunteer coach called Graham as support within his coaching sessions Richard suggested:

"It's useful that he is not part of the team [OHPI], it means that we can get on with things in the way I want to and I don't have to waste time justifying or debating my decisions… sometimes people just want to argue within you for the sake of arguing but if I'm in control of who I work with that's not gonna happen" (Field-note, June).

From these examples is can be argued that the competitive culture of sport has an impact on how coaches employed their agency towards engagement with social support networks.

Interestingly, in the last month of the study Frank made multiple attempts to engage Richard as a critical peer in reviewing his coaching practice but was repeatedly ignored/evaded.

"I have spent all of Saturday night with Richard buying him beers and what not, and he still didn't give me his opinion… and he thinks 'I've got to look after my team, my interests, and my team is team Richard'… So when he says yes I would help you, but when I ask him a direct question he

won't answer it for me. I think he has great vision because he offers up great and interesting solutions to other points, but he doesn't offer them up to me. Fair enough, I don't care if that's the way it is, I'm a big boy and clever enough to figure it out myself, but I'll make do and I'll use the people I can outside this place [OHPI]" (Frank).

As such, Frank ultimately had to rely on undisclosed individuals outside of the OHPI and in the same manner as Stewart and Richard, a volunteer coach, to supplement his learning support.

In all these instances the coaches reported that they valued the mentoring/social support systems that had in place, regardless of their origins. Coaches characterised them as *'sounding boards', 'critical friends'*, and *'opportunities to see what you do from the outside'*.

Questions:

How is time a function in the creation of successful knowledge sharing/support networks?

How does the culture with a particular location/field shape the viability of networks between individuals?

Is attempting to enforce collaboration just adding another layer of unwanted 'learning' support to coaches' working lives?

The memo demonstrates how rivalries and the competitive culture of the OHPI shaped coaches' engagement with, and creation of, social support networks. Indeed, this was recognised by the administrative staff of the OHPI as Alison mentioned:

> *"So we for example, thought that the performance coaches would all sit down together and talk about their training plans and experiences and what is useful for them, but the nature of the world is that in [this sport] they are rivals, though all together we are one team. So there is a troubling juxtaposition there between what we are trying to achieve". (Interview, May 2013)*

The data captures the notion that whilst coaches recognised the importance and value of social support networks within their practice and development, to expect coaches to readily engage with colleagues within a performance sport may not always be feasible. What is more, as Stewart's experience highlights, often coaches maintain pre-existing support mechanisms that predate organisational attempts to intervene. As such, coaches can be reluctant to add an additional layer of support to their practice given the rivalries and time deficient context of high performance coaching.

4.5.4 Locations and Fields of Activity

An interesting theme that was identified within the data was the notion that coaches' attitudes towards engagement with workplace learning opportunities were tempered by conditions of context and culture associated to the location or learning venue, in this case the OHPI. The evidence suggested that for some coaches the history and culture associated with the location of the institute impinged upon the organisations ability to foster collaborative workplace practices amongst staff. For Andrew, the difficultly lay in the belief that *'Northwich has always been the place where coaches have done their own thing… it's generally been a place unto itself if you know what I mean'*. Indeed, it was the opinion of many institute coaches (Julie, Frank and Andrew) that Northwich perhaps wasn't the right location for the OHPI to be based. As Julie elaborated, *'I don't think many people are happy that the organisation is based here, the medical and support personnel might be, but I think this place has left a bad taste in people's mouths from before'*. Frank characterised this circumstance well when asked 'Do you think this is the right environment to attempt to create a collaborative community of coaches?'

> *"Only in the right environment lead by a head coach who's able to stop people just doing what they want…you would have been around when we had an institute in Walingbridge, one in Northwich and one in Pickets lock. When the institute in Walingbridge organically developed, we had an institute, support staff and Andrew, Julie, and me would sit and have coffee and talk about everything, the weights coaches would talk about solutions etc. So it was completely organic… we were all in the same office, it was a tiny office and it was organic, and it was no one's job for it to happen." (Interview, July 2013)*

Interestingly, Frank elaborated on the difficulty Alison (centre manager) and other administrative staff (Stephen) had faced in attempting to instigate a cultural change within this venue, namely fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing amongst coaches'.

> *"Now Alison who is the centre manager here, was the centre manager there… she was a very good politician. Nobody wanted to piss off Alison because she wasn't a man, she didn't think with an ego, she was much calmer… now that she's in charge of the institute here you would think she had the capacity to*

develop that and form those relationships, but she is up against people that are already resistant to this idea of collaboration, and I'll tell you why. Some of those coaches have established routines where she has had no input, so…"

"So, again you know it think it's interesting, I think it will take shape, but it's going to take a very long time because of way this place has always worked [the OHPI], but ultimately for me I think that for it to work effectively the institute should be based in Walingbridge and not Northwich, you could start all over again without the tensions… you know, that place is almost tarnished [the OHPI] now. I think then it would be work because the ground rules would be different because the ground would be different. So it's a very interesting dynamic, but until then I guess I keep doing what I'm doing, getting my stuff done". (Interview, July 2013)

Frank's account suggests that the history and culture associated with a location influences an individual's perceptions of what is possible, and indeed how they expect themselves and others to act. Stewart's comments appeared to support this contention, whilst also suggesting that an individual's experience in other associated behavioural locations (i.e. high performance training centre) also played a role behaviour within a new location.

Researcher Note: Whilst waiting for a physiotherapy consultation I asked Stewart whether he had changed much in how he approached his development as a coach since his apprenticeship to now.

"Not really, I started working for [the organisation] based in Leedale [former training centre] as an apprentice, and like we talked about before I was basically in charge of my own development… then I mover up here to [the OHPI] and I was an apprentice in this building, so really not a whole lot has changed around me other than there are a few new people, a lot of the same things are in place… so really you could say that whilst things have changed, not a lot is REALLY different" (Field-note, March, Stewart, emphasis added)

The following theoretical memo was constructed to capture my thoughts on the consideration of location and individuals past experiences as factors that mediated learning engagement.

Theoretical memo – Andrew, Frank and Stewart (Coaches)

Code name/Observed process: **Locations conditioning behaviour/learning.**

For some of the coaches, Frank and Andrew in particular, the inability of the OHPI to function as a collaborative learning environment relates to both their past experiences within this context, and the history of the location (the OHPI). The autocratic and performance driven regime that previously led the sporting organisation appears to have 'tarnished' the location as a learning context, thus constraining/shaping the coaching behaviours (i.e. learning) that are possible within this environment (at present). As such, it could be argued that the 'learning culture' within a location is in part subject to history of the location itself. Indeed, in considering Stewart's comments it could also be suggested that an individual's experiences within different locations potentially shapes their behaviour in subsequent locations.

Question(s):

How does the experience of working in the American system influence the ability of Richard and Terrance to work/learn/collaborate within the OHPI.

The above memo highlighted the question, how does experience of working within the American system influence the ability of Richard and Terrance to work/learn/collaborate within the OHPI? Whilst neither American coach believed that their past experience (within another sporting system/location) shaped their behaviour within the OHPI, many of the other coaches attributed this factor to their inability to conform to the behaviours expected by the organisation. As Stewart stated, '*He's [Richard] used to an American system, there is no team or group over there, it is all I."*

To conclude, for coaches within the context of this study coaching behaviour, and thus learning, was in part the outcome of an interdependent relationship between the cultural/historical context of a location, and the experience of individuals within associated locations.

4.6 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has presented data which suggests that performance coaches' workplace learning experiences are the product of an interdependent process between social and structural factors located within a fluid contextual setting. Within the context of this study, this process was characterised using three core conceptual categories. The first category, 'Negotiating Personal Engagement', illustrated the processes through which coaches constructed a personalised understanding of their workplace. This in turn mediated their behaviour and engagement with opportunities to learn. As such, this category captured how coaches' negotiated the employment of their agency, which guided their interpretations of, and engagement with, the learning affordances present within the OHPI.

The second category identified within the analytic process, 'Structuring of the workplace', addressed the structural processes observed within the OHPI that impacted upon coaches' workplace learning. This category captured how coaches learning experiences were located with a dynamic and fluid landscape. Of particular interest was the notion that the workplace was far from being a benign entity, as implicit goals, beliefs, traditions and practices had the potential shift and thus guide learning behaviour. As such, this fluid environment provided a context that both afforded opportunities to learn/or not, and shaped how such opportunities were valued and engaged with by the participants.

The final category, 'Mediating Factors' addressed the broader sociocultural processes that were found to mediate coaches' workplace learning within the OHPI. Interestingly, the influences of these social processes on learning were found to extend beyond either personal negotiations or the impositions of structural factors. As such it is proposed that the bridging features of these social and structural processes warrant consideration in their own right as prevailing socio-structural pre-conditions influence practice.

In summary, within the context of this study coaches learning engagement within the workplace constituted a process of agentic negotiation between the individual, and social structures, located within a context that is subject to a variety of mediating factors (including culture). Within this perspective agency was seen as the outcome of personal biographies, histories, constructed identities and membership within multiple communities. As such the invitational learning affordances of the workplace are construed

and constructed in a manner that is personally and contextually dependent. The findings demonstrate how these features are inherently linked to the workplace learning experiences of performance coaches'. The nature of this links are explored in relation to extant theoretical knowledge in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.0 Introduction

The following chapter provides a discussion on the findings presented within chapter 4. The preceding chapter reported data on the sociocultural processes that influenced the workplace learning experiences of professional coaches within the Olympic High Performance Institute (OHPI). These processes will now be discussed in order to *'refine and extend extant concepts'* (Charmaz, 2006, p.169) so that a greater understanding of professional learning might be reached. In doing so, this chapter utilises socio-cultural theory as a means of addressing the core categories identified throughout the grounded theory process. Though broad in nature, this approach provides scope to address the data in relation to *'more general and fundamental disciplinary frameworks'* so that workplace learning may be considered from a broader perspective (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996, p.153). Indeed, for Silverman (2010) attention to wider detail in this manner should allow for theoretical understandings of social and cultural processes that extend beyond the immediate context of the data itself.

The chapter is presented across three sections. The first section considers the characterisation of the OHPI as a 'Learning Organisation' as the head coach and performance director set out to reform the OHPI as a centre for learning and collaboration. The second section examines core categories 1 and 2 and utilises Billett's (2008) theory of relational interdependence to conceptualise the relationship between the individual (related to agency) and collective learning processes (relating to structure) observed within the OHPI. The use of such a framework looks to satisfy the contention that often, situated approaches to learning over empathise with either the individual or the social structure (Hodkinson et al., 2008). It was noted however, that as the data analysis progressed the findings required explanation via a wider range of conceptual frameworks. Specifically, there was a need to consider a broader view of culture in order to account for mechanisms which shape the relationship between agency and structure. As such, the third section considers broader cultural learning theories in order to illustrate how mediating pre-conditions (those which bridge the agency-structure divide) guided coaches' workplace learning engagement. The chapter concludes by offering a summary of how these theoretical frameworks have been used to frame and conceptualise learning, and presents

the theory of 'Negotiated community transitions' constructed to characterised coaches' workplace learning within this context.

For the purpose of clarifying the discussion to follow, a model of the theory 'Negotiated community transitions' is depicted below.
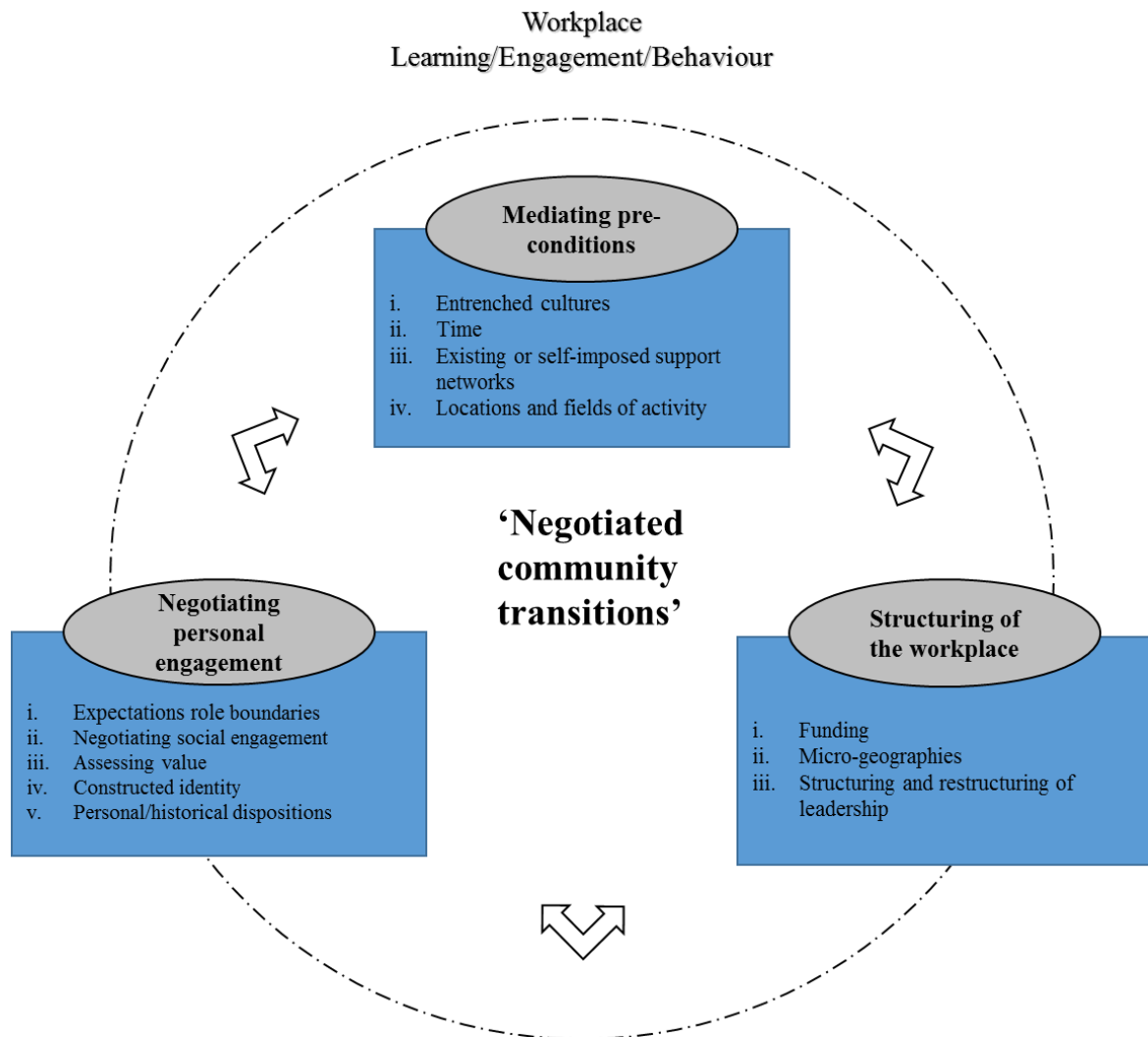
Figure 7: Model depicting theory of 'Negotiated community transitions'

5.1 Section 1: The Olympic High Performance Institute as a Learning Organisation

As discussed in Chapter 4 (Discussion), the study coincided with significant structural changes to the organisation, brought about by changes in the quadrennial Olympic funding cycle. A new administrative staff led by the Performance Director (Stephen) and the Head Coach (Paul), sought to maximise the effective use of coaching resources through the creation of an 'institute' (the OHPI). The organisation as a whole sought to foster a collaborative workplace for coaches to share and create knowledge. Indeed, what was

unique about this intention was the proposition that coaching success was to be judged not solely on the results of athlete performances, but on the coaches' engagement with the ideals and aims of the institute. In considering the data, it is possible to argue that the organisations goals align with the aspirations of a 'learning organisation', that being the desire to facilitate employee learning so that transformation can occur (Yeo, 2002). Indeed, whilst neither Stephen nor Paul characterised the OHPI as a learning organisation, the use of such terminology as *'innovation'* (Wang and Ahmed, 2003), *'reform'* (Mulford and Silins, 2003), and *'shared values'* (Watson, 2014) to characterise their aspirations for the OHPI, clearly aligns with organisational learning literature. Indeed, the coaches' themselves noted that collaborative engagement and learning amongst colleagues was explicitly outlined as a function of their roles within their employment contracts. As such, consideration of this body of work has proven useful in examining the utility of this approach in fostering and supporting coaches' workplace learning.

Within the context of the OHPI the desire to become an organisation that learns was seen by Stephen and Paul as vehicle for the development of both coaching staff and overall athletic performance. Indeed, within business this notion has been proliferated for more than 20 years as a model through which learning and working can be characterised as complementary and effective workplace practices (Matlay, 2000). More recently, the central tenets of this concept have been captured within education under the umbrella term 'Professional Learning Community' (PLC) (Stoll et al., 2006), emerging as an educational 'buzzword' that encompasses an overlapping spectrum of meanings (i.e. peer collaboration, learning groups, collective responsibility) (Leavitt et al., 2013). That said, despite the prevalence of this notion, it has been suggested that as a model it lacks definitional clarity, as critics argue *"there are [still] no easy answers to questions such as what is a learning organisation, and how might a manager [or education facilitator] introduce the concept?"* (Thomas and Allen, 2006, p.127). As such, neither academics nor practitioners can offer a common definition for the learning organisation/PLC, provide an evaluative criterion, or even suggest an assessment methodology (Eijkman, 2011). Consequently, there exists no practical framework for underpinning a learning organisation (Grieves, 2008). Nevertheless, adoption of this ideal remains 'de rigueur' within organisations striving to overcome the shortcomings of de-contextualised professional development (Watson, 2014).

This ambiguity reflects the difficulties reported by Stephen and Allison in fostering collaborative working practices amongst the coaches of the OHPI. As the data presented in chapter 4 demonstrated, the negotiations of coaches' personal engagement in relation to structural and mediating pre-conditions, gave rise to a workplace culture that undermined the collaborative goals of the organisation by propagating a culture of performative isolation. Interestingly, recent criticisms of organisational learning literature offer insight into this seemingly contradictory outcome. Grieves (2008) and Clegg et al., (2005) have argued that the very notion of a learning organisation is in fact an oxymoron, *'a metaphor too far'* (Grieves, 2008, p.471), in as much as it is inherently contradictory. For Clegg et al., (2005) the act of learning paradoxically opposes the very concept of 'organising', in that it is a process premised on transformation. Learning therefore has the potential to introduce change through disequilibrium, thus giving rise to disorder (Watson, 2014). Eijkman (2011) extends this concern, highlighting the notion that the 'ordered' and 'stable' learning organisation is portrayed as naively apolitical in that it *"ignores organisational power arrangements as well as, for instance, exploitative work practices and socio-cultural diversity"* (p. 167). Put plainly, learning involves disorder and organisations are stable structures. This contention is reflective of events observed within the OHPI. For example, when constructing the workforce little attention was paid to entrenched anti-American tensions, coaches' previous working practices, or the hierarchical disparity created by the significant differentiations in salaries; all factors participants cited as determinants of (dis)engagement with learning opportunities. Eijkman (2011) offers further insight, arguing that all behaviour (and thus learning) within an organisation is inherently political given the existence of embedded regulatory messages. Indeed, within the context of the OHPI, coaches noted experiencing role conflict, wavering between overt (organisational) collaborative aspirations and a covert performative culture. As such, despite striving to adopt the characteristics of a learning organisation, a variety of mediating socio-cultural and contextual factors saw the proliferation of a culture of competitive isolation, which as Frank suggested, revolved around *'looking after number one"*.

In looking to further examine why the context of the OHPI was ill-suited for the adoption of the learning organisation concept, Watson's (2014) work (re)examining of the assumptions which underpin this notion has been particularly useful. After drawing parallels between the rhetoric present throughout learning organisation and PLC literature,

Watson raises concerns surrounding the key features of this discourse. Through consideration of the connotations attached to *'shared values'*, the conception of *'learning'*, and the facets of *'community'*, Watson argues that contradictions of terms have created complacent and potentially damaging assumptions regarding learning. The insistence of shared values and beliefs can for example be questioned on two fronts. Firstly, it can be argued that adherence to organisational values inhibits change or innovation, and thus impedes engagement in learning behaviours; and secondly, the suggestion that these values are derived from socio-cultural notions of worth (Thornton et al., 2011). As is identified in chapter 4, coaches made value judgements based on the interplay of their personal dispositions and identity constructions within a given cultural context. Indeed, within the OHPI it was clear that despite an overt call for collaboration, coaches believed they would ultimately be 'measured in medals' (a notion affirmed throughout the organisations history and public affirmation within media coverage). As such, the dominant belief system held by the coaching staff was that of competitive isolation. With regards to learning, it must therefore be recognised that employee's engagement in learning behaviours cannot be guaranteed by shift in organisational values alone.

Questions have also been raised regarding the qualities of the term community (Watson, 2014). Whilst it is noted that the traditionally beneficial conceptions of the term remain (i.e. the collaborative development of intersubjective understandings, Lave and Wenger, 1998), Watson (2014) warns that strong community ties, and a heavy presence of socialised 'old-timers', can impede change within an organisation. The suggestion here is that individuals with strong organisational identities maintain local norms of practice, reifying them through consensus, and thus limiting the capacity to instil change. Indeed, this notion is not a new one, as over 20 years ago March (1991) suggested, *"The development of knowledge may depend on maintaining an influx of the naive and ignorant"* (p. 86). Through considering these contentions is can be suggested that the presence of strong willed 'old-timers' can restrict the learning capacity of an organisation by restricting new forms of practice. Indeed, this was certainly a feature of the OHPI as Andrew and Stewart confirmed:

> *'Northwich has always been the place where coaches have done their own thing' (Andrew, fieldnote, May)*

'I think it will take shape [collaboration], but it's going to take a very long time because of way this place has always worked' (Stewart, Interview, June 2013)

The results of this thesis can be seen to reflect the current discourse within learning organisation literature, namely that in its current conception it fails to provide a framework for promoting learning and development. It has however as a conceptual lens, proven to be a useful mechanism through which to identify the significance wider social, cultural and contextual factors play in shaping coaches workplace learning experiences. The findings suggest that education providers cannot simply ascribe themselves to the tenets of a 'learning organisation' and assume that success and appropriate engagement will follow. It is necessary to both consider the values being espoused within a community, and the dispositions and identities of the individuals that constitute it. Recognition of these features might offer insight into the learning that can be achieved within a given organisation, or highlight factors that potentially need addressing in order to achieve a desired outcome.

The following sections shall examine the aforementioned wider social, cultural and contextual factors, those being the core categories identified in chapter 4, in greater detail.

5.2 Section 2: Core Category 1: Negotiating Personal Engagement

The category Negotiating Personal Engagement discussed the processes through which coaches came to construct a personalised understanding of their workplace, which in turn mediated their behaviour and engagement with opportunities to learn. As such, these processes were seen to shape the agentic behaviours of coaches, thus guiding their interpretations of, and engagement with, the learning affordances present within the OHPI. Agency in this context can be regarded as intentionality, subjectivity and identity (Billett, 2006). The category was constructed to encapsulate the social processes identified in the following sub-categories: Expectations and identification of role boundaries, Negotiating social engagement with colleagues, Assessing value (meaningfulness), Identity congruencies, and Personal/Historical dispositions. These sub-categories will now be analysed in relation to the relevant theoretical literature.

5.2.1 Expectations and identification of role boundaries

Findings from the study indicated that clarifications of role boundaries were a central component in mediating workplace-learning engagement. Data illustrated that coaches' understandings of their 'role' shaped collaborative practices and therefore engagement with learning opportunities. For the administrative staff of the OHPI (Stephen, Paul, and Alison) the perceived role of the coaches and the expectations surrounding their behaviour was tied to the organisational goals for the OHPI. In striving to *"support athletes getting better through our coaches getting better through collaboration and collective thought"* (Stephen), the coaches roles were seen as community members committed to collaborative learning and knowledge sharing. Interestingly, despite acknowledging that collaboration was outlined within their job description, coaches largely held role expectations that deviated from the organisational assumptions. Indeed, coaches' within the study tended to define their roles along practical coaching measures such as, *'winning medals', 'improving their event',* and *'looking after myself and my athletes'*. This divergence between perceived coaching roles became problematic for some coaches as it impinged upon learning affordances. As Frank explained:

> *"So I thought I was here to be part of this learning community, be part of a new outlook and a new system that was working towards becoming better coaches. But where is it, when I've tried make those connections its hasn't happened… so in the end we go back to the way we were, I look after myself"* *(Interview, July 2013)*

In understanding the divergence between coach and organisational role expectations, it was useful to draw upon role theory (Jones et al., 2004). In traditional understandings 'role' is most typically used to refer to the behaviour expected of individuals within particular social contexts (Ashford, 2001). However this perspective of bounding role by context and behaviour has been critiqued in contemporary literature for privileging social structures as determinants of behaviour (Simpson and Carroll, 2008; Lynch, 2007). Lynch (2007) for example, rejects functionalist and interactionist perspectives for failing to adequately comprehend the multiple societal roles individuals adopt, instead arguing that a socio-cognitive approach be taken. Indeed, this is of particular importance given the multitude of communities within which coaches operate (i.e. Family, gender, race, social groups, and cultures). Lynch contends that this socio-cognitive lens is more appropriate as

it recognises behaviour as a negotiation between the individual and context, within a dynamic process of negotiation. As a consequence role behaviour can be understood as the outcome of individual agency and the influence of societal and cultural structures through which individuals negotiate/navigate role behaviours (Morgan & Schwalbe 1990).

Utilising this perspective it is possible to explicate some of the workplace interactions observed throughout the study. In the case of Richard and Stewart, it is possible to view their working relationship as shaped by their constructed roles within various communities. It was clear that both coaches' interpretations of their role were conditions of negotiations between social factors, such as personal and historical biographies, and structural factors, such as organisational and sporting cultures. As Alison (Centre manager) stated, *'in an ideal world of course we'd love to have them [Richard and Stewart] getting together more, but in reality it's not how they each work' (Interview, May 2013)*. For Richard, his role within the OHPI was about *'getting medals'*, not about collaboration, as that was why he had been *'brought in from the states'*. This perception was grounded within Richard's biography and history as an American coach, whilst mediated by his experiences of American coaching culture (i.e. isolated, performative, self-directed). For Stewart, his perceived role was to *'improve his event'* and prove that he was no longer an apprentice coach. Indeed, this transition resonates with Lave and Wenger's (1991) conception of legitimate peripheral participation where community members are characterised as naturally transitioning from apprenticeship to experienced 'old-timers'. Stewart's individualised perspective was the culmination of little organisational guidance, his personal historical experiences, and a culture of competitive sport. Such behaviour is consistent with the notion that people create and present roles they feel to be situationally necessary (Jones et al., 2004). In considering these points it is clear that the roles adopted by each coach could not facilitate engagement with collaborative learning within the OHPI. As such, the understanding of role was a determinant factor in how coaches chose to employ their agency towards learning opportunities.

Interestingly, Stewart's story highlights another dimension within which an individual's constructed role influenced behaviour. Within organisational learning literature it has been argued that roles are intermediary translation devices in the dynamic social process of identity construction (Simpson and Carroll, 2008). As such, roles never become identities, but rather, they mediate the meaning-making processes within identity construction. This

importantly describes the notion of 'role' in a dynamic and flexible manner, a view that resonates with contemporary understandings of identity construction (Ibarra and Barbulesescu, 2010). Indeed in some instances the adoption of certain roles can be seen as a vehicle towards the attainment of a desired identity. Data from the study concurs with this proposition as the both Stewart and Julie adopted roles and behaviours that acted to dissociate them from their previous titles of apprentice coaches.

Through understanding role in this manner, this study takes note of Purdy and Aboud's (2011) suggestion that an appreciation of agency and social structure offers useful insights into coaches' role constructions and practices. Indeed, within coaching literature appreciation of these factors has been used to understand various degrees of compliance, resistant and cooperation amongst coaches (Purdy et al., 2008). Certainly then it is important to recognise the place of role construction in discerning a state of congruence or discord between individual coaches and the sporting organisation. Through a greater consideration of this it might be possible to comprehend how coaches choose to engage with, and create learning experiences within their workplaces.

5.2.2 Negotiating social engagement with colleagues

Within this study data suggested that the nature of the interpersonal relationship between participants was a determinant in their engagement with one another, and therefore the learning opportunities of the OHPI. Indeed it was the intension of the Performance director Stephen to employ only those coaches that expressed *"open personalities, personalities conducive to effective learning and collaboration"*. That said, the learning experiences reported within this study imply that the quality of the relationship between coaches had the potential to act as a barrier to, or enabler of, workplace learning. For example, Stewart described how his weak interpersonal relationship with Richard acted as a barrier to their learning engagement; *"[Stephen] wanted us to work together because we come from the same event, and he does know his stuff I'll give you that, but there's just some personally issues I can't quite get past with him" (Fieldnote, April).* Conversely, strong interpersonal relationships, as seen between Andrew and Richard, were characterised by shared understandings and histories.

Within coaching literature little research exists in assessing the quality of working relationships between coaches and how these relationships undermine or facilitate learning. What literature there is, tends to focus largely on the quality of coach-athlete

relationships and the learning therein (i.e. Jowett and Poczwardowsk, 2007; Jowett and Ntoumanis, 2004). As such, mentoring literature was useful in approaching the notion of interpersonal compatibility. Within education both McCaughtry et al (2005) and Stroot et al., (1998) note that effective mentors possess rich and sophisticated pedagogical knowledge combined with strong listening and communication skills. These skills are said to support, motivate and emotionally engage mentees, providing profitable professional development relationships (Wycherley and Cox, 2008; Cushion, 2006). That said, when attempting to formalise these learning relationships, as attempted within the OHPI, incompatibility between learners can lead to non-learning relationships (Ehrich et al., 2004). Indeed, despite profiling employees in an attempt to ensure learning collaboration, a number of non-learning relationships were identified within the OHPI (signpost to findings). As such, there is a need to further understand what constitutes interpersonal compatibility.

Within organisational learning literature, research proposes that high quality workplace learning relationships are underpinned by the notion of 'psychological safety' (Carmeli et al., 2009; Edmonson, 2004). Psychological safety describes a perception that *'people are comfortable being themselves'* (Edmondson, 1999, p. 354) and *'feel able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status or career'* (Kahn, 1990, p. 708). An important manifestation within high quality relationships is relational co-ordination, whereby learners share goals, knowledge, and mutual respect (Gittell, 2002). When these three components are aligned the information processing and learning capacity of employees are said to increase (Carmeli and Gittell, 2009). These notions can be used to explore some of the findings within this study. For instance, where Andrew was able to utilise a strong interpersonal relationship with Richard to engage in generative learning conversations, both coaches could be seen to share similar histories and knowledge. This therefore created mutual respect and facilitated a relationship where each member was psychologically safe. Conversely, Stewart was seen to guard his behaviour in order to preserve a self-image that suited his assumed role, that of expert practitioner and not 'apprentice'. Interestingly, in a recent examination of valued learning experiences amongst high-performance coaches, Mallett et al (2014) noted how increasingly contested coaching contexts had the propensity to limit social interaction. Indeed, the authors suggested that within these contexts coaches' were likely to be guarded against revealing perceived deficit or weakness to coaches in subordinate positions, or to

those coaches they were in competition with. This finding resonates with the notion of psychological safety, where in the case of this thesis a contested workforce accounts for Stewart's lack of psychological safety and thus his weak interpersonal relationships with other coaches (Julie, Richard).

From the findings of the study it was possible to perceive that the nature and quality of coaches' interpersonal relationships was a determinant in engagement with learning opportunities. The examples of successful generative conversations demonstrate the importance of social interaction as a means of constructing learning through dialogue, negotiation, and collaboration. However, these opportunities to learn hinged upon the interpersonal compatibility of coaches, whereby certain relationships were untenable. Notions such as psychological safety proved useful in comprehending how coaches chose to employ their agency to engage with (or not) the learning opportunities afforded via social relationships. What is more, in considering the experiences of Andrew and Julie, and Richard and Stewart, it is possible to suggest that social relationships are a product of social and historical legacies. With regards to learning engagement it can therefore be suggested that time is a significant factor in the construction of valued and effective social/learning relationships.

5.2.3 Assessing value (meaningfulness)

The data from the study suggested that despite a clear organisational goal, the administrative staff of the OHPI (Stephen, Alison and Paul) were unable to foster a collaborative community of learning coaches. That being said, the opportunity to engage in social interactions with fellow coaches did present some examples of positive learning experiences. Julie for example, reported the benefits of being able to attain *'practical experience of technical skills'* through observing and collaborating in training sessions with Andrew and Frank. Andrew also reported that he really valued the opportunity to *'pick the brains'* of a fellow coach (Richard) within his normal day-to-day routine. In reference to learning theory these examples resonate with Sfard's (1998) participatory view of learning and provide further support to a large body of literature that argues the merits of more 'authentic' modes of learning (Gilbert et al., 2009; Rynne et al., 2006; Garrick, 1998). Throughout the literature on adult learning (Knowles et al., 2015), teaching (Musset, 2010), and coaching (Cushion et al., 2003), academics and practitioners alike have recognised the primacy of learning experiences that are directly related to

individual's immediate needs and context. Put plainly, people more readily engage with learning that is relevant to them personally. This notion was particularly useful in addressing the findings within this study as not all authentic learning opportunities were valued or deemed meaningful by the coaches. Indeed, social constructivists do not maintain that all interactions are meaningful for learning as all activities are located within, and influenced by, social and cultural factors (Woo and Reeves, 2007). There is therefore a need to understand the mechanisms through which individuals interpret how valuable or meaningful a learning opportunity is.

In organisational learning literature the antecedents of meaningfulness as the influential concepts within workplace learning have been addressed. Early work derived that meaningfulness arose from practical aspects such as skill variety, job security and task significance (Hackman and Oldham, 1980). More recently the importance of factors such as psychological safety, interpersonal relationships, organisational culture, and social identity within this process have been noted (May et al., 2004). Pratt and Ashforth (2003) characterise the concept stating:

> "One finds meaning not in what one does, but in whom one surrounds oneself with as part of organisational membership, and/or in the goals, values, and beliefs that the organisation espouses" (p. 314).

Examples from the data would appear to echo this suggestion. In chapter four, the data described how coaches' (Stewart, Richard and Terrance) actions were guided by the meaningfulness they prescribed to workplace activities such as collaborative engagement. Coaches were seen to negotiate the value of collaborative engagement in relation to the competitive culture of the sport, their perceived role/identity, and the manner by which they felt their performance would be measured by the organisation. Frank observed that the competitive nature of the sport made it difficult to foster collaboration amongst the coaches.

> "We've got people who just aren't getting on, and, and really people are starting to think, I am anyway, that it's time to look after number one… I have to focus on what's important and right now that's my job and proving I can do it etc, and that means performances from my guys and medals". (Interview, July 2013)

In considering this it is possible to suggest that coaches' interpretations of what constituted a valuable or meaningful activity shaped their agentic engagement with the learning opportunities afforded by the OHPI.

Findings from the study reflect contemporary literature, which argues that authentic learning opportunities are important to individual learning and development (Herrington et al., 2014), but interestingly also highlighted the role perceived meaningfulness plays in coaches' engagement with learning affordances. What is more, this notion of meaningfulness was derived through coaches' negotiations of various artefacts, those being resources constructed from social/cultural factors. Such an understanding is likely to be significant in how managers or facilitators shape the content and evaluation of future professional development provision.

5.2.4 Identity congruencies

In this study constructed coaching identities were a crucial component in determining coaches' engagement with the learning situations present within the OHPI. Coaching identities were bounded within the context of the workplace, the sport, and individuals ontogenetic histories, thus providing a base upon which they negotiated agency and intentionality (Billett, 2006). For example, Richards statement *"They [British coaches] b**** and moan about things, about not having stuff, well go and get it, that's what I did, it's what I had to do" (Fieldnote, March)*, shaped his interpretation of, and subsequent engagement with, colleagues when seeking assistance. Similarly, Terrance's identity as a "*professional medal winning coach*" inhibited his inclination towards engagement with the monthly technical meetings where he purported, "*it's just covering the same old ground again and sucking the same old eggs" (Fieldnote, April)*. In the cases of Julie and Stewart the data suggested that a 'designated' identity directed their behaviour in order to achieve a future more desirable identity. Within the literature, designated identities are regarded as *"stories believed to have the potential to become a part of one's actual identity"* (Sfard and Prusak, 2005, p.18), characterised by the used of future tense verbs, 'should', 'want' and 'wish' become vehicle towards achieving that identity. For example, when a child says 'I want to be a doctor', they are aspiring towards a designated identity. Indeed, both Julie and Stewart reflected this notion in their discourse of 'shoulds', 'wants' and 'wishes'. As such, each were cautious in their engagement with colleagues as they endeavoured to leave their previous titles of apprentice behind. Coaching identity was therefore an important

presentation of self through which coach's negotiated participation in, and interpretation of, learning opportunities (Handley et al., 2006).

The work of Hughes (2010, 2007) was particularly useful when attempting to comprehend the nature of how coaches' constructed identities shaped behaviour. Through the examination of 50 undergraduate students' collaborative learning experiences, Hughes (2010) proposes the analytic framework 'identity congruence', arguing that where congruence occurs individuals are more like to engage with group learning activities. Congruence in this instance was said to occur when individual's social identities were consistent with the topics, patterns of communication, and associated discourses of identity that existed within a community. As such, Hughes outlines three dimension of identity congruence:

- *Social identity congruence:* Social identity congruence concerns building relationships in a group or community around aspects that are unrelated to the group's learning project, such as common leisure interests.

- *Operational identity congruence:* Operational identity congruence relates to the learning groups behaviours and the alignment of the practices group members employ. This can for example relate to technological communication such as email.

- *Knowledge-related identity congruence:* Knowledge-related identity congruence concerns the practitioner knowledge and the compatibility of those forms of knowledge. This can also relate to an individual's willingness to put their knowledge within the public domain.

Within the study Hughes (2010) found that knowledge related identity was a key component in ensuring social learning, as operational and social identities often aided, but sometimes abetted the learning process. By explicating the notion of identity congruence it is possible to understand the influence identity played on coaches working relationships. Frank for example noted his inability to *"connect with"* Terrance stating, *"We just don't speak the same language"*. As such the incongruence between their practical content knowledge's made learning engagement difficult. Conversely, despite a lack of operational congruence (characterised be Richards's dislike of technology), Richard and Andrew were able to engage in a generative learning relationship based on shared knowledge surrounding particular training techniques. In these instances the ability to align identity

congruencies either facilitated or negated the creation of collaborative knowledge sharing processes.

The implications for coach education rest on the notion that learning through identity congruence requires identity shifts and even transformations (Hughes, 2010). However these shifts are not likely to occur in isolation and will be dependent on the cultural contexts of the situation (Clarke, 2008; Billett, 2006). For organisations looking to promote group learning, the adoption of a cultural pedagogy that cultivates identity transformation would consider the details of learning groups' interactions, rather than assuming some members have deficits and expect them to conform. Indeed, this was certainly not the case within the OHPI as the entrenched culture of anti-Americanism did little to accommodate the American coaches entering into a new community/organisation (Terrance and Richard).

Another important point identified within the study was the notion that coaches existed and operated within a number of different communities (i.e. nationality, family, age group, and event). The data suggested that it was important to recognise that membership within multiple communities resulted in coaches assuming multiple identities. Andrew for example could be characterised as belonging to the communities of separate training centres, where different practices resulted in different constructions of himself in order to gain certain perspectives and behaviours (Wenger, 1998). As such, identity can be seen as a performance shaped by the social and cultural connotations of an arena (Nunez, 2014). Within coach education literature, it has been argued that coach learning can be either fostered or negated by the movement of coaches between communities, as movement can be characterised by cognitive processes such as filtering, selecting and rejecting (Griffiths and Armour, 2012). These processes then have the ability to afford or restrict opportunities within learning structures such as the workplace. Hodgen and Askew (2007) suggest the implications of these processes arise when:

> *"Confronted by tensions between the different aspects of their identities, individuals are compelled to negotiate and reconcile these different forms of participation and meaning in order to construct an identity that encompasses the membership of different communities."*

As such, individuals maintain a sense of agency through the adaptation of different forms of participation and identity construction within different communities (Handley et al.,

2006). This approach recognizes that attempts to adapt will generate tensions within individuals, and instabilities within the communities, such as those found within the OHPI.

In recognising identity construction in this manner it is possible to view it as an expression by which individuals chose to employ their agency. This constitution of experiences from participation within multiple communities then mediates engagement with, and the interpretation of, future experience. Workplace learning identity is therefore a condition of learning, where those facilitating a collaborative workplace environment need to be familiar with the facets of identity construction. Indeed, this is not to warn against the inclusion of new members within a community, for as Wenger (1998) observes fresh thinking impedes knowledge stagnation. Indeed, within coaching literature Occhino et al's (2013) study of Australian football coaches would suggests the learning capacity of the community is extended by incorporating coaches from varied sporting codes. As such, a learning community needs to find ways of viewing outsiders as potential members, establishing sufficient congruence between individual identities and the evolving identities, so that learning opportunities can be afforded. This is particularly important given the transient nature of coaching employment around the globe, a conception that while particularly prevalent within the mainstream media, is notably absent within coaching literature. The difficulties encountered by the American coaches within their first year of employment in the UK are testament to this point.

5.2.5 Personal/historical dispositions

The findings from the study suggested that coaches' cognitions regarding interaction and learning were guided by a set of values, beliefs, and attitudes that predating coaches' entrance into the workplace. Regarded within learning literature as personal dispositions, recognition of this notion was valuable in examining coaches' inclinations towards particular behaviours within particular contexts (Schussler et al., 2010). Put plainly, they refer to a relatively enduring tendency to behave in a certain way (Katz 1985). As Stewart illustrated, "*For me it's been good [the nature institute], I've liked the freedom to be able to do my own thing and do the things that come naturally" (Interview, June 2013)*. These inclinations to behave in a particular fashion are rooted in a person's life both inside and outside of a particular social setting, colouring the ways in which a person perceives and interprets their workplace and the learning opportunities within (Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2004). What is more, these subjective dispositions are themselves rooted in the

social structures that patterned workers lives. In trying to better understand the nature of these dispositions it was useful to consider Shum et al's (2012) contention that they represent a journey. That said, it is a complex and embedded journey where the personal and autogenic factors of an individual are considered (the social, historical, cultural and personal resources that shape a person's life). To better explain this metaphor a diagram is suggested (Figure 8). Shum et al contend:

> *Learning dispositions are personal, and autogenic. On the one hand they reflect 'backwards' (the 'personal' left side of Figure 8) to the identity, personhood and desire of the learner, and on the other hand, they can be skilfully mobilised to scaffold 'forwards' towards the acquisition of the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary for individuals to develop into competent learners (the 'public' right side of Figure 8) (p.3).*

Self			Competent Agent
Identity Desire Motivation	Dispositions Values Attitudes	Skills and Strategies Knowledge Understanding	Competent Learner, Citizen, Mathematician, etc
Personal			Public
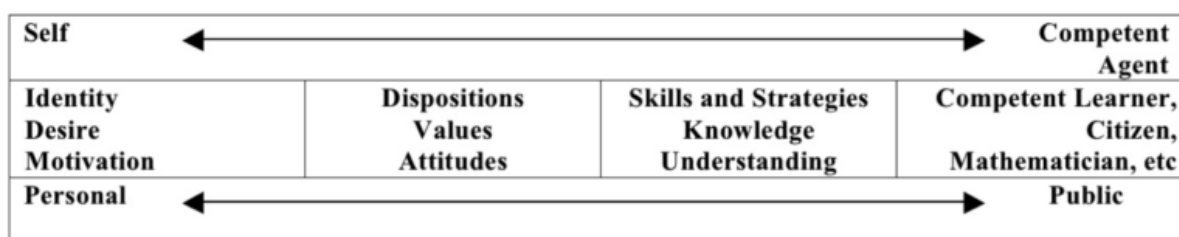
Figure 8: Dispositions as a personal attribute, embedded in a learning journey oscillating between personal and public, taken from Shum et al., (2012, p.3)

Utilising these perspective it can be suggested that agentic action, including learning at work, depends upon the integration of these subjective dispositions, and external workplace structures.

Bloomer and Hodkinson (2000) utilised a similar understanding of dispositions when examining the developing learning careers of secondary school students. The authors argued that the dispositions of individual learners orientated them towards particular learning opportunities. As such, different learners perceived and reacted to opportunities differently, where their dispositions acted to filter the interpretation of new opportunities. Support for this contention can be found in psychology and educational management literature, where dispositions as a construct have been widely linked to motivation and value judgements regarding cognitive resources (Crick and Yu, 2008; Dweck 1999; Ames 1990). This notion is useful in unpicking some of the learning behaviours demonstrated by Andrew, Richard and Stewart. In chapter 4 it was outlined that Andrew's historically

accrued dispositions facilitated his learning interactions with Richard. Put plainly, his affinity for bio-scientific knowledge meant he valued Richard as a learning resource. In contrast to this, Stewart's dispositions, namely his coaching philosophy and preferred learning behaviours, resulted in him viewing Richard as a none-valuable learning resource. The outcome of this was a gradual decrease in workplace engagement between Stewart and Richard to the point where the organisational leads (Alison and Stephen) no longer expected any interaction. The evidence suggests that dispositions clearly play a role in how coaches' construed/engage with afforded learning opportunities, but also functioned to contribute to the re/production organisational cultures and the accepted practices therein (Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2004).

Interestingly, findings suggested that participant dispositions constituted more than relatively enduring features of an individual's personality (Crick and Yu, 2008), extending to incorporate the cultural aspects of coaches' histories/biographies. For example, with reference to the American coaches (Terrance and Richard), their dispositions were shaped by their experiences within a culture starkly different to that of British sport (Independent, non-accountable). Indeed, as Terrance stated "*we just don't speak the same language*". In fact, when discussing habitus, a portfolio of dispositions that guide behaviour regarding all aspects of life, Bourdieu (1993) contends that dispositions are acquired and manifested in a socio-historical setting. Thus it is possible to suggest that dispositions are culturally specific, as well as person dependent. This finding is supported by Deakin et al's (2007) investigation of 10,000 students' lifelong learning dispositions. The results indicated that there was a high level of association between students' learning dispositions and; their perceptions of teachers' beliefs and practices, student self-efficacy, effort-avoidance strategies and knowledge-seeking curiosity, each being regarded as culturally motivated. This finding suggests that there is a need to recognise individual dispositions as influenced by participation within multiple fields or communities, each culturally informed (Griffiths and Armour, 2012) in order to better understand how coaches choose to employ their agency towards learning opportunities.

The utility of perceiving personal dispositions in this manner, is that it recognises the impact of cultural practices on subjective learning dispositions. As such it can provide valuable insight into the pedagogical process of supporting the development of professional coaching practice. What is more, the influence of culture indicates that such

dispositions may fluctuate over time. Whilst it is beyond the scope of this thesis to speculate in what manner, and at what rate this may occur, if learning dispositions are malleable, then assessment tools designed to stimulate interpretation and change can be useful in fostering effective learning.

5.3 Core Category 2: Structuring of the Workplace

The category 'Structuring of the workplace' discussed the structural processes observed within the OHPI that impacted upon coaches' workplace learning. The findings suggested that these processes' not only afforded opportunities to learn, but also impacted upon how coaches' interpreted and reacted to these learning opportunities. The category was constructed to encapsulate the structural processes identified in the following sub-categories, *Funding, Micro-geographies, and Structuring and restructuring of leadership*. These sub-categories will now be analysed in relation to the relevant theoretical literature.

5.3.1 Funding

The findings from the study suggested that fluctuations in organisational funding greatly impacted upon the working lives of the coaches' within the OHPI. As was addressed within chapter four, I entered the field at the start of the 2012-2016 Olympic cycle and was witness to 'the post-Olympic effect'. Imposed funding cuts resulted in substantive organisational change, which impinged upon coaches learning engagement via psychological (mental stress) and structural means (reduction in learning affordances). The notion of 'uncertainty', taken from organisational management literature, was useful in comprehending this process. In this context uncertainly refers to an individual's "*inability to predict something accurately*" (Milliken, 1987, p. 136), leading to an adverse mental state concerning doubts over future events and the stability of one's environment (DiFonzo & Bordia, 1998). Research suggests that in times of organisational restructuring, employees often feel uncertain about the changing priorities of the organisation (Buono and Bowditch, 1989). Indeed, throughout the study coaches regarded the goals of the OHPI as *'unclear', 'fuzzy'* and *'different for everyone'*. Within the literature uncertainty is considered to be a highly probable outcome of organisational restructuring, where a failure to manage employees appropriately can have implications for future change efforts and the culture of an organisation (Allen et al., 2007). As such, organisational culture and the ability to reconstruct that culture can be seen as a condition of organisational change and subsequent employee uncertainty (Allen et al., 2007). This concept is of particular

relevance within this study as a defined organisational goal was to instil a collaborative learning culture within the OHPI. Therefore the potential for employee uncertainty needs to be recognised as a factor that can impact upon workplace learning via cultural change.

The findings highlighted that funding related organisational changes influenced coach learning in two dimensions. Firstly, the psychological state of coaches' was influenced by job-related uncertainty. The reduction in state funding resulted in significant redundancies, reducing the previously employed workforce by half. Stewart and Frank highlighted how the fears surrounding job security altered the culture within the OHPI by creating tensions between colleagues. In relation to the loss of previously popular learning activity (the Friday 'meet up') Frank observed, *"People generally don't seem to be that interested"* *(Interview, January)*. Indeed, Bordia et al., (2004) suggest that uncertainly surrounding position and future roles and responsibilities, is one of the most commonly reported and destructive psychological states. As such it could be argued that the culture within the OHPI was not conducive to collaborative learning, as the nature of events meant coaches' focus was on aspects of their careers beyond learning and development (the focus shifting to preservation). The second aspect through which funding impinged upon coach learning was via direct changes to the social structure. Indeed, the significant reduction in staff dismantled pre-existing social support networks, an important learning resource for sports coaches (Occhino et al., 2013). For Stewart and Andrew in particular this meant the loss of valuable informal learning structures (Nelson et al., 2006). Stewart lost his mentor of three years and Andrew lost the assistant coach he termed his 'soundboard'. What is more, the reduction in employed coaches further shrank the opportunities to engage with colleagues, and the breadth of knowledge present within the institute. As Allison suggested,

> *"There is only Richard and Frank, Julie… five coaches… that is actually a really small number. So there's not much to choose from and I suppose that if two people don't necessarily see eye-to-eye, then it sort of blows the whole idea" (Interview, January 2013).*

These findings suggest that organisational change, such as funding cuts, has significant implications for the learning opportunities afforded within a given workplace. Moreover, change in this manner also has the propensity to influence how individuals chose to engage with and interpret these opportunities. As such, this is demonstrative of an interdependence between individual agency and the social structures of the workplace (Billett, 2006).

Interestingly in a study of change within a public sector organisation, Bordia et al., (2004) found that job-related uncertainty could be significantly reduced by means of shared decision-making and consistent communication between superiors and their sub-ordinates. Indeed, this was certainly not the case within the OHPI, as the isolation of coaches from administrative staff was heavily reported.

5.3.2. Micro-geographies

The findings from the study indicated that within the OHPI coaches' engagement with colleagues was tempered by entrenched territorial behaviour. Captured under the term 'micro geographies', territoriality represented a physical space that engendered a sense of belonging for some of the coaches and their athletes (Altman, 1975). For example, specific locations within the institute clearly represented a certain coach or event group as Julie identified, *"everyone has their spot, so like up on the [mezzanine] is where Frank and his [athletes] live" (Interview, April 2013).* Within psychology literature it is acknowledged that territoriality is an innate socio-behavioural construct that impinges upon interpersonal relationships. As Altman (1975) suggests:

> *"Territorial behaviour is a self-other boundary regulation mechanism that involves personalization of or marking of a place or object and communication that is 'owned' by a person or group. Personalization and ownership are designed to regulate social interaction and to help satisfy various social and physical motives. Defence responses may sometimes occur when territorial boundaries are violated." (p. 107)*

This definition illustrates how the establishment of physical and social boundaries (i.e. through territorial behaviour) can be utilised to mediate the interactions between individuals. Thus, a major function of territoriality is to maintain privacy. Indeed the findings suggested that some coaches within the OHPI chose their 'territory' for this very reason. Terrance for example located his training group on one of the outer fields of the facility, allowing him to *"focus on my guys and what they need"* and *"keep out of some of the politics inside".* The literature also suggests that within any context a sense of proprietary ownership fulfils basic human needs, including the need to express one's identity and display efficacy over one's environment (Pierce et al., 2003). In Brown and Werner's (1985) study of housing community members, it was suggested that residents expressed their identity through proprietary relationships with community artefacts (i.e.

Halloween and Christmas decorations) as a means of establishing who they were in relation to others in the community. The findings of this study concur with this notion. For Stewart, isolating himself via his location within the OHPI served to mediate his identity as a successful coach that *'managed to isolate himself from distractions' (Interview, January 2013).*

Within management and organisational learning literature the field of territoriality is recognised as an important, though often overlooked aspect of workplace interaction (Brown et al., 2005). Moreover, whilst territoriality can have positive effects on individual development, (e.g. reification of identity construction), territorial behaviour can both directly and indirectly lead to negative consequences for organisations (Brown and Robinson, 2007; Brown 2009). Indeed, within the data geographical territoriality was found to impede knowledge sharing amongst coaches'. The sheer fact that coaches were isolated from one another limited afforded opportunities to engage with colleagues, whilst a pervasive culture of individuality shaped their interpretations of such engagements. In talking about a conflict over space Frank characterised this point:

> *"If we were a real co-operative he would say don't worry fuzz I'll do my session in the afternoon, or I'll just move the twenty meters… but he doesn't because he doesn't care and doesn't want to move work near Stewart" (Interview, June 2013).*

As such, the entrenched territorial behaviour made coaches' reluctant to venture into certain areas and collaborate with particular colleagues (Brown et al., 2005). Therefore it could be said that territorial boundaries undermined the collaborative goals of the institute through the inhibition of learning affordances.

Another impact of territoriality highlighted amongst the coaches was a resistance to change. As highlighted within chapter 4, the OHPI represented the initial conception of a new organisational performance centre. As a result, coaches who transitioned from the previous incarnation of the organisation to the new, were required to navigate significant structural and environmental changes (i.e. funding shifts, redundancies, new management systems). Frank and Stewart for example, having been employed under the previous regime endeavoured to maintain their previous practices and territories. However changes in the social structure, such as the introduction on new staff, led to shifts in the boundaries of perceived territorial ownership, and with that created tensions and conflict amongst the

coaches (Brown and Robinson, 2007). This notion is useful in understanding some of the antecedents that fostered the conflict between Stewart and Frank in relation to Richard. In carving out a territory of his own Richard impinged upon the boundaries of Frank and Stewart, ultimately leading to Frank not being able to engage in his normal training practice. The result of which was a weakened interpersonal relationship between Frank and Richard, thus reducing their social interactions.

The implications for coaches' workplace learning extend to an organisational need to both acknowledge the existence of territoriality as an inevitable trait of human behaviour, and manage the process proactively to mitigate and eliminate the negative repercussions. For example, Brown and Robinson (2007, p. 262) use examples of territoriality in collectivist (collaborative) societies to suggest a means by which to *"reduce individual territoriality and increase [knowledge] sharing",* by *"encouraging people to view objects and entities as secondary territories shared by many"*. Indeed, in a study by Salari et al. (2006) communal cultures were demonstrated to exhibit decreased territorial conflict as participants adopted ownership over entire location (workplace/organisation) rather than specific sections of that location. From this perspective territoriality can be seen as a condition of organisational culture, where the value, beliefs, and traditions of that organisation guide patterns of behaviour and social understandings.

5.3.3 Structuring and restructuring of leadership

For the coaches in this study the Olympic cycles and constant restructuring of leadership presented a workplace in fluctuation. As such, coaches were required to continuously negotiate new social structures, a process that both shaped the affordance of learning activities and informed coaches' inclinations to engage. For example, it was noted that coaches' dispositions and routine practices had been grounded within the previous organisational regime. Stewart for example, continued to work in the isolated and self-managed fashion he had previously, excluding himself from activities that did not meet his entrenched ways of working. As such, restructuring of the OHPI's leadership impacted upon the learning behaviours of the coaches. As Stephen the Performance Director noted, *"the coaches have gotten used to being led with a stick, so there is a learning curve to get used to under the new 'less strict' leadership" (Interview, August 2013)*. In this instance, the established practices and dispositions of coaches' were undermined by structural change, namely the instalment of a new administrative staff structure. An example of this

was seen in the changes to the line management of the coaches. Monthly formal review meetings were abandoned in favour of a more informal and passive process under Paul the Head coach. As a result some coaches (Frank, Stewart) were left feeling *'unsupported'* and *'unchallenged'* by the removal of this support tool. Indeed challenging and innovative experiences are a well renowned component of professional development in a number of fields (i.e. teaching and coaching, Richter et al., 2011 and Rynne et al., 2010 respectively).

As was described in chapter 4, the OHPI underwent a significant structural change four months into the study, namely the loss of Paul as Head Coach. As a founding member of the new look institute, the decision to quit his role created tensions and uncertainty amongst the coaching staff. As Julie noted, coaches were left wondering, *"Does he not believe in that system? Or does he not believe in what we are creating?" (Interview, April 2013)*. The unanswered questions and rumours surrounding his departure undermined the organisations attempt to instil a collaborative culture, as coaches uncertainty surrounding their roles led to the adoption of traditional isolated coaching practices. Frank characterised the feelings amongst the coach, stating:

> *"He [Paul] knew he was going, and as a result of him knowing he was going but never really saying anything, he couldn't make any decisions because he didn't actually give a s***. If people don't care, then they become disenfranchised and so do those under them, us, the coaches." (Interview, July 2013).*

Indeed, as was explicated whilst discussing the impacts of funding on coach learning engagement, organisational change in this manner has the propensity to both become as a major stressor for employees, and shape attempts to employ cultural change (Allen et al., 2007).

Following Paul's departure issues also arose surrounding leadership within the OHPI. Despite the intention that Stephen would fill the void left by Paul, coaches reported that there was a lack of clear direction or guidance within the institute. In what Stewart termed 'a leadership vacuum', coaches *forgot about working together and returned to looking after themselves and the athletes'* (Frank). Through utilising Lave and Wenger's (1991) community of practice theory this process can be explicated in greater detail. As discussed in chapter 2, within a community of practice (CoP) learning is viewed as the outcome of social groups collaboratively working towards shared goal(s) within a shared context. The

similarities between the organisational goals of the OHPI and those within a CoP make this theory a useful comparative tool. Within the literature it is acknowledged that CoPs are rarely present within coaching contexts as the competitive nature of sport often serves as a constraint to coaches sharing their knowledge (Culver et al., 2009 Lemyre et al., 2007). Indeed, within coaching literature it is suggested that without a facilitator or coordinator coaches will not change from their habitual coaching behaviours (i.e. learning practices) (Culver & Trudel, 2006). This was certainly the case within the OHPI, as the absence of a facilitator, or leader, left coaches to *get on with it their own way*. In fact, recent studies in the field of coaching support this finding. For example, Culver and Trudel (2008; 2006) discuss attempts to cultivate three CoPs within an alpine ski club, a karate club, and with high-school-sport coaches. The results indicated that those practitioners who participated within facilitator-run CoPs greatly valued collaborative engagement with colleagues as a learning and development tool. However, the third CoP was notably less successful. Despite being comprised of coaches that had a history of successful engagement with previous CoPs, the group lacked leadership and direction because the facilitator did not attend. The results of these studies therefore suggested the facilitator played an important role in the group learning process, adding a layer of social structure that shaped coaches inclinations towards learning engagement.

5.4 Section 3: Core Category 3: Mediating Pre-Conditions

The category 'Mediating Factors' discussed the broader sociocultural processes observed within the OHPI that were found to mediate coaches' workplace learning. Data within this category was found to extend beyond personal negotiations and the impositions of structural processes, to impact upon how coaches interpreted and responded to a variety of learning activities. The category encapsulates the following constructed sub-categories; *Time, Existing or self-imposed support networks* and *Locations and fields of activity*. It is important to note that whilst each process had both social and structural qualities, and therefore could have been located within either of the previous themes, it was felt that the bridging quality of these processes warranted a separate category. This line of thinking shall be further developed within section 2 of this chapter.

5.4.1 *Time*

Within this study, time was clearly identified as a significant barrier to learning engagement amongst coaches. Beyond the practical job of coaching their athletes, coaches

had additional vocational and family responsibilities. Stewart for example, characterised the situation in that 60 to 70 percent of his day was actual coaching, where the rest was occupied by:

> *"Liaising with the medical people, liaising with the science guys and various other meetings that we have, like this one [laughs]. And you know, dealing with the management side of things, chasing up competitions that sort of thing". (Interview, January 2013).*

As such, time was described by management and coaches alike as *'restricted'*, *'non-existent'* and *'precious'*; and for this reason regarded as a commodity to be managed carefully.

The findings suggested that time played a significant role in how coaches considered the value of engagement with workplace learning activities in relation to the cost benefit exchange it provided. This was seen in two dimensions. Firstly, some coaches (Terrance and Richard) did not see the investment of time into significant learning engagement with colleagues as important to the completion of their role. As Richard observed, *"I'm not going to be measured in terms of how well I worked with Tom, Dick, or Harry, I'm going to be judged on whether these guy [athletes] win medals. So that's my priority, getting this bit done" (Fieldnote, March).* Secondly, whilst some coaches' (Frank and Andrew) recognised the importance of engagement with learning opportunities, often to do so required that time be taken away from family and social obligations. Subsequently this lead to limited learning engagement and occasionally feelings of guilt on the part of the coaches, *"It kind of sounds bad doesn't it because I know it's important, but I think it's going to be the same for a lot of people"(Frank, Interview, January 2013).* Indeed, in learning literature similar findings have been noted. O'Sullivans' (2003) study into the CPD experiences of 20 chartered physiotherapists found that despite being highly motivated towards the concept of CPD, many actually felt guilty about taking time out for learning. Likewise, within education literature Armour and Yelling (2007) found that physical education teachers often believed that taking time for learning was disruptive to pupil learning given their absence. In medical literature, support for the conflict between service provision and the finding of time for learning has also be noted. For example, in a review of CPD impact on Doctors performance and patient outcomes, Mathers et al (2013) suggests that simply having the time to meet and discuss learning with colleagues is major

concern for GP's given their patient workloads. Together, evidence suggests that workplace learning requires dedicated time and space so that it does not conflict with the primary function of individual's vocational roles. Certainly, it could be argued that until continuous learning engagement becomes an explicit function of professional coaches roles it is unlikely to be valued alongside performance outcomes.

5.4.2 Existing or self-imposed support networks

For many of the coaches in this study the formation and maintenance of existing social support networks played a significant role in the development of their professional knowledge. Indeed, within coaching development literature the value of these learning networks (i.e. CoPS, Informal knowledge networks and Networks of practice) has long been acknowledged by academics and practitioners alike (Culver and Trudel 2006; Rynne et al., 2010; Occhino et al., 2013). The findings suggested that coaches were highly agentic in the development of their networks, where support was often sought from individuals outside of the immediate context of the OHPI. Where such networks were most successful, coaches reported that relationships were grounded in trust and respect, developed over long periods of time. Frank for example, admitted to having sought out a mentee not affiliated to the organisation, providing a *'sounding board'* and 'trusted *ear'* to aid his coaching practice. Indeed, this is indicative of naturally occurring or informal mentoring relationships, a notion already prevalent within coaching literature for its pervasiveness and impact on generate learning (Cushion et al., 2010; Cushion et al., 2003)

In considering the widely accepted notion that coaches rely heavily on support networks for their professional development, it is perhaps not surprising to note that some maintained pre-existing networks outside the OHPI. Experience of these pre-existing relationships, alongside significant personal investment (i.e. time, personal) shaped coaches' dispositions towards the creation of new support networks. It was found that where coaches already had the support they required, they were disinclined to add an additional 'institutional' layer on top. As Stewart described:

> *"I know Stephen wants me and Richard to be doing more together too, you know, but as far as I'm concerned I already have what I need to figure out the things I need to figure out… I've worked with Kevin (external support) for years and really I'm just going to keep doing that."* (Interview, January 2013).

Stewart's statement also alludes to the importance time played within the creation and maintenance of coaches' networks. Indeed, the development of a social network was described as a lengthy process, where within an environment already time deficient coaches were sceptical about their ability to form generative relationships. As Andrew implied, *"it's a challenge, it takes time to find out if you can learn from this person and then it takes more time to build a relationship where you can share stuff" (Interview, February 2013)*. This finding is in keeping with recent studies in coaching, where it was reported that the development of mutual trust and respect between coaches took many years to build (Occhino et al., 2013; Mallett et al., 2007). As such, it can be argued that the lengthy process of identifying and constructing relationships with confidantes had the potential to thwart learning engagement.

It was also interesting to observe how individual coach agendas and the culture within competitive sport, influenced coaches' dispositions towards engagement with social networks. Richard and Stewart for example favoured utilising support networks comprised of members with whom they were not directly competitive. As Stewart pointed out, *"we each have two guys who are going to be competing for the same medal, so I think there will always be elements of caution and trust to consider" (Interview, June 2013)*. Stewart's statement typifies the performative culture that was present within the OHPI and the subsequent impact this culture had on the development of trust and knowledge sharing behaviours between coaches. Similar findings have been recorded in earlier research. Trudel and Gilbert's (2004) for example attempted to instigate a COP within a Canadian youth ice hockey league, but were unsuccessful as the 'win at all costs' culture of the league stifled collaborative learning engagement between coaches. Adding further support, Occhino et al's (2013) examination of social networks amongst professional Australian soccer coaches suggested that the results-driven imperative of professional sport was a deterrent in the development of trust between coaches. In considering these points it is possible to argue that trust, and the ability to build trust within an appropriate cultural environment, was significant in determining how coaches constructed their social networks. Indeed, within sociology literature trust and shared values are regarded as a significant facets of establishing social capital within a particular social network, a feature essential in supporting effective knowledge transfer (Field, 2005).

The nature and form of the networks observed within the OHPI bear a resemblance to what Mallett et al (2007) identify as 'Dynamic social networks'. The authors characterise a DSN as the development of a trusted and respected relationship between a coach and a confidante whereby a coach agentically seeks counsel from a specific individual. In developing this notion further Occhino et al., (2013) have suggested that network engagement is driven by the *"need to access the most relevant person at the time when it is needed most and the decision of whom they go to is governed by whom they think they have access to"* (p. 100). As such, little indication is given as to how coaches' agency is mediated. The findings of this thesis echo the contentions within contemporary literature, namely that competitive sport often negates engagement in generative social networks (Trudel and Gilbert, 2004, Lemyre et al, 2007), whilst offering insight into the constitutions of coaches' agency. As such, organisational culture, personal dispositions and structural conditions, such as time, have been shown to influence coaches' judgments regarding the creation and engagement with social support networks. In light of the findings, it could be argued that creating generative social networks within such a competitive environment may not be feasible. The findings therefore provide useful information towards further understanding the social relations that underpin the development of coaching knowledge (Bowes and Jones, 2006).

5.4.3 Cultures

The findings from the study suggested that the workplace learning experienced by coaches within the OHPI was the outcome of a complex inter-relationship between individual agency and a variety of social-structural factors, of which the OHPIs learning culture was key. The learning culture was bounded within the individual dispositions of the coaches, the context of the workplace, and the historical tensions of the sport; thus compromising three dimensions through which entrenched and existing cultures shaped learning. This finding resonates with contemporary literature as it has been proposed that practitioners conception of, and participation in vocational practice, itself socially determined, shapes the construction and reconstruction of workplace culture and the learning affordances therein (Billet, 2008; Hodkinson et al., 2008). For example, the constructed identities and dispositions of some coaches, Stewart, Terrance and Richard in particular, propagated a culture of isolation, thus opposing the organisations attempts to instil a collaborative culture amongst coaches. In consequence the learning opportunities afforded coaches (Andrew, Frank and Julie) otherwise inclined towards collaborative practices were limited.

What is more, based within a sport renowned for competitive isolation, and maintaining subversive anti-American tendencies, coaches largely returned to the isolated learning practices entrenched within the organisations history. As such, these various dimensions of cultural influence were seen to shape the learning culture of the OHPI.

Within wider education literature similar suggestions as to the influence of culture on learning experience have been proposed. For example, in exploring the changing culture and practice of teaching, Hargreaves (1994) suggested that collaborative cultures offered richer and more diverse learning opportunities. Interestingly, the author warned that to contrive of such a culture was to remove the spontaneity within, thus rendering it ineffective as a development tool. This finding offers a potential antecedent as to the difficultly experienced by Stephen, the Performance director, in formally instigating a culture of collaboration within the OHPI. Day (1999) built upon Hargreaves work, highlighting the role networks and communities played in shaping "*a school culture [that] provides positive or negative support for its teachers' learning*" (p.77). Indeed, Harris's (2001) empirical study of how departmental culture impacted teacher performance and development echoed this notion. Utilising data from two evaluation projects across 12 schools, Harris suggested that departmental culture played a significant role in shaping collaboration, communication and reflection amongst staff. More recently, and within the field of coaching, Lemyre (2008) examined the feasibility of establishing a culture of negotiated learning within a Karate dojo through the use of a CoP. The study argued that the traditional hierarchical structure within karate was counterproductive to establishing a culture of negotiated learning. This notion echoes the findings of this thesis as a number of coaches made explicate their belief that *"for me [this sport] isn't right for this type of thing, working together in this way [a collaborative community]"* (Stewart, *Interview, June 2013)*. It can therefore be argued that a culture of isolated practice was 'entrenched' within the fabric of the sport itself, and thus shaped the learning experiences possible within this context.

Whilst the literature addressed is useful in demonstrating the importance culture plays within learning practice, it offers little insight into the inherent processual links between culture and learning. In order to explicate this further Hodkinson et al., (2007) offer their concepts of cultural convergence, synergy and divergence as a means of differentiating and unpicking learning cultures.

- Convergence occurs when the forces between different factors are pushing or pulling in broadly the same direction. Within this context forces are considered to the influence of factors such as politics, historical tensions, traditions, gender roles, age etc.

- Synergy is a stronger term used when that convergence results in strongly reinforcing forces acting largely together.

- Divergence is the opposite of convergence, and can result in tensions between forces, or conflicts between them, when different forces 'pull' the learning culture in contrasting ways.

Utilising this framework it is possible to characterise the learning culture within the OHPI as divergent, whereby multiple tensions or forces sought to influence the culture of learning within. Indeed, in Hodkinson et al's (2007) study, an examination of learning cultures within further education, sites displaying pre-eminent tensions, divergences, and conflicts, largely held negative consequences for learning. Put plainly, tensions were dysfunctional for the site as a whole, though not necessarily for all learners. This supposition resonates with the findings of this thesis, where strong divergences challenged and shaped the learning culture of the OHPI. For example, some of the key divergent features were as follows. Whilst there was organisational pressure to focus on collaboration between coaches, the entrenched culture within the sport prescribed a performative culture of assessment. This lead to a culture of *'looking out for number one'*, proliferated by quadrennial funding shifts and uncertainty surrounding job security. A further underlying divergence pertained to the nature and dispositions of the coaches' employed. As discussed earlier within the chapter, dispositions guided coaches' perceptions of learning, where conflicting preferences such as those seen between Richard and Frank impeded learning affordance. As such, conflicting dispositions shaped the learning culture. A final divergent feature illustrated within the findings was the anti-Americanism that was present among some of the British coaches. As Stephen (Performance Director) suggested, this *"divided the workforce, where British and American coaches were clashing in the way they expected to work" (Interview, August 2013).* Notably this final notion has been documented in both management and identity construction literature. A central argument in both literatures is that people tend to associate similarity concerning beliefs and values with attractiveness and trustworthiness,

regardless of whether conceptions are 'real' or are stereotypical conceptions (Vaara et al., 2012). In the case of this thesis, the association led to the creation of group conflicts, creating subsequent collaboration problems. Consistent with this reasoning, research on organisational trust has shown that trust in a person or group tends to be greater when the two are culturally similar (McAllister, 1995; Sitkin and Roth, 1993). It could therefore be argued that cultural compatibility should be a pertinent consideration for educators and professional development facilitators alike.

The learning culture within the OHPI can be characterised as having deep divisions, tensions and conflicts, all of which led to a dysfunctional and ineffective learning culture when compared to the collaborative goal of the organisation. It is interesting to note that this finding is contra to a body of work that argues challenges and conflict promote learning through necessity. Engeström's (2001) activity systems theory for example, proposes that learning through work is primarily driven by conflict and the need for learners to evolve and relearn their roles. However, the conflicts identified within the findings of this study suggest that not all challenges represent a constructive learning opportunity. Therefore there is a need to readdress the nature of these conflicts to clarify what determines the utility of conflict within the workplace. A recent study by Vaara et al's (2012) relating to culture, learning, and international business acquisitions, found strong evidence that exposure to different national contexts and cultures provided unique learning opportunities for employees. However, this finding was associated with increased levels of operational integration, that being the control and co-ordination of operations in a bid to foster knowledge sharing and transfer. This again points to the critical importance the facilitator or organisational lead plays in facilitating learning, particularly in relation to how a learning culture is shaped and maintained.

It is important to acknowledge that within every learning culture some degree of divergence and convergence exists (Hodkinson et al., 2007). For example, despite obvious divisions amongst employed coaches, Andrew and Richard were able to engage in a fruitful and generative learning relationship. That being said, within any learning culture there will be a dominant view as to what represents 'good' and 'effective' learning. As such, this represents the interrelationship of the cumulative individual and social factors that produce and reproduce culture.

The utility of considering workplace pedagogy as culturally mediated is that it provides a valuable way of identifying the limits of possible change within a given learning site. Indeed, as within the case of the OHPI, often there are cultural limitations that are difficult/undesirable to change, thus impeding learning and the achievement of a desired learning outcome. That being said, acknowledging this process provides a potential learning development tool. As such, where the promotion of effective learning is an organisational goal, altering the learning culture through social and structural dimensions is likely to increase cultural synergy, thus increasing the effectiveness of learning behaviours (Hodkinson et al., 2008). What is more, this perspective provides a useful way of characterising coaches' within the learning process that resonates with contemporary learning literature. As demonstrated within the data, coaches were constantly working to mediate the learning culture. Stewart and Frank were prime examples of individuals working to construct and reconstruct the particular learning culture they desired. This perspective is useful in making explicit that whatever an individual does will always interact with other forces in the culture, sometimes with unpredictable and unintended effects (Hodkinson et al., 2007).

5.4.4 Locations and fields of activity

It was evident within the data that coaches' attitudes towards engagement with workplace learning opportunities were tempered by conditions of context and culture associated with a location or learning venue. As identified by Frank and Stephen, the OHPI was positioned within a location renowned for *'tensions', 'attitudes'* and *'ground rules'* which had in the past shaped coaches' attitudes and practices. As such, many of the coaches' (Frank, Julie, Andrew) expressed the concern that collaborative learning would never truly work within the OHPI [Northwich] as the *'ground is tarnished'*. The implication of this contention is that a learning culture is influenced by a particular site or physical learning venue.

In explicating this notion it was useful to consider Bourdieu's notion of 'field' in relation to cultural production. Indeed, within education and coaching literature Bourdieu's concept has provided a valuable theoretical tool used to explore cultural production and reproduction (Hodkinson et al., 2007; James and Biesta, 2007; Cushion and Jones, 2006). It should be noted that whilst this concept has been addressed within the literature review (Chapter 2), it is useful to revisit it here. Within Bourdieu's work, field can be considered as a set of social relations that characterise particular learning sites (i.e. school, home, and

the workplace). In reviewing Bourdieu's writings, Jenkins (2002) defines the concept as a "*structured system of social positions-occupied either by individuals or institutions-the nature of which defines the situation for the occupants*" (p. 85). Significantly, it is important to recognise that fields are defined by shifting and imprecise boundaries, the point at which the field fails to impact on practice. As such, fields can be characterised as overlapping or interconnected (i.e. the economy, education, politics and family), whereby several overlapping fields have the ability to influence the learning culture of a particular site (Taylor and Garratt 2010; Hodkinson et al., 2007).

As discussed earlier, coaches' constructed identities represented a view of their 'self' in relation to the multiple communities within which they participated. Through viewing these communities as fields, and thereby sites of learning, it is possible to understand how participation within one field influences participation and interpretation within another, as fields shape the dispositions of members and thereby conceptions of behaviour (i.e. learning). For example, Frank and Andrew interpret the inability of the OHPI to function as a collaborative learning environment in relation to their past experiences of the location. In this light, it can therefore be argued that coach learning is constrained and/or liberated by the movement of coaches between fields or communities (Griffiths and Armour, 2012). In considering the impact of individual agency with regards to learning engagement, and the wider social condition of 'field', this is indicative of a relational interdependence between agency and structure.

Evidence suggests that coaches' engagement with learning constituted their biographies, dispositional and interpretations, and was communicated both inside and outside of the field that was their workplace. The notion of field acts as a reminder that the workplace is not just a place or a context for learning, but is positioned in relation to others. This in turn means that a learning culture will permit, promote, inhibit or rule out certain kinds of learning, as was described by Andrew and Frank. Consequently, to understand the learning culture of a particular site, it was necessary to understand the fields that surround it, and the relationships of the site to other fields it may in part connect to, or interact with.

5.5 Relational interdependence within the OHPI, mediating pre-conditions, and a theory of negotiated transitions.

In summary, section 2 of this chapter has suggested how coaches negotiations around personal engagement shaped the learning they experienced within the workplace. It has

been argued that these negotiations were premised on a variety of personal factors, including individual dispositions, role expectations, constructed identity, and value judgements. Such factors influenced and directed coaches' agency and intentionality towards the learning opportunities being afforded them within the OHPI. As demonstrated within the discussion, agentic action was critical to the learning that did and did not occur. Indeed, as has been suggested in previous studies, results intoned that where organisational learning affordances are poor or conflicted, individuals (coaches') are required to become highly agentic in order to access meaningful learning activities (such as coaches' creating their own mentoring relationships) (Billett, 2014; Rynne et al., 2010). Importantly however agency alone was found to be insufficient to promote learning (Billett, 2006). The data suggested that the invitational qualities, and thus the learning affordances of the OHPI influenced the behaviour of coaches. The processes that structured the workplace, namely, funding cuts, micro-geographies, the structuring leadership, and the entrenched cultures, shaped the nature of these invitational qualities. As such, it has been argued that examining agency/structure didadically is insufficient in understanding the dynamic process of relearning. What is needed therefore is a unifying theory that identifies relationships and processes between agency and structure.

Such a relationship between agency and structure is best understood through an appreciation of Billett's notion of relational interdependence between agency and structure. As an interpsychological process Billet (2009) conceives of learning as:

> *"Comprising negotiations between (a) what the social and physical worlds suggest and project, and (b) individuals' construal and construction of these experiences, as shaped by their socially shaped personal histories, which includes the mediating role of brute facts, such as maturity" (p.39).*

Therefore, there is an interdependence between the person and the social world that underpins both learning and the remaking of cultural practices. However, the interdependence is relational, what for one individual may be a compelling and transformative learning experience, may have no relevance to another (Billett, 2014). For example, Andrew's desire to access and utilise Richard's bio-scientific knowledge base is a case in point, as other coaches failed to see value in this as a learning resource. As such, the same social experience or suggestion is construed and constructed (i.e. learnt) relationally by individuals in a way that is both situationally and personally dependent.

Over the course of the study it is demonstrated that an individual's agency had the propensity to alter the learning affordances within the OHPI, though it should be noted that the majority of these instances served to remove learning opportunities. For example, the lack of interest displayed towards the weekly coaches meeting soon resulted in a discontinuation of the exercise. As Stewart stated, '*but it was usually quite useful… it doesn't happen anymore, people just, I guess priorities changed' (Interview, January 2013)*. That being said, there was evidence that where opportunities had been successfully provided to one coach, others were able to access similar opportunities. For instance, the adoption and retention of volunteer mentees by OHPI coaches' was utilised by three of the participant coaches. First, in opposition to the organisational policy, Stewart was allowed to maintain a pre-existing relationship with an individual from outside of the organisation. Once this was established Frank and Richard engaged in similar relationships, following suit along what was then an accepted learning practice. In these examples, the agency and structural affordances were interacting interdependently with respect to coach learning.

This conceptual premise is particularly relevant for examining learning through participation in the workplace, and thus through cultural practices. Indeed, it has long been suggested that much of the knowledge needed for professional practice originates from cultural and historical precedents (Scribner, 1985). The utility in recognising learning in this manner is that it allows for comprehension of the mechanisms through which agency is constructed and mediated by the exercise of socio-cultural norms and practices. What is more, it highlights the role that personal agency plays in transforming or maintaining cultural practices, such as those brought about by a funding cycle or change in management (Billett et al., 2005). Through understanding the ontogenetic development of agency, that being with relation to history, identity, multiple community membership, and an understanding of role, it is possible to see the person behind the coach/learner (Griffiths and Armour, 2012). The significance for coach education in applying this perspective would be to create a workforce of more critical thinkers, a reportedly lacking characteristic amongst coaches (Cushion et al., 2003). Such a move could empower coaches to better reflect upon their coaching philosophies and the ontogenetic development that informed them. Thus with regards to practice and education, the choices coaches made would be more intentional rather than based on *"tradition or uncritical inertia"* (Cushion 2013, p.69).

The application of Billett's relational interdependence concept within this study is particularly useful as it provides a tool by which to assess the subjective experiences of coaches with regards to the objective structural processes of the workplace. Indeed, as Sage (1987) exclaimed, '*it is necessary to examine subjective experiences in order to understand the development of personal professional identities and associated knowledge's*' (p.215). With this in mind, coach educators and learning facilitators can hopefully begin to understand the subjective learning experiences of coaches/employees, and better facilitate this process (Cushion et al., 2003 Jones et al., 2003). Through consideration of the themes addressed in this thesis it is possible to identify some questions that could facilitate this learning audit. For example, how will a coaches\learners biography and history influence their response to a particular environment? How will their membership within multiple communities manifest within this new context? What forms of culture do they bring with them? Are they likely to attain congruence with colleagues and organisational goals?

That said, in attempting to conceptualise the learning experiences of participant coaches, it became apparent that as a theory relational interdependence alone was insufficient in unpicking the mechanisms at work within the OHPI. Billett's notions of agentic engagement and affordance appeared too rigid when attempting to examine the mediating factors that bridged social and structural elements. Indeed, those sociocultural processes outlined under the gerund of mediating pre-conditions had both individual and structural connotations. For example, culture operates on two fronts. It can be viewed as an individual construct shaped by social concerns (family/history), or seen as a structural component within the constraints of employment (organisational culture). Indeed, whilst Billett's (2006; 2008) work does consider culture as remade/maintained by practice, an inability to address culture in its own right required that a broader view of learning from a cultural perspective be considered. That said, whilst wary of engaging in an overly eclectic combination of theoretical perspectives, researchers are cautioned against single-mindedly applying overly simple explanations to human behaviour that is quite clearly complex (Walcott, 2009). Therefore in order to interpret 'real' meanings, the analysis mirrored the complexity of that observed by utilising a collage of perspectives. As such, the work of Hodkinson et al., (2008) provided useful in considering culture with regards to learning, positioning the notion as a mechanism through which the relationship between agency and structure was mediated.

Through consideration of culture in this manner those codes captured under the gerund 'mediating pre-conditions' could be characterised as pre-existing circumstances, which had the propensity to both enable and constrain behaviour. Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008) offer the term 'practice architectures' as a means of explicating this relationship. Within this notion practices within a context are seen as subject to three preconditions:

1. Cultural–discursive preconditions, which shape and give content to the 'thinking' and 'saying' that orient and justify practices;

2. Material–economic preconditions, which shape and give content to the 'doing' of the practice; and

3. Social–political preconditions, which shape and give content to the 'relatings' involved in practice.

It can be argued these practice architectures operate alongside agency and structure, as they pertain to densely interwoven patterns of saying, doing, and relating that are prefigured within any one context or place (Schatzki, 2002). These prefigured practices, such as how people will relate to one another in educational settings and situations, mediate the current and future interactions that are subject to Billett's notions of agency and affordance (Kemmis and Mutton, 2012). For example, within the context of this study coaches perception of 'time', a material-economic condition, mediated their intentionality towards learning engagement. In another example, the 'location and field of activity' was as significant socio-political pre-condition, shaping how coaches such as Frank interpreted the utility of the OHPI as a learning environment. This perspective is then useful in positioning such contextual factors in relation personal agency and structural affordances.

The use of a grounded theory methodology within this study provides the means by which to create an explanatory model of coaches' workplace learning within this particular context. As Strauss and Corbin (2015) contend, this *"theorising is the act of constructing . . . from data an explanatory scheme that systematically integrates various concepts through statements of relationship…viewed through the eyes of the researcher" (*p.81). Importantly then, I myself am as much a part of the theory as the situation and context it reflects. The explanatory model which emerged from, and constitutes the central finding of this study, is entitled 'Negotiating Community Transitions', and is a significant socio-cultural process through which coaches workplace learning experiences were mediated.

Within this theoretical perspective, coaches' of the OHPI were characterised as highly agentic in their learning engagement as they navigated a fluctuating workplace, and negotiated their transitions across cultural and community boundaries. The theory consists of three interrelated propositions. The first proposition refers to a variety of personally dependent processes through which coaches' negotiated their learning engagement. These negotiations constituted five distinct, yet interrelated processes, as coaches' constructed their identities, defined their social and role boundaries, and determined the value of the learning opportunities afforded them. The second proposition outlines how the structuring of the workplace shaped the invitational learning qualities of the OHPI, as funding, territoriality, and leadership structure all had the propensity to constrain or enable learning affordance. The final proposition delineates mediating preconditions though which patterns of saying, doing and relating were prefigured within the context of the OHPI. These three propositions represent the overall structure of the theory 'Negotiated Community Transitions'.

Conclusion

In summary, this section has identified the utility of adopting a perspective of relational interdependence between agency and structure when attempting to conceptualise coaches learning experiences. Within this perspective, agency is seen as the outcome of personal biographies, histories, constructed identities, and membership within multiple communities. As such the invitational learning affordances of the workplace are construed and constructed in a manner that is personally and contextually dependent. Therefore, it is argued that workplaces should be viewed as something negotiated and constructed through the interdependent processes of structural affordance and personal engagement (Rynne et al., 2010). Thus they are not to be considered disparate physical and social environments. In contrast to traditional perspectives of characterising behaviour as the outcome of negotiations between agency and social structure (Bourdieu, 1993), it has been argued that mediating preconditions such as time and culture shape the context within with practice is located. As a result, workplaces such as the OHPI can be best understood if attention is paid to the social, cultural and structural provisions of the employees, the organisation and existing preconditions. As such, the theory 'Negotiating Community Transitions' has been constructed to characterise learning within this context. It proposes relationally interdependent bases for understanding learning through work and the (re)making of

cultural practices (Billett et al., 2005). Importantly, it should be noted that these bases do not solely concern the interaction of individuals and structures, but also capture the negotiation of behaviours (i.e. learning) between people.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to examine the characteristics of workplace learning and consider the role of culture in shaping professional sports coaches' learning experiences. In this final chapter the conclusions drawn are presented in two sections. The first section addresses the study's findings via the research questions and considers the original contribution to knowledge. The second section considers the implications of this research, potential limitations and the possible future research directions.

The following section provides an overview of the main research findings and conclusions by addressing the research questions. Initially, the procedural research questions are independently explored before these findings are drawn together to provide final conclusions in response to the main research question.

6.1 Overview of Findings

- *How does individual agency influence learning engagement within the context of performance coach development?*

The study found that how participant coaches chose to employ their agency was a significant determinant in the level and frequency of learning engagement within the OHPI. For example, how coaches made sense of their roles, and constructed understanding of the associated role boundaries, was shown to be the result of negotiations between individual agency and the influence of societal and cultural structures (Morgan & Schwalbe 1990). As such, coaches' agency shaped decisions to occupy either collaborative or performative roles, a move which either enabled or constrained learning engagement. The data indicated that a range of factors served to influence and direct coaches' agency, and thus what were construed as meaningful and valuable learning opportunities. Coaches were seen to negotiate the value of collaborative engagement in relation to the competitive culture of the sport, their perceived role/identity, and the need for job security within a fluid and changing workplace. Moreover, coaches were required to employ their agency to overcome barriers to learning. The coaches of the OHPI were largely guarded in their collaborative behaviour, meaning that generative relationships were hard to come by. Indeed, this is indicative of professional isolation, a theme that is a recognised concern in business (Billett et al., 2003), teaching (Bedward and Daniels, 2005) and coaching literature. Interestingly, a potential solution to this issue might be recognizing the importance of providing psychological safe places for collaborative engagement.

- ***What role does personal biography and history play in the shaping of learning dispositions?***

For the coaches of the OHPI, learning dispositions were a legacy of previous experience from both their private and working lives. These experiences filtered the way these coaches perceived and engaged with learning activities afforded within the OHPI. Learning dispositions were defined as personal and autogenic, reflecting 'backwards' towards the identity, personhood and desire of the learner, and forwards to scaffold the acquisition of learning affordances deemed as valuable and meaningful. What is more, data suggested that participant dispositions constituted more than enduring features of an individual's personality, extending to incorporate the cultural aspects of coaches' histories/biographies, as demonstrated by the tensions surrounding the American coaches. Through recognising learning dispositions as personally and culturally constituted, coach educators can begin to understand the learning affordances coaches' value, rather than impose learning behaviours facilitators/managers assume they should need.

- ***What is the role of culture on individual learning engagement?***

The findings from the study suggested that the workplace learning experienced by coaches of the OHPI was a condition of personal agency and social-structural factors operating within a variety of mediating cultures. In this instance, culture was constructed/reconstructed in relation to three dimension, the individual dispositions of the coaches, the context of the workplace, and the historical tensions of the sport. The result of this process was a learning culture that could be characterised as divergent (Hodkinson et al., 2007), as historical tensions and social conflicts propagated a culture of professional isolation. As such, the learning culture represented a view of what was 'good' and 'effective' learning, which played a role in directing coaches' perceptions and engagement with the learning affordances of the OHPI. The utility of this theoretical lens is that it provides a valuable way of identifying the limits of possible change within a given learning site. Indeed, as with the case of the OHPI, often there are cultural limitations that are difficult/undesirable to change, thus impeding learning and the achievement of a desired learning outcome. It can be argued then that a greater understanding of this process and the implications of a given learning culture should be a must for coach educators looking to assess current learning environments, or instil new ones.

- *What policy and structural changes are needed for sustained professional learning of performance coaches?*

The study's findings highlighted the importance of leadership in facilitating the learning of coaches within the OHPI. Indeed, how coaches construed, engaged with, and constructed learning opportunities was tempered by their interactions with the Performance Director and Head Coach. The evidence demonstrated that coaches were required to continuously negotiate new social structures, an important notion as coaches' dispositions and routine practices had been grounded within the social structures of a previous organisational regime. For example, the removal of monthly formal review meetings left some coaches (Frank, Stewart) feeling 'unsupported' and 'unchallenged' in their learning. What is more, the identification of a leadership vacuum created via poor communication between coaches and organisational leads, created uncertainly and tensions within the workplace. This resultantly negated the organisational aim of fostering collaboration amongst coaches and reinforced a culture of professional isolation. Indeed, this finding reaffirms current thinking within coaching literature where it is argued that without appropriate facilitation coaches will not change from their habitual coaching behaviours (i.e. learning practices) (Culver & Trudel, 2006). As such the findings indicate that a more informed pedagogical role is needed from coach educators and learning facilitators in supporting coaches' within the 'fluid' landscape of the coaching workplace. To achieve this, the incongruence's between employees and organisations aims, values, and cultures need to be addressed. Within teaching and nursing it has been argued that workplaces characterised by open flows of communication, staff participation in decision-making, and clear organisational vision, are more likely to afford generative learning experiences (Ohlsson, 2014; Clark, 2005). Therefore, practitioners should consider how they might intervene particularly in these aspects of their organisations in order better to support workplace learning.

How does participation in multiple communities' (cultures) impact upon individual learning?

Findings from the study reaffirm the notion that workplace learning is a condition of social, cultural and contextual factors (Eraut, 2007). However beyond this, the findings indicated that for the coaches of this study, workplace learning did not take place in closed communities (Evans et al., 2006), but operated within a multi-dimensional environment where individuals are to be considered members of multiple communities, each socially

and culturally constituted (Griffiths and Armour, 2012). Critically, this played a role in how coaches constructed their identities, that being their sociological sense of self (Mead, 1934), which in turn shaped their dispositions (agentic behaviour) towards workplace learning engagement. As such, these processes acted to afford or restrict opportunities within the learning structures of the OHPI. The implication for educational facilitators and sporting organisations is a need to be familiar with the facets of multiple community participation and identity construction, so that the congruencies required for learning engagement can be supported. Such a move is of particular importance given today's coaching climate. Indeed, the transient nature of the coaching workforce sees staff moving between teams, organisations and countries, where if attention is not paid to transitory staff, knowledge can be lost within the system (Griffiths and Armour, 2014).

6.2 Original contribution to knowledge

Though there is large body of work devoted to understanding how sports coaches develop professional knowledge (e.g. Côte 2006; Gilbert et al., 2006; Irwin et al., 2004; Werthner and Trudel 2006), and whilst recent studies have addressed the coaching workplace as a legitimate site for learning (Mallett et al., 2014; Rynne et al., 2010; Rynne et al., 2006), few empirical studies have considered how these learning experiences are influenced by a variety of social, personal and cultural factors (particularly with reference to elite practitioners). What is more, within fields such as coaching, nursing and education, academics have called for longitudinal studies that might address the socio-cultural aspects of the lived realities within the workplace (Stodter and Cushion, 2014; Kitto et al., 2013; Rynne et al., 2010; Berg and Chung, 2008). In this context, the thesis makes an original contribution by extending the knowledge base concerning the learning processes that shape workplace learning experiences of elite performance coaches. The thesis proposes that workplace learning within this context can be captured through recognition of a triad of influencing factors, agency, structure, and mediating pre-conditions. These features are presented within the theoretical framework of 'Negotiated community transitions'. The following section outlines the implications of this work, the inherent limitations, and the recommendations for future study.

6.3 Implications, limitations, and Recommendations

As was outlined in Chapter 1 (Introduction), the aim of this thesis was not to generate grand generalisations as this very motive goes against the epistemological stance of any

interpretive study (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). That being said, it is hoped that this work can offer insight into other related contexts (Silverman, 2005) for both coaches and researchers alike. Indeed, as has be demonstrated within the Discussion and Conclusion chapters, the identification of a workplace influenced by socio-cultural factors can be related to any workplace in which there is the opportunity to engage in learning behaviours. As such, it can be argued that the results of this thesis might help educators and practitioners across professions understand the implications, challenges, and opportunities inherent in fostering and managing workplace learning. From the findings of this thesis, it is possible to suggest a number of implications for both the practice of workplace learning and the Implications for management/administration of the coaching workplace.

6.3.1 Recommendations for the policy, the administration, and the facilitation of a coaching workplace

Within organised professions, a major vehicle for the transfer of knowledge and continuous development is the implementation of professional policy. As Darling-Hammond (2006) argue:

> *"Professional policy holds a profession accountable for developing a shared expertise among all of its members, rather than imposing standardised prescriptions for practice that would fail to meet the clients different needs… that supports quality assurance in mature professions" (p.15).*

The findings presented within this study would suggest that such a standard was not met within the OHPI, as not all coaching staffs were afforded learning opportunities they regarded as valuable and meaningful. It can be argued that within this context there is a need to afford all members of a coaching staff with meaningful, authentic, and personally sensitive learning opportunities that are relevant in terms of knowledge, identity, and personal dispositions. However, it has also been demonstrated that supporting such a change cannot take place on an individual level alone, as the wider organisational and cultural features of a workplace have the propensity to inhibit learning engagement (Makopoulou and Armour, 2011). Through consideration of these points, there are a number of recommendations for policy and administration in the context of workplace learning:

- A major implication drawn from this study pertains to the facilitation of leadership and organisational goals within elite coach workplace settings. For instance, it can be argued that the role of a leader, or learning facilitator, is particularly important within contexts where individuals are required to negotiate changing organisational structures. Indeed, it has already been identified within business literature that managing such transitions directly relates to employee well-being and the ability to employ cultural change (Allen et al., 2007). The findings of this thesis indicated that coaches' were unlikely to change from their habitual behaviours without appropriate facilitation and leadership. As such, a more pedagogical informed role is required from leaders and/or learning facilitators in managing coaches' negotiations of the workplace, when roles, expectations, and support structures change around them. Indeed, management literature suggests that current organisational change processes are largely reactive and ad-hoc, with a reported failure rate of around 70% of all change programmes initiated (Balogun and Hope-Hailey, 2004). It could be argued that a priming or preparation phase is required at the beginning of any organisational change process so that employees and leadership are better informed for operation under a new regime. Such a preparatory phase might include a lead in period where changes to organisational workings can be discussed with employees in relation to historical working practices, and introduced in a progressive fashion. The utility of this approach would be in clarifying the move forward, but also reflecting on the past so that what is, and is not possible, might be understood. This could act to limit the occurrence of employee uncertainty through creation of a 'psychologically safe' workspace for employees. In doing so, this would take account of Bordia et al's (2004) assertion that job-related uncertainty and insecurity can be significantly reduced by means of shared decision-making and consistent communication between superiors and their sub-ordinates.

- Building on the above recommendation, it must be recognised that the elite coaching workforce represents an international market. As coaches move across sports, organisations, and continents, they are required to continually negotiate changing organisational/workplace structures. Education providers must find effective ways to prepare and manage coaches' transitions within this environment so that the negative implications of these events can be negated.

- The findings of the study suggested that there is a need to consider communication between the constitute parts of the coaching workplace (i.e. at organisational, administrative, and practical coaching levels). As was demonstrated within the OHPI, a lack of congruence between individual coaching and organisational identities (e.g. values and goals), can inhibit the social and collaborative working practices required to foster effective workplace learning experiences.

- The theory of 'Negotiated Community Transitions' offers coach educators and policy makers a structure from which to consider the factors that mediate learning in this context. In particular the theory may alert those responsible for education provision (or employee management) as to the support needed to ensure that congruencies are met between coaches and colleagues, and coaches and organisations (relating to identity, culture, beliefs, etc.). In doing so, organisations are more likely to have more control in managing change initiatives, and ensure that coaches are more thoroughly supported in their professional development.

- A further consideration for learning facilitators might be recognising that learning in the workplace as culturally mediated, and that doing so might provide education providers with a powerful assessment tool for use within workplace contexts. It is argued that through consideration of a sites 'learning culture', it is possible to identify whether a particular site is predisposed to maintain a learning culture that is convergent, synergistic, or divergent (Hodkinson et al., 2007). Recognition of this framework would allow education providers to identify the limit/extent of change possible within a given learning site. Indeed, within the case of the OHPI, often there are cultural limitations that are difficult/undesirable to change, thus impeding learning and the achievement of a desired learning outcome. It can be argued that where the promotion of collaborative learning is an organisational goal, altering the learning culture through social and structural dimensions is likely to increase cultural synergy, thus increasing the effectiveness of learning behaviours (Hodkinson et al., 2008). An example of modifying one such dimension so that a learning culture is more synergistic is to exclude those individuals who do not fit in.

- In addition, findings also highlighted the significance of 'time' in determining coaches learning engagement within the OHPI. As was stated, 'it takes time to

figure out what you can learn from someone… then it takes time to build a relationship with them'. The coaches in this context were notably time deficient, resulting in a trade-off between practical performative goals and collaborative learning goals with colleagues. Findings from this study suggested that workplace learning is developmental, particularly within the context of a new organisational setting with a restructured workforce. This is an important consideration for Olympic sports contexts where quadrennial funding cycles have the propensity to facilitate significant structural and staff changes. The implication for practice is that workplace learning requires dedicated time and space so that it does not conflict with the primary function of individual's vocational roles.

- Currently within performance coaching contexts, it appears fashionable to look towards creating a collaborative community of coaches within a given performance centre. However, in this study such aspirations were illusionary. As such, these aspirations need to be clearly defined at the levels of organisation and coaching staffs, so that coaches 'buy-in' to new organisational goals and practices. If coaches are to see themselves as 'professional' practitioners, there needs to be recognition of the moral obligations associated, namely to engage in generative professional development. What is more, organisations must develop a critical understanding of the collaborative workplace communities within such inherently competitive environments so that issues such as power and inequality can be addressed. Until these factors are addressed, collaborative aspirations within this context will remain just that.

- Finally, given the international and transient nature of this workforce, sporting organisations must consider the 'retention' of knowledge within their system. Such a move is of particular importance given today's coaching climate. As staff move between teams, organisations and countries, there is the risk that knowledge can become lost to the system should effective learning and knowledge sharing opportunities not be presented within everyday working practices. To achieve this, sporting organisations must become 'learning' organisations, capable of responding to the changing contexts of elite sport. At these elite performance levels coaches can be considered commodities, where sporting organisations are heavily investing in their professional growth and development.

6.3.2 Recommendations for research

The results of the study indicate three main directions for future research.

   i.   The first is to conduct similar workplace learning investigations within other professional/Olympic sports contexts so that judgements might be made around workplace learning experiences between different coaching populations. The same can be said for other vocations where social interaction and learning might occur. Through this it would be possible to contrast and compare workplace learning experiences across sports and professions, and begin to construct a consensus of content within the coach knowledge base.

   ii.   Secondly, the results of the study highlighted the significance of an individual's personal dispositions in determining learning engagement, suggesting that these dispositions were formed over time. Further investigation into understanding the factors and processes which shape these dispositions over time, might better inform education providers of the learning opportunities that are, and are not, possible within their specific contexts. As such, there is a need to investigate the 'trajectory' of coaches learning dispositions throughout the various phases of their careers (i.e. novice/expert, volunteer/professional) (Griffiths and Armour 2013).

   iii.   Finally, within management and organisational learning literature the field of territoriality is recognised as an important, though often overlooked aspect of workplace interaction (Brown et al., 2005). Indeed, given the contested nature of the coaching workplace further investigation is needed regarded how coaches constructed 'micro-geographies' might enable or impinge upon their workplace learning. This is of particular importance considering the primacy of this form of learning amongst elite coaches.

6.3.3 Limitations

The study presented within this thesis can be characterised as insider research, and as such is open to criticisms of research bias. It could be argued that as an insider, 'I' the researcher am blind to the everyday, mundane nuances of the context. That said, I do not claim objective independence, instead arguing that my position as an insider offers a unique insight into the working lives of an elite community of coaches. What is more, a number of strategies have been employed throughout the research process in order to ensure that the study was credible, rigorous, and dependable. These methods included peer

debriefing, member checking, and the incorporation of data that was thick with description, and grounded in the experiences and discourses of the research participants. In providing a clear audit trail throughout this body of work, the methods utilised have be identified, critiqued, and illustrated for reader clarity. What is more, reflexive practice has been adopted throughout the research process so that any factors that might have influenced the data collection, analysis, and interpretation have been acknowledged.

Another point of consideration is the sample size utilised within this thesis. Whilst there are no substantive rules regarding sample size within qualitative inquiry (Marshall et al., 2013), it should be recognised that the number of performance coaches/staff addressed within this study is relatively small (N= 9). Indeed, this issue was compounded by circumstances within the sporting organisation, namely that two participants left the employ of the organisation midway through the investigation (Paul and Terrance), and that not all participants were present from the beginning of the study (Allison and Julie). Indeed, as is discussed within Chapter 3 (Methodology) the reduction of the sample size to 9 was an unanticipated change. When initial access to the OHPI was granted there were 14 coaches and 4 administrative staff employed by the organisation. As such, this was the initial sample target. Certainly a larger sample size would have provided a greater variety of data regarding the issues addressed within this study. That being said, rather than view the change in circumstance as methodologically restrictive, I would argue that this condition exemplifies a previously unaddressed component of performance sport; namely that the context of the coaching workplace is one of constant fluctuation. In this light, the unforeseen reduction in sample size can be viewed as a component that captures the reality of performance sport, rather than detract from it.

6.4 Concluding thoughts

There have been substantive calls from within coaching literature to better understand the complexity of the coaching process, and through that, uncover how the inherent socio-cultural factors shape the development of coaching knowledge. What is more, it has been argued that this task can only be completed through prolonged and authentic academic investigations of coaching practice. This study builds upon existing research so that the beginnings of a clear conceptual knowledge base can be informed. The data from this study suggests that the factors which influence coaches interpretations of, and engagement with, workplace learning are multiple and complex. This enhances current understandings

of workplace learning engagement, as behaviour is characterised as an interdependent relationship between individual agency, structural affordances, and mediating pre-conditions. An important finding was that workplaces, particularly within the context of performance sport, cannot be considered stable environments. For example, the influence of funding shifts created a context where coaches must constantly renegotiate this changing landscape. This study also identifies the need to recognise the coaching workforce as transient in nature, where particularly in performance and professional sport, coaches' transition from organisation to organisation globally. As such, there is a need for sporting organisations to consider how knowledge is shared and stored, for fear that it might be lost within the system. To conclude, this study raises fundamental questions that need to be addressed in recognising coaches as professionals which must negotiate contested and dynamic workplace environments. Such considerations will no doubt be crucial as future education facilitators look to create/foster effective learning and development experiences for professional sports coaches.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Application for ethical review

| UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM |
| APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL REVIEW |

Who should use this form?

      This form is to be completed by PIs or supervisors (for PGR student research) who have completed the University of Birmingham Ethical Review of Research Self-Assessment Form and have decided that further ethical review and approval is required before the commencement of a given Research Project.

      Please be aware that all new research projects undertaken by postgraduate research (PGR) students <u>first registered as from 1st September 2008</u> will be subject to the University's Ethical Review Process. PGR students first registered before 1st September 2008 should refer to their Department/School/College for further advice.

Researchers in the following categories are to use this form:

      1. The project is to be conducted by:

         o   staff of the University of Birmingham; or

         o   a research postgraduate student enrolled at the University of Birmingham (to be completed by the student's supervisor);

      2. The project is to be conducted at the University of Birmingham by visiting researchers.

Students undertaking undergraduate projects and taught postgraduates should refer to their Department/School for advice.

NOTES:

➢ Answers to questions must be entered in the space provided – the beginning of an answer field will be indicated by a grey bar (   ).
➢ Use the up and down arrow keys to move between answer fields; use the side scroll bar to navigate around the document.
➢ An electronic version of the completed form should be submitted to the Research Ethics Officer, at the following email address: <u>aer-ethics@contacts.bham.ac.uk</u>. Please **do not** submit paper copies.
➢ If, in any section, you find that you have insufficient space, or you wish to supply additional material not specifically requested by the form, please it in a separate file, clearly marked and attached to the submission email.
➢ If you have any queries about the form, please address them to the <u>Research Ethics Team</u>.

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM	*OFFICE USE ONLY:*
APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL REVIEW	Application No:
	Date Received:

1. TITLE OF PROJECT

A study of workplace learning from the perspective of a university athletics coach

2. THIS PROJECT IS:

University of Birmingham Staff Research project ☐
University of Birmingham Postgraduate Research (PGR) Student project ■
Other ☐ (Please specify):

3. INVESTIGATORS

a) PLEASE GIVE DETAILS OF THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS OR SUPERVISORS (FOR PGR STUDENT PROJECTS)

Name: Title / first name / family name	Simon Phelan
Highest qualification & position held:	MA, Doctoral student
School/Department	Sportex
Telephone:	
Email address:	

Name: Title / first name / family name	Dr Mark Griffiths
Highest qualification & position held:	Supervisor
School/Department	Sportex
Telephone:	
Email address:	

b) PLEASE GIVE DETAILS OF ANY CO-INVESTIGATORS OR CO-SUPERVISORS (FOR PGR STUDENT PROJECTS)

Name: Title / first name / family name	
Highest qualification & position held:	
School/Department	
Telephone:	
Email address:	

c) In the case of PGR student projects, please give details of the student

Name of student:	Simon Phelan	Student No:	
Course of study:	PhD SportEx	Email address:	
Principal	Dr Mark Griffiths		

Name of student:		Student No:	
Course of study:		Email address:	
Principal supervisor:			

4. ESTIMATED START OF Date: 29/01/13 **PROJECT**

ESTIMATED END OF Date: 29/08/13 **PROJECT**

5. FUNDING

List the funding sources (including internal sources) and give the status of each source.

Funding Body	*Approved/Pending /To be submitted*

If applicable, please identify date within which the funding body requires acceptance of award:

Date: [   ]

If the funding body requires ethical review of the research proposal at application for funding please provide date of deadline for funding application:

Date: [   ]

6. SUMMARY OF PROJECT

Describe the purpose, background rationale for the proposed project, as well as the hypotheses/research questions to be examined and expected outcomes. This description should be in everyday language that is free from jargon. Please explain any technical terms or discipline-specific phrases.

> The project is an investigation into athletics coaches workplace learning practices so that the characteristics of effective learning within the workplace can be addressed. The workplace is now recognised as a legitimate and important site of learning. A better understanding of the features of learning within the workplace will allow organisations to reconsider processes and actions that might facilitate coaches' learning, and thereby their practices.
>
> Main research question
>
> - What can be learnt from a workplace learning analysis of a university athletics coach?
>
> Procedural questions
>
> - What workplace features promote professional learning?
> - What role does personal biography play in the shaping of learning dispositions?
> - How does individual agency influence learning engagement within the workplace?
> - What is the impact of organisational culture on individual learning engagement?

7. CONDUCT OF PROJECT

Please give a description of the research methodology that will be used

> Semi-structured interviews and observations over 7 months are to be used to ascertain coaches' perceptions of workplace learning. All observations will take place at the high performance centre that is the coaches' workplace. Athletes will be present during the observation, and whilst not the focus of the research will be asked to complete a consent form prior to any observation being undertaken.

8. DOES THE PROJECT INVOLVE PARTICIPATION OF PEOPLE OTHER THAN THE RESEARCHERS AND SUPERVISORS?

Yes ■ No ☐

Note: "Participation" includes both active participation (such as when participants take part in an interview) and cases where participants take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time (for

example, in crowd behaviour research).

If you have answered NO please go to Section 18. If you have answered YES to this question please complete all the following sections.

9. PARTICIPANTS AS THE SUBJECTS OF THE RESEARCH

Describe the number of participants and important characteristics (such as age, gender, location, affiliation, level of fitness, intellectual ability etc.). Specify any inclusion/exclusion criteria to be used.

> The study will sample six high performance athletics' coaches based in the West Midlands. Interviews will be digitally recorded and observations notes will be used ascertain their experiences of workplace learning. The coaches will be purposely sampled through the researchers existing organisational contacts. All data shall be kept confidential and participants will be anonymised ensuring they cannot be identified.

10. RECRUITMENT

Please state clearly how the participants will be identified, approached and recruited. Include any relationship between the investigator(s) and participant(s) (e.g. instructor-student).

Note: Attach a copy of any poster(s), advertisement(s) or letter(s) to be used for recruitment.

> Participants will be approached with the consent of the workplace and volunteered to partake within the study.

11. CONSENT

a) Describe the process that the investigator(s) will be using to obtain valid consent. If consent is not to be obtained explain why**.** If the participants are minors or for other reasons are not competent to consent, describe the proposed alternate source of consent, including any permission / information letter to be provided to the person(s) providing the consent.

> All participants will be asked to complete a consent form that will set out the details of the evaluation project, issues of anonymity, possible publications, and the ability of participants to withdraw.

Note: Attach a copy of the Participant Information Sheet (if applicable), the Consent Form (if applicable), the content of any telephone script (if applicable) and any other material that will be used in the consent process.

b) Will the participants be deceived in any way about the purpose of the study? **Yes** ☐ **No** ■

If yes, please describe the nature and extent of the deception involved. Include how and when the deception will be revealed, and who will administer this feedback.

12. PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Explain what feedback/ information will be provided to the participants after participation in the research. (For example, a more complete description of the purpose of the research, or access to the results of the research).

> Participants will have access to the final report

13. PARTICIPANT WITHDRAWAL

a) Describe how the participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the project.

> Clearly outlined in the consent form

b) Explain any consequences for the participant of withdrawing from the study and indicate what will be done with the participant's data if they withdraw.

> There will be no consequences for the participant. The completed data will be destroyed.

14. COMPENSATION

Will participants receive compensation for participation?

i) Financial   **Yes** ☐ **No** ■

    ii) Non-financial   **Yes** ☐ **No** ■

If **Yes** to **either** i) or ii) above, please provide details.

> N/A

If participants choose to withdraw, how will you deal with compensation?

> N/A

15. CONFIDENTIALITY

a)   Will all participants be anonymous?   **Yes** ■ **No** ☐

b)   Will all data be treated as confidential?   **Yes** ■ ☐

Note: Participants' identity/data will be confidential if an assigned ID code or number is used, but it will not be anonymous. Anonymous data cannot be traced back to an individual participant.

Describe the procedures to be used to ensure anonymity of participants and/or confidentiality of data both during the conduct of the research and in the release of its findings.

> Participant data expressed in reports/publications will be assigned ID codes

If participant anonymity or confidentiality is not appropriate to this research project, explain, providing details of how all participants will be advised of the fact that data will not be anonymous or confidential.

> The confidentiality of the data will be ensured by meeting the requirements of the data protection act. The data will be encrypted by using password protection for USB sticks. All participant data will be anonymised and not identifiable to their employer

16. STORAGE, ACCESS AND DISPOSAL OF DATA

Describe what research data will be stored, where, for what period of time, the measures that will be put in place to ensure security of the data, who will have access to the data, and the method and timing of disposal of the data.

> The data will be held on memory sticks that have been password protected. Only the author/researcher will have the passwords for the USB sticks. The timing and disposal of the data will conform to both the University of Birmingham requirements and the data protection act.

17. OTHER APPROVALS REQUIRED? e.g. Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks

        ☐   YES   ■   NO   ☐   NOT APPLICABLE

If yes, please specify.

> N/A

18. SIGNIFICANCE/BENEFITS

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Outline the potential significance and/or benefits of the research

> The research will further understanding of coach learning and identify the characteristics of effective learning within the workplace

RISKS

a) Outline any potential risks to **INDIVIDUALS**, including research staff, research participants, other individuals not involved in the research and the measures that will be taken to minimise any risks and the procedures to be adopted in the event of mishap

> Potential risks to the interviewer and the participants will entail travel safety. To this end, a mobile phone will be taken and someone will be informed of the expected time of the interviews in order to know that the interviewer and the participants have arrived safely.

b) Outline any potential risks to **THE ENVIRONMENT and/or SOCIETY** and the measures that will be taken to minimise any risks and the procedures to be adopted in the event of mishap.

> na

19. ARE THERE ANY OTHER ETHICAL ISSUES RAISED BY THE RESEARCH?

Yes ☐   **No** ■

If yes, please specify

CHECKLIST

Please mark if the study involves any of the following:

- Vulnerable groups, such as children and young people aged under 18 years, those with learning disability, or cognitive impairments ☐

- Research that induces or results in or causes anxiety, stress, pain or physical discomfort, or poses a risk of harm to participants (which is more than is expected from everyday life) ☐

- Risk to the personal safety of the researcher ☐

- Deception or research that is conducted without full and informed consent of the participants at time study is carried out ☐

- Administration of a chemical agent or vaccines or other substances (including vitamins or food substances) to human participants. ☐

- Production and/or use of genetically modified plants or microbes ☐

- Results that may have an adverse impact on the environment or food safety ☐

- Results that may be used to develop chemical or biological weapons ☐

Please check that the following documents are attached to your application.

	ATTACHED	NOT APPLICABL

		E
Recruitment advertisement	☐	☐
Participant information sheet	☐	☐
Consent form	■	☐
Questionnaire	☐	☐
Interview Schedule	☐	☐

20. DECLARATION BY APPLICANTS

I submit this application on the basis that the information it contains is confidential and will be used by the University of Birmingham for the purposes of ethical review and monitoring of the research project described herein, and to satisfy reporting requirements to regulatory bodies. The information will not be used for any other purpose without my prior consent.

I declare that:

- The information in this form together with any accompanying information is complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and I take full responsibility for it.
- I undertake to abide by University Code of Conduct for Research (http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/policy/cop/code8.htm) alongside any other relevant professional bodies' codes of conduct and/or ethical guidelines.
- I will report any changes affecting the ethical aspects of the project to the University of Birmingham Research Ethics Officer.
- I will report any adverse or unforeseen events which occur to the relevant Ethics Committee via the University of Birmingham Research Ethics Officer.

Name of Principal investigator/project supervisor:	Simon Phelan/Dr Mark Griffiths
Date:	01/01/13

Please now save your completed form, print a copy for your records, and then email a copy to the Research Ethics Officer, at aer-ethics@contacts.bham.ac.uk. As noted above, please do not submit a paper copy.

Appendix 2: Participant information sheet

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Study Title: **Organisational culture, knowledge, and learning: A case study of workplace learning in a high performance centre**

You are invited to take part in the above research study. Should you choose to take part, it is important that you understand why the research is being undertaken and what it will involve.

1) What is the purpose of the study?
The aim of the study is to investigate coach learning with the workplace with attention paid to the social practices and relationships coaches engage in within their professional practice.

2) Why have I been approached?
Your name has been put forward by the head of the performance centre as you are an employed performance coach within the associated performance sport organisation.

3) Do I have to take part?
The decision to take part is entirely yours. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you have the option to withdraw from the study at any time for any reason. You can also withdraw your information/data from any future analysis/publication should you wish.

4) What will happen if I take part?
You will be observed in your normal coaching practice and asked to take part in a number of 10-20 minute interviews over the next 8-9 months. The decision over which activities you wish to take part in is entirely yours, and interviews will only be recorded with your permission.

5) What are the possible benefits of the study?
The study is designed to promote a better understanding of elite coaches learning experiences. It may have Implications for coach education and professional development through explicating the characteristics of effective coaching learning.

6) Is what I say confidential?
Whatever is disclosed to the researcher will be completely confidential and only used for the purposes of the study. For this reason all information will be keep in a locked office at the University and names will be anonymised.

7) What will happen to the result of the study?
The results of the study will go towards the completion of the researchers PhD thesis. This may include research papers that will be submitted for publication to education and sports coaching journals.

8) Has the study been ethically reviewed?

The study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Birmingham.

Appendix 3: Informed consent document

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Sports coaches often cite their greatest learning experiences to those that occur within the working environment, outside of the classroom. Recent studies support this claim, where learning is seen as a social process, guided by colleagues and situations. This research project looks to investigate this learning process, assessing these specific learning experiences and the factors that's impact upon these experiences. This is to be achieved through observations of coaching practice alongside interviews around coaching history. Participants are asked to partake in a series of interviews over an 8-month observation period, regarding coaching history, learning conceptions and their workplace experiences.

The researcher will report findings to all participants upon completion of the study, and interview transcripts are to be checked by participants pre-analysis to ensure an accurate description of events has been taken.

Aim and objectives

The aim of the study is to investigate:

- **What can be learnt from a workplace learning analysis of 6 high performance athletics coaches?**

Observations will take place over an 8-Month period within the high performance centre on those days coaches deem it appropriate. Observations will generally consist of the researcher watching the day-to-day goings on of the coach with their athletes and other coaching colleagues. Interviews will also be conducted concurrently throughout this time, lasting between 10 to 20 minutes. Interviews shall then be transcribed verbatim and analysed to create an interpretation of events.

- The purpose and details of this study have been explained to me. I understand that this study is designed to further scientific knowledge and that all procedures have been approved by University of Birmingham Ethical Advisory Committees.

- I have read and understood the information sheet and this consent form.

- I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation.

- I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in the study.

- I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage for any reason, and that I will not be required to explain my reasons for withdrawing.

- I understand that all the information I provide will be treated in strict confidence and will be kept anonymous and confidential to the researchers unless (under the statutory obligations of the agencies which the researchers are working with), it is judged that confidentiality will have to be breached for the safety of the participant or others e.g. criminal proceedings

- I agree to participate in this study.

Your name

Your signature

Signature of investigator

Date

Researcher Contact Details

Simon Phelan

School of Sport and Exercise Science

University of Birmingham

Edgbaston

B15 2TT

Supervisor Contact Details

Dr Mark Griffiths

School of Sport & Exercise Sciences

University of Birmingham

Edgbaston

B15 2TT

Appendix 4: Example of field-note transcript and focused reflections procedure

FIELD-NOTES   **DATE:** *07/03/13 Thurs*

WORKPLACE MEMBERS INVOLVED: *Terrance, Julie, Andrew*

OBSERVATION NOTES:

I arrived late today because of traffic, which Richard gladly reminded me meant I missed the opportunity to buy the coffees again. It was a pretty quiet morning, Andrew and Frank's groups are away today, so I was just working with Richard and Stewart in the morning. What was interesting to note was that the space Richard's group tends to occupy seems to be growing. Whilst originally confined to the bottom of the home straight, today, as over the last few days, training bags and equipment have slowly made their way up the wall around the long jump area. Thought this is not in anyone's way as the building is quiet today, a number of Stewarts athletes commented that they had better move their stuff because if they don't it will get covered in sand. The athletes from both training groups exchanged a few words (and expletives) and this seems to characterise a growing tension between the athletes of the two groups. It could be important to consider whether this is a reflection of the animosity felt between Richard and Stewart.

> **Reminder**
>
> **Spradley's Framework:**
> **Spaces**: the physical place or places; **Actors**: the people involved; **Activities**: a set of related acts people do; **Objects**: the physical things present; **Acts**: single actions that people do; **Events**: a set of related activities that people carry out 7. **Time**: the sequencing that takes place over time; **Goals**: the things people are trying to accomplish; and **Feelings**: the emotions felt and expressed
>
> **Charmaz:** Record significant processes, recognise participant's use of language, focus notes on key analytic ideas, and detail participant anecdotes.

I was invited to eat lunch with Richard and Stephen whilst they were planning the national relay training weekend coming up. I was a bit surprised that I was invited to be honest as Stephen can sometimes hold things close to his chest. Throughout the lunch meeting Richards referred to things 'they' used to do in the states [USA] and how they needed to adopt a similar outlook in the relay sessions coming up. Often he would refer to me to confirm his points about how athletes felt on this issue, but I tried to stay as impartial as possible. Stephen spent most of the time reminding him that it would need to be run by the other coaches involved (i.e. Stewart) and that getting everyone together should be the first priority over defining the structure of the weekend and things to come.

In the afternoon I sat in on biotech support meeting today with Terrance, Andrew, Julie and an external bio-mechanist tasked with assessing the biomech needs of the coaches, before putting together an action plan. The meeting started with the notion that the coaches and the bio-mechanist might discuss their perceived needs, and through joint conversation/debate potentially uncover some new avenues to explore. In the first 15 minutes, Julie confessed to not having had much biomech support herself an athlete, and never really using it within her coaching practice. She preceded to ask numerous questions with Terrance interceding, often on behalf of the bio-mechanist. After only about 30 minutes of meeting scheduled for an hour and a half, Terrance made his excuses (poor ones at that) and left the room. When I caught up with him later I managed to ask him about his sudden departure. After an extended discussion he revealed 'look it's pointless me sitting in there passing bull**** around the room like that, I know what I need, I've been doing it for years... I just don't have time to listen that sort of stuff, really to do what we do, they should know that by now'. From this account it is clear that Terrance removed himself from the situation given his perceived technical superiority. As such, he has removed himself from that learning activity/behaviour, limiting his exposure and modifying the quality that could then be taken from it. It would be useful to question Terrance in this issue at a later date through an interview to question whether this pertains to working with people of

a lesser ability, or Andrew and Julie in particular. Note: also this could just be down to him having a bad day, I will need to readdress this response.

I stayed a bit later today to write up my field-notes after the majority of the coaches had gone. Whilst I was writing up this very note Stephen was leaving for the day and hung around and talked for a while before he left. He asked me about my own athletics and how I was doing. I indulged a bit in this conversation hoping it would remind him that I am an athlete and potentially bring us closer together. I did ask him about sitting down and talking about my ideas and findings do far but wasn't able to pin him down, he seems to want to book most things via email!

CONTEXT/PROCESSES:

Claiming space/boundary crossing? Could be a potential issue to question as time goes on.

Competition between groups/athletes/coaches?

Reflecting on experiences within other contexts/organisations (Richard)

Not valuing lesser knowledgeable colleagues (Terrance)

Coding Families	Theoretical codes
The six 'C's	Causes, contexts, contingencies, consequences, covariance's, and conditions
Identity/self	Identity construction, self-image, self-worth, transformations, and value assessments.
Cultural family	Social norms, cultural values, beliefs, traditions etc.

EMERGING CONCEPTS/IDEAS:

- *Coaches value learning opportunities that are relevant to their needs*
- *Coaches occupying space in the OHPI has the potential to cause conflict… particularly with regards to athlete groups*

QUESTIONS:

- ***How do coaches make value judgements around working with others of a lesser ability?***
- ***What is the role of the locations/space coaches occupy within the OHPI in guiding their behaviour?***

REFLECTIONS

One of the key implications that can be drawn from the observations of today is the notion that coaches perceived levels of competence/ability has the potential to act as a barrier to engagement in learning activities. What is more, the decision by Terrance to extricate himself from that opportunity altered the nature and value of that opportunity as a valuable contributor (himself) was removed from the activity. This then had the potential to shape the learning opportunities afforded to other members of the workplace.

One concern I had in retrospect from today was engaging in a conversation with Stephen about myself as an athlete. In one instance I want he to see me as an insider and share knowledge/experiences/information with me, but on the other hand I don't want to label myself as an athlete who he might be less inclined to share with. I will need to consider this and judge what is best for the relationship.

Appendix 5: Example of interview transcript and focused coding procedure

STEWART, INTERVIEW 3, 14/07/2013	
NARRATIVE DATA	**OPEN CODES**
(Researcher) Ok, so what I'd like to start with is talking about the organisational plan this year, that being the setup of the new institution, Stephen's vision to setup this new culture of collaboration between coaches, and really just get a picture of whether you thought that idea worked and was it a success?	
(Stewart) Yeah I think that, for me, I think that it worked, but I wouldn't say that it was entirely his vision that made it work. Like, for me my guys wouldn't have been able to have done what they have done without the support crew that we had in terms of science and medicine, you know um, James wouldn't have gone under ten seconds if it were not for Bricey and my brother helping with that side of thinks, and Poora and Gordan on the medical side of things. So I think that if you were saying what the vision, especially what the vision I had in my head to improve British sprinting was to say that we had got talented kids in this country, but we've not been looking after them and getting the right science and medicine around them to get them to perform then yeah that what, that's what worked. In terms of collaboration between coaches I would say that they didn't have such an impact on the success that we have had.	Articulating/confirming a performative culture
(Researcher) What were the reasons then behind that?	
(Stewart) I think that erm…I think that it is an unrealistic goal to have as a target in a sport like athletics, which is very individual in nature and has, [laughs] has coaches who are very individualised in the ways that they work as well. You know, they have different styles and philosophies and ideas, and I think that I have definitely gotten a lot more from, and inspiration from, my support team or whatever you want to call it than I have had with other coaches. For me that is completely to do with the nature of these elite talented coaches. Talented coaches are a lot like talented athletes in the way that they do things. They can have very bespoke ways of doing things, which I think is then hard to integrate.	Expecting unrealistic goals [i.e. collaboration]

Fabric of the sport |

(Researcher) Interesting. You've mentioned before that your history isn't from athletics, so when was it that you noticed that fact about the sport?	
(Stewart) Um…	
(Researcher) In terms of noticing that there was the culture out there of competiveness even amongst the coaches.	
(Stewart) I think that, we I have always had that I've always had to deal with that because I have had to come in with no athletics background, so it's always been something that I've been well aware of from the start.	
(Researcher) Is that in terms of other coaches towards you personally?	
(Stewart) Yeah, absolutely. I think that your coming in as an outsider and especially the way that I am working is almost saying well, this is a different more sophisticated, more logical way of doing things, and I think that can be challenging to other coaches that have been indoctrinated in the sport into a certain was and to believe certain things.	'doing it my way'
(Researcher) Ok. Organisationally then, was there a conscious effect to push collaboration. You know, not just to say this is what we want, but to promote it by manufacturing situations or creating activities?	
(Stewart) I don't think there was, um, you know I don't think there was. It's still fairly early days I suppose in the grand scheme of things, but I don't think that there has been any significant push to make that happen, and I think, well this would be my impression of Stephen's viewpoint, and that he is happy for that not to happen now. Almost that perhaps it has changed from collaboration between coaches to having a more realistic opinion of what is possible.	Workforce feeling unsupported/isolated
(Researcher) So you believe it's more about having the right	

people around the coaches, rather that the coaches around each other?	
(Stewart) The impression that I would have as a coach is that we all realise that that collaboration will happen in the long term between certain coaches, but it won't happen between other coaches. Um, because of that I think that definitely I have noticed that the sort of vision is moving more towards a sort of place where we have certain really talented individuals that can win medals, so let's figure out how we are going to individualise stuff around those individuals to get them to be successful.	Intentionality towards collaborating
(Researcher) You said that you think it can work between certain coaches, but not others, do you think that is down to personality types, histories or even events type?	
	Recognising personality conflicts/alignments
(Stewart) I think that it is nothing to do with event types, I think that it is all to do with some coaches share the same general philosophies, share the same the same general working styles and share the same personalities… and I think that it is easier for those coaches to integrate than it is for coaches who come from different ends of the spectrum.	
(Researcher) I understand. I'd like to look now at the structure of the organisation over the year. At the start of the year they were setting up this new institution, the beginning of the process I suppose, they were setting up this vision, they were in the process of employing staff, and do you think that the structural changes going on impact upon the way you coached or behaved in the workplace.	
	'doing it my own way'
(Stewart) I think that my biggest priority was to try and keep things really focused on what we needed to do to get my guys to be successful. So I never really, we never really differed in the way that we went around that. You know like, in terms of the medical side of things there wasn't a medical team in place throughout the year, but we still managed to get the people we needed to come in to make the guys run fast. In terms of science [sports] a lot of that was up in the air but we managed to get Bricey involved, Barry involved, you know the people that we got in still had an impact on the. I mean Paul was another one. When Paul was around he was probably trying to… I mean I think that a lot of the upheaval and changes has actually been a good thing for me personally because it allowed us to have a bit of space to put in place our own system. Whereas with Paul, what he was trying to do was get us to work in a certain was that matched his ideal and	'engaging in routine behaviours'

his belief system of how it should be operating. I think that scared me a lot because, you know, coaches do have certain ways of working which are individualised to them and I think that it is always wrong to try and get everybody to work in the same way which I think is what Paul was trying to do. I think the space that has been created by the head coach leaving has had some negative, but the one big positive is that it has allowed people to form their own way of doing things. And that's a big change from what it was like previously and probably a big chance from what was initially envisioned as well, but I actually think it has been a huge positive from that situation.	legacy of previous regime
(Researcher) That perspective you have, do you think that is influenced by your past, the apprenticeship for example and how you operated during that time?	Engaging in routine behaviour
(Stewart) Yeah, I mean possibly, I've always been in a situation where I've had the freedom to develop my own working style and I had a mentor that allowed me to do that. I think that it has sort of carried on from that, I mean like simple things like group size numbers. I've always decided that the philosophy I was going to operate with was to have a very small number but with quality individuals. You know, what's been good about Stephen is that he has respected that I want to work in that way, and he's realised that to get the best out of me is to work in that way and he hasn't gone 'oh you need to coach fifteen athletes, you need to do this, this and this'. He's allowed that to develop naturally and that's been really positive. I think that it actually allows people to develop the strengths in the way that they want to work and at their own pace.	Maintaining traditional behaviours
(Researcher) Ok I see. If you were to think about this year, and sum up the year for your yourself, do you think that within this new look organisation that its been positive?	Leadership vacuum
(Stewart) [Laughs] yeah look I think, um, I depends how you say… I mean results wise it was enjoyable, but there has been a lot of. I guess when we talk about the space that was allowed because of the lack of leadership the downside to that obviously has been that, although we've has space to go and develop and all the rest of it there has been a lot of political infighting so to speak to try and fill that void and almost captain the ship. All those sorts of things have been going on and that's been quite stressful, that side of it hasn't been enjoyable.	
(Researcher) It sounds like you've had to deal with this situation	

yourself, would you say that you dealt with it well? Would you say that the other coaches struggled with this situation?	
(Stewart) I wouldn't say that I managed it that well, I mean I dealt with it in a way that didn't affect my guys but It affected me a lot. I took a lot of, well it was a very stressful year trying to deal with all that and fight for every inch to make sure that my guys got what they needed to get. So I absorbed a lot of the stuff so that my guys wouldn't have to, so yeah that was quite difficult. I think everybody is, from the outside I think that most people have dealt with it reasonably ok. From my perspective I think that a lot of the other coaches have seen it as an opportunity to sort of grab some power and to sort of take charge and take lead of the organisation, so there has been a bit of a power struggle in that respect.	Fighting for status
(Researcher) Building on that then, if Stephen sat you down now and said 'I want your opinion on next year', what would you want to see changed, what would you want done, how would you guide the ship?	
(Stewart) I think, um, I think, well I've already done that with Stephen and you know… one of the great things about Stephen's leadership is that he has allowing, and listened, allowed things to go in that direction. He's very sort of supportive in that respect. I guess that it is interesting because I'm not going in there to say to Stephen that the ship, or the whole British athletics sprinting ship needs to go in a certain direction, I'm saying that if you want these five guys to run fast this is what I need. I think that is how I have sort of structured the way that I want to work and to operate. You know, I think that it hasn't really… for me in my job, my job description as an institute coach, I don't really have a lot of responsibility for the greater health of the organisation or even sprinting in this country… so It's hard for me to know if I need to be going in there and saying those things, or whether I should just carry on coaching the five guys I coach and just think about making them run faster. I've always seen my role as being at the very top of the iceberg and you know, that all the other stuff will fall from that.	Redefining expectations of organisations goals
(Researcher) Do you think that, well you had such a successful year, do you think that as a coach you have grown, that you have learnt?	Negotiating increasing performative targets
(Stewart) I think that I have aged about 10 years; success is a double-edged sword. It comes so quickly in terms of the rapid development, and there are things that go on which you have never	

had a chance to experience before… and there is no instruction manual out there, so for sure absolutely one hundred percent, I'm a better coach than I was this time last year. Some of the things that I have gone through, and some of the things that I've gone through I won't know until I go through them again this year, but I think that having gone through them things will be a lot easier for me to deal with. So yeah I think that I have grown In lots of different areas.

(Researcher) So it's been the novel situations and new experiences that have been the key this year then?

(Stewart) Yeah definitely, and I'm not going to say that's not going to happen again this year, because you know evolutionary things change and you are always taking on new projects and they are always presenting new things as you go, but a lot of the stuff that I have been through this year will come up next year and I'll be in a lot better position to deal with it and hopefully deal with it better, planning better for it, reflecting better for it and all the rest of it. I've definitely learnt a lot through this year.

(Researcher) Could you say that this year has almost been like learning the trade, but at a different level maybe?

Assessing learning needs based on results

(Stewart) Yeah, I think what generally happens in coaching is, it's weird like, you never actually get the opportunity to repeat… I mean there are no identical years out there. What generally happens is if your guys, if your generally doing a good job and they are talented, are going to run faster which then presents a whole new type of coaching to deal with. And again next year, I will have a whole different type of coaching to deal with because I'll not only have James I'll have Adam, and then Clarky is coming along, so there are lots of different things to manage rather that managing one albeit dramatic rise from James… so next year it will be a different set of management things that I am going to have to learn.

Valuing leadership support

(Researcher) I see, just going back a bit. When Paul left there was a gap at the top, in the head coaching position, did Stephen fill that gap in terms of contact with you?

(Stewart) Yeah, I think that he did. My relationship with Stephen grew from that point onwards and definitely through the height of the summer Stephen was a massive support in terms of guiding me

through the process, um, working at that level, and I think he helped a lot with that.	
(Researcher) Ok. The last coach to be appointed was Julie. Have you had any interaction with her in terms of her development within specific events?	
(Stewart) No, no I haven't.	
(Researcher) Is it something that you think is going to happen, or is planned to happen?	
	Recognising the importance of natural development
(Stewart) Um, I don't know really, I don't know how that is going to work. What I will say is that there are a lot of things that are happening just naturally. For example, I basically mentor Leon as a coach. So Leon still competes, he's coming back from a knee surgery and he had an outdoor season this year, but you know, he's starting to look areas outside of that as well. So I decided to coach around five people in the top end group, and then he coaches around ten people in his group with me kind of overseeing it and mentoring him. You know, it's interesting because these things have naturally developed … this is not something that we planned or sort of set out to do, but it's really working, for us anyway… Leon actually coaches all through last year and had a really successful year with his group, and now he has obviously got the opportunity to take on some faster athletes, so again it's another opportunity for him to sort of step up and I'm going to try and help him through that process. Because if there are then kids in that group, and they are young talented individuals then one of them could pop out and be somebody that we really sort of take up. So it's interesting because it's naturally occurring, and it's not just me. I mean, I look at Richard and Graham a similar sort of situation, and then you have Frank and Grant. You know, although we got rid of the apprenticeship programme it seems to me that, that sort of scheme has continued on in a much more successful way. Um, and it's not forced that the beauty of it. And the reason why it's been so success is because the guys aren't being paid, they are volunteering their time so they want to be there, they want to learn. I mean it naturally selects the right individuals for work and learn with or from, especially Leon, I mean I can't speak for the other guys because I don't know them too well, but I know that Leon has been tremendously successful in his development as a coach.	Justifying behaviour based on existing practice
	Valuing unforced learning driven relationships
	Consolidating and expanding understandings with others
(Researcher) Would you say that it is then useful for you as well,	

in terms of you being the mentor now?	Engaging multiple networks/groups
(Stewart) I actually enjoy the process immensely and it's good to have someone to talk through the stuff we're doing because it consolidates your own though process, the stuff that you already know or are learning there and then. It consolidates your own belief systems and philosophies and the rest of it, you know, and I still use mentors above me. I'm still in contact with Kevin and Dan on a very, very consistent basis so, I am still getting mentored myself I guess, while doing it for someone else myself. So I am kind of in the middle of a triangle I guess.	
(Researcher) So you maintain your existing support networks I guess, the ones you had before the institute came into effect?	Resisting forced and incompatible relationships
(Stewart) So I have sat down and discussed this with Stephen, one of the things that Stephen was trying to foster was collaboration between the existing coaches, and from what we discussed at the end of this year it was clear that it was absolutely not possible for this to happen because of the different nature of our philosophies and the way we work [coaches], we made it very clear that we should firm up the relationship that I have with Dan and Kevin because they are more from the school of philosophy that I learnt my trade in, so they are more appropriate for me to learn from that from the people that are currently around in the organisation. So to go back to the start, there hasn't been a lot of collaboration between me rest, and me and the other coaches, but there has been collaboration between others and people outside of the institute, like my old mentors and me. So Stephen, for me, has spent a lot of time during my break contacting them and firming up some sort of relationship with them formally.	Identifying specific learner/coach needs
(Researcher) Do you think that there is the possibility for there to be repercussions from this as they are part of other NGB's?	Identifying relevancy
(Stewart) No I don't think so, the reality of it is, is that I need help and Stephen has decided that he is willing to support me getting help in the way that I feel comfortable and a way that I think is appropriate for the athletes that I do have. It's very difficult for me to find help, to coach a group like a do now, to find someone who's had a couple of guys go under ten seconds and Dan is one of few people who has done that, he's had five or six guys go under ten, so it interesting to hear from his experience. The thing that I have been looking for is somebody that has had the type of athletes that I am currently with and been successful doing that. So	

that's what I really wanted.	
	Considering impressions of others
(Researcher) I see. This time last year you were just applying for this new role, now you are 'the' sprints coach, do you feel that you have changed in that time in terms of the role, do you identify as that or with that?	
(Stewart) [Laughs] I think um, yeah I feel that… it's really difficult to get. Um, I think in some terms, look it's a really hard question to answer but I think that I am going to try and answer. There are some sections, where I think that my sort of standings have gone up, but in other areas I still feel that there are people in the organisation that still don't fully appreciate, and still don't sort of give me the standing that somebody who has just achieved what I achieved should get. So yeah, I think that it's on and very case by case basis, some people are blinded by the fact that I was an apprentice coach and are not willing to accept that I have stepped up and am now working at a different level. Whereas, other people have been very supportive of that transition. You know, I get different feelings off different individuals so what I feel is not really always consistent, but some people seem to be really supportive and are very aware of the level that I am now working at, where others are still, they don't fully understand what it has taken to, and the complexity of what we have done and how we have achieved it to get what we want. Really some people just see what we have done as lucky and is something that has just happened by chance and by accident.	
	Aligning personal values
(Researcher) In these separate instances with different people, does this affect the way you feel about it, when you are around people that don't think that you have moved on?	
(Stewart) Um, I think that it does, I think that it makes you question yourself a little bit. You know, I think the hardest thing for me is trying to educate people. So you have a certain amount of success and you think that you done it you way, then all of a sudden it happens, and people start to question why it happened, so what I've spent a lot of time doing is trying to educate people to start to believe what I believe. To demonstrate to them that this is the vision that we had and this is how we did it, this is the level that we are working at and I've been trying to do things that way to make people realise what it took to do it and why we did it that way. To try and engage people and try and get them to support us. Whether that's support through hearts and minds as it were or whether its support through expertise, it's really hard to try and explain to somebody who isn't fully aware of the journey that we have gone through if that makes sense.	

(Researcher) I see, so some people only have a snapshot of things.

(Stewart) Yeah, someone who doesn't realise that to run 9.92 drugs free is as fast as its ever going to get. There is certain things that we need and that we need to keep that happening. It's a constant education process I feel, not just to do with my own standing about myself, but also to try and galvanise that British athletics machine, the support people, and the medical people, you know the people that are trying to help us achieve what we are trying to do.

(Researcher) Brilliant, thank you very much for talking to me again Stewart.

Appendix 6: Constructed conceptual categories

The following tables delineates the construction of the core theoretical categories with regards to the associated focused and open codes. It should be noted that the list of open codes is not exhaustive, instead providing an overview of those identified within the data analysis process.

Core Category	Negotiating personal engagement				
Focused Codes	Expectations and identification of role boundaries	Negotiating social engagement with colleagues	Assessing value	Constructed identity	Personal/historical dispositions
Open Codes	View of the coaching process, redefining expectations of organisations goals, the influencing culture of the sport, making it 'what they wanted', lacking guidance from leadership, working towards personal goals	Recognising personality conflicts/alignments, interpersonal skills, engaging in opportunities to interact with knowledgeable others, guiding behaviour, resisting forced and incompatible relationships, selective engagement, presenting of self to attain response from others,	Making value judgements, cost benefit exchange, considering career progression, considering job security, defining status as a coach, motivation to collaborate, perceiving organisational targets, defining practical knowledge, identifying relevancy, engaging in meaningful activity, viewing competition as a barrier to engagement, Justifying behaviour based on existing practice	Defining self through experience, personal biography and history, being a former an athlete, views on the role of the coach, defining career, considering impression of others, understanding role, defining quality practitioners, redefining title/identity, constructed belief systems	Aligning personal values, longevity in the role, time in a certain context, reciprocity to certain opportunities, intention to be 'collaborative', engaging in routine behaviour, maintaining traditions, 'doing it my way', identifying specific learner needs, considering career transitions, resisting forced and incompatible relationships

Definition: The category Negotiating Personal Engagement discusses the processes through which coaches came to construct a personalised understanding of their workplace, which in turn mediated their behaviour and engagement with opportunities to learn. This theme was particularly insightful given the integration of new coaching staff alongside new organisational structures.

Core Category	Structuring of the workplace		
Focused Codes	**Funding**	**Territories and micro-geographies**	**Structuring and restructuring of leadership**
Open Codes	Recognising the post-Olympic effect, fluctuating structures, negotiating job cuts, workforce reformation, engaging in competition for jobs, losing previous/traditional support structures, losing of social/colleague support, recognising the competitive nature of Olympic sport	Attaining ownership of space, being comfortable in personalised sites, controlling locations and access, being free from observation/judgement, removing of self from distractions, boundary crossing, territory as routines/traditions	Changing organisational structures, leadership vacuum, lack of role clarity via leadership direction, legacy of previous regime, changing leadership style, the stick and the carrot, lack of challenging management, workforce feeling unsupported/isolated, falling back on previous routine, losing confidence in organisational message

Definition: The category 'Structuring of the workplace' identifies the structural processes observed within the OHPI which impacted upon coaches' workplace learning. The data suggested that these processes' not only afforded opportunities to learn/or not, but also impacted upon how coaches' interpreted and reacted to the learning opportunities afforded them.

	Core Category	Mediating pre-conditions		
Focused Codes	**Prevailing cultures**	**Time**	**Existing and self-directed support networks**	**Locations/fields of activity**
Open Codes	Accepting isolation as a fabric of the sport, nature of performance coaching, adopting experience of other cultures, historical anti-American feelings, influence of past organisational regimes, considering job security, measuring in medals	Justifying time for learning behaviours, making value judgements based around time, intentionality to create time for engaging in collaboration, having family/wider commitments	Maintaining relationships with valued peers, having access to a sounding board, preference for maintaining pre-existing support, Engaging multiple networks/groups, considering relevancy of learning support, additional layer of organisational support	History of the location, relating to activities in previous locations, influence of engaging in personal fields/communities, characterising a location via its history

Definition: The category 'Mediating Factors' discusses the broader sociocultural processes observed within the OHPI that were found to mediate coaches' workplace learning. The data within this category was found to extend beyond personal negotiations and the impositions of structural processes, to impact upon how coaches interpreted and responded to a variety of learning activities.

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