REFLECTIVE PRACTICE IN SPORT COACHING:

an autoethnographic exploration into the lived experiences of one coach

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Notice 1

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

STATEMENT OF SOURCES

To the best of my knowledge and belief, I declare that the work presented in this thesis is original and my own work, except as acknowledged in the text, and that the material has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for a degree at this or any other university.

Denis Ang

18 December 2014

NOTES ON WRITING STYLE AND THESIS STRUCTURE

In this thesis, the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (Sixth Edition) was used as a guide to the presentation and style. It was used to provide consistency and quality in presentation, rather than purely compliance of rules. There were times in the study when conventions had to be stretched and even broken in the effort to present an autoethnographic exploration into my lived experiences. The style of writing was unique to me and was done in the spirit of the chosen methodology, to present a phenomenological investigation into my lived experiences through a self-narrative. Inspired by van Manen's (1990) work on *Phenomenology of Practice*, the originality of my writing style is guided by these ideas behind crafting of the research text. This mainly refers to the presentation of research text in the section of Chapter Six "Autoethnographic Representation", and the discussions presented in Chapter Seven "Plausible Insights".

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to contribute to the growing pool of knowledge on the use of alternative representation of lived experiences to advance practical understandings in sport coaching. Documenting a self-inquiry into my coaching practice, this study demonstrates the value of autoethnography as a methodology to deepen knowledge from experiences. By illuminating my coach-researcher voice through a self-narrative, this study shows how autoethnography is able to immerse the sport researcher in his or her own corporeal reality and engage embodied reflection of lived experiences to develop deeper pedagogical insights (Smith & Sparkes, 2009a).

Effective coaching of community sport in Singapore is limited by coaches' ability to make their practical experiences meaningful (Cronin & Armour, 2013; Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003). Although novel representations contextualise expressions of social reality, the encouragement of silent authorship and impersonal representations of experiences by realist tales has raised questions on its legitimacy (Sparkes, 2000). Jones (2009) asserted that there should more inward attention to the interplay between emotions, thoughts, and actions should practitioners wish to have a better understanding of their practice. The existing under-appreciation of richly informative "hidden knowledge" (Jones, 2009, p. 385) during coaching practice has left sport coaches like myself with an abstracted consciousness of our lifeworld.

The approach of this study is to present a descriptive and evocative account of my lived experiences in community sport coaching. This study uses phenomenology as a framework, in particular van Manen's (1990) idea of the *Phenomenology of Practice*, because it offers the opportunity to facilitate an understanding of my lived experiences during coaching practice and my lifeworld as it is lived (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Dixon, Lee, & Ghaye, 2013; Thorburn, 2008). Through an emphasis on reflexive re-living and a reflective appropriation of meaningful interpretations, hermeneutic phenomenology provides this study with a methodological framework to explicate phenomena as they are presented to human consciousness (van Manen, 1990, 2014).

Using the autoethnographic research method, this phenomenological investigation allowed the explorations to take an incantative, evocative speaking, and primal telling form

that languages an authentic version of the world (van Manen, 1984). The style of writing for this study is unique to me and is done in the spirit of autoethnography (Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Sparkes, 2000). By representing my embodied experiences using a self-narrative, the research text presented descriptions of the experiential meaning of my lived world as I live them in my coaching practice (Allen-Collinson, 2005; Sparkes, 1995). Structuring the hermeneutic phenomenological reflection and discussion using existential themes of spatiality, temporality, relationality, and corporeality (van Manen, 1990), this study was able to engage me in a systematic, explicit, and self-critical autoethnographic exploration into my coaching practice. Through the embodied reflective process, I would eventually realise that the phenomenological inquirer in me cannot be separated from the sport coach within me. This self-inquiry demonstrates the potential of using autoethnography as a research tool to investigate the interwoven essential structures of lived experiences located within the sport coach's lifeworld and also reveal the usefulness of embodied experiential learning for sport coaches to develop deeper pedagogical consciousness.

CHAPTER ONE

EMBARKING ON MY JOURNEY

Coaching in the participation domain is the act of coaching participants that are less intensely engaged in sport than performance orientated athletes. This form of coaching is a popular activity occurring in community settings such as schools or sport clubs, and it is often undertaken with a broad range of social and health outcomes in mind. The experiences and practices of the large army of 'community coaches' have been under-explored in comparison to those of elite performance coaches who focus on competitive success and dominate much academic research.

(Cronin & Armour, 2013, p. 1)

My experiences as a practicing basketball coach in Singapore's community sport scene have been problematic. Spending six years as the head coach of a Singapore basketball club, the complex task to train young players and lead a team through competition has filled my practice with a sense of dilemma and tension. The situational and relational issues that I constantly face during coaching practice have been arduous and at times tumultuous.

Despite my efforts to model practices prescribed in coach education, I continue to face problems arising from participants, situations, and processes. While I had attended courses and received formal training to be a sport coach, I am still unable to apply my coaching knowledge to resolve many coaching issues. I then ask the question has my coach education equipped me with sufficient knowledge to formulate my own understanding about my coaching practice. While the limitations I experience as a basketball coach seem to leave this question about my coaching knowledge unanswered, I am reassured by discussions in literature highlighting my concerns (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2006; Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2006). The realisation that practitioners can take an active role in making their coaching knowledge more meaningful through research presents opportunity for sport coaches like myself to develop an action sensitive pedagogy for their continued professional development (Makopoulou & Armour, 2011; van Manen, 1990).

My Beginning

My life as a basketball coach was born through a painful moment. In a reckless pursuit of a basketball during a junior college match, a violent collision and an awkward landing ruptured my anterior cruciate ligament (ACL). The grim prognosis overwhelmed the pain from my broken body. I needed surgery and I will never play competitive basketball again. My prime years had come to an abrupt end.

My post-operation rehabilitation began almost immediately. My body was healing but my heart was shattered. I was in denial that my life had changed and continued to participate in team practices and matches from the bench. I knew I was no longer a championship calibre player but I refused to be separated from the sport.

Sensing my desperation and a need for a distraction, my coach took me under his wing as an assistant. I knew nothing about sport coaching. My understanding about coaching basketball came from my playing experiences and watching how my coach coached the team. I was expected to know fundamentals, playing tactics, match strategies, skills, physiology, sport science, and I had to teach them to players who were once my peers. I was given a huge role, and I did not know where to begin.

I was horrible as a new coach and I hated it. Before my injury, I joked at how easy it was for coaches to bark instructions while the players were the ones who were pressured to perform. I did not recognise the knowledge and wisdom that was demanded of a coach. In the years that follow, I enrolled myself in numerous sport coaching courses hoping to be a better coach. My completion of the National Coaches Accreditation Programme (NCAP) Level 3 marked my attainment of the highest professional coaching certification in Singapore. I had joined the elite but I was far from being an elite coach.

It has been 8 years and I am still unsatisfied about my development as a community sport coach. While I have acquired valuable knowledge from my coaching experiences, I knew I still lacked the deep understanding of my coaching practice needed to be a better basketball coach. This unease with my progress has led me to ask how can coaches like myself deepen our learning from our coaching experiences. This question in itself has led me to an interesting juncture in my life. My journey as a coach-researcher in community sport coaching has begun.

Framing the Phenomenological Investigation into My Lived Experiences

Discussions within the literature reveal that coaches can develop greater knowledge about their coaching practice should they deepen their understanding of coaching experiences (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2006; McKay, Gore, & Kirk, 1990). Cushion (2007a) argued that attempts to structurally map complexities of the coaching process have abstracted coaching knowledge to the point it is speculative and imprecise. Researchers (Cushion, 2007a; Lyle & Cushion, 2010; Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2006) explained that this problem of impoverished practical understanding begins from rooting coaching practice concepts in genericism. Researchers argued that the scientific and dispassionate way professional knowledge is presented has decontextualised the realities of practice to a point where coach education is left with a gap between theoretical knowledge and practical understanding (Anderson, Knowles, & Gilbourne, 2004; Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003, 2006; McKay, Gore, & Kirk, 1990).

Community Sport Coaching in Singapore

Literature in sport coaching argues that knowledge on sport coaching suffers from an abundance of theorising but lacks practicality (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2006; Cushion, 2007a; Gilbert, 2009). More specifically, there is a shortage of information concerning participation and practices in recreational sport and physical activity for the purpose of promoting enjoyment and health (Ashford, Biddle, & Goudas, 1993). Despite their professional knowledge, many sport coaches cannot fully articulate their coaching experiences. This highlights the inadequacy of research and education in sport coaching to produce understandings of tacit coaching situations (Cushion, 2007a; Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2006; Potrac, Brewer, Jones, Armour, & Hoff, 2000). Sport coaches have found it useful to rely on their experiences to coach, which therefore replicate a problematic pedagogy in coaching (Carless & Douglas, 2011; Denison, 1996; Douglas & Carless, 2008).

The literature on coaching reflects an opportunity to develop professional knowledge further by paying particular attention to the subjective and deeply personal experiences of coaches (Jones, 2006a, 2009; Potrac, Brewer, Jones, Armour, & Hoff, 2000). Realising the need to discover better ways to draw deeper meaning from experiences in sport coaching (Dixon, Lee, & Ghaye, 2013), researchers have turned their attention to

exploring subjective knowledge (Bain, 1995). Much of the discussion within sport studies now centre on the use of experiences to bring authenticity to professional knowledge for more meaningful practical understanding (Mallett & Dickens, 2009; Mallett, Trudel, Lyle, & Rynne, 2009).

Phenomenology of Practice

Jones (2009) asserted there should be more inward attention to the interplay between emotions, thoughts, and actions should practitioners wish to have a better understanding of their practice. The existing under-appreciation of richly informative "hidden knowledge" (Jones, 2009, p. 385) during coaching practice has left sport coaches like myself with an abstracted consciousness of our lifeworld. Van Manen (1990, 2014) and Van Maanen (1988) suggested a plausible way for an action sensitive pedagogy to occur is to bring to the surface deeper consciousness of experiences within subjective lifeworlds. Van Manen (1990, 2014) recommended the use of *Phenomenology of Practice,* a retrospective human science with the intent to interpret and to understand phenomena as opposed to observing, measuring, explaining, and predicting, to research lived experiences. This usefulness of phenomenology as a research tool is also noticed by researchers in sport studies (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Dixon, Lee, & Ghaye, 2013; Thorburn, 2008).

Phenomenology has advanced explorations into ways of developing knowledge from lived experiences to enlighten understanding of pedagogical practice (Akinbode, 2013; Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002; Smith & Sparkes, 1999, 2009). The opportunity to continue the discussions started by Van Maanen (1988) and the promise of better understanding my lifeworld has led me to undertake this phenomenological investigation into my lived experiences in community sport coaching. Embarking on my own journey of self-discovery, I hope to continue my professional development (Cronin & Armour, 2013; Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, 2005).

Narrative Inquiry

Earlier works on narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) and more recent discussions on various alternative representations of lived experiences (Carless & Douglas, 2011; Denison, 1996; Douglas & Carless, 2008; Garratt & Hodkinson, 1998; Jones, 2006a, 2009; Prudy, Potrac, & Jones, 2008; Sparkes, 2001, 2008, 2009b;

Sparkes & Douglas, 2007; Sparkes, Nilges, Swan, & Dowling, 2003; Sparkes & Partington, 2003) found the use of stories about experiences deepens phenomenological research. Researchers (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Richardson, 2000a, 2000b; Sparkes, 1995, 2000) found presenting experiential data in the form of narratives injects realism to extend sociological understanding. Composing a research text for phenomenological research conveys the intricacies of social life in its raw form while engaging the researcher in reflective analysis (van Manen, 1990).

While narratives can be represented in different forms, Sparkes (1995, 1998, 2008) and Hopper, Madill, Bratseth, Cameron, Coble and Nimmon (2008) recommended the use of novel representations for social science research. They explained that realist forms of representations move expressions of lifeworld closer to an authentic social reality (Hopper et al, 2008; Sparkes, 1995, 1998, 2008). Under the broad classification of realist tales, genres of representations include poetic representations, ethnodrama, and fictional representations (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006; Sparkes, 2008). Despite the earlier successes in social sciences with positivist forms of narrative inquiry, some researchers (Eisner, 1997; Kiesinger, 1998; Sparkes, 1999, 2000, 2009b) are unconvinced by the claims of accuracy, authenticity, and completeness of these forms of representations. The legitimacy of realist tales has been called to question for its use of "author evacuated text" (Sparkes, 2000, p. 22) and abstracted representations of experiences when characterising novel representations.

Autoethnography

A growing number of studies in sport sociology use autoethnography to research lived experiences (Jones, 2006a, 2009; Sparkes, 1995, 2000, 2009b). Autoethnography resides under a broader classification of Creative Analytical Practices (CAP), which Richardson (2000) considered as the use of postmodernist writing approaches in ethnographic research as a method of inquiry. This interest in autoethnography originates from the ability of self-narratives to elaborate complex contextual details of lived experiences through the perspective of the researcher (Geertz, 1988; Sparkes, 2002a; Van Maanen, 1988; Woolgar, 1988). The turn to autoethnography for a research method is a reaction to address concerns in narrative forms of inquiry. Researchers (Hopper et al, 2008; Smith, 1980; Sparkes, 1995, 2002a) argued that illuminating the researcher's voice injects

authenticity into representations of social reality and moves social science research from scientific analytic to evocative. Autoethnography not only addresses concerns with dispassionate representations of social reality by challenging accepted views of silent authorship (Carless & Douglas, 2011; Lyle & Cushion, 2010; Mallett, 2007; Sparkes, 2000, 2009b; Sparkes & Partington, 2003), but also presents social science research with a method to use researcher's subjectivity to deepen understanding of phenomena (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

Autoethnography is essentially a form of writing for self-inquiry that "make(s) the researcher's own experience a topic of investigation in its own right" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 733). As an alternative to objective and neutral forms of knowledge produced through scientific methods, Sparkes (1995, 2000, 2009) clarified that autoethnography is not interested in locating an objective truth for social science research. Instead, as a methodology for a constructivist paradigm of inquiry, it seeks the truth of the author's experience itself (Hopper et al, 2008; Sparkes, 1995, 2000).

Autoethnography uses ethnographic research methods and is concerned about the cultural connections between the self and society. Ellis and Bochner (2000) explained that autoethnography is "an autobiographical genre of writing that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural" (p. 739). The method emphasises the "research process (graphy), on culture (ethno), and on self (auto)" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 740). Autoethnography can be differentiated from other self-narrative writing such as autobiography and memoir by its emphasis on cultural analysis and interpretation of the researcher's own behaviours, thought, and emotions in relation to others. Autoethnographies are "autobiographies that self-consciously explore the interplay of the introspective, personally engaged self with cultural descriptions mediated through language history, and ethnographic explanation" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 742). Autoethnography is well positioned within qualitative research as a methodology to connect the personal to the cultural.

Significance of the Study

This study seeks to contribute to the growing pool of knowledge on the use of alternative representation to advance practical understandings in sport coaching in general and community sport in particular. By illuminating my voice through a self-narrative, this

self-inquiry demonstrates the value of autoethnography for social science research. Autoethnography evokes critical reflexivity for deeper practical self-understanding by immersing researchers in their own corporeal reality. This evocative ability of autoethnography to engage researchers in critical thinking upon their lived experiences also allows the audience to engage with the experiential data in their own way. In showing the usefulness of autoethnography as a means to develop pedagogical consciousness, it is hoped that this study also creates opportunities for others in the sport coaching community to undertake a self-inquiry into their own coaching experiences.

Guiding Research Questions for the Self-Inquiry

Autoethnography has the potential to generate greater knowledge on sport coaching for practicing community sport coaches and researchers in sport coaching. This study demonstrates the investigative ability and evocative power of an autoethnographic exploration by performing a self-inquiry into my lived experiences. The guiding research question for this study is:

How does autoethnography lead to and promote understanding of lifeworlds in sport coaching?

To demonstrate the potential of autoethnography as a research method, I asked the following questions in this study:

1. How does autoethnography develop reflexivity in sport coaching?
2. How does autoethnographic research extend my own sociological understandings as a sport coach?
3. What implication does an autoethnographic study have on my coaching practice?

By answering these questions, my objective is to bring to light a clearer understanding of autoethnography as an evocative research method and encourage continued discussions on its potential. This study was a journey to awaken my consciousness in community sport coaching by reflexively exploring my lived experiences, and through the embodied research process, it leads me to deeper self-understanding of my *Being* as a sport coach. In undertaking a self-inquiry for my own self-discovery, this study also seeks to contribute to

the existing body of knowledge by demonstrating the potential of using autoethnography as a research tool to investigate lifeworlds as it is lived in sport coaching.

I have operationalised this autoethnographic exploration into my lifeworld through van Manen's (2014) ideas of phenomenology for practice. Van Manen (2014) clarified that "phenomenology is primarily a philosophic method for questioning, not a method for answering or discovering or drawing determinate conclusions" (p. 29). The phenomenological investigation adopts a strategy of stimulating deeper questioning about lived experiences for the discovery of essences of the experience, leading to better understanding of individual lifeworlds. Van Manen (2014) observed that the phenomenological investigation process often starts with answers and ends with questions. Similarly, this study sought to broaden and deepen my thoughts about my coaching practice instead of seeking closure to problems. This research approach allowed knowledge that was previously obscured by the messiness of coaching practice to surface.

Overview of the Autoethnographic Exploration

Through a self-inquiry into the basic and essential structures of lived experiences within my lifeworld, I hope to address the issue of dispassionate representations of social reality that have impoverished my understandings. Reacting to concerns that an author evacuated text (Sparkes, 2000) presents a less accurate interpretation of lived experiences, this study foregrounds my voice during phenomenological investigation. The study presents a "reflective odyssey" (Attard & Armour, 2006, p. 209) of my journey to self-discovery and an intimate perspective of my "swamp like" (Mallett, 2007, p. 420) coaching environment. Cushion (2007a) asserted "coaching being understood as a relational, dynamic social microcosm that is contingent and ever changing has the implication that to think of coaching and the coaching process, one should think relationally or dialectically" (p. 398).

Van Manen (1982) posited that hermeneutic phenomenology is a means for reflectivity to be used to address pedagogic concerns. Through critical "minding" (p. 283), van Manen (1982) theorised that pedagogical practice creates an opportunity for the researcher to be accountable, responsible, or answerable for his educative work. Phenomenological pedagogy, as van Manen (1982) calls this mindful concern, is a learning

process. In this respect, van Manen's (1990) idea of hermeneutic phenomenology not only provided this study with a research methodology but also an action sensitive pedagogy.

This autoethnographic exploration (Ellis & Bochner, 2000) situates me as the researcher as well as prime object and subject of the reflective and interpretive self-inquiry into my coaching practice. Van Manen's (1990) work on hermeneutic phenomenology frames the study's research design and methodology. To develop plausible insights from this study, I am required to undergo a process of hermeneutic phenomenological reflection and hermeneutic phenomenological writing to produce an autoethnographic research text before proceeding to a deeper analysis of a composed self-narrative (Hopper et al, 2008; Sparkes, 1995, 2000). In particular, the hermeneutic phenomenological reflection stage of this self-inquiry begins with thematic analysis by coding experiential data and determining phenomenological themes to write the guiding lived experience text. This study then continues with the hermeneutic phenomenological writing stage by using the lived experience text to craft a descriptive and confessional self-narrative about my lived experiences during coaching practice. The autoethnographic research text for this study was only composed after a rigorous process of working with and refining the lived experience text (experiential case materials). This study then proceeds with an analysis of the research text guided by van Manen's (1990) recommended use of existential themes to develop plausible insights about my community sport coaching lifeworld before coming to a close with my concluding comments as coach-researcher.

Synopsis of Chapters

In this introductory chapter, I have outlined the study and presented the guiding research question and aims. In addition, I presented the premises behind a phenomenological investigation into my sport coaching lifeworld and the importance of autoethnography to uncover hidden knowledge (Jones, 2009).

Three chapters of literature review follow. Chapter Two, *Community Sport coaching in Singapore,* represents the start of the literature review of this dissertation and presents gaps in knowledge about sport coaching. This chapter begins with a description of coaching in the Singapore community sport context and describes how Singapore sport coaches are educated and prepared for their practice. The next segment elaborates on the nature of sport coaching and discusses the complex process of coaching. This leads to the discussion

that the practitioner's experiences can be used to enrich professional knowledge. This chapter concludes by presenting the argument for deeper exploration into the use of reflective techniques to construct professional knowledge for sport coaches.

Chapter Three, *Phenomenological Research into Lived Experiences,* presents a literature review on the phenomenological roots that ground my research into the lived experiences of coaching practice. It also discusses several key concepts such as lifeworld existentials, existentialist themes, and hermeneutics for phenomenological research. In the following sections I will discuss how exploring the intercorporeality of lifeworlds can help deepen pedagogical understanding in sport coaching. Finally, I will conclude with a deliberation on the often under-realised potential of phenomenological research into lived experiences.

Chapter Four, *Alternative Representations of Lived Experiences*, serves to present autoethnography as a methodology to study sport experiences. This chapter begins by elaborating on how the potential of stories to present multiple perspectives of social realty and its ability to engage the emotional space has led to a growing interest in writing narratives for research. Next I engage in deep discussion on scepticism over disengaged representations of experiential data offered by a dispassionate researcher (Sparkes, 1999, 2000, 2009b; Woolgar, 1988) and doubts over the claim of personal assumptions incorporated in realist tales (Eisner, 1997). The chapter continues by discussing the different representation genres used in sport studies. Next, this chapter emphasises the plausibility of using autoethnography to represent embodied experiences for both the sport researcher and the audience to engage with the data. Finally, I conclude this chapter by highlighting the possibility of an incantative, evocative speaking, and primal telling of my lived experiences for sport studies (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Sparkes, 2002a). Collectively, Chapters Two, Three, and Four provide the theoretical grounding for this research-based self-inquiry.

Chapter Five, *Research Approach,* will outline my use of autoethnography for self-inquiry, the methodology, and specifics of the research process. This chapter begins by establishing the importance of the coach-as-researcher perspective for this embodied phenomenological exploration to be both situated and reflexive. I then proceed to elaborate on the hermeneutic circle research process of this critically reflexive self-inquiry. This chapter then concludes by presenting the ethical considerations and implications of

autoethnographic exploration, the trustworthiness of the methodology, and its limitations as a genre of representation.

Chapter Six, *Autoethnographic Representation*, presents the research text produced from experiential data gathered from my coaching practice. This chapter has dual purposes: to present experiential case material situated in my community sport coaching lifeworld for cultural analysis, and to allow myself as coach-researcher to undergo an evocative thinking process. This chapter begins with a prologue positioning the self-narrative as part of my doctoral thesis before proceeding to outline the background, characters, and setting of the story. I follow this with the research text proper and present episodes of my lived experiences during my community sport coaching season. I then conclude this chapter with an epilogue presenting the moral of the story and the epiphany emerging from the dramatic tensions.

Next, in Chapter Seven, *Plausible Insights*, I present my reflective thoughts on the significant themes surfacing from the re-telling of my stories of coaching practices. Within this chapter, I continue this hermeneutic phenomenological exploration into my community sport coaching lifeworld by using existential themes to guide the analysis (van Manen, 1990). I then close this chapter by connecting the existentials that form my intertwining community sport coaching lifeworld in Singapore.

Finally in Chapter Eight, *Final Thoughts*, I present the concluding comments of this study. This final chapter serves as a space to consolidate the insights I have gained from this journey. In this chapter, I look back at what I have gathered from this study by further reflecting upon my phenomenological investigation into my lived experiences in community sport coaching and the autoethnographic exploration process that I have undertaken.

Through this study, I hope to validate the immense potential of autoethnography as a tool for sport coaches to develop their practical awareness and in the process deepen self-understanding. Documenting a self-inquiry into my coaching practice, this study attempts to demonstrate the value of autoethnography as a methodology for social science research. By illuminating my voice through a self-narrative, this study shows how autoethnography is able to immerse the sport researcher in his own corporeal reality and engage embodied reflection of lived experiences to develop deeper pedagogical insights (Smith & Sparkes, 2009a).

CHAPTER TWO

COMMUNITY SPORT COACHING IN SINGAPORE

Despite an increasing recognition of the existence of a process of coaching, and a resulting increase in research activity, there remains a lack of a clear conceptual base for sport coaching. This situation has left coaching without a clear set of concepts and principles that reflect coaching practice.

(Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2006, p. 83)

Sport research have expressed an unease with the tendency of practitioners to privilege theoretical knowledge over practical understanding (Cushion, 2007a; Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2006; Gilbert, 2009). Moreover, sport researchers have highlighted a concern over the shortage of information concerning participation and practices in recreational sport and physical activity for the purpose of promoting enjoyment and health (Ashford, Biddle, & Goudas, 1993; Cronin & Armour, 2013). Despite their professional knowledge, many sport coaches cannot fully articulate their coaching experiences. This highlights the inadequacy of research and education in sport coaching to produce understandings of tacit coaching situations (Cushion, 2007a; Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2006; Potrac, Brewer, Jones, Armour, & Hoff, 2000). Sport coaches have found it useful to rely on their experiences to coach, which therefore replicate a problematic pedagogy in coaching (Carless & Douglas, 2011; Denison, 1996; Douglas & Carless, 2008). Instead of seeing this as problematic, tapping hidden knowledge (Jones, 2009) from lived experiences holds promise for sport coaches to develop deeper pedagogical understanding about themselves and their practices.

The literature on coaching reflects an opportunity to develop professional knowledge further by paying particular attention to the subjective and deeply personal experiences of coaches (Jones, 2006a, 2009; Potrac, Brewer, Jones, Armour, & Hoff, 2000). Realising the need to discover better ways to draw deeper meaning from experiences in sport coaching (Dixon, Lee, & Ghaye, 2013), researchers have turned their attention to exploring subjective knowledge (Bain, 1995). Much of the discussion within sport studies now centre on the use of experiences to bring authenticity to professional knowledge for

more meaningful practical understanding (Mallett and Dickens, 2009; Mallett, Trudel, Lyle, & Rynne, 2009).

This chapter draws out the practical issues of coach education that has made coaching knowledge problematic. Elaborating on the usefulness of experiences to inform coaching practice, the discussion in this chapter aligns the study with earlier discussion on professional development through experiential learning. This chapter now presents a description of how Singapore sport coaches are educated and prepared for their practice. Subsequently, I elaborate on the context of Singapore community sport before moving on to discuss the complex nature of sport coaching. This leads to the discussion on a problematic area in sport coaching concerning the difficulty of translating coaching theory to practical understanding. The discussion suggests that the practitioner's experiences can be used to enrich professional knowledge. This chapter concludes by presenting the argument for deeper exploration into the use of reflective techniques to construct professional knowledge for sport coaches.

Community Sport Coaching in Singapore

In Singapore, sport is valued for developing social cohesion and maintaining national health (Wright, McNeill, & Schempp, 2005). This usefulness of sport as a social and political mechanism has generated interest in not only viewership of elite sporting activities, such as those classified as high performance sport, but also in participation of recreational forms of sporting activities (McNeill, Sproule, & Horton, 2003). The long-standing campaign by the Singapore government towards an all-inclusive active recreation has since led to a robust growth in national sport participation. In a longitudinal study conducted by Singapore's Ministry of Cultural, Community, and Youth (MCCY), 65% of Singapore residents were found to regularly participate in some form of sport at least once a week, in which 34% were more frequent participants of at least three times a week (MCCY, 2014). Some of the more popular sporting activities in Singapore are mass running events, like the annual Singapore marathon organised by Sport Singapore (SportSG), and team sport within the local community such as soccer and basketball (MCCY, 2014). While sport participation in

Singapore had grown tremendously, studies have focused on enhancing elite sport performance and research on developing sport for the Singapore community remains sparse.

Hylton and Totten (2007) defined community sport as a version of sport activity subsumed under community recreation. Recognising that traditional sport participation patterns have prominent variations, this profiling of sport through participation acknowledges a version of sport occurring in community settings such as schools and sport clubs (Hylton & Totten, 2007). Underpinned by the ideology of "Sport for All" (p. 249), Ashford, Biddle, and Goudas (1993) saw community sport guided by a philosophy of providing individuals with access and opportunities to engage in recreational sport and physical activity for the purpose of promoting enjoyment and health.

While sport can be classified through its participatory nature, Hylton and Totten (2007) noted the emphasis on sport activities is not always clear or evident. With the broad range of social and health outcomes in mind, participation in community sport also involves "informal activities which blur the boundary between sport and recreation" (Hylton & Bramham, 2007, p. 78). This vague demarcation of what actually constitute community sport leaves coaching practices of this nature a contested concept (Hylton & Totten, 2007). There is agreement, however, that community sport exist in a participatory domain of a lesser intensity than a performance oriented activity (Ashford, Biddle, & Goudas, 1993; Côté & Gilbert, 2009; Hylton & Totten, 2007).

From one perspective, Côté and Gilbert (2009) offered a clearer explanation through the distinction of sport coaching based on the competitive levels of athletes, namely participation coaching and performance coaching. Noting the inherent objective of participatory coaching is in the use of sport as a platform for enjoyment and health-related outcomes, Côté and Gilbert (2009) posited that "participation coaching is distinctive because competition performance is not emphasized, and participants are less intensively engaged with the sport" (p. 314). In contrast, performance coaching entails a more intensive commitment to preparation for competition and performance. Using fun and enjoyment to distinguish the emphasis of coaching practice, Ashford, Biddle, and Goudas (1993) and Côté and Gilbert (2009) clarified the concept of coaching in community sport by positioning it as a pedagogical activity with the objective of participation and development.

The practice of coaches in community sport differs from competitive coaching through the emphasis on not only the development of sport performance but on achieving a broad range of social outcomes (Hylton & Totten, 2007). Despite much sport coaching literature, in particular sport coaching in Singapore, research work continues to focus on producing knowledge on high-performance coaching (Erickson, Côté, & Fraser-Thomas, 2007). Noting the under-exploration on practices and experiences of community coaches, Flett, Gloud, Griffes, and Lauer (2012) saw the opportunity for more to be done in the development of practical understanding for community sport coaches. In particular, there is a need for professional knowledge for sport coaches working with schools, youth, and the community.

Professional Development of Singapore Sport Coaches

In Singapore, educational institutions and sport governing bodies traditionally oversee the education and preparation of sport coaches for their profession. The Singapore Sport Council (SSC), now renamed as SportSG, has been entrusted with training sport coaches and providing opportunities for continued professional development. Formed in 1973, SportSG developed avenues for sport practitioners to excel in their profession, created opportunities for sport practitioners to engage in sport practices in various roles and capacities, and facilitated the growth of sport as a business platform in Singapore. Through SportSG's efforts, the local sport scene in Singapore has attained an enhanced national identity through sport participation programmes, gained greater regional and international presence, and has matured into a vibrant industry (SSC, 2012a). It is the aim of SportSG to transform the nation through sport by inspiring people and uniting communities (SSC, 2012a).

SportSG's strategy for sport in Singapore rests on three key pillars: sport participation, sport excellence, and sport industry (SSC, 2012a). Focusing on sport participation, SportSG uses sport outreach programmes to nurture a sport lifestyle for all levels of participants. SportSG also works towards building a sustainable sport industry through sponsorship and financial support from private and government organisations. For sport excellence, SportSG promotes continued professional development in sport coaching.

The various SportSG initiatives have also nurtured the growth of community sport. The most recent development project by SportSG is *Vision 2030*, a joint master plan led by

SportSG and the MCCY. *Vision 2030* began in 2011 as an initiative to engage discussions with current and prospective participants of sport in Singapore (SSC, 2011) with the intention of identifying opportunities for sport in Singapore to advance national priorities in helping participants lead healthier lives and bonding social communities. In 2012, the steering committee for *Vision 2030* presented a report outlining recommendations for development in opportunities, access, and capabilities of sport in Singapore for the next 20 years (SSC, 2012b).

In the Vision 2030 Steering Committee Report, the suggestion to establish a coaching academy addressed the need for an institutionalised sport coaching training platform in Singapore. The Vision 2030 report presents the importance of a coaching academy to lead and support the professional development of Singapore sport coaches,

> *Coaches are the single most important influence on how athletes, families, schools, sponsors and the public view sport and elite performance in Singapore. If there is no confidence in 'the coach', there will be no personal journey or life-long family commitment, no sustained school support or sponsored financial investment and no optimism, loyalty or growth in the fan base. (SSC, 2012b, p. 40)*

With the support by various certificate, diploma, and degree level programmes in sport coaching, the recommendations presented in the Vision 2030 Steering Committee report highlight the urgency to develop the ways Singapore sport coaches are prepared for their practice.

Training and Education of Singapore Sport Coaches

For Coombs and Ahmed (1974), grouping the contexts where learning occurs is a useful way to categorise education. These sources of knowledge are grouped as formal education (Irwin, Hanton, & Kerwin, 2004), non-formal programmes (Schempp, Templeton, & Clark, 1999), and informal resources (Jones, Armour, & Potrac, 2003). Formal and non-formal sources of knowledge can be distinguished by describing formal education as an "institutionalised, chronologically graded, and hierarchically structured educational system" (p. 8), whereas non-formal education is characteristically shorter-term, voluntary, and has fewer prerequisites (Coombs & Amend, 1974).

Traditionally offered by institutions in the form educational programmes, formal education typically requires candidates to demonstrate prerequisites in admissions guidelines before embarking on a course of compulsory attendance, standardised curricula,

and final certification (Cassidy, 2009; Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2006). In contrast, learners can acquire non-formal education through "organised, systematic, educational activity carried outside the framework of the formal system to provide select types of learning to particular subgroups in the population" (Mallett, Trudel, Lyle, & Rynne, 2009, p. 8). In the third category, informal learning refers to knowledge acquired from sources other than formal and non-formal channels (Coombs & Amend, 1974; Malcolm, Hodkinson, & Colley, 2003). Typically, informal forms of learning are unrestricted by a specified curriculum but originate accidentally, sporadically, and in association with certain occasions (Carter, 2010).

Researchers have found that learning for sport coaches generally comes from large-scale coach certification programmes developed by national governing bodies in sport and higher education courses relating to coaching and the sport sciences (Cassidy, Potrac, & McKenzie, 2006; Cushion & Nelson, 2013; Reade, 2009). Gilbert, Lichtenwaldt, Gilbert, Zelezny, and Côté (2009) observed that "traditionally, education has been regarded as the institutionalisation of learning – learning is the process which occurred in individuals and education is the social provision of the opportunities to learn (and be taught) formally" (p. 7). From award courses and programmes of seminars, workshops and conferences to publications, visiting and mentor coaches, and a variety of structured forms of experiences, the certification the learners receive serves as a professional qualification (Lyle, 2002). Governed by "indoctrination" (p. 367), Cushion and Nelson (2013) noted that "coach learning in formal situations defines what knowledge is necessary for coaches to practice and how that knowledge can 'best' be transmitted" (pp. 367-368).

In Singapore, physical educators generally take a more formal route to attain their teaching qualification through either a two year diploma or four year degree programme, such as those offered by the Physical Education and Sport Sciences (PESS) academic group within the National Institute of Education (NIE) (PESS, 2013). In contrast, Singapore sport coaches typically take a different educational route of certification courses, such as those offered by SportSG. To develop the Singapore sport coaching profession, SportSG has departed from the traditional apprenticeship system by implementing professional development initiatives to educate and train of sport coaches. The strategy SportSG has adopted for professional development of sport coaches is to formalise a systematic

development process (SSC, 2012a). It is the intention of SportSG to use these coach education programmes as a certification tool and a form of professional recognition.

One of the programmes SportSG has spearheaded is the National Coaches Accreditation Programme (NCAP) (SSC, 2013a). Offered as a qualification in sport coaching, the programme has three skill levels. NCAP is national standard for coaching qualification for pre-service and in-service sport coaches (SSC, 2013a). Divided into two forms of certification, participants are required to attend instructional sessions on both theory and practice. In the 30-hour NCAP theory course conducted by SportSG, the lessons cover the following disciplines:

- *Advanced Recovery Training*
- *Analysis / Development of Skills*
- *Coach as a Resource Manager*
- *Growth & Development*
- *Flexibility Training*
- *Functional Anatomy for Coaches*
- *Intermediate Planning for Coaches*
- *Physical Preparation*
- *Physical Training Principles*

- *Planning & Sport Safety*
- *Mental Skills Training*
- *Mentor Coaching*
- *Role of the Coach*
- *Sport Medicine*
- *Sport Nutrition*
- *Testing Athletes*
- *Training for Speed / Strength / Power / Endurance*

(SSC, 2013b)

Practical aspects of sport coaching accompany the theoretical knowledge sport coaches acquire through the NCAP theory certification course. The programme offers workshops on specific skills, techniques, and strategies in sport coaching with the respective National Sport Associations (NSAs). Sport coaches are trained on the practical curriculum by the respective sport governing bodies, such as the Basketball Association of Singapore (BAS) (SSC, 2013c). The NCAP Technical syllabus is sport specific and generally covers the following topics:

- *Coaching Attachment*
- *Rules*
- *Sport Specific Fitness*

- *Tactics*
- *Teaching Strategies*
- *Techniques*

(SSC, 2013b)

With the completion of the NCAP theory and technical certification, and accompanied with a first-aid qualification, certified coaches can apply for admittance to the National Registry of Coaches (NROC) (SSC, 2013d). Admittance to the NROC carries with it the acknowledgement and prestige of being part of the Singapore sport coaching community. With a centralised registry, SportSG offers NROC registered sport coaches a platform to present their qualification and achievements to current and prospective employers. To encourage sport coaches to continue their professional development beyond the knowledge imparted through NCAP certification courses, the Continuing Coach Education (CCE) programme fosters continued professional development through enrichment courses and practical experiences. This programme recognises the accumulation of learning hours from sport coaching courses, coaching practice, and other forms of coach education (SSC, 2013f).

In recent years, formal diploma and degree programmes have also become available to sport coaches for professional development. In 2012, Republic Polytechnic (RP) introduced the Diploma in Sport Coaching within the School of Sport, Health, and Leisure. Designed as a three year diploma programme, nascent and experienced sport coaches pursue a tertiary qualification through a sport coaching oriented curriculum (RP, 2013). Through a mix of theoretical and practical subjects, the syllabus of this diploma includes sport science topics such as psychology, nutrition, and kinesiology, as well as a 30-hour internship under the guidance of a senior coach.

In addition, the Education Statistics Digest published by Singapore's Ministry of Education (MOE) listed several higher education courses available to sport practitioners (MOE, 2014). These include the Diploma in Sport and Wellness Management offered by Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP), as well as the Diploma in Sports and Exercise Sciences, the Diploma in Sports and Leisure Management, and the Diploma in Wellness, Lifestyle, and Spa Management offered by RP. An annual report by Singapore's Ministry of Manpower (MOM) indicated that these courses prepared 348 graduates for the Singapore sport industry in 2013 and have collectively provided 1894 Singapore graduates with some form of sport education since 2003 (MOM, 2014). While this report showed the growth of sport related education in Singapore, the Diploma in Sport Coaching offered by RP remains the only programme dedicated to coach education.

Other programmes offering sport coaching degrees within Singapore have also become available. These include a Graduate Certificate in Sport Coaching, a Graduate Diploma in Sport Coaching, and a Master of Sport Coaching in the School of Human Movement Studies of The University of Queensland in Australia (Mallett & Dickens, 2009). Transnational education for Singapore sport coaches is also available through the University of Wolverhampton's Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Sport Management and Bachelors of Science (Honours) in Sport coaching programme, conducted by Asia Pacific School of Sport and Business (APSSB), a private educational institution in Singapore (WLV, 2012). Producing sport coaches with higher education, these programmes have further shaped practice of sport coaching in Singapore.

Gaps in the Knowledge on Sport Coaching

Cassidy, Jones, and Potrac (2004, 2009) observed that the way sport coaches use their coach education for coaching practice is seldom one-dimensional. Other than learning from formal sources of education, it is also important to note that "in reality coaching practice entails the intricate integrations of various sources of knowledge at any one period of time" (Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2004, p. 249). Knowledge of sport coaching is a multifaceted construct in which sport coaches draw from multiple sources, so it is important to balance the forms of professional knowledge coaches acquire (Gilbert & Côté, 2013).

According to Gilbert and Côté (2013), a major component of coaching expertise resides in one's professional knowledge on teaching sport specific skills. Abraham, Collins, and Martindale (2006) elaborated on this pedagogical knowledge of coaches to comprise of not only procedural knowledge on how to teach, but is also accompanied by declarative knowledge in sport sciences and sport specific knowledge. More recently, researchers found that coaching effectiveness is linked not only to pedagogical content knowledge, but also requires interpersonal knowledge such as emotional intelligence, and also intrapersonal knowledge to maintain relationships (Gilbert & Côté, 2013). Of late, a preoccupation in coach education with producing pedagogical content knowledge more than developing practical understanding has become an area of growing discussion in literature in sport studies.

Within the plethora of research on coaching practice, Cronin and Armour (2013) noticed a strong focus on performance issues in competitive and elite sport. This emphasis

on performance sport presents an opportunity for further exploration into coaching in schools and sport clubs to balance sport research as a whole. In particular, there seem to be a need for greater understanding on the social dimensions in community sport coaching (Cronin & Armour, 2013). Nelson, Cushion, and Potrac (2006) warned that the inability of sport coaches to utilise their knowledge on sport coaching have resulted in their learning from formal education to be relatively low impact endeavours when compared self-directed modes of informal learning. The realisation that sport coaches are beginning to disregard the value of their coach education has raised concerns on the effectiveness of current approaches in coach education (Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2004, 2009; Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2006).

Nelson, Cushion, and Potrac (2006) explained that the issue with coach education is in presenting professional knowledge on sport coaching without a balanced conceptual base. This critique suggests that within the literature there exists a privileging of content knowledge over procedural knowledge on how to coach (Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2006). Evidence of this problem can be found in the way conceptual and theoretical topics such as physiology, nutrition, and psychology has pervaded the syllabi of sport coaching courses and education programmes even at the highest level (Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2004, 2009). This emphasis on hard science in coach education by emphasising concepts and theory has impoverished sport coaches with a lack of procedural knowledge (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003).

Nelson, Cushion, and Potrac (2006) argued theoretical-based approaches for coach education leaves sport coaches with speculative and imprecise sociological understanding of their coaching practice. This notion is also found in Potrac, Brewer, Jones, Armour, and Hoff's (2000) argument that,

> *While a body of knowledge addressing critical concerns of culture in physical education teaching is evolving, there remains a paucity of such sociologically grounded research in sport coaching. Such an approach is necessary in order to understand the nuances, actions, and behaviours of coaching practitioners whose craft incorporates a multiplicity of roles. (p. 187)*

Caused by an onset of reductionism, the abstraction of coach education over-generalises professional knowledge to the point it incapacitates sport coaches so they

cannot deal effectively with the reality of coaching practice (Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2006).

Problems with Structuring Coaching Knowledge

According to Cushion, Armour, and Jones (2006), the prevalence of structuralism in creating professional knowledge has compartmentalised knowledge about sport coaching in such a way that it has become procedural and technocratic. They noticed the influences of a technocentric ideology from the way "coach education courses often break the process down into specific components, with students shown a gold standard or perceived notions of best practice of coaching for each component" (p. 221). McKay, Gore, and Kirk (1990) were concerned about the way structuralism has skewed coach education towards a technical rationality. They observed sport coaching has become "an ethos of professional expertise, a reliance on scientific teaching methodologies, and an obsession with instrumental rationality" (p. 53). Objecting to this technical rationality towards sport coaching practices, researchers have argued the presumption of sport coaching as a systematic, co-ordinated, and integrated process has transformed coach education into a rigid and process driven construct (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Cross & Lyle, 1999; Lyle, 1996).

Illustrating the prevalence of structuralism in presenting knowledge of practice, Borrie and Knowles (2003) described the coaching process as "a series of stages that the coach has to go through to help the player/athlete learn and improve a particular skill" (p. 85). This structuralist approach has often relied on modelling to establish a relationship between the various components of the coaching process (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2006; Vella, Oades, & Crowe, 2010). The usefulness of modelling for a structural depiction of coaching practice is its ability to present a clear framework of the process (Seligt, 2005). The types of sport coaching models can be broadly categorised as models *for* coaching and models *of* coaching (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2006; Lyle, 1999).

Lyle (2002) describes models *for* coaching as frameworks to direct coaching practice. Models *for* coaching encourage desirable practices by formulating systematic processes for coaches to assess their procedures and outcomes (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2006). The Key Factor Model (Franks, Sinclair, & Thomson, 1986) and the Objectives Model (Fairs, 1987) are two such models. In contrast, models *of* coaching are heuristic models built upon successful or effective coaching performances for coaches to follow (Lyle, 2002; Mallett,

2007). Models *of* coaching emerged from the examination of a range of competition and practice settings to identify plausible strategies (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2006). An example of the model *of* coaching is the Mental Model (Côté, Salmela, Trudel, Baria, & Russell, 1995).

Sharing their concern on the limitation of modelling to describe fully the teaching practices in education, Loughran and Berry (2005) noted that the challenge of educators is in the explicit modelling of thoughts and actions underpinning one's pedagogical approach.

> *The fundamental claim is that models reflect an overly simplistic approach to conceptualising the coaching process and are unable to represent the complexity of the process…. We need not simplify our description of the complexity, but we need to model the core process and intention; and then to apply this to a series of domains, cultures and organisational settings…. Modelling the process is a mechanism for enhancing that understanding. The complexity of the process is better comprehended as an outcome effect rather than part of the (relatively) rational and planned intervention activity of coaches. (Lyle, 2007, pp. 407-409)*

Lyle (2007) argued that the way modelling frames the coaching process requires one to structure knowledge about coaching practice around the concepts of grounding theory. It then becomes difficult for this structured knowledge to account for all the inherent complexities within the coaching process. Models by design are not meant to map the complexity of coaching practices, so they may be better suited as an instrument of analysis rather than the object of the investigation (Cassidy, 2007; Cushion, 2007a).

While structured depictions of the complex coaching process with models have offered some useful insights into the nature of sport coaching, researchers continue to be unsettled with the way modelling has not met the learning needs of sport coaches (Brewer, 2007; Cassidy, 2007; Cushion, 2007a; Lyle, 2007; Mallett, 2007). Cushion (2007a) discussed the drawback of the way coaching models almost uncritically present the complexities and social intricacies in sport coaching,

> *A consistent issue in grasping the complexity of coaching is its representation. Models, diagrams, and schemata, can only be represented two dimensionally and as a result appear as composites of logical episodes. Models are consequently unproblematic representations of what are complex actions and, as such, can only plot hierarchical relationships and interactions without generating an understanding of the functional complexity that lies behind it. Moreover, because coaching can be readily represented as 'episodes' and therefore parts of it described in individual terms, it is easy to overlook the degree to which the inter-relatedness and interconnectedness of coaching sustains the process. (p. 397)*

Structuralism in coach education tends to oversimplify the complex coaching process into generalisable episodes, which in turn reduces the meaningfulness of knowledge (Cushion, 2007a). By under-accounting the social reality in the sport coaching process, coaching models presents "fragmented and disjointed" (Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2004, p. 10) professional knowledge to sport coaches.

Clarifying that coaching models are not meant to discern the complexities and social intricacies within the coaching process, Mallett (2007) suggested "perhaps one problem associated with coaching models is not the models per se, but the use of models to explain what they were not intended to explain - for example, the 'muddiness' of the realities of the coaching process" (p. 419). In other words, the fault with limiting the meaningfulness of professional knowledge does not lie with the nature of coaching models but the way people use them to further understanding about sport coaching (Cushion, 2007a). As Cushion (2007a) asserted, "the coaching process and models thereof are a design, and ultimately our designs are hostage to our understanding, perspectives, and theories" (p. 396). Similar to how Utley (2006) described teacher education, this approach in coach education to promote the application conceptual knowledge to real-world problems has become a persistent issue. Cushion, Armour, and Jones (2006) argued coach education must be held accountable for this apparent inadequacy in coach preparation since coach education determines the necessary knowledge for coaches. Cushion (2007a) and Mallett (2007) both maintained that sport coaches would see greater benefit in knowledge that authentically accounts for complexity and social intricacies inherent within their practice.

Nature of Sport Coaching

Carter (2010) aligned sport coaching as a pedagogical practice by drawing reference to its historical development as a teaching profession during the ancient Olympic movement. Existing as a practice within the historical social divide, Huggins (2008) further noted the term *coach* was not widely used in working-class sport in the early eighteenth century, where the term *trainer* commonly referred to the preparation of working-class athletes in wrestling and boxing. The idea of sport coaching gained more prominence when sport started to be part of the leisure lifestyle of the upper class (Huggins, 2008; McKibbin, 2011).

Huggins described the growth in the interest of sport culture by the British upper class in the late nineteenth century where the boundaries regarding preparation of athletes for competitive performance became indistinguishable. Giving the example that *coach* is synonymous with the term *manager* in football, Carter (2010) illustrated how the term *coach* has gradually become a universal term for an individual responsible for preparing an athlete. This popularity of sport eventually made sport activities a social norm and a culture (Carter, 2010; Huggins, 2008). The modernisation of sport has since elevated sport coaching into greater prominence through competitive sport events associated with public schools and universities (Carter, 2010).

Within the plethora of research into coaching, Jones, Armour, and Potrac (2002) noticed that coaching knowledge is dominated by a focus on theories and methods of training. They argued that it is restrictive to frame sport coaching to a process of psychological and physical development of athletes. With the developments in sport, the task of contemporary sport coaches has expanded to involve elements beyond coaching, instructing, leading, teaching, and training (Lyle, 2002). This realisation has led Lyle and Cushion (2010) to assert, "sport coaching is a catch-all and inevitably too imprecise a term; it is assumed to all forms of 'coaching' activity, but the differences outweigh the similarities" (p. 246). Lyle and Cushion (2010) suggested this level of assumed genericism in research and literature has made defining and understanding sport coaching challenging and even problematic. They observed that the absence of a definitive description of what sport coaching is has made coaching practice a conflicted and contested concept.

Complexity of the Sport Coaching Process

Lyle (2002) and Lyle and Cushion (2010) explained the nature of coaching practice by elaborating on the sport coaching process and the sport coach's involvement in coaching practice. For Lyle and Cushion (2010), sport coaching encompasses a wide range of behaviours, activities, interactions, processes, individuals, and organisational functions. As Lyle (2002) elaborated, "the coaching process is the contract/agreement between athlete and coach and the operationalization consists of the purposeful, direct and indirect, formal and informal series of activities and interventions designed to improve competition performance" (p. 40). This need for sport coaches to "respond to athletes, participants, employers, international structures and shifting market demands" (Lyle & Cushion, 2010, p.

1) has been recognised in numerous studies on sport coaching (e.g., Brewer, 2007; Cushion, 2007a; Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003; Gilbert, 2007; Jones, Armour, & Potrac, 2002; Mallett, 2007). With a social and development objective that involves working with a broad range of community participants including disaffected, vulnerable, and underrepresented groups, coaching community sport is characterised by complicated tasks to deliver complex social outcomes (Flett, Gloud, Griffes, & Lauer, 2012; Wikeley &Bullock, 2006).

Cushion, Armour, and Jones (2006) maintain the sport coaching process is (i) not necessarily cyclical but is continuous and interdependent, (ii) consistently constrained by a range of objectives within and outside the coach's control, (iii) a constantly dynamic set of intra and inter-group interpersonal relationships, (iv) embedded within contextual constraints, and (v) influenced by a pervasive cultural dimension. Realising this inherent complexity of the coaching process, researchers Taylor and Garratt (2008), as well as North (2013), have found it useful to describe sport coaching as a multi-dimensional and multi-layered construct.

Cushion (2007a) and other researchers (Brewer, 2007; Gilbert, 2007; Mallett, 2007) consider the complexity of the sport coaching process to be the result of the social intricacies and volatility of the sport coaching environment. Cushion (2007a) supported this notion by describing sport coaching as "full of context based, opportunist improvisations and extensive management of uncertainty and contradictions" (p. 396). Mallett (2007) elaborated on the multiple social dimensions of sport coaching work by stating it consists of "(a) the coaching tasks undertaken by coaches, (b) coaches' relations with other people (e.g. athletes, other coaches, parents), and (c) the coaching situation and context in which they operate" (pp. 419-420). This need to balance relationships between coaches and participants suggests that coaching is fundamentally about making connections between not only tasks and methods, but also is a dynamic social activity vigorously engaging coach and athlete (Cushion, 2007a; Mallett, 2007).

Jones (2006a) stated that coaching practice is seldom routine and rarely consistent. For Jones (2006a), the need for coaches to work within dynamic situations has led to the description of sport coaching as "multifaceted, constantly in a state of flux, where coaches must continually make decisions in a variety of contingent situations, which themselves are influenced by any number of factors to verifying degrees" (pp. 5-6). This volatility of the

coaching environment makes a coaching practice an activity that "precludes any paint-by-number plans that practitioners can easily follow" (Jones & Turner, 2006, p. 182). It is with the understanding that sport coaching occurs in a socially intricate and dynamic environment that Jones (2006a) concluded that sport coaching is a "multifaceted, intricate and complex endeavour" (p. 12).

Resulting from the complexity of the coaching process, the elusiveness of the sport coaching concept has lead researchers and theorists (e.g. Barnson & Watson, 2011; Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2004, 2009; Lyle, 2002; Lyle & Cushion, 2010; Martens, 1990) to frame sport coaching in broad terms instead of making definitive statements. Arguing that a generic definition of sport coaching presents a highly imprecise representation of the reality of coaching practice for sport research and education, Lyle (2002) recognised that a "short, pithy, catch-all statement" (p. 38) will not suffice for a definition of sport coaching. As an alternative, Lyle (2002) suggests that a "definitional framework" (p. 38) of coaching can be determined by considering the various aspects of coaching practice. He suggested this examination to include the objective of sport coaching as a pedagogical practice, the pedagogical role of the sport coach, and their adaptive coaching philosophy.

Sport Coaching as a Pedagogical Practice

Lyle (1996) considered the identification of the pedagogical work inherent in coaching practice useful for understanding the training and development responsibilities of a sport coach. According to Hackett (2002), sport coaches typically adopt a development orientation for their coaching practice by focusing on the technical aspects of sport involving the mastery of skills and techniques. Sport coaches' work of training of athletes' mental, physical, and technical abilities is a pedagogical practice (Becker, 2009; Corlett, 1996; Cross, 1995; Lyle, 1999). As pedagogical practitioners, the sport coach may be involved in many training activities but the basic task is to improve the performance of athletes (Lyle, 1996; Lyle & Cushion, 2010). As Lyle (2002) stated, "sport coaching centres on the improvement of an individual's or team's sporting ability, both as a general capacity and as specific performances" (p. 38).

Recognising the demand by sport coaches to better understand of their practice for professional development, researchers (Kirk, 1991; Lawson, 1984; Tinning, 1991, 2008) have found it important to explore into pedagogical approaches of sport coaches. According to

Lusted (1986), pedagogy is "a teaching style, a matter of personality and temperament, the mechanics of securing classroom control to encourage learning" (p. 2). Practices in pedagogy occur as "any conscious activity by one person designed to enhance learning in another" (Watkins & Mortimore, 1999, p. 3). This explanation of pedagogy as a concept determined by the nature of the activity has prompted Stones (2000) and Tinning (2008) to compare sport pedagogy to an amoeba in its shapeless and perpetually changing ways. In the context of sport, Crum (1986) explained sport pedagogy as dealing with "relations between presage, process, product, and contextual variables of educational practices within physical education and interscholastic sport, as well as sport organised by institutions other than schools" (p. 213). According to some, sport coaching is a science of teaching where the interest in the discipline is in the behavioural practices of teaching that underpins learning in sport (Kirk, 1991; Lawson, 1984; Tinning, 1991, 2008).

Simpson and Weiner (1989) further explained that the idea of a *pedagogue* originated from the concept of "a man having the oversight of a child or youth, an attendant who lead the boy from home to school, a man whose occupation is the instruction of children or youths, a schoolmaster, teacher, preceptor" (p. 417). In the context of sport, researchers (Kirk, 2006; Tinning, 2002, 2008) have described a sport pedagogue as a facilitator of the process of production and exchange of knowledge for the transformation of consciousness taking place in the interaction of the teacher, the learner, and the knowledge they produce.

The pedagogical emphasis to train and develop through acts of teaching in sport coaching have prompted researchers to argue that sport coaching be considered a form of teaching (Bergmann-Drewe, 2009; Crum, 1986; Lyle & Cushion, 2010; Tinning, 2008). Bergmann-Drewe (2000) suggested coaching is as much didactic teaching as it is pedagogical practice. These commonalities suggest that coaching is a form of teaching where the educational setting takes place in sport activities (Langan, Blake, & Lonsdale, 2013). Researchers (Bergmann-Drewe, 2009; Jones, 2006a; Lyle, 2002) have taken this notion further by describing a coach as an individual who undertakes the act of teaching of athletes. As Bergmann-Drewe (2009) posited "they (sport coaches) are engaged in teaching – teaching their athletes skills, technique, and strategy" (p. 81). These arguments suggest that

the demarcation between coaching and teaching serves little purpose since both share similar pedagogical intentions (Jones, 2006a; Penney, 2006).

According to Lyle (2002), seeing coaching as separate from teaching may lead to a lack of sound teaching approaches in coaching practice. For example, Lyle (2002) noticed concepts in teaching seem to be largely absent from performance-level or higher-level competition. Researchers are concerned that not acknowledging the presence of teaching within the sport coaching process has contributed to the under-appreciation of educational theory to inform sport coaching (Jones, 2006a; Lyle, 2002).

Realising that sport coaching pedagogy can be better informed by theory and concepts in teaching, Penney (2006) suggested that pedagogical practices in sport coaching should draw from educational research for professional knowledge. Lyle and Cushion's (2010) concurred "there is evidence to suggest that professionals in teaching and coaching share a common territory and could learn much from each other" (p. 161). Cushion, Armour, and Jones (2003) recommended drawing on the experiences and research in the field of education for professional development in sport coaching.

Role Multiplicity of Sport Coaches

The sport coach holds a multiplicity of roles. As Hackett (2002) explains,

Being a successful coach is an enormous challenge. Successful coaching is much more than just winning. Successful coaches help athletes master new skills, enjoy competing with others, and feel good about themselves. Successful coaches are not only well versed in the skills of their sport; they know how to teach these skills. They also teach and model the skills needed for successful living in our society. (p.1)

Herll and O'Drobinak (2004) stated a sport coach may take on the role of a dream keeper, instructional leader, supporter, teacher, facilitator, friend, and reformer. Côté (2006) took a slightly different view by describing coaching roles as a diverse mix of being a leader, psychologist, friend, teacher, personnel manager, administrator, fundraiser, and role model.

According to Lyle (2002), the complexities within coaching practice and the need for coaches to attend to the various tasks associated with athlete development have caused sport coaches to be flexible to the multiplicity of roles in their work. Lyle and Cushion (2010) observed "sport coaching is a family title, it connotes a family of related roles, roles that are linked but with different degrees of engagement with the coaching process" (p. 246).

Perhaps Carter (2010) described it best by asserting that a sport coach adopts roles guided by his or her pedagogical intentions. As Carter (2010) clarified, "the actual term 'coach' can be broadly interpreted as referring to an individual responsible for training others for an athletic contest and 'coaching' as preparing an athlete for competition" (p. 2). With this view of a sport coach as a pedagogical practitioner, Jones (2009) argued "coaching is much more than sequentially imparting content knowledge through a particular pedagogy" (p. 377). Lyle (2002) saw the taking of diverse roles by sport coaches as a way by which the broader development orientation intentions are achieved. For Lyle (2002), "the typical and expected range of behaviours and practice that result from the coach's interpretation of the part to be played by the coach in achieving the improved or sustained performance that is the purpose of sport coaching" (p. 60). Regardless of the ways these roles are constructed, Williams, Jerome, Kenow, Rogers, Sartain, and Darland (2003) stressed that the role of a sport coach is shaped by his or her pedagogical intentions towards athlete development.

Acknowledging the influence of the pedagogical intentions on coaching practice, Lyle and Cross (1999), Lyle (2002), as well as Lyle and Cushion (2010) found it more useful to describe the role of sport coaches through their functions in a particular pedagogical practice. The International Sport coaching Framework (ISCF) recommended this idea of classifying the roles of sport coaches. The ISCF is collaboratively developed by the International Council for Coaching Excellence (ICCE) and the Association for Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF) and establishes a common ground in the interpretation of coaching practice consolidated from the perspectives of experienced coaches, administrators, researchers, and coach developers.

While existing literature has not drawn on the ISCF, the concepts presented in the ISCF came from literature in sport coaching and condenses academically accepted ideas for a useful framework to amalgamate understandings. Presented through a framework of six primary coaching functions, the ISCF submits that to perform roles in coaching is to (i) set the vision and strategy, (ii) shape the environment, (iii) build relationships, (iv) conduct practices and structure competitions, (v) read and react to the 'field', and (vi) learn and reflect (ICCE and ASOIF, 2012, pp.11-12).

SET THE VISION AND STRATEGY

The coach creates a vision and a strategy based on the needs and stage of development of the athletes and the organisational and social context of the programme.

SHAPE THE ENVIRONMENT

The coach recruits and contracts to work with a group of athletes and takes responsibility for setting out plans for specified periods. The coach also seeks to maximise the environment in which the programme occurs through personnel, facilities, resources, working practices and the management of other coaches

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

The coach builds positive and effective relationships with athletes and others associated with the programme. This includes personnel at the club, school, federation and other levels. The coach is responsible for engaging in, contributing to and influencing the organisational context.

CONDUCT PRACTICES AND STRUCTURE COMPETITIONS

The coach organises suitable and challenging practices and targets competitions for the athletes. Such ongoing experiences are required for continued development and improvement.

READ AND REACT TO THE 'FIELD'

The coach observes and responds to events appropriately, including all on- and off-field matters. Effective decision making is essential to fulfilling this function.

LEARN AND REFLECT

The coach evaluates the programme as a whole as well as each practice and competition. Evaluation and reflection underpin a process of ongoing learning and professional development. The coach also supports efforts to educate and develop other coaches.

Source: Adapted from ICCE and ASOIF (2012, pp.11-12)

From the diverse task sport coaches perform in their roles, Lyle (2002) concluded the overarching role of the coach is one of mitigating "the range of interrelated and interdependent variables that contribute to the performance enhancement, the individuality of the performer and the contested nature of the environment" (p. 74). The understanding that sport coaches are required to perform a multiplicity of roles to enhance the performance of athletes supports the description of sport coaching as a complex process (Lyle & Cushion, 2010).

In practice, sport coaches receive titles to describe their level of involvement and areas of responsibility. Bale (2007) and the ISFC (ICCE and ASOIF, 2012) identified four main

coaching role descriptors according to proficiency levels; (a) coaching assistant, (b) coach, (c) advanced/senior coach, and (d) master/head coach.

Coaching Assistant	*Assist in the delivery of sessions*
Coach	*Delivers sessions over a season, often as part of a wider programme*
Advanced / Senior Coach	*Oversees and contributes to the delivery of the programmes over seasons and in specific contexts* *Involved in the management and the development of other coaches*
Master / Head Coach	*Oversees and contributes to the delivery of programmes over seasons, in medium-to large-scale contexts, underpinned by innovation and research* *Involved in designing and overseeing management structures and development programmes for other coaches*

Source: Adapted from ICCE and ASOIF (2012, p. 20)

Bale (2007) argued this simplified classification for practicing sport coaches has the benefit of distinguishing the roles coaches perform without disregarding the complexities within their coaching practice. By classifying the level of work that coaches are asked to perform (Bale, 2007; ICCE and ASOIF, 2012), this definition of coaching roles serves as a useful guide to chart development and employment pathway of sport coaches.

Sport Coaches' Philosophical Construct

While the pedagogical intentions of coaching practice frame the roles of a sport coach, Martens (1990) explained that the execution of these roles is determined by the beliefs and values of sport coaches. Despite describing winning as an aspect of successful sport coaching, Martens (1990) was also quick to highlight that successful coaching is much more than just winning contests. For Martens (1990), sport coaches have a greater responsibility beyond the imparting of professional knowledge. The task of leading coaching practice places the sport coach in a position of power (Lyle, 2002; Martens, 1990). Recognising the significance of the power in sport coaching, Armour and Fernández-Balboa (2001) highlighted the influence of the beliefs and values that the sport coach holds. Other studies have concluded that what coaches do in their practice, and how they do it tends to

be shaped by their personal beliefs articulated in their belief system (Becker, 2009; Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2004, 2009; Parsh, 2007).

Lyle and Cushion (2010) stated that a coach's belief has an implicit or explicit influence over his or her behaviour. On the construct of the coach's belief system, Lyle (2002) explained, "when particular patterns of values are held by significant numbers of individuals and these are promoted as a coherent 'approach', it could be said that they represent an ideology, that is, a system of ideas and values about coaching" (p 171). These beliefs reflect either a deeper set of values held by the coach or a set of externally imposed expectations to which the coach feels the need to adhere (Lyle, 1999).

Vella, Oades, and Crowe (2010) clarified the distinction between beliefs and values with the explanation that beliefs are the convictions the coach perceives to be true, whereas values are judgments of what is important that govern the coach's attitudes, opinions, and behaviour. These deep-seated beliefs and values have been termed in the coaching literature as coaching philosophy (Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2004, 2009; Lyle, 1999). A coaching philosophy is a comprehensive statement derived from beliefs and values that determine the way objects and experiences in the lives of a coach are viewed (Martens, 1990). Coaching philosophies are thus statements of beliefs and values that guide behaviours and characterise of coaches' practice (Barnson & Watson, 2011; Bruton & Raedeke, 2004; Lyle, 1999, 2002; Lyle & Cushion, 2010).

For Martens (1990), the success of a sport coach depends more on coaching philosophy than any other factor as it determines how wisely the coach uses knowledge about technical and tactical skills, the sport sciences, and sport management. Philosophy guides the coach's interaction with players, their parents, fellow coaches, and officials. Martens (1990) considered coaching philosophy as a form of self-awareness that forms principles for guiding actions. Nash, Sproule, and Horton (2008) observed that "philosophy underpins all aspects of coaching and by creating a formal philosophy coaches may improve their coaching effectiveness" (p. 539). Cassidy, Jones, and Potrac (2004, 2009) further argued sport coaches should begin their professional development by developing their coaching philosophy. Well-developed coaching philosophies have the benefit of clarifying major objectives to the sport coach and define the beliefs or principles for coaching

practices that will help achieve these objectives (Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2004, 2009; Lyle, 1986, 2002; Nash, Sproule, & Horton, 2008).

Martens (1990) cautioned that without a well-developed philosophy, coaches may find themselves lacking direction and readily succumb to external pressures. As sport coaches typically make coaching decisions and take actions in accordance to their perception of the sport coaching context, having a guiding principle encapsulated in a philosophy is valuable in formulating informed choices and better priorities (Cushion, Jones, & Potrac, 2006). Martens (1990) believed that coaching behaviour without a definitive philosophy can become too situation-specific and reactive.

However, a formal coaching philosophy may not always address the social intricacies and dynamics of the sport coaching environment. Consequently, Cushion (2007b) argued for the ideologies behind coaching philosophy to embody greater adaptability. Cassidy, Jones, and Potrac (2004, 2009) challenged the taking of an ideological stance with coaching philosophies by arguing against having a "sanitized list of statements that is not sufficiently refined to apply in the subtle contradictory world of coaching" (p. 60). Acknowledging that the complex reality of coaching practice may adversely challenge rigid philosophical ideals, Lyle (1999) argued that a sport coach can benefit from a flexible philosophy that responds to situational demands to serve as the coach's cognitive frame. To this end, Jenkins (2010) posited, "coaching philosophies should be regarded as flexible guidelines to action, which are based on personal values but account for contextual complexity in that they are able to adapt to changing circumstances" (p. 235). Seeing the philosophy of sport coaches as a malleable construct, researchers in sport studies have continued to stress the importance of coach education and the continued professional development of sport coaches.

Sport Coaches Learning from Experiences

Locke's (1979) statement that both "teaching and learning are the processes at the heart of sport pedagogy" (p. 1) highlights the importance for sport coaches to learn from their coaching experiences. While knowledge in sport and physical education has been attentive towards pedagogical practice, Cushion, Armour, and Jones (2003) suggested that the way sport coaches develop knowledge from coaching experiences is an important

consideration. Eraut (2000, 2004) asserted learning should take a broader view on how knowledge can be acquired, rather than a focus on formal education. Schempp (1993) argued that knowledge is a social construct, which highlights that knowledge creation is not simplistic.

In sport coaching, the way knowledge has been compartmentalised and taught has taken what Moon (2004) termed the "brick wall" (p. 16) view of learning. Moon (2004) used this metaphor to denote the structuralist approach taken by education to construct knowledge. The emphasis lies in the reproduction of knowledge reasonably close to its original form. This structuring of knowledge into episodic blocks is helpful for the teacher in identifying and correcting erroneous knowledge (Moon, 2004).

Scholars are concerned about the way a product view of knowledge has taken hold of coach education (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003). Expressing her unease with structuralist conceptions towards knowledge construction, Moon (1999) argues that the instructional approach in the brick wall view of learning does not address challenges presented by human learning situations. Sport activity requires learning to be an active process since sport is predominantly problem-based. These realisations have since caused a paradigm shift in emphasis within coach education (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Hung, 2002; Sternberg, 2007). As Rynne, Mallett, and Tinning (2010) observed, "the product view of knowledge and learning has been steadily replaced with the focus on the person as a member of a socio-cultural community in which activities, tasks, functions and understandings do not exist in isolation but rather as a part of broader systems of relations" (Rynne, Mallett, & Tinning, 2010, p. 317). In reaction, some are taking a constructivist view towards coach education and learning.

Constructivist View of Learning

While education has traditionally favoured structured approaches for learning, Vygotsky's (1978) work has shown that this need not always be so. Calling for educators to take on a constructivist view of learning, Vygotsky (1978) has argued for the scaffold of knowledge. According to Kirk and Macdonald (1998), a constructivist view emphasises learning as an active process by which the individual seeks out information in relation to the task and tests the knowledge that is acquired. Kirk and Macdonald (1998) explained, "constructivist approaches also stress that learning is developmental, both in the sense that

there are identifiable phases in learning physical skills and that the ways people learn change over time due to growth, maturation, and experience" (p. 377). The notion that knowledge can be constructed by the learner has led education in sport and physical education to explore the possibilities of using social constructivist research to make education and learning a more meaningful process (Kirk & Macdonald, 1998).

Schön (1983) justified the importance of constructivist learning for professional development by highlighting the practitioner's need for not only an initial period of formal education but also the continued construct of new knowledge from experiences. While formal education has been the primary source of knowledge for sport coaches, research has also found that sport coaches acquire knowledge from practical experiences during coaching, observations, and discussion with others (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003; Reade, Rodgers, & Hall, 2008). Schön (1983) asserted that practitioners can turn experiences into meaningful knowledge by internalising experiences from practice. Learning for sport coaches is a lifelong process of accumulating knowledge, skills, attitudes, and insights from daily experiences, so reflecting on experiences from coaching practice is a significant resource for knowledge on sport coaching (Jones, Armour, & Potrac, 2003). In fact, Jones (2009) had demonstrated the effectiveness for sport coaches to discover hidden knowledge (Jones, 2009) about their coaching practice to enrich pedagogical understandings.

Abraham, Collins, and Martindale's (2006) research on 16 expert coaches from 13 sport found coaches acquired learning from experiences and serendipitous encounters with opportunities for learning. In another study, Carter and Bloom (2009) found that "while the developmental paths of the current coaches demonstrated that it was possible to become an expert coach without accumulating elite athletic experiences, the participants suggested that their lack of elite athletic experiences was an initial hindrance to their development" (p. 432). This interest in using experiences for practical understanding of sport coaching comes from the observation that experiences, when effectively studied, have some implicit learning properties that can reveal much about social reality to inform coaching practices (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, 2005). This informal way of learning has been termed as experiential learning (Dewey, 1916).

While experiences can produce procedural knowledge in sport coaching, Cushion, Armour, and Jones (2003) also noticed authentic forms of knowledge are not always found

in coach education. Duguid (2005) suggested that the absence of contextualised knowledge in education could be because tacit experiences are not easily reducible to the explicit. Experiences are not easily transferred, shared, or articulated in formal education (Duguid, 2005). This inherent difficulty in making experiences accessible for learning may be why much of current literature in coach education seeks to better teaching by imparting theoretical knowledge rather than developing the procedural knowledge of sport coaches.

Several scholars (Itin, 1999; Kolb, 1984; Moon, 2001, 2004) have attributed the roots of experiential learning theory to Dewey's (1859-1952) work. Often cited as the architect of learning from experiences with his work on experiential learning, Dewey believes that education must acknowledge experience as a primary factor in learning and developing knowledge. Dewey's (1916) earlier attempt to introduce experience in education through the book titled *Democracy and Education* outlined the nature of experiential learning. Itin (1991) connected experience and learning by saying experiential learning "occurs when changes in judgements, feelings, knowledge or skill results for a particular person from living through an event or events" (p. 91). Dewey (1916) further argued it was insufficient simply to know without doing and impossible to understand fully without doing. In his book *Experience and Education*, Dewey (1938) introduced the concept of experiential learning for education by stating that the concern was with "the place and meaning of subject-matter and of organization within experiences" (p. 7). From the perspective that education is central to the preparation of the learner for participation in a community, Dewey (1938) presented the view that education is not simply the transmission of facts but involves the teacher and learner in purposeful experiences.

Kolb (1984) popularised the use of experiential learning in education by arguing that experience is fundamental in developing knowledge. Drawing on Dewey's (1938) earlier work, Kolb (1984) applied principles from the experiential learning theory to model reflective practice. Kolb's (1984) four-stage reflective practice model centres on the transformation of information into knowledge to portray the experiential learning process. The cyclical model features concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation, which takes place after the situation has occurred and entails a practitioner reflecting on the experience. Kolb (1984) believed that modelling the reflective process offers users a guide to develop a general understanding of

the concepts encountered during the experience. Further, it gives them the ability to test the general understandings in a new situation.

Kolb's (1984) modelling of the cyclical learning sequence demonstrates how knowledge gained from a situation is continuously applied and reapplied. Moon (2004) clarified the significance of turning experience into learning and knowledge through reflection. She emphasised "the nature of meaningfulness in the constructivist approach is crucial for the relationships between the process of learning and instruction and for the attempt to tease out the nature of experiential learning" (Moon, 2004, p. 18). Reflection can inject experiences into the learning process to create contextualised and meaningful knowledge of coaching practice.

Using Reflection to Develop Practical Understanding

The product view of learning has diminished the meaningfulness of professional knowledge by failing to acknowledge complexities of coaching practice. This has led to calls for reflection as a means to produce practical understandings from tacit coaching experiences (Anderson, Knowles, & Gilbourne, 2004; Jones, 2009; Lunenberg & Korthagen, 2009; Sparkes & Smith, 2002). Schön's (1983) concept of knowledge-in-action has served as a conceptual framework to use reflection to turn experiences into meaningful knowledge on sport coaching. Through the elaboration of reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action, and retrospective reflection-on-action, Schön (1983) focused on the construct of domain-specific knowledge for professional practice. Schön's (1983) concept of reflection-in-action as occurring in the midst of the activity rests on the notion that practitioners can use feelings, emotions, and experiences to guide situational response. In contrast, reflection-on-action occurs within the action-present, but not in the midst of the activity. It analyses the practitioner's reaction to the situation, exploration of the reasons leading to the reaction, and the review of the consequences (Schön, 1983). Separately, retrospective reflection-on-action is reflection well past the actionable period with no opportunity to immediately address the issue (Gilbert & Trudel 2001).

Reflection is a process of recognising the problematic, questioning routine situations, and making meaning from experiences to enhance understandings of one's professional practice (Adler, 1991; Berry, 2009; Bullough, 1989; Bullough & Gitlin, 1989; Loughran, 2002; Schön, 1983, 1987). Boyd and Fales (1983) described the scientific method of reflecting

practice as "the process of internally examining and exploring an issue of concern, triggered by an experience, which creates and clarifies meaning in terms of self and results in a changed conceptual perspective" (p. 100). Reflection involves a series of critical questioning and contemplation based on a scientific method of identifying, analysing, and reflecting for knowledge (Argyris, 1998; Crisfield, 1998; Schön, 1987). By "looking at what is, in order to see what might be" (Edwards & Nicoll, 2006, p. 123), reflection becomes a way to test ideas and develop plausible insights on pedagogical practice (Schön, 1983, 1987). As Lyle (2002) elaborated,

> *Reflective practice (RP) is best described as an overall approach to professional practice. Although it is very useful in the early stages of education and training, it should become part of day-to-day activity. There is an element of being 'critical' (that is, questioning) about RP, but it is important to note that reflection also focuses on positive features of practice and achievements. RP involves a structured approach and makes use of procedures such as journals/diaries, stimulated recall, briefings, reflective conversations and analysis of critical incidents. The 'analysis' of questioning must also be structured. (p. 288)*

Cushion, Armour, and Jones (2003) encourage coaches to reflect on their practice. They argued that "unless coaches reflect on and reinterpret past experiences of coaching, they remain in danger of leaving their practice untouched by new knowledge and insight" (p. 222). Nelson and Cushion (2006) argued that the insightful frame of reference through reflection allows learners to construct, implement, and evaluate strategies to overcome dilemmas specific to their coaching practice. Jordi (2010) reframed this concept of reflective practice by adding that reflection should move beyond a rational analytical process. He argued that an open learning dialogue with our implicit embodied experiences expand the cognitive process in reflection to deepen human consciousness (Jordi, 2010).

Loughran (2002) and Schwandt (2000) discussed the usefulness of reflection as a conscious or intentional analysis of behaviour or performance. Because reflection is contingent on the outcomes required and the type of questions it responds to, researchers have seen reflection occurring at various levels of cognition (Attard & Armour, 2006; Trudel, Culver, & Werthner, 2013). While different descriptions have been used to term the type of reflection, such as Attard and Armour's (2006) labelling of *spontaneous reflection*, *technical reflection*, *dialogic reflection*, and *transformative / critical reflection* (pp. 220 to 221), they all describe the process of deepening reflection.

The most elementary form of reflection is technical reflection (Tinning, 1977). With the intent of producing instrumental outcomes from the application of existing knowledge, technical reflection is typically a form of action research. Practical reflection is a form of reflection that more deeply analyses the theoretical underpinnings of practice. By connecting theory and practice, practical reflection is a form of contemplative inquiry that clarifies assumptions underpinning practical actions (Tinning, 1977). Critical reflection is recognised as the highest level of reflection for its consideration of political or ideological dimensions influencing practice (Mallett, 2004). Researchers have used critical reflection to interpret social and cultural contexts that lead practitioners to question their practices. While different levels of reflection produce different levels of understandings, Hellison and Templin (1991) asserted all levels of reflection should be valued since reflection is about deepening analytical thought for plausible insights.

Self-Understanding for Self-Knowledge and Self-Awareness

The ability of reflection to mediate experiences and knowledge has led Gilbert and Trudel (2001) to consider reflection a self-learning tool for pedagogical practitioners. Reflection promises an ability to develop self-understanding as it presents practitioners with the ability to analyse one's own practice, incorporates problem solving into learning by doing, and applies critical theory to the examination of professional practice (Beyer, 1988; Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, 2005; Gitlin & Titelbaum, 1983).

Hunt (1999) described self-understanding as the accumulated wisdom from sustained reflective thinking. It includes such things as, for example, one's strengths, weaknesses, needs, emotions, and drives. London (2001) added that self-understanding also refers to the recognition of how experiences and current situations influence how one views oneself as a professional. Berry (2009) underscored self-understanding for educators by stating "the development of professional self-understanding as a form of expertise matters in teacher education because as more finely nuanced understandings of self are developed and elaborated, these in turn shape the way in which practice is enacted and understood (by oneself and other teacher educators) and how it is experienced and interpreted by students of teaching" (p. 305).

Building self-understanding of pedagogical practice involves acquiring both self-knowledge and self-awareness (Berry, 2009). The concept of self-knowledge is a broad field

that includes comprehension of one's own knowledge and skills and of how one learns (Eraut, 1994). Self-awareness is a level of consciousness of one's actions and interactions and includes an understanding of how one typically acts or is perceived by others in particular situations (Korthagen, 2004). Berry (2009) considered it important to reflect critically on one's behaviour and actions in professional practice since it helps to monitor and inform pedagogic actions.

Berry (2009) applied critical questioning to more than a set of skills and knowledge but also to certain qualities such as "open mindedness to seeing problems within one's own practice; willingness to open one's practice up for scrutiny; as well as, preparedness to take risks and expose oneself as vulnerable" (p. 308). Critical reflection develops self-understanding by generating deeper self-awareness cognitively, emotionally, and even socially (Anderson, Knowles, & Gilbourne, 2004; Edwards & Nicoll, 2006). Anderson, Knowles, and Gilbourne (2004) explained, "the questions guide the practitioners to examine actions, thoughts, and feelings in an attempt to develop a deeper understanding of their practices" (p. 194). In this way, critical questioning draws on increasingly sophisticated understandings to make ideas clear, explicit, and applicable to open a way for self-understanding (Berry, 2009). Cushion, Armour, and Jones (2003) explored into the usefulness of critical questioning through reflection during coaching practice. They argued that reflective practice has a strong educative potential to develop practical understanding and even support the professional development of sport coaches (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003).

Berry (2009) stated reflection supports analytical thinking of one's own experience to develop practical understanding through the enculturation of self-awareness. She elaborated, "through reflection, a deeper understanding of the self – including how one acts, what one knows and does not know, strengths and weaknesses and gaps between what one says and does – can be developed" (p. 308). Developing self-awareness connects experiences to produce more meaningful understandings of the realities in practice (Loughran, 2002)

Critical reflection in sport coaches' on-going professional development makes them more likely to consider their coaching practice in a wider context (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001; Knowles, Borrie, & Telfer, 2005; Lyle & Cushion, 2010). Douglas and Carless (2008) found

that reflective practice allows the coach to learn from practical coaching experience to make informed sport coaching decisions. Lyle (2002) substantiated the argument for critical reflection to develop self-understanding by stating "reflective practice may prove to be a very valuable mechanism for ensuring that this practical experience enhances coaches' learning and contributes to monitoring and assessment" (p. 289). Reflective practice in situations such as sport coaching, where practice is complex, applied, and contextualised, and in which learning requires a degree of critical reflectivity, develops self-understanding (Lyle, 2002).

Reconceptualising Reflection for Practical Understanding

While findings suggest that coach education can benefit from deeper exploration into tacit coaching experiences to draw out self-understandings, studies have also indicated that reflecting on experience alone is insufficient to develop expertise (Eraut, 2004; Etherington, 2004; Lynch & Mallett, 2006). As Attard and Armour (2006) cautioned, "although (they) see reflection as a powerful tool for learning, it will not always offer quick and easy answers… sometimes it might offer no answer at all" (p. 222). Despite its potential as a powerful learning tool, the use of reflection as a technique to create self-understanding of tacit experiences has drawn critique for its lack of authenticity and the lack of acknowledgement of social conditions that frame and influence practice (Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2004, 2009; Jordi, 2011; Zeichner & Liston, 1996).

Jones (2006a) posited that attempts at self-understanding of practices by sport coaches and its application into coaching practice has been limited by attempts to structurally map understandings from an "outside-in" approach, as opposed to an "inside-out" effort to foreground the "muddled reality" of personal feelings (p. 1019). The inadequate consideration of coaches' thoughts and feelings in coaching practice suggests that contemporary approaches to producing professional knowledge in sport have limited professional development (Rynne, Mallett, & Tinning, 2010). Reiterating the need for reflective practice to stretch its potential, Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) regarded reflection as a technique for cognition enabling the learner to explore action, thought, and feelings.

While Schön (1983, 1987) has presented researchers with a vital instrument in making connections between experiences and theory, researchers and scholars (Jordi, 2011; Loughran, 2002; Loughran & Berry, 2005) have argued that not all attempts at reflection are

truly reflective. They challenge the claim that reflective practice has occurred without the presence of critical thinking. Contending that reflection emphasises solely a rational analytical process through which humans extract knowledge from their experiences, Jordi (2011) argued that "reflection is maligned by critiques of the rationalist assumptions of experiential learning discourses for it mentalist prejudice" (p. 182).

Opposing the preoccupation with rationalist approaches, Jordi (2011) critiques the over-thinking about experiences instead of working towards the essence of social reality for self-understanding of coaching experiences. As Jordi (2011) clarified, "in spite of reflection's reputation for distilling rational knowledge from the mess of human experience, I will argue that reflective practices have the potential to do the opposite – to integrate a range of cognitive and nonconceptual elements that make up our experience and consciousness" (p. 182). While neurosciences and social sciences have guided research towards a physiology of mind-body integration for critical thinking, Jordi (2011) stated the structural and functional tendencies in reflective practice have perpetuated a dissociation of thought from embodied experiences. This inclination towards the disconnection of the mind from the body has led to a dispute over the value of reflection as a learning tool.

In a recent study, Dixon, Lee, and Ghaye (2013) observed that sport coaching and education suffers from an "anaemic and skeletal conception of reflection" (p. 585). They argued that sport research has borrowed the original ideas of reflection but have failed to comprehend its full intention when applied. They criticise the pre-occupation with reflection-on-action that has left coaches and researchers with a deficit-based view of coaching pedagogy. Describing this as privileging rational analytics over consciousness of a social reality, Zeichner and Liston (1986) argued against focusing "on teaching practice at the level of the individual without sufficient attention to the social condition that frame and influence practice" (p. 19). Zeichner and Liston (1986) and Dixon, Lee, and Ghaye (2013) suggested a more effective way of reflective practice can be found in encouraging the practitioner to focus internally on their own practices and externally on the social conditions of their practice. Their action plans for change should involve efforts to improve both individual practice and their situations.

To address the apparent inadequacies of existing use of reflection to construct professional knowledge for sport coaches, researchers have argued for embodied forms of

reflection for self-knowledge to occupy a more prominent space in sport coaching research (Dixon, Lee, & Ghaye, 2013; Jones, Armour, & Potrac, 2003). Nash, Sproule, and Horton (2011) ascertained the successes of sport coaches were attributed to their association of coaching experiences from their own practice situations to coaching theory. Coaches have found success in developing practical understanding of their practice when they contextualise coaching theory commends reflective thinking on tacit experiences for self-knowledge (Mallett, Trudel, Lyle, & Rynne, 2009; Sparkes, 2009a).

Amidst the critique of approaching reflection on experiences through rationalism, Jordi (2011) cautioned against a total reversal on the bias by giving preference to the body over the mind as the site of experiential learning. As Jordi (2011) argued, "we have to learn to listen to the dialogue between what is emerging to become explicit in our cognition on one hand and our non-conceptual experience on the other" (p. 182). Loughran (2002) furthered the argument for embodiment in reflection by stating,

Reflective practice has an allure that is seductive in nature because it rings true for most people as something useful and informing. However, for reflection to genuinely be a lens into the world of practice, it is important that the nature of reflection be identified in such a way as to offer ways of questioning taken-for-granted assumptions and encouraging one to see his or her practice through others' eyes. The relationship between time, experience, and expectations of learning through reflection is an important element of reflection, and to teach about reflection requires contextual anchors to make learning episodes meaningful. (p. 33)

In proposing the construct of self-knowledge to consider the reflective dialogue between the body and the mind, Jordi (2011) suggested this embodied reflective process can encourage an integration of varied and often disconnected aspects of our human experience and consciousness. This argument has since stimulated discussion in sport studies where researchers are now arguing for greater attention to embodied forms of reflective exploration into lived experiences for self-knowledge (Dixon, Lee, & Ghaye, 2013).

Chapter Summary

This chapter began by positioning the field of study in community sport as a subset of a larger sport culture. The discussion then followed with a presentation on the construct of knowledge on sport coaching before moving to discuss how sport coaches require

professional knowledge comprising of both content knowledge and procedural knowledge for effective coaching practice. I then established the context of this study through a review on the multi-dimensional nature of sport coaching and discussed aspects that make coaching practice a complex process. This led to the discussion on a problematic area in sport coaching. Other studies have found that, despite the effort in coach education to enrich and impart professional knowledge, sport coaches continue to find it difficult to apply their content knowledge to coaching practice. There exists a paucity of procedural knowledge in coach education. A key contention is the use of coaching models to present professional knowledge on sport coaching. The almost uncritical acceptance and presentation of the complex coaching process has abstracted coach education to the point that it is no longer meaningful. Finally, this chapter concluded by suggesting procedural knowledge on sport coaching can be further developed with reflection in an embodied sense. By allowing for an open learning dialogue with implicit embodied experiences, reflective practice then becomes an expansive process to develop more concise practical understanding. The next chapter will provide a discussion on reflecting on lived experiences and elaborate on phenomenology as a research methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH INTO LIVED EXPERIENCES

Lived experience is the starting point and end point of phenomenological research. The aim of phenomenology is to transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence – in such a way that the effect of the text is at once a reflexive re-living and a reflective appropriation of something meaningful: a notion by which a reader is powerfully animated in his or her own lived experience.

(van Manen, 1990, p. 36)

Van Manen (1990, 2014) described the usefulness of phenomenology as a research tool to study lifeworlds. Researchers in sport studies have found that phenomenology deepens professional knowledge of coaching practice (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Dixon, Lee, & Ghaye, 2013; Thorburn, 2008). While phenomenological research has helped develop practical understanding of sport related practices, researchers (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Kerry & Armour, 2000; Tinning, 2008) have noticed that studies often do not pay necessary attention to the philosophical roots of phenomenology. This lack of philosophical grounding gives rise to questions regarding the credibility of these phenomenological studies (Brown & Payne, 2009).

This chapter presents a literature review on the phenomenological roots that ground my research into the lived experiences of coaching practice. It offers an overview of transcendental phenomenology, ontological phenomenology, existential phenomenology, and hermeneutic phenomenology and discusses several key concepts such as lifeworld existentials, existentialist themes, and hermeneutics for phenomenological research. I will also explore the intercorporeality of humans with their lifeworld. Van Manen's (2014) concept of phenomenology for practice has provided sport studies with a philosophy for qualitative research. In the following sections I will discuss how a non-dualistic form of existential and hermeneutic research into lived experiences can help deepen practical understanding of lifeworlds in sport coaching. Finally, I will conclude with a deliberation on the often under-realised potential of phenomenological research into lived experiences.

Phenomenology in Social Science Research

Contemporary and applied ideas of phenomenology for qualitative research originated from a scientific approach to the study of the nature of human beings and existence (Allen-Collinson, 2009). According to Seamon (1999), phenomenological research focuses on human situations, events, meaning, and experiences as they manifest through the course of everyday life. Phenomenology began as a descriptive philosophy to scientifically study the essences of pure experiences (Burch, 1989, 1990, 1991; Kerry & Armour, 2000; Seamon, 1999). Kerry and Armour (2000) described phenomenology as a "systematic and disciplined methodology for derivation of knowledge" (p. 3). Husserl (1970a) viewed phenomenological research as a disciplined and scholarly method for analysis and interpretive explication of immediate experience.

Husserl is generally regarded as the intellectual founder of phenomenological philosophy (van Manen, 2014). Husserl saw phenomenology as a philosophy to capture experiences in their primordial origin or essence as it appears in the consciousness of human beings, without interpreting, explaining of theorising. Husserl (1970a) maintained that "we must go back to the things themselves" (*wir woollen auf die 'Sachenselbst' zurückgehen*) (p. xxiii). Heidegger (1962) explained that phenomenology-based investigations are essentially attempts to clarify the nature of logical concepts by tracing their origins in intuition.

Phenomenology is "the study of phenomena, things as they present themselves to, and are perceived in our consciousness" (Allen-Collinson, 2009, p. 279). Phenomenology is considered as both a philosophy and a method. Thorburn (2008) observed that "phenomenology contained the potential for experiences to provide the basis for a rigorous methodology, which could lead to specific forms of experiences (thoughts, perceptions, feelings) linking to associated subject knowledge meanings to achieve learning goals" (p. 265). Phenomenology therefore provides social sciences with a useful form of qualitative research to discover underlying, essential qualities of human experiences and the world in which that experience happens (Brunch, 1989; Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997; van Manen, 1990).

Phenomenological researchers revisit lifeworlds through an exploration into lived experience. As Merleau-Ponty (2012) explained, the "turning to the phenomenon of lived experience means re-learning to look at the world by re-awakening the basic experience of the world" (p. viii). For Burch (1990), exploring lived experiences in phenomenological research gives us the opportunity to gain a fuller interpretation of social reality. He posited "the expression signifies in strictly ontological terms human experiences as such, the original way in which human beings exist in the world as selves, and it implies that the essence of this experience lies precisely in its 'lived' character" (p. 133). Van Manen (1990) explained this connection of lived experiences to phenomenological research as follows:

> All phenomenological human science research efforts are really exploration into the structure of the human lifeworld - the lived world as experiences in everyday situations and relations. Our lived experiences and the structures of meanings (themes) in terms of which these lived experiences can be described and interpreted constitute the immense complexity of the lifeworld. (p. 101)

Van Manen (1977) uses the noun *erlebnis* (experience) to identify a sense of experience as something one lives through personally. This concept of lived experience is derived from the verb *erleben* in German philosophy, which means "to relive" or "to be still alive when something happens" (p. 217). While earlier ideas of phenomenological investigation started out as characteristically systematic and descriptive, the potential of phenomenology as a research tool has led phenomenologists to experiment and refine ways to conduct phenomenological research.

Philosophical Roots of Phenomenology

While Husserl's (1970) work has been credited for launching the phenomenological movement, developments in social sciences have since produced distinctive approaches of phenomenology for research (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Kerry & Armour, 2000; Koch, 1995). Presently, phenomenology has become "complex, mutable, multi-stranded, nuanced, and contested" (Allen-Collinson, 2009, p. 280). Making reference to the work of influential thinkers, Van Manen (2014) highlights the existence of multiple strands of phenomenology. He identified these phenomenology strands to include Ethical Phenomenology by Emmanuel Levinas, Existential Phenomenology by Jean-Paul Sartre, Gender Phenomenology by Simone de Beauvior, Embodiment Phenomenology by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Hermeneutic Phenomenology by Hans-Georg Gadamer, Critical Phenomenology by Paul

Ricoeur, Literary Phenomenology by Maurice Blanchot, Oneiric-Poetic Phenomenology by Gaston Blanchot, Sociological Phenomenology by Alfred Schutz, Political Phenomenology by Hannah Arendt, Material Phenomenology by Michel Henry, and Deconstruction Phenomenology by Jacques Derrida.

The following section does not elaborate on the many sub-strands of phenomenological research. Rather, it discusses the philosophical proponent of these strands of phenomenology. I begin with van Manen's (2014) distinctions between transcendental phenomenology, ontological phenomenology, existential phenomenology, and hermeneutic phenomenology. This discussion is necessary to demonstrate a direction in phenomenological research that has advanced the study of embodied experiences.

Transcendental Phenomenology

Researchers such as van Manen (1990, 2014), Connolly (1995), and Seamon (1999) have credited Edmund Husserl's (1859-1938) contribution in Transcendental Phenomenology as the principal work for phenomenological research. Husserl was one of the most influential philosophers in modern history. He contributed central ideas to almost all areas of philosophy and neighbouring disciplines such as linguistics, sociology, and cognitive psychology. Modern phenomenologists continue to cite Husserl's two volumes entitled *Logical Investigation* (1900, 1901).

Although the origins of the phenomenology can be traced back to Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and Georg Hegel (1770-1831), Husserl's (1970a) earliest work adopted the existing term *phenomenology* (*phänomenologie*) in less than a fully systematic way to characterise a modernist approach to the study of phenomena.

> *Pure phenomenology represents a field of neutral researches, in which several sciences have their roots. It is, on the one hand, an ancillary to psychology conceived as an empirical science. Proceeding in purely intuitive fashion, it analyses and describes in their essential generality – in the specific guise of a phenomenology of thought and knowledge – the experiences of presentation, judgement and knowledge, experiences which, treated as classes of real events in the natural context of zoological reality, receive a scientific probing at the hands of empirical psychology. Phenomenology, on the other hand, lays bare the 'sources' from which the basic concepts and ideal laws of pure logic 'flow', and back to which they must once more be traced, so as to give them all the 'clearness and distinctness' needed for an understanding, and for an epistemological critique, of pure logic. (Husserl, 1970a, p. xxiii)*

Husserl's (1970a) idea of phenomenology distinguished itself from earlier ideologies by emphasising the essential structure of cognition and its correlation to the things known. To Husserl (1970a), phenomenology is not just a logical process to describe phenomena but is a research method that deepens our understanding of social reality. He saw phenomenology as having an enduring pathos that strengthens weak foundations in the sciences. He argues that while the sciences have been successful, they do not foster reflection on the meaning of the foundations of their knowledge base. To Husserl (1970a), phenomenology is a rigorous human science because it investigates the way knowledge comes into being and confronts us with the assumptions upon which all human understandings are grounded (van Manen, 2014).

For Husserl (1970a), phenomenology is a rigorous science of all conceivable transcendental phenomena. Transcendental phenomena are the experiential entities that become the objects of our reflection as meaning of objects is sought from a worldly encounter. Van Manen (2014) distinguished between that which is within us, and that which is transcendental, outside of us. He went on to explain, "phenomenology does not study the "what" of our experiences but the "experience of the what – the experience of the intentional object, thing, entity, event as it appears in consciousness" (p. 91). Phenomenology does not direct its reflective attention to the external world but the inner awareness of experiences as the phenomena is presented to human consciousness. Phenomenology is therefore a study of phenomena, which are experiences belonging to someone's consciousness (van Manen, 2014).

While Husserl's work posits that the study of experiences can yield deeper understanding of lifeworlds, he also recognises that human experiences cannot be described directly (van Manen, 2014). To try to describe them would be to reduce human science to a study of ideas, which then results in the fallacy of idealism. Further, to not acknowledge the subjectivity of these experiences would be to overlook social reality as meaningfully constituted by human consciousness. The study of experience needs to be more than a descriptive exploration, and phenomenological research allows us to study experiences as they are manifest in human consciousness.

Husserl ascribes a key role to the concept of intentionality in phenomenological study (van Manen, 1990). The term intentionality is defined as the "inseparable

connectedness of the human being to the world" (van Manen, 1990, p. 181). By intentionality, Husserl (1970a) means that our thinking, feeling, and acting are always prompted by awareness about things in the world (van Manen, 2014). The inseparability of intentionality and consciousness in all human activity has prompted van Manen (1977) to assert that "experiences are intentional and intentions belong to subjects or individuals and to acts of consciousness" (p. 217).

Husserl further maintains that phenomenological reflection cannot be introspective but is retrospective (van Manen, 2014). Since a person cannot reflect on lived experiences while living through the experience, reflection is always recollective and emerges from previous experiences (van Manen, 2014). To scientifically and retrospectively reflect on experiences to study the essential structures of lived experiences within a particular lifeworld, Husserl (1982) deemed it necessary to suspend one's various scientific, philosophical, and cultural assumptions. He cautioned researchers to limit their biases when gathering experiential data. Recognising that the researcher's pre-reflective consciousness can greatly influence the interpretation of phenomena, Husserl stated that phenomenological researchers begin by omitting as much as possible pre-conceived assumptions, attitudes, and interpretations of the phenomenon (van Manen, 1990).

To suspend pre-conceived ideas, impressions, and influences for phenomenological research that allows the experience being studied to return to its primal consciousness. In this context, Husserl (1982) introduced the concept of *epoché*. The term originated from the Greek word meaning to abstain, stop, or to keep a distance from. Also known as transcendental reduction, *epoché* is a technique to suspend taken-for-granted assumptions or natural attitudes about a phenomenon (Allen-Collinson, 2009). This focusing of the researcher by suspending biases is also described as *bracketing* (van Manen, 1990, p. 175). Although the process of phenomenological research requires the reduction of data, phenomenological reduction is not meant to reduce the informativeness of the phenomenon. Rather, it objectifies data for better understanding and descriptions of the workings of consciousness. In using transcendental reduction to return to the world as it shows itself in human consciousness for the constitution of meaning, transcendental phenomenology is also called constitutive phenomenology (van Manen, 2014).

In a more recent application of *epoché* as a technique in phenomenology, Giorgi (1985) produced a significant body of work in the spirit of descriptive phenomenology. Adopting the Husserlian idea of transcendental phenomenology, Giorgi (1985) developed the *Descriptive Phenomenological Method in Psychology* to promote phenomenology as a theoretical movement that avoids the reductionist tendencies of contemporary approaches in psychological research. Applying the *bracketing* technique to the researchers' own assumptions pertaining to the phenomenon in question, Giorgi (1985) conceived a framework to encourage objective understandings of psychological problems.

Despite providing social sciences with a philosophy to research phenomenon, the emphasis on a descriptive approach in transcendental phenomenology has since drawn criticism from researchers (Burch, 1989; Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997). Critics argued that the emphasis on solely rational-based inquiry into human experiences has prevented transcendental phenomenology from evoking deeper thinking. Allen-Collinson (2009) questioned the positivist claim that human experience can be objectified into generalisable truths – the seeing of the world as objects, sets of objects, and objects acting and reacting upon one another. Some researchers think that phenomenology fails to acknowledge sufficiently the power of social-structural constraints upon individuals, interactions, and relationships (Allen-Collinson, 2009).

Seamon (1999) used the descriptive phrase *radical empiricism* to denote the philosophical movement towards "a way of study whereby the researcher seeks to be open to the phenomenon and to allow it to show itself in its fullness and complexity through her own direct involvement and understanding" (p. 162). It is this search for a more radical approach to empirical research that has led thinkers such as Heidegger (1962), Merleau-Ponty (2012) and Gadamer (1975) to view phenomenology with other philosophical lens to shape alternative ways of knowing. Dominant paradigms within the realm of phenomenology have expanded to include existential phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Kerry & Armour, 2000; Koch, 1995). These strands of phenomenology are not mutually exclusive and share characteristics of phenomenological theorising originating from Husserl's work (Allen-Collinson, 2009).

Ontological Phenomenology

In Husserl's later work, the approach to phenomenological analysis began to turn away from the earlier emphasis on transcendental ego and consciousness towards the exploration of pre-reflective lifeworld of everyday experiences (van Manen, 2014). The body of work started by Husserl was continued by Heidegger, who turned the gaze of phenomenological research from descriptive knowledge of phenomena to the meaning of their being. For Heidegger, instead of asking how the being of things are constituted as intentional objects in consciousness can be known, he asked how the being of these things reveal themselves (van Manen, 2014). Heidegger criticised transcendental phenomenology for committing to representational assumptions about being. He questioned how philosophy is possible since human life is always involved in dynamic change. Heidegger contended that social sciences tend to assume the lives being studied have a permanent identity and a permanent presence, yet lifeworlds are never the same and are always changing. For Heidegger, earlier ideas in phenomenology that stressed philosophical thematisation and description of lived experiences hindered the exploration of those very experiences (van Manen, 2014).

Heidegger (1889-1976) was concerned with Husserl's unquestioning nature of individual beings (Inwood, 2002). Heidegger's significant contribution to phenomenology was his philosophy of existence and the meaning of time (Steiner, 1991). His ideas of a conscious *Being* in the world and lived time transformed Husserl's phenomenological method from an epistemological project to an ontological one.

Arguing that the mind and bodily experiences are inseparable, Heidegger (1962) was uneasy with Husserl's (1970a) disconnected involvement of the person and the world of actual lived experiences. This shift away from Husserlian phenomenology appeared in the lectures on Aristotelian logic that Heidegger gave at the University of Marburg in the winter term of 1925-26, and the lectures for the summer term of 1927 on the fundamental or foundational problems of phenomenology (*Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*) (Steiner, 1991). Challenging the view of the person as a function of the world who reacts to worldly influences, Heidegger (1962) instead saw the world as a function of a person where a person consciously acts and shapes the world.

Central to the reconceptualisation of Husserl's (1970a) idea on phenomenology to include bodily consciousness is Heidegger's (1962) concept of *Being-in-the-World* (*in-der-welt-sein*). Heidegger (1962) refers to this *Being* through the concept of *Dasein*, which he explains as follows,

> *Dasein is an entity which does not just occur among other entities. Rather it is ontically distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an issue for it. But in that case, this is a constitutive state of Dasein's Being, and this implies that Dasein, in its Being, has a relationship towards that Being – a relationship which itself is one of Being. And this means further that there is some way in which Dasein understands itself in its Being, and that to some degree it does so explicitly. It is peculiar to this entity that with and through its Being, this Being is disclosed to it. Understanding of Being is itself a definite characteristic of Dasein's Being. Dasein is ontically distinctive in that it is ontological. (p. 32)*

Attending to the perspectives that phenomenology cannot be reduced to one's consciousness separate from bodily awareness, Heidegger (1962) used the concept of *Dasein* to argue the non-dualistic human presence where one's existence in the world cannot be fully comprehended without *Being-in-the-World*. The principle behind Heidegger's (1962) concept of *Being-in-the-World* is the rejection of Cartesian Dualism. René Descartes (1596-1650) distinguished the self-awareness of the mind from the physical body (Hart, 1994). In contrast, instead of seeing experiences bounded by dichotomies of reason and emotion, or other dualisms such as mind and body in phenomenological research, Heidegger (1982) considers consciousness, the world, and the body as intricately intertwined and mutually engaged. Thorburn (2008) observed that philosophers of phenomenology referred to the lived body rather than just the physical body. He noted that in German writings on phenomenology there exist differences in terminology to describe the body. For example, the lived body is referred to as *leib* while the physical body is referred to as *korper*. The English language however does not make such a distinction. The inseparable involvement of consciousness and the body in the world locates the experience of things in the world in a phenomenological context as lived from an embodied point of view.

Picking up from Heidegger, Rintala (1991) presented a critique of literature in physical education pedagogy by challenging the way studies have dualistically separated the mind from the body when studying experiences. Believing that dualism limits understanding in sport, Rintala (1991) argued, "our assumptions regarding the mind and body have

impacted curricula, research methodologies, and the creation and valuing of the disciplines themselves" (p. 261).

While Husserl (1970a) thought of phenomenology as a philosophical approach that epistemologically conceived of humans as having been constituted by states of consciousness, Heidegger's (1962) idea took phenomenological research further using a metaphysical ontology (Steiner, 1991). Heidegger (1962) argued that only when philosophical inquiry happens in an *existentiell* manner does it become possible to disclose the existentiality of existence. By using psychoanalysis to consider influences of subjective lifeworlds, Heidegger's (1962) work on existential phenomenology shifted Husserl's (1970a) concept of phenomenological research from cognitive consciousness to embodied experiences.

Existential Phenomenology

Husserl saw phenomenology as a means to analyse essential structures of consciousness on experiences that penetrated deeper into reality to reveal the truths known in cognition. Thinkers in phenomenology such as Merleau-Ponty (2012) continued to develop the concept of phenomenology by expanding the ideas of phenomenological research to include existentialism. According to Spiegelberg (1982), existential phenomenology seeks to arrive at the understanding of meaning through ontological questioning of "What does it mean to be a person?" Existentialism stems from the belief that ethics and meaning must come from an individual experience of the world (Allen-Collinson, 2009). Merleau-Ponty's orientation is considered existential in that he aims to bring the body into the research process (van Manen, 2014).

Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) was a phenomenological philosopher and a student of Husserl whose work on lifeworld and lived experiences added another dimension to Heidegger's (1962) concept of *Being-in-the-World*. Merleau-Ponty (2012) explored perceptions of phenomena and in the process discovered deeper meaningful understanding of lifeworlds. Instead of moving away from Husserl's (1970a) descriptive ideology for phenomenological research, Merleau-Ponty's (2012) extensive work on embodiment adopted a sympathetic and creative reading of Husserl's work (van Manen, 2014). He interpreted Husserl's transcendental phenomenology with its emphasis on the investigation

of consciousness and essences into an existential phenomenology to posit that the world is always already there (van Manen, 2014).

Pollio, Henley, and Thompson (2006) further explained this non-dualistic body-mind relationship in phenomenology by stating that "the world is to be lived and described, not explained" (p. 5). The view that the person and the world are intimately interwoven emerged from the interest to define meaning in a broader way that includes bodily, visceral, intuitive, emotional, and transpersonal dimensions (Seamon, 1999). In embodiment phenomenology, Merleau-Ponty (2012) introduced a form of phenomenological research that emphasises the body as the primary site of knowing the world. This idea that the body and that which is perceived cannot be disentangled from each other is also central to Heidegger's (1962) concept of *Being* and *Being-in-the-World*.

In his book *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty (2012) introduced the concept of body-subject into phenomenological research as an alternative to Cartesian dualism. He used the concept of the body-subject to outline, "how this provides a way of conceiving relations between the body and the world which avoids over-privileging the role of cognition and under-representing the centrality of the body in human experience" (Thorburn, 2008, p. 266). Arguing that the mind should not be privileged over embodied experiences in research with phenomenology, Merleau-Ponty's (2012) intention is to "bring the body back in" (Allen-Collinson, 2009, p. 3) to theorisation in phenomenological research. The real value of the embodied dimensions is not realised in isolation from lifeworlds but in intimate relationship with aspects of the lived world (Whitehead, 1990).

For Merleau-Ponty, the original human relation to the world is a relation of perception. Merleau-Ponty (2012) uses Husserl's (1962) term of intercorporeality to describe the intersubjectivity of embodied experiences and the lifeworld. This concept of intercorporeality begins with Husserl's (1970c) description of lifeworld (*lebenswelt*), a primal, corporeal, and preconscious level of consciousness that gives no reflection to the tacit context of daily life. Merleau-Ponty's (2012) interest in the corporeal rather than the intellectual originates from the notion that consciousness of lifeworld is developed from experiences. In seeing that human beings know the world bodily and through embodied actions, existential phenomenology is interested in seeing phenomena from our pre-

reflective experience (van Manen, 2014). As Merleau-Ponty (2012) asserted, to do phenomenology one must always begin with lived experience.

As an immediate pre-reflective consciousness of life, Connelly (1995) describes lived experiences as a reflexive consciousness that is unaware of itself. Van Manen (2014) clarified that "lived experience means that phenomenology reflects on the prereflective or prepredicative life of human existence as living through it" (p. 26). Van Manen (1990) described this form of experiences as "original and naïve, prior to critical or theoretical reflection" (p. 182), typically the state of affairs in which the world is experienced. Husserl (1970c) elaborated on the validity of pre-reflective consciousness from experiences by arguing that the disposition of lifeworld is always pragmatic and refers to lifeworld as the "world of immediate experience", the world as "already there", "pregiven", the world as experiences in the "natural, primordial attitude", that of "original life" (pp. 103-186). Phenomenology is therefore a way of accessing the world as it is experienced pre-reflectively (van Manen, 2014).

However, Schutz (1967) cautioned that although a human being arrives at meaning when one derives consciousness from experiences, not all consciousness is completely meaningful.

> *Meaning does not lie in the experience. Rather, those experiences are meaningful which are grasped reflectively…. It is, then, incorrect to say that my lived experiences are meaningful merely in virtue of their being experiences or lived through…. The reflective glance singles out an elapsed lived experience and constitutes it as meaningful (Schutz, 1967, pp. 69-71)*

Schutz's (1967) view that the meaningfulness of lived experiences does not always begin at the onset of the consciousness of the experience is also reiterated in Burch's (1990) description that the full meaning of experience is not revealed in the reflexive immediacy of the lived moment but emerges from explicit retrospection. As van Manen (1990) noted, "there is a difference between our pre-reflective lived understanding and the reflective grasp of the phenomenological structure of something lived" (p. 77).

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

While existentialism provides phenomenological research with a way to existentially study lifeworlds, hermeneutics has been credited for adding an interpretive process to explore the meaning behind the phenomena (van Manen, 2014). Hermeneutic

phenomenology draws on ideas in embodiment and language to analyse the context, intention, and meaning surrounding a lifeworld (Allen-Collinson, 2009).

For van Manen (1990), phenomenology is hermeneutic. He argued that the intention of phenomenology to discover whatever appears in consciousness is already a form of research with subjectivity. In this way, the interpretive nature of phenomenological research becomes a hermeneutic exploration. Van Manen (1990) went on to suggest that lingual dimensions pervade all experiences and that text and linguistic forms provide hermeneutic phenomenological research with a way to interpret meaning from lived experiences.

For Merleau-Ponty (2012), word and thought are not separable. Thought and feelings are always present in words. Language bares the meaning of thought and emotions. In this way, Merleau-Ponty (2012) underscores Husserl's principal idea that phenomenological research takes the form of an inquiry using language. Gadamer (1975) posited that hermeneutics does not develop a formula of understanding but illuminates the conditions in which understanding takes place. Gadamer (1975) further developed the idea of a hermeneutic method to frame phenomenological research by explicating Friedrich Schleiermacher's (1768-1834) application of hermeneutics to the reading of texts. While Gadamer (1975) agreed with Schleiermacher that one must approach a text with openness and sensitivity to the historical tradition and interpretivity of the text, he also argued that placing oneself in the original reconstructed historical context would be impossibly complex (van Manen, 2014). Gadamer (1975) placed the interpretation of the text in the context of one's own social historical existence. This is where hermeneutic phenomenology and its emphasis of exploring phenomena through text becomes a way to return to the world of actual experience for the discovery of essential structures of lived experiences within lifeworlds (Risser, 1997).

Van Manen (2014) defined hermeneutic phenomenology as "a method of abstemious reflection on the basic structures of the lived experiences of human existence" (p. 26). He used the term *abstemious* to describe the means by which this form of phenomenological research abstains from "theoretical, polemical, suppositional, and emotional intoxications" (p. 26) when reflecting on experiences. For van Manen (2014), hermeneutics means that reflection must use discursive language and sensitive interpretive

devices to make phenomenological analysis, explication, and description possible and intelligible.

Phenomenology of Practice as Research Methodology

In the tradition of phenomenological research and the strand of hermeneutic phenomenology, van Manen's (2014) work on *Phenomenology of Practice* considers phenomenological research to be a retrospective human science with the intent to interpret and to understand phenomena as opposed to observing, measuring, explaining, and predicting. In van Manen's (1984) early work, he framed the methodology of phenomenological research around these philosophical principles of phenomenology:

(i)   Phenomenological research is the study of essences

(ii)   Phenomenological research is the study of lived experience

(iii)   Phenomenological research is the attentive practice of thoughtfulness

(iv)   Phenomenological research is a search for what it means to be human

(v)   Phenomenological research is a poetizing activity

(Extracted from van Manen, 1984, p. 1)

Van Manen (1984) considers phenomenological research to be the study of essences. He begins with Husserlian ideals of phenomenology as a means to seek out the very nature of the phenomenon through the study on essential structures of lived experiences within lifeworlds. He observed that "phenomenology is less interested in whether something actually happened, how often it tends to happen, or how the occurrence of an experience is related to the prevalence of other conditions or events" (p. 6). Rather, phenomenology is interested in discovering the essence of phenomena by exploring the essential structures of lifeworlds (van Manen, 1984). This ability of phenomenological research to study essences has led van Manen (1984) to describe phenomenology as both a philosophy and research method to reveal the lived meaning or significance of the experience in a fuller or deeper manner.

> *From a phenomenological point of view, to do research is always to question the way we experience the world, to want to know the world in which we live as human beings. And since to know the world is profoundly to be in the world in a certain way, the act*

of researching – questioning – theorizing is the intentional act of attaching ourselves to the world, to become more fully part of it, or better, to become the world.

(van Manen, 1990, p. 5)

For van Manen (1984, 1990, 2014), this concept of lifeworld is interchangeable with lived experiences. In seeing that the "most basic form of lived experience involves our immediate, pre-reflective consciousness of life" (p. 35), van Manen (1990, 2014) seeks to present a fuller interpretation of one's lived world for hermeneutic exploration. According to van Manen (1984), the use of phenomenological research to discover the essences of the experience is also a way of knowing how to improve teaching practices, for example. Van Manen (1984) argued that "phenomenological pedagogical research edifies the same attentive thoughtfulness which serves the practical tactfulness of pedagogy itself" (p. 1). By engaging in phenomenological research, practitioners gain an active state of knowing from greater minding, heeding, and caring about their pedagogical practice (van Manen, 1982). This thoughtfulness towards teaching is termed as phenomenological pedagogy (van Manen, 1982). The usefulness of phenomenology to develop thoughtfulness during pedagogical practice has led van Manen (1990) to describe phenomenological research as critically oriented action research.

Van Manen (1984) saw phenomenological research progressing through the exploration into the possible meaning of lived experiences where the researcher gains a fuller self-understanding of *Being* in the world and the involvement in the researcher's own lifeworld. By searching for fullness of living through the phenomenological research process, phenomenological research becomes a way of gaining consciousness of self (van Manen, 1984). He described phenomenological writing as a means for social science to communicate experiential data. Phenomenological research delimits structuralist and instrumentalist conventions (Sparkes, 2008). As van Manen (1984) has found, phenomenology has the ability to provide researchers with an "incantative, evocative speaking, a primal telling, wherein we aim to involve the voice into an original singing of the world" (van Manen, 1984, p. 2). Developed from various ideologies in feminism, critical theory, postmodernism, and poststructuralism, the poetising that van Manen (1982) identifies allows the data to speak for themselves (Sparkes, 2008). Narrative sociology has encouraged the use of stories to present experiential data. As Ellis (2004) noted, "the goal is to practice an artful, poetic, and empathetic social science in which readers can keep in their

minds and feel in their bodies the complexities of concrete moments of lived experience (Ellis, 2004, p. 30).

Recently, van Manen (2014) has adopted the phrase *Phenomenology of Practice* to describe the process where "one constantly tries to place oneself in the open, to learn from the future as it unfolds in the works of present and emerging phenomenological scholars" (p. 213). *Phenomenology of Practice* "sees new thinking as an invitation to openness, to be intrigued by the constantly renewing and creative impulses of the search for the experience and origin of live meaning, and the meaning of meaning in human life" (p. 213).

> *Phenomenology of Practice not only wants to be sensitive to the concerns of professional practices in professional fields, but also to the personal and social practices of everyday living. In this way Phenomenology of Practice distinguishes itself from the more purely philosophical phenomenologies that deal with theoretical and technical philosophical issues. As well, Phenomenology of Practice is sensitive to the realization that life as we live and experience is not only rational and logical, and thus in part transparent to reflection – it is also subtle, enigmatic, contradictory, mysterious, inexhaustible, and saturated with existential and transcendent meaning that can only be accessed through poetic, aesthetic, and ethical means of languages. (van Manen, 2014, pp. 212-213)*

Contributing to the evolving field of phenomenology, van Manen's (2014) conception of *Phenomenology of Practice* advances the works of major thinkers and continues to shape phenomenology for social sciences with new ideas. The ability of phenomenology to stimulate reflection for deeper insights into pedagogical practices has encouraged researchers and practitioners to undertake phenomenological exploration for action research. In recent years, these new ideas have also found their way into research in sport studies.

Lifeworld Existentials

For an effective way to reflect and analyse the phenomenological themes developed from experiential data, van Manen (1990) suggested that phenomenological research should begin by applying essential thematic structures, known as lifeworld existentials to analyse our lived experiences. Merleau-Ponty (2012) believed that all phenomenological human science research efforts should be descriptive and interpretive explorations into the complex lived world of human beings. To study peculiarities of the lived world of human beings, van Manen (1990) argued that it is necessary to begin by studying the fundamental

thematic structure of lifeworlds, namely (i) lived space, (ii) live body, (iii) lived time, and (iv) lived other (Connelly, 1995; van Manen, 1990).

Van Manen (1990) clarified that this thematic exploration into lifeworld existentials is distinct from thematic analysis in phenomenological research. Justifying the functionality of lifeworld existentials for phenomenological research, van Manen (1990) argued that these "four fundamental existentials of spatiality, corporeality, temporality, and relationality (that) may be seen to belong to the existential ground by way of which human beings experience the world" (p. 102). By structuring experiential data into existential themes of lived space, lived body, lived time, and lived other, phenomenological explores the essences of lifeworlds.

Lived Space

Bollnow (1961) described lived space as a human being's felt space. The comprehension of space as the exterior surroundings of the life of a person has little value since lived-space cannot be developed simply by a superficial analogy of a concrete living space. This interpretation of spatiality is more than just the bodily occupying of "mathematical space, or the length, height, and depth dimension of space" (van Manen, 1990, p. 102) but also encompasses the experience of the space as comprehended by the mind. Bollnow's (1961) explanation that "distances within lived-space depend strongly on how a man feels at the moment" (p. 38) clarifies that lived-space is derived from a human being's thoughts and feelings in relation to the moment. Van Manen (1990) illustrates this by using the example of the tendency to look for a comfortable and quiet space for reading of a favourite novel. Lived space is more than physical occupation of a space but is felt and experienced by the research subject while residing in that space itself.

Lived Body

Van Manen (1990) stated that lived body in the realm of phenomenology refers to the embodiment of experiences presented to human consciousness. Guided by the notion that "we are always bodily in the world" (p. 103) to explain the corporeality between body and experiences, van Manen (1990) believed that there is a connectedness between the body and the experience. This non-dualistic account of human existence is described in Gallagher's (1986) statement that "a human being neither 'has' nor 'is' two bodies; the body

as it is lived and the body as it appears in objective observation are one and the same body"
(p. 140). This inseparability of the body with human consciousness of experience has led
Gallagher (1986) to conclude that the existing distinction between the lived body and the
physiological body is perceptual rather than ontological. Van Manen (1990) offered an
example of the intersubjectivity between the body and consciousness when he described
how a body can lose naturalness when unnerved by someone else's critical gaze.

Lived Time

According to Wyllie (2005), lived time is subjective time as opposed to clock time or
objective time. "Lived time is our experience of things happening and this correlates lived
time with the activity of the embodied subject" (Wyllie, 2005, p. 175). Rational clock- time
presents a reductionistic view of time by failing to acknowledge that time is relative (Funes,
2011). Van Manen (1990) demonstrated the wider view of time in his description of the
sense of time speeding up when enjoying an experience or the sense of time slowing down
when boredom sets in. Wyllie (2005) describes these distortions in lived time to be
perceptual where "lived time is connected with the experience of the embodied subject as
being driven and directed towards the world in terms of bodily potentiality and capability"
(p. 17). The dialectical relationship between an embodied human subject and the world is
further conditioned by intersubjective synchronisation with the lived time of others.

Lived Other

Van Manen (1990) explains that the lived other is "the lived human relation we
maintain with others in the interpersonal space that we share with them" (p. 104). This
relationality exists in a corporeal way where human beings create experiences with the
presence of others (van Manen, 1990). Through development of conversational relations,
the intersubjectivity of a human being's mind and body is in a reciprocal relationship with
communally created experiences.

Van Manen (1990) and Connelly (1995) reiterate that these four existentials can be
differentiated but not separated. As a whole, "they all form an intricate unity which we call
the lifeworld – our lived world" (van Manen, 1990, p. 105). Connolly (1995) noted that while
existentials of lifeworld can be studied in their different aspects, the inter-relatedness is
illustrated when one existential always calls forth the other. These intertwining dimensions

of lifeworld existentials are thus components of a human being's lived world that, when compiled in phenomenological research, describe one's own lifeworld. In serving as a means for phenomenological research to map descriptions of phenomena, lifeworld existentials provide the social sciences with a framework to analyse lived experiences. This approach offers useful potential for research in sport, physical education, and pedagogy.

Sport Studies with Phenomenology

Phenomenology has made useful contributions to the study of lifeworlds in the field of psychology (Giorgi, 1970, 1985), nursing (Koch, 1995), sport, and physical education (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Brown & Payne, 2009; Kerry and Armour, 2000; Thorburn, 2008) and coaching (Cornin & Armour, 2013; Jones, 2006). More recently, the tradition of existential phenomenology and the concept of hermeneutic phenomenological research have informed a growing number of phenomenology driven sport studies. Bain (1995) explains this interest of researching embodied experiences with existentialism and hermeneutics in sport:

> *Because of its focus on embodied consciousness, phenomenology seems to hold particular promise for our field. Embodied knowledge is at the center of our field. And embodied knowledge has great significance beyond our field. Embodied knowledge— ways of speaking and moving, ways of using and caring for and presenting our bodies—becomes a cultural language that serves to create and convey our identities.*
> *(p. 244)*

In particular, researchers have recognised the importance of phenomenological existentialism and embodied experience in the study of phenomena (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Bain, 1995; Sparkes, 2007). In examining embodied experiences, researchers have applied existentialist ideals of spatiality (lived space), corporeality (lived body), temporality (lived time), and relationality (lived other) to thematically frame hermeneutic explorations into the essential structure of lifeworlds (Connolly, 1995; Thorburn, 2008). It is through the potential of embodying corporeal immediacy and textured sensuosity in the lived sporting body where researchers such as Sparkes (2007), Allen-Collinson (2007, 2009) and Jones (2006a, 2009) have used existentialism and hermeneutics to analyse lived experiences and contribute a fresh perspective to the sociological study of sport.

Emphasising existentialism and hermeneutics as a research methodology, Shusterman (2004) regarded experience as a central concept of philosophy and affirms the

body as an organising core of experience. Shusterman (2004) argued that knowledge of one's bodily dimension must not be ignored since the improved awareness of personal feelings provides greater insight into the experiences presented to human consciousness. As Connolly (1995) stated, embodied experiences has a critical role in phenomenological research as it is,

> *a concept that provides a common ground within which phenomenology and physical education can meet. It is a place where the body is taken seriously. Phenomenological human science begins in lived experience and eventually turns back to it. (p. 26)*

Seeing lived experiences as a unifying concept, Connolly (1995) believed that the placing of the body at the centre of the research presents phenomenological investigations with a method for feeling, seeing, knowing, and understanding lived experiences and the meaning of those experiences. The study of sporting embodiment is awakening researchers to the idea that human beings live with and through their bodies. Allen-Collinson (2009) stated that there is an irreducible bodily dimension in sport experience and practice. This dimension presents researchers with a greater appreciation of subjectivity and conventions for analysing lifeworlds. Scholars such as Connolly (1995), Hockey and Allen-Collinson (2007), and Dixon, Lee, and Ghaye (2013) are calling out for greater consideration of the interplay between emotions, thoughts, and actions in sport coaching and coach education.

Lived Experiences in Sport Coaching

Jones (2009) conducted a phenomenological investigation of lived experiences in sport coaching. His autoethnographic exploration demonstrates the importance for research to begin from bodily experiences. Jones (2009) argued that a more effective exploration of bodily experiences, such as the clarification of the muddled reality of personal feeling, is needed for better understanding of subjective lifeworlds. His study exemplified an emotionally laden lived experience of a coach and the effects of caring in the coach-athlete relationship.

In another study of lived experiences in sport, Hockey and Allen-Collinson (2007) researched the effects of embodied sport experiences by acknowledging the duality of body and mind. Drawing on Rodaway's (1994) idea of a sensuous geography, Hockey and Allen-Collinson (2007) suggested that sport is an embodied practice where the sensation experienced by the body is deeply connected to the mind. Leder (1992) draws on ideas in

existentialism to claim that "the lived body is not just one thing in the world, but a way in which the world comes to be" (p. 25). Demonstrating the central role of the body in shaping experiences of the world, Hockey and Allen-Collinson (2007) challenged the notion of disembodied experiences to focus on the hidden corporeality of language and thought. These concepts have prompted Hockey and Allen-Collinson (2007) to consider that "the body is not so much an instrument nor an object, but rather the subject of perception, socially and indeed subculturally mediated through that perception may be" (p. 281).

Allen-Collinson (2005) examined the emotional dimension of an injured sporting body to demonstrate the connectedness of the body and the experience. By situating herself in the study, Allen-Collinson (2005) contextualised a highly emotional tale of a struggle with the realities of an injured athlete. In describing the alarm, anxiety, and fear, the optimism, relief, and doubt, the faith, hope, and disappointment, and the despair, anger and blame experienced by the researcher's sporting body, Allen-Collinson's (2005) emotional labour presents the phenomenological investigation with an analysis of the lifeworld characterised by an ambiguous, uncertain state the researcher experiences in dealing with the injury and transiting to a new physical status.

Attard and Armour's (2006) study into lived experiences explored social phenomena from an insider's view point by treating the researcher's experience in physical education teaching as a case-study. With the intention of studying physical education practices, the embodied experiences within the perspective of the researcher were examined through on the reflective journaling. These studies demonstrate the growing body of literature attending to the call for embodied ways of knowing from a situated perspective. While embodied forms of phenomenological investigations such as those performed through reflective practice are taking root, researchers such as Hockey and Allen-Collinson (2007) and Dixon, Lee, and Ghaye, (2013) have noted a paucity of phenomenological research in the field of sport**.**

Paucity of Phenomenological Investigation in Sport

Brown and Payne (2009) argued that a majority of phenomenological research has made little or no explanation of the strand of philosophy underpinning their research methodology. This lack of theorising on the nature of phenomenological roots has led to some confusion on the approach of the phenomenological research. As Allen-Collinson

(2009) pointed out, "given the centrality of the body within sport, it is surprising that, with some notable exceptions, relatively little use has been made explicitly of phenomenological approaches within sport-related studies generally" (p. 284). Although phenomenological investigations in sociology of sport, kinesiology, and pedagogy have made attempts to incorporate corporeal realities of the lived sporting body in research work, researchers have argued that only a small number of these studies truly qualify as phenomenological research into embodied experiences (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2007; Wainwright & Turner, 2006).

Through an extensive review of the literature at the time, Kerry and Armour (2000) only located six articles that fit the description of a phenomenological research into embodied experiences. These include Pronger's (1990) phenomenology of gay men in athletics, Rail's (1990, 1992) phenomenological examination of experiences of contact in women's basketball, Woods' (1992) phenomenological description of the experience of lesbian physical educators, Smiths' (1992) study of the lifeworld of physical education, and Wessigner's (1994) study of the lived meaning of scoring in games in physical education. Several years later, Tinning (2008) did not see much improvement. "With the exception of the work of Smith (1991, 1998), Connolly (1995), and Nilges (2004), we have not seen much of the phenomenological focus on pedagogy in kinesiology" (p. 410). Dixon, Lee, and Ghaye's (2013) recent work outlined a deficit view of pedagogy that has resulted, in part, from a myopic view of reflection practices.

While phenomenology is steeped in philosophical foundation and terminology, Kerry and Armour (2000) argued that the problem with phenomenological research is in its vague or absent philosophical grounding. Giorgi (1970), Schutz (1972), and van Manen (1990) have acknowledged the conceptual framework of contemporary studies rarely clarify the foundational philosophy of phenomenology. Brown and Payne (2009) also noted that the philosophical roots of phenomenology are seldom specified or clarified in research, as exhibited in studies such as Wessinger's (1994), Nilges' (2004), and Kentel and Dobson's (2007) work. Bain (1995) claimed, "despite the promise of phenomenology for understanding our field, little of qualitative research in kinesiology and physical education is grounded in this theoretical perspective" (p. 244). This absence of a "systemic empirical tradition" (Wainwright & Turner, 2006, p. 258) has raised concerns about the scholarly

rigour of phenomenology (Schrag, 1979) as a method for analysis and interpretation of immediate experience. Brown and Payne (2009) also expressed a deeper concern in the small number of actual empirical phenomenological research.

Kerry and Armour (2000) believe an inadequate tacit understanding in sport is due to a misconception that qualitative research and research with phenomenology are one-and-the-same. Brown and Payne (2009) note "there is considerable overlap in how both phenomenological research and qualitative research is represented and reported" (p. 424). While qualitative and phenomenological researches have the common intent to discover meaning in human experiences, Kerry and Armour (2000) cautioned "not all qualitative research processes, however, are phenomenological" (p. 10). The confusion between qualitative research and research with a phenomenological orientation stems from the lack of attention to the philosophical roots of phenomenology. Allen-Collinson (2009) noted a nonchalant treatment of phenomenological research where "'phenomenology' is sometimes adopted in talismanic fashion, with no real attempt to engage with phenomenology as epistemology, ontology, or indeed methodology in its wider, philosophical sense" (p. 289).

An inadequate understanding of what it really means to research lived experiences has perpetuated an almost superficial level of phenomenological investigation. While it is accurate to describe phenomenology as a style of qualitative inquiry through a particular concept and methodological foundation, the disembodied treatment of lived experiences in sport research has not addressed Merleau-Ponty's (2012) critique of Cartesian Dualism. Kerry and Armour (2000) analysed the available literature on phenomenological research and concluded that qualitative research sometimes misuses or misconstrues the concept of phenomenology, in particular the embodied understanding of lived experience. Kerry and Armour (2000) see this misinterpretation originating from Whitson's (1976) attempt to present an alternative to the traditional positivistic approaches common in sport related research.

With all of these factors limiting phenomenological studies in sport, Brown and Payne (2009) still maintain that there is promise in philosophical and methodological approaches rooted in existentialist phenomenology. They suggest that researchers stand to benefit from clarifying and developing the epistemological and ontological presuppositions

and positions informing phenomenological research. A more discerning approach is needed. Brown and Payne (2009) stress the importance of thinking about how embodied experiences can be better studied. While Jones (2009) and others (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Carless & Douglas, 2011; Douglas & Carless, 2008) showed the significance of an embodied understanding for sport coaches, researchers continue to find an absence of reflective practice to develop embodied understandings in sport studies (Allen-Collinson, 2007; Dixon, Lee, & Ghaye, 2013). The under-appreciation of embodied phenomenological research in sport has led researchers to see hidden potential of phenomenology to add richness, depth, and value to sport studies (Dixon, Lee, & Ghaye, 2013).

Chapter Summary

In conclusion, this chapter presented a literature review on the phenomenological roots and framework for research into my lived experiences during coaching practice. The chapter began by establishing the concepts that have grounded phenomenology as a credible research tool. It described founding ideas of phenomenological research such as transcendental phenomenology, ontological phenomenology, existential phenomenology, and hermeneutic phenomenology. It then discussed the key concepts of lifeworld existentials, existentialist themes, and hermeneutics for phenomenological research. This chapter explored the idea of the intercorporeality of humans with their lifeworld and the concept of lifeworld existentialism. I reviewed how the ideas of hermeneutic phenomenology have provided sport studies with a research methodology. In particular, this chapter profiled van Manen's (1990) concept of phenomenology for practice. Within this section, I discussed how a non-dualistic form of existential and hermeneutic research into lived experiences can help deepen practical understanding of lifeworlds in sport coaching. This chapter concluded noting that the potential of phenomenological research into lived experiences is under-realised. There continue to be challenges that impede the progress of phenomenology in meeting the promises it has made. One potential way to advance the possibilities of phenomenology for research into lived-experience is to carefully consider how those experiences may be represented in text. Van Manen (1990) has highlighted that this approach in phenomenological research is the central means to

enlighten understanding of pedagogical practice. The following chapter addresses this challenge for phenomenological researchers.

CHAPTER FOUR

ALTERNATIVE REPRESENTATIONS OF LIVED EXPERIENCES

Narrative is about the telling of stories. In the telling, listening, and reading of stories the opportunity arises to share experiences about our own lives and the lives of others. Eisner (1997) commented, 'Narrative, when well crafted, is a spur to the imagination, and through our imaginative participation in the worlds that we create we have a platform for seeing what might be called our "actual worlds" more clearly' (p. 264). He added that such tales can advance and enhance empathetic forms of understanding.

(Sparkes, 1999, p. 19)

Phenomenology has advanced explorations into ways of developing knowledge from lived experiences to enlighten understanding of pedagogical practice (Akinbode, 2013; Bruner, 1987; Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002; Smith & Sparkes, 1999, 2009). Earlier works on narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) and more recent discussions on various alternative representations of lived experiences (Carless & Douglas, 2011; Denison, 1996; Douglas & Carless, 2008; Garratt & Hodkinson, 1998; Jones, 2006a, 2009; Prudy, Potrac, & Jones, 2008; Sparkes, 2001, 2008, 2009b; Sparkes & Douglas, 2007; Sparkes, Nilges, Swan, & Dowling, 2003; Sparkes & Partington, 2003) found the use of stories about experiences deepens phenomenological research. A growing number of studies in sport sociology use autoethnography to research lived experiences (Jones, 2006a, 2009; McMahon & Penney, 2013; Sparkes, 1995, 2000, 2009b). This interest in autoethnography originates from the ability of self-narratives to elaborate complex contextual details of lived experiences through the perspective of the researcher (Geertz, 1988; Sparkes, 2002a; Van Maanen, 1988; Woolgar, 1988).

This chapter presents a literature review into the use of narratives in qualitative research, in particular, the use of autoethnography to study sport experiences. This chapter begins by rationalising the use of storytelling to study experiences. I elaborate on how the potential of stories to present multiple perspectives of social realty and its ability to engage the emotional space has led to a growing interest in writing narratives for research. Next I engage in deep discussion on the critique narrative forms of research have received, in

particular, the concerns of the *Dual Crisis of Representation and Legitimation* (Eisner, 1997; Hopper et al, 2008; Sparkes, 1995, 2000). This scepticism includes concerns over disengaged representations of experiential data offered by a dispassionate researcher (Sparkes, 1999, 2000, 2009b; Woolgar, 1988) and doubts over the claim of personal assumptions incorporated in realist tales (Eisner, 1997). The chapter continues by discussing the different representation genres used in sport studies, in particular confessional tales, poetic ethnodrama, autoethnography, representations, and fictional representations. Next, this chapter emphasises the plausibility of using autoethnography for reflexive research in sport studies. I then deliberate on the suitability of the autoethnographic research text to represent embodied experiences for both the researcher and the audience to engage with the data. Finally, I conclude this chapter by highlighting the possibility of using autoethnography for an embodied exploration into my coaching practice through an incantative, evocative speaking, and primal telling of my lived experiences (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Sparkes, 2002a).

Narrating Stories for Sport Studies

The belief that stories are capable of retaining a data quality ordinarily characteristic of lived experiences has prompted researchers (Denison, 1996, 2002; Denzin, 2014; Edwards, Skinner, & Gilbert, 2004; Maines, 1993) to call for greater acceptance of storytelling for sport studies. Denzin (2014) qualified the use of storytelling for phenomenological research by asserting,

> *Lives and their experiences, the telling and the told, are represented in stories which are performances. Stories are like pictures that have been painted over, and, when paint is scraped off an old picture something new becomes visible. What is new is what was previously covered up. A life and the performance about it have the qualities of pentimento. Something new is always coming into sight, displacing what was previously certain and seen. There is no truth in the painting of life, only multiple images and traces of what has been, what could have been, and what now is. There is no firm distinction between the texts and performances.*
>
> *(p. 1)*

Believing that stories of lived experiences portray a richer interpretation of human action, researchers (Gergen & Gergen, 1988; Richert, 2002) argued that storytelling can function as a powerful medium to convey experiential data for research. With the

possibilities of stories to explain, express, analyse, or understand, Maines (1983) considers telling stories of coaching experiences in research a means through which phenomenological inquiry can occur.

Richert (2002) suggested the usefulness of storytelling for phenomenological inquiry lies in its ability of stories on lived experiences to develop a plot or put together an assortment of heterogeneous, previously unrelated components. Brunch (1990) explained that the process of storytelling aids understanding of phenomena through "remembrance, narration, mediation, or more systematically, through phenomenological interpretation and 'inscription'" (p. 134). Van Manen (1990) surmised the significance and draw of composing narratives in the form of stories for social science research:

1. *Story provides us with possible human experiences;*

2. *Story enables us to experience life situations, feelings, emotions, and events that we would not normally experience;*

3. *Story allows us to broaden the horizons of our normal existential landscape by creating possible worlds;*

4. *Story tends to appeal to us and involve us in a personal way;*

5. *Story is an artistic device that let us turn back to life as lived, whether fictional or real;*

6. *Story evokes the quality of vividness in detailing unique and particular aspects of a life that could be my life or your life;*

7. *And yet, great novels or stories transcend the particularity of their plots and protagonists, etc., which makes them subject to thematic analysis and criticism.*

(p. 70)

Nodding and Witherell (1991) explained that telling stories deepens understanding "by making the abstract concrete and accessible" (p. 279). It is through stories where experiential data can connect disparate understandings to promote meaningful interpretations of human action (Maines, 1993).

Gergen and Gergen (1988) asserted that, in phenomenological research, an interwoven relationship exists between social interaction and communication through the living and telling of stories. Eisner (1997) validated the use of storytelling for social science research since "humans have used storied forms to inform since humans have been able to communicate" (p. 264). This humanistic inclination to communicate through storytelling is

believed to come from the ability of stories to contain rich contextual information on human lives (Brown, 1988; Winter, Buck, & Sobiechowska, 1999). Eisner (1997) goes further, claiming that pedagogical practitioners have found fluency to communicate complex situation in its existing context by telling stories. This realisation on the usefulness of storytelling to practitioners for teaching and learning has led to further discussion in literature on ways to generate knowledge from stories (Maines, 1993).

Cushion (2007a) argued that the ability of storytelling to portray the unseen of those that are most difficult to articulate should be extended to research in sport. He argued, "coaching being understood as a relational, dynamic social microcosm that is contingent and ever changing has the implication that to think of coaching and the coaching process, one should think relationally or dialectically" (p. 398). Carless and Douglas (2011) further argued that storytelling can benefit sport studies in the following way.

> *First, stories necessarily start with personal embodied experience in the form of specific events or happenings…. Second, while stories are personal, they are at the same time socio-cultural constructions…. Third, and finally, as we have previously observed, stories provide a 'freeze-frame' through which past events may be reconsidered. (Carless & Douglas, 2011, p. 4)*

By producing a richer and more meaningful representation of the "swamp like" (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2006, p. 96) sport coaching environment, storytelling in sport studies becomes an ideographic research tool capable of examining coaches' experiences in the context of negotiating and engaging in their daily coaching work. Carless and Douglas (2011) found this use of stories to communicate experiences on a social and cultural level provides sport researchers with a medium to explore the multi-dimensional sport environment.

Writing Narratives for Research

One of the ways researchers have explored turning storytelling into a meaningful research effort is through writing narratives (Akin, 2002; Ashmore, 1989; Atkinson, 1997; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Czarniawska, 2004). Maines (1993) described this turn to writing narratives to present stories for social science research as the "narrative moment" (p. 17). Distinguishing the story of the phenomenon from the written "narrative" (p. 2), Connelly and Clandinin (1990) described narratives as a processed form of stories produced from listening, observing, reliving with others, writing, and interpreting texts. This

usefulness of stories to depict experiences has led Polkinghorne (1995) to deem stories fundamental data for systematic, rigorous, and principled narrative analysis. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) termed the process of using narratives to study the ways humans experience the world as narrative inquiry.

Polkinghorne (1988) argued for the use of narrative inquiry in social science research by asserting that narratives have an inherent nature suitable for documenting phenomena. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) found educational research to have also benefited from narrative inquiry. The ability of narratives to construct and reconstruct personal and social stories has made it easy for researchers to characterise human experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Emihovich, 1995). As Clandinin (2006) argued, narrative inquirers cannot "bracket" (p. 47) themselves out of the inquiry but rather need to find ways to inquire into the participant's experiences, their own experiences, and the co-constructed experiences developed through the relational inquiry process.

Smith and Sparkes (2009b) described narrative inquiry to offer studies within the sport domain with benefits found by social sciences. Not only do narratives contextualise descriptions of experience, the analytical process in narrative inquiry enables sport studies to explore stories in greater depth (Smith & Sparkes, 2009b). By objectivising stories at the centre of the inquiry, these episodes of experiences present researchers with a source of empirical data to enrich phenomenological forms of inquiry (Polkinghorne, 1995).

Smith and Sparkes (2009b) argued for narrative inquiry in sport by stating four useful outcomes. Firstly, the analysis of stories draws out the meaning to lived experiences. Next, researching stories connects the experience to the fabric of society and culture. The analysing stories bring to consciousness an embodied understanding of human complexity. Lastly, a deeper understanding of stories can create a better sense of who we are (Smith & Sparkes, 2009b). The analysis of narratives in sport typically takes place through reflection (Dixon, Lee, & Ghaye, 2013).

Researchers (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Smith, 1980) have also found the participation in narrative research to have a transformative effect on the narrative inquirer. Clandinin and Rosiek (2006) observed "narrative inquirers study an individual's experience in the world and, through the study, seek ways of enriching and transforming that experience for themselves and others" (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006, p. 42). From the

interpretation of the story according to the motives, purposes, or guiding set of principles, the on-going negotiations of engaging in a narrative inquiry progresses through a cognisant and sometimes unconscious engagement of the researcher with tales of lived experiences at a deep and sometimes personal level (Clandinin, 2006). This relational nature of narrative inquiry does not allow researchers to detach from their social reality. Reconnecting to experiences on a personal level through stories has a metaphoric effect of the inquirer (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Despite the recognition of narrative inquiry as a legitimate research approach in social sciences since the mid-1980s, Smith and Sparkes (2009a) noticed a slower uptake by sport studies. They reasoned that while narrative forms of research have much to offer studies in the field of sport, there was little attention in this domain (Smith & Sparkes, 2009a).

In the years since this realisation, researchers (Attard, 2012; Carless & Douglas, 2011) have started to pay more attention on the use of narrative writing as a powerful tool in sport studies. Attard (2012) described the potential of writing narratives for research as a way to look back on sport experiences for analysis. He realised that reflecting on narratives awakens practitioners and researchers to multiple perspectives by enabling them to understand situations from various perspectives (Attard, 2012). For sport, Attard (2012) sees this as especially important since the deeper understanding of practice helps practitioners develop reflective thought to focus on possible solutions for future situations.

A Call to Action for Embodied Reflection in Sport

Despite the increased recognition of reflective practice in sport studies, researchers continue to be dissatisfied with results of narrative forms of inquiry (Dixon, Lee, & Ghaye, 2013). Dixon, Lee, and Ghaye (2013) argued that the way reflection techniques are copied from other fields and applied to sport studies have raised questions on its effectiveness. Unsettled by the formulaic use of narrative inquiry, they critiqued that the way reflection is retrospectively applied to the dynamic nature of sport is no different than a performance evaluation (Dixon, Lee, & Ghaye, 2013).

Dixon, Lee, and Ghaye's (2013) uneasiness is with the addiction of technical forms of reflection to analyse a tacit practice. While Dewey's (1933) notion on experiential learning,

Schön's (1983) ideas of reflection as well as the reflective models recommended by other researchers (Gibbs, 1988; Kolb, 1983) provided a basis to make-meaning from experience, the critique is in seeing reflective practice in sport as a problem solving opportunity (Dixon, Lee, & Ghaye, 2013; Evans, 1989). This rigid application of reflection is believed to take away the educational aspect from experiential learning (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006). Dixon, Lee, and Ghaye (2013) argued that, by doing so, the use of "reflection-on-action" (Schön, 1983) for critical inquiry in sport is no different than a positivist study rooted in science (Dixon, Lee, & Ghaye, 2013).

Researchers have found (Dixon, Lee, & Ghaye, 2013; North, 2013) that a deeper consequence of resting on scientism to generate knowledge limits understandings of coaching practice. To Eisner (1999), an orientation towards science in researching experiences by no means exhausts the ways lifeworlds can be represented. North (2013) believed that "the social world has an underlying material and emergent causal structure that is not easily identified through events and our experiences of them" (p. 133). By focusing on improving performance, reflective practice is maligned for its failure to consider the interplay between emotions, thoughts, and actions in human performance (Dixon, Lee, & Ghaye, 2013). For example, empirical data gathered from observations of events or activities are not sufficient to identify the potentially complex relationship between objects and structures because the nuances underlying these relationships are often hidden from view (Sayer, 1992, 2000).

Dixon, Lee, and Ghaye (2013) suggested that a more embodied reflective practice is important to develop coaching knowledge since emotions and thoughts are equally significant in guiding human action. Hockey and Allen-Collinson (2007) argued that it is not possible to separate how one chooses to describe something from what is being described. They described the proliferation of scientism in sport professional knowledge by asserting that "the sociology of sport has to-date addressed this primarily at a certain abstract, theoretical level, with relatively few accounts to be found that are truly grounded in the corporeal realities of the lived sporting body" (Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2007, p. 116). Jones (2009) identified this problem with disembodied representations of lived experiences as one of expression and access. For Jones (2009), "the current rationality-dominant discourse of coaching has limited forms of expression about it, so much so that coaches

can't find the language to convey adequately what they know" (p. 378). Disregarding emotional, ethical, and ambiguous aspects has resulted in an under-appreciation of professional knowledge, resulting in hidden knowledge (Jones, 2009).

Using Narratives to Engage the Emotional Space

In response to the call for reflection to take a more active engagement of the emotional space, researchers (Hopper et al, 2008; Smith & Sparkes, 2009a, 2009b) have pushed for narrative inquiry to take a more evocative approach. This call to action has reawakened Denzin's (1997) insistence that "a text must do more than awaken moral sensibilities. It must move the other and the self to action" (p. xxi). Noticing that research discourses have focused on understandings that lack the embodied connection to experiences being studied, researchers in the field of sport (Jones, 2009; Jones, Armour, & Potrac, 2003; Sparkes & Smith, 2002) have called for radical ideas to involve researchers when constructing narratives.

Drawing on earlier works on narratology, researchers (Hopper et al, 2008; Sparkes, 2002a) noticed that accessing the emotional space with narratives is catalytic in the way it grants deeper access to field situations and collecting of empirical data. Researchers argued that realist sport studies through an internal-idealist, relativistic ontological understanding not only encourages inner sense-making but also allows researchers to think about the data in new and unpredictable ways (Hopper et al, 2008; Jones, 2006a, 2009). Eisner (1997) explained,

Narrative, when well crafted, is a spur to imagination, and through our imaginative participation in the worlds that we create we have a platform for seeing what might be called our "actual worlds" more clearly. Furthermore, when narrative is well crafted, empathic forms of understanding are advanced. (p. 264)

As Jones (2009) pointed out, "such a perspective allows both author and reader to engage with the unique, ambiguous nature of coaching through illuminating issues that currently lie undiscovered and undisturbed in the muddy depths of the activity" (p. 378).

The epistemology of realist form of narrative inquiry is more concerned with how subjectivity can develop awareness of social reality through an iterative process (Hopper et al, 2008). Researchers (Barone, 1995; Carless & Sparkes, 2008; Denzin, 1997; Frank, 2000; Sparkes, 2002a) have noted that this realist approach empowers qualitative research with

the ability to dissect the internal dialogue of the subject and allow an exploration beyond the surface of the experience, highlighting what is seen and felt, and how arising dilemmas are dealt with. This process dissuades premature closure on understanding, conveys complexity and ambiguity, and creates a space for alternative interpretations (Maines, 1993).

Hopper et al (2008) described this alternative approach in narrative research is possible through a paradigm shift in emphasis from scientific tales to realist tales. While the scientific tale offers a standardise form to represent findings that suits a technical form of reflective exploration, the demand for an embodied type of narrative inquiry calls for the use of catalytic realist tales to offer an ideographic, hermeneutic, or dialectical account of social reality (Hopper et al, 2008). Denzin (1997) claimed that the use of realist forms of narratives in research provide sport studies with an "evocative epistemology" (p. 12) suitable for a critical realist type of narrative inquiry.

In the wake of this call for evocative forms of narrative inquiry, social science researchers have experimented on the use of creative writing approaches to study culture and experiences. Richardson (2000) argued this to be a movement towards the use of experimental or alternative writing as a method of inquiry, and has broadly encapsulated these ethnographic research methods under the title Creative Analytical Practices (CAP). In seeing knowing inseparable from the process, CAP considers writing and the product from the writing as deeply intertwined (Richardson, 2000). This was where ethnographies embodying creative approaches were described to have taken a postmodernist turn.

Distinguishing between the scientific and the realist approach to research, Smith and Sparkes (2009b) summarised that sport studies might perform narrative inquiry from different two standpoints. The scientific researcher as a story analyst can approach narrative inquiry through either structural or performative analysis, whereas the realist researcher as a storyteller might take an ethnodramatic approach narrative using creative analytical practices (Smith & Sparkes, 2009b). Reviewing earlier works on narratology, researchers (Hopper et al, 2008; Sparkes, 2008) noticed the potential of using realist tales to gain deeper access to field situations and collecting of empirical data. Sparkes and Smith (2002) demonstrated this through a realist tale about a serious sport injury that raised many difficult questions. Using a narrative to represent a body-self relationship, they wrote about

the anxiety and doubts about masculinity that were raised as a result of a spinal injury (Sparkes & Smith, 2002).

While researchers (such as Denison, 1996; Garratt & Hodkinson, 1998; Prudy, Potrac, & Jones, 2008; Sparkes, 2001, 2008, 2009b; Sparkes & Douglas, 2007; Sparkes, Nilges, Swan, & Dowling, 2003; Sparkes & Partington, 2003) have demonstrated the potential of realist tales for narrative inquiry, the use of narrative representation in sport studies remain uncommon. While narrative forms of inquiry have created opportunities for qualitative research, there is also scepticism on this postmodernist approach to develop knowledge (Edwards & Usher, 1994). The most prominent of these critiques on narratives are on the accuracy of representation and on the claim of legitimation.

Addressing the Dual Crisis of Representation and Legitimation

Smith's (1980) description of the use of narratives in qualitative research as afflicted by uncertainties suggests research with narratives has not always been trouble free. Kiesinger (1998) asserted not all deep accounts are good scholarship. Concerns have been raised about self-indulgence by the writer (Sparkes, 1999, 2000, 2009b) and how personal assumptions incorporated in realist tales can be considered academically credible (Eisner, 1997).

Some suspect audiences seldom know precisely the points being covered in narrative representations because of their ambiguity (Sparkes, 2000, 2009b). Others are hesitant to embrace the subjectivity of narratives and a preoccupation with data analytics (Maines, 1993). This emphasis on instrumentalism in research has led Maines (1993) to consider the departure of narrative inquiry from its ideological intentions and grounds of concern. He is uneasy with researchers laying claim to being empirical when they are simply indexing people's verbalisations about experiences, conduct, or thoughts. Positivist use of narratives for research has aggregated psychological data to the point so mediated by instrumentation that claims of being empirical are dubious (Maines, 1993).

These contentions against the accuracy, authenticity, and completeness of narrative writing to represent phenomena have unsettled narrative researchers by casting doubts on the legitimacy of using realist tales in social science research (Eisner, 1997; Sparkes, 1995).

Researchers have used the label *Dual Crisis of Representation and Legitimation* (Hopper et al, 2008; Sparkes, 1995, 2000) to describe the tension concerning narratives within the social sciences. To Hopper and his colleagues (2008), this uncertainty with using narrative writing to improve understandings and subsequent action in social reality can be described as a matter of praxis contesting against the purpose of the research. Consequently, narrative researchers inhabit a tension ridden and methodologically conflicting terrain (Hopper et al 2008; Lincoln & Denzin, 2000; Sparkes, 1995, 2000, 2009b).

Researchers (Kiesinger, 1998; Sparkes, 1995, 1998, 2008) have also noted that this problem with narrative research in particular applies to representations for sport studies that claim to be novel. This scepticism with representation has challenged the use of creative analytical practices for effective portrayal of the cultural and social reality in the context of sport (Hopper et al, 2008). Maines (1993) observed that the approach is susceptible to tensions, contradictions, conflicts, differences of interpretations, and poor quality realist tales. These factors have cultivated "a reluctance to consider seriously what happens when humans communicate" (Maines, 1993, p. 18). Sparkes (1995, 2008) saw this in the small number of studies that acknowledge the impressionist, literary, and artistic aspects of realist tales for sport and physical education ethnographers. Attributing this reluctance, apprehension, and even avoidance of contentious issues in human sciences to distrust with the represented data from direct research experiences, Sparkes (2009b) suggested that this perhaps explain why narrative representations for sport studies remains a rarity when compared to quantitative types of research.

Illuminating the voice of the Researcher

Hopper et al (2008) attributed the issue of *Dual Crisis of Representation and Legitimation* to the predominance of rational analytic ideology in qualitative social science research. They contended that the privileging of instrumental approaches invite critiques of the ability of narratives to portray accurately the social, cultural, and political peculiarities of social reality (Hopper et al, 2008). Sparkes (1995) challenged the assumption of rational analytical sciences that a robust paradigm unaffected by the researcher's biases. He used the analogy of how researchers translate oral responses of questionnaires into research categories for statistical analysis and presentations. Sparkes (1995) argued that this technique allows the text to give the impression that its symbols are inert, neutral

representations existing independently of the interests of the researchers, who are presented as neutral and dispassionate analysts.

The understanding that no narrative form of representation can be independent of a particular narrator have led researchers (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Maines, 1993; Smith, 1980) to challenge scientific approaches in writing narratives for research. Clandinin (2006), and Clandinin and Rosiek (2006) noted the inseparability of the research and the subject in the production of empirical narratives. Lincoln and Guba (2000) and Denzin and Lincoln (1994, 2005) observed that researchers cannot avoid injecting their own subjectivity in the internalising of lived experiences to compose narratives for qualitative research. Entrusted with translating, transforming, or otherwise modifying a particular narrative, researchers are vital narrators who represent their interpretation of the story according to certain motives, purposes, and guiding principles (Smith, 1980). This realisation that narrative inquirers cannot "bracket" (p. 47) themselves out of the inquiry has led Clandinin (2006) to argue for ways to inquire into the participants' experiences, researchers' experiences, and the co-constructed experiences developed through the relational inquiry process. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) suggested that since researchers influence qualitative research through their narratives, it is then prudent to recognise the researcher's authoring of lives, collecting and telling of stories, and writing narratives of these stories.

Other researchers (Smith, 1980; Sparkes, 1995, 2002a) have also attested that narrative expressions of social understanding through the languaging of lived experiences has empowered qualitative research with the ability to illuminate the researcher and participant's voices, heightening the authenticity of their interpretation of social reality. The languaging process often occurs through a conversational approach where a voice enriches expressions of social reality (Clarke, 1992; Rickman, 1976). Hertz (1997) explained that these voices to have multiple dimensions: the voice of the author presenting the research; the voice representing the respondents' account; and the author when the self is the subject of the inquiry. These different voices vocalise diverse perspectives during qualitative research (Hertz, 1997). For example, Carless and Sparkes (2008) demonstrated the use of narratives from different perspectives in physical activity experiences to preserve and reveal much about a unique lifeworld.

Discussions on the usefulness of different types of vocalised tales have also indicated unease with the use of dispassionate voices (van Manen, 1988). The instrumental approach towards experiential data rooted in scientism limits the involvement of the researcher by presenting a perspective framed by the voice of others (Geertz, 1998; Van Maanen, 1988). Challenging the concept of silent authorship where researcher produces disembodied expressions of social reality through a distanced and abstracted voice, researchers (Geertz, 1988; Sparkes, 1995; Van Maanen, 1988; Woolgar, 1998) argued against the use of author evacuated text (Sparkes, 2000) to represent experiential data. Sparkes (1995) described this approach of representing social reality as a "stripped-down, abstracted, detached form of language; the impersonal voice; and the statement of conclusions as propositions or formulae involves a realist or externalising technique that objectifies through depersonalization" (p. 161). Excluding the researcher's opinion devalues the quality of experiential data by limiting a truer portrayal of the social reality (Woolgar, 1988).

Realising that the voice of the researcher can draw on different discourses and use different rhetorical strategies to develop authenticity in their accounts, researchers (Hopper et al, 2008; Smith, 1980; Sparkes, 1995, 2002a) have explored the use of narratives to address the issue with reductionistic and abstracted experiential data representation. Sparkes (2009b) observed that ethnographers in sport studies need awareness of other representational forms available for informed decision-making. Consequently, he compared narrative representations in sport with the use of authoritative text to illustrate sport-related contexts. Asserting that the personalised authority is able to enrich experiential data by attaching an emotional immediacy to the expressions of researchers and research participants, researchers (Geertz, 1988; Richardson, 1994, 2000a, 2000b; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Sparkes, 2002a; Van Maanen, 1988; Woolgar, 1988) have pointed out the need in human science research to illuminate the experiences of the researcher using creative analytical practices such as that of writing an experiential text for phenomenological exploration.

Calling for narrative research to adopt a textual strategy that allows the researcher's point of view to be presented, researchers (Smith, 1980; Sparkes, 1995, 2002a) have pointed to using self-narratives as a plausible direction. This demand for narratives to evoke

a more intimate form of understanding has led researchers in sport studies to explore into legitimising the use of self-narratives (Sparkes, 1995).

Legitimising Self-Narratives for Qualitative Research

Smith (1980) argued for the legitimisation of self-narratives as a credible form of representation. He calls for narratives to be "regarded not only as structures but as acts, the features of which – like the features of all other acts – are functions of the variable sets of conditions in response to which they are performed" (pp. 231-232). Self-narratives are autobiographical, highly personalised, and self-absorbed accounts that depict the reality occurring during research fieldwork (Atkinson 1990; Sparkes, 1995; Van Maanen, 1988). Richardson (1994) elaborated:

> *Narratives of the self do not read like traditional ethnography because they use the writing techniques of fiction. They are specific stories of particular events. Accuracy is not the issue; rather narratives of the self seek to meet literary criteria of coherence, verisimilitude, and interest. Because narratives of the self are staged as imaginative renderings, they allow the fieldworker to exaggerate, swagger, entertain, make a point without tedious documentation, relive the experiences, and say what might be unsayable in other circumstances. Writing these frankly subjective narratives, ethnographers are somewhat relieved of the problems of speaking for the' 'Other'', because they are the "Other" in their texts. (p. 521)*

Hopper et al (2008) argued that self-narratives provide research with an alternative means of describing phenomena from the perspective of new spaces to inform the research agenda and communicate research to diverse audiences. Sparkes (1995) described the methodology behind self-narratives as a post-positivist approach to textual strategy in narrative research, which produces highly personalised accounts depicting the reality of the research process and the researcher.

The self-narratives present ethnographic tales with a reflexive approach that enhances the coherence of research findings. By applying reflexivity for dialectical conversations, writings, or thoughts, either individually or with another person, the inclusion of the researcher's voice adds the native's point of view for authenticity (Hopper et al, 2008; Van Maanen, 1988). In the research process, the researcher's knowledge of his or her own self intertwines with the researcher's knowledge of the subject. Consequently, Kluge (2001) maintained that writing the research text require a reflexive process. In a field of research where the researcher's voice is among the many voices present in the research

process, the author's reflexivity will enable him or her to become aware of their centrality to the research process, their influence over it, and their influence by it. As Hopper et al (2008) explained, "the validity in this genre is based on personal authority of the researcher's rationale and emotional struggle to reveal meaning, and participants' voices are included alongside her voice" (p. 219). It is through the usefulness for reflexive dialogue where Kemp (2001) sees the potential of confessionals tales in qualitative research.

Van Maanen (1988) cautioned that self-narratives in themselves are not naturally reflexive. A common indication is in the way the research with self-narratives often begins as monographs such as journal articles, or as book chapters devoted to fieldwork practices and problems (Sparkes, 1995). Hopper et al (2008) suggests that this problem with reflexivity in ethnographic self-narratives can be addressed through the inclusion of confessional tales. Humberstone (1997) argued that leveraging on the reflexive characteristics of confessional tales to supplement other narratives in research, such as self-narratives, sharpens the coherence of research findings. Although confessional tales on their own can sufficiently present experiential data for narrative inquiry, Sparkes (2002a) found combining confessional tales with other representation genres ensure a level of reflexivity is injected into the research. Hopper et al (2008) asserted, "confessional tales can be integrated into the research work as a section in the methodology, as a chapter on its own, as an addendum at the beginning or end of the work, or woven in throughout the work in italics, where information could be more effective" (p. 220). The way confessional tales is interwoven into the research is unique to the researcher's individual voice and personality (Hopper et al, 2008). Atkinson (1991) commended a successful integration of confessional tales into the narrative inquiry immensely benefit social sciences with a self-exposing commentary for a reflexive research process. This complementary nature of confessional tales for narrative research can inform interpretations of findings, which aids the exposure of ethical and methodological complexities about the research (Hopper et al, 2008).

Alternative Narrative Representations

Hopper et al (2008) elaborated on the different forms of representation that were available to synthesise experiences for research. These "genres" (p. 216) of representation provide narrative inquiry with creative analytical practices in data collection, analysis, and representation capable of engaging the emotional space to advance their research agenda (Hopper et al, 2008). Details on the ontology, epistemology, and methodology underpinning these genres of representation are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Genres of Representation

	Genre: Valued and Implicit Assumptions		What Genre Looks Like and How Judged	
Genre	**Ontology**	**Epistemology**	**Methodology**	**Format, "research as …."**	**Interest of genre**
Scientific tale	external realist, reality out there to find	Objectivist, correspondence with reality	Experimental, instrument to measure and predict	Set structure fabula story, 'measure and compare'	Prediction and control (technical)
Realist tale	Internal idealistic, reality constructed inside person	Subjectivist, interactive, coherence	Researcher-as-instrument, systematic analysis of perceptions	Extensive, closely edited quotes, 'map view'	Descriptive understanding and interpretation (practical)
Confessional tale	Researcher's reflexive study on research process	Process and self-exposed, complementary coherence	Unpack method and ethical issues researcher's participations' voices	Addendum or 'as aside', 'struggle and personal anxiety'	Problematise and demystify messiness (insightful)
Ethnodrama	Realist tale negotiated with audience, intersubjective	Subjective interpretive and interactive, catalytic	Data translated into script, reaction of audience to script	Performance of lived reality, empathy, 'virtual reality'	Social change, silenced realities (lived understanding)
Autoethnography	Poststructuralist text/reader, internal relative	Memory tied to emotion, embodied attunement	Systematic sociological introspection, through author's experience and feeling	First-person insights, 'vicarious experience'	Evoking understanding, intimate other (personal)
Poetic representations	Emotionally reflexive, internal idealist	Subjectivistic interactional, reader/text impressionistic	Participative with audience, meaning co-created, poetry using metaphor, etc.	Expressive art literary skills and devices, 'aesthetic feel'	Embodied and visual, represents how we speak (emotional)
Fictional representations	Verisimilitude, 'rings true', internal idealist, relativistic	Cohere, shared subjectivity, based on events, authentic story to resonate with reader	'being there', created based on lived experience, author creates a plausible fiction via multiple sources	Provoke visceral response, storytelling, 'stepping into other's reality'	Catalytic empathy, larger audience appeal (communicative)

(Hopper et al, 2008, p. 232)

In their own way, these alternative representation styles are found useful to preserve, convey, and reveal much about the inherent uniqueness within each subjective experience (Hopper et al, 2008; Sparkes, 2008). The different realist forms of sport studies (such as Carless & Douglas, 2011; Carless & Sparkes, 2008; Douglas, 2009; Douglas & Carless, 2008; Jones, 2006a, 2009; Sparkes, 1999, 2000, 2009; Sparkes & Partington, 2003) highlights the significance of presenting an emotionally engaging representation of experiences that authentically depicts the social reality being explored. Eisner (1997) elaborated:

> *Interest in new approaches to research are, in part, motivated by the desire to secure more authentic information about the people and situations studied and by the realization that conventional forms of research often constrain the data in ways that misrepresent the phenomena the researcher wishes to understand (p. 259).*

This gravitation towards alternative ways to represent experiences is unsurprising to Eisner (1997) since the process of producing realist tales presents researchers with a evocative method of discovery and analysis. As Richardson (2000b) stated, "by writing in different ways, we discover new aspects of our topic and our relationship to it" (p. 923). The importance of understanding the various genres of representation is found in Connelly and Clandinin's (1990) argument that the mode of choice in research needs to relate to the purpose of the inquiry. For research that draws heavily on phenomenology, it becomes more important to make disciplined and principled choices on representing experiences and social reality (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

The various textual strategies available for narrative inquiry in order of their ontological progression from an external reality (scientific) to representing a plausible reality (verisimilitude) are identified as (i) confessional tales, (ii) ethnodrama, (iii) poetic representations, (iv) fictional representations, and (v) autoethnography (Hopper et al, 2008).

Confessional Tales

Hopper et al (2008) identified confessional tales as reflexive narratives created from dialectical conversations, writings, or thoughts individually or with another person. The unpinning concept behind confessional tales is that "knowing the self and knowing about the subject are intertwined" (Kluge, 2001, p. 329). Confessional tales allow the researcher to present an initial reflexive examination of the experience by producing the researcher's personal interpretive account of his/her experience (Kluge, 2001). The validity of confessional tales for narrative inquiry is found in the personal authority of the researcher's

rationale and emotional struggle to reveal meaning amongst the voices of participants (Sparkes, 1998). As Hopper et al (2008) noticed about writing confessional tales, "the researcher admits her responsibility to share her trials, confusions, and problems with a wider audience" (p. 219). While the use of narratives allow multiple perspectives to be heard, this voicing of the researcher's perspective moderates the representation by focusing the discussion on the issues and concerns of the researcher (Hopper et al, 2008).

In a study examining males' understanding of masculinity and health, Madill and Hopper (2007) found confessional tales useful for embodied explorations. Infusing confessional tales into poetic representations, the researcher was able to reflexively examine a woman's embodied experiences and practices in different cultural and social contexts. For this study in particular, her position as a woman interviewing and interpreting males, succeeding in male-privileged sport, and become aware of the gender-related power imbalance (Madill & Hopper, 2007). Adding of confessional tales not only provided the researcher with an opportunity to value-add to a certain genre of representation, the evoking of reflexivity also creates an opportunity for body-self relationships to occur in phenomenological research (Smith & Sparkes, 2002b).

Ethnodrama

Mienczakowski and Morgan (2001) defined ethnodrama as the use of participatory and interactive theatre to invite audiences to negotiate and construct understandings from ethnographic performances with an interpretive epistemology. Using theatrical practices to interact with the audience, ethnodrama is an informant-led process decodes that renders accessible culturally specific signs, symbols, aesthetics, behaviours, language, and experiences. Mienczakowski (2007) described that involvement of audiences in producing and refining an ethnodrama.

> *Ethnodrama performances are constantly updated according to data drawn from audience interactions. Scripts are made available to audiences prior to or at performances so that audience members may seek clarification or revisit the issues represented in the performances. Ethnodramas operate on a set of themes considered central and pertinent to understanding the experience of a particular (health or social) issue by relevant informants. (p. 469).*

After exposing the audience to an initial drama performance, recorded reactions and interpretations produce catalytic conscientisation of drama scripts that refine

interpretations of an authentic social reality (Bratseth, Camron, Coble, & Nimmon, 2008). Incorporating multiple and contested perspectives of the performance through the various voices portrayed in the ethnodrama performance, the process vocalises silent notions by projecting subdued expressions to what may be unspoken (Mienczakowski, 2007; Sparkes, 2002a, 2008). The use of characters in ethnodrama stimulates empathetic engagement elicits compassion and empathy to encourage critical thinking about the social and lived realities (Carless & Douglas, 2010; Hopper et al, 2008).

In a recent study, Morgan, Jones, and Gilbourne, and Llewellyn (2012) developed, produced, and performed ethnodrama scenes of lived realities in sport coaching to engage sport coaches with their practice, to document a process through which ethnodramatic research was conducted, and to record and interpret the subjects' responses to the approach in terms of their learning experiences. To inject authenticity in the problem- based learning (PBL) scenarios represented with ethnodrama, the researchers worked with a theatre director from a university and student actors to dramatise sport coaching scenes. Morgan, Jones, and Gilbourne, and Llewellyn's (2012) study, and others like it (Brown, 1998), demonstrated how ethnodrama representations in sport research engaged the audience at a deeper level of thinking on coaching issues and concerns.

Poetic Representations

Richardson (1992) substantiated the use of poetry to represent experiences from the observation that "when people talk, whether as conversants, storytellers, informants, or interviewees, their speech is closer to poetry than it is to the sociological prose" (p. 25). According to Sparkes (2002a), poetic representations use the characteristics of poetry, such as use pauses, metaphors, and alliterations in communication, to emotionally engage the audience. Poetry allows the audience to "step into the shoes of the other, becoming more attuned to lived experiences as subjectively felt by the other, and being able to see familiar sites in new ways" (Sparkes, 1995, p. 178). The creative, emergent, and changing poetic process is able to incite the audience to interpret meaning by moving audiences to rethink the boundaries between themselves and their work for an intimate access to explore thoughts and feelings (Carless & Douglas, 2009; Ely, Vinz, Downing, & Anzul, 1997; Kennelly, 1992; Richardson, 2001). As Kennelly (1992) elaborated,

Poetry is an opening of the doors of rooms that are never fully known; the poet is an eternal door-opener while at the same time living with the sense of always being on the outside, of not being entirely at home even where he might be said to belong. For me, poetry is an entering into the lives of things and people, dreams and events, images and mindtides. This passion for 'entering into' is, I believe, the peculiar vitality of the imagination. (p. 10)

The poetic representation process begins by arranging exact words from field data to reduce and condense a transcript into a crafted research text that invites imaginative and creative interpretations by the audience (Sparkes & Douglas, 2007; Sparkes, Nilges, Swan & Dowling, 2003). This use of spaces, word emphasis, positioning on the page, line breaks, metaphor, and imagery, creates a structure that engages the reader more intimately than formal academic writing (Hopper et al, 2008).

Madill and Hopper (2007) created their poetic research text using only the audiences' own words, presenting it to the audience for their interpretation. The use of poetic representation to study on how perceptions are influenced by the messages promoted by the media found the ensuing cultivation of reflexivity produced an unexpected benefit of challenging innate assumptions (Madill & Hopper, 2007). Separately, Sparkes, Nilges, Swan, and Dowling (2003) experimented with poetic representations and found them useful as a resource for understanding own experiences, experiences of others, and as a means of communicating this understanding to different audiences. In another study, Sparkes and Douglas (2007) realised poem-like composition can illuminate the wholeness and interconnectedness of thoughts. While discussions have identified possibilities with poetry in research, researchers (Sparkes, 1995; Sparkes, Nilges, Swan, & Dowling, 2003) describe this approach rare and in its infancy in sport and physical education.

Fictional Representations

Hopper et al (2008) described fictional representation to use creative writing of stories to heighten the visceral engagement of narratives with their audience. Recognising that descriptive narratives may not fully encompass the true meaning of experiences, researchers have explored into narrating fictional stories to develop empathetic connections with social reality (Banks & Banks, 1998; Frank, 2000; Sparkes, 1997). As Banks and Banks (1998) asserted, "what fiction can do that no other sort of expression does is evoke the emotion of felt experience and portray the values, pathos, grandeur, and spirituality of human condition" (p. 17). In doing so, fiction provides ethnographic research with another

perspective for seeing by speaking from a subjective truth to sensitise the audience to the phenomenon examined (Frank, 2000; Rinehart, 1998; Sparkes, 1997, 2000).

Hopper et al (2008) described the methodology behind fictional representation as unbounded by structure, such as format, imposed by traditional forms of reporting. Sparkes (2002b) and Gray (2004) further identified two sub-categorises of fictional representation to exist. Ethnographic fiction explicitly draws its claims from actual data, whereas creative fiction actively uses the imagination, eschewing any necessary reliance on historical interactions or documents (Gray, 2004; Sparkes, 2002b).

According to Sparkes (2002a), ethnographic fiction heightens analytic possibilities by showing scenes rather than describing them, building interest through character development, using plots to create dramatic tension. While most of the words, phrases and sentences are taken directly from the transcripts, their order and style of presentation are arranged for the best telling of the story (Gray, 2004). By basing the story on real people and events, ethnographic fiction uses a technique that is fiction in form but factual in content to inject realism into the story being told (Agar, 1995; Sparkes, 2002a). A study conducted by Douglas and Carless (2008) revealed the potential of using ethnographic fiction to convey tacit details, such as thoughts and feelings behind the experience of sport coaches, which would have been unavailable through traditional forms of communication. This study and others like it (Denison, 1996; Gilbert, 2008) demonstrated the ability of ethnographic fiction to deepen engagement with experiences in sport studies.

Sparkes (2002b) described creative friction to be less governed by realism. While creative fiction can be based on real situations, it can invent people, events, and places to craft an engaging and evocative story (Sparkes, 2002b). The concern of creative fiction to convey meaning through stories takes precedence over reconstructing literal details of a particular incident (Banks & Banks, 1998; Hopper et al, 2008; Sparkes, 1995, 2002b). Banks and Banks (1998) substantiated the validity of this perspective by arguing, "facts don't always tell the truth, or a truth worth worrying about, and the truth in a good story – its resonance with our felt experience, as Walter Fisher says – sometimes must use imaginary facts" (p. 11). To demonstrate the evocative power of creative fiction, Sparkes (1997) wrote a story about a gay, male, physical education teacher and sportsman. By speaking on behalf of absent others, Sparkes' (1997) study and others of a similar genre (Tierney, 1993)

demonstrated how a fictional story not only provokes the audience to emotionally respond, but also shows the ability of creative fiction in engaging the them with a created reality.

Hopper et al (2008) noticed that these five different genres of representation are sometimes complementary. Richardson (1994) described this usefulness in supplementing realist tales with ethnodrama.

Drama is a way of shaping an experience without losing the experience; it can blend realist, fictional, and poetic techniques; it can reconstruct the "sense" of an event from multiple "as-lived" perspectives; and it can give voice to what is unspoken. . . . When the material to be displayed is intractable, unruly, multisited, and emotionally laden, drama is more likely to recapture the experience than is standard writing. (Richardson, 1994, p. 522)

Similarly, the complementary nature of these genres is found in the way confessional tales have linked with other realist tales to develop reflexivity in ethnographic studies (Hopper et al, 2008).

Hopper et al (2008) stated that each genre of creative ethnography offers different value to research, individually and sometimes even collectively. For sport studies in particular, approaching narrative inquiry with different genres of representation provides researchers with a means to engage with experiential data in different ways (Hopper et al, 2008). The way narratives are textually represented is a means to convey different perspectives to surface different truths (Richardson, 2000a, 2000b). It is also through genres of representation where researchers can find a more effective means of not only engaging themselves with the experiential data but also engage their audience (Hopper et al, 2008). In recent years, the growing number of sport studies with autoethnography has generated greater interest in the use of autoethnographic self-narratives to engage both the researcher and the audience in researching experiences to develop practical understanding.

Autoethnography

Ellis and Bochner (2000) identified autoethnography as a qualitative research methodology that is concerned about the cultural connections between the self and society. This method emphasises on the "research process (graphy), on culture (ethno), and on self (auto)" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 740). As an alternative to objective and neutral forms of knowledge produced through scientific methods, Sparkes (1995, 2000, 2009) clarified that autoethnography is not interested in locating an objective truth for social science research.

Instead, autoethnography seeks to present a subjective truth through a constructivist paradigm (Sparkes, 1995, 2000; Hopper et al, 2008; Wall. 2008). Autoethnography can be differentiated from other self-narrative writing such as autobiography and memoir by its reflexive cultural analysis and interpretation of the researcher's own behaviours, thought, and emotions in relation to others (Ellis, 2004, 2007, 2008; Ellis & Bochner 2000; Howe, 2009).

According to Hopper et al (2008), the principal strategy that autoethnography adopts is to produce highly personalised and revealing text where the researcher tells stories about his/her own lived experiences. By placing the self in the text, the researcher is able to offer a personal perspective through his/her emotional embodied experiences of the social phenomenon (Hopper et al, 2008). The belief is that emotional and participatory experiences are dimensions of knowing that can help deepen understanding of social reality. In effect, autoethnographies are "autobiographies that self-consciously explore the interplay of the introspective, personally engaged self with cultural descriptions mediated through language history, and ethnographic explanation" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 742). The production of self-evolving narratives of lived experience from emotional memories is necessary to connect the personal to the cultural (Hopper et al, 2008). Ellis and Bochner (2000) explained that usefulness of this approach is in providing research with "an autobiographical genre of writing that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural" (p. 739). The intention of autoethnography is to "make the researcher's own experience a topic of investigation in its own right" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 733).

The potential of using narrative representation to enrich qualitative research in social sciences continues to entice researchers to think deeply about lived experiences and seeking embodied understandings of experiences (Sparkes, 2000). The expansive and investigative power of narrative inquiry to explore experiences has invited sport researchers (Denzin 2013; Sparkes, 2002a) to theorise and explore alternative ways of describing, inscribing, and interpreting social reality. Others (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Denzin & Lincoln, 1990) have explored into developing self-narratives from empirical materials, such as case studies, personal experiences, introspection, as well as observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts to describe routine and problematic moments in individuals'

lives. Through self-narratives, in particular autoethnography, phenomenological investigations in sport studies are allowed to take an incantative, evocative speaking, and primal telling form that languages an authentic version of the world (Smith & Sparkes, 2009b).

Having provided a brief overview of the various genres of representation, it is now appropriate that I further clarify why autoethnography was chosen as the form of representation for this study.

Autoethnography for Sport Studies

The ability of reflexive ethnography to engage with the emotional space of sport practitioners has created immense possibilities for sport studies (Davis, 2007). This promising approach to study experiences in an embodied way has helped researchers study sporting experiences (Smith & Sparkes, 2009a; Sparkes, 1995, 2000, 2009a). Sport researchers (such as Allen-Collinson & Hockey, 2001; Jones, 2006a, 2009; McMahon & Penney, 2013; Purdy, Potrac, & Jones, 2008) have demonstrated this through their use of autoethnography to study lived sporting experiences.

Purdy, Potrac, and Jones (2008) conducted an autoethnographic exploration to chart the complex and dynamic relationship that existed between the principal author as a participant in competitive rowing and coaching during the preparation for a national rowing championship. Writing an autoethnographic account on real events enabled the study to explore into coaching practices from the perspective of the participant (Purdy, Potrac, & Jones, 2008). Drawing on data from a training diary, emails, and memories from coaching practice, Purdy, Potrac, and Jones (2008) represented an autoethnographical account on the tension between the author's personal perceptions of effective coaching and those employed by the coach. Their conclusion emphasised on the importance of recognising the power-ridden nature of coaching and the value of autoethnography to explore it.

In another study, Jones (2009) followed his earlier work (Jones, 2006a) with an autoethnographical account of himself as a coach to argue for writing about coaching from a personal or autoethnographic perspective. In the earlier article, Jones (2006a) presented a self-narrative as a coach of a semi-professional football team to explain issues associated

with maintaining face and other's respect in a context characterised by uncertainty, ambiguity, and power. Through his autoethnography as a dysfluent coach, Jones (2006a) used a self-narrative to present a "truer" (p. 1012) representation of the coach's practice. Jones (2009) continued the argument for internalising lived experiences to compose self-narratives about coaching experiences from a personal or autoethnographic perspective by presenting a novel narrative account of his coaching of a national age-group boy's football team. Using a personal story that tells of the importance of a caring in the coach-athlete relationship, Jones' (2009) work demonstrated the use of an autoethnographical text to portray an incident with a particular player that creates deeper self-understanding of his role as a coach.

More recently, McMahon and Penney (2013) used narrative ethnography and autoethnography to explore body pedagogies as an integral dimension of sport coaching. Through semi-structured interviews and collaborative development of narrative accounts to generate stories of experiences of three Australian swimmers, McMahon and Penney (2013) found that body pedagogies in Australian competitive swimming culture focused on weight, shape, body fat, and performance, revealing that body pedagogies have powerful and long-standing influence upon the participants' feelings about their bodies and themselves.

These brief examples of autoethnographic explorations in sport studies demonstrated the possibilities of conveying stories from the researcher's perspective to represent lived experiences authentically. By illuminating the researcher's voice through an authoritative writing of the research text, the process of writing the research text engages researchers in deeper thinking about lived experiences from an embodied perspective and in the process leads them into deeper consciousness of their individual lifeworlds (Ellis, 1999; Sparkes, 2009a). In sharing these self-narratives, autoethnography also allows the audience to also engage in deeper thinking on representations of lived experiences and how these stories might resonate with their own lifeworlds.

Writing a Reflexive Autoethnographic Research Text

Researchers (Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Sparkes, 2000) argued that the effectiveness of writing self-narratives to represent highly personalised account to engage the researcher and the audience has made autoethnography a viable option for narrative inquiry in sport

studies. Denzin (2014) identified the autoethnographic research text can written by following a structure that include;

1. *People depicted as characters*

2. *A scene, place, or context where the story occurs*

3. *An epiphany or crisis that provides dramatic tension, around which the emplotted events depicted in the story revolve and toward which a resolution is pointed*

4. *A temporal order of events*

5. *A point or moral to the story which gives meaning to the experiences depicted*

   (p. 4)

The intention of this recommendation for the self-narrative in autoethnography is to enable the experiential data to present a first-person insight that is reflexive, situated, and evocative (Denzin, 2014; Hopper et al, 2008).

In addition, Hopper et al (2008) asserted that an infusion of confessional tales within ethnographic writing heightens the reflexivity of the narrative inquiry. The importance of embodying reflexivity in autoethnographic research is found in Maréchal's (2010) argument that "autoethnography is a form or method of research that involves self-observation and reflexive investigation in the context of ethnographic field work and writing" (p. 43). Within the various ways confessional tales can inject reflexivity into sport studies, autoethnography researchers have found usefulness in writing it into the research text to enrich the experiential data (Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Sparkes, 2000).

Sparkes (2000) believed that writing confessional tales into self-narratives allows the sport study to produce a high quality reflexive research text that addresses earlier concerns of narrative representation. He argued, "by writing themselves into their own work as major characters and choosing to foreground their own voices, these scholars have challenged accepted views about silent authorship and author evacuated texts" (p. 22). Along with highly personalised research texts in which the author tells stories of lived experiences relating the personal to the cultural, the authoring of the researcher's own rational and emotional dialectical self-conversation stimulates a reflexive engagement with multiple layers of consciousness for systematic sociological retrospection (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). This process of internalising of experiences to compose the research text from field data is an integral part of the autoethnographic research process as it reveals information about the

author's membership in social groups and immersion in particular social processes (Allen-Collinson & Hockey, 2001; Richardson, 1994).

Sparkes (1995) and Allen-Collinson (2005) also believed a reflexive research text can convey immediacy, make connections, and allow the audience to experience emotions from a personal perspective. In researching, writing, and storytelling, the author connects the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political and the audience is empowered with a socially supported self-interrogation within a social context (Ellis, 1999). In doing so, the audience of the autoethnographic exploration becomes active participants of the author's storytelling, and in the process the audience are placed in a position to co-constructs meaning from their own perspective of the author's represented account (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). The reading of the descriptive and interpretive self-narratives thus develops deeper understandings of experiences by immersing the audience into the experiential data, engaging the audience with autoethnographic accounts that identify with their personal experiences, and evoking deeper thinking in developing meaning of their own lived experiences (Hopper et al, 2008). It is through supplementing the research text with confessional tales where autoethnography can grant the audience deeper access into the author's experiences and enable them to fully engage with a represented version of social reality to form their own sociological understandings (Sparkes, 1995, 2000; Hopper et al, 2008). More recently, the potential of autoethnography to extend sociological understanding in both the researcher and the audience has taken a more prominent stage in sport studies.

Accessing Experiences with Autoethnography

The ease by which researchers can access the primary data source has led Allen-Collinson (2009) to describe autoethnography as sport researcher friendly. In addition, she considers autoethnography reader-friendly in that the personally engaging writing style appeals to readers more than conventional scholarly writing. Sparkes (2000) also saw autoethnography as an excellent vehicle through which researchers enhance cultural understanding of themselves and others. Both Allen-Collinson (2009) and Sparkes (2000) described the self-awareness created by autoethnography has the potential to transform the researcher and researchers in the process.

For sport research in particular, autoethnography has been appreciated over other genres of representations for its ability to present situated experiential data steeped in social and cultural details that enrich experiential data for an inquiry into pedagogical practice (Allen-Collinson & Hockey, 2001; Richardson, 1994). Richardson (2000a) argued that autoethnography helps humans understand their own lives and how they go about them. This potential of autoethnographic representations has made it possible for sport researchers to turn "conventionalized, narrative expressions of life experiences" (Denzin, 2014, p. 7) into research text rich with experiential data for sport studies.

According to Denzin (2014), autoethnography works with experiential data by using conventions to structure experiences into self-narratives. These conventions are identified to focus on the following aspects of experiences:

1. *the existence of others;*
2. *the influence and importance of race, gender, class;*
3. *family beginnings;*
4. *(textual) turning points;*
5. *known and knowing authors and observers;*
6. *objective life markers;*
7. *real persons and real lives;*
8. *turning-point experiences;*
9. *truthful statements distinguished from fictions*
    (Denzin, 2014, p. 7)

Since the interpretations of experiences may change and take different form depending on the writer, the place of the writing, and historical moment, Denzin (2014) considers conventions important attributes that shape how lives are told, performed, and understood.

Autoethnography is considered an effective methodology to study sport experiences for its ability to perform an invasive investigation that queries "taken-for-granted assumptions" (Denzin, 2014, p. 7). Ellis (1999) elaborated on the intrusive nature of autoethnography by stating that autoethnographic research seeks;

to develop an ethnography that includes researchers' vulnerable selves, emotions, bodies, and spirits; produces evocative stories that create the effect of reality; celebrates concrete experience and intimate detail; examines how human experience

is endowed with meaning; is concerned with moral, ethical, and political consequences; encourages compassion and empathy; helps us know how to live and cope; features multiple voices and repositions readers and "subjects" as coparticipants in dialogue; seeks a fusion between social science and literature… and connects the practices of social science with the living of life.

(p. 669)

The approach that autoethnographic forms of research takes to extend sociological understanding of sport practices is by encouraging the researcher to internalising highly personalised accounts of experiences (Allen-Collinson, 2009). This reflexive engagement with experiences occurs through the process of refining the field data, writing the research text, and analysing this experiential data (Sparkes, 2000).

Jones' (2009) noticed the significance of engaging with the data as a means to develop understanding for both researches and sport practitioners. He asserted "the value of utilising the autoethnographical text in coaching then also lies in increasing our empathetic understanding of interaction within, and our sociological sensibilities to, the activity" (p. 380). In autoethnography for sport studies, the researcher engages in self-learning activities by making meaning of their stories, putting something of themselves into the text to enrich the informativeness of the stories, and identifying of autoethnographic accounts with other experiences (Hopper et al, 2008).

Creswell (2007) explained the ability to develop self-understanding with narrative forms of self-inquiry, such as autoethnography, through the concept of "naturalistic generalization" (p. 163). In analysing the data of the case, naturalistic generalisation of the represented experience with other experiences or situations puts the researcher in a mode of self-learning. In entering a process of co-construction of meaning, the researcher and practitioner reflect and analyse authoritative writing to arrive at an action sensitive pedagogy (van Manen, 1990).

Pitfalls in Autoethnography

While autoethnography is an effective genre of representation, researchers (Chang, 2008; Denzin, 2014; Sparkes, 2000, 2009) warned of several pitfalls the user should avoid in autoethnographic explorations. First, self-indulgent introspection without digging wider into the cultural context of individual stories is likely to produce a self-exposing story but not an autoethnography (Boring, 1953; Sparkes, 2000). Chang (2008) suggested that a way to

address this is through autoethnographers' constant reflection of the interconnectivity between themselves and others in their lifeworld. Next, Sparkes (2009b) highlighted that storytelling may tempt autoethnographers to settle for elaborate narratives with underdeveloped cultural analysis and interpretation. He argued that readers need to make their own informed, principled, and informed decisions about the criteria they use to judge autoethnographic forms of representation (Sparkes, 2009a). For this concern, Chang (2008) and Sparkes (2009b) recommended a conscious, steady, and mindful focus by the autoethnographer on the research purpose during the autoethnographic study.

Denzin (2014) also cautioned an over-reliance on the autoethnographer's personal memory as a data source. The accuracy and validity of autoethnographic writing might be addressed through triangulation with multiple data sources (Chang, 2008; Morse, 1991). Another caution is that autoethnographers sometimes mistakenly assume confidentiality does not apply to self-narrative studies. As stories often link to stories of others no matter how vague the linkage is, Chang (2008) suggested autoethnographers adopt creative strategies to protect the confidentiality of the people in the story.

Finally, Sparkes (2000) highlighted the possibility of confusion on the use of autoethnography over other self-narrative inquiries. His concern is of researchers failing to centrally position their body and self in the autobiographical ethnographic project (Sparkes, 2000). Suggesting that readers would be able to better understand the research method from highly descriptive self-narratives such as autobiography and memoirs, Chang (2008) recommended that autoethnographic studies distinguish the research method before entering into the study process. From these arguments, there is consensus amongst researchers (Chang, 2008; Denzin, 2014; Sparkes, 2000, 2009) that it is important for the autoethnography research sequence to have a robust and rigorous research method design.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a literature review into the use of narratives in qualitative research, in particular, the use of autoethnography to study sport experiences. This chapter begins by rationalising the use of storytelling to study experiences. I elaborated on how the potential of stories to present multiple perspectives of social realty and its ability to engage

the emotional space has led to a growing interest in writing narratives for research. Next I engaged in deep discussion on the critique narrative forms of research have received, in particular, the concerns of the *Dual Crisis of Representation and Legitimation* (Eisner, 1997; Hopper et al, 2008; Sparkes, 1995, 2000). This scepticism included concerns over disengaged representations of experiential data offered by a dispassionate researcher (Sparkes, 1999, 2000, 2009b; Woolgar, 1988) and doubts over the claim of personal assumptions incorporated in realist tales (Eisner, 1997). The chapter continued by discussing the different representation genres used in sport studies, in particular confessional tales, poetic ethnodrama, autoethnography, representations, and fictional representations. Next, this chapter emphasised the plausibility of using autoethnography for reflexive research in sport studies. I then deliberated on the suitability of the autoethnographic research text to represent embodied experiences for both the researcher and the audience to engage with the data. Finally, I concluded this chapter by highlighting the possibility of using autoethnography for an embodied exploration into my coaching practice through an incantative, evocative speaking, and primal telling of my lived experiences (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Sparkes, 2002a). The next chapter of this thesis will present the methodological framework of this autoethnographic study into my sport coaching lifeworld.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH APPROACH

As we research the possible meaning structures of our lived experiences, we come to a fuller grasp of what it means to be in the world as a man, a woman, a child, taking into account the sociocultural and the historical traditions that have given meaning to our ways of being in the world. For example, to understand what it means to be a woman in our present age is also to understand the pressures of the meaning structures that have come to restrict, widen or question the nature and ground for womanhood. Hermeneutic phenomenological research is a search for the fullness of living, for the ways a woman possibly can experience the world as a woman, for what it is to be a woman. The same is true, of course, for men. In phenomenological research description carries a moral force. If to be a father means to take active responsibility for a child's growth, then it is possible to say of actual cases that this or that is no way to be a father! So phenomenological research has, as its ultimate aim, the fulfilment of our human nature: to become more fully who we are.

(van Manen, 1990, p. 12)

With an intention to continue my professional development in community sport coaching, the journey I have embarked on in this study was an attempt to develop an action sensitive pedagogy (van Manen, 1990). Through an exploration into my lifeworld in community sport I hope to understand further my coaching practices and in the process discover my *Being*, my existence as a sport coach of a Singapore basketball club. Seeking to develop a more meaningful interpretation of my lived experiences, I formulated a research question,

How does autoethnography lead to and promote understanding of lifeworlds in sport coaching?

With this research question in focus, I turned to ideas in phenomenology and of alternative representations that would best facilitate this study.

In this phenomenological investigation into my community sport lifeworld, I used autoethnography so I could develop a more meaningful self-understanding of my coaching practice (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Through a self-inquiry into the essential structures of lived experiences within my lifeworld, I hoped to address the issue of dispassionate representations of social reality that have impoverished understandings. Reacting to concerns that an author evacuated text (Sparkes, 2000) presents a less accurate

interpretation of lived experiences, this study explored the possibilities of foregrounding my voice during phenomenological investigation. Undertaking my own reflexive exploration into my community sport coaching lived world, this thesis represents my own journey of self-discovery. By documenting my self-inquiry, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by demonstrating the potential of using autoethnography as a research method to investigate lived experiences in sport coaching.

The research methodology for this self-inquiry into my community sport coaching lifeworld is presented in this chapter. I begin by establishing the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of this study. In particular, I elaborate on the importance of positioning of myself as investigator and topic of this autoethnographic exploration into my lived experiences during coaching practice. The coach-as-researcher perspective is necessary to meet the intention of an embodied phenomenological exploration, to be both situated and reflexive. I then proceed to elaborate on the formal procedures of the hermeneutic circle research process. Outlining the process of the critically reflexive self-inquiry, I elaborate on the research site and sample, data collection approaches, thematic analysis phases, strategy for composing the autoethnographic representation, structure for discussion of findings, and final comments. This chapter then concludes by presenting the ethical considerations and implications of autoethnographic exploration, the trustworthiness of the methodology, and its limitations as a genre of representation.

Epistemological and Ontological Background

This autoethnographic exploration into my corporeal reality uses embodied reflexivity to deepen my insights into my sport coaching lifeworld, and in the process surfaces issues that I may not have realised about my coaching practice. Van Manen (1982) posited that this approach "bids to recover reflectively the grounds which, in a deep sense, provide for the possibility of our pedagogic concerns" (p. 298). The critical "minding" (van Manen, 1982, p. 283) created an opportunity for the researcher to be accountable, responsible, or answerable for his pedagogical practice. Terming this thoughtfulness of pedagogical practice as "phenomenological pedagogy", the mindful concern developed

through this study was also viewed as a learning opportunity for myself as a coach-researcher (van Manen, 1982).

In this respect, van Manen's (1990) idea of hermeneutic phenomenology not only provided this study with a research methodology but also a critically oriented action research. Through my phenomenological research, I was able to make visible the basic and essential structures of my lived experiences embedded in my expression of lifeworlds for this study (van Manen, 1977). Phenomenology awakens the researcher to deeper consciousness about his or her lifeworld by focusing on the immediacy between lived experience and consciousness of life that precedes explicit retrospection, objectification, or recapitulation (van Manen, 1990).

Van Maanen (1988) explained not all lived experiences are meaningful since human beings are not always immediately conscious of their intentional relation to the world. Because the meaning behind a phenomenon is multi-dimensional and multi-layered, the true essence of an experience can never be grasped in a single definition (van Manen, 1990). Concerned with meanings that continue to remain hidden in preconscious thought, this phenomenological research challenged commonly accepted surface understandings of human experiences by uncovering the truth of lived experiences (van Manen, 1977). While various standards of truth or verisimilitude in autoethnography exist, this study sought to discover a subjective truth embedded within my everyday life in community sport coaching.

This phenomenological investigation of my lived experiences in community sport coaching was guided by ideals in social constructivism. Lincoln and Guba's (1994) explained this connection between a constructivist ontology and phenomenology,

> *The meaning-making activities themselves are of central interest to social constructionists/constructivists, simply because it is the meaning-making/sense-making/attributional activities that shape action.*
> *(p. 167)*

Social constructivist approaches benefit phenomenological research by creating knowledge from a different world view (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 2005). For this phenomenological investigation into my lived experiences in community sport coaching, my subjectivity was the mechanism that allowed myself as coach-researcher to make better

sense of the world from a situated perspective. This study continues Schutz's (1932/1967) work on giving subjective meaning to life experiences for a way to understand lifeworlds.

Van Manen (1990) recommended the use of hermeneutic phenomenology for a situated approach to research lived experiences. The methodology for this self-inquiry used human-as-instrument as an alternative to positivist approaches in research and education (van Manen, 1990). Reflexivity was in-built into this study for an effective phenomenological investigation to hermeneutically uncover meaning within my own pedagogical practice (van Manen, 1982, 1990). Thorburn (2008) supported this by stating that "phenomenology is a study of structures of consciousness as experiences from the first-person point of view" (p. 265).

My involvement as coach-researcher in this self-inquiry on embodied experiences provided a participative paradigm. Differing from the dualist and objectivist epistemology dominating positivism and post-positivism, this study embraced critical embodied reflection to discover new knowledge (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). The approach of using autoethnographic representations to engage my emotional space created an opportunity for both researchers and the audience such as sport coaches to classify, describe, interpret, and analyse essential structures of experiences to better understanding of their social reality.

Guided by van Manen's (1990) ideas of phenomenology as a philosophy and method of critical inquiry into lived experiences, this phenomenological investigation embodied situatedness to help focus the study on human consciousness of experiences. To move the coach-as-researcher beyond pre-reflective consciousness of lived experiences, this study used techniques in hermeneutic phenomenological reflection and writing (van Manen, 1990). Van Manen (1984) considered reflection and writing situated interpretations of social reality is revealing in itself. By writing the autoethnographic self-narrative from the perspective of the coach-as-researcher, this study was able to use my voice to evoke understanding of phenomenon in terms of the meanings people brings to them (van Manen, 1990).

Research Process

For a robust research design and a rigorous data analysis protocol, a hermeneutic circle guided the process of this reflexive self-inquiry into my lived experiences (Koch, 1995; Kerry & Armour, 2000). The procedures and processes in the hermeneutic circle of this study were framed around suggestions for narrative inquiry by Creswell (2007), Patton (1990), Van Maanen (1988), and van Manen (1990, 2014), and autoethnography by Chang (2008) and Denzin (2014).

As the research method of choice for this autoethnographic exploration, the task of writing a self-narrative on embodied experiences encouraged critical reflexivity to take place by immersing myself as coach-researcher in my own corporeal reality (Denzin, 2014; Ellis & Bochner, 2000). The autoethnographic research text was written in a situated way that illuminated my inner voice as much as it does from field notes, dialogues, and quotations (Chang, 2008). This coach-researcher positioning during the phenomenological writing process was meant to encourage critical reflexivity (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). The evocative ability of autoethnography to engage the coach-as-researcher to critically think of his own lived experiences was also necessary to craft a compelling story that encouraged the audience to engage with the self-narrative in their own way (Denzin, 2014). Autoethnography representation was also selected because the method made it possible for other practitioners in the sport coaching community to undertake a similar self-inquiry of their own (Chang, 2008).

The self-narratives in this study reflected me, the sport coach, as the central character and key witness to the lifeworld being studied. Applying autoethnography as a "genre that fuses author, researcher, and researched" (Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2007, p. 124), this study situated myself as both coach and researcher for a hermeneutic phenomenological exploration into my community sport coaching lifeworld. Through a crafting of the research text on my lived experience during coaching practice, I was able to draw experiential data for self-inquiry (Chang, 2008). I centred on my coaching practice as the primary site of the investigation to foreground my experiences with spatiality and relationality with others. The stories represented in my autoethnographic narratives flowed through a temporal order of events to depict my lived experiences in sport coaching. I was able to collect rich experiential data on my lived space, lived body, lived other, and lived

time to perform a process of inventorying self (Chang, 2008) with respect to my coaching practice. Being an active participant and contributor of information from my sport coaching experiences for self-inquiry, the opportunity for critical reflexivity in this study produced a form of "living knowledge" (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 170) that helped me gain a deeper understanding of my sport coaching experiences.

The next part of this chapter details the research design of this autoethnographic exploration into my lived experiences. I present the formal procedures of the inquiry and elaborate on the process that frames the data gathering, processing, representation, and analysis of this investigation into my lived experiences in community sport coaching. The research process of this self-inquiry followed an inductive hermeneutic circle that progressed through my stages of self-reflection (van Manen, 1990).

This self-inquiry into my lived experiences in sport coaching with autoethnography was framed by processes used in critical realist research (Ackroyd, 2009; Bhaskar, 1975). Critical realist studies allow for flexibility and greater freedom to explore the essential structures of experiences by choosing a multiple method/stakeholder design to build ontological depth (Archer, Bhasker, Collier, Lawson, & Norrie, 1998; Bhaskan, 1975; Collier, 1994). Critical realism provided this study with conceptual frame to theorise coaching practice as it enables myself as coach-researcher to analyse the plurality, complexity, and contextual nature of the social world in sport coaching (North, 2013; Sayer, 2000). This included contextualising my sport coaching background to understand my goals and strategies, the audio recordings of sessions, and post season interviews with the athletes. After data was collected, this critical realist study used existing theory and new empirical research to produce new adaptive theories about my coaching practice.

This study comprised of several distinct phases. This self-inquiry into my lifeworld in community sport made explicit the research frame by mapping the field, my lived experiences in sport coaching, and distinguishing this autoethnographic exploration through the literature review chapters. Bhaskan (1975) described this examination of general theory, other relevant theoretical and empirical research, and substantive resources necessary to build up an initial impression of the critical realist inquiry.

Following the establishment of the theoretical and conceptual framework of this dissertation, this chapter now proceeds to describe the research methodology by outlining

the hermeneutic circle research process. Hermeneutic phenomenology was selected as the research methodology for this self-inquiry into my lived experiences in community sport coaching because of its capability in leading to and revealing the essential nature of the phenomenon (van Manen 1990). The hermeneutic circle provided this study with a mechanism to develop embodied understanding (Koch, 1995; Kerry & Armour, 2000). Within this research process, reflection took a hermeneutic turn by considering the background of the situation, as well as including my pre-understanding, co-constituted consciousness of *Being*, and interpretation of the phenomenon (Koch, 1995).

This phenomenological exploration flowed through a hermeneutic research process, which began by establishing the background and my pre-reflective consciousness of the experience before proceeding into a deeper hermeneutic reflective analysis (Van Maanen, 1988). The hermeneutic circle then moved this self-inquiry from an interpretive inquiry of phenomenon to a critically reflexive investigation of socially located, related, and interacting bodies within my social reality in community sport coaching (van Manen, 1990).

This chapter now presents the methodological framework guiding this autoethnographic exploration into my lived experiences in sport coaching. Brown and Payne (2009) considered this distinction important to dispel confusion on the use of phenomenology over other phenomenological studies. The stages of this hermeneutic circle are elaborated under these subheadings; (i) site and sample, (ii) data collection, (iii) thematic analysis, (iv) research text, (v) plausible insights, and (vi) final thoughts. The activities after establishing the conceptual framework of this study are sequenced in Table 2.

TABLE 2: The Research Process

PHASE	A	B	C	D
THESIS CHAPTER	**Two, Three, Four**	**Five**	**-**	**-**
ACTIVITY	**Literature Review**	**Methodology**	**Site and Sample**	**Data Collection**
STAGE	**Turning To The Nature Of Lived Experience**		**Investigating Experience As We Live It**	
DESCRIPTION	• Review of literature Community Sport coaching in Singapore. • Review of literature on Phenomenological Research into Lived Experiences. • Review of literature on Alternative Representations of Lived Experiences.	• Presenting the methodological framework for this phenomenological investigation. • Presenting autoethnography as research method. • Outlining the research sequence. • Discussing the ethical considerations, trustworthiness, and limitations of the study.	• Naming the site of the study. • Identifying the research participants. • Explaining the study to the research participants. (Appendix A) • Obtaining consent from the research participants. (Appendix B)	• Preparing data through verbatim transcription, formatting, and sorting. • Journaling my coach-researcher lived experiences. (Appendix C) • Audio recording of training sessions. (Appendix D) • Focus groups interviewing of participants. (Appendix E, F, G)

PHASE	E	F	G	H
THESIS CHAPTER	**-**	**Six**	**Seven**	**Eight**
ACTIVITY	**Thematic Analysis**	**Research Text**	**Plausible Insights**	**Final Thoughts**
STAGE	**Hermeneutic Phenomenological Reflection**	**Hermeneutic Phenomenological Writing**	**Maintaining a Strong and Oriented Relation**	**Concluding Comments**
DESCRIPTION	• Experiential data coding. (Appendix H) • Phenomenological themes development. (Appendix I) • Single case interpretation. (Appendix J) • Lived experience text writing. (Appendix K)	• Crafting the self-narrative. • Weaving confessional tales into the research text. • Presenting the autoethnographic representation.	• Connecting Research/Writing and Pedagogy • Reflecting on the lived experiences. • Presenting plausible insights guided by lifeworld existentials. • Discussing the findings.	• Concluding comments and further discussion. • Presenting implications for sport coaches and the coaching community. • Presenting implications for sport studies. • Suggesting on a future direction.

Site and Sample

Data gathering for this phenomenological investigation into my lived experiences in community sport coaching lasted three months. The site of the inquiry centred on my coaching practice in a Singapore basketball club during a league season. The data collection duration coincided with the in-season period of a team's competition cycle. The weekly coaching sessions starts on a Monday, followed by basketball matches on Thursdays.

The participants of this study were identified and recruited through a "purposeful sampling strategy" (Creswell, 2007, p. 125). Individuals who participated and were in a position to provide experiential data on my coaching practice were selected. In all, there were two groups of participants in this autoethnographic exploration; (i) the sport coach as researcher, and (ii) the players participating on the team coached by the coach-as-researcher.

For this self-inquiry into my coaching practice, I was both the protagonist and prime suspect of the phenomenological investigation. By collecting situated experiential data on his own coaching practice, I was able to take a postmodernist research approach to write an experiential case on his community sport coaching lifeworld for cultural analysis (Torres & Magolda, 2002).

To gather relevant data on my coaching practice, the 12 participants were all players on the team I coached. While the participants had diverse family upbringing, they all joined the team I coached to compete in a social basketball league and possessed similar cultural background. The players were all male ethnic Chinese between the ages of 21 to 26. Six were students studying in a Singapore university and six had just started their careers after university graduation. They were also selected for their situated experiencing of my coaching practice through the duration of the league season. Their thoughts and opinions about my coaching practice provided useful insights from the perspective of others. Data was gathered on my conversation and interaction with these players. When names were needed, pseudonyms were used to mask the participants' identities. To support the

construct of the research text, data from focus group interviews were used to crystalise thoughts and opinions mentioned in reflective journals and audio recordings.

Data Collection

Van Manen (1990) and other researchers (Patton, 1990; Creswell, 2007) suggested that experiential data can be gathered from sources such as written field observations and field notes, recorded data on the practice setting, and thoughts from the participants. More specifically for ethnographic research, such as this autoethnographic exploration, observed the narrative research process often began from monographs such as journal articles, or as book chapters devoted to fieldwork practices and problems (Sparkes, 1995). As Patton (1990) explained:

> *Raw field notes and verbatim transcripts constitute the undigested complexity of reality. Simplifying and making sense out of that complexity constitutes the challenge of content analysis. Developing some manageable classification or coding scheme is the first step of analysis. Without classification there is chaos and confusion. Content analysis then involves identifying, coding, categorizing, classifying, and labelling the primary patterns in the data. (Patton, 1990, p.463)*

Following Patton's (1990) recommendations, I focused the data collection in Phase D on myself as coach-researcher, the coaching setting, and the players. In addition, I sought accuracy and validity in my autoethnographic writing through triangulation, using multiple data sources (Morse, 1991; North, 2013).

Being aware of the importance on having a multi-faceted approach to gather sufficient field data to inform the writing of the autoethnographic research text, *Phase D: Data Collection* of this study dedicated a substantial portion of the fieldwork to the collection of experiential data from the coach-as-researcher, via (i) journaling my coach-researcher lived experiences, and (ii) audio recording of training sessions, and (iii) focus group interview of participants.

Prior to the start of data collection, an explanatory statement (Appendix A) communicated details of the study by explaining the objective of the study, the data gathering process, use of collected data, and the rights of the participants. Participants provided consent through consent forms (Appendix B).

Journaling my Coach-Researcher's Lived Experiences

For data that appropriately informs my self-narrative, I recorded my lived experiences through journaling (Creswell, 1997; Francis, 1994; Mallett, 2004). Francis (1995) elaborated on the way reflective journal entries can support analysis of data by stating that "this reflection on 'micro incidents' combined with the journal writing served to uncover and render explicit impressions which might otherwise have made no impact on subsequent observations" (p. 235). Creswell (2007) termed this section of the study for recoding a description of activities as "descriptive notes" (p. 135).

After every coaching session, I recorded descriptive notes on my experiences during coaching practice. These journal entries were sometimes written immediately after my coaching sessions and on other occasions written when new thoughts and insights started to reveal themselves. By documenting my engagement with the players and interpretations of the lived experience as they were presented to my consciousness, the reflective journal entries recorded experiential data about my coaching practice for this study. To maintain contextual richness to my documentation, I formatted the reflective journal (Appendix C) as running script collecting phenomenological information from the start of data collection to the end of the coaching season.

Audio Recording of Training Sessions

Audible materials also provided this phenomenological research with an alternate source of field data useful in the construction of the research text (Creswell, 2007). This approach is substantiated by Bullough and Pinnegar's (2001) finding that audio information was particularly useful to aid retrospective exploration of experiences in sport. To record this form of experiential data, I wore an audio recorder during my coaching practice sessions. These actual recordings of conversations and interactions also ensured that my recollection of the experiences as I re-listened and transcribed the data was as close as possible to the situated reality.

I paid careful attention to the field recording process as the quality of data collected informs my retrospective recollection of lived experiences and my writing of the research

text. The audio recordings were transcribed following each field recording session to ensure that the experience was fresh in my mind. These audio recordings (Appendix D) were unedited and transcribed according to the audio track word-for-word. These raw recordings of conversations and interactions with players during coaching sessions and games matches were transcribed verbatim to retain an original quality that contained rich details of my lived experiences.

The verbatim transcription process of the field recordings was also meticulous. Prior to typing down the audio statements in a word processing form, I performed a preliminary listening of the audio track. This allowed myself as coach-researcher to gain clarity on the audio statements and minimised any misinterpretation of words used.

Focus Group Interview of Participants

Creswell (2007) suggested that to elicit stories from participants, the researcher should not limit himself/herself to a rigid data collection process. To record the thoughts and opinions from participants that could inform this study but were not evidently expressed during coaching session, focus group interviews were conducted to generate a discursive inquiry on the topic of my coaching style and techniques. Focus group interviews added experiential data to this study by drawing out participant's thoughts and opinions about my coaching practice (Seidman, 1998). I gathered data from conversation and discussion during the focus group interview in two ways: audio recording and written observations with the aid of a third-party interviewer. Verbatim transcripts of these recordings provided a source of field data to support reflective analysis (Oliver, 1998; O'Sullivan, 2007; Patton, 1990).

With the intention of collecting experiential data on my lifeworld in sport coaching through purposeful sampling, interviewees who were actively involved in my coaching practice were sampled (Patton, 1990). The focus group interviews of all participants for this study were audiotaped through two 45-minute sessions. During each session, six participants engaged in a post-season discussion about their experiences on the team with a moderator.

To record data from the focus group session, a protocol designed from Creswell's (2007) suggestion was used to facilitate the group discussions. The interview protocol included: (i) a header to record essential information about the project; (ii) a space after questions in the protocol forms to facilitate interviewer entries; (iii) questions phrased for easy understanding and presented in a flowing process; and (iv) a closing comment to thank the interviewee.

To document responses from participants, the protocol included a focus group interview guide (Appendix E), focus group questions (Appendix F), and an interviewer worksheet (Appendix G) to record interviewer observations such as physical reactions, facial expressions, and general impressions.

Prior to the actual focus group interview, I conducted a pilot test by posing the focus group questions to the interviewer who would assist in the actual interview. To test the appropriateness of the interview questions, I took into account her reactions to the questions for further refinement. Pilot testing before publishing the final interview questions also allowed the interviewer to familiarise herself with the questions to be posed during the interview. I found the responses gathered in the pilot test positive. The interview questions were found to be unambiguous and able to generate deep discussions about my coaching practice. The interviewer also found the questions had a good structure that facilitated a smooth flow to the discussion.

For a venue with facilities and conditions conducive to conversations and interactions between the moderator and participants, the briefing rooms located at Queensway Secondary School were used. To ensure clarity of audio-recordings, the focus group interview was conducted in the evening after school hours. Prior to the actual focus group interview session, the venue was tested for suitability. The private space prevented any unwanted disruption to the interview and the minimal ambient noise allowed the recording to be clear.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis for this reflexive self-inquiry began with myself as coach-researcher entering into reflective labour on data gathered from fieldwork. Van Manen (1990) elaborated on this process in hermeneutic forms of phenomenological research.

First, human science is concerned with action on that hermeneutic phenomenological reflection deepens thought and therefore radicalizes thinking and the acting that flows from it… Second, phenomenology is a philosophy of action especially in a pedagogic context… Finally, phenomenology is a philosophy of action always in a personal and situated sense

(van Manen, 1990, p. 154)

This approach of "looking at what is, in order to see what might be" (Edwards & Nicoll, 2006, p. 123) was an effective way for this phenomenological investigation to attach meaning to experiences and awaken my sensibilities about coaching practice.

The approach of this phenomenological research to perform reflective analysis was through retrospective reflection-on-action (Schön, 1983). This reflection on experiences well after the phenomenon had occurred was useful to create "distance and tension between understanding and experience" (van Manen, 1990, p. 124). Cushion, Armour, and Jones (2003) underscored the importance of retrospective reflective techniques in sport studies by stating "unless coaches reflect on and reinterpret past experiences of coaching, they remain in danger of leaving their practice untouched by new knowledge and insight" (p. 222). By giving myself time after the experience to reflect, I allowed my thoughts to deepen and deeper consciousness to surface.

The design of this reflexive self-inquiry paid careful consideration to the discourse in ethnographic research that cautioned the reduction of large and amorphous collection of data into less meaningful research information (Goetz & LeCompte, 1981). Alvesson (2002) criticised the fruitlessness of applying reflection for unthinking compilation of experiential data by asserting "blindly following methodological guidelines is totally insufficient for good research, and at least some of the complexities and uncertainties involved must be taken seriously and addressed" (p. 9). Conversely, he argued reductionistic representation in also research fails to account for the range of influences shaping the research process (Alvesson,

2002). This contention had led Agar (1995) and Lincoln and Guba (2000) to urge qualitative research to adopt a poststructuralist reflective analysis process capable of drawing "living knowledge" (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 170), which this study had followed.

Attending to van Manen's (1984, 1990) thought about post-positivist forms of phenomenological investigation, the structure of this reflexive self-inquiry was free-flowing where thinking about experiences were ongoing and recursive to support my search for an epiphany. In contrast, Creswell (2007) cautioned that a "systematic architecture" (p. 17) remains a necessity to structure and formalise a post-positivist inquiry. This study used a poststructuralist research framework to evoke my own sensibilities when reflecting on my lived experiences.

Trying to relieve the tension between structuralism and a need for a structured research design, poststructuralist phenomenology researchers (Koch, 1995; Kerry & Armour, 2000) recommended the use of a hermeneutic circle to continually revisit lived experiences for deeper indwelling. Hermeneutic circle provides sport studies with a rigorous process for reflection and analysis (Kerry & Armour, 2000). The hermeneutic circle was an important instrument for moving this study from a procedural accounting of social reality to one of a narrative-driven hermeneutic exploration into the lifeworld of the sport coach. Reflecting to produce the research text alone did not facilitate a holistic exploration of the lifeworld of a sport coach, as a biographic or ethnographic study would. Rather, the use of phenomenological writing for this autoethnographic exploration used a hermeneutic process of deepening self-reflection to draw out significant realisations and epiphanies about lived experiences (Creswell, 2007; Gilbert, 2010).

Using the hermeneutic circle to structure the reflective analysis process for this self-inquiry, I was able to use hermeneutic phenomenological reflection to refine and recalibrate my sociological understanding of coaching practice (Kerry & Armour, 2000). The rigorous process of reverting back to the data to write about my lived experiences granted repeated entry to the scene of the phenomena just as an investigator would with a crime scene. The reflexive labour that I undertook in the process of revisiting my lived experiences also

encouraged intimate engagement with the experiential data to occur in hopes of developing deeper pedagogical consciousness (Koch, 1995).

The application of a hermeneutic circle for hermeneutic phenomenological reflection on experiential data in *Phase E: Thematic Analysis* ensured that this study did not present lived experiences with underdeveloped cultural analysis and interpretations. The hermeneutic circle in the study comprised of the following reflective analysis stages; (i) experiential data coding, (ii) phenomenological themes development, (iii) single case interpretation, and (iv) lived experience text writing.

Experiential Data Coding

Van Manen (1990) noted that data on lived experiences can be found in a multitude of expressions or forms. In fact, any conversation or dialogue is an appropriate source for uncovering thematic aspects of the phenomenon being studied since there will always be informative value in descriptions of lived experiences (van Manen, 1990). For this phenomenological investigation with autoethnography into my coaching practice, experiential data was gathered from my reflective journal, transcribed audio recording of my conversations and interactions with players during coaching sessions, and transcribed audio recordings of the focus group interview. This use of multiple data sources to crystallise findings also addressed concerns about accuracy and validity (Chang, 2008; Richardson, 2000). Multiple methods of observation yielded a more credible interpretation of my empirical reality as coach-researcher (Morse, 1993).

To convert these recordings on the coach-as-researcher's conversation and interaction into meaningful experiential data, thematic statements needed to be developed (van Manen, 1990). The analysis process of this study began with experiential data coding (Appendix H), which was followed by sorting the coded data. Isolation of thematic statements was necessary to identify descriptors of lived experiences to inform the writing of the research text (van Manen, 1990). The unstructured form of data gathered from lived experiences often makes data processing challenging as it typically yields a massive volume

of non-engaging information that often obscures significant experiences (Goetz & LeCompte, 1981).

To effectively process large amount of amorphous data from this self-inquiry into meaningful information, concepts were identified and their properties and dimensions were discovered in the experiential data by connecting the process of coding to thematic development (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). By labelling the collected data, the codes present phenomenological investigations with information on the phenomenon that worked as a "groundstone" (Seamon, 1999, p. 158) from which to discover meaningful and revealing connections within the experiential data itself.

This study used the wholistic or sententious approach to code the gather experiential data (van Manen, 1990). Field data from journaling and audio recordings were labelled with codes, categorised, and reorganised to reveal meaningful connections within the compiled data. The wholistic reading of the data gathered was a necessary step in this study to attach meaning to the raw data. This work with the experiential data also constituted my pre-reflective engagement with my lived experiences.

Phenomenological Themes Development

According to Van Manen (1990), social science research is interested in revealing phenomenological themes that made up the structure of a phenomenon. Themes were important for this study since analysis of phenomenological themes aided description and interpretation of phenomena (van Manen, 1990). As van Manen (1990) explained:

As we are able to articulate the notion of theme we are also able to clarify further the nature of human science research. Making something of a text or of a lived experience by interpreting its meaning is more accurately a process of insightful invention, discovery or disclosure – grasping and formulating a thematic understanding is not a rule-bound process but a free act of "seeing" meaning. (p. 79)

For this study, thinking of the phenomenon in terms of meaning units, essential structures of meaning or phenomenological themes within writings, helped direct myself as coach-researcher to significant aspects of lived experiences within the lifeworld being studied (van Manen, 1990).

Van Manen (1990) cautioned that researchers should not be misled to think phenomenological themes as conceptual foundations or categorical statements. Since the intention of this phenomenological research was to study experiences as they were lived, this study avoided the reductionistic tendency to treat phenomenological themes as conceptual abstractions (van Manen, 1990). On the contrary, the phenomenological research process of this reflexive self-inquiry used phenomenological themes to help myself as coach-researcher gain a deeper appreciation of the meaning within the experience.

For this phenomenological exploration into my community sport coaching experiences, I used the selective or highlighting approach to develop phenomenological themes (van Manen, 1990). Using selective reading approach, I re-read the experiential data several times before I was able to highlight phenomenological statements and themes that describe an episode within the experience. I then organised the highlighted data into related clusters, before proceeding to assign a label to the data group as a form of identifier. The raw data was made meaningful for this study through this process of phenomenological themes development (Appendix I).

Single Case Interpretation

Grouping the experiential data according to a cluster of common phenomenological themes provided this study with a means to connect packets of data to form meaningful categories (van Manen, 1990). Performing a single case interpretation on the related phenomenological themes allowed for deeper meaning about the data to form (van Manen, 1990). By identifying overarching phenomenological themes, topics framing the experienced phenomenon were encouraged to surface.

This study performed a single case interpretation of related phenomenological themes using a long table analysis (Appendix J). Interpretation of the field data was performed using the line-by-line approach (van Manen, 1990). Performing a detailed reading approach of each sentence data in the cluster, I internalised these experiences to produce interpretive description labels. This use of interpretive descriptions to organise my

thoughts about the experiences provided me with greater mental clarity about the episode that I had previously experienced.

Lived Experience Text Writing

This study used "protocol writing" (van Manen, 1990, p. 63) as a technique to refine thoughts about the phenomenon. Van Manen (1990) explained that as the researcher develops phenomenological themes, he/she may choose to capture the thematic statements in more phenomenologically sensitive paragraphs. This use of writing to record my interpretation was a form of linguistic transformation that turned thoughts into written notes about the experiences. By condensing experiential data into an original text, crafting texts stating impressions about the lived experiences provided myself as coach-researcher with a useful elaboration of the phenomenon to construct the research text.

Van Manen (1990) also described the use of conversation to deepen interpretation of lived experiences. From van Manen's (1990) clarification that a conversational relation between two people in phenomenological research is not just a dialogue, engaging in conversations during this study created opportunities for myself as coach-researcher to deepen exploration into the pedagogical approaches of my coaching practice (van Manen, 1990). He uses the term *hermeneutic interview* to describe the collaborative quality of the conversation for reflection on phenomenological themes under study. In this stage, the phenomenological themes about my lived experiences provided topics for reflective conversations to take place. Using critical friendship to broaden and deepen my perspectives, I was able elaborate on my interpretation of the phenomenological themes through live experience text writing (Appendix K) about the phenomenon. Using these Lived Experience Texts as materials for discussion with my research supervisor, who performed the role of my critical friend, I was able to engage in deep conversation to deepen my comprehension of experiences and allow deeper meaning from experiences to surface.

Research Text

Van Manen's (1990, 2014) methodology in *Phenomenology of Practice* guided reflective analysis of this study by encouraging myself as coach-researcher to write up the

data and write down the research text. The significance of hermeneutic phenomenological writing for this self-inquiry was in its ability to compel attention, stimulate reflection, create personal involvement, transform, and allow the making of interpretive sense (van Manen, 1990). This notion that writing can offer researchers space and time to look back, re-live and re-experience, and ultimately reflect upon daily lives was exemplified in Attard's (2012) assertion that "writing helped me think, reflect and develop" (p. 163). It was through crafting highly textured, evocative descriptions that located impressions of my coaching practice within broader, more general interpretation on essential structures of my lived experience (Allen-Collinson, 2009). Crafting the self-narrative not only provided this reflexive self-inquiry with a research text to extend sociological understanding (Attard, 2008; Attard & Armour, 2006), the process of composing the autoethnographic representation was also a means for myself as coach-researcher to reflexively engage with the experiences for self-discovery (Denzin, 2014).

Entry into a narrative inquiry relationship through hermeneutic phenomenological writing during this study heightened my sensibilities about coaching practice by connecting experiences at a deep and sometimes personal level (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998). Clandinin and Rosiek (2006) stated, "narrative inquirers study an individual's experience in the world and, through the study, seek ways of enriching and transforming that experience for themselves and others" (p. 42). Clandinin and Connelly (1994) and Richardson (1994) posited that the self-discovery from textual labour during hermeneutic phenomenological writing of lived experiences possess a transformative effect on the researcher.

Van Manen (1990) summarised these metamorphic changes to the researcher. First, it makes external what is internal. Second, it distances the researcher from the phenomena, and in doing so, allows the researcher to discover the essential structures of the lived experience within his lifeworld. Subjectivities of the experiences become the object of reflective awareness. Third, writing makes it possible for the researcher to engage in a more reflective praxis. Writing focuses the researcher's reflective awareness for more thoughtful action by disregarding the incidents and contingencies that constitute the social, physical, and biographic context of a particular situation. Fourth, writing abstracts the researcher's

experience of the lived world while also intellectualising what is being presented. Through textual emotions, hermeneutic phenomenological writing presents phenomenological investigations with a narrative "more compelling, more moving, more physically and emotionally stirring than lived-life itself" (van Manen, 1990, p. 129). Fifth, writing objectifies thought into print for subjective understandings. As a way to exercise self-consciousness, studying my lived experiences through writing placed my human consciousness in a position where it can confront itself in a self-reflective relation (Gilbert, 2010). In this segment of the study, the research text, Phase F, was written in three stages; (i) crafting the self-narrative, (ii) weaving confessional tales into the research text, and (iii) presenting the autoethnographic representation.

Crafting the Self-Narrative

In this autoethnographic exploration into my lived experiences during coaching practice, the use of hermeneutic phenomenological writing to compose self-narrative passages was a means for myself as coach-researcher to enter into a reflexive conversation (Hopper et al, 2008; van Manen, 1990). Van Manen (1990) argued that hermeneutic phenomenological writing can help the researcher grasp the essential meaning of experiences through reflectively appropriating, clarifying, and making explicit the structure of meaning of the lived experience. The process of constructing representations lived experiences through hermeneutic phenomenological writing therefore was a form of critically oriented action research where I as the coach-researcher of this study engaged in analytical thinking for self-examination of pedagogical practice. As van Manen (1990) found, "to write is to measure our thoughtfulness" (p. 127). In positioning the creation of the phenomenological text as the object of the research process, writing and reading was a way to sustain a conversational relation between myself as coach-researcher and the experience for pedagogical theorising to occur (van Manen, 1990).

Weaving Confessional Tales into the Research Text

Writing an autoethnographic research text was more than presenting the field data but a process of stringing bits of data together in a certain style and structure conducive to autoethnographic exploration (Chang, 2008).

Autoethnography is interpretive in a sense that your personal perspectives are added in all steps of research, whether in data collection where certain memories are selected, in data analysis where certain themes are probed, or in data interpretation where certain themes are searched. It is also constructive in a way that you are transformed in the self-analytical process. As a result, autoethnographic writings interweave stories from the past with ongoing self-discovery in the present.

(Chang, 2008, p. 140)

An explanation for this notion is found in Foltz and Griffin's (1996) assertion that ethnography is not a mere reporting of culture through a description of experiences, but a constructive interpretation of life. To help the reader and audience develop a deeper connection with the research text, I added confessional tales into the research text to build emotional engagement and encourage interpretation (Hopper et al, 2008; Madill & Hopper, 2007).

For this self-inquiry, confessional tales were not only reflexive narratives created from dialectical conversations, writings, or thoughts individually or with another person, they were also textual supplements that enrich experiential data (Hopper et al, 2008). In writing interpretive-emotional passages about the experience, the research text also added a complementary coherence to the representation (Hopper et al, 2008). Confessional tales fed situatedness and reflexivity into the research text of this study by authoring my embodied perspective (Madill & Hopper, 2007).

The weaving of confessional tales into the research text in this self-inquiry was accomplished through a *timeout* mechanism. Just like how timeouts are used by the sport coach during a basketball match to put the activity on hold for an opportunity to speak, time stoppages were evoked at various points of the self-narrative for myself as coach-research to insert my voice. This injection of confessional-emotive passages to enrich the research

text illuminated significant episodes of my lived experiences for continued discussion on the implications and consequences of my coaching practice.

Presenting the Autoethnographic Representation

In Chapter Six, *Autoethnographic Representation*, narratives of my coaching experiences for this study that were earlier composed using the lived experience texts as a crafting reference were pieced together to produce a short story of my coaching practice. The autoethnographic research text of this study was completed by stitching the various episodes together in a temporal order of events into a self-narrative (Denzin, 2014). This self-narrative on my lived experiences in community sport coaching featured key characters in my lived experiences, episodes of significant events, an epiphany that created dramatic tension, a temporal order of events, and a moral of the story (Denzin, 2014).

Plausible Insights

The way this hermeneutic phenomenological research engaged the body was a means for self-interrogation into my lived world to take place (Alcoff & Potter, 1993). Van Manen (1990) also noticed that "all phenomenological human science research efforts are really explorations into the structure of lifeworlds" (p. 101). While hermeneutic phenomenological reflection and writing can deepen emotional engagement with the experiential data, van Manen (1990) argued that a phenomenological investigation is not complete without further reflection on the represented lived experiences to explore the existential dimensions of the lifeworld under study.

To explore the essential structures of lived experiences within an individual's lifeworld, a careful study into the lifeworld existentials of lived body, lived space, lived others, and lived time was needed. Engaging the existential themes in Phase G provided this phenomenological study with a useful basis for myself as coach-researcher to engage in embodied reflection to develop plausible insights. Van Manen (1990) supports this notion by asserting that narrative expressions of lived experiences must also explore into my body-mind engagement with the world to heighten post-structural and postmodern sensibilities (van Manen, 1990).

In Chapter Seven of this thesis title *Plausible Insights*, I deepened this phenomenological investigation into my lived experiences in community sport coaching by discussing my findings about the experiences represented in the autoethnographic research text. Treating this phase as a form of post-event reporting, I structured my reflective analysis on the essential pillars of my lived experiences during coaching practice according to the existential themes of spatiality, temporality, relationality, and corporeality (van Manen, 1990). This stage of the research process allowed the significant existential themes characterising my lifeworld that I found was imbedded within the represented research text to surface through a more explicit form.

Final Thoughts

In the final segment of this study into my community sport coaching lifeworld, Chapter Eight, *Final Thoughts* present the concluding thoughts that I had developed and suggested a possible direction for future research through my final comments. It was only from my active participation as coach-researcher in the study through the process of reflecting on experiential data and crafting the research text where deeper understanding of my coaching practice was developed. This final phase, Phase H, served more as a space for consolidation of my thoughts on this journey of self-discovery. In looking back at the deeper understanding and new insights that I acquired from this self-inquiry, I also undertook a further step of reflecting upon my phenomenological investigation into my lived experiences in community sport coaching.

By elaborating on these phases of this self-inquiry, I had outlined the hermeneutic circle research process. This chapter will now discuss my realisation on issues of ethics, trustworthiness, and limitations that surfaced through the course of this phenomenological investigation into my lived experiences in community sport coaching.

Ethical Considerations

Morse (1993) and Patton (2002) maintained that whichever format the qualitative researcher adopts, he or she still needs to keep in mind that other people are always present in self-narratives either as active participants or as associates in the background. While this autoethnographic exploration focused primarily on investigating the self, wider ethical issues do apply to the research design (Chang, 2008). This study into my lived experiences during coaching practice illuminated the relational nature between the sport coach and participants and exposes ethical concerns with confidentiality and disclosure, and power relationship between myself as coach-researcher and the participants. The following section elaborated on the actions I had taken to ensure responsible research conduct and reporting.

The players on my basketball team were primary witnesses of coaching practice. Since the story told was of my interaction with participants, it would not be difficult to narrow down participants' identity and respondents' identity to speculate on probable contributors of any data collected. While the players' responses were a crucial source of data for this study, participation was voluntary and efforts were made to minimise risk to the respondents. Attending to this concern, I assured them of confidentiality, protected their identity, and promised responsible disclosure of results.

Addressing to Chang's (2013) concern about maintaining confidentiality of participants, pseudonyms were used to protect the participant's identity. These aliases were allocated randomly to ensure secrecy of the respondent's identity. Through the course of the study where participants had opportunities to offer responses, identifiers such as names and descriptors were purposefully omitted in the writing of the research text. When names were needed, pseudonyms masked the participants' identities. In addition, this study took a creative approach of giving recurring characters in the stories new pseudonyms for each new episode of a lived experience. Audiences were not able to draw references or infer identity from personality traits or behavioural responses. As an added layer of precaution to

maintain anonymity of respondents, a recently graduated PhD candidate from the same university as me moderated the focus group interview of this study.

In response to the concern of responsible handling and disclosure of sensitive information, participation was strictly voluntary at all phases. Participants were informed of the potential risk in their participation, the effort made to minimise these risks, and the rights of participants to decline to participate in the research or withdraw from participation. During the participant recruitment process, I assured participants that they could withhold or withdraw their participation at any point of the research to prevent unwitting disclosure of sensitive or private information. This verbal briefing was accompanied by an Explanatory Statement (Appendix A) that detailed the specifics of the study and the participants' involvement. Prior to the start of the data gathering sessions, a briefing session explained the specifics of the data gathering process to participants. Using a Consent Form (Appendix B) that reiterated the details of the study, the participants provided consent before the start of data gathering. At the completion of data gathering phase, participants received the collected data for a fact-check and final review before further processing and analysis.

My dual role of the coach-as-researcher created a situation where there exists a close relationship between myself and participants. To study my own sport coaching experiences, I collected data from respondents with whom I had a direct working relationship. The teacher and student affiliation created the possibility for myself as coach-researcher to exert authority or influence responses. This power of the coach-as-researcher over research participants also extended to implicit responses where even my interpretation may elicit responses participants believe more desirable. Recognising these possible influences from a power-relationship, and where the power-relationship unavoidable in the context of this study, considerations was made to address the unequal relationship between myself as coach-researcher and the participants in data gathering sessions.

The moderator of the focus group interview played a key role in averting the issue of power-relationship between myself as coach-researcher and the participants (Patton, 1990). With deep experiences in phenomenological research, the moderator was able to serve as

my proxy for this part of the study, and gather data without tainting responses. In addition to facilitating the interview sessions, explaining the parameters of the session, presenting the questions to participants, recording of audio responses, and documenting observations, the interviewer elevated the quality of data gathered by applying the probing technique on respondents to draw richer data.

Trustworthiness of the Study

While Sparkes (1995) described narrative forms of representations are unavoidably and usefully conditioned by researcher subjectivity, others (Geertz, 1998; Van Maanen, 1988) suggested that researcher bias can raises question on the trustworthiness of the study. Creswell (2007) and Richardson (2004) argued that studies using phenomenological writing as a research tool can address questions on the trustworthiness of the study by acknowledging the presence of subjectivity and explaining its role in strengthening the research. This acknowledgment of my performance prejudices, biases, and stereotypes was particularly important for this self-inquiry since beliefs and values can present different understandings of social or human problems (Richardson, 2001).

For this autoethnographic exploration into my coaching practice, my subjectivity was an important part of the research methodology to represent my interpretation of lived experiences to develop deeper pedagogical understanding (Denzin, 2014; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). While objectivity in qualitative research is often seen as an absence of bias, subjectivity had helped myself as coach-researcher of this study comprehend the world as it exists (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 2005). As Creswell (2007) explained, "qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 37). Since this study into my sport coaching lifeworld was not just interested in interpreting my experiences but to discover a subjective truth embedded within my everyday life, subjectivity then became a necessary

feature in this hermeneutic phenomenological exploration to reveal how the social world being studied is understood (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Richardson, 2001, 2004).

Limitations of the Study

Jones (2009) acknowledged that autoethnographies have recognisable limitations, some of which this study was able to address fully while others were inherent by design. Although it is arguable that the limitations of this study originate from misguided expectations, it remains important to highlight actual limitations observed by myself as coach-researcher. The three prominent limitations found in this phenomenological research with autoethnography are: (i) inability to document all aspects of social reality, (ii) possibility of inconclusiveness, and (iii) dependence on the openness of the coach-researcher.

Autoethnography by design only presents one version of a lifeworld. While the use of autoethnography produced a native interpretation of social reality, not every lifeworld is fully comprehensible in this form of phenomenological research (Van Maanen, 1988). North's (2013) description of sport as a multi-layered and multi-dimensional construct characterised by inherent complexities indicate the vastness of social reality that present challenges even for post-positivist forms of social science research. This then leads to the argument that it is impractical to expect any attempt to capture contextual and situated details of the lived world through self-narratives to be exhaustive and complete representations of social reality (Brewer & Jones, 2002; Sparkes, 2002a). In itself, genres of representation already struggle to present verisimilitude, a plausible reality (Hopper et al, 2008; Sparkes, 2002a). The situatedness of the experiential data upon my perspectives in this study can be argued to limit the opportunity of others to participate in the study (Chang, 2008).

Van Manen (1990) described phenomenological research as the study of essential structures that begins with answers and ends with questions. The process of telling and re-telling stories through hermeneutic reflection and writing makes this phenomenological investigation with autoethnography a lengthy and tedious process (Sparkes, 2002a). The

highly demanding nature of this study made the possibility of a fruitless journey a real concern. Progressing through a rigorous research process, inconclusive findings will demand for deeper indwelling to arrive at some form of useful hidden knowledge (Jones, 2009). Since the interpretive gaze and the development of phenomenological themes are subjective acts, there was no guarantee that a study of this form may lead to what I was looking for or what it was intended to accomplish. This prospect of arriving at an unknown was unnerving and even daunting for me.

Autoethnography is self-initiated, focused, multi-faceted, interactive, and autobiographical (Denzin, 2014). While this self-inquiry drew on the hermeneutic research protocol, procedures, and processes from proven studies for a robust and rigorous design, the meaningfulness of these data was dependent on a number of factors influenced by myself as coach-researcher. These included and were not limited to my ability to journal experiences, skill in crafting lived experience texts, and compose self-narratives. The quality of this phenomenological investigation was heavily dependent on my ability as coach-researcher to textually represent experiential data.

Chapter Summary

The research methodology for this self-inquiry into my community sport coaching lifeworld is presented in this chapter. This chapter began by establishing the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of this study. In particular, I elaborated on the importance of positioning of myself as investigator and topic of this autoethnographic exploration into my lived experiences during coaching practice. The coach-as-researcher perspective is essential for this embodied phenomenological exploration to be both situated and reflexive. I then proceeded to elaborate on the formal procedures of the hermeneutic circle research process. Outlining the process of the critically reflexive self-inquiry, I elaborated on the research site and sample, data collection approaches, thematic analysis phases, strategy for composing the autoethnographic representation, structure for discussion of findings, and final comments. This chapter then concluded by presenting the ethical considerations and

implications of autoethnographic exploration, the trustworthiness of the methodology, and its limitations as a genre of representation. The next chapter will present the autoethnography composed through the hermeneutic circle research process in this study.

CHAPTER SIX

AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION

Written and performed autoethnography has the power to actually insist on mutual respect in embodied and textual encounters between ourselves and those "others" our cultures and beliefs have alienated and misrecognised.
(Gingrich-Philbrook, 2013, p. 612)

According to van Manen (1984), "phenomenological pedagogical research edifies the same attentive thoughtfulness which serves the practical tactfulness of pedagogy itself" (p. 1). Applying this idea to sport studies, phenomenological investigation not only helps to discover the essence of lived experiences, but also improves sport coaching practices (Allen-Collinson & Hockey, 2001). Narratives present these types of research with a means to document experiential data for reflective analysis (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998). The autoethnographic representation presented in this chapter serves as the research text of this self-inquiry into my lived experiences (Sparkes, 2002a).

Despite research into lived experiences in sport, Hockey and Allen-Collinson (2007) and others (Brock & Kleiber, 1994; Dixon, Lee, & Ghaye, 2013) felt social science researchers had not fully appreciated the potential of embodied phenomenological investigations. Allen-Collinson (2009) argued "given the centrality of the body within sport, it is surprising that, with some notable exceptions, relatively little use has been made explicitly of phenomenological approaches within sport-related studies generally" (p. 284). Researchers such as Allen-Collinson (2009), Hockey and Allen-Collinson (2007), as well as Wainwright and Turner (2006), argued the limited number of empirical studies grounded in the corporeal realities of the lived sporting body limited phenomenological research into embodied experiences. While researchers (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Sparkes, 1999) had explored alternative genres of representation to convey embodied experiences, the potential of autoethnography continues to be under-appreciated. Ellie (2007, 2009) and Denzin (2014) maintain the autobiographical re-telling of life experiences can display multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural.

This chapter invites you, the reader, to immerse yourself as the author has done within his lifeworld in sport coaching. The self-narrative I present offers you the opportunity to participate in the research of my lived experiences. I hope that by immersing you in my lifeworld, I am also allowing autoethnography to engage you in deeper thoughts about your own experiences and evoke a profound consciousness of your own pedagogical practice.

This chapter chronicles my embodied experiences through an autoethnographic representation of my community sport coaching experience. By foregrounding embodied experiences in my writing, the self-narrative draws on my inner voice as much as it does on field notes, dialogues, and quotations. I take this approach to present experiential case material for cultural analysis and to lead me into an evocative thinking process.

This chapter begins with a description on the features of the research text. I then proceed with a prologue positioning the self-narrative as part of my doctoral thesis before outlining the background, characters, and setting of the story. I follow this with the research text proper and present five pre-reflective episodes of my lived experiences during my community sport coaching season. Within this self-narrative, I use confessional tales in the form of *timeouts* to interpret the situational encounters and show how the lived experiences came into my consciousness as a coach and as a researcher. Just like an actual match, these metaphoric *timeouts* occur within the quarter, between quarters, at the half, and at the end of the whole episode. I then conclude this chapter with an epilogue to summarize the moral of the story and the epiphany emerging from the dramatic tensions.

Autoethnographic Research Text

The autoethnography that I compose was shaped by key characters in my lived experiences, episodes of significant events, an epiphany that created dramatic tension, a temporal order of events, and a moral of the story (Denzin, 2014). I write from a coach-researcher perspective to situate you in an authentic interpretation of my lived experiences. The characters that I describe were real, and I used pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants. The intention of my self-narrative was to expose my lifeworld without invading the privacy of the participants.

The self-narrative in the proceeding pages is a tale centring on my participation in this study as the main character and subject of the phenomenological investigation who wades through a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous season of challenges in a community basketball tournament. The setting of this parable takes place during my practice as a sport coach with a Singapore community sport club. The proceeding short story moved through a series of significant episodes in my coaching experience depicting my interpretation of my lifeworld as they play into my consciousness. The narrative comes to a finale where I present the moral of the story and the epiphany I experienced from writing this research text.

The title *The Ball is Round* was given to this self-narrative to identify with the personal interpretation of my lived experiences through a community sport coaching season. 球是圆的 means *The Ball is Round* in literal Mandarin translation. This expression has been commonly used term in Singapore basketball to mean the volatility, unpredictability, complexity, and ambiguity of the sport or, as Singapore coaches often say, "anything can happen". Singapore sport coaches have used the spherical shape of a ball to illustrate the unpredictable direction of activities and events during coaching practice. For my story, the analogy of a ball possibly rolling in any direction describes the multi-directional nature of coaching practice. Seldom do things in sport coaching go as planned. This propensity for change during my coaching practice also meant that my community sport coaching lifeworld was shaped by dynamic situations.

The Ball is Round

球是圆的

Just like how a basketball rolls,

my coaching season

is unpredictable.

PROLOGUE: PREGAME

This is a story about my personal journey of self-discovery in sport coaching and written for my PhD studies. Stories possess the power to surface memories of significant experiences, and with their telling, a silent voice is given life. I believe this vocalising of my inner voice has the ability to expose significant lived experiences and move descriptions from pre-reflective consciousness to interpretations that are more meaningful. Through the voicing of my lived experiences and using *timeouts* to present my interpretations of my phenomenological encounters in the proceeding pages, I offer a glimpse into my lifeworld and invite readers to join me in seeking a truth about my own coaching practice.

I find exhilaration in sport coaching. The dynamic involvement in live-action and the complex characteristics of the tasks carry with it a level of excitement unmatched by any other profession. The thrill of competing and the satisfaction of achieving an elusive goal gives me a deeply felt sense of fulfilment. The dynamic nature of community sport is challenging. Unlike professional sport, where the pride of playing for a reputed club binds the team, keeping a community sport club together after each basketball season is difficult. The recurring changes to the player roster with each new season places the team in a constant rebuilding mode. Because of this, my season as head coach typically begins with the recruitment of new players before the start of any actual competition preparation.

I have grown weary of restarting the rebuilding process with every new group of players. I have always hoped to coach a team bonded by our passion for the sport. For me, the best part of sport coaching is the opportunity to serve a higher calling of nurturing and developing the next generation of responsible and knowledgeable basketball players. With a likeminded group of coaches and players, we made a pact and formed this basketball club in the late 2000s. Since then, we have contributed in our own ways to grow progressively as a team. We have matured since the early days and have become a well-organised team.

This coming season was no different from the past. Most of the players from last season had returned. Returning this season was Michael, a highly skill player in his mid-twenties who joined us last season after completing his officer cadet training with the Singapore Armed Forces. Also in their mid-twenties were Scottie, Chris, Charles, Larry, and

Patrick who had just started their careers and had been with the team since 2010. Joining us for the first time this season were John, Ervin, Clyde, Christian, Karl, and David. This new group of players who were still in university had as much talent as the current group of players but lacked their competition experiences.

The story I am about to narrate centres on myself as the head coach of a Singapore basketball club and progresses through a Singapore league competition season. I, Denis, am an experienced sport coach who took on the challenge of amalgamating these players together into a cohesive and dynamic competition team. I was leading a team seemingly loaded with potential and this responsibility carries with it an aspiration of success. Yet, as the team progressed deeper into the season, the constant grappling with performance issues seemed to set the players adrift…

FIRST QUARTER: TIP-OFF

Standing on the basketball court, I could read the eagerness on the faces of the players. Our first in-season training session was about to begin. Our sessions were prompt and would always start at 7pm. But for today, the players were ready to go with ten minutes to spare. Everyone was early and the team was in full attendance. The players were dressed in our latest kit and I could feel our presence. The unmistakable red and black of our team colours that filled the court was an awesome sight. I could hear the players chatting about today's session. It had been two weeks since we last trained. The break from our regular session to focus on university examinations did not dampen their excitement for the coming season. They looked upbeat and ready to begin.

Out of the corner of my eye, I saw some of the players practicing the moves they learned before our break. I was pleased to realize the players remembered my coaching. They were energetic and spirited as they rehearsed the pick-and-roll. The pace of their movement was quick. The screeching of their sneakers rubbing against the newly waxed floor mimicked the squeals of delight at a children's playground. The alertness of their reactions indicated a well-rested mind and a heightened mental focus. From the sweat on their jersey, I could tell the players were working hard. Their bodies looked primed and nimble for a physically demanding session. It was time to start our pre-competition training, so I whipped out my trusty whistle.

BEEEEEP, "To the baseline!" I barked.

With our pre-game preparation underway, I could see the liveliness in the players. They responded by moving swiftly to the side of the court I indicated. They knew my routine and quickly took up their positions behind the thick white line on the long end of the basketball court.

Their posture assumed a ready position for the sprint off. The players waited in anticipation for my whistle to signal the start of the run. I moved towards the centre of the court. I gave my instruction and blew hard into the whistle. "Three sets of suicide on my whistle… *BEEP*…" The shrill of the whistle set the players in motion.

My training would always begin in the same sequence. It was my intention to work on player fitness before moving on to the more technical skills. I intended the suicide runs to raise the players' core temperature. It was my way to kick-start the session with an intense warm-up before proceeding to run drills for skill development. With their bodies awake, I continued with the next item on our training programme.

"Next, in groups of three, do a full court three-man-weave and return to the queue from the left side of the court… *BEEP*…" The players moved in response to my signal for the next sequence to begin.

Their eagerness was evident in the aggressiveness they tackled their warm-up. They flowed through the first ten minutes of our training with ease. Their movements were natural and coordinated. The confidence in the way the players moved demonstrated an alignment between their mind and body. Despite being their first day back, I did not go easy on them. As my session wore on, I could see fatigue set in.

"Hah… I told all of you to keep your stamina up and use the running track during the break. I instructed you all to do your physical training homework. Looks like no one did the homework", I said. I intended for the snide remark to leave a sting as if to say "I told you so". The players were not able to keep up with my training after the recent break and I felt that they thoroughly deserved the discomfort and strain they were feeling.

As the evening went on, the two weeks of physical inactivity started to show on their bodies.

The players' facial expressions and body postures clearly showed signs of exhaustion. There were no smiles as the players struggled to catch their breath. Bending forward, some of the players tugged on their shorts to stay upright. Sounds of players panting replaced the lively chatter that echoed earlier this evening. Their bodies were not as ready as I thought.

As I watched the team struggle through the rest of the training session, I felt a disconcerting uneasiness over our readiness for competition. I tested the physical limits of the players through an intense warm-up session and their poor physical conditioning became obvious. They tired quickly. Their pace slowed as our session went on. By the time I finished my next sequence, they dragged their legs as if they were moving through mud.

While I half expected the players not to be in their peak form, I felt uneasy with the extent of work that remained undone. We had spent the last two months training, but their poor physical conditioning led me to conclude we had backtracked on our preparation. We were lagging behind in and the team was not ready to start our season in the local league.

The team's level of preparedness, or lack thereof, revealed a bigger concern on the team's overall readiness to compete. In just one short intense sequence, the team made bad passes and their effort to keep up faded. The physical fatigue the players' were experiencing seemed to have a cascading effect on their mental focus and emotional resilience.

During our water break, my tone had a hint of urgency as I stressed the importance of positioning for the two-on-one fastbreak. The players were not getting it right and my patience was wearing thin. I started to nit-pick their slightest mistake. The drills the players attempted were a mess. The spacing was bad, the decision-making was bad, and the players were not executing the drills we had worked on during training. The players did not move as fluidly as I liked, and more importantly, the players did not make good passes to teammates to capitalise on scoring opportunities. The season was about to start and the players were missing much-needed readiness.

Before their time off from training, I recalled leaving clear instructions that the players were to use this break for recuperation and light workouts. I even highlighted that the best athletes in the world spend countless hours on their physical preparations during the off-season. It alarmed me to realize the players did not allocate time for even light workouts, especially with our competition only weeks away. I expected more dedication from the players. What I had witnessed was disappointing.

At the back of my mind, the sight of the players' lacklustre physical preparedness made me ask, "Why were the players not physically ready?" This was a disgraceful showing. I questioned if the players even felt responsible to the team.

Calling A Timeout

We were on a countdown to the tip-off of our first match of the new season and it was as though the players did not care if the team played badly. I was disappointed with their behaviour. I expected more out of them and I considered their poor showing unacceptable. While the two-week break was a necessary intermission for the players to study for their university examination, I had assumed the players would continue their workout on their own time. We had an understanding they were to stay in shape and I believed the players would follow my instructions. Our months of pre-season preparation had gone to waste.

This contradiction with my coaching philosophy disturbed me. I valued effort in maintaining physical conditioning and I firmly believed every player was responsible for his or her physical preparedness. What I had witnessed today deviated from my beliefs about their character and shook my confidence in the team. Was my expectation reasonable? Did I ask too much from them? I was disappointed that they allowed their peak physical form to deteriorate so quickly.

The players had failed to keep their agreement with me and I held them responsible for their inaction. A sense of urgency was notably absent. I found this lack of effort disturbing. I could feel a nauseating type of anxiety. There was little time left for our pre-season preparation and we had squandered our opportunity to get ready. We now had a problem. The players needed to use constructively the remaining preparation time to cover game tactics, but instead they were now playing catch-up to regain their former conditioning. Their overall lack of preparedness was a serious setback and the team was no longer ready for our first match of the season.

I disliked the way our final training ended. I decided the players needed a few more practice sessions before they were ready to face our opponents. Unfortunately, we were out of time. Our next meeting would be at the competition venue for our first match of the season. The season was starting and we were unprepared for our first game.

Our season started with a match against the Iguanas. Entering their fifth season, this veteran team was a regular in our basketball league and a tough team to beat. While I started the day unsure if we had made sufficient preparations to face this seasoned competitor, I was pleasantly surprised by the players' fighting spirit our players as they warmed up. Their coordinated and purposeful movements showed this energetic display was not pre-game jitters. The seriousness and focus among the players delighted me. The warmth from their bodies radiated with energy. They stood tall and their posture hinted of confidence. They listened attentively to my briefing and understood my instructions on the game plan. As they moved into the tip-off position for the match to begin, the feeling of vigour from the team as a whole reassured me. Since our last training, the players atoned for their physical preparation slip by putting in extra hours to prepare for our first match of the season. They looked ready to compete.

The match official tossed the basketball into the air for the ritual starting tip. We were off to our new season. The players made fast darting movements and quick sprints at every turn. Adrenaline coursed through my veins. The pace of the match was faster than usual and the players did well to keep up with the intensity. Throughout the first quarter, the players maintained their composure and showed no sign of anxiety. The players kept to their game plan and used what they practiced to good effect. They executed the set play I had drawn up and completed several sequences to perfection. I was pleased with our momentum and, more importantly, our smooth performance indicated that the strategy I had drawn-up for the team was working.

For the most part of today, the players' gallant effort had some measure of success. The players had given the team a great first quarter and our dream start was underway. From their energetic movements, I had a good feel about the players mental and emotional focused for today's match. The intensity was infectious and it absorbed me into the moment. Unpreparedness can be destructive in basketball. I felt assured and believed this was not going to be the case tonight. I was relaxed and I was confident the team would continue to build their lead. I was wrong.

The basketball in flight approached our rim at an awkward angle. The deviation was marginal but it was enough to prevent the ball from descending into nylon netting below. The basketball bounced off the rim. As the basketball continued it's descent, Clyde slowed his movements towards the falling basketball. Convinced that the next possession was ours, he slowed his motion to a stop. Just as the basketball was about to hit the ground, an outstretch hand reached out to tip it back into play. Delicately guiding the basketball ever-so-slightly to stay on the legal side of the basketball court, our opponent made a great extra effort to prevent the out-of-bounds. Again, we had lost another advantage by being out-hustled. Our opponent kept possession and he was rewarded with an excellent position for another shot. Our opponent completed his sequence by lofting the basketball towards the rim. Contact again. The basketball took a shorter bounce this time. Not as hard as the first miss. Clyde and the rest of the players looked on, watching the rebound fall for the second time, waiting to see where it would land. As the basketball floated down, a pair of hands reached up to meet the basketball. There was a pause as the offensive rebound came to a rest. With the ball in the palm of our opponent's hand, he made a light push to nudge the basketball softly towards the rim again. This time, the basketball dropped through the net and the field goal was finally good. We had just given up another two points.

Our string of costly turnovers quickly swung the match to our opponent's favour. Our promising start was gone. Being out hustled repeatedly irked me. The players' mistakes did not bother me as much as the effort Clyde and some of the other players had shown throughout the match. Unlike the focused and energy they displayed at the start of today, the players moved at a casual pace and their lack of urgency was damaging. They seemed nonchalant about competing for possessions. I could also tell they were no longer putting their training into practice. The players knew I expected them to fight to the very end every single time they had the opportunity to step on the court, but the fight in the players were no longer there. We had lost our ability to compete.

"Timeout… timeout…" I called out to the officials at the scorer's table. I managed to stop the play before the match continued. The buzz was immediate and I beckoned the players to join me in a huddle. In the timeout, I rattled off the mistakes I was witnessing.

"We are a lot better than this… In practice, you all play great… Then come to the game time, you are all different players… No effort, lots of mistakes…". Making sure I was explicit enough to highlight my disapproval, for the next thirty seconds I shared my thoughts about their subpar performance during our timeout. I scanned the huddle to make sure I had the players' full attention before speaking. Using a firm tone, I voiced my disapproval over the lack of effort I was witnessing.

Listening to my assessment of the situation, the players responded with glazed expressions. Their eyes averted my gaze and their bodies inched to distance themselves from me. Compared to their earlier selves, I was certain that the players were of a different sort. They were physically present but their expressions betrayed their disinterest. The mental focus they held when the match started was no longer there.

As the sixty-second timeout ran out, I squeezed in my final words to urge the players to be more aggressive in the match.

"We know that we can play… We can win this… We just need to know not to turn the ball over… Everybody's got to play hard till the end…"

Despite my plea for the players to fight on, the lacklustre effort would continue for the rest of the match. The players were unresponsive to my encouragement and any words I spoke had no effect on changing the outcome. The final buzzer sounded and our inaction decided our fate. We would eventually lose this first match of the season by giving away several more winnable possessions. The promising start I had hoped for ended with a disappointing finish. I was exasperated. This was our first opportunity to show how good a team we were, but our meagre effort made us the inferior team.

We lost our first match by the narrowest of margins and I was upset with the way we were playing. By failing to beat our opponent, we had failed to make our first mark in the campaign. The thought that this was no longer a perfect start to our season consumed me. We had a good number of seasoned players on this team and I hoped that we could at least get a win in our first encounter. I had high expectations but I ended our first match disappointed.

Looking back, the team started well enough from the tip-off. I was sure we could win this match, yet the players' efforts, or lack thereof, failed us. All through the match, I highlighted the bad decisions, the lack of block-out, and the poor court positioning. Every single time John threw a weak pass, I yelled for him to focus. The passes were soft and lazy, which made it easy for our opponents to intercept. When Patrick waited for the rebounding basketball to fall into his hands, I urged him to get in front of his man push him out of the 'box'. I thought these reminders were enough.

In the past, my methodical approach was always sufficient to help a team perform better but not today. Our problem was not a technical issue, but one of player attitude. I could tell we ceased to compete from the moment we stopped making challenges for 'loose balls'. The misses, the turnovers, and the carelessness compounded our on-court problems. We were complacent in the way we played and it stretched our opponent's lead.

I directed my frustration towards the players and I was quick to blame the disappointing results on the team's inadequate efforts. The players walked when they should run, they hopped when they should jump, and they gave up on makeable plays. I questioned their actions. If only we made fewer mistakes, if only we played harder, if only the players competed the way I trained them to. We could have won this match if only the players listened to me and tried a little harder. I felt that the players did not want to win as much as our opponent did and we had paid for this with a loss. The match was over. Now it was time to face the consequences and thrash out the details with the players.

I gestured the players to gather for today's match debrief. I took a quick pause to collect my thoughts before I started my address. I was overwhelmed with frustration. I needed to comment on so many aspects of our play. With so many thoughts that I wanted to convey, I struggled as to where to begin. The players did not understand winning takes effort, much effort. It all should start with effort, the effort that I did not see in the latter half of the team's performance today. Just as I was about to speak my mind, I noticed the heated conversation between Michael and Clyde.

"So what if one person is defending well, get ten, twenty blocks... That's no use... We have to do it as a team... I do not mind if we get zero blocks if we all make a very good team effort like we did in the first quarter..." Michael ranted in his loud booming voice.

Michael's criticism was a retort to Clyde's claim that he did his part for the team by playing hard. From the way Clyde bowed his head and allowed the criticism to continue, I could tell that he accepted the brunt of the verbal lashing he received from his teammate. This response was not an admittance of wrongdoing but it highlighted a concern that we all had missed. Listening in on Michael's lecture, I was drawn to the wisdom in his words.

"We should ask ourselves if we gave up... That team amazes me... They do not get tired at all because they support each other... They are playing as a team... It's not about their skills buts it's about teamwork..." Michael continued in the same tone.

Michael's statements were harsh but within reason. He accurately highlighted what I initially wanted to address. The words sounded accusing, but I could tell from the tension in his tone that he was deeply frustrated with the team's play. Calling out the whole team, Michael made it obvious that the issue was not the lack of individual effort to compete. As Michael saw it, we were not able to win our first match because we did not compete as a team. Adding effect to Michael's statement, I highlighted my view that individual skill alone was not enough to win matches. Winning is a team effort and we need to come together as a team if we were going to see any success.

Michael's argument highlighted a concern that the players did not support each other as teammates during our match. When we had possession of the basketball, the players on the court did not help their teammate screen off their opponent. Their disinterest in the match showed in the way they took their time to get into position. When the opportunity came for them to challenge for the basketball, they just looked on and seemed to want no part of the action. The players did not compete when adversity challenged them. Our opponents capitalised on our lacklustre performance. We played well as a team early in the match but did not sustain this determination to the end. I questioned why the players just did not see that their effort was needed before we could start winning.

First Quarter Intermission

Our first foray together in competition was disappointing. Despite my efforts to prepare the players to play a good game, it did not go as planned. I did not predict a win, but I did expect the players to perform as they had done during practice.

For today, the deciding factor was effort. Effort from the team was amiss and the results were telling. The players did not give it their all for the match and a part of me felt no sympathy. Tell-tale signs that effort was amiss in the latter half of today's match were the absences of the players' willingness to challenge for a loose ball, relentlessness to guard their defensive assignments, and resilience to adversity. They deserved the eventual defeat. We were in a battle to win and I expected everyone to contribute. Their meagre effort betrayed my confidence. I had entrusted these players to give their all for the team but their actions showed otherwise. They had forgotten the privileged position of competing for the team and what an honour it was to wear our jersey. Where was their commitment to the team and to our campaign?

While the team told me that they wanted their first win, their actions showed otherwise. Their nonchalant behaviour during competition irked me. We were a team in body, but our hearts and minds remained separate. Among the players themselves, some seemed committed to compete for the team, while others seem contented just to participate in the game. The players were happy to play in the match but they performed as individuals. Despite their physical and mental readiness to compete, their actions betrayed the way they felt about the team and each other. When these players were in a position to fight for their team, their efforts were missing.

I disapproved of the players who failed to make an effort for the team. The disinterest among these of the players in the midst of our competition was alarming. Even after the end of our match, they behaved as though nothing had happened. Why did they not feel accountable for their actions? Where was their remorse? Did they not feel part of the team? The season had just started and I did not like what I was seeing. Where was their sense of responsibility and ownership? Where was their drive to win?

SECOND QUARTER: ROLLING THE OTHER DIRECTION

This was our second week of the competition. Throughout the past week, I had tried to address the mistakes we made in our last game. The teaching point for our training was on team effort. To emphasise this point, I repeated words like "fight for the ball", "chase your man", "pin the rebounder", "shove your defender", and "deck your opponent". I wanted to set the tone for this next match.

Our second match of the season was a close game. There were fifteen lead changes in the first half of the match. The players looked worn from the intensity of the game, but the extra effort was well worth it. The team was rewarded for their fighting spirit with valuable possessions. They kept the game was kept close and their determination was paying off.

With four minutes left in the third quarter, we trailed by only two points. The players on the court challenged our opponents at every turn. The renewed vigour was a turnaround after last week's poor performance. In a show of grit and determination, our core players did a masterful job to lead the charge. Their energy was infectious and they made one spectacular play after another. I soaked in the excitement and immersed myself in the action. The anticipation of the next sequence captivated my attention and I locked my eyes on players executing their moves on the court. After three quarters and countless lead changes, we were 'toe-to-toe' with one of the best teams in this league. Our more experienced players kept the game close by sticking to our game plan and ran the plays we had worked on during practice. The players were visibly upbeat and the flow of today's match was on our side. We were in great form and our shots hit their mark. I was confident we could win if we kept the game close for the remainder of the match.

A sharp beep rang from the referee's whistle. The shrill of the whistle was deafening and my heart sank. Things were great up to this point. Scottie had committed an unintentional foul, the fourth of his five fouls. He had one more penalty before he would be ineligible for the rest of the game. In most circumstances, the bench players could easily take his place. This situation was different. There was an obvious chemistry between the players on the court and the foul changed the on-court dynamics. Scottie had been the key

to our great performance with his stellar passes and excellent defensive stops. We needed him to stay in the game.

I had a difficult decision. Should I leave this player with the fourth foul in the match to continue our run at the risk of losing him for the next quarter, or should I break the momentum by bringing in a substitute? Weighing my options, I elected to play it safe. To preserve Scottie's last foul so he could continue to make great plays in final quarter, I had to make a substitution. Our opponents would surely make a strong push in the fourth quarter and we needed Scottie to anchor our team again. In the meantime, I was optimistic that the chemistry would continue even with a player change.

I scanned our team bench for a candidate. Seated at the far end, Karl was the last player who had not played today. He was late and the least prepared. Since his arrival, Karl looked eager to get in on the action but I was hesitant about fielding a player who had not warmed-up. I had little choice but to designate him as the twelfth man on our roster rotation. Before this situation with the fouls, my coaching plan was clear. I had planned to keep Karl on the bench today.

With Scottie's foul trouble, my predicament was all too obvious to all those around me. Karl knew I needed to make a substitution and he saw the opportunity to get into the match. Straightening his posture, Karl turned towards me and stared intently at my movements as if to say, "Pick me". While I had the liberty to decide on a substitution that best fit the dynamics of the group of players on the court, I allowed feelings to influence my call. I planned to finish the final quarter with our best performing players and this was the final opportunity for Karl to receive some playing time. I defied my rational thoughts. Maybe I could be nice for once and let him play.

I turned to the far end of the bench, drew in a deep breath, and gave the command. "Karl, sub in for Scottie... He has four fouls. We are playing man, and on offence you are at the wing…"

With a half grin, Karl looked at me with an appreciative smile. He had been waiting this call-up all whole evening. He was visibly delighted with my decision. For a moment, the

good feeling of making a player happy replaced any misgivings I had. The electronic buzzer sounded. The court referee beckoned the entry of the substituting player and Karl was in.

The match resumed but it did not take long for me to realise the mistake with the substitution. Since Karl checked-in, he was a 'turnover machine'. He made miscues after miscues. Repeatedly failing to gain any control of the basketball, Karl's hands seemed to be coated in butter. He behaved as though he was alien to the game and bobbled any of the passes made to him. Taking advantage of our string of mishaps, our opponents made one easy basket after another. And, for those shots our opponents did miss, they fought for the rebound and converted their second chance. In a span of three minutes, our opponents stretched the lead from two points to fourteen. The furious pace we coughed the ball up stunned me. I felt as though the match we played the match with four players against their six. I had the urge to yank Karl off the court, but it was far too late. The quarter was over and damage had been done.

The fourth quarter started with a huge deficit etched into our score line. I took Karl out of the line-up and returned our key players back into the game with hopes of re-establishing our chemistry. Throughout the remainder of the match, our key players gallantly fought as best they could but the deficit was simply too large to overcome. There was no recovering from our meltdown in the last quarter's closing minutes and this match was another loss. Karl's miscues had killed whatever momentum we had earlier.

This day would end with our second failed attempt to record our first win of the season. Nagging thoughts of how a single player substitution cost us the match continued to bother me. I was deeply frustrated on letting this win get away. Our post-game talk was short and solemn. I felt that there was not much to talk about since the mistakes started from my call. I was angry with myself.

As the players departed for home, I uttered these words to the team. "Alright... I know you want to train harder and I know appreciate that... Try to be on time next week... I will be earlier next week...". Feeling the weight on my shoulder for today's loss, I could only manage a feeble attempt to remind the players to be punctual for our next session.

Like many instances throughout my coaching career, I was in a situation where I did not know how to respond. I had questions I could not answer. I had no solution to this problem I confronted. This was a disconcerting feeling. The sport coach was expected to know what to do in any situation. This was a tall order. Changes were so frequent and unexpected. How does a coach know exactly what to do in every situation? How does a coach know the right decision to make or the right thing to do? How does a coach know it all?

Taking Another Timeout

Dealing with coaching situations that exist in a volatile interplay between people and activity, I had become wary of the frequent adjustments I had to make to. Despite my preparation for issues that could develop, I noticed that nothing planned was ever fullproof. In our last match, we had an excellent run for almost three quarters. The volatility of the coaching environment disrupted the great flow we had and forced me to substitute one of our lead players out of the match.

I had made firm plans for the game, but the situation that I was presented demanded my improvisation. I knew I should stick to my decision to bench a player for his lateness, but I made an exception. In this instance, I elected to compromise my coaching values and permitted a player unprepared for the action to participate. As it turned out, this was a mistake. I had my misgivings on fielding a 'cold' player at this crucial juncture, yet I ignored my instincts. While I knew that a player who had not warmed-up was most likely not ready for the intensity of the match, I expected this to have a minimal effect on the good lead we held. I was so wrong.

In this instance, I had made a monumental error in judgement. The defensive lapses and numerous turnovers from the new player cancelled the good team chemistry we had and widened the score in favour of our opponents. Despite the obvious poor showing by this player, I felt equally responsible for our team's collapse. While I was initially angry with this player for putting me in a difficult position, I knew better. Although I blamed his lateness, missed warm-up, and unpreparedness for the

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intensity of the match, the fault was mine. I had compromised my principles and this cost the team dearly.

I had made the mistake and the outcome was irreversible. I knew I would shy away from making the same decision the next time round. But I wondered if I could learn something new from this negative experience? Were there other considerations that I could make before I blindly deciding a course of action? How does a coach truly learn from his experience?

Our match this week was my most enjoyable by far. I was still emotionally sore from losing last week's match but I quickly forgot the sting. There were positive signs throughout today's match and we were playing a much better game. While there were the usual mistakes during the game, they were minor and had minimal impact on our flow. The discipline exhibited by the team in sticking to my game plan had a positive effect. The players were attentive to their roles and performed the task I assigned to the smallest detail. They had hardly any defensive lapses and were spot-on in their passes. The team was coordinated and moved in rhythm. The momentum we had built led to a sizable fifteen-point lead at the end of the first quarter. The minutes ticked away to the end of the second quarter and our flow looked set to continue.

"Coach, can I play?" came a voice from behind me.

The question was familiar. It was the same question asked by this same player just one week ago. Acceding to the request by this player, I had made a bad coaching decision. This same player had asked for leniency for his lateness so he could participate in the competition and I agreed. His unpreparedness would eventually cost us the match last week. My mind went into overdrive thinking about the details of how I made an exception for Karl to play in our last match and how this concession was now an expectation. My euphoria abruptly ended and I was pulled back to reality. I had hoped to avoid receiving this dreadful request.

I felt agitated that the seriousness of the situation was oblivious to this player. My body tensed and my heart raced as I struggled to hold back an angry outburst. This was the second successive session that Karl was late. The thought of Karl being late again and behaving nonchalant irritated me. To make matters worse, he was later than last week. Karl arrived after almost two quarters of our match had passed. I felt an annoyance with this uncouth insistence to play in a competitive game by someone who should know punctuality was important.

I could feel the heat in my breath as I exhaled. "You are late again." I exclaimed.

Karl bowed his head and replied in a soft tone. "I just came from a job interview... Sorry that's why I came late..."

Noticing that he was 'cold' and in no condition to enter the match, I continued. "You need to go warm-up..." I instructed.

"No, no, no... I'm fine…" he insisted. I was both shocked and appalled by this reply.

Karl's audacity to refuse my instruction to warm up infuriated me. While Karl believed himself to be ready to play, I was unconvinced he was ready for the speed and intensity to compete against the best in this league. Moreover, this was the second straight week he was late for our match and there was really no reason for me to grant him further special treatment.

This exchange reminded me of a similar incident with Karl just a week ago. The sequence of events replayed in my mind in vivid clarity. I was annoyed with how my latitude to this player's poor punctuality cost us the match. The thought that I had been led to make the horrible coaching decision was haunting. I knew Karl was not ready to enter the match but against my better judgement, I had allowed this player to participate in the competition. Karl played with an unfocused mind and confused his teammates on the court. He had no feel for the flow of the game and disrupted our team's momentum. Karl did not cope well with the intensity and we eventually lost last week's game. I was certain that his poor defence and the numerous turnovers he committed in the last three minutes of the quarter cost us the game. Reliving this whole experience added to the mounting frustration building within me. I had a sense of *déjà vu* seeing Karl arrive late for today's game and hearing his

insistence to be fielded. I was conscious of the possible disastrous outcome and I was careful in avoiding a repeat of this mistake.

By this point, my rage had taken hold of my body. My jaw tensed and I could feel my chest tighten as I breathed in to speak. "You are late and we already have eleven players ready to play today." There was a distinct annoyance in the tone of my reply and I could not hide my bitterness towards such a question.

My answer was not a resounding "NO" but my words indicated that I had no intention for him to play today. I was tempted to add to the statement and air my displeasure on how we lost our previous game because I made an exception for him. The match was still in progress and I was not in a state of mind to talk about this right now. I was conscious of not getting into the blame-game and I held back my comments. I did not see the viability of a 'would-have-could-have' dialogue and I most certainly did not want to go into the details of my feelings from the last game right now. We were in a basketball match and I was not in a position to address the issue of lateness now. My serious talk with Karl needs to happen but it had to wait until the match was over.

The final whistle rang and I let out a sigh of relief. The match was over and we had our first win since the season started. The pressure to win our first match was off and I could breathe easier. It was not so much we were able to win, but it was more a matter of delivering the promise I made to the team, the promise we could achieve something if we worked together.

As the players lined up to shake our opponents' hands, there were smiles all around. They had bested their opponent but their glee was not to mock. The players had achieved something elusive and they wore a genuine look of contentment. The joy they expressed was the complete opposite from our last game where they appeared shattered after suffering another loss. I could tell that the mood among the players was now different and the gloom of a losing season was dissipating.

Karl and David were the last to leave as the players started to depart for home. Standing at the doorway, Karl was in deep conversation with David.

"Are you ok, Bro?", David asked with a concerned voice.

"It is not fair… Coach said I can't play…" was Karl's reply.

The comments I overheard struck me. Karl was not as elated with the win like the rest of the team. He did not care we finally won our first match. Karl was unhappy with my decision and he was now griping about the treatment from his coach.

Karl's claim that I was unfair offended me. While I had the option to allow him to play since we held a good lead today, I reasoned my actions were necessary to enforce discipline. Just last week, I allowed Karl to play even though he was late for the game. He was not prepared and his substitution cost us the win. I could not continue to endorse lateness by any player and I was unwilling to make any more compromises. Karl was late again and this time I had to complete the punishment with a benching. By believing that his coach was unreasonable, it was clear that Karl did not comprehend the seriousness of his actions.

I was alarmed Karl expected me to again make an exception and allow him to play. He took my graciousness as a given. By thinking I would do the same for him this week, it seemed to me Karl was trying to take advantage of my leniency. Evidently, he was in denial and believed he done no wrong. While I had made an earlier concession for Karl to participate in a match despite being late, he now felt entitled to the exception I had granted last week.

To make matters worse, our post-game talk began with Karl's teammates expressing their disapproval over my leniency. The team disapproved of his disruptive play and did not want to play with him. There was a growing intolerance towards his lateness. Scottie in particular did not appreciate the way Karl's unpreparedness disrupted the good game they were having.

Voicing his disapproval just moments earlier, Scottie attributed the team's performance issue to Karl's unfamiliarity with the game plan. "Honestly I feel the line-up wasn't that good when he came in, and like… he didn't know the plays…" I recalled Scottie saying.

Despite the happiness from our first win, I was compelled to address the displeasure Scottie and the other players harboured towards Karl's poor punctuality. We talked about it

after our last game and made Karl aware that his unpreparedness cost us a win. Instead of an effort to be on time, Karl continued to be late for today's game and dared to claim my coaching decision today was unjustified. The more I thought about it, the more infuriated I became. I felt an uncontrollable urge to set the record straight. I had been beyond patient and accommodating. Karl's complaint about unfairness was just too much for me to keep to myself.

"I did not say that you cannot play... I did say there were eleven players already... Come earlier next time..." I retorted at Karl.

This time I made it clear that his punctuality was the reason for my decision. I did not want him to perceive my statement as mere words of anger and dismiss my point as an emotional outburst. Karl paid full attention as I continued to highlight the need for punctuality should he want to play in the match. I had benched him because his lateness affected team.

An uneasy silence from Karl shrouded the next few minutes of my lecture. The dialogue ended with no conclusion, just a nod to say we were done. As Karl turned to leave, he gave no indication he felt any remorse for what had transpired today. As well, I did not notice anything suggesting he even realised why he was a benched in the first place. How could I make him understand the seriousness of his action? How I could make him realise the importance of punctuality for our subsequent sessions?

Half-Time Intermission

I had grown conscious of the spate of poor punctuality plaguing the team in recent weeks. Players who challenged my system disrupted the stability on our team. These players missed our pre-game briefing and warm-up by arriving late to our matches. Discipline among the players during coaching sessions had slipped and this behaviour had serious implications on our readiness for competition.

While I issued physical punishment such as sit-ups, and push-ups, and running suicides to players who flouted our attendance rules for training sessions, I did not

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enforce this same standard during competition. I grew concerned the unchecked attitude towards punctuality was seriously damaging the team's morale.

I grew more uneasy when I realised Karl was taking advantage of my leniency. How dare he? This week, Karl arrived late for the second week in a row and believed attending a job interview was sufficient to warrant an excuse and so blatantly insisted on playing. He compounded the issue with his refusal to warm-up. His actions were irresponsible and I disapproved of this behaviour. Karl arrived after our game started. Hearing his teammates voice their disapproval towards the team's lack of synergy with him on the court, I felt the least he could do to was get ready. He seemed to be oblivious to the problems he was causing.

The second encounter reminded me of last week's incident where my latitude towards this player's poor punctuality cost us the match. My bad coaching decision continued to haunt me and I was adamant on not repeating it. Conscious of the possible ramifications, I stood firm on my decision to withhold his participation for today. But, at the same time, I was also careful not to hurt his feelings. While I intended to send the message I was no longer tolerant of lateness, I also wanted this player to learn from this incident. I was responsible for developing players' characters and I needed to teach them to be accountable for their actions. I now wonder if I should have been more explicit in expressing my disapproval. Was the way I maintained my relationship with the players appropriate to sustain discipline? Was my teaching approach effective?

Despite hearing my disapproval of his lateness for our match, Karl actions this week showed he remained unrepentant. His unreceptiveness to my counselling was evident in his claim that he was unreasonably penalised. His refusal to accept responsibility for his actions infuriated me. Karl's attitude also drew strong objections from his teammates. I confronted two dilemmas. I needed to address a player's poor punctuality while also attending to his teammate's growing intolerance. I could not make any progress in reaching out to Karl and I struggled to understand the rationale behind his resistance. I could not comprehend why Karl refused to see the importance

of being on time. This problem with Karl was serious and I recalled feeling that the team was better off without him. Looking back, this coaching attitude did not seem right. Was I too preoccupied with winning at the expense of a player's development? How could I make Karl understand?

THIRD QUARTER: SPINNING OUT OF CONTROL

We have just passed mid-season. Even with the score 62 to 64 in our opponent's favour, I liked our position. The final possession was ours and the close game was clearly in our favour. If the players made the right play and scored, we would either be tied or earn another win. Adding to my confidence, the play I had picked for the team was fresh in their mind. They were familiar with this game-winning play from our most recent practice.

Set plays were an integral part of our team's match strategy. I had used pre-drawn plays to orchestrate synchronous movements for our matches. The complex plans gave us a step-by-step guide to prepare and execute sequences. To ensure success, I called a timeout to setup our attempt at a game winning shot. Using a short break to assign tasks and resolve doubts gives the players a distinct advantage. We were in control and it was up to us to turn this situation into a win. What happened next was, however, a disaster.

We had practiced this play in our recent training sessions and the players were familiar with the sequence. Their run was easy and the play only required the players to position themselves at fixed points on the court. The inbounding player had to simply fake a pass to a teammate perched at the three-point line before slipping the basketball to another teammate underneath the basket. The tactic was meant to lead our opponents into a scramble to cover the outside shooter. This would leave our teammate beneath the basket open for an easier shot.

The sequence started with John holding the basketball with both hands high above his head. He was standing behind the sideline ready to set our play into motion. He faked the pass and our opponents shifted to keep up their defensive assignments. Patrick was left wide open underneath the basket. This was the perfect opportunity for the finish.

There was a slight hesitation. "Pass to Patrick!" I shouted at John to execute.

John passed, except it was not to Patrick. John did not follow through with our plan. He deviated from our strategy at the least opportune time and threw the basketball towards Christian, who was in the worst position to take a shot. Fumbling the ball, Christian continued the broken-play with a quick heave. Instead of an extra pass to a teammate in better position, Christian rushed to take a jumpshot. The flight of the basketball veered to

the side and the ball bounced off the rim. An opponent grabbed the rebound and tossed the ball high and long towards the far end of the court, leaving us with no chance at another attempt. Despite my effort to make sure everyone was on the same page for our set-play, the team was again unable to execute it during competition. We had again lost a match because the players did not comply with my instructions.

This last play was not what I had planned. The players defied my instructions in so many ways that I was appalled beyond words. Twice in as many weeks, the opportunity to win was there, and both times we made foolish mistakes to give the game away. I wrote off our earlier losses to growing pains. I was apprehensive to make the same excuse for today's game.

I was astounded by what I had just witnessed. John's pass was a poor choice and Christian's gamble sealed the game. What was John thinking? I directed my disapproval at John for disobeying my commands. I was infuriated. My mouth was open to explode in criticism, but I did not know what to say. My arms fell to my side and my legs weakened. My body conceded defeat as I lowered myself to the bench. The game was over and again we lost.

Compounding this shocking turn of events, during our post-game talk the players could not provide a reasonable explanation for their actions. None of them took ownership for the change in play. John in particular insisted the planned recipient of the pass was not open so they improvised, a claim that I continued to dispute.

In the days following this last match, I spent time listing the numerous points I wanted to address during our next practice. While I was tempted to run through every single mistake I observed, I narrowed the long list to focus the players on a more pressing issue. I was deeply concerned with the players' mental lapses. The way the players failed to follow my instructions highlighted their tendency to lose focus during competition. The team needed to redress their indiscretion before our next match. The team talk was crucial and took place at the expense of much-needed preparation for our next game.

The start of this team practice was a solemn affair. An eerie silence replaced the usual laughter and chatter. From the guilt the players wore on their faces, it was obvious

they still felt the sting from last Saturday's defeat, a loss I felt they deserved because of their own actions. I could see the remorse in their eyes but I wondered if our losing streak was enough to give the players a sense of urgency to act as a unified team.

Ensuring a fruitful discussion to improve as a team, I made a conscious effort to avoid turning this session into a lecture. I made the openly discuss issues in hopes that the players would come to their own realisations. Gathered in a circle by the court we trained on, I started the session with a direct question.

"Guys, tell me about what went wrong in our game."

The bluntness of my question added to the uneasiness of an already tense situation. My tone was serious and conveyed an urgency to investigate the team's problems. I took the role of a crime scene investigator and I was intentional with my words. My statement highlighted to the team that I expected the players to man-up and admit their faults. We would not end the day until we resolved this issue.

Silence reigned as the players considered responses to my question. They sheepishly averted my gaze. No one volunteered as I waited for someone to speak up. At the corner of my eye, I spied a figure move forward. Clearing his throat to speak, "Sorry Coach, I think I messed up man... Seriously, I messed up man..." John said.

I turned my body to face John as he continued to stutter.

"It was ok on the defensive end... It was the offense... The offence wasn't structured so we had to force it... and on the offensive end, we weren't sure what we were playing ... so you could tell, it was..." John paused before he took in a deep gulp of air to finish his sentence. "It was confusing... it was messy... yeah... we were all confused on court..."

I disagreed with John's claim. The players were not confused. More likely, John's decision to deviate from our plans caused the breakdown in our play. While I found John's explanation a poor excuse, I held back my urge to rattle on about his actions in front of the team. The issues plaguing our team's inability to complete a basic play were isolated to the actions of a few players. Rather than turn my unhappiness with John's indiscretion into a public display, I thought it more prudent to speak to him in private at a later time.

Taking A Quick Timeout

I was sure the players clearly understood my plans and I felt in control of the situation. Despite going through the details, John altered our pre-rehearsed play at the last possible moment. Annoyed by his audacity, I questioned his actions and wondered if he altered my set-play on purpose. His decision to go his own way highlighted a breakdown in communication between the coach and his player. Why did he deviate from our game plan? Even if the changed play worked, did he not think I would still disapprove of his actions? How can he override his coach?

Even after days had passed, this incident continued to bother me. My displeasure focused on the audacity of a player to go against my coaching. I wondered if John took advantage of my niceness. I was hard on the players when I coached but friendly and approachable after our sessions. Was I losing my ability to maintain authority? Was my coach-friend approach sending the wrong message? Losing player control was a serious discipline issue. John prevented the team from utilising their training. Moreover, what John did disappointed his teammates with another unnecessary loss.

John's rubbish play was occurring with regularity. Even with my attention to correct John's mistakes, new ones would occur. His weak effort to be a better player highlighted my failure to get his attention. He was ignorant about his poor progress and I became more perturbed when I noticed he thought my concern was trivial. Why did this player show such disobedience to his coach? Did I not command respect from him? Had my emphasis on nurturing the players become ineffective? Is this a call for me to be stricter with the players?

Despite our numerous sessions, we have yet to develop our team chemistry. I felt accountable for the team's slow progress. Our inability to complete a simple set-play as a team was an embarrassment. I was conscious of how I was losing 'face' in front of our opponents, the officials, and the spectators. It was not the losing but what it reflected about my coaching that truly bothered me.

Another week had passed and we were well into the second half of the league season. For the second week in a row, we were right in the middle of a 'down-to-the-wire' match. Throughout the match, both teams exchanged lead and none held a distinct advantage over the other. Holding a one-point lead with five seconds to spare, we were in the better position to win this match. The last possession was ours and all we needed to win this game was to keep our opponents from scoring until the time expired. Just to be certain the players knew this, I made good use of the timeout our opponents had just called to reiterate our final sequence.

If we played out these final seconds correctly, we would win the match. I kept my instructions simple: stay aggressive instead of allowing our opponents to pressure us into a mistake. As long as we kept our composure and held on to the ball, our opponents could do little. They would had to take a foul and give us two free throws or let the clock run out. Either way, they would not be able to score the next basket for the win.

Describing our set-play in steps, I read out the sequence to the players. The underlining objective was to keep the ball moving and out of our opponent's hands. As soon as Christian came off a screen from Larry, John was to pass him the basketball. Christian's task was to commit his body into a drive hard toward the basket for a layup attempt. "Take it strong to the hoop," I stressed to Christian. "The only way they are going to stop you is to foul you." I patted Christian's shoulder to offer my assurance.

I was certain the odds were in our favour. I reassured myself on the plan. A made layup on this final sequence was ideal, and, if not, a foul would give us two free throws to put the game out of reach. In the worst case of a missed shot, the time that remained on the clock would run out. It all pointed to us being in the best possible position to closeout today's match with a victory.

A short beep from the referee's whistle signalled the players to get into their position for the game to resume. The match referee ushered the players back onto the court and the sequence we had planned was about to begin. John held the basketball high above his head as the referee started his five-second count to get the basketball inbounds. Christian made his move to receive the pass. As the sequence developed, I sensed

something out of place. Continuing to watch the play run its course, I realised that Christian had mistimed his run and was a step too slow. Not able to move to his spot in time, Christian missed the screen Larry had set. Christian froze in mid-play. He looked confused and seemed to forget the part of the sequence. He was lost in the play and was in a daze. The poor play execution was about to become another end-game disaster.

"Christian, V-cut right, V-cut right!" I screamed in hope to save the broken play.

I urged Christian to continue his run to the right of the court before performing a V-cut back to the left to receive the inbound pass. We knew this manoeuvre, which we had often practiced during training, as a V-cut because it required the player to execute a run and change in direction in the shape of the V to create space between the player and his defender. Scrambling to receive the pass before the expiry of the five-second count, Christian stumbled before the pass could be made.

In plain sight of the commotion, John tried to alter his pass at the last possible instance. His delivery went wayward and the unthinkable happened. He lofted his pass too high and the basketball grazed the bottom of the backboard before falling into the hands of our opponent. Another turnover had occurred. Retrieving the unforced error, our opponent took full advantage of the miscue and dribbled the basketball down the length of the court to score the winning bucket just before the final buzzer.

In twice as many weeks, the opportunity to win was ours for the taking but our unforced error cost us dearly. We played well at the start but another mistake killed our chances. Today's match had come to another dismal end.

Taking Another Quick Timeout

I was embarrassed by the way we turned the ball over to our opponents in the final moment of the match. The players had a simple task of inbounding the ball to the first available teammate. The ricochet of an inbounds pass off the bottom of the backboard was a silly mistake that should not occur at any level of competition. The assignment was easy and I felt that the players were accountable for the mistake.

> *We were in a rut and our losing streak was heart wrenching. With every passing week, the players were slowly losing confidence in their abilities. The spark in their eyes at the start of the season had diminished. The team's reputation had sunk to an unfathomable depth and there was nothing proud for our players to talk about. They felt embarrassed with their association to a losing team and they had a right to be. Our season was a disaster.*
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> *As their coach, I was not spared from this depressive state. Watching the players' confidence crumble, I felt the need to arrest the slide in emotions but I did not know how. Even my talks to the players in were futile. In my attempt to rally the players on, the lifelessness of my words betrayed my despair. The lack of a definitive solution in my pep talk only seemed to add to helplessness plaguing our team.*
>
> *Our problems were growing by the week. This week had ended and I had no solution for the team. We were in crisis. What must we do to get better?*

Another week had passed since our embarrassing loss. Today's match was no different from the earlier ones in these past two months. Our dismal plays continued. There were a few good sequences in this match, but missed passes and badly timed plays filled most of the evening. As the evening progressed, our mistakes piled on. Bad plays happened with such regularity the players called out the turnovers before they even occurred. The team was visibly disheartened. The effort to run our set-plays ceased and the players became mere figures moving in a crowd of people. John elected to walk on the court instead of chasing his assignment back on defence. Tempers flared on the court. Ervin had thrown his body into an opponent to vent his frustration, followed by a scream for the referees to make a non-existent call. Michael heaved a poorly conceived shot taken three steps beyond the three-point line, before signalling his intention to be substituted out of the match. Larry did not even want to play and preferred to watch from the bench. They were physically present but no longer mentally focused.

Their exasperated expressions spoke volumes and I knew the players had grown tired of losing. They felt helpless. Their confidence was shattered and the players were

visibly disheartened. I could only fathom their agony of defeat. They were labelled as losers and the players had succumbed to their fate.

The match was finally over and the team had conceded defeat. The players had given in to their emotional wounds sustained from weeks of disheartening losses. Preferring to be left alone, the players sat scattered at our match venue. I could see the decimation around me. As I sought them out to offer comfort, they avoided me and prepared to leave the court. The spirit among the players was in shambles and only shadows of their former selves remained. Michael, the towering structure who once imposed his will on those around was lifeless. Ervin, the power-packed energizer sat on the ground motionless with his eyes staring into emptiness. David, the roaring behemoth who put fear in our opponents with mere whispers was silenced. And Larry, the cool sharp-shooting assassin was left seething with frustration on the team bench. The way the players dragged their tired body said that they had enough.

The sight of the players in emotional turmoil was heart wrenching. I felt hurt by my inability to relieve them of this pain. It was my responsibility to care of the players' emotional wellbeing but I had no solution to their agony. I felt guilty for being idle when I the players need me most.

As I recounted the sequence of events from today, I searched my memory to explain why the players were mentally and emotionally abandoned the team. I had countless reasons for our poor performance and it all pointed to a singular conclusion: the constant losses had consumed our hope. I could feel the team slipping away and hopelessness started to engulf me. Nothing I could do would reverse our losses. The sight of the players in torment took its toll on me. I began to let negativity into my thoughts and I allowed the feeling of defeat to fester within me. My confidence was shaken and I started to wonder if the team would even hold together until the end of the season.

Today's session with the plays ended in a solemn parting.

Standing under the hue of the street lamp, the light bathed everything around in a tangerine glow. Something about the warm lighting soothed me. I had regained my calm. The intensity from the earlier match remained in the still air. I could still smell the tension in

the musky evening atmosphere but I knew the worst was over. The quietness of the night was a comforting relief after the turmoil I experienced. As I made my way to leave the court, Michael, who had waited patiently for a word with me, approached.

Seeing that I had moved within earshot, he spoke in a low soulful voice. "Coach, what are your plans for us?" Michael asked.

I was caught off-guard by Michael's question. Up to now, I had been in a constant struggle on finding a way for the team to perform better during competition. Such a question about our next step had not even crossed my mind. My preoccupation with our problems had left me with no time to contemplate our future. It seemed like a simple and reasonable question. Michael wanted to hear about my plans for the team and he needed to hear my thoughts about how we were going to get there. Still, the question made me feel somewhat uncomfortable.

Since I was unprepared to provide a reasonable response, I allow my thoughts to flow through my words. "I have not thought much in depth about this. We still have a long way to go. I do know this." I said "Wouldn't it be nice to have a group of players playing together and growing together? Teammates do come and go. Wouldn't it be great to have a group of guys building a bond beyond the basketball court? Teammates who are together not just to play the game. Friends who are together because this is where they feel they belong."

By allowing my emotions to steer the conversation, I had expressed my idea of this team being a place where players could grow together. I believed there was promise in turning our team activities into a nurturing environment. I was surprised by how my words flowed. Unknowingly, I had exposed my inner most desire for this team.

Hearing the details, Michael's eyes brightened and he broke into a half grin. The solemn expression he carried moments earlier dissipated. His response told me we had made a connection. Not only was Michael in agreement with my thoughts, he even seemed to like it.

"I need you to do something very important for me, something extremely important to the team..." I said. Taking a deep breath, I continued. "I'm worried that I am no longer

connecting with the players... I need somebody to help keep us together... Can you do that for me by talking to them?"

I had swallowed my pride and made a humble request for Michael's help to reach out to the team. I knew I sounded desperate but it didn't matter. The team was coming apart and I needed help to hold this group together. The players were not responding to my demands to be more sensible in their play. Maybe my message could get across if they heard it from a more familiar voice.

"Coach, this is the first time someone asked me to do this… I'll get the players to meet one of these days when we are not training or having a game... We can meet to talk more about the team..." Michael replied.

Michael's acceptance was a relief. From his willingness to help, I had stumbled onto an opportunity for me to connect with the players. I now know I was no longer alone in keeping the team afloat. This response gave me some reassurance our season could still be saved. As I left the court for home, the small progress I had made with one of the players comforted me.

An awful day was ending. A late night walk along a quiet stretch of road before I got home was always enjoyable. The long row of trees seemed never-ending as I trotted on. It was quiet and the image of trees passing by was therapeutic. This was my personal time where I was alone with my thoughts. I felt unbothered by the world around me. The setting was perfect for reflection and unapprehensive thought. My mobile beeped. It was a text message from Michael.

"We have been actively chatting on WhatsApp. We want you to take our game to the next level."

I was ecstatic with this wonderful news. The message I received was brief, but the tone was positive enough. Michael was successful and the response was encouraging. More importantly, this was an indication the players were willing to work with my concept and help our team move forward. My spirit was rekindled because we were going to keep on fighting. Now that I had gotten the players' commitment, where do I begin?

I felt defeat loom in our hearts and minds as the team moved into mid-season of the league competition. The season was spinning out of control. Our team's performance had plateaued and we had entered a crisis mode. Our recent problems revealed issues with the player's poor decision-making, individualism, and a tendency to disregard their training. I could feel the depression grow among the players and I too had succumbed to the same feeling of hopelessness.

Since the beginning of our season, I had made little headway to help the team develop further. Despite being patient towards our team's performance issues, the consistent losses took an emotional toll on the team. My heart sank when I saw that the players had come to a point where losing had become an expectation. The self-serving thoughts of adversity and defeat were evident in the way the players gave up before they even made a challenge for the basketball during our last game. Hopelessness had become ingrained in the player's psyche. I felt helpless and weak. I could do nothing to stop this downward spiral. I could feel the crash coming. It was only a matter of time before the end. I was responsible for this team and had failed them.

I felt guilty. I had promised progress for the team but I had instead allowed the dismal situation to take hold of our future. I found myself recounting the incidents that led to this point and doubts had cast a permanent shadow. There were a lot of 'should haves' and 'would haves', yet none of them gave me a clue on what to do next. I was stuck in recalling past situations that yielded no information to help me move forward. I was frustrated with my inability to find a solution. What else should I know? What else can I do? I had no answeres to these questions.

My despair had taken hold of me. Despite this, I realised that there was hope. A turn of events offering help from the unlikeliest of persons changed my thought of the inevitable. Hearing my pitch on the possibilities with this team, Michael stepped forward to offer his assistance. His support of my vision gave me an opportunity to take a different approach to reach out to his teammates. While Michael's willingness

to help the team moved me, I was even more impressed by his subsequent success to rally the players. The agreement from the players reaffirmed their desire to build a unified team. From the players' commitment, I could feel a rekindled spirit among the players to put our disappointment behind and come back as a stronger team. Why didn't I think of this before? Michael was there the whole time. He spoke up during our post-game talks and during our matches. How did I miss this until now?

FOURTH QUARTER: ROLLING OUT OF BOUNDS

Michael's determination to rally his teammates after our last match had a positive impact on the team. The players responded with renewed vigour. The extra effort was immediately obvious from their lightning quick reaction in every sequence. Heading the charge was Michael, barking at his teammates to keep up the intensity. There was fire in their belly and they scorched their opponents with their tenacity.

The excellent run by the players continued into the final quarter. We were on defence and our opponents could not complete any entry pass to a teammate jostling for position underneath our basket. We played as a team and the unified effort produced results on defence. The players stifled the other team with their tenacity and they pressured our opponents into several mistakes. The players were attentive to their defensive assignments and our opponents found no freedom to move without a defender hounding them. Denying our adversaries any easy opportunity, any points we gave up to the other side were hard earned.

The team put the strategy the team we devised for this match during our pre-game preparation to good use. Noticing that our opponents were a slower team, we predicted speed to be our advantage. We used our superior quickness to convert the hard-earned rebounds into quick-hitting offensive runs. The plan for this match was to find an open teammate for an easy shot opportunity. Our objective was to capitalise on the following sequence with a fastbreak before our opponents could recover. Knowing the pass was always quicker than a player dribbling the ball, our playmakers had the responsibility to move the ball ahead of the recovering defence.

We had the next possession at our backend of the court. The sequence started with John securing the defensive rebound. Chris was ahead of the defence and called for the quick pass with his hand raised high above his head. The setting was ideal for us to move into a quick offensive. This was an excellent opportunity to start our fastbreak. In an odd turn, John hung on to his dribble instead of sticking to the strategy. Watching John cross mid-court, I wondered if he did not see Chris urgently calling for the pass. I was even more perplexed for what I saw next.

The sequence continued. Patrick was unguarded as he closed in on the opponent's basket. He waved his hands signalling for the basketball. There was urgency in his actions as he urged for the pass. Patrick was in plain sight and I was certain John could see him. Like before, John continued to advance his dribble instead of making a pass. John's clear line of sight of an open teammate was unmistakable. I just could not comprehend why he did not pass the basketball.

"Pass the ball!" I shouted, hoping that John did his part.

John was deaf to my demands. He seemed to be in another mind and was oblivious to my command. I struggled to make any sense of John's defiance to pass the basketball. I wondered if John could hear me over the court's ambient noise.

At first, I thought John was not looking up to spot the open man. Both Chris and Patrick were in plain sight. No, I was quite certain that they were. Then it struck me. John was ignoring his teammates so he could keep possession of the basketball for his own shot attempt. John was 'ball-hogging' so he could score more points.

The next sequence would prove my suspicion correct. As I feared, John continued his charge toward the opponent's basket. A third teammate was now gesturing for the pass to him. It was a futile request. John was already airborne to take his shot. Leaning sideways to avoid an oncoming defender, he released the basketball from his fingertips. The stroke looked awkward and he took the shot hastily. The field goal attempt looked almost certain to be a miss. The basketball veered from its intended target and grazed the side of the rim. As I recounted back to our earlier part of this match, this just was one of the many instances where John had forced the issue without success.

I felt we played great as a team the whole evening and the flow we had was disrupted by John's solo effort. I was even more concerned John did not fulfil his playmaking responsibility to involve his teammates in the game. This show of self-centeredness angered me. John's play today was not just about poor decisions but it also highlighted an undesirable attitude. John played as if he was above the team.

There was no room on this team for selfish players. John had a duty as our playmaker and his actions contradicted our team values in so many ways. His personal

desire to improve his statistics did not fit my idea of team basketball. The individualistic plays damaged our team chemistry and I could not allow the incorrigible behaviour to go unaddressed. I signalled Scottie over to the officiating table for an immediate substitution. To discipline John and to serve as a reminder to those who were thinking of playing this way, I was going to bench him for the rest of the game.

At the next dead ball, Scottie proceeded with the substitution. Showing his disapproval of the substitution, John glared towards my direction and flung both his hands in the air as he walked off the court. Hoping to put things into perspective, I beckoned John. Instead of responding, he ignored my call and made his way to the furthest end of the bench. John did not like my decision and was not holding back his feelings. This show of unhappiness to his coach was rude and disrespectful. It was only befitting that I leave him on the bench for the rest of the match.

The remainder of today's match ended without much incident. As the players returned to their respective benches after the ritual handshake with their opponents, I gathered them for a much needed team talk. There were several concerns requiring my immediate attention and John's 'ball-hogging' was at the top of my list.

There was tension in the air. I began the talk with a speech to the team about the poor decisions leading to our high number of turnovers before moving to address our problems with individualism. Emphasising our team values, I reasoned the importance for our playmaker to share the basketball instead of taking the first shot. The players kept their thoughts to themselves until Michael voiced his criticism on how 'ball-hogging' affected our performance.

"Is it because our conditioning is not up to mark... And because of that, we make a lot of careless turnovers by bad passes. We are not as aggressive as we all are in the first and third quarter... Running up and down the court is a waste of energy if you are going to keep turning the ball over..." Michael stated his view on the way the team played today.

I agreed with Michael's criticism. I chimed in with my disagreement of the individualism that I witnessed. "Can I describe what I saw … I saw at least four or five possessions where our guy did not pass and took the first shot... anybody disagree... No, ok...

Can we agree with that... Because, point guard, I need to impart this on to you: play ball handler as well... As a ball handler your responsibility is not just to bring the ball up, you are supposed to set up the offence. If you take the first shot, the other four do not get a single touch of the ball. There is no set up on offence, right?... So the other four guys are aimlessly running, they might as well stay on that side of the court and not run..."

Despite hearing this slew of criticism about the inappropriateness of his play, John remained silent. He did not argue back, but I could sense his discontent. Maintaining an expression locked in a seemingly mock smile, John was quiet throughout the discussion. This silence hid his defiance. Uneasy with the notable displeasure John was harbouring, I probed him for a response.

"Are you ok?" I asked in an attempt to offer my concern.

John looked away in response. John's frustration was boiling over and I could feel his deepened resentment towards me. Attempting to sooth the tension, Larry rubbed John's shoulders to indicate that John may be grumpy from fatigue. I knew better. The seething anger continued to brew within him. This silence from John was soon-to-be short-lived and a reckoning was at hand. Upset by the mass of criticism, John retorted on the practicality of our team approach.

"Just feels so limited when I just play according to set play and passing out to them…" John scoured before getting up and leaving the court.

Instead of showing remorse, his retort showed that John felt he was not guilty of any wrongdoing. Despite listening to our comments, John still did not see the seriousness of his actions. He remained unreceptive and continued to insist our game plan limited him. I disagreed with his thoughts. John was accountable in so many ways. How could he say he our game plan limited his opportunities?

> ### *Using My Final Timeout*
>
> *In my last encounter with the players before this week, I was heartened to realize the players wanted to refocus to become a better team. Knowing the team had aligned our objective, I wanted a system that provided opportunities for the*

players to perform their part. I planned greater involvement by everyone on the team. The idea was to give them, regardless of their skill or seniority, a clearer understanding of their roles so they could focus on making their own contributions. I wanted to develop team plays over individual skill. The individualistic way John played today transgressed the boundaries of team play.

Despite the understanding that we were working as a team and the faith I had placed in the players, John's selfish plays cast a shadow over our team's performance. My trust in him was shaken. I questioned John's cavalier attitude as a contradiction to our collective effort as a blatant disregard of our earlier agreement. How he put himself ahead of the team appalled me. I questioned his desire for personal glory over the team's effort. I had highlighted the need for players to put in more effort and pick up their individual performance during our matches. How did my emphasis on performance affect John's mindset? Was John's behaviour the result of a misconstrued understanding of performance?

The disrespectful way John brushed me off when I tried to speak to him insulted me. I wanted him see I substituted him, but he did not want to hear it. John was our playmaker and his selfishness hindered our team's ability to complete plays. Despite my efforts to reason with him, John remained defiant towards our resolve to distribute the ball. He insisted his actions were justified. I wondered if John's reaction stemmed from feeling singled out by his teammates during our discussion. The way he continued to deviate from our team orientation showed my efforts were futile. John's unresponsiveness to my coaching made me lose trust in him for the important task of playmaking. Who knows what other damage to the team he would cause if I left the ball in his hands. Did he not feel it was enough to be part of a team that played well together? Was his ego more important than his responsibility to his teammates? How can I trust him during a match now that I know I had no control over his individualist tendencies?

In our next match, we were smaller in stature than our opponents were, so speed tactics gave us a good counter. Making a run towards our opponent's side of the court was a textbook setup for a two-on-one fast break. The concept was simple. Spread the floor with two players running wide for an easy pass and an open layup. We failed to capitalise on two earlier attempts and this was the third successive try.

David dribbled hard on the attack and Ervin filled his right lane two steps ahead of him. Only a lone opponent retreated to defend the attack. The defending player perched at the free-throw line made an instinctive move to cut off the oncoming attacking player by taking a step forward. This commitment was the perfect setup. By shifting his body towards one side of the court, this defender had left the other side of the basket unguarded. The opportunity had arrived and David proceeded with a delivery to Ervin who continued his approach to the basket. The finishing move only required Ervin to guide the basketball in for the finish. In all likelihood, we were about to secure two more easy points on the scoreboard.

Disaster struck. Instead of finishing the play, Ervin made an ill-advised choice and swung the basketball behind his back to flip a behind-the-back pass back to David. The narrowed space multiplied the difficulty of a return catch. Bobbling the bad pass, David fumbled the basketball. The ball slipped from David's hands and fell out-of-bounds. I had kept track of our unforced errors and this was our third consecutive turnover in the quarter.

The players knew they had let an easy opportunity slip away. Ervin and David had grown impatient with the number of miscues and tension was brewing between them. Their body tensed as they turned to face each other, both holding their long piercing stare. Unable to hold back their emotions, they broke out in a war of words. Aggressively pointing their fingers, each accused the other as the culprit. They both insisted the other was more to blame for the turnover.

Ervin and David's exchange had now escalated into a heated confrontation. From their aggressive body language, I could tell that they were not about to let this incident slide. This was not one of those short bouts of frustration between teammates that was quickly forgotten after a few passes of the basketball. The situation had become explosive.

They did not restrain their emotions and threw accusations. Words spoken were so tainted with frustration that rational thoughts gave way to bitter remarks. The bickering turned into a public spectacle. The raised voices drew attention from the rest of the players on the court. The match paused as the crowd gathered to watch. Judging by their intensified aggression, I could tell that the verbal spat was quickly raging out of control.

From a distance, David and Ervin looked like a pair of championship boxers getting ready to start their bout. As David and Ervin inched closer to each other, they clenched their fists and braced their postures. This verbal confrontation was about to become physical. Sensing a need to intervene before this, I signalled the table officials for a timeout. The sound of the referee's whistle was sharp and caught the players' attention. The reminder that we still had a match to play was a good distraction to the conflict.

Making use of this intermission, I refocused the players by reiterating our game plan. "Everybody hang on… everybody around me first… I'll share something with you, all of you, when it comes to the two-on-one fast break… The intentions of the two-on-one fast break, why do we make it… why do we get everyone to stand at the forty five degrees, come in at forty five degrees, why do you attack the basket at forty five degrees?" I turned to Ervin for an answer.

"Is it because it forces him to one side and leave the other side open?" Ervin replied.

Ervin's responsiveness was a good sign. I continued my clarification. "Yes, absolutely correct… The last thing you want to do on a two-on-one fast break is this, you get to the point, and then you stop there, you jump in the air, and you try to flip the ball somewhere else… Why? High chance of deflection… And your fast break, it's gone… So what I want to see next time when you bring it down here is that you wait for him. You see what he does… If he comes to you, you give… If he doesn't come to you, you drive… Ok, right, let's try again…"

The match was not over and I did what I could to mediate the sensitive situation and channelled their focus back into the game. Through a tentative movement, Ervin reached out to touch David's hand as if to say 'we are cool'. David reciprocated and accepted the tap from Ervin's hand. The significance of their gesture indicated a consensus that they agreed

to set aside their differences. Both players seemed to understand the need to find a way forward and made a compromise to come to a middle ground. While they agreed to put the matter to rest, I needed to address this incident after our match.

Airing of disagreement among players during competitions should never happen on a team. Both David and Ervin broke this cardinal rule and were accountable for their actions. By starting an argument in the middle of the match, both players had ceased being teammates. Their conflict disrupted the team's performance and damaged our fragile camaraderie.

This latest incident was just one of the many on-court player problems I had to address this week. As the season wore on, my encounter with behavioural issues during competition started to worry me. They issues pointed to behavioural problems among the players.

The reality I faced with this team had become clear. With my presence limited to issuing instructions from the sidelines, I had limited control over the team during competition. Unable to directly orchestrate the players during our matches, my ability to steer the team was hampered. I was a passive spectator when the match was on and my only means to establish control was through the few timeouts we had.

The ineffectiveness of establishing control over the players during the course of the match made coaching this team difficult. Limited to only timeouts and end of quarters to address the team, some of the players deviated from my instructions or were confused over the next sequence of play. I suspected their failure to follow our plays emerged from a lack of on-court guidance.

The players needed a form of guidance I was in no position to provide. I could not circumvent limitations to my control of the team during competition. My search for a better way to manage the players was perplexing. I could not find a solution to the dilemma until I received a text message from Michael: "Let me propose we play zone tmr. also i wish for a shot at pg tmr if possible. is it ok if i get a shot at running this team?"

Michael's request to take on the role as our floor general was a promising proposition. Michael knew of the problem with my on-court control of the players and

thought he could offer a possible solution. His request to manage the team when the game was in play was an enticing but provocative alternative. While I did not fully agree with his strategy for our power forward play point guard, the idea of Michael taking on at bigger leadership role fascinated me. Michael's suggestion allowed someone who understood my coaching philosophy and our game plan to organise the team during competition.

I responded, "Ok Michael. Let's tell the team our plan and see how it plays out."

There was something about the way Michael expressed his desire to help the team grow that I found reassuring. Michael had a genuine concern for our team's well-being and he cared for our future. Michael's suggestion to provide on-court leadership made good sense. The team was already in disarray. Maybe Michael's suggestion could improve our situation.

My mind shifted to our conversation just a few weeks back: "I came in to change the team... I am trying to change the team... I want to help everyone in the team but I find that I need some advice... Actually I do not know what I can do for this team..."

Discovering that Michael was concerned over our team's future, I had previously sought his help to reach out to the team on my behalf. Banding the players together, Michael's tremendous effort was instrumental to motivate the players forward from our last disheartening loss. Today, I would again call upon Michael for help for a different purpose: to manage the team.

Going into Overtime

I was losing control of the players. The individualist play and the infighting between teammates were wrecking our team chemistry. I could no longer hold this team on course and we were rolling out of bounds.

During our last match, I saw the heated exchange between a pair of players escalating into a fight in the middle of the match. Despite my feeling that David had a right to be angry with the other for being too fancy with an unnecessary pass of the basketball, I find both guilty. The fight among teammates was inexcusable. I firmly believed players should never raise their fist in anger to another, even if there was a

cause for retaliation. A fight does not solve problems and a brawl was sure to damage the relationship between teammates.

The friction between Ervin and David indicated a festering unhappiness among teammates caused by a lack of synergy. Players acting out their frustration showed they were losing patience. They had committed to play as a team and now some did not live up to commitment. While some of the players tried to collaborate as a team, others made a less concerted effort to cooperate. Were their teammates' behaviours affecting them? Was individualism disrupting our bond as a team? How could I address the disharmony among teammates?

The inability to have all players to work together was a problem of control. While I could see problems form during the course of our match, sideline coaching limited how I could intervene in a basketball game. I was uncomfortable with the long stretches I was not in control of the team. Some of the players on this team had proven they were wilful and would challenge authority. These players had previously altered our game plan and refused to follow coaching instructions. I was concerned if I could not maintain control over the team, the disruptive plays the team had experienced would continue. Without a strong voice to direct the team, the players' reaction to game situations was erratic. The team needed a strong and reassuring leader who could be with them throughout the match. How then could I provide this leadership? How could I sustain better control over the team?

In a chance encounter, I encountered a possible solution. Michael wanted to step up in the team in a bigger way. I was enthused by the idea of a player to serve as my proxy. There was obvious benefit to the appointment of a team captain to extend my scope of influence. Having one of their peers to issue orders and conduct the team could encourage commitment and nurture responsible behaviour. Other coaches found this approach so successful they empowered the team captain with assistant coaching roles. The role of a team captain was not an easy position to fill. The player assuming this position had to be familiar with all the plays and have sufficient organisational skills to manage the players while under pressure. Michael's offer to

fill the void of our on-court leadership was heartening. While I had some uneasiness to place an inexperienced team leader to take on the captaincy, his good grasp of my coaching philosophy and strong leadership qualities convinced me he was up to the task. Michael had my confidence and the idea looks promising. I was keen to incorporate Michael's suggestion.

OVERTIME: ON THE REBOUND

It had been a week since we were together as a team. We parted ways amidst tension after our last match. I had taken a hard stand to address several issues during the last match and I could only imagine sour feelings lingering. We ended our last session with the player whom I benched walking out on the team. John was upset from the critique he received for 'ball-hogging' and terminated his participation by leaving before the team talk ended. I wondered if the unhappiness John felt towards remained.

In our last match, tension affected to everyone and I thought we needed a break for emotions to settle. I cancelled our last regular practice and kept my distance with the players to give the players some space. I had not spoken to the team since and I was hopeful that calmness would return to the team this week.

Arriving at the court today, I intentionally slowed my steps as I moved past John. I wanted to gauge his feelings towards me. I positioned myself so he could notice my presence from the corner of his eye. He continued his warm-up as though I was not there. John's non-response placed me in an awkward situation. We were going into today's match without being on talking terms.

The match was about to begin and the referees looked eager to get the game underway. I signalled the players to gather for my instructions. I took this opportunity to announce my appointment of Michael as our new captain. A rousing response from the players greeted the news. David nudged Michael to tease him of his new title. Patrick put his arm around Michael's shoulder and playfully shook him. Smiles circulated.

I huddled the players closer. We were cramped close enough to feel the warmth radiating from our bodies. Forming a circle, I reached out my right hand into the centre of our cluster. Some of the players made playful groans as they squeezed their hands closer to mine for the team roar. To help Michael's transition into his new leadership role, I gave him an extra boost by specifying an additional directive to the team: "By the way, today is not about winning… It doesn't matter if we win… I just want us to play well together…" This change in team goal was a significant shift from the performance orientation. My emphasis on winning had been ineffective and my push for performance only added more stress on

the team. From today, the team was moving in a new direction with a new approach to leadership. We were in a rebuilding process. Placing emphasis to develop team chemistry was a good way to solidify our foundation.

An upbeat chatter met this order. Excitement arose about our new objective. The players warmly welcomed the removal of pressure to win. The players felt happier knowing they need not worry about being answerable should they lose this match. The pressure to perform was off and the team could enjoy today's game. The players were in a lively mood as we got our match underway.

Despite our positivity, the team had a shaky start. I was uneasy with the performance, but I expected this. I reminded myself of today's objective to learn, not to win. While the poor plays needed attention, I held back my urge to bark at the players. The team was unsettled and unfocused minds led to several bad passes. In a normal circumstance, I would call a timeout to let the players hear of my disapproval. Today, I allowed Michael to reign in the team.

I waited in anticipation for Michael to take action. While he was right in the middle of the unfolding chaos, Michael continued his silence. He took too long to respond and the errors rapidly piled up. These miscues had to cease. I could no longer wait for Michael to assert himself. I called an early timeout to calm the nerves of the players.

With the team gathered around me, I directed my comments at Michael. My intention was to highlight to everyone that Michael was accountable for organising our execution as a team. I made it clear to Michael there was no hiding from his duty. Although I added pressure on Michael, my actions served a greater purpose. By intentionally communicating my instructions through Michael, I also empowered him with the authority he needed to issue commands on my behalf.

As the players moved back onto the basketball court, Michael's response delighted me. Confidently giving his first orders to his teammates, he embraced the responsibility bestowed on him and took the plan to task. The players attentively listened to Michael before fulfilling their assignments. I was looking for this sight of a leader taking charge on court.

With Michael orchestrating our plan of attack, there was a rhythmic response in the team movement. We were re-energised as a team and there was fluidity in the players' execution of their plays. The cheering from our bench was boisterous. The competition was intense and the players lived up to the challenge. In every possession we had, the players pushed the ball hard on the attack. We met every shot of our opponent made with a reply. The players responded as a team to every play. They were quick and moved the ball to the first teammate they saw. There was no ball-hogging or individualistic play. Their shot selection was great and we capitalised on our opportunities.

First, we took a running jump shot that sank through the bottom of the net. Our opponent followed with running past our defence for a layup. We replied with a jump shot that banked off the backboard. Both teams battled intensely from start to finish. The players were playing with a smoothness missing since the season started. The players were cohesive and our team chemistry reached a new high.

Watching the energetic performance, I became immersed in the moment. "Great work… Keep it up!" I cheered.

I was even more ecstatic by a surprise reaction from the player whom I thought was still bitter against me. John replied to my encouragement with a smile and a 'thumbs-up'. This unexpected response was a welcome sight. John's reaction dispelled the tension between us and our rift seemed mended.

Today, the team was finally making good progress. The players bonded and we all forgot their past transgressions. The players' attitude displayed a visible change. We took our on court mistakes positively. Words of encouragement replaced blame. The players saw things in a different light. Michael's efforts rejuvenated the team.

As the evening went on, the players showed a growing amount of togetherness. Installing Michael the team leader on the court had worked better than expected. Not only did he develop his potential, the team improved through his leadership. Team cohesion remerged. The players worked to achieve a common goal and displayed a genuine liking for each other's company.

Michael's first outing as team captain showed promise and brought order to the team. I had entrusted Michael to interpret my instructions and issue orders on my behalf. He used his leadership qualities to forge a cohesive bond among the players. I was thrilled by how Michael embraced his new role. Michael executed his approach to set plays and the technique he used to speak to the players on their assignment demonstrated his capability as a leader. By allowing Michael opportunity to grow in his responsibilities, I realised that all those what-if questions were moot. I had considered empowering Michael with greater authority for a while, but my apprehensions held me back. I did not trust the players enough. Contrary to my initial judgement, my faith in Michael has led me to discover a way to evoke passion, dedication, and commitment among the players.

Despite our loss in today's match, there was an obvious difference in the team. The players were out-skilled and out-played, but they did not care about the loss. They were a happier team and they now found a way to play better. While we were still searching for our identity as a team in this new season, the camaraderie missing from the start of the season developed. The players had lost the match today but their confidence to become a better team made them feel like champions.

Our team debrief filled with lively voices and hearty tones. The players chattered ecstatically of the great plays they made. I noticed that they were visibly upbeat with the better on-court chemistry. The players talked with each other on the moves they should work on. I sensed the players' yearning for the next opportunity to work on their game together. The players were making training plans for our next practice. I saw that they desired more progress than what they had achieved today. There was significant development since our earlier sessions and we had taken a huge step forward as a team.

The success in our last game with Michael assuming the captain's role made me realise the possibility of placing a player in an expanded role to discover his true potential. I was initially unsure if Michael could carry the weight of his new responsibility, but the positive outcome from the first attempt encouraged me. Michael was the catalyst to our team cohesiveness. His effort and commitment helped refocus the team's direction and

provide players with an added level of confidence. The players responded to the on-court leadership with renewed vigour during competition and fought as a band of brothers.

I attributed today's excellent match performance to Michael's maturation into the leader of our team. I felt encouraged by how he stepped up and brought the players together. Expressing my delight on how he organised our team's offensive performance, I could not contain my excitement over his progress during the short chat we had after his first game at the helm. I suggested how he could further work with the players before our next meeting with this same opponent. I elaborated on the seventeen free throws the players took, of which they made only three bonus points. I carried on with my emphasis that he needs to focus the players on playing better defence. I highlighted on the poor transition defence that left us vulnerable to our opponent's quick fast breaks. Throughout our whole thirty-minute discussion, we engaged in a lively and spirited dialogue. Michael was the catalyst and our performance today was a clear sign we were finally making progress.

This last game of the season was a major turnaround. As a team, we had experienced frustration through the course of our season. The great stride we made with our newly minted captain not only gave us a glimmer of hope, we were finally becoming a stronger team. The visible camaraderie within the team showed Michael had helped foster a nurturing culture. The players were no longer self-centred individuals only interested in personal glory. By assuming a leadership role on this team, Michael was now the big brother watching over his teammates. Considering the amount of care he had shown his teammates and the team this past month, calling Michael the 'big brother' was fitting.

Since our turnaround, everyone on the team had formed a tighter bond through our collective desires. From the way the players took initiative to contribute to the team's continuity, I could see they had taken ownership of the team's well-being and growth. There was new meaning to the expression that "this is our team". More importantly, I knew I was no longer alone in my quest to shape the players into a competitive team. With the captain's help, there was leadership for team both on and off the court.

As I watched the players leave the court a few at a time, the chatter among the players was spirited and lively. They spoke of what they could do next and went on about how to prepare for it. Judging by their enthusiasm, our recent success had renewed the players' confidence in our greater potential. Our earlier setbacks were now a distant memory. There was newfound dedication to build our team's future and the players were undeterred by the challenges and hardships that lay ahead for our next season.

Parting Thoughts Before The Off-Season

This season began like any of my other seasons coaching a team of players through a competitive community basketball league. My goal was to bring together a group of seasoned competitors and novices to form a cohesive and dedicated basketball club. I envisioned the players I was coaching to be part of a caring team who had committed themselves to our common cause. I was hopeful for this team to be a place where we all could grow together through our shared hardships as a nurturing community where individuals could find success with like-minded others. To achieve this level of growth, I believed it necessary to demand absolute discipline and effort from everyone on the team.

I entered the season expecting the usual challenges in sport coaching. Unfamiliar with their new counterparts, the players began the season as individuals. I found coaching this team to be an uphill task. Our progress to find a common ground as a team was slow and tensions among the players grew as the season wore on. I was bothered for most of the season by some of the players' pervading individualism. Their desire for personal glory overshadowed the ability of the team to perform. Players exhibited poor discipline and their tendency to perform selfishly continued to turn winning opportunities to avoidable losses. While I tried to arrest the issues as they arose, new struggles continued to hamper our progress.

In my earlier attempt to correct the problems on this team, I took a stern approach to reign in the players. I focused my efforts to correct poor player discipline and meted out harsh punishments for poor player conduct and indiscretions. Despite

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my efforts to address the issues, my coaching approach seemed to add to the mounting tension and a growing rift within the members of the team. The players were unresponsive to my coaching and I made little progress to inculcate the positive values I desired in the players.

Frustration within the team festered as our season continued. Players faulted their teammates for the team's performance and I too began to blame the players' attitude for our losses. I perceived the stubbornness in the players to adapt to my way of playing as a lack of effort by the players to come together as a team. The doubts and questions plaguing the team were damaging. Before our participation in the competition had reached mid-season, the players were already in a state of despair and I started to feel a sense of hopelessness. This was an emotional time for the team and I was unsure if we would continue our foray in the tournament.

I was at a juncture where I felt powerless to stop this downward spiral. In an act of desperation, I turned to one of the more vocal players to reach out to the team. I had no success with my coaching approach to band the players together and sought help from Michael to rally his comrades. This was possibly the best coaching decision I made all season. Michael cared for the team successfully inspired his teammates. This turn of events would eventually be the tipping point of our season team and an epiphany for my coaching practice.

The team was now on the rebound. We started the season with a clear direction, but the team veered from our plans. As our season progressed, the problem rolled us further in another direction. The downward spiral led the team to spin out of control and we seemed doomed to fail. Fortunately, Michael stood up for the team and facilitated a turnaround.

I was delighted Michael's effect on the team. He renewed the players' commitment to be better players. This spark revitalised the players' competitiveness amid the losing season and was enough to keep the team together. Despite Michael's efforts, the team's performance issue remain unresolved, but the rekindled team spirit would become the foundation of a caring team.

The players would continue their struggles to perform during competition. Individualistic playing was still evident and my unhappiness with the players would again follow. I would again be pushed into a situation where I had to call on Michael's help to reach out to the team. Michael's leadership and ability to inspire his teammates had become an invaluable resource to the team.

While I did not realise this at the time, my appreciation for Michael's contribution to bond the team had far greater implications on the way I coached. At the time, I did not work well without control and this unnerved me. I now understand that the coaching environment and human relationships are beyond the coach's control. I have since learned my rigid coaching ideals I started my season with may not always work and it had become clear that a coach should maintain a fluid response to the complexities of the coaching process.

As we closed this season with the team still unable to win, I was heartened to know we had achieved something much more important. Despite the disappointment with our losing season, the players had renewed their commitment to each other. Gaining the player's confidence was a sign I had also received their trust, dedication, and willingness to give time and energy. The team's recent turnaround had a positive effect. The players were inspired to work together for the team's success to continue and the rekindled spirit among the players was a positive close to the season. I was led to believe winning was the apex of sport coaching. The positivity that had since developed from nurturing a player's potential showed me that an over emphasis on performance was myopic.

Instead of a winning season, we had found a renewed faith in ourselves. We were no longer a group of individuals who sought personal achievements. The team now seeks to continue our growth together. We had become caring as a team who desired to continue our journey together. The ball may be round, with uncertainty awaiting us, but our growth and maturation together continues…

EPILOGUE: THE FINAL WHISTLE

The team received well Michael as the new team captain and I could sense the positive energy from the players. A text message I received from one of the players at the end of today reaffirmed my realisation. Christian shared his approval of the latest development on our team and voiced his delight with the new team structure. He expressed the hope our newfound camaraderie would continue: "Really enjoy the talking session…. Hope the bonding is stronger…".

These simple words were indicative of our day. The positive emotions from today would continue to linger long after the players had left for home. I was certain this bonding continued off the court. I could feel the warmth of the players coming together as a team again.

In our finale league match, I could see progress. The team encouraged each other when opportunities it missed plays. Players communicated on ideas to improve their game instead of critiquing mistakes. Togetherness among the players was amiss since the start of our season. More importantly, with a captain to guide the players during the match, the better chemistry translated into a more enjoyable experience for the players. Hardly any friction existed between teammates like before and the energy was infectious. The positive effect on the team was delightful. With a team captain guiding and organising the team on the court, the players not only performed better, they were visibly happier as a team.

The players had experienced challenges throughout the season and we had since grown into a cohesive unit. There were too many words left unsaid from our last game and I felt need to share my feelings with the players:

"Thanks for sticking with me through the good and the bad. Although it was painful, it is part of our growth. I am also growing with you. I saw something that I must share. Through a hard time, I realised everyone cared for this team. We all want to be better individually and together. We may not have played well on the court, but we are a team at heart."

My thumb pressed against the 'ok' button on my mobile. I sent my text message to the players. Re-reading the words I typed, I could feel the emotional energy resonate from

the text. The immense value of this message laid behind the meaning in the words. I wanted the players to know that the team was now healthy because of their efforts. For the first time since the season started, I could feel that coaching this team was more than a duty.

As our season ended, I gained more than I intended. While we did not become the winning team we had hoped, I had accomplished a far greater success. The realisation our unity could help us to develop further had become the team's inspiration and focused us towards a common goal. We were no longer individuals but a team. This dedication has since turned into our collective commitment to continue to be better as a team. This same group of players has decided to make a comeback for the next season. Post season was here and soon we would again begin our next pre-season preparation.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PLAUSIBLE INSIGHTS

Crucially for coaching, autoethnographies can be a way of bringing the unconscious to the surface by engaging the self in reflexive conversations about the other and context, and the subsequent interactions that occur. In the words of Spry (2001), such performances 'turn the internally somatic into the externally semantic' (sic.) (721), thus developing a critical coaching consciousness... Autoethnography can also help us unmask the many ambiguous faces of coaching; as imitation, as construction, as intervention, as breaking and re-making and as a socio-political act. Such texts involve writers/coaches inserting their own experiences and dilemmas into the culture and coaching performances that they study. Hence, they require practitioners to access their own complexities and to articulate them in a manner others can relate to. Similarly, such a means of representation has the potential for severing the chains of 'normative traditions' in confronting and transcending the problems of representing the complex interactive coaching context.
(Jones, 2009, p. 379-380)

In Chapter Six, *Autoethnographic Representation*, I presented my community sport coaching experiences through an autoethnographic representation. *The Ball is Round* is an autoethnography exposing my interpretation of dramatic tensions in his everyday life of a sport coach. I positioned myself as the central character and subject of the inquiry to show how writing a research text based on my own lived experiences could bring myself and readers closer to the lifeworld of a sport coach. The writing of a self-narrative enabled me to engage in evocative thinking about my lived experiences during coaching practice. The narrative performance of my life provided this study with the needed experiential case material for reflective analysis. Representing the autoethnography also provided you, the audience, with an opportunity to engage with the lived experience as I had done. The next part of this study continues with hermeneutic phenomenological exploration into the essences of my community sport coaching lifeworld. It is through a post-season analysis of my lived experiences with the aid of existentials where I seek to deepen my understandings of my coaching practice.

This chapter continues my self-inquiry through a deeper analysis of the autoethnography on my experiences during coaching practice, in particular the self-

narrative on my interpretation of lived experiences. Van Manen (1990) suggested deeper self-consciousness emerged when performing a reflective analysis using existential themes. He argued that phenomenological investigation into lived experiences, such as those narrated in Chapter Six *Autoethnographic Representation*, is not complete without a further exploration into the essential pillars of their subjective lifeworlds (van Manen, 1990). While existentials were always present in my research text, this hidden knowledge (Jones, 2009) was not explicit or immediately obvious and remained buried beneath the messiness of my coaching practice.

Within this chapter, I continue this hermeneutic phenomenological exploration into my community sport coaching lifeworld by using existential themes to guide the analysis (van Manen, 1990). While this chapter presents my interpretation of my autoethnographic accounts, readers may view these differently and arrive at their own conclusions. I begin the discussion on the lived space of my coaching practice, *The Coaching Arena,* by establishing spatiality within my coaching environment. I then determine the role of lived time in my sport coaching lifeworld, *The Richness of Knowledge in Coaching Experiences,* by highlighting temporality within my coaching practice. Next, the chapter discusses my lived relation during coaching practice, *The Interwoven Social Fabric,* with an examination of the relationality occurring within my sport coaching lifeworld. The chapter then moves to discuss the participation of my lived body in my coaching practice, *The Situated Presence of My Being*, through an elaboration of my corporeality as a sport coach. I then close this chapter by connecting the existentials that form my intertwining community sport coaching lifeworld in Singapore.

The Coaching Arena

Bollnow (1961) noticed an exploration into the spatiality of lived worlds materialises and contextualises the space and place of the phenomenological investigation. Van Manen (2014) clarified "the existential theme of spatiality may guide our reflection to ask how space is experienced with respect to the phenomenon that is being studied" (p. 305). The concept of lived space is not about spatial occupation but the experience of the research

subject while residing in that space itself (van Manen, 1990). This exploration into the spatiality of my lived space in the research text revealed that my coaching practice was a multi-dimensional construct, my coaching environment exists in a fluid state, and my coaching practice was a messy affair. I now start to explore in greater depth these existential themes on spatiality found in my lived experiences.

My Coaching Practice is a Multi-Dimensional Construct

On several occasions, my view of social reality changed as I gathered new information about my coaching situation. Considering multiple perspectives provided me with useful understandings of my coaching practice. My ability to develop practical wisdom by considering new information led me to the notion that the perspectives I held subjectively shaped my view about sport coaching. This suggests an individual's lifeworld is a subjective construct and allowing other perceptions into my thoughts can deepen my awareness of my lived space.

In one episode, I watched the players succumb to thoughts of hopelessness. While some of the players had dedicated themselves to hard work and improving their game, the persisting failure to better our opponents constantly reminded them of their incapability. The players had stopped competing because they had given up hope with their losing season. I had presumed this emotional devastation resulted from despair in our failed campaign. I could not provide an answer for questions like *"What else should I know? What else can I do?"* This frustration made me believe there was no other solution to my coaching problems. My presumptions led me to a self-serving conclusion that the team would inevitably fail.

While I had assumed this episode was solely a performance issue, my discussion with the players would later alter my comprehension of the situation. I realised the players' performance inadequacies did not cause their sadness. On the contrary, they were distraught about the team's future. My preoccupation with performance was so ingrained within me I had presumed the team was disheartened by their inability to win matches. Once I considered other perspectives, I realised the players were concerned with the

emotional tension threatening the team's future. They feared the loss of camaraderie they had developed.

Revisiting my lived experiences through autoethnography revealed the dogma of my initial thoughts. My coaching season began with my myopic view towards a coaching style focused on fixing performance issues (Duguid, 2005). This shift in perspectives about my coaching practice showed sport coaching operated in a three-dimensional space (van Manen, 1990). My experiences revealed an intertwining connection between the players, their emotions, the coaching situation, and coaching activities (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2006). Van Manen (2014) used the analogy of a six-sided dice to explain the multi-dimensional construct of lifeworlds. While it was possible to view these dimensions separately, to do so would often provide only a glimpse of social reality (Taylor & Garratt, 2008). A view from another side could lead to a different opinion.

Sport coaches need to adopt a broader perspective should they wish to develop better situational awareness (North, 2013). Despite this need to broaden thinking and deepen awareness about my lived space, I realised I often limited my perspective to an initial view of my coaching practice. By focusing my attention on only the obvious, the reliance on my immediate interpretation prevented me from fully understanding the coaching situation.

My Coaching Environment Exists in a Fluid State

The difficulty I had in grasping my coaching situations perhaps stemmed from the constant state of flux in which my coaching practice operated. Using autoethnography to revisit my experience during coaching practice, I found situational changes frequent and typically unexpected during my coaching practice. Sudden deviations from my coaching plans were the root cause of several coaching issues.

In one incident, I responded on the fly to situations that developed during one of our matches. Despite the team having their best game of the season, picking up an unexpected foul by one of our key players disrupted the energetic play. I had to choose between making a quick substitution for this player to preserve his final foul, or continue without making a

substitution and risk his disqualification from the rest of the match. I would eventually decide on fielding a benched player.

Despite using sound reason and judgement to make the best coaching decision, the situation would further deteriorate. The player I had fielded was unprepared and failed to cope with the intensity of the match. His poor performance would eventually put us at a disadvantage by widening the score. It was difficult to attribute this loss to the player's actions or my substitution, but I found myself pinning the blame on him in the heat of the moment. The chain of events starting from my decision frazzled me.

Little was routine during my coaching season (Jones, 2006a; Mallett, 2007). A large part of my coaching involved managing complexity and contradictions in a variety of contingent situations (Cushion, 2007a; Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2006). The way I responded to these unexpected changes required me to find solutions through spontaneous improvisations (Cushion, 2007a). Despite my best efforts, any plans I had could change. The only certainty I had about my coaching practice was the presence of uncertainty. The unpredictability of my coaching situation had added an element of ambiguity to an already fluid coaching environment (Cushion, 2007a; Jones & Turner, 2006). This expectation of change during my coaching activities instilled in me a sense of cautiousness and vigilance regarding my decisions (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2006).

My lived experiences had shown that the coaching process was seldom routine and rarely consistent (Jones, 2006a). The need for sport coaches to work within dynamic situations characterised coaching practice as a multifaceted activity existing in a constant state of flux (Jones, 2006a). This fluid state of coaching practices made pre-defined plans and structured processes, such as models (Cushion, 2007a), minimally effective. While contingency planning helped prepare for changes, sport coaches need to be more aware that such contingencies may not be suitable or effective for every situation. Since pre-defined responses may not offer immediate solutions during coaching practice, sport coaches who developed creative solutions to problems during coaching practice were better prepared to deal with the volatility of the coaching environment (Cushion, 2007a).

My Coaching Practice is a Messy Affair

In a typical coaching session, multiple activities occurred around me. Within a basketball match, people, place, and processes were always in constant interplay. The way the players simultaneously engaged in intricate interactions with their coach, teammates, and their opponents further complicated the coaching process. The practical nature of sport coaching had made my coaching practice a messy pedagogical activity (Lyle & Cushion, 2010). The task to deliver complex social outcomes added to the complication (Flett, Gloud, Griffes, & Lauer, 2012). During a match, for example, I instructed the players from the sideline. On top of this, players were communicating among themselves during the match. They were also reacting to their opponents, and we were all responding to the calls from the referee.

Looking back at my autoethnography, I noticed my coaching activities involved a series of crisscrossing interaction between coaching tasks, interpersonal relations, and the coaching situation (Mallett, 2007). The interactions between these components usually did not follow any sequence and were typically unstructured (Cushion, 2007a). This free-ranging interaction between elements inherent in any coaching sequence made the coaching process an intricate network of individual connections. This complexity made routine approaches for my coaching practice impractical (Jones & Turner, 2006). I discovered the way coaches were prepared for their practice has limited their ability to engage new ideas to deal with the complexity of the coaching environment (Cushion, 2007a; Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2006). To respond to the intricacies of the coaching environment, I found situational alertness more useful than a detailed coaching plan. While theorising had helped me develop a structure for my coaching practice, my heightened awareness of the coaching environment had made it possible for me to maintain responsiveness to dynamic situations.

Modelling Coaching Practice for Teaching

This exploration into my lived space revealed the presence of complexity that characterised my sport coaching terrain. The realisation that my coaching practice was typically multi-layered led me to see sport coaching as a multi-dimensional construct (North, 2013). Within the spatiality of my lived world was a social and cultural system (Petitpas,

2007). The dynamic nature of my coaching practice was the result of activities conducted in the midst of intricate social connections and fluid coaching situations (Cushion, 2007a; Mallett, 2007). This complexity of my coaching environment made it difficult to apply modelled solutions on coaching problems (Jones & Turner, 2006).

The examination of my coaching approach revealed I frequently relied on set-plays and pre-planned approaches during coaching situations (Burton & Raedeke, 2008). I categorised my approach to direct coaching practice under models *for* coaching (Lyle, 2002). Cushion, Armour, and Jones (2006) cautioned against this reliance on coaching models to guide thoughts and actions. The inherent weakness of a structured response to coaching situations was in the use of a rigid process to respond to complex situations (Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2004, 2009; Cushion, 2007a). While efforts to frame sequences of play made coaching tactics easier to comprehend, a technocratic approach made coaching strategies rigid and incapable of responding to situational changes (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2006).

While I believed I had committed sufficient effort to familiarise the players on the set-plays for our matches, there were constant deviations from my intended sequence. In almost all cases, the pressure of the moment, new developments in the situation, a teammate changing the play, and many other situational factors made it difficult to complete our pre-planned sequence. These experiences from my coaching practice led me to see the ineffectiveness of the use of models to structure my coaching practice (Brewer, 2007; Cushion, 2007a).

I agree with Brewer (2007) and Hodges and Franks (2002) that coaching models made it possible to understand the complex coaching process. However, I noticed an inherent difficulty in structuring my coaching practice on such frameworks. This arises perhaps from my inability to incorporate a full account of complexities and social intricacies into models *for* coaching (Cushion, 2007b; Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2006). Forcing the issue by sequencing my practice into episodes seems overly simplistic in that it leaves out important considerations of what really goes on in the coaching environment (Cushion, 2007b; Lyle, 2007).

Although the use of models to map the complexity of coaching practices seemed inappropriate, they were useful to outline and sequence intricate player movements (Lyle, 2007). Realising their limitations, I noticed found I could use coaching models as pedagogical tools instead of instructional guides to sport (Casey & Dyson, 2009). Casey and Dyson's (2009) study demonstrated the benefits of cooperative learning using instructional models. The positive results of modelling for teaching encouraged me to explore concepts such as Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) (Kirk, 2005; Light & Tan, 2006). The simplification of coaching processes into generalisable episodes makes complex sequences easier to understand for learners while at the same time engaging learners in games with modified conditions (Casey & Dyson, 2009).

The Richness of Knowledge in Experiences

Exploration of lifeworld through lived time created opportunities to study experiences within the context of temporality (Wyllie, 2005). Van Manen (2014) explained, "the existential theme of temporality may guide our reflection to ask how time is experienced with respect to the phenomenon that is being studied" (p. 305). Wyllie (2005) differentiated subjective time to clock time, or objective time, to explain lived time. Clock time is a cosmic time that may not always be in harmony with lived worlds, whereas phenomenological time considers one's comprehension of experience both past and present. The metaphysical nature of time allows the mind to reach beyond physical boundaries (van Manen, 1990). Temporality made it possible for conscious worlds to intersect (van Manen, 2014). By using autoethnography to highlight the presence of temporality within my coaching practice, not only could show how my experiences provide situated knowledge, I could also illustrate how my practical wisdom was developed from connecting experiences, and demonstrate how experiences were a source of education. I now proceed to explore these existential themes on temporality found in my lived experiences in greater depth.

My Experiences Provide Situated Knowledge

Through this season, I found it difficult to understand fully my coaching practice without engaging in deep thinking. Situational encounters during my coaching season often carried with them deeper meaning hidden beneath the surface of the experience (Jones, 2009). While I had asked questions and attempted to rationalise my experiences, I was often unable to form any immediate meaningful understandings.

While a performance orientation provided other coaches with a system to drive players towards goals, I did not experience the same effect when my season started. Even after framing my coaching practice with structure and procedures as my season continued, there were occasions when I could not ascertain the team's problems with players' individualistic attitudes, undisciplined behaviour, and a general lack of experience in handling competition pressure. While using processes to structure my coaching practice had helped to develop a detailed curriculum, it did not provide me with procedural knowledge to address the coaching situations (Duguid, 2005).

Through the second half of my coaching season, unresolved issues in the team accumulated. While I had tried different approaches, I was unsuccessful in addressing the undisciplined behaviour among the players. My problems began with poor player punctuality, followed by a string of selfish players, which also fuelled annoyance and frustration between teammates. Disharmony and tension became common during my coaching practice. Despite receiving an abundance of coach education and training, I found myself incapable of effectively understanding the issues surfacing during my coaching practice (Cushion, Armour, & Jones 2006; Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2006). I recalled questioning a player's behaviours during my coaching season, *"Did he not feel it was enough to be part of a team that played well together? Was his ego more important than his responsibility to his teammates? How can I trust him during a match now I had no control over his individualistic tendencies?"* Cushion, Armour, and Jones (2003) explained this inability of coaches to connect their coaching knowledge to practice as the result of a lack of contextualised knowledge.

As experiences became more meaningful, sport coaches like myself had benefited from learning through experiences (Duguid, 2005). Despite several attempts to develop a useful solution to my coaching situations, I remained unsuccessful until I acquired practical wisdom much later in the season. My comprehension of the situation was meaningful only after I had amassed sufficient experiences to deepen my thinking and inform my understandings. I depended on my situated understanding of dynamic situations for coaching knowledge (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003).

My Practical Wisdom is developed from Connecting Experiences

During my coaching practice, I noticed I reflected when I critically analysed my experiences for practical understanding (Bromme & Tillema, 1995; Knowles, Gilbourne, Tomlinson, & Anderson, 2007). Reflective thinking helped me consider other perspectives and engage in deeper thoughts about coaching issues. Through my coaching season, I reflected on the team's problems with players' individualistic attitudes, undisciplined behaviour, and a general lack of experience in handling competition pressure (Petitpas, Giges, & Danish, 1999).

The use of a situational encounter during my coaching practice as a frame of reference enlightened my thinking with greater contextual details (Kirk & MacDonald, 1998). Adding to my immediate understanding of the situation at the time of the encounter, my ability to make connections with similar situations deepened my appreciation of the current situation (Cushion, Armour, & Jones 2006). The players' demand for participation reminded me of a similar episode that had occurred the previous week. I remembered my decision to permit this player to compete despite being late and the subsequent impact it had on the team's performance. I had risked inserting a player who was not warmed-up into the match. He failed to cope with the intensity of the game and the poor chemistry costs us valuable points needed for a win. My heightened awareness on the accompanying risk of repeating my coaching decision became a factor in my consideration. With the help of situated knowledge, I was able to develop practical wisdom as I accessed, made sense of, and learnt from my tacit experiences (Anderson, Knowles, & Gilbourne, 2004).

Reflecting on first-hand experiences was an effective way to develop practical wisdom during coaching practice (Anderson, Knowles, & Gilbourne, 2004). The way I developed understandings from coaching situations became possible by moving into a reflective process of deep and critical thinking. This effectiveness of reflection to recognise problems, question routine situations, and draw meaning from experiences enhanced my coaching practices (Petitpas, Giges, & Danish, 1999). Performed constantly and progressively, my reflective thinking about my immediate experience progressively developed my practical understanding through deeper knowledge-in-action (Schön, 1983, 1987). This form of constructivist learning from my coaching experiences provided me with another source of coaching knowledge (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, 2005).

My exploration into my research text revealed my prior experiences as a player and as a coach were important resources for my professional development. The way I sought to learn from my experiences as I practiced sport coaching demonstrated the closely-knit process of teaching and learning during coaching practice (Armour & Fernandez-Balboa, 2001; Locke, 1979). Evidently, learning from my coaching practice could provide sport coaches with a means to enrich practical understanding since experiences had some implicit learning properties that could reveal much about my social reality (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, 2005).

Experiences are a Source of Education

My coaching experiences were not only a source of coaching knowledge but also useful resources for my pedagogical practice (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003). In addition to the informative richness in experiences, the creation of experiences helped contextualise my teaching during sport coaching. Itin (1999) termed this process as experiential education. The central premise of experiential education lies in presenting opportunities for experiences to be a part of the learning activity (Itin, 1999; Joplin, 1995). Experiences provided sport coaches with a rich source of contextual information that helped develop situational understanding and deepen knowledge.

During my coaching practice, experiences became educational when I allowed a player to assume an expanded role on the team. The opportunity for this player to learn

from his experiences became possible when I placed him in a leadership role. After appointing this player as the captain of the team, I ensured opportunities to learn from experiences by channelling my instructions to the team through him and guiding him through the leadership process. Instead of situating this player in a passive learning process of creating knowledge from observation, encouraging his active involvement in the coaching process enabled his own experiential learning to occur.

This approach to training a player by situating him in the midst of the experience allowed me to suit my coaching activity to the learning context (Itin, 1999). Using a co-creation approach, I facilitated a player's leadership development by allowing him to experience the process for himself and learn from his own action (Kolb, 1984). By integrating experiences into the learning process, I had turned experiences created during my coaching practice into a significant part of my pedagogical practice (Polyani, 1966).

Despite the possible benefits of learning through tacit experiences, imparting authentic forms of knowledge were not always present in my coaching practice (Duguid, 2005). In most instances, I had resorted to describing processes and used coaching models to create understandings among the players. Perhaps I resorted to this because my tacit experiences were not easily reducible to the explicit (Duguid, 2005). There was also the possibility that my performance orientation had placed an unduly strong emphasis on results, which in turn led to an apprehension for the players to experiment. While experiences had shown promise by adding educative value to my coaching practice, I realised I had undervalued its usefulness as a teaching tool.

Reflection on Experiences for Coaching Knowledge

My exploration into the temporality of my lived world allowed me to create practical knowledge from experiences. This exploration into my lived time revealed the way I transcend objective time in my coaching practice through experiences (Wyllie, 2005). The connections I made of my experiences allowed me to learn from experiences, develop practical wisdom about my current coaching situation, and discover a useful resource in my teachings (Armour & Duncombe, 2004; Armour & Yelling, 2007; Cruickshank, 1985, 1987; Cruickshank & Armaline, 1986; Cruikshank, Kennedy, Williams, Holton, & Fay, 1981).

Van Manen (2014) made reference of the past to the present as the merging of clock time with subjective time. The alignment of my sense of time to lived moments that occurred during my coaching practice when I thought about my experiences to make better sense of my current situation (Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998; Gore, 1987). Wyllie (2005) described this dialectical interaction between the embodied human subject and the lived world as the collapsing of temporal divide into a 'Now'. In using experiences to enrich interpretations of the present, I had attempted to create movement in my consciousness of lived time (Wyllie, 2005).

I had used reflection to draw new knowledge and insights from my experiences (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003). While one can broadly classify my reflective thinking during practice as reflective practice, there were several degrees to the contemplation (Schön, 1983). Attard and Armour (2006) used levels of criticality to differentiate forms of reflection from "spontaneous reflection", "technical reflection", "dialogic reflection", to "transformative / critical reflection" (pp. 220-221). Reflection had become a vital self-learning tool, providing me with the ability to analyse my own practice, incorporate problem solving into learning by doing, and apply critical theory to examine my coaching practice (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001).

Because a progressive approach through different levels of reflection deepens analytical thought, there was value in appreciating reflection as a process instead of focussing on just one particular form of reflection (Hellison & Templin, 1991; London, 2001). An analysis of my coaching practice revealed I had accumulated practical wisdom from sustained reflective thinking (Hunt, 1999). The self-understanding I developed in this critical thinking process shaped the way I enact and understand my practice (Berry, 2009; Handal & Lauvas, 1987; Killen, 1989). My critical reflectivity made me more likely to learn from my experiences to make informed sport coaching decisions (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001; Knowles, Borrie, & Telfer, 2005).

While reflection presented my coaching practice with a vital instrument in making connections between experiences and theory, I realise not all my attempts at reflecting on my experiences produce useful insights (Loughran, 2002; Loughran & Berry, 2005; Jordi,

2011). I noticed some of my thoughts about experiences were not expansive but rather lapsed into superficial thinking (Jordi, 2011). I noticed this in the way much of my thoughts about my coaching practice focused on technical issues such as executing set-plays and shot selection instead of critically exploring players' actions. By privileging rational analytics, my effort to develop new insights about my coaching practice seems to restrict itself to technical reflection instead of critical reflection (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Casey & Dyson, 2009; Dixon, Lee, & Ghaye, 2013).

The Interwoven Social Fabric

Lifeworlds exist in an interpersonal space (Canales, 2000). The relationality that accompanies lived worlds generally refers to interpersonal relationships with existentially different human beings (van Manen, 2014). These others need not be constant and often shift with changes in time, distance, and perspective (Canales, 2000). I found an exploration into my relationality with lived others in my lived world useful for examining influences of those other than self on my coaching practice (Chang, 2008). Van Manen (2014) explained "the existential theme of relationality may guide our reflection to ask how self and others are experienced with respect to the phenomenon that is being studied" (p. 303). This exploration into the relationality of my lived others in the research text revealed social intricacies omnipresent in my coaching practice, social situations as learning opportunities, and social communities existing in my coaching practice. I now continue to explore these existential themes on relationality in greater depth.

Social Intricacies are Omnipresent in My Coaching Practice

In addition to my earlier observation that coaching was an inherently complex process, I also realised that my coaching practice exists as a system operating within a relational, dynamic social microcosm (Cushion, 2007a; Mallett, 2007). Through my coaching season, I noticed the need to be in constant interaction with others in my coaching environment, which meant a significant portion of my coaching practice operated within social situations. This need for the coach to respond to athletes and other direct participants, such as officials and opponents, during coaching practice had made my coaching

environment a conflicted arena (Lyle & Cushion, 2010). The task of teaching during my coaching practice required interaction with a broad range of community participants, and with it highlighted the importance of social interaction during my coaching practice (Flett, Gloud, Griffes, & Lauer, 2012).

At different points of my coaching season, instances arose where I was locked in intense relational engagement with players that was highly emotional. An encounter that took a more positive turn spanned through several small episodes during my coaching season. In the beginning, I noticed a player's vocal support of the team. He actively participated in our team talks and gave constructive comments to his teammates. I felt positive about his contribution but at first thought little of this display beyond a player's enthusiasm to share his views. After one of our matches, I chanced upon a short discussion with this same player on our team's future. The tension created from entering a discussion on this topic triggered an emotional reaction in me where I spoke from the heart about my desire for the team. This episode allowed me as the coach to breach a coach-athlete relationship boundary to connect with this athlete on a personal level. Especially in the Asian context, an expectation exists for coaches to maintain an emotional distance from athletes as a precautionary measure. Coaches like me tend to shy away from emotional closeness with the players in fear it might compromise our ability to exert authority. I found this coach-athlete relationship to evolve during my coaching season.

Perhaps the turning point came when I realised that my innermost feelings about the coaching situation could help athletes understand situations better. I would eventually continue to move along this path of coaching from the 'heart'. This situation turned positive when this player rewarded my confidence by taking a more active role in motivating his teammates. From his actions, I began to develop trust and was even encouraged to allow peer coaching. He also responded to my confidence in him by embracing his role. He took on the responsibility of bridging my communication with the players and began to flourish as our spokesperson. As the season progressed and as I developed deeper appreciation of his efforts, he would continue to mature in his role and become the emotional leader of the team.

This episode demonstrated dynamic social situations that vigorously engage the coach and the athlete (Cushion, 2007a). Not only were social intricacies always present during my coaching practice, managing and working with interpersonal relationships were a significant part of my coaching (Mallett, 2007). My realisation that relationships and feelings were inseparable from my coaching decisions showed that social factors not only complicated my coaching practices, human emotions can also have a significant impact on my pedagogical approach (Cushion, 2007a).

Social Situations are Learning Opportunities

I noticed that my coach learning took place during social situations in the midst of sport activity (Kirk & MacDonald, 1998). In numerous instances through my coaching season, my interaction with others helped deepen my understanding of the situation (Locke, 1979). I also observed that players learned from their interpersonal relationships and societal concerns (Kirk & MacDonald, 1998). This situated learning by the players amidst my coaching practice was outside of my coaching curriculum and regularly occurred during day-to-day social interactions (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

I began my coaching season with a view that the players were not ready for greater responsibilities. I assumed that since the team were facing issues, the players were of no help to me. The players were the source of the problem, so I could not find solutions on the team. At the later stages of my coaching season, I realised I had failed to recognise a solution to my coaching problems by being myopic. Challenging my assumptions, one of the players would help solve the team's problems. By stepping up as the leader of the team, he had proven me wrong. His actions made it possible for the team to build a stronger bond and encourage better performance. This experience became a learning situation.

Engaging in social situations during my coaching practice created opportunities for me to engage in incidental learning about my coaching practice (Kirk & Macdonald, 1998). This learning from interpersonal interaction was a by-product of other activities associated with informal learning (Mallett, Trudel, Lyle, & Rynne, 2009). Despite doubts about the quality of incidental learning situations, coaches should be encouraged to seek out their own learning opportunities from their coaching situations (Mallett, Trudel, Lyle, & Rynne,

2009). Incidental learning from social situations enriched my coaching knowledge to enhance my pedagogical practice.

Social Communities Exist in My Coaching Practice

Significant others were present throughout my coaching season (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Individuals who participated in my coaching practice included other coaches and parents as well as teammates, opponents, match officials, and friends (Mallett, 2007). Since learning occurs in social situations, the presence of social communities in my coaching practice showed coaching was not just about making connections between tasks and methods, but also was a dynamic social activity vigorously engaging coach and significant others, such as the players, during the learning process (Cushion, 2007a; Mallett, 2007).

Despite the awareness of players having social connections with others than myself, I did not comprehend their full impact on my coaching practice. During this past coaching season, my concerns about the actions of lived other led me to ask *"Were their teammates' behaviours affecting them? Was individualism disrupting our bond as a team? How could I address the disharmony among teammates?"* Among the players were individuals who were significant to the players' own lifeworld. In one incident, unhappiness with a poorly made pass led to a player to confront his teammate in the midst of the match. This player was upset with his teammates' lapse of judgement. The heated exchange escalated quickly and conflict between these two players ensued. The damaging effects of infighting among the players concerned me. While I was an active participant in the heated social situation, this incident showed the presence of the player's own significant other during my coaching activity.

I found the effect of significant others also had a cascading effect. A positive feeling could truncate from one relationship to another. In a separate incident, a player was delighted with the bond he developed with his teammates. His appreciation of the camaraderie on the team extended to strengthen his bond with me. I knew this from the text message from this player. *"Really enjoy the talking session…. Hope the bonding is stronger…"*. Through these brief yet meaningful words, he expressed his happiness with the better relationships between teammates. While I did not act directly to influence his

relationship with his teammates, his relationship with me continued to develop. This favourable side effect showed that one's emotional state could transfer to the next person.

Both these incidents provided not only evidence of a community behind the coaching activity but also demonstrated the effect and transference of emotions within social communities. Social situations provide sport coaches with learning opportunities and sources of knowledge (Mallett, 2007). Siedentop (1998, 2002) maintained sport education is a learning community. The sport education model expanded on the idea of situated learning for education by proposing that learning also occurred through one's own social interaction during sport activities (Anderson, Reder, & Simon, 1996; Siedentop, 2002). The way players interact and learn from others during coaching practice indicates the presence of social communities (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This evidence of inter-relationality between the coach and the wider social context highlighted the importance for sport coaches to consider a broader set of relations during coaching practice.

Learning through Communities of Practice

While I saw evidence of situated cognition from social interaction during my coaching practice, I noticed much of it was not deep enough to be reflection-in-action (Schön, 1983). Despite the surface level thinking during my social interaction with the players, the information I gathered from my social interaction deepened my understanding about problems occurring during coaching practice (Kirk and MacDonald, 1998; Quicke, 1997). Duguid (2005) saw knowledge had both social and tacit dimensions. He argued tacit knowledge such as that of experiences from social interactions was more meaningful than it seems (Duguid, 2005).

From this study into my lived experiences, I found my learning to be situated in a social context and embedded within the activities of a coaching environment (Kirk & Macdonald, 1998). Lave and Wenger (1991) identified this knowledge and learning from social situations as situated learning. They argued it was inappropriate to view learning as simply the transmission of abstracted and decontextualised knowledge from one individual to another. Instead, they described learning as a social process whereby knowledge was co-constructed (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Wenger (1999) used the concept of *community of practice* to explain how humans learn to solve problems by exploring real life situations. This problem-based learning approach takes place with individuals learning through socialisation, visualisation, and imitation (Wenger, 1999). In communities of practice, learners see benefit in gravitating towards communities with shared interests since a social learning environment allowed learning from those who were more knowledgeable than they were (Cox, 2005; Culver & Trudel, 2008; Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Cushion (2007a) and Kirk and MacDonald (1998) paraphrased Lave and Wenger's (1991) work on situated learning to the coaching context to explain that coaching practices were sources of learning opportunities. Cassidy (2007) suggested the possibility of taking a broader view of Lave and Wenger's (1991) ideas on communities of practice since learning from fellow coaches does not accurately describe coaches' learning from the wider educational community. Cassidy (2007) argued that coaches' learning does not occur in isolation and should not be viewed as such. Kirk and MacDonald's (1998) observation that learning occurred in a variety of social situations supported Cassidy's assertion.

The significance of my realisation that coaches and players learn while practicing in a dynamic, social microcosm highlights the importance of broadening sport coaches' pedagogical awareness (Cushion, 2007b; Mallett, 2007). As social beings living in a world of unavoidable exposure to social interactions through their daily activities, the relationality that exists between humans heavily influences their thoughts, behaviours, and attitudes (Mallett, 2007). Not only was my consciousness shaped as I experienced my social world, I was simultaneously learning and devising my own ways to live it (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

The relationality that occurs during coaching practice creates the possibility for sport coaches to develop higher level of thinking about their pedagogy (Mallett, 2007). Despite possessing content knowledge about sport coaching, the opportunity for sport coaches to learn within their sociological context deepens their practical wisdom relevant to coaching practice (Kirk & Macdonald, 1988). The realisation that social situations were opportunities for sport coaches to create knowledge and learn highlight the importance of the broader social context of coaching practice (Cushion, 2007b).

The Situated Presence of My *Being*

Van Manen (1990) identified lived body as the embodiment of experiences presented to human consciousness. As Van Manen (2014) asserted, "the existential theme of corporeality may guide our reflection to ask how the body is experienced with respect to the phenomenon that is being studied" (p. 304). While humans engage their lived world in the embodied sense, technical rationality has continued to dominate thinking in sport and physical education (McKay, Gore, & Kirk, 1990). The lack of attention to the corporeal realities of our lifeworld creates tension by limiting human understanding of phenomena (van Manen, 2014). This exploration into the corporeality of my lived body in the research text revealed that my coaching roles were diverse, my coaching philosophy guides my coaching practice, and technical rationality frames my coaching orientation. I now attempt to explore these existential themes on corporeality in greater depth.

My Coaching Roles are Diverse

Through my coaching season, I noticed that my roles during coaching practice were defined loosely and often varied (Herll & O'Drobinak, 2004). My responsibility as a sport coach was more than sequential imparting of knowledge to the players (Jones, 2009). Tasked to prepare the players for competition, the duties I assumed extended beyond skill-based training (Lyle, 2002). Broad objectives for holistic player development guided the roles I adopted. Some of these roles called for non-technical tasks, which included building players' confidence, instilling a sense of sportsmanship, encouraging responsible behaviour, and nurturing a caring attitude towards others (Jones, 2009). Situations called me to adopt roles where stricter and firmer actions could be taken, including benching to punish undesirable conduct from players.

A significant role during my coaching season was that of a disciplinarian. In one episode, a player exhibited an irresponsible behaviour. The repeated late arrival to our matches was hindering his preparedness and ability to contribute during competition. Adding to this performance issue, his inconsiderate attitude was becoming a social problem within the team. To address these issues, I responded by highlighting my disapproval of this

behaviour to the player before continuing to stress the importance of player punctuality. I was the coach and I believed it was my duty to arrest the inappropriate attitude.

Despite assuming a multitude of roles ranging from leader, disciplinarian, team manager, teacher, and conflict mitigator, my roles were temporary (Côté, 2006). Depending on the need of the coaching situation, these roles would change and sometimes even merge (Lyle & Cushion, 2010). My roles were a significant part of my pedagogy and evolved with my coaching practice. The roles I embodied were necessary to support the teaching requirements of the coaching situation (Carter, 2010). Among the many roles, I served as the team's physical trainer to prepare the players' conditioning for competition, while also functioning as their mentor to guide their emotional growth. To prepare players holistically for competition through acts of teaching fits the argument for sport coaching as a form of teaching instead of training skills to develop technical competency (Bergmann-Drewe, 2009; Crum, 1986; Lyle & Cushion, 2010; Tinning, 2008).

Sport coaches must adopt numerous teaching orientations through the length of their career (Lyle, 2002). While I began this coaching season assuming an instructional approach towards training players for competition, I shifted my coaching orientation to address the issues on the team. The need to provide a player with the opportunity and freedom to discover his leadership potential changed my role from an instructor to that of a facilitator. Evidently, a coach was a better educator if he or she remained vigilant to the needs of the practice and treated coaching philosophy as a flexible construct.

My Coaching Philosophy Guides My Coaching Practice

My coaching philosophy had a significant influence on my coaching practice (Carless & Douglas, 2011). These beliefs were convictions I perceived to be true, whereas values refer my coaching attitude, opinions, and behaviour (Lyle, 2002; Vella, Oades, & Crowe, 2010). My beliefs and values were significant in the way they defined my coaching practice (Martens, 1990). My view of the world and the experiences I had previously acquired formed these beliefs and values (Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2004, 2009). My beliefs and values were also deeply ingrained within me and difficult to change. Through my coaching

season, I found that the principles framing my ideology in sport coaching include my belief in team unity and my value of player preparedness, discipline, and respect.

My values and beliefs manifested in my coaching decisions and actions. Articulated as my coaching philosophy, my attention to the preparedness of the players represented my belief on the importance of being ready for competition and the value I placed on players' efforts in maintaining their physical conditioning and mental readiness. My emphasis to ensure preparedness of the players during my coaching practice led me to focus coaching activities on skills-based drills and mastering competition situations over physical training. In addition to my belief that players should possess a responsible attitude for their preparedness, I also valued the player's sustained effort during competition. This also led me to be critical of actions contradicted to my views. *"What I had witnessed today deviated from my beliefs about player conduct and shook my confidence in the team. Was my expectation reasonable? Did I ask too much from them?"* I remember asking.

On numerous occasions, I was critical of certain actions by the players because they were in conflict to my beliefs and values. There were notable benefits of my overt coaching philosophy on the players. By articulating my belief that the players should always be prepared, I was able to communicate my expectations on player readiness for practice and competition. The awareness of coaching philosophy also allowed me to set performance goals, such as being warmed-up before the start of every match. The belief system and the values I held not only enabled me to define and articulate my expectations to the players, it also allowed for who I am as a sport coach, my *Being*, to manifest in my coaching practice.

My Coaching Orientation is a Shifting Construct

I often executed my coaching strategy through a structured process. I saw coaching as a predictable process and I sequenced my coaching practice in a mechanistic way. Players received specific instructions to guide their on-court movements and I believed the players could achieve a planned outcome. This generalist view of my coaching, however, did not consider the effects of the surrounding social and cultural complexities (Cushion, 2007a; Mallett, 2007). My coaching orientation embodied technical rationality by drawing on

instrumentalism, managerialism, and liberalism to structure my coaching curriculum (Cropley, Hanton, Miles, & Niven, 2010; MacKay, Gore, & Kirk, 1990). Some have challenged this technocratic approach to sport and physical education for its lack of ability to represent, interpret, understand, and make sense of social reality (MacKay, Gore, & Kirk, 1990).

In my coaching practice, I had place strong emphasis on performance (Charles, 1979). In many occasions, I was mechanistic during coaching practice, believing that strict adherence to processes produces results. The technocratic approach during my coaching practice was evident in the way I equated the presence of certain components such as effort and preparedness to winning. Tinning (1991) linked this type of approach ideologically to a capitalist mode of production. In reality, the complexity and volatile coaching environment presents an array of variables hindering the replicability of results. My experiences showed that using performance pedagogy might not account for the dynamic social and cultural context of practice (Kirk, 1992; Tinning, 1991). This was evident when one of the players deviated from my coaching instructions.

At the onset, I assumed all the players had bought into my idea of a team culture. Despite my confidence in the team's agreement with the new approach, one of the players followed his own beliefs by refusing to follow our game plan. He chose not to cooperate with the team and was selfish with the basketball. He made his intention obvious through his ball-hogging and refusal to pass the basketball to his open teammates. He believed achievement of his personal goals was more important than the team's performance. In this episode, I saw the situation as a failure to follow performance standards.

As I developed deeper understanding of my coaching practice, I found I had lapsed into a status quo of technical rationality. I believed I could rectify the issue by recalibrating the wayward attitude but was unsuccessful in my attempt. In my haste, I had failed to recognise that coaching was a social and dynamic practice. My process-driven thoughts were rigid and ignored the human element behind the situation. I would later realise that this was a relational issue where the player did not feel accountable for the team's performance and a solution was in re-establishing his commitment to the team.

My pedagogical approach in sport coaching was more effective when it did not focus on articulating ideological elements into distinct sets or chains of meaning, but delivered through a constructivist learning approach (Kirk & Macdonald, 1998). When I began my coaching season, my beliefs about coaching to improve player performance directed my coaching practice. Through this research process, I came to the deeper realisation that player development was more important than an orientation towards performance in certain coaching situations. This has helped shift my coaching values. As Bergmann-Drewe (2000) pointed out, I found coaching to be both a pedagogical and learning process where new knowledge about my coaching practice developed as I coached. In seeing knowledge not as an autonomous body of facts but a socially constructed phenomenon, practitioners become better equipped to address coaching situations (MacKay, Gore, & Kirk, 1990). Some of the skills I found useful for sport coaches to develop practical understanding included critical and reflective thinking (MacKay, Gore, & Kirk, 1990). The ability of practitioners to think critically allows them to be more effective in their own practice (Zeichner, 1981).

Developing Practical Wisdom with Embodied Reflection

I participated in my coaching practice through social activities in a situated context, which largely involved my interaction with people (Mallett, 2007). My experiences showed that knowing about coaching practice was inseparable from doing (Duguid, 2005). Through a reflective analysis of my experiences, I found contemplation of my experiences and situated learning significant in rationalising the complexities of my coaching practice (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001). There was more to it than simply living through the experience. The situated consciousness of the social and tacit dimensions of my experience had a significant role in providing me with greater practical wisdom about the social, cultural, and physical contexts of my coaching practice (Nelson & Cushion, 2006). Van Manen (1990) described this minding and heeding of practical concerns as an active practice of pedagogical thoughtfulness.

Brown, Collins, and Duguid (1989) identified this approach to learning during the context of the practice as situated cognition. According to Bredo (1994), situated cognition involves entering into a social and physical interaction with an issue of concern to define the

problem and formulate a solution. Situated cognition is a reaction to earlier technocratic approaches to solve problems. This newer concept critiques the dominant computational or symbol-processing view where the mind is detached from the contextual reality of experiences (Bredo, 1994).

My experiences showed that the practical nature of my coaching practice made it difficult for me to think about the issues without acknowledging their context. In all instances of my experiences, I gained clarity on coaching issues from contemplation of the problem accompanied by the conditions where it occurred (McKay, Gore, & Kirk, 1999). The literature expresses this concern with diminished practical understanding from decontextualised interpretation of experiences (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2006; McKay, Gore, & Kirk, 1999). Situated cognition helped me to learn from the problems I encountered during coaching practice (Hung, 2002).

Researchers recommended practitioners move into deeper reflection through exploring embodied experiences and its accompanying emotions (Allen-Collinson, 2005; Smith & Sparkes, 2009a; Sparkes, 2009a). Allen-Collinson (2009) continued the discussion on "to bring the body back in" (p. 279) to theorisation about sport activity by arguing that sporting embodiment could reveal deeper pedagogical insights to the sport coach. This self-inquiry with autoethnography granted me entry into a body-mind exploration of phenomena during coaching practice. By evoking my emotions about my lived experiences, my engagement with the experiential data took an embodied turn (Sparkes, 2009a; Rintala, 1991). Similar Allen-Collinson's (2005) exploration of the emotional dimension of an injured sporting body, my autoethnography allowed me to study my struggles during coaching practice. By writing about lived experiences, the added authenticity in my intimate re-visit of my sport coaching lifeworld drew me closer to my actual social reality (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2007).

Despite the potential of reflecting on embodied experiences, I noticed that the sociology of sport to date had addressed the body at a certain abstract, theoretical level, with relative few accounts truly grounded in the realities of the lived sporting body (Allen-Collinson, 2007). Rintala (1991) stressed that by treating the mind and body as separate, the

assembly of knowledge without factoring humanistic elements tends to leave this knowledge in abstraction. There was promise in deepening situated cognition during coaching practice by reflecting on embodied experiences.

Through this exploration into my lived body, I was able form a level of practical understanding by merging my interpretation of bodily experiences in sport coaching with my coaching philosophy (Allen-Collinson, 2005). The attentiveness to my corporeality through embodied reflection enabled me to gain deeper pedagogical consciousness by being more aware of the mind-body interaction during coaching practice (Allen-Collinson, 2007; Smith & Sparkes, 2009a; Sparkes, 2009a). The exploration into my lived body revealed that my pedagogical approach was guided by my consciousness of my lived world, my philosophical construct about sport coaching, and the practical wisdom I developed.

The situating of my lived body in my coaching practice served as a powerful conduit for experiences to manifest into useful pedagogic insights. Being always bodily in the world (van Manen, 1990), studying my lived world in an embodied way allowed me to absorb my felt world, reflect, and attach deeper meaning to my experiences. By living, breathing, and feeling the experiences, the corporeality of my lived world fed my awakening consciousness about my coaching context and pedagogical approaches (van Manen, 2014). Through deeper awareness of my bodily presence in my coaching practice, I found that I was not only able to discover something about myself but also enlighten the mystery surrounding my lifeworld as a sport coach.

My World, My Life, My *Being*

Through this existential exploration into my lived experience, I have developed both an understanding and an appreciation of the transformational properties of a self-inquiry into lived experiences (Ellis, 2007, 2008; O'Sullivan, 2003). I have heard how others learned, have grown, or matured from their experiences. Through the reflexive process undertaken for this self-inquiry, I arrived at deeper realisation of my world, my life, and my *Being* in this world. For my experiences to transform one's life, they must be made meaningful. For experiences to be meaningful, sport coaches must first come into consciousness of their

lived worlds. My consciousness of my lifeworld helped me comprehend the *Being* of my existence as a person and as a sport coach. In essence, the transformative learning that occurred through my study led me to understand van Manen's (1990) interpretation of what it means to be human.

As I looked back at the existential themes of my lived world, it became apparent that the essential structures of the lived experiences I identified and explored through my thesis operated not in isolation but as constituent parts of me as a community sport coach (Connelly, 1995; van Manen, 1990). Similar to the way I found describing coaching a process contradictory, since much of coaching activities do not really happen in a neat process, I found it inaccurate to say these existential themes intricately connect together work in sync to form my lifeworld. Rather, the existential themes of spatiality, temporality, relationality, and corporeality were over-lapping, meshed, and intertwining attributes that transcend space and time to form my lived world.

Researchers have concluded that coaching is deeply embedded in sociology and coaching practice is unavoidably social (Cushion, 2007a; Mallett, 2007; North, 2013; Taylor and Garratt, 2008). Similarly, I realised I could not separate the process through which my coaching practice occurs from its relational activities. This study helped me realise that my coaching philosophy emerged from my understanding of the dynamic, social environment. This was not to say hermeneutic phenomenological explorations with lifeworld existentials should give way to more practical forms of self-exploration. On the contrary, this study demonstrated my existential existence within an intricately intertwined lifeworld. From this self-inquiry with autoethnography, I now see I cannot understand the elements of my community sport coaching lifeworld in isolation. Embodied reflection is necessary for my experiences to be holistically understood (Rintala, 1991).

While my phenomenological investigation into the essential structures my lived experiences revealed several existential themes constituting the lifeworld of my coaching practice in community sport, I also realised that the essence of my complex lived world cannot be fully contained within these existential themes. This observation served to highlight that my innate understanding of lifeworlds was at times too complex to completely

describe or map (Cushion, 2007b). While ethnography and ethnographic forms of research ascertained a certain truth about my lifeworld, I could not assume the truth was complete.

There is so much more to our human understanding I find difficult to put down in words. When I recalled my fleeting thoughts about my recent encounter with a deeply troubled and defiant student, I realised that before I could pen down all I understood from our conversation, I was left with only memories from which draw. The process of developing the existential themes of this study had been helpful in stimulating my thoughts, but what about those memories I had somehow forgotten? The existential themes I had presented in this chapter were my honest thoughts and feelings about my lifeworld, yet I know there continues to be hidden knowledge (Jones, 2009) and deeper meaning within my lived experiences that await discovery.

Thinking about my lived experiences has had a transformative effect (Boyd, 1980; Boyd & Myers, 1988; Ellis, 2007, 2008). As I developed a more meaningful understanding of my experiences, change in my worldview was unavoidable. No doubt, some experiences had little impact on my life, but there were also significant experiences that awoken my consciousness, framed my understandings, and structured my belief system. As I had found through autoethnography, the sport coach's life can be forever changed by entering a new meaningful experience. My journey of self-discovery as both a sport coach and researcher brought me to an epiphany by writing and reflecting on my autoethnographic text. My view of the world evolved as I gained a new perspective (Denzin, 2014). I say with certainty that should I undertake the process of writing the research text and reflective analysis again, it would yield both similar findings and new insights. The experience would be the same, but as I deepened my consciousness of my lifeworld, my perspectives would also have undoubtedly changed. As I live life and experience the world, deepening my understanding of these experiences would undoubtedly continue to shape my *Being*.

CHAPTER EIGHT

FINAL THOUGHTS

The value of utilising autoethnography to investigate coaching hangs on presenting an alternative, perhaps a more authentic, truer portrayal of the activity to much previous work. A depiction embodied through stories that isn't bound by existing conventions. It is a portrayal that requires authors to draw on highly personalised accounts of lived experiences: one that is more faithful to the micro-reality of coaching that reveals the questions, doubts and concerns that coaches may have but as yet remain unconsidered. The autoethnographical text then, allows an exploration beyond the surface of coaching and coaches' personas, to highlight what coaches see and feel and how they deal with the dilemmas that arise. In this respect, it possesses the ability to dissect the internal dialogue of coaches and the motivations behind subsequent actions.
(Jones, 2009, p. 379)

This dissertation began by presenting the significance of a self-inquiry with autoethnography for both researchers and sport coaches, before proceeding to state the guiding research question for this study. It then continued by outlining the conceptual framework grounding this study. Chapters Two, Three, and Four presented literature on how phenomenology and genres of representations had informed social science research in sport coaching. To demonstrate the potential of self-narrative for phenomenological research in sport coaching, I presented the argument for the use of autoethnography as a qualitative research tool to inject greater authenticity into expressions of social reality. In the methodology chapter, I discussed the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of this study before describing the hermeneutic circle research process I undertook to compose the autoethnography. I followed with an elaboration on the ethical considerations and implications of this autoethnographic exploration, the trustworthiness of the methodology, and its limitations as a genre of representation. My next chapter presented the research text written from the experiential data I gathered from my coaching practice. This autoethnography showed how writing a self-narrative could bring the reader and the audience as close as was textually possible to my lived experiences in sport coaching. I then continued the study with a reflective analysis through a hermeneutic phenomenological

exploration into the essences of my lived experiences in community sport coaching. It was through this reflective analysis of my lived experiences through four lifeworld existentials where I further deepened my understandings of my coaching practice.

This final chapter serves to consolidate the insights I have gained from this journey. In this chapter, I look back at what I have gathered from this study by further reflecting upon my phenomenological investigation and the autoethnographic exploration process. I hope that my concluding comments will further facilitate reflection on community sport coaching in Singapore, *Phenomenology of Practice*, and autoethnographic representations as a means for both researchers and practitioners to develop deeper knowledge. In continuing to challenge both myself and readers to internalise and critically reflect on lived experiences, this final chapter may elicit deeper self-exploration. For me, this phenomenological investigation into my lived experience has not concluded but has become a continued journey of self-discovery.

Revisiting the Research Methodology and the Method of Inquiry

The effective coaching of community sport in Singapore has been limited by coaches' abilities to make their practical experiences meaningful (Cronin & Armour, 2013; Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2006). This phenomenological investigation into my lived experiences explored the potential of autoethnography as a research method. Although the use of novel representations contextualises expressions of social reality, researchers have questioned the legitimacy of realist tales for their use of author evacuated text (Sparkes, 2000) and abstracted representations of experiences. Jones (2009) asserted there should more inward attention to the interplay between emotions, thoughts, and actions should practitioners wish for better understanding of their practice. The existing under-appreciation of this richly informative hidden knowledge (Jones, 2009) during coaching practice left sport coaches with an abstracted consciousness of their coaching lifeworld.

The aim of this study was to present a descriptive and evocative account of my lived experiences in community sport coaching for self-inquiry. This study used van Manen's (2014) idea of *Phenomenology of Practice* as a framework because it offers the opportunity

to facilitate an understanding of lived experiences (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Dixon, Lee, & Ghaye, 2013; Thorburn, 2008). Hermeneutic phenomenology provided this study with a methodological framework to reflect on phenomenon as they were presented to human consciousness (van Manen, 1990, 2014).

For a study that approaches phenomenological investigation by looking inwards instead of a focus on structural constraints, this self-inquiry embraced critical realism to explore the muddled reality of personal feelings for deeper insights into the essences of the swamp like (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2006; Jones, 2009; Mallett, 2007) coaching lifeworld. This phenomenological investigation allowed the explorations to take an incantative, evocative speaking, and primal telling form that languages an authentic version of the world (van Manen, 1984). The style of writing for this study was unique to me and I conducted it in the spirit of autoethnography (Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Sparkes, 2000). I wrote the research text as a self-narrative representing the experiential meaning of my lived world (Allen-Collinson, 2005; Sparkes, 1995). Structuring the hermeneutic phenomenological reflection and discussion using existential themes of spatiality, temporality, relationality, and corporeality (van Manen, 1990), this study engaged myself as coach-researcher in deeper thinking about the essential structures of his lived experiences during coaching practice. The systematic, explicit, and self-critical approach to my lifeworld in community sport coaching enabled me to enter an attentive process of pedagogical thoughtfulness (van Manen, 1990). In undertaking my own journey of self-discovery, this study also sought to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by demonstrating the potential of using autoethnography as a research tool to investigate lifeworlds as they unfold in sport coaching.

Concluding Comments

In this chapter, I bring us back to the research question of this study and present my concluding thoughts about of my phenomenological investigation into my lived experiences in community sport coaching.

How does autoethnography lead to and promote understanding of lifeworlds in sport coaching?

Through the insights I have developed from this study, I offer my thoughts for further discussion of autoethnography as a phenomenological research method and propose a direction for future autoethnographic forms of studies. At the start of this doctoral dissertation, I aimed to demonstrate the potential of autoethnography as a phenomenological investigation tool for developing practical understanding. By situating myself as the researcher and subject of the reflective and interpretive self-inquiry, I began my journey of self-discovery in search of answers and insights into these questions:

1. How does autoethnography develop reflexivity in sport coaching?

2. How does autoethnographic research extend my own sociological understandings as a sport coach?

3. What implication does an autoethnographic study have on my coaching practice?

The insights I had attained from this reflexive and analytical self-inquiry suggest that autoethnography possessed greater potential as a research method to enlighten both researchers and sport coaches about coaching practice. I concluded this from my finding that autoethnography has led me to deeper consciousness of my pedagogical practice. My awakening as both practitioner and researcher reminded me that if I had embraced one role over the other, I would not fully develop my self-understanding. The phenomenological inquirer in me is inseparable from the sport coach within me. There was truth behind my experiences that I was only able to discover when I broadened my view of the horizon and look deeper into my embodied experiences.

The discovery that I had made as both coach and researcher with this autoethnographic study had deeper implications. The insights from this study through my personal perspective not only showed how hidden knowledge (Jones, 2009) within the messiness of coaching practice can be made visible to sport coaches, it also challenges conventional approaches to coach education. By demonstrating how coaching knowledge can develop from understanding one's self, this reflexive self-inquiry also revealed an opportunity for sport coaches to continue their professional development.

In response to the question "*How does autoethnography develop reflexivity in sport coaching?*", I noticed autoethnography encouraged reflexivity by allowing easy and

repeated access to my social reality (Ellis, 2007). The perpetual need for me to work with the experiential data to write the autoethnography deepened my engagement with my lived experience (Denzin, 2014). At the onset, I started to recall my coaching practice as I documented my lived experience in my reflective journal. This thinking about my coaching experiences then deepened during data processing where I coded and organised the data to write the lived experience text. This was followed by writing an autoethnography where the representation of lived experiences through a research text not only shows the source of my insights, it also allowed me to engage with the data and internalise the represented experience in my own way (Allen-Collinson & Hockey, 2001; Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

It is my hope that other readers of the final autoethnographic research text will also develop deeper understandings of lived experiences by immersing them into the represented research text, engage them with autoethnographic accounts that identify with their personal experiences, and evoke deeper thinking in developing meaning of their own lived experiences (Hopper et al, 2008). The interpretive process I had undertaken to document experiential data and write the autoethnographic research text was, in itself, reflective thinking taking effect. I was simultaneously participating in a reflective analysis as I was immersing myself in my lifeworld. This reflexivity was not limited to myself as coach-researcher, but also made available to readers with interest in the sport coaching autoethnography (Allen-Collinson, 2007). Just like an ethnographic case study, the representation of an authentic research case also made it possible for readers and audiences to enter into deeper thinking about how these experiences resonated with their own lifeworld (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

In response to the question *"How does autoethnographic research extend my own sociological understandings as a sport coach?"*, I found autoethnography useful in stimulating reflective thought through the use of writing about embodied experiences (Ellis, 2008). By situating myself as coach-researcher within the experience, the intuitive process of thinking and writing autoethnographic representations fostered self-observation and reflexive investigation in the context of ethnographic fieldwork and writing (Maréchal, 2010). In composing an autobiographical story to reinvigorate myself to my sport coaching

lifeworld, autoethnography grants me repeated accesses into personal experiences, and in the process, challenged him or her to think about what it means to be a sport coach. This reflective revisiting of my lived experiences encouraged me to think critically about my engagement with my coaching environment, my coaching experiences, the players, others around me, and my coaching pedagogy (Allen-Collinson, 2009). As I started to acquire understanding of my social reality, I had become mindful of my presence in my coaching practice (Sparkes, 2000). These critical insights about my coaching practice developed through my autoethnographic exploration were useful in evoking my sensibilities about sport coaching and would not have occurred otherwise. By studying my pedagogical practice, this journey with autoethnography had also deepened of my understanding of my sociological understanding as a community sport coach.

In response to the question *"What implication does an autoethnographic study have on my coaching practice?"*, I found autoethnographic research was also a transformational process that supported my professional development as a community sport coach (Denzin, 2014). In using autoethnography as a research method for this phenomenological investigation, the self-inquiry not only revealed to me the community sport coaching lifeworld I reside in but also gave me a clearer sense of who I am. Through writing and re-reading my own autoethnographic representation, I was able to internalise my experiences and engage in self-examination (Denzin, 2014; Ellis, 2007). The different perspectives I developed not only helped me to understand my coaching practice, the realisations also transformed my *Being* as a sport coach. Through autoethnography, I was able to peel back the layers of my being to reveal the core of my existence as a sport coach. I began by undertaking a deeply personal exploration into the spatiality of my coaching environment before thinking about my relationally with those around me, and their influence on my thoughts and actions. By deepening my awareness to my own lifeworld, autoethnography and the intimate engagement with my lived experiences also transformed the way I saw my lifeworld (Denzin, 2014). This was my awakening to the social reality I was in. My pedagogical consciousness emerged from my embodied reflection and reflexive engagement with the space and time revolving around practice and relationality with

significant others. Through the autoethnographic exploration process, I not only gained self-understanding and broadened my cultural understanding, but was also sensitised to the needs of others (Taylor, 1994, 2001). This journey helped me deepen my practical wisdom, and, through it, my pedagogical approach improved.

Implications for my Coaching Understanding and Practice

Rather than deliberately seeking to use this self-inquiry to further my own professional development as a sport coach, it is important to acknowledge that this study was attempting to reveal or draw out the lived experiences of my coaching. The ability of autoethnography to engage my emotional space allowed me to immerse myself in my lived world in an embodied way, which then led me to deeper consciousness of my role in community sport coaching (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Bain, 1995; Sparkes, 2007). By studying my own lived experiences in a multicultural setting, autoethnography was a conduit for me to develop self-understanding about sport coaching and understand what it means to coach (Denzin, 2014).

While the journey of this thesis may have originally been conceptualised to understand my coaching practice, the significance of this study is in the use of a mechanism to illuminate the sometimes deeply personal perspective and develop deeper pedagogical insights (Sparkes, 2000). The portrayal of my own coaching story re-immersed me in my bodily experiences, and through it evoked deeper thinking about my coaching practice (Allen-Collinson, 2009). The embodied reflection that occurred through phenomenological writing was the key condition for this self-discovery to take place (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

The heightened awareness about my coaching lifeworld has sensitised me to my coaching practice. My comparison to how I previously coached revealed a difference in me. At the end of my coaching season, I was actively listening to the players in search of better understanding of my coaching situations. I had also become attentive towards my interactions with the players and focused on the relational aspects of my coaching practice. I was mindfully seeking out different ways of coaching to engage the players. Even if my

studies revealed no solution to any of the issues in my coaching practice, my coaching has undoubtedly changed.

Autoethnography and the embodied reflection process had awoken my pedagogical consciousness. Now that I coach, I listen to what the players had to say. I also desire to interact with the players at multiple levels. Engaging with the players through a coach-player relationship is not enough. I need to engage the players on a personal and emotional level. I am no longer relying on my coaching perspective to coach. I began this coaching season as a 'hard' coach who demanded effort and perfection, but my learning from this season changed me to become a coach with a 'heart'. My perspectives have broadened and I have developed deeper appreciation of the people around me. The way my experiences shifted my coaching philosophy allowed transformative learning to take place (Boyd, 1980; Boyd & Myers, 1988; Mezirow, 1994, 1996, 1997; O'Sullivan, Morrell, O'Connor, 2002; van Manen, 1990).

My identity as a sport coach has evolved and I have become more aware of my community sport coaching world. The broader perspectives that I now possess complement my coaching practice by providing me with deeper cultural sensitivity (Denzin, 2014). My journey of self-discovery has enhanced my competence as a sport coach by equipping myself with pedagogical mindfulness (van Manen, 1982). I have found a way to develop greater practical wisdom and I have become more informed about my pedagogical practice. Not only did this study provide me with insights into my coaching practice, I had sharpened my pedagogical skills and become a better sport coach.

Implications for the Coaching Community

Despite possessing deep knowledge about sport coaching, sport coaches often struggle to develop meaningful understanding of complex situations and issues during their coaching practice (Cushion, Armour, and Jones, 2003). With a need to be more knowledgeable about their coaching practice, autoethnography could develop deeper insights about their pedagogical practice (Jones, 2009). With an opportunity for further

development of practice in coaching pedagogy, this thesis attempts to add valuable knowledge for the sport field via its development.

If sport coaches undertake this self-inquiry, they could possibly benefit from their own autoethnographic self-inquiry by acquiring rich insights into hidden knowledge (Jones, 2009). The potential of an autoethnographic exploration into lived experiences is in providing sport coaches with a means to analyse their own thoughts and feelings about experience to reveal deeper meaning behind phenomena in sport coaching (Allen-Collinson, 2007). These are real-world opportunities for coaches and the coaching community to engage with their embodied exploration of lived experiences and develop tangible outcomes.

By casing their own deeply personal experiences, autoethnography could provide sport coaches with a useful and powerful tool for developing meaningful understandings to better their own coaching practice (Denzin, 2014; Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, 2005). The potential of embodied and phenomenological understandings of coaching processes have the power to access hidden knowledge (Jones, 2009). For example, a coaching course could provide participants with opportunities to write reflexively on their personal coaching experiences to develop their own pedagogical insights. This could also provide a platform for coaches to turn discussions on their experiences into learning case studies. In addition, embodied thinking about coaching experiences can even stimulate the development of ideas around personal, emotional, and subjective responses to coaching. This could quite easily sit alongside more traditional and rationalist perspectives of coaching practice and coaching knowledge.

The autoethnographic research text for this study in itself was an ethnographic case written from my perspective as coach-researcher. The representation of situated coaching experiences is significant because each self-narrative can become a platform for sport coaches to explore and discuss the social and cultural aspect in their coaching practice. My self-inquiry with autoethnography followed van Manen's (1990) concept of critically oriented action research on coaching practice where findings about the sport coaching lifeworld reveals intimate details about who a person is as a sport coach.

My study showed that autoethnography provides sport coaches with examples of corporeal realities of the lived sporting body (Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2007). The process of reflecting on embodied experiences to make meaning of coaching issues enables practitioners to develop self-knowledge (Allen-Collinson, 2009). My embodied reflection on lived experiences from my pedagogical encounters helped me better understand my strengths, weaknesses, needs, emotions, and drives during coaching practice (Hunt, 1999).

The self-revelation sport coaches could develop with embodied reflection during autoethnography contributes to their professional development (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001). The creation of deeper insights and learning with autoethnography could help sport coaches sharpen their pedagogical approaches (Jones, 2009). Through this study, the thought provoking realisation I had developed led me to see nurturing players' personal growth was more effective in improving the team's performance than developing their playing skills. Similar to the self-discovery I was able to accomplish, the coaching community could also benefit from the life-changing process autoethnography offers. This learning could take a deeper and more permanent form by transforming sport coaches' cognitive, emotional, or spiritual way of being (Dirkx, Mezirow, & Cranton, 2006).

Implications for Sport Studies

My study showed autoethnography to be an effective way of researching and surfacing insights about sport coaching. Sport studies are often criticised with claims that coaching knowledge is speculative and imprecise (Cushion, 2007a; Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2006). Some have cited inauthentic coaching knowledge as insufficient to enlighten the complexities surrounding the coaching process (Cushion, 2007a; Mallett, 2007; Mallett & Dickens, 2009).

More recently, autoethnography has begun to evoke researchers' sensibilities and the method shows promise for sport studies (Hopper et al, 2008). While literature described numerous benefits in the autoethnography research methodology, I found autoethnography contributed to sport studies in several ways. The evocative nature of autoethnography enabled me to enrich my field data with a more authentic representation of social reality

and legitimise the writing of novel representations as a research strategy (Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Sparkes, 2000).

I found autoethnographic narratives a powerful medium for conveying situated interpretations of social reality for research (Denzin, 2014). Writing an autoethnographic research text made it possible for my sport study to portray a richer interpretation of human action by allowing myself as coach-researcher to authenticate experiential data through my own depiction of social and cultural interaction (Gergen & Gergen, 1988; Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2007). The potential of autoethnography is in engaging the coach-researcher and the audience in deeper thinking of a sport coaching lifeworld (Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2007).

The resurfacing of memories about coaching practice strengthens my engagement with his or her coaching experiences (Chang, 2008). Some of the memories that resurfaced during my study were happy and pleasant, while others were discomforting and even painful. These memories, especially the stinging ones, were vital in the way they located significant moments (Denzin, 2014; Schoepflin, 2009). The intensity of these emotions, such as the sting of a poorly executed play that placed the coach in an embarrassing situation, the sting of a hurtful comment by a player, or the sting of realising I had been a hard coach instead of a coach with a heart, drew me deeper into my lived experience.

Writing a self-narrative reconnected me to my sport coaching lifeworld on a personal and intimate level (Clandinin, 2006). The way my experiential encounters from this study reverberated within me meant they were significant to my lifeworld, which made this study even more meaningful to me (Chang, 2008). By giving myself as coach-researcher a space to voice his embodied perspectives, autoethnography is not only capable of representing a more accurate social reality for phenomenological investigation, but also becomes a mechanism for sport studies to draw out deeper meaning from experiential data on significant issues (Denzin, 2014).

Autoethnography differs from body-mind dualism types of studies by taking a poststructural turn (Chang, 2008). The ability to represent lived experiences in a research text provides myself as coach-researcher with an academic freedom to enrich experiential

data with my own interpretation of past events (Carless & Douglas, 2011; Denzin, 2014). This phenomenological embodiment of experiences responded to critiques on the way other ethnographic forms of research segregated myself as coach-researcher, the research text, and the subject matter (Sparkes, 1999, 2000, 2009b; Woolgar, 1988). Autoethnography encourages my participation as the person on the ground, as I possess valuable insights about the research topic and data.

In my search for the most appropriate form of autoethnographic representation for my study, I noticed sport studies were privy to a number of phenomenological writing styles, such as those used by Jones (2009), McMahon and Penney (2013), and Purdy, Potrac, and Jones (2008). Chang (2008) used a general typology to classify autoethnographic writing styles into descriptive-realistic writing, confessional-emotive writing, analytical-interpretive writing, and imaginative-creative writing.

The many alternative representations permit researchers to adopt a format of the research text that most accurately represents their pre-reflective consciousness of lived experiences (Chang, 2008). More importantly, this freedom of expression presents researchers with an opportunity to select the most appropriate form of representation to immerse themselves and the audiences into the lifeworld being explored (Archer, Bhasker, Collier, Lawson, & Norrie, 1998). The authenticity brought to the phenomenological exploration with alternative representations also legitimises narrative forms of research.

By freeing my autoethnographic exploration from having to exhibit a specific preference for a particular type of research data, I was able to select a style of phenomenological writing that accurately represented my interpretation of social reality. The flexibility of writing the research text encouraged me to not only internalise the represented experiences but also allowed me to find ways for words to flow and carry deeper meaning about my lived experiences.

Implications for Research

Methodologically speaking, there exist several strengths of this thesis. Firstly, it draws out the dynamics of the coach-athlete relationship evidenced in the

autoethnographic representation and enlightens researchers on the complex coaching lived world. Findings from autoethnography also add to the current literature base on coaching, especially those utilising novel representation approaches. This autoethnography provides important social and pedagogical insights of community sport coaching that differ from the predominant work on high performance coaching or coaching at an elite level.

Through my phenomenological investigation into my lived experiences in community sport coaching, I have found that my learning as a sport coach occurs in social communities and my professional development was intricately tied to my interaction with my significant others (Casey, Dyson, & Campbell, 2009; Makopoulou & Armour, 2011). Seeing how understanding the complexity of my multi-dimensional lifeworld in sport coaching requires both the broadening and deepening of my perspective in a social setting (Lave & Wenger, 1991), I am intrigued by the idea of collaborating with others in their autoethnography-driven sport studies.

My thought on the possibility of a significant other taking a prominent role in sharpening my thoughts has led me to think about the possibilities of greater collaboration in autoethnographic explorations. The success of this study in deepening my reflexivity through critical discussions suggest that a collective research of researcher subjectivity can deepen explorations into the inner personal, emotional, and subjective experiences of its participants (Erickson, Brandes, Mitchell, & Mitchell, 2005). In extending participation to the coaching community, coach-to-coach co-autoethnographies have the potential of adding to this study's evidence base.

By thinking about the possibilities of a phenomenological research method that is simultaneously collaborative, autobiographical, and ethnographical, I have started to consider Chang, Ngunjiri, and Hernandez's (2013) suggestion for collaborative autoethnography. As a paradigm of autoethnography, Chang, Ngunjiri, and Hernandez (2013) described collaborative autoethnography as a pragmatic application of the reflexive, creative, evocative, and analytical autoethnographic research approach for social inquiry. Collaborative autoethnography is not a departure from autoethnography. Rather, it is a

version of a reflexive research method that continues to focus on self-interrogation in a collective and cooperative way within a team of researchers.

Chang, Ngunjiri, and Hernandez (2013) positioned the notion of collaborative autoethnography as an alternative form of autoethnography by highlighting that self-inquiry guides both research approaches. In this respect, both research methods are self-focused, researcher-visible, context conscious, and critically dialogic. Collaborative autoethnography has at its core a phenomenological research method in which researchers work in a *community of practice* (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Lave & Wenger, 1991) to collect their autobiographical materials. They can analyse and interpret their data collectively to gain a meaningful understanding of sociocultural phenomena reflected in their autobiographical data. The autoethnographers have the opportunity to seek fellow researchers as sounding boards to refine or reaffirm their thoughts. This concept of a collaborative self-inquiry is a refinement of "co-constructed autoethnography" proposed by Ellis (2007, p. 3). As member of an ensemble of autoethnographers, participants contribute to the collective work in their distinct and independent voices. Chang, Ngunjiri, and Hernandez (2013) believed this combination of multiple voices for a phenomenological investigation could strengthen perspectives represented in the research text that autoethnographers have found difficult to attain in isolation.

Collaboration with other ethnographic researchers further legitimises autoethnography as a research method (Sparkes, 1995). By admitting critical insights and critiques from one's research community during the research process, a layer of rigour is added to the research methodology (Lave & Wenger, 1991). With several researchers collaborating together to write their own autoethnography on the same research case, researchers would have a self-checking mechanism that addresses issues occurring from "politics of text" (Sparkes, 1995, p. 164). In my autoethnographic exploration, I found that this critical minding of my research efforts occurred during my discussions on the research case with critical friends of this study (Francis, 1995).

While the idea of collaborative autoethnography presents phenomenological investigations with a means of self-inquiry, there is also a need to be cautious of the

potential pitfalls of this approach (Lave & Wenger, 1999). Like any research design that takes a form similar to group work, there is a concern about the tendency of subscribing to a groupthink that continues the thoughts of others. By straying away from the reflexive nature of the self-inquiry, the collaborative autoethnographic exploration may produce synchronous findings rather than produce critical self-understandings. As a caution, Chang, Ngunjiri, and Hernandez (2013) highlighted the importance of finding the right companions for the research venture since the dynamics of the research team may affect the findings. They anticipated that the challenge with this group project is in negotiating disagreements or differences in perspectives.

In venturing into the realm of a collaborative form of autoethnography, I have started to think about how the significant others around my coaching practice can deeper my self-inquiry (Lave & Wenger, 1991). By proposing to enlarge the role of a critical friend whose participation is currently limited to posing questions about experiences to that of a researcher who presents his own perspective of the experience, I have suggested a way for autoethnographic exploration to take on a more reflexive, creative, evocative, and analytical form. In doing so, I hope my concluding thoughts can stimulate further discussions about turning autoethnography into a more evocative research methodology.

Final Words for this Study

This final chapter served to consolidate my thoughts on this journey of self-discovery. In this chapter, I looked back at what I had gathered from this study and presented the insights I had gained. I hoped that my concluding thoughts would further facilitate reflection on community sport coaching in Singapore, a *Phenomenology of Practice*, and autoethnographic representations as a means for both researchers and practitioners to develop deeper knowledge. In continuing to challenge both myself and readers to internalise and critically reflect on lived experiences, this final chapter elicited deeper self-exploration. For me, this phenomenological investigation into my lived experience had not concluded but has become a continued journey of self-discovery.

As I bring to a close this phenomenological investigation into my lived experience in community sport coaching, the final words in this thesis serve to remind us of the potential of autoethnography as a research method for phenomenological investigation. This exploration into my own community sport coaching lifeworld that I embarked on began as a journey of self-discovery. Through the reflexive self-inquiry into my lived experiences in community sport coaching, I found autoethnography not only helped me gain meaningful self-understanding but also could be useful for other sport coaches to develop their own pedagogical insights. In this way, autoethnography has shown itself to be an effective way for researching and surfacing insights about sport coaching. While I had come to understand better my coaching practice from this self-inquiry, the process was also transformational. Not only was my awareness heightened from the deeper insights into the essences of my lifeworld in sport coaching, this study also awakened a deeper consciousness of my *Being*.

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MONASH University

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Reflective Practice in Sport Coaching

NOTE: This information is for you to keep

My name is Denis Ang and I am conducting a research project with Dr Trent Brown a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Education towards my Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at Monash University. This means that I will be writing a thesis, which is the equivalent of a 300-page book.

As a member of the basketball team which I presently coach, you are invited to take part in this study. Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before making a decision.

The aim/purpose of the research

The aim of this research is to adopt a research approach to explore upon my lived experiences as a basketball coach, to determine the value of this contextual knowledge in developing deeper understanding and creation of new knowledge, enabling (re)development of my coaching philosophies. The purpose of this research is also to elaborate on the principles and philosophies that frameworks my coaching practice, and elaborate on my educative and coaching progression as a thinking educator.

Possible benefits

This research is conducted with the intention of benefit to practitioners, participants, anyone with a vested interested in coaching practice, and potential users of the knowledge created. The coaching understanding and contextual knowledge created from this research will enable coaches and practitioners to create self-knowledge and access hidden knowledge from experiences for future opportunities of experiential learning. Coached participants and players stand to benefit from experiencing better coaching practices.

Research scope

To gather experiential data of the researcher's coaching, the research involves audio recording of the coach's conversations, discussions, and interactions with the participants, which will be reflected upon by the researcher for critical inquiry into the coach's philosophy that is articulated in practice. Following which, a Focus Group Interview will be conduct by a 'Critical Friend' as a third-party researcher to gather in-depth responses and opinions on experiences by participants of the coach's philosophy and practice. For deeper exploration into the coach's practice and philosophy, a reflective writing session for participants through Protocol/Reflective Writing will be conducted for a retrospective elaboration into their lived experiences.

Date collection

As this research is an exploration into the coach's practice and philosophy, the emphasis of data collection is upon the coach's actions and communication with participants. Thus it is not the intention of this research to collect personal, health, or sensitive information of participants. Participants should note that the use of audio recording of conversation, discussion, and interaction with the coach may inadvertently capture personal, health, or sensitive information. Should this occur, participants may choose to remove or omit any privacy intruding information during the review of the verbatim transcript.

Date usage

As this research is upon the practice and philosophy of the Coach (Researcher), should any health or sensitive information be collected, they will not be used or published in this research. Only information for the sole purpose of this research will be collected and will not be used for other purposes without the explicit consent of the participants.

Research duration

The Recording of Lived Experiences portion of this research, which will last 10 weeks from the commencement of data collection, will be collected in weekly blocks of 2-hour basketball practices and 1-hour basketball games. As part of interaction with the coach, participants can expect an accumulated 0.5-hour discussion before and after each coaching activity. The preferred form of data capturing for this portion of the research is audio recording. Upon completion of this 10 weeks, to conclude this research and Initiate Retrospective Reflection, participants are invited to attend a 2.5-hour Focus Group Interview and Protocol/Reflective Writing session.

Inconvenience/discomfort

There are no foreseeable risks of harm to participants. Care and effort have been made to ensure that experiences of participants do not digress from that of normal participation in their basketball team.

Withdrawal from the research

Being in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. However, if you do consent to participate in the study, you may withdraw from further participation at any stage. To elaborate, once the collected data from conversations, discussion, and interactions have been presented to the participant in the form of a transcript for approval to proceed, should the participant indicate a withdrawal, the written-up comments for the session will not be used in the research. It should be noted that it is not be possible to withdraw data once they are documented and logged.

Confidentiality

To ensure confidentiality, collected data will be documented using pseudonyms. Constant effort will be made that no traceable information to participants is collected. Extracts and quotations that will be used in the publication of the findings will bear no indication of the origin. The use of a 'Critical Friend' during the Focus Group Interview and Protocol/Reflective Writing session also preserves anonymity of the responses on the coach's practice. Prior to publication and conclusion of this research, participants will be allowed to review and withdraw any findings that may present any privacy or confidentiality concerns.

Storage of data

Data collected will be stored in accordance with Monash University regulations, kept on University premises, in a locked filing cabinet for 5 years. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

Results

If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding, please contact Dr Trent Brown on ███████████████████████████████████████ or Website:

www.education.monash.edu.au/profiles/tdbrown.

The findings are accessible for the duration of this research.

If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:	If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research 2012000274 is being conducted, please contact:
Dr Trent Brown Faculty of Education McMahons Road, Frankston Building A4, room 27 Peninsula Campus Monash University VIC 3199 █████████████	Executive Officer Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) Building 3e Room 111 Research Office Monash University VIC 3800 ████████████ ████████████

Thank you.

████████████

Denis Ang
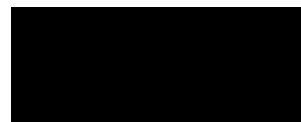
MONASH University

CONSENT FORM

Reflective Practice in Sport Coaching

NOTE: **This consent form will remain with the Monash University researcher for their records**

I agree to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the Explanatory Statement, which I keep for my records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that:

I agree to allow my interaction to be audio-recorded and used for this research ☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to participate in an audio-recorded Focus Group Interview, and
I understand that I have the right to the view the transcript ☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to undergo and complete a Protocol/Reflective Writing session ☐ Yes ☐ No

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged.

and

I understand that data collected from this research will be kept in a secure storage only accessible to the researcher. I also understand that the data will be destroyed after a 5-year period unless I consent to it being used in future research.

Participant's name:

Signature:

Date:

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

Reflective Practice in Sport Coaching

Date:	Time:

Descriptive Notes:

Date:	Time:

Journal Entry:

Date:	Time:

Journal Entry:

Date:	Time:

Journal Entry:

AUDIO RECORDINGS

Data Collection Session 8	
Date:	4-June 2012
Time:	7:00pm
Location:	Queenstown Secondary School Basketball Court

173. COACH: Everybody come... Come... Come... Christopher come... Everybody come, come... hey... Come... Great job... The last 3 minutes was what we should have done for the past 3 and half quarters... Ok... You all fought hard all the way till the end, they could not stop you... We were down by 23 points... Now we are down by 9... Ok... Fantastic right... And we did it all within 3 minutes... This is one thing is if you guys actually play solid defence you all can do it... The offense was picking, we need a bit more solid defence... Ok... Everybody alright with that... Ok next week I want to see better defence... Ok... We are not going to let them rebound... We are going to make sure they cannot shoot cannot score against us... They cannot get easy shots...

174. PLAYER: just want to add 1 point... They only winning us today one reason... It is because of their fast break... You all can see it very clearly... Whenever they do a half court set... They will never get it against us... Agree... So what I want you all to do next week right, try to get into the post and slow the game down... Do not let them get the tempo they get used to it then they will get hoops and baskets... That is all I got to say...

175. COACH: That is good... Stop the Fast breaks as well... Our turnovers are the ones that kill us with some points today right... Ok... Anything else to add...

176. (silence from the players)

177. COACH: No... It is ok... Anyway, I'm proud of you all ... Although you all had a very tough first half of the game... At least you all play hard all the way until the end... Ok ah... Play hard ah as a team... Come hands in, Ben...

178. PLAYER: 1 2 3...

179. ALL PLAYER: Oosh...

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FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE

Reflective Practice in Sport Coaching

The researcher will convey the following points/topics with group members prior to starting the actual questions:

"Good morning/afternoon!"

"Thank you for taking the time to meet with me. I will honour your time by making sure that we conclude this Focus Group Interview in the next 45 minutes."

"I am a researcher undertaking a study into the philosophy and practices of a coach."

"The evaluation is formative and qualitative. Our intention is to gather information that helps coaches improve their meaning making of their experiences in the enhancement of their coaching."

"Recordings are privy only to the researchers. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, collected data will be transcribed and documented using pseudonyms. All information we collect is confidential as to who provided it. For example, I will not disclose who actually participated in this Focus Group Interview nor will our final report make any attributions for quotes."

"A transcript of the audio recording will be made available for your review and commentary before its utilisation for the research. I hope this encourages you to speak freely. Does anyone mind if I audio-tape this session for our records?"

"Our evaluation will be presented in a written report. This report will be made available through Monash University, and it is the intention of sharing the findings with scholars and practitioners in the field of coaching."

"Are there any questions before we start?"

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FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Reflective Practice in Sport Coaching

"The Focus Group discussion will last for 45 minutes."

"Please discuss the questions to the best of your recollection."

"The questions, broken into several thematic groups are:"

"1. The Coach's Environment,"

"2. The Coach's Behaviour,"

"3. The Coach's Competencies,"

"and lastly, 4. The Coach's Beliefs."

"We shall begin."

The Coach's Environment: *"Where did my basketball coach coach?"*

1. As concisely as possible, describe to me what a 'typical' coaching session look like. (the place, the facility, the set-up, the ambience etc)
2. Please elaborate what did you see and hear in the environment where the coach was coaching.
3. As a player in the typical basketball practice or match, describe your experiences in the sessions when Denis was coaching.
4. Please elaborate what you felt about your experiences.

The Coach's Behaviour: *"How did my basketball coach coach?"*

5. As a player, describe the different coaching actions (his behaviour) that Denis used in training and during matches. (Probe on bodily movements and gestures, verbal and non-verbal responses, and articulation techniques if discussion does not develop)

6. In the typical coaching session, with some example of incidences, what and how did Denis communicate and interact with you?

7. What did he say to you? (Probe on how feedback was given, emphasis on performance, strategy, and social)

8. How did you feel when the coach communicated or interacted with you?

The Coach's Competencies: *"What is my basketball coach good at?"*

9. As a player on the coach's team, what competencies did you see Denis demonstrate throughout the season?

10. Give an example of one of these situations. (Probe on the important technical skills, social skills, or other skills emphasised by the coach)

11. If you were a player on the coach's team in the future, please elaborate what skills and competencies do you think the coach should improve on?

The Coach's Beliefs: *"Why did my basketball coach coach this way?"*

12. From your experiences as a basketball player, what values and beliefs do you feel a good coach should have?

13. What values and beliefs do you feel were exhibited by Denis throughout the season either during training or in matches?

14. Is there an example you feel could best illustrate this?

Experiences as Participants: *"What was my experience of the coach's coaching?"*

15. We have been discussed the coach's environment, behaviour, competency, and beliefs. Now I would like you to speak freely of your experience with the coach through the course of the season Please elaborate on any occurrence or incident during the coach's coaching that left a lasting impression on you?

16. What if anything, have you learned from being a player during the basketball season that Denis has coached?

17. Can you give an example?

18. To conclude this Focus Group Interview, is there anything you would like to add about your experience as a player?

"Thank you for the valuable discussion."

"A transcript of this session will be made available to you for review and commentary."

"This concludes the Focus Group Interview."

"The information you have contributed will be kept in the strictest confidence and used only for the purpose of this research."

"If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding, please contact Dr Trent Brown on ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇ *or Website: www.education.monash.edu.au/profiles/tdbrown"*

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FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWER NOTES

Reflective Practice in Sport Coaching

To Interviewer:

The interviewees' reactions, expressions, or non-verbal cues may enhance the quality of data collected. Please record your observations (if any) in the space below.

Sample of Coded Data

Reflective Journal Entries

Journal Entry: 8th May 2012

Questions About Our Future

In the dead of the night, I couldn't sleep. I was physically drained but my thoughts would not let me rest. As I lay in bed with my eyes close, my mind saw my room as if it was bathed in the afternoon sun. My soul was restless. My heart was racing from the tension. My head was filled with echoes. The reality that we lived in was smashed beyond recognition. We were suffering in hopelessness, yet my sub-conscience was keeping me awake. Something within me was keeping me aware that my duty as a coach was not done.

Comment [D118]: Thinking motivated by frustration

My thoughts wandered to my earlier conversation with Ben. I was standing under the orange hue of the street lamp. The light bathed everything around in a tangerine glow. There is always something about warm lighting that soothes me. The intensity from the earlier match remained in the still air. I could still smell the tension in the musky evening atmosphere. The quietness of the night was a comforting relief after the turmoil I experienced. My nerves were shot. My hands still trembled. My stomach was in a knot. My emotions remained unsettled almost an hour after the match. The game was over. The players have gone. There was no one else around except Ben. I did not notice his presence earlier. He has been waiting patiently for the opportunity to speak to me. Now that everyone has left, we were all alone. In a low soulful voice, Ben spoke "Coach, what are your plans for us?" This question has not crossed my mind. It seemed like a simple question, yet it was profound. It pressed for deeper thoughts from me. It sought for my response. It carried with it deeper implications. I was caught off guard by Ben's question. I was unprepared for a response. He was waiting for a reply.

Comment [D119]: Discomfort, disconcerting, disturbing

Comment [D120]: Unprepared, uneasiness

It was not the manner how Ben's question that struck me but the context behind his asking. His question made it sufficiently clear that I am not just one of the players. I started to feel the weight of the team rests on my shoulders. Although we had the same experience, my position was entirely different. I was not allowed to feel like the rest. I was the coach. I had greater responsibilities than to the game we just played. Ben's question highlighted the fact that the players were looking towards me for direction. The players were waiting for my guidance to progress. My decisions and my indecisions were affecting their lives. I had no

Comment [D121]: Pressure of coaching

Comment [D122]: Self-justification, rationalising coaching role

Comment [D123]: Responsibility to players

time to lament. I cannot afford an opportunity for self-pity. There was no recuperation. Every moment I waited, the players were gliding further away to a dark side. Like Ben, the negativity of the experience was eating into them. They were drifting towards hopelessness. I have a duty to the moment. I have to anchor the team back into the light. I have to prepare for the team's future. I needed to be forward looking. I needed to rise beyond the current experience. I need to inject positivity into the players. The team's future was for me to carve. It is an injustice for me to sit on my hands and strike this off as a helpless episode. I felt an epiphany. I came to a realisation. I made a conclusion. This is not the end. This is only the beginning if I am to help the team move forward. I must look beyond the surface. I have to explore deeper into the sequence of events. I need to learn from the experience. I felt a renewed encouragement. The future has yet to be decided. I was not going to resign to fate. I was going to take the players further. When the night is at its darkest, dawn approaches.

Maybe the unexpected nature of Ben's question was for the best. I had no time to create a prepared reply. I had no time to formulate the ideal response. There was only time for the answer I had on hand. I spoke from my heart. "I have not thought much in depth about this. We are only in week 4 of the season and we still have a long way to go. I do know this Ben. Wouldn't it be nice to have a group of players playing together and growing together? Teammates do come and go. Wouldn't it be great to have a group of guys building a bond beyond the basketball court. Teammates who are together not just to play the game. Friends who are together because this is where they feel they belong." What I said was honest and unplanned. It may not have been a perfect speech to rally the players but there was nothing artificial or frivolous. I spoke with the utmost sincerity. These were my inner most thoughts and desires. As I spoke, I could sense the brightening in Ben's eyes. There was a connection with the words that I just said. His body visibly relaxed as I completed my sentence. He seemed reassured by my words. My unplanned expression seemed to establish an intrinsic connection with him. Ben's reaction inspired me to continue to express my inner desires. "Ben, I need you to do something very important to me, something extremely important to the team. I am worried that I am not connecting enough with the players during the game when I am on the sideline. I need somebody to be my voice on the court. I need somebody to lead the players. Can you do that for me?" It was a bold suggestion. I felt the brashness in my tone. I suggested this on a whim. I voiced my mind. I

Comment [D124]: Staying strong, not revealing any sign of weakness

Comment [D125]: Self-justification, rationalising coaching role

Comment [D126]: Surprise, atalytic

Comment [D127]: Reflection-in-action

Comment [D128]: Team concept

Comment [D129]: Reflection-in-action, expressing thoughts

Comment [D130]: Reaching out and connecting with player

Comment [D131]: Inspired

Comment [D132]: Participatory, involving the players

did not consider the implications. I reacted solely to my initial thoughts. I cannot do this alone. I need help to hold the players and the team together. I speak to the players from a coach-player perspective. I need someone who can speak to the players as a peer. I impart and empower the players with strategies and tactics. I need someone who can organise and execute these strategies and tactics on the court. I held my breath waiting for a response.

"Coach, this is the first time someone asked me to do this. I'll get the players to meet one of these days when we are not training or having a game. We can meet to talk more about the team." I did not realise it at the time. Ben's reply was more than just a statement that left a positive close to a dreadful experience. As I recalled the conversation, I felt the same delightful surprise by Ben's response. His enthusiasm was refreshing. I have been surrounded by negativity. The shadow over my thoughts started to fade into a glowing brightness. The future was changing. I was being charged by the positive prospects. I am looking forward to the greater things to come. Thank you Ben.

Comment [D133]: Team concept

Comment [D134]: Aligning of beliefs with practice, allowing coaching philosophy to thrive in practice

Sample of Coded Data

Audio Recordings

53. (timeout)

54. **COACH:** Group of you on the court, what I want is solid defence and rebound... Ok every single shot I want everybody to challenge and fight for the ball we are not going to give them another basket their points is going to stay at two-one-two all the way till the end of this quarter... Ok... Alright... On offence right what I want is very simple, when you are playing one-four on rebound the ball goes up, this guy rebound on this side, the guy rebound on this side, do not run into another guy's place and try to fight for the ball... What happen is we have guys fighting the ball on one side only ok that's one, but we are fighting for the ball so that's good... Ok the other thing I want you guys to do is this... on the ball itself right I want solid passes, I don't want drop passes, I don't want you to roll the ball, I want you to chest pass, ok, if you have nowhere to go, don't throw the ball in the air, hold the ball down keep your footing and wait... Ok if they want the ball from you they have to foul you I don't want you to just throw the ball into their hands and then get deflected out... Ok... Alright, solid defence all the way till the last two minutes forty five seconds, do not give them another single ball...

> **Comment [D150]:** Frustration

55. **PLAYER:** tell them to pass properly, always back passing, we didn't have a single shot... The last three minutes no shots were taken...

> **Comment [D151]:** Player frustration

56. **COACH:** Yes you are right, I told them already... Later we adjust again, we still have another half of the game...

> **Comment [D152]:** Frustration

57. **COACH:** Keep your heads up... Take it, good shot... Come on PK harder passes... Chin Soon Chin Soon, I want you to bring the ball... Ball handler Chin Soon... Good one... Follow, hands up... Good... Give him... Out, out... give him give him swing the ball, swing the ball a bit more...

> **Comment [D153]:** Frustration

58. **COACH:** (towards player on the bench)... I want you to go in for number thirteen... Sub, sub...

59. **COACH:** (towards player coming in to the bench)... Daniel, Daniel give it a while... Get some water... The next quarter start you are going in with Ben... Get some water... I want to see power in there... Good...

60. **COACH:** Defence guys... Come on, good, good... good call Chin Soon hold for one shot... Defence, proper defence... Challenge... Chin Soon... Defence guys everybody defence, no shot for them... James at the back...

61. (whistle... end of quarter)

62. **COACH:** Good job come in...

63. **COACH:** Well done...

> **Comment [D154]:** Positive reinforcement

64. **COACH:** Ok... Same thing now ok the five of you will stay on the court first... Alright what I want to see is for you guys to correct the mistakes... When u get the ball I don't want you to figure out the ball... If you dribble down the base line, take a shot if you shoot it shoot it don't dribble halfway and then toss the ball out and get a fast break... We lose 2 points just like that... Ok... Good shooting so far, good aggressive if you get open shot just take it... Otherwise you just secure the ball organise the game... You are the point... You have him in the corner, he can shoot 3s as well... Ok... Good job in the game... Good job, keep hustling

for the ball okay... Keep playing hard... Hands in everybody... five of you in the court... Everybody get water... On three Oosh... One, two, three...

65. **ALL:** Oosh...

66. Ok, same thing guys five on the court... one-four, I want to see overloading Chin Soon knows how to organise this... You give the ball the ball comes back this guy comes out this side swing the ball give him... The post guys don't run all over the place, stay in the pose, alright... Ok hands in... One, two, three...

67. **ALL:** Oosh...

68. (half starts)

69. **COACH:** Guys we are on the offence our ball get into position... Good shot Jeff... Turnaround... Chin Soon get the ball... Good one P.K.... Much better... Hold the ball draw the foul, good one... Nice turnaround... Good shot, good shot... Follow P.K. don't give up... Good one... Outlet... Take it nice... Good run good run... Ok

70. **COACH:** Ben, LiRen, Sam come, come all five of you... Ben, Ben come here first... LiRen come here first... Not yet...

71. **COACH:** Ok, alright the five of you are going in for the five of them, ok this is what I want from you guys, ball handler, wing, pick the sides you want... Post, the two of you... Rebound I want you to rebound on your side of the court I don't want you to run on each side... Even if you cannot receive the ball you are heavily guarded by somebody, I don't want you to run on the other side, I want you to stay on your side... Don't run into the side because it will cause traffic... The other thing is, overload, bring one side, give him, if he doesn't have swing, swing, come out and then give it to him... Like what we play in the first few minutes of the first quarter... Very decent game very smart game... Very simple game make every shot counts... Take good shot and make hard solid passes... One, two, three...

72. **ALL:** Oosh...

73. **COACH:** Good, good, good our ball... Sam run to the ball Sam... Sam run to the ball... Good job Daniel... Sam, cut into the guy and run to the ball... Good...

74. **COACH:** Stack, stack, inbound... Inbound... Stack, stack... LiRen run out... Chin Soon I want you to run out... Slap it... LiRen... Take it strong LiRen... Sam follow, Sam challenge... Daniel too much dribbling... Pass it out... Good one Sam...

75. **COACH:** Turnaround... Dribble... Nice Daniel... Good one... Good drive keep taking those... Rebound... watch out... good... Oh come on...

76. **COACH:** Kelvin , you are going to go in for Sam you are the ball handler... Ok I want you to set up and organise now you see he is running at the back, see what's happening... He is not controlling the ball or anything... You need to control...

77. **COACH:** And then you are going in for Christopher... Same thing, you are the wing... If you can drive get some free throws...

78. **COACH:** Daniel good one… Much better Sam this time… Much better on the drive… Except that before you drive, before you layup a bit earlier… You are doing it a bit too early, so if you take it a bit later, you take a step and dribble in then you get a better one, ok…

79. **COACH:** Good settle down… Chin Soon ask for the ball… Chin Soon ask for the ball told you right…

80. **COACH:** Sam but I like your drive earlier… The one you went up… That's very nice… Daniel yours… Rebound it… Rebound the ball… Rebound it… rebound it… Chin Soon… five seconds… ben go for it…

81. (whistle… end of quarter)

82. **COACH:** Come, come, come… you guys come, come… Ok I do not understand how when we are standing like this and the guy miss… two free throws twice… Alright I cannot understand why the second free throw miss, why this guy on the free throw can rebound it two times in the row… Do not run in, everybody is guarding 1 guy, if you can see on the free throw line this guy is guarding the free throw shooter, this guy will take 1 guy, sorry, this one will take one guy, and this guy too… ok… That's all very simple… What I want also to block out on the rebound not just the free throw one… The normal shots… What happen is we are not blocking as well, all we are doing is we are jumping and then we are not getting the ball… LiRen is keeping his hands up but he is not getting the ball because the guy is jumping over him… Right… I want you to use your weight here and lean on him… Ok… The same five of you stay in again…

83. **PLAYER:** Guys, guys we need our very best to win this game ah…

84. **COACH:** ok on three Oosh… One, two, three…

85. **ALL:** Oosh…

86. (quarter starts)

87. **COACH:** Come on guys… Drive drive shoot… Good shot… Go in for kelvin… Ya, go in for kelvin

88. **COACH:** Good one too many turnover guys………… LiRen, LiRen, its ok… Learn to pivot your feet… Good one much better… Play hard… good one James…

89. **COACH:** Ok you are going in for Daniel, Chin Soon playing at the back, if you get a chance at the wing, drive him ok get some good shots get some fouls… Ok…

90. **COACH:** Good D Daniel… Tell them tell them… Shoot ball… Good one James… Chin Soon again… Sam Chin Soon… Sub him… Ya, sub, sub… Sub Chin Soon…

91. **COACH:** You ok… Come, come, come…

92. **PLAYER:** He stick his bloody leg just to foul me…

93. **COACH:** Yup, yup but it's a normal foul… It happens… Rest it up… How's your leg… Bruised… Is it bruise… Ok rest ah

94. **COACH:** It is normal... When we are in the game we get those, but you got to keep your head... Next time you just take that, and take the foul, and then get free throws... I know, he is a moving screen... Ya so we will get them lah... But must control... If not we give up easy technical for nothing...

95. **COACH:** Turnaround... Good keep running... Good job good job James... Oh we been missing that the whole night, rebounds... Stack, stack, Sam... Daniel, ok...

96. **COACH:** Good one James... Good job... Sub sub...

97. (player substitution)

98. **COACH:** (towards player holding arm)... Are you ok... Elbow caught you .. Oh old injury... Good...

99. **COACH:** Sam... Rebound... Push it push it... Look, look, come on... sub number 10... Kelvin go in for Christopher... Sorry today... set up set up stack it... Stack 1 line and then run... Move, move, move... Good... Good try... Good shot... Good try good try... Stack, stack it... Sam where are you standing... Don't run from there...

100. **COACH:** Ok come everybody shake hands... Shake hands... Come, come everybody except the ones that are injured on the floor... Come, come shake hands...

101. **COACH:** Eh, good game nice game... Guys, guys, come, come, gather, gather... Ben, LiRen... Quick one I know everybody is tired today... Alright...

102. **COACH:** We started really strong first quarter... We start to run very quickly we were sticking to the plan... What change till the end of the first quarter was we kind of like start to rush our shots very very bad passes... In fact we didn't even make good passes, all our passes were soft pass, we roll the ball ok or light passes what we want to see is solid passes... If we don't pass solid passes the ball will never reach your teammate and then the ball get deflected, and then you get turnovers and then you get fast break... And then by the time you lose six points to eight points... As a team right you start to lose a little momentum as a team right, you know you stop working that hard any more... So everybody has to play hard... It starts from the first pass, it starts from not turning the ball over you realise the more we turn the ball over the harder the game is for us... I cannot recognise the team on the court... Come on guys, you are giving up before the game is over... Don't give up... Keep fighting to the end...

103. **COACH:** Ok it's really an emotional thing... If we can keep our emotions and play hard till the end, it would have been a really close game... It's just a few turnovers... But no blame to anybody... Everybody had their fair share of miss passes miss catches, air balls, ok, defensive laps, everything we have today... So everybody has to work on their game... So from today we have to work hard... Don't be disheartened by our mistakes... Think about getting the next play right...

104. **COACH:** Ok but one thing I must highlight is this ah, ok basketball although you don't expect contact because they give you fouls they award you fouls... But do expect contact, if you do get it, keep your head in the game, earn the free-throws do not give up easy technical for them... It could be an inadvertent foul, they could slap you on the hand or slap you on the face... and if you react you give them technical free-throws, we don't want that... Ok it could have been a very close game... It could be a two point game, we have

given them the game... So what I want everybody to do is, don't get even by getting angry... Get even by playing a better game...

105.   COACH: Everybody alright today... Anybody want to add... LiRen... Christopher... Tough game .. How's your leg... Ok right... Good job Daniel...

106.   PLAYER: The thing about overload ah, it works lah but it's really important that the guards on the top need to have need to communicate... Like you can't expect, you are swinging the ball way too far... Because you swing it right, these guys can throw the passing lanes just like that... Once the passing is like float up, either the ball handler has to dribble closer or this guy has to come up or something... There needs to be team communication and team effort if we want to win this... The passing gets cut off, and then all we have is post and then you keep trying to force the post... Then they know this then they just guard the post, and then the post cannot set up properly so its just forcing the post that's why we get so many turnovers... Cause the passing lanes are cut off... So whichever side, they have to make it clear, otherwise it looks like a three-two...

107.   COACH: So what Daniel is saying spacing is important, not too little space, alright and not too much space between the guys at the wing... You guys get the ball but not too far away so that you get turnover, and you got no one to pass to...

108.   PLAYER: the defender is pushing the ball handler one way right, or his cutting him off right... What you can do is to if this guy he is in trouble right, he needs help you can go up screen for him or the post can screen for him... Help them out because he is the quarterback... If the quarter back is played down he can't pass, then the whole offence is gone...

109.   COACH: So spading is important...

110.   COACH: Anybody else... Ok good job James...

111.   COACH: Towards the last quarter that was very good he was jumping for every ball... He was doing that... We have been missing that for the last two quarters... Ok well done... Not say the boys were not doing anything but there was a lot of miscommunications... Running in the same area... And when you do that you don't go for the ball... You just stand there and wait for the ball to come to you... Alright... Ok... Kelvin ok... Good job hustling for the ball

112.   COACH: Alright guys hands in hands in... play hard for the next game... We will play even harder, and we will come back with a win... Must be positive... On three Oosh... One, two, three...

113.   ALL: Oosh...

114.   PLAYER: I play post as well but these guys are not going to drive it in I don't mind taking the contact...

115.   COACH: I like the idea of you being the post when you drive when you go for rebound...

116.   PLAYER: the thing is I can't even get the ball, cause they are not setting play up so the post is not getting the ball.... I was posting the way you tell me to go then they overload... They don't throw it to me for some reason, they keep moving the ball outside but they don't

move the ball in… It's like the overload work perfectly right, so you overload here, then back to this guy but for some reason instead of seeing the post… Because they think the guys got me, but I already got him but keep swinging outside, I don't know why they keep swinging out….

117.   COACH: Ya, that's the other thing we will try to do next practice… We work on the inserting of the ball… So what happen is when the post is open we not giving them a one on one… This is working for us because we are pulling you notice that the defenders are all guarding very high, but the problem with it is the post doesn't get to do a 1 on1 like Ben doesn't get a one on one… You don't get a one on one… Today nothing was going right.. Stay positive… We try to work it . Ok… Alright so, give me a second… I will be right back…

118.   COACH: Cause they keep feeding the outside, they too use to the three-two not overload… They know how to guard the three-two they play three-two everyday they play zone or the passing lane then our offence is gone… They need to be comfortable in seeing the post and having screens for each other, like the point guard, if Sam is screen, then we can practice…

119.   COACH: like what I said earlier, the point guard can ask for a screen… I need all our guys here earlier… There are certain things we miss out that we were practising for… Then it's like missing pass… Don't worry, I think this comes as a team… I totally understand that the post guys have to come out and give a screen and then I understand we are getting we are not feeding the post enough, we are getting the movement on the wing but the ball is not feeding the post so I guess we will address that by practising in the next training… Ok but I think it's good, I will try to play you more at the wing…

120.   PLAYER: I don't mind post…

121.   COACH: I think you get if you can get the ball in the post that's where you can do the most damage on the opponent… Because you can drive it you can get fouls…

122.   COACH: My thoughts are this, if you can get eight free throws… Sam can get eight free throws and you make seventy percent of it, you can get about twelve points all from free throws… In the whole game we get thirty seven points in total… Twelve is a lot for thirty seven points right… We need to earn our free throws and easy points… So keep it up…

123.   (end of recording)

Sample of Coded Data

Focus Group Interviews

97.   FACILITATOR: Ok. What about, what do you think, a good coach should have in terms of values and believes. How does a good coach look like in terms of good values, what are some of them in your opinion?

98.   INTERVIEWEE: Besides technical knowledge, a good coach should always be able to look at his players and know what he has. For example is like, if you play a game of chess you will need to know what moves each piece can execute. For example like, whether, can move one step or can move diagonally. So once you know what each piece can do, then you will be able to organize your team accordingly and the way you play and structure accordingly to that style. So you know what you have and you know what you can ⬜. So that is one thing. Another thing is that, coaches have to be assertive but there are times that they should be open to feedback. And I think most of the players on this team will agree that almost nowhere else that you will be able to comfortably talk to a coach.

> **Comment [D45]:** Coaches need to have of practical understanding

> **Comment [D46]:** Communicative coach, coaches should connect with players

99.   FACILITATOR: So maybe it is more beyond coach, maybe more towards friend already.

100.   INTERVIEWEE: Mentor, I would call it that.

101.   FACILITATOR: Mentor.

102.   INTERVIEWEE: Mentor, because I am personally I'm on his team. So I see him doing well on the court, he is like a ringleader on the court and right now he is my mentor. So aside from that, I would agree with him that that he's right. Nowhere else can find it. But I would go down to the bread and butter of a good coach. That he's addressing the weaknesses and building up the strengths of the team. So this is what a good coach does.

> **Comment [D47]:** Seeing coach as mentor

103.   INTERVIEWEE: For me right a good coach right, he will try to understand and now what each of the players are feeling. Like, he would ask them for the feedback which is what Denis always does. And he also emphasize on sportsmanship. This particular incident where the level of violence was more than what was appropriate, so I got fed up so he immediately sub me out and talk to me. He told me even if the other party was a little bit more violent than me I should have taken it into my stride.

> **Comment [D48]:** Empathetic, practical understanding

104.   FACILITATOR: So he intervene at the right time, ok.

105.   FACILITATOR: What about things like discipline? Like punctuality?

106.   INTERVIEWEE: Yeah. I think the lack of assertiveness, people take advantage of this. But then again basketball is a game of passion so he is right in a way that sometime job obligations we have no choice. But other than that it is not his fault that some people are late. Just that in Singapore, this society we don't just get millions to play basketball like in the States. It is hard to organise but when we are here, we are here together as a team. We work well together. There is no discipline issue. There is no distinctive discipline issue that needs to be addressed cause everybody just is focused in one direction. So I guess this is something builds on the same issue every time we see each other.

> **Comment [D49]:** Taken advantage off, lack of assertiveness

> **Comment [D50]:** Working together, development orientation

107.   FACILITATOR: Ok, so this agreement was it facilitated by Denis? Or is just somehow the group come to understanding that there's a strong bond for some kind of culture in this team? Was it the setting or was it naturally occurring when it comes to game play? Any team you go you have that feel?

108.   INTERVIEWEE: Actually at the start when we first join this program, a lot of us were thinking that just come down since we get to play for free in an indoor setting, and we go training

and we play games for free everything. But after like the first two or three games, then we start to find that we actually enjoy playing with each other a lot. We find that is quite fun to be playing with this group of people. Then we start to get closer. Then we even have a whatsapp group. Then we will chit chat there. We will talk. So it is more it came naturally over time. But I think it doesn't happen everywhere, so ...

Comment [D51]: Team culture, development orientation

109.   FACILITATOR: Somehow the chemistry just come together.

110.   INTERVIEWEE: Most important thing is, most of us, there are times we eat together after the game. Not just I am part of this team, my objective to come to play basketball for this team is that we are also a team on and outside the court. We did not start out as team but we got closer as we played longer together. To the best of our abilities when we don't have any obligations after game, we spend time together.

Comment [D52]: Team culture, development orientation

111.   FACILITATOR: Spend time with each other.

112.   INTERVIEWEE: We just lack the entertainment part so other than that we are almost perfect already. (*laughter*).

113.   FACILITATOR: Entertainment. (*laughter*).

114.   FACILITATOR: Is Denis in this picture all the time?

115.   INTERVIEWEE: Yes of course.

116.   FACILITATOR: So he is part of the team, all the way.

117.   INTERVIEWEE: Ya. He is a teammate and coach.

Comment [D53]: Coach's social involvement

118.   FACILITATOR: Ok, so the next question is what values the team exhibit, but I think you have elaborated just now.

119.   FACILITATOR: Ok, just last two questions. He would like to ask for an incident or occurrence, that happen during the season of training that left you a very deep impression. It could be a very individual incident or a team incident that left you with very deep impressions and would like you to describe exactly what happen. How was his intervention? Was it good?

120.   INTERVIEWEE: Initially I thought his intervention would come after a lagged period of time. Like after the incident happen, he will address it a whole; later and not immediately. But there is this incident where I didn't really control the tempo of the game well. So I thought that would be ok, and that he wouldn't scream at me to speed up the tempo or something like that, but he immediately stood up and shout "Changed the tempo, change it to the right one".

Comment [D54]: Immediate intervention

121.   FACILITATOR: Direct to you and ask you change to the right one. But you already know you're not playing the right tempo right?

122.   INTERVIEWEE: Well, sometimes when we are on the court everything is just messy.

123.   FACILITATOR: Yup, just messy.

124.   INTERVIEWEE: And then you have people like me. (*laughter*)

125. FACILITATOR: So you play a key role in controlling the tempo?

126. INTERVIEWEE: Yeah, I am sort of the playmaker.

127. FACILITATOR: So he intervened immediately. How do you feel when he did that?

128. INTERVIEWEE: It came as a shock. That was only the third session think.

129. FACILITATOR: He shouted at you is it? In the court?

130. INTERVIEWEE: Sort of. Ya. Then I was like oh, did Denis just said that? No no he did. Did he? Ya he did.

Comment [D55]: Exerts control

131. FACILITATOR: Because it is different from what you know about him is it?

132. INTERVIEWEE: Because in my original impression he just an enthusiastic and friendly person. A friend.

133. FACILITATOR: Ok, so that shock you and then what did you do?

134. INTERVIEWEE: He did have. He did show me that he did have some authoritative sort of sense.

Comment [D56]: Authoritative in situations

135. FACILITATOR: So just change?

136. INTERVIEWEE: So I just change. He's the coach so I follow him.

137. FACILITATOR: Did you talk to him after that.

138. INTERVIEWEE: No, it is a mature understanding so don't have to really explicitly talk about it.

139. FACILITATOR: So you just digest the learning yourself?

140. INTERVIEWEE: Ya.

Comment [D57]: Player's experiential learning for practical understanding

141. INTERVIEWEE: I got two incidents. Basically, one was the fact that the first time I saw my teammate get injured I never seen a coach run out. The first person to run out.

142. FACILITATOR: Ok.

143. INTERVIEWEE: Right?

144. INTERVIEWEE: Yes. That is right.

145. INTERVIEWEE: Touched me. This guy is sincerely concerned for his team to my lab rat experiences back then when I was just recruited for my skills. If I got no use, I would be put on the bench. This guy truly is concerned. He runs out, he is the first one there to address the injury, so that is impressive.

Comment [D58]: Caring, attentive, compassionate

146. FACILITATOR: Yup.

147. INTERVIEWEE: Secondly, personally when I messed up like what he said, I think he gives me due respect. He subs me out then he pulls me to one corner and then he talks to me. So that is, I was quite touched by it honestly. I was never insulted or whatsoever. Honestly speaking,

Comment [D59]: Respectful

I think I really appreciate what he did for me. I think I got better after I played with this team. We are all not established players in this country, but we coming together as a team, and we keep getting better and better. I see a lot of potential, and it is all because of Denis and he's interventions here and there. He tells you what you are good at and he shows you what you need to improve on. Ya but I think a little bit more assertiveness would be good, like "Hey, you do this", instead of "Hey, why don't you try this" that kind of thing.

Comment [D60]: Appreciation

148. FACILITATOR: So he always use the "Why don't you consider this or that"? And it sits well. It sits better?

149. INTERVIEWEE: It sits well, but sometimes if it doesn't stick, then you need to be more assertive. After all, I can see he truly is helping the team to improve as a whole.

Comment [D61]: Development orientation

150. FACILITATOR: His sincerity part is obvious.

151. INTERVIEWEE: Ya.

152. FACILITATOR: Yourself? Any encounter?

153. INTERVIEWEE: Like what he say. Last week I also sprain my ankle actually towards the end of the game, and he also came out on the court to make sure I'm ok. So it is like very rare because I use to play in other teams where the coach will just simply stand by the side and he will just call some other people on the bench to go check or pull him aside, pull the person out of the court. But he himself comes on the court and make sure you're ok. Then another thing is like, sometimes when in the heat of the game, like when you are not playing properly or what then your coach subs you out, then you feel very demoralized and maybe unhappy because you feel like why am I being subbed out. Because you still can play everything. There was once I was in a bad mood everything when he subbed me out. Actually when he first sub me out I was a bit angry, but after he came over and told me why he sub me out and why he let me play so little that day. So after he explains already then I understand what he trying to do. So at least I know what is going on in the team, I know why I'm being sub out. Maybe I'm having a bad game. Maybe he wants a different style. So at least his players are kept in the loop. We do know what is going on and the reason for putting us in or putting us on the bench.

Comment [D62]: Caring

Comment [D63]: Nurturing

154. FACILITATOR: He always make the attempt to explain and rationalise with you.

155. INTERVIEWEE: Although sometimes there is not much of a need to because as the coach he has to be assertive so sometimes he has to just simply execute the plays, everything. But it is nice he makes the effort to make sure that everyone is ok.

Comment [D64]: Need for balance between assertiveness and caring

Sample of Developed Themes

Reflective Journal Entries

Issues with or Challenges to Beliefs

Issues with Losing, Issues with Under Performance, Issues with Discipline, Receiving Support from Players, Conflict with Player's Views, Shift in Beliefs

Issues with Losing

Too often I have seen players getting lost in matches when things don't go as planned and when teammates didn't move as they should. I really object to the "deer in the headlamp" mentality. And worse yet. A player freezing or looking confused on the court indicates a failure by the coach during preparation. I am a way better than a textbook coach.

> **Comment [D249]:** Issues with beliefs, players not doing what was coached

. I needed to know what the players felt about the game and at the same time I wanted to be encouraging by not playing the blame game on why we lost.

> **Comment [D250]:** Issue with beliefs, not winning

The games were lost in such a manner that they felt shameful.

> **Comment [D251]:** Losing is shameful

I was embarrassed how these games were lost. How these games were lost are stories I do not want to be told.

They spoke of the poor game preparation of the players by the coach. They spoke of a coach's poor management of the players. They spoke of the coach's inability to make good game decisions.

> **Comment [D252]:** Losing reveals coaching weaknesses

This last game was the worst we have played in the past month. We have had poor runs but not like this. I was not prepared for this. The players were not prepared for this. The team on the court were not running the plays we have put in hours of work on. They seem to have forgotten that which went well for us at the start of the game. They appeared to have stopped playing basketball.

> **Comment [D253]:** Disparity between coaching and performance

Issues with Under Performance

He made a short 12 player roster. He was given playing time. Did he not appreciate all those opportunities? Was he taking the team, and most importantly, my trust and efforts for granted.

> **Comment [D254]:** Issues with belief, performance matters

A fear struck me. What transpired in the past 2 games was telling. I was conscious of what can be concluded of my lapses as a coach. I have been coaching for 8 years, and I felt like a novice coach.

> **Comment [D255]:** Discomfort with indication of poor coaching

The sequence of events that transpired has past and there was no way of knowing if the outcome would have been otherwise different. Even if we discussed the last game in length, it would be a highly subjective discussion from possibly different perspectives. There was nothing positive to be gained. There would only be frustration, hurt feelings, and resentment. There would only be a sour aftertaste.

> **Comment [D256]:** Issue with Belief, Rationalising, Reconciling

Issues with Discipline

These past few 2 weeks, punctuality had become a concern of mine.

There were players who came late for practice sessions and came late for games. For P.K. in particular, I have made an exception for his late arrival. Last sessions, he was at a job interview. He was late for our game, and he asked to play in the match. I accommodated to his situation and included him in the team's activities. This session, P.K. was late for the game again. This time there was no appointment he was attending to. There was no reason for him to miss the start of our regular session.

I have communicated the need for attendance and punctuality at the start of our season. He was well aware of his commitments, yet he chose to ignore it. It seemed to me that he was not keen on the warm-ups and pre-game preparation.

Receiving Support from Players

Both their efforts touched me. I did not expect this from the players. They have taken the initiative to help the team in this time of need. They have taken the liberty to help the team come together. The players also wanted more for the team. They were starting to feel that this was their team. They have taken ownership. The players themselves were also letting everyone in the team know that they were not alone.

Conflict with Player's Views

My mind searched for an appropriate response. I needed the right words to get my point across. There was no room for error this time.

I did not realise it at the time. Ben's reply was more than just a statement that left a positive close to a dreadful experience. As I recalled the conversation, I felt the same delightful surprise by Ben's response. His enthusiasm was refreshing. I have been surrounded by negativity. The shadow over my thoughts started to fade into a glowing brightness. The future was changing. I was being charged by the positive prospects. I am looking forward to the greater things to come.

All that has happened was neither expected nor planned for when I started this journey. I was feeling emotions that I was not prepared for. I was connected to the players and the team on an emotive level that I did not think possible. I had become emotional beyond my normal self.

Although it was clear that Chin Soon disagreed, he was not making an overt challenge of my perspectives. It was obvious that he was not hiding his opinions. It seemed that he objected

Comment [D257]: Coaches' Control (Technical)

Comment [D258]: My expectations vs My belief

Comment [D259]: Issues with Belief, Rationalising, Reconciling

Comment [D260]: Agreement with player roles

Comment [D261]: Reflection-in-Action

Comment [D262]: Aligning of beliefs with practice, allowing coaching philosophy to thrive in practice

Comment [D263]: Transformation

to my perspectives. It was clear to me that he did not agree with my highlighting of the point guards taking quick shots.

I have had success with the team through an emphasis on the team concept, yet we are still not there yet. Chin Soon was still not buying in to the redefined group identity. He was still holding on to his personal beliefs. He was incognito to the progress we have made through the rejuvenated perspective. He was persisting to remain in his status quo.

Alarm bells rang in my head. It was not the words he said that I was concerned with. It was that which he did not communicate that was worrying. I am aware that Chin Soon felt restricted with my insistence of him to play point guard in a fixed offensive set.

I know that he felt that I was holding him back and limiting his opportunity to score the basket. There was a tension between Chin Soon and myself. He knew where I stood on the matter. It is clear to me that he did not fully agree with my views. His mock smile was a superficial preview to his masked thoughts. His avoidance of direct communication with me indicated a greater intricacy to his frustration. His effort to maintain his silence hinted of feelings that were not fully expressed.

Shift in Beliefs

Something in me has changed dramatically. I was seeing things with my heart. My perspectives have changed with my beliefs. I was stepping into unchartered waters. I was no longer the coach I started out as. I can feel the metamorphosis in me.

Something has awakened in me. My consciousness is more alert. I have become more aware. I have unconsciously started searching for the deeper meaning hidden within my lived experiences.

Sample of Developed Themes

Audio Recordings

Developmental Orientation

Educating/Explaining, Correcting, Placing Learning over Winning, Analysing

Educating/Explaining

COACH: So for very simply later when we play right, what I want is I want you all to have spacing at the back ok? If there is a hole here right, this purposely allow for a back-door cut… Weak side, you come up here, your come up here, you come up here right, then you cut through (moving the beads on the coaching board)… Then you immediately pass the ball inside, if they are playing man, if they are playing man ah… so you all have to recognise… Now that is for the weak side for cutter… If ah, if this doesn't work, this guy at the post can also do this… You come up here, there is a screen and roll, remember that.. (players chatter)… so the offence is very simple for this play, all of you just…

PLAYER: (player interjects)… If you don't mind me saying… Let's say if he passes the ball in, he does an all around cut right…

COACH: Yes…

PLAYER: This guy goes down right, it becomes a triangle…

COACH: Right…

PLAYER: In the event ah, he can move to post up, or this guy will go cut right ah, can still pass it in… It becomes a so called err… simple offence…

COACH: Ok, right, we can do that, no problem but we have to…

PLAYER: (player interjects)… but err…

COACH: We have to, we have to standardise… If we do that in a game…

(players chatter)

COACH: If we were to do that in a game, you've got to know what you want to do… Based on what you said, basically if you do what you want to do in a game, you must know what is your final outcome… If you want to take them at the low-post, if you know you can take them at the low-post, do that… But if you want the wings to drive, then all you need to do is stand high… Ok, can? Ok, what happens if they do this? If the decide to zone?

COACH: Yeah… Give him a backdoor screen here… Yeah… no, no, no… screen the other side because you are doing the area of the court… Right, the moment you screen what do you do? You drop… Ok? Can see that? Ok, I', going to go slow motion one time ah… P.K. can you guard Ben?… Ok, right, ok… Give him the ball… Backdoor screen, roll… Ben roll… Make sense, ok, but execute it a bit, ah, a bit more sharp… More sharp mean like this, the moment you give him a screen, you take you forearm and touch him like this… Screen must always have body contact, if no body contact there is no screen, you can't even run pass him… ah, ah, Daniel and P.K. ah… come, come, just stand here awhile… Ok, so what happens is the moment ok, I am Ben… Ball goes to Sam… When I give him a screen, I make sure I give him a screen on the back side here… Look when I do this to him… Go (gesturing for player to move) no, no, no, we do that again… when I screen him, you see my legs here, go through… Go through, ah… See, he can't move because if he is going to move, he has to push me…

PLAYER: Isn't that a foul…

COACH: Forearm… If you push him yes, if you hold him no… Don't push him…

PLAYER: Can we go like this? (player making a screen pose with the hands covering the groin area)

COACH: No, no, no, why do basketball players go like this?

(player giggles)

COACH: This is like for soccer… there is no, no need… Screen the guy… the moment you screen the guy, you do this… you use your forearm and do this because this is a strong position… No

you do this, and then you use this, drop… that's it… Can ah? Ok, now we are going to go… shall we do it one time?... Ok, I'm going to ask the defenders to follow ah…

COACH: Ok… Everybody alright with that… Ok next week I want to see better defence… Ok… We are not going to let them rebound… We are going to make sure they cannot shoot cannot score against us… They cannot get easy shots…

PLAYER: I recall last time when we were younger we always do the Same thing, is just that when we pass the ball right we asking the guy to do a back door… Because this side is always harder to pass, so what we did right is 1 pass, 1 screen pass back then back door…
COACH: yes that one is like off the ball screen right… We have that but we…
PLAYER: because just now very small, you are bigger… The defender is ready… So basically cutting off all the lane…
COACH: actually we will do that when we go more advance but in the mean time because we want our ball handler to know ah, that he has to take care of the ball… Cannot always rely on the screen to be open… So we are going to try and cultivate a sense of urgency from the ball handler… Because we get a lot of turnovers from there…

Correcting

COACH: Kelvin, next time when you got the ball in there, you got to keep your pivot foot… They called you a 3 seconds right… That was because your pivot foot was not planted, then you couldn't move… What you want to do is plant your pivot, turn, it's like dancing, turn (coach demonstrates pivoting action)… Then it is very difficult for them to stop you… You come out this way you can still go back in… Can right…

COACH: The ball handler is supposed to be the defender the last man… if don't have, then it becomes a fast break on that side… And to be honest with you, if we did not give them a single fast break today, I think we would have tied them or at least have a chance to win… They won us by about 20… Alright… 17… Ok.

PLAYER: Why is it a technical…
COACH: Because his hand in his face… They are going very strict now, the moment you shoot the hand right in your face right, technical… Good free throws we are still at 100%…

Placing Learning over Winning

COACH: Never run behind a player dribbling the ball… Behind then you are too slow… The guy is dribbling and he is still faster than you… Something is wrong… You will always be in front… So next week 7 o'clock we are still going to be here, we going to work on something I'm going to add 1 more thing to how we are playing we are going to work on our strong side weak side… Alright… But I like the fact that you all are playing hard today ok… The very basic thing is today I came today not hoping that you guys win but I hope you guys learn so I hope you all learn basically…

PLAYER: How's my game coach?
COACH: I think you're suited to play zone… Zone is better for you on defence… Today you are making very good movement…
PLAYER: What is bad… I'm not interested in the good… (laughter)
COACH: it should be then you know how to better… The bad part is, not bad but a habit, I realise when you cannot get the ball, you tend to run out to the perimeter… The moment you get the

ball away from the painted area... You are ineffective on offense... That is to be blunt sorry ..but I would say that you get the ball so far out there is nothing you can do... Unless you force the long range, which I thought was a good jump shot earlier... So what I want you to do is to hold and plant your position... Your position holding is not good yet... But on defence today, the zone is totally you... You stop their big guys... Fantastic... Today record low man... Ever had so few fouls before... (laughter)

COACH: You do everything well... But I need you to be excellent in 1 or 2 things... Is just like when I put Christopher inside he is going to take a 3... I know when I put coach inside, he will push up the ball very fast and then drive... LiRen inside I know he will try and bang and get rebound... John I will see him bang inside... I know Kelvin will pull down the rebound... Can right... Pick 1...

COACH: Ok today is not about winning its about playing a good game... Ok if we win that's good... So Ben go... five on the court...

Analysing

PLAYER: Can I say something... We are saying that right the first quarter we are playing vey relax...
COACH: I know ...
PLAYER: And when they shoot we do not really guard them... Ok we were like next one won't go in... Then go in again...
COACH: There is a thing about relax you are talking about I agree with Christopher because I have on the score sheet we have 17 free-throws today... How many free throws did you all think we made... 1... 2... 3...... Out of 17 free throws we made 3... I know, I'm just being honest here ok, that is 1 thing we need to improve on...

COACH: We only lost them by 17 points... We make 10 more and stop a few more fast breaks, I think we will have made it an easier game... Right... Offense is there for us today, there was nothing wrong with our offense, just not making free throws... And we need to play more of a team game... More passes before we attack... And then defence we have to stop them on fast break, and it starts from our shots selection... Better shots selection, for today I can tell you my point is this, I like what Kelvin did... If I had the game ball today those MVP thing, I will give it to Kelvin... He didn't stop defending, took good shots he played hard... Alright, ok what I want is you guys to play as hard as he does... All of you all play hard, I know Christopher run until his lungs want to come out already... But he was playing hard, so back to the relax one...

PLAYER: When coach ask us to play 1-4 right, he is basically asking us to 3-2 game over here, imagine if anyone of us take open shots, it can be this guy this guy take a quick shot, formation will always be this 1-4... We haven't change we haven't do any screen it is still 1-4... It is very hard how often the opponents on this line... It will always go this way... And that is why they will always get the ball... And frankly speaking overall they are faster than us... So whenever we do an outlet pass right, they keep the ball here that is why we go into a fast break... And if Let's say we want to do a quick shots, it is possible, why not we start the ball or whenever we pass to our teammate, later screen for me, later I'm going to take shots or post... Right very simple... This guy going to take quick shots, come to centre... Just wait over here...

PLAYER: 1 guy here my job would easier, they know I'm going to pass here or here, if I move here... It would make my job easier, please people open your mouth and communicate... Just screen for him, makes my life so much easier, then they cannot slack on me...

COACH: ok so communicate, ok my thoughts on this, I think Christopher sees it… Let's see if Christopher agrees with me… We are playing 1-4… If you are the point guard, all the way at the top of the 3 point line here… As long as you run inside here you take the shot… The ball bounces out, rebound, who is going to stop the fast break… That was what happened at least 6 to 7 of our possessions… Ok… Our point guard takes a shot here, I'm not saying the point guard should not take a shot I'm saying that when you take a shot, make sure that you are not in this position, and then the rebound becomes a fast break… If you are here and you have a last man here, if this is a point guard you happen to be here, aid your teammate here, you miss at least there is a chance for a defence…

PLAYER: just now right they are only they are just like us, so Let's say they are defending like this, the moment you take it to one side, this 2 have to shift like that… The moment you shift like that and if he doesn't right, because if you move right, he is slow to respond… So if he slows right he either have to take you or go down… So it is either you or the forward shot already… So cuts down you can just take the shot before come up… If they are fast, you swing…

PLAYER: And when this happens right, this guy can you be the last person… Because doing this right its very risky,

PLAYER: Because whichever way you do this right there will always be someone there back for defence… Then you cut down here right, when you pass to him or you do not pass to him let's say you cut down, you shoot this guy can come from the back… Whichever way it happens, always 1 person will run back… Be fair to our centres also what… You take a shot right, just nice it is a 1-4… I go high post… The moment they run up here right, if you just take a quick shot, get ready for the rebound also…

PLAYER: the guy is just standing right behind of us so you take quick shots right we turn ourselves…

PLAYER: bring up the ball to here…

PLAYER: we got 24 seconds… When you bring up the ball is minus 8 seconds… We got 16 seconds to carry the ball…

Comment [D348]: Player's self-analysis, discussion and self-realisation

COACH: Can I summarise this whole thing… Whether you all agree with me… Just tell me… If it is a no then let me know… Now, can we conclude that point guard should not be taking shots at top here too quick because there is no last man… The best place to take the shot is you move the ball to the wing before you go for any shots… Everybody agree with e… Ok right… So what happen today it is a team effort not pinpointing anybody, but I want you all to start seeing the court see where the ball will bounce… You know that if you shoot from here, the ball bounce this way… You will not shoot from top here, hit the rim and go 45degree 90degree out there, not possible… It will always bounce back… And that was what happened today because we had a we gave up a lot of fast breaks because of the difficult rebounds that we have to get…

Comment [D349]: Development Orientation, highlighting learning points

PLAYER: Sometimes for the point guard they do not want to do a stupid shot, but sometimes if this guy goes up and marks him here, what he his job is really hard, he look for them to be open but they are not open, he's trying to get them open but they are not open…

PLAYER: if the players get open, job would be a lot more easier

COACH: Can I describe is what I saw is the same thing… I saw at least 4 or 5 possessions the guy did not pass to the first shot, anybody disagree… No ok… Can we agree with that… Because point guard I need to impart this on you, play ball handler as well… As a ball handler your responsibility not just to bring the ball up you are supposed to set up the offense, if you take the first shot the other 4 did not get a single touch of the ball there Is no set up on offense, right… So the other 4 guys are aimlessly running, they might as well stay on that side of the court and not run … True… We have better defence that way anyways… Can we make it such that the point guard at least try to look to set up the offense…

PLAYER: if the point guard wants to play, run to here switch right then people have to play 1 up 1 down... That has to be the case... Then if the defence knows that it is going to happen 1 up 1 down then this guy can come here...

PLAYER: we got only 17 free throws give or take that is only 10 fouls in 4 quarters... Average 2 per quarter... In the second quarter I got 3 fouls simply by dribbling the ball up... If you notice their team is very willing to give fouls... For example you are dribbling up the court he chases you, just go full speed, go full speed and jam break here... He will foul you along the way... You just stop some where the guy will bang into you... You look at this way, chasing after you when you dribble at the side what you have to lose as a dribbler... That the ball goes up still our possession... He reaches out still our possession... The thing is that, when he is running slowly after you, you dribble slowly right it is very easy for him to tap away what... If you are running very fast right, he run and concentrate on tapping, very high chance of foul... be more aggressive... Take the fouls... Make them foul you... Ok...

PLAYER: in general right I think you all really improve a lot .. Looking at first week and now, we are joining together as a team... Because our ball movement has improve a lot... Nobody is lost anybody... The ball is moving faster and faster every week... It is just I think that we need to work on our conditioning .. We lose focus a bit... If you all agree with me... In the second and third quarter... You all will suddenly lose team... So you all free go for your own endurance running... Go do something about it .. The fact that are playing better because I see more confidence in each and every one of you .. In terms of gameplay... You are taking more shots this guy is there... This guy self-proclaim sharpshooter... Everyone is doing better...

PLAYER: our game is quite good we were like our form... We leading not a lot... As usual... Cannot stand... Lose by a bit .. We just got to work on that .. Can tell when we are playing, we get very little turnovers... Can say that we are bonding quite well...
COACH: Christopher... Sam... Chin Soon... Kwek... Allen... Work harder that is the spirit... Good effort right... Basketball is a team game not won by one person... All it takes is a couple of bad plays by 1 person and then everyone suffers the consequences... Same thing when 5 is on the court, if 1 guy makes the turnover, all other has to run... So it's a team game... Then again if we are winning that everybody earns it together... We enjoy the fruits of our labour together... If you all are going to fight together as a team I'm with you guys, alright and that is the way we should see it... So I'm proud of you guys .. Let's have another solid game next week... And we get better as we go along... And 10 games together is a very short time... Other teams they are together for a couple of years... Together for barely 2 months... So you guys are playing good...
PLAYER: I got proposal, we should continue to have this type of training every Monday...

Sample of Developed Themes

Focus Group Interviews

Player's Views on Coaching Practice

- Players value a developmental orientation towards sports performance in coaching practice
- Players describe coaching practice to be team focused, have opportunities for participation, immediate intervention
- Players prefer a balanced Firm and Caring approach in coaching
- Players describe the coach as enthusiastic, personable, mentoring
- Players see the coach to be strong in relational skills, player engagement, confidence, and competence
- Players see the coach to be weak in assertiveness

Coach Develops Players by Allowing Fair Participation (Inclusive, Learning by Practice, Equal Opportunity)

INTERVIEWEE: More towards the encouraging side. Basically the only difference, the differences is, because I had been in many teams so I can roughly, I could see the differences. He is not an authoritative figure. He is more of like a, how do I put it, you are your own man, and you decide what play you play, and you tell him and he gives you his suggestions. So basically he is a suggestive person, he is not an authoritative person. It is what I appreciate from him. But could be a bit more assertive lah when there is time to be. As a coach you are a figure head, so when you push come to shove, sometimes you just need to make a decision.

> Comment [D33]: Development orientation

> Comment [D34]: Participatory approach

> Comment [D35]: Unassertive

INTERVIEWEE: ... We get the freedom to play, which is really adaptive from one of the famous basketball coaches, I realize.

> Comment [D36]: Participatory

INTERVIEWEE: I like the fact that he's very involved, but at the same time, he is not, he is not overly involved. In the fact that he doesn't command you, he doesn't tell you like you have to play exactly like the way I tell you, this kind of thing. But he rather than that he gives you suggestions and he is, he is very approachable. He's not the type that, I had coaches before who only opens their mouth when they have something bad to say about your play. When you do something good they just keep quite like as if they expect it from you. But when you do something bad, then they will straight away sub you out or they would scold you.

> Comment [D37]: Participatory

> Comment [D38]: Nurturing

FACILITATOR: Ok. What about his behaviour? In a sense like for instance, are there any different coaching actions that he exhibit? It could be verbal, it could be non-verbal when he is trying to coach you or coach the team?

INTERVIEWEE: I think he is very very fair to everyone.

FACILITATOR: Fair? How do you know he is fair?

INTERVIEWEE: He won't, there's no such thing as star player in the team. He treats everyone the same. That is one.

> Comment [D39]: Fair, participatory, development orientation

Coach is Enthusiastic and Deeply Engaged

INTERVIEWEE: He is also very enthusiastic. Because the coaches that I had in the past right, they just seat on the chair and don't really stand up all the time. Then he is different. He always stands up and shouts at the players lah.

Comment [D40]: Enthusiasm

FACILITATOR: So he is very engage in players in the sense. He is like he is with you. He's not like a third person outside the game.

Comment [D41]: Engaged

INTERVIEWEE: Yes exactly. So it feels sort of bonded, like he is part of the team.

Comment [D42]: Connected to the team

FACILITATOR: Is Denis in this picture all the time?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes of course.

FACILITATOR: So he is part of the team, all the way.

INTERVIEWEE: Ya. He is a teammate and coach.

Comment [D43]: Coach's social involvement

Coach is Nurturing towards the Team through Care and Encouragement

INTERVIEWEE: I double up on that. He is very encouraging.

Comment [D44]: Encouraging

INTERVIEWEE: He praises you when you do good. And he encourages you when you're down.

Comment [D45]: Encouraging

INTERVIEWEE: He does approaches us personally. He discuss with us where we went wrong, what we should have done.

Comment [D46]: Personable, nurturing, development orientation

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah. He, he is very approachable, so when you ask him for advice personally lah. Say, eh coach, what do you expect out of me. He will just tell me, "Just play your game. You will be able to fit to this team because you have what we all need. So just find yourself comfortable and then I will fit you somewhere." and that is very encouraging. This is the first encounter I ever had.

Comment [D47]: Personable, nurturing, development orientation

INTERVIEWEE: ... He tries his very best to see what each player can do and try to let that player be able to make use of that strength within the team to improve the team.

Comment [D48]: Nurturing, development orientation

INTERVIEWEE: ... Whereas for Denis, he is more of, he will try and find out what is your strength then he will try he can fit it into the team. How you can fit into the team. That is what I think makes him a good coach.

Comment [D49]: Nurturing, development orientation

INTERVIEWEE: Mentor, I would call it that.

FACILITATOR: Mentor.

INTERVIEWEE: Mentor, because I am personally I'm his teammate coach on his team. So I see him doing well on the court, he is like a ringleader on the court and right now he is my mentor. So aside from that, I would agree with him that that he's right. Nowhere else can find it. But I would go down to the bread and butter of a good coach. That he's addressing the weaknesses and building up the strengths of the team. So this is what a good coach does.

Comment [D50]: Seeing coach as mentor

INTERVIEWEE: I feel that he handles the players very well.

FACILITATOR: How does he handle? The way he talks?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, the way he talks. Suppose a player makes a mistake, he don't scold them directly. He will explain to them why they should not do it. Which is very very important.

Comment [D51]: Nurturing, development orientation

INTERVIEWEE: Ya, he is right. Denis is quite patient.

FACILITATOR: Patient?

INTERVIEWEE: Patient in the way he coach a person. Like keep on explaining his weak point. Stressing on the weak point and tell him what should he do.

Comment [D52]: Patient, nurturing

INTERVIEWEE: I got two incidents. Basically, one was the fact that the first time I saw my teammate get injured I never seen a coach run out. The first person to run out.

FACILITATOR: Ok.

INTERVIEWEE: Right?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. That is right.

INTERVIEWEE: Touched me. This guy is sincerely concerned for his team to my lab rat experiences back then when I was just recruited for my skills. If I got no use, I would be put on the bench. This guy truly is concerned. He runs out, he is the first one there to address the injury, so that is impressive.

Comment [D53]: Caring, attentive, compassionate

FACILITATOR: Yup.

INTERVIEWEE: Like what he say. Last week I also sprain my ankle actually towards the end of the game, and he also came out on the court to make sure I'm ok. So it is like very rare because I use to play in other teams where the coach will just simply stand by the side and he will just call some other people on the bench to go check or pull him aside, pull the person out of the court. But he himself comes on the court and make sure you're ok. Then another thing is like, sometimes when in

Comment [D54]: Caring

the heat of the game, like when you are not playing properly or what then your coach subs you out, then you feel very demoralized and maybe unhappy because you feel like why am I being subbed out. Because you still can play everything. There was once I was in a bad mood everything when he subbed me out. Actually when he first sub me out I was a bit angry, but after he came over and told me why he sub me out and why he let me play so little that day. So after he explains already then I understand what he trying to do. So at least I know what is going on in the team, I know why I'm being sub out. Maybe I'm having a bad game. Maybe he wants a different style. So at least his players are kept in the loop. We do know what is going on and the reason for putting us in or putting us on the bench.

> **Comment [D55]:** Nurturing

FACILITATOR: The very last question is there, are there any incidents that you encounter on his coaching? His interaction with you that leave a lasting or very deep impression on you? Could be personal encounter or a team encounter that situates in you. He would like to know how you feel about the situation that he managed? Was good or bad?

INTERVIEWEE: I think even after some games even though we lost the game right, he managed to keep the emotion and spirit very high. This is something that is not easy.

> **Comment [D56]:** Motivational, maintaining team morale

FACILITATOR: How does he do it?

INTERVIEWEE: I think one is debrief. First he ask for debrief and then we try to give reasons why we lost. Then he will suggest ways on how we can counter them next time. So I think, we feel that if we work on those areas we can win them next time. So probably that is how he did it.

> **Comment [D57]:** Nurturing

FACILITATOR: So he empower by picking up the improvement areas that you can work on.

INTERVIEWEE: That's right.

> **Comment [D58]:** Participatory

FACILITATOR: So you don't see that in many teams, based on your experience? Like keeping the spirit high even though you lost?

INTERVIEWEE: Usually for other teams right, usually the coach would be angry when we lose the game. Ya.

> **Comment [D59]:** Nurturing, not oppressive like other coaches

INTERVIEWEE: Ya.

FACILITATOR: Believes in a team as well?

INTERVIEWEE: Ya.

> **Comment [D60]:** Team focused

FACILITATOR: How did he do that?

INTERVIEWEE: He tries to encourage you.

FACILITATOR: So that demonstrates his belief in the team?

> **Comment [D61]:** Nurturing, encourages by demonstrating belief in the players and the team

INTERVIEWEE: Ya.

INTERVIEWEE: There's this incident when I had five fouls then I fouled out. It wasn't exactly fair, I felt. I was very angry. Cause first time I fouled out of the game. So I was very angry and I walked away. Then he just smile at me. Then I don't know why also. I mean if it was last time, my coach, he will just scream at me.

FACILITATOR: So his smile works on you, in the sense he helps you cool down?

INTERVIEWEE: Yah. It calms down, then after the game right, I apologise. I said "I'm sorry for fouling out. I know I could contribute a bit more". He said, "I would be surprised if you weren't angry, I would be quite upset if you weren't angry."

INTERVIEWEE: What gives me deepest impression is that, what I said, he is very patient. Like what he says, if you make a mistake or another player makes a mistake, he doesn't scream at you. He put it aside first. Then after that try to correct them. That is very good point

Coach Promptly Intervenes when Needed

FACILITATOR: So when he speaks with you how do you feel? Do you feel, like yeah, it is the right moment he gave me this feedback? Or?

INTERVIEWEE: Ya. More or less.

FACILITATOR: So the assessment are always very prompt when he gives feedback and how he gives feedback. Is that what you are trying to say?

INTERVIEWEE: I see. Ok.

INTERVIEWEE: Initially I thought his intervention would come after a lagged period of time. Like after the incident happen, he will address it a whole; later and not immediately. But there is this incident where I didn't really control the tempo of the game well. So I thought that would be ok, and that he wouldn't scream at me to speed up the tempo or something like that, but he immediately stood up and shout "Changed the tempo, change it to the right one".

Coach Focuses on Developing the Team

FACILITATOR: He also demonstrates on the team level I suppose?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWEE: Most of us experience it, should be on a team level.

FACILITATOR: What I mean is it could be just one on one, or it could be on a team setting.

INTERVIEWEE: Most important thing is, most of us, there are times we eat together after the game. Not just I am part of this team, my objective to come to play basketball for this team, we are friends also outside the court. To the best of our abilities when we don't have any obligations after game, we spend time together.

FACILITATOR: So he always use the "Why don't you consider this or that"? And it sits well. It sits better?

INTERVIEWEE: It sits well, but sometimes if it doesn't stick, then you need to be more assertive. After all, I can see he truly is helping the team to improve as a whole.

FACILITATOR: So for him, in relation to the values that you just mention. Is it aligned or is it not aligned to the team? Does he has it?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWEE: Ya he has it.

FACILITATOR: He demonstrates them?

INTERVIEWEE: Ya.

Coach is Approachable

FACILITATOR: So he is also humble enough.

INTERVIEWEE: Ya. When I say, when for instance when I say just last week, "Coach, why don't you use defence A instead of defence B, I think it works better to our strength." he said, "Ok, let's try it today." so I think it is new. He has his competency but he also listens to suggestions, so that is.... (stop in mid-sentence)

FACILITATOR: He is not over exerting his own point of view.

INTERVIEWEE: Ya, so in terms of competency I think he is there lah.

INTERVIEWEE: ... Another thing is that, coaches have to be assertive but there are times that they should be open to feedback. And I think most of the players on this team will agree that almost nowhere else that you will be able to comfortably talk to a coach.

Coach can be more Assertive

INTERVIEWEE: Well honestly speaking if you want me to change it I would say be more assertive in certain points in time. As in, he don't have to consider certain factors like playing time when you know you need to do the right thing at the right time. This is a bit vague. I don't know how to put it but if you want me to be specific, he is fair to everyone but sometimes you cannot be fair in certain setting. Your team is down, you need these guys in, but those certain guys are not given playing time, so he finds it fair that everybody gets to play, but those guys will not contribute so... (stop in mid-sentence)

FACILITATOR: So maybe it is more beyond coach, maybe more towards friend already.

INTERVIEWEE: ... Like, he would ask them for the feedback which is what Denis always does. And he also emphasize on sportsmanship. This particular incident where the level of violence was more than what was appropriate, so I got fed up so he immediately sub me out and talk to me. He told me even if the other party was a little bit more violent than me I should have taken it into my stride.

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah. I think the lack of assertiveness, people take advantage of this.

FACILITATOR: He always make the attempt to explain and rationalise with you.

INTERVIEWEE: Although sometimes there is not much of a need to because as the coach he has to be assertive so sometimes he has to just simply execute the plays, everything. But it is nice he makes the effort to make sure that everyone is ok.

FACILITATOR: So does it mean appropriately appropriate emotions?

INTERVIEWEE: Yup. Must be firm.

FACILITATOR: Then, just now you said urgency, the other one is... (stop in mid-sentence)

INTERVIEWEE: Anger

FACILITATOR: Anger. Ya, what about anger?

INTERVIEWEE: Anger is like ah... (stop in mid-sentence)

FACILITATOR: I wouldn't throw anger at the team?

INTERVIEWEE: I wouldn't say it is anger like be angry. It is more of, like really want it so much that you are so angry.

FACILITATOR: And demonstrating it to the team.

Coach can be More Communicative (Gives Impression of Being Unconcerned)

FACILITATOR: So he intervened immediately. How do you feel when he did that?

INTERVIEWEE: It came as a shock. That was only the third session think.

FACILITATOR: He shouted at you is it? In the court?

INTERVIEWEE: Sort of. Ya. Then I was like oh, did Denis just said that? No no he did. Did he? Ya he did.

> Comment [D80]: Exerts control

FACILITATOR: Because it is different from what you know about him is it?

INTERVIEWEE: Because in my original impression he just an enthusiastic and friendly person. A friend.

FACILITATOR: Ok, so that shock you and then what did you do?

INTERVIEWEE: He did have. He did show me that he did have some authoritative sort of sense.

> Comment [D81]: Authoritative in situations

FACILITATOR: Did you talk to him after that.

INTERVIEWEE: No, it is a mature understanding so don't have to really explicitly talk about it.

FACILITATOR: So you just digest the learning yourself?

INTERVIEWEE: Ya.

> Comment [D82]: Player's experiential learning for practical understanding

FACILITATOR: So, is let's say you are going to be his coachee in future, what areas would like to see him have in terms of competency? Your ideal. For instance, let's say two years down the road if you ask him to be your coach again. At that level, would that be anything that you would want to see him reach in terms of competency. It may be something he needs to work on from now on.

INTERVIEWEE: Urgency and anger.

> Comment [D83]: Coach need to be more expressive

FACILITATOR: Ok. Elaborate.

INTERVIEWEE: Urgency meaning, even though he is calm, sometimes he must learn to be more panicky. Because when a coach is panicky, he gets that kind of aura then the players… (stops in mid-sentence)

FACILITATOR: Send a signal to the team, in that sense.

INTERVIEWEE: Ya. The team will feel it that's why. Because sometimes he is too composed so the team not scared. So sometimes we feel too relax.

> Comment [D84]: Perceived as unconcerned

Sample of a Single Case Interpretation

Experiential Data on Lived Experiences (Extracts from Reflective Journal Entry, Audio Recording, Focus Group Interview)	Code from Experiential Data	Labels for Interpretative Descriptions
DEFEATISM *As I sat on my living room couch, I felt an unease that was amplified not by emotions, but by guilt. I have been trying to convince myself that there was nothing more I could do. I was attempting to escape from reality. I wanted to elude this day. There was no hiding from the truth. I knew better than to look for the quick getaway. <u>My conscience was unrelenting. I felt the heavy pounding at the back of my mind. I was beating myself for this calamity. I felt as though I was empowered with a great responsibility, I had no control over the situation. I felt as though my actions could have made a difference, I was inapt. I felt as though I had the knowledge within me to prepare everyone, I was incompetent. I was overwhelmed with guilt. I started to question where I was in all this. I felt responsible and I could not move beyond the lingering feeling of me losing control of the team.</u>* (Reflective Journal Entry 7th May 2012)	futility	feeling defeated
This was one that will be remembered for all that had gone wrong. These were powerful emotions within me. My mind replayed every impactful moment in crystal clarity. I could still feel the back of my throat straining from the words that I screamed. "Rebound, Rebound". The frustration flowed through my mind. I recollected every moment leading up to the sequence of events. I searched my memory for every minute detail. <u>I questioned my every part in all this. I was looking for deeper meaning beyond the surface of the experience</u>. (Reflective Journal Entry 7th May 2012)	doubt	feeling defeated
<u>This last game was the worst we have played in the past month. We have had poor runs but not like this. I was not prepared for this. The players were not prepared for this</u>. The team on the court were not running the plays we have put in hours of work on. They seem to have forgotten that which went well for us at the start of the game. They appeared to have stopped playing basketball. (Reflective Journal Entry 7th May 2012)	devastated	feeling defeated

Sam started to walk on the court instead of chasing his assignment back on defence. Tempers flared on the court with Chin Soon throwing his body into an opponent, screaming at the referees for a non-existent call. Ben heaved a poorly conceived 3-point shot taken 3 steps beyond the 3-point line, before insisting a substitution out of the game. Christopher was apprehensive to substitute back into the game. <u>It was pure anarchy. None of the players were interested in playing the game anymore. The players were visibly affected in the drying moments of the game. Their reactions personified their experiencing. Their words communicated their feelings. These expressions were pure and unedited. Their exasperation spoke volumes. The players were living every second of the game. This was chaos that they were experiencing</u>. (Reflective Journal Entry 7th May 2012)	given up	players' response to defeatism
<u>*I could only fathom that there was nothing else on their mind except the hopelessness of the game they were experiencing*</u>*. Who the players were on the court reflected their true interpretation of the moment. The players have given up playing the game. Although they were physically present, they were no longer spiritually on the court.* (Reflective Journal Entry 7th May 2012)	hopelessness	players' response to defeatism
Their emotions have set their mind adrift. They ignored my instructions from the sideline. They could not hear me because they were no longer there. <u>There was nothing I could do. I felt helpless</u>. My voice with the team dissipated with the sounds on the court. My presence was reduced to an opaque shadow. My existence was forgotten. <u>I have lost control of the team. My ability to coach the players has ceased. I was just a person at the sideline screaming at the players on the court.</u> (Reflective Journal Entry 7th May 2012)	helplessness, loss of control	feeling defeated
The match was over and the last few minutes brought out the worst in us. <u>There was decimation all around me. The players were scattered. As I sought to reconnect with them, their eyes averted mine. The players were hurrying to leave ground zero</u>. There was nothing left for them. There was nothing left of them. It was a holocaust. Nothing remained from the apocalypse. <u>The spirit of the team was disintegrated. The passion that brought us together was atomised. Only ashes of our former selves remained.</u> (Reflective Journal Entry 7th May 2012)	spiritual defeat	players' response to defeatism
<u>*As I scoured the remains, I could no longer recognise us. It was as though I was standing in the epicentre of a mega earthquake and all around me were in shambles*</u>*. Big Ben, the towering structure who once imposed his will on those*	given up	players' response to defeatism

around was reduced to a pile of unrecognisable rubble. Chin Soon, the power-packed energizer sat on the ground motionless with his eyes staring into emptiness. LiRen, the roaring behemoth who put fear in our opponents with mere whispers was silenced. And Christopher, the cool sharp-shooting assassin was left a smouldering mess at the team bench seething with frustration. (Reflective Journal Entry 7th May 2012)		
<u>The only recognisable that remained was the hope that was lost. That which I saw left a gaping wound in me</u>. The sequences that made up the experience felt like a string of razor blades. The images replayed in swift decisive movements, slicing at a beating heart. The frustration in the players' voices pounded like a blunt knife into my mind. <u>All that the team has worked to become was being diced into a million pieces. My confidence was being shredded. The throbbing pain I felt was sharp and continuous. The sting of the experience was unrelenting</u>. (Reflective Journal Entry 7th May 2012)	shattered confidence	feeling defeated
The quietness of the night was a comforting relief after the turmoil I experienced. My nerves were shot. My hands still trembled. My stomach was in a knot. My emotions remained unsettled almost an hour after the match. The game was over. The players have gone. There was no one else around except Ben. I did not notice his presence earlier. He has been waiting patiently for the opportunity to speak to me. Now that everyone has left, we were all alone. <u>In a low soulful voice, Ben spoke "Coach, what are your plans for us?" This question has not crossed my mind. It seemed like a simple question, yet it was profound. It pressed for deeper thoughts from me. It sought for my response. It carried with it deeper implications. I was caught off guard by Ben's question. I was unprepared for a response. He was waiting for a reply</u>. It was not the manner how Ben's question that struck me but the context behind his asking. His question made it sufficiently clear that I am not just one of the players. I started to feel the weight of the team rests on my shoulders. Although we had the same experience, my position was entirely different. I was not allowed to feel like the rest. I was the coach. I had greater responsibilities than to the game we just played. <u>Ben's question highlighted the fact that the players were looking towards me for direction</u>. <u>The players were waiting for my guidance to progress</u>. <u>My decisions and my indecisions were affecting their lives</u>. I had no time to lament. I cannot afford an opportunity for self-pity. There was no recuperation. Every moment I waited, the players were gliding further away to a dark side. (Reflective Journal Entry 8th May 2012)	searching for guidance from the coach	players' response to defeatism
Like Ben, the negativity of the experience was eating into them. They were drifting towards hopelessness. <u>I have a duty to the moment. I have to anchor the team back into the light. I have to prepare for the team's future</u>. <u>I needed to be forward looking</u>. I needed to rise beyond the current experience. I need to inject positivity into the players. The team's	surfacing coach's belief	using coach's beliefs to inspire

future was for me to carve. It is an injustice for me to sit on my hands and strike this off as a helpless episode. I felt an epiphany. I came to a realisation. I made a conclusion. This is not the end. This is only the beginning if I am to help the team move forward. I must look beyond the surface. I have to explore deeper into the sequence of events. I need to learn from the experience. I felt a renewed encouragement. The future has yet to be decided. I was not going to resign to fate. I was going to take the players further. (Reflective Journal Entry 8th May 2012)		
Maybe the unexpected nature of Ben's question was for the best. I had no time to create a prepared reply. I had no time to formulate the ideal response. There was only time for the answer I had on hand. I spoke from my heart. "I have not thought much in depth about this. We are only in week 4 of the season and we still have a long way to go. I do know this Ben. Wouldn't it be nice to have a group of players playing together and growing together? Teammates do come and go. Wouldn't it be great to have a group of guys building a bond beyond the basketball court. Teammates who are together not just to play the game. Friends who are together because this is where they feel they belong." _What I said was honest and unplanned. It may not have been a perfect speech to rally the players but there was nothing artificial or frivolous. I spoke with the utmost sincerity. These were my inner most thoughts and desires._ (Reflective Journal Entry 8th May 2012)	coach's vision	using coach's beliefs to inspire
As I spoke, I could sense the brightening in Ben's eyes. There was a connection with the words that I just said. His body visibly relaxed as I completed my sentence. He seemed reassured by my words. My unplanned expression seemed to establish an intrinsic connection with him. (Reflective Journal Entry 8th May 2012)	agree with beliefs	alignment of coach's beliefs with players
Ben's reaction inspired me to continue to express my inner desires. "Ben, I need you to do something very important to me, something extremely important to the team. I am worried that I am not connecting enough with the players during the game when I am on the sideline. I need somebody to be my voice on the court. I need somebody to lead the players. Can you do that for me?" It was a bold suggestion. I felt the brashness in my tone. I suggested this on a whim. I voiced my mind. I did not consider the implications. I reacted solely to my initial thoughts. I cannot do this alone. I need help to hold the players and the team together. I speak to the players from a coach-player perspective. I need someone who can speak to the players as a peer. I impart and empower the players with strategies and tactics. I need someone who can organise and execute these strategies and tactics on the court. (Reflective Journal Entry 8th May 2012)	using player to communicate coach's beliefs	using coach's beliefs to inspire

I held my breath waiting for a response. "*Coach, this is the first time someone asked me to do this. I'll get the players to meet one of these days when we are not training or having a game. We can meet to talk more about the team.*" <u>*I did not realise it at the time. Ben's reply was more than just a statement that left a positive close to a dreadful experience.*</u> *As I recalled the conversation, I felt the same delightful surprise by Ben's response. His enthusiasm was refreshing.* (Reflective Journal Entry 8th May 2012)	agreement to help coach communicate beliefs	alignment of coach's beliefs with players
"<u>Me, Chin Soon, Christopher, and Daniel have been actively chatting on What'sapp. Are you able to join us for dinner after our Monday session? We want to take our game to the next level.</u>" Just got a call from Ben. A short call. Just a few sentences in our conversation. The topic was simple. The plan was just a dinner date, yet there was some much more behind it. <u>A couple of them were taking the initiative to better themselves and the team. Some of the players were connecting beyond their time in training and in matches.</u> (Reflective Journal Entry 9th May 2012)	player commitment	alignment of coach's beliefs with players
<u>I was not expecting this. I could not envision that which was going to happen nex</u>t. Team dynamics or player proactivity were not part of my thoughts at the start of this season. Something has taken hold of us and the team. The change that was occurring was not just manifesting in me, the players have somehow started to change as well. (Reflective Journal Entry 9th May 2012)	unexpected	alignment of coach's beliefs with players
The last call was clearly influencing John. He was evidently in disagreement with the referee's earlier decision. <u>*He seemed to be harbouring a festering displeasure. He appeared to be playing under the influence of frustration. With the ball in his hands, John tried to execute the exact same move again*</u>*. He dipped his left shoulder into the defender. He leaned into the square of the opponent's chest and pushed towards the basket. He forced his way forward.* <u>*In his attempt to dig into the defence, both players lost their footing and tumbled to the floor.*</u> (Reflective Journal Entry 13th June 2012)	venting frustration	players' response to defeatism
I was appalled at that which I was witnessing. I was clear and direct in my instructions. I have emphasised not to do this countless times today. I received acknowledgement that my directive was understood. <u>*The outcome of the latest sequence indicated otherwise. Same player. Same move. Same result. The call was made. This was John's fifth an foul. He was out of the game*</u>*.* (Reflective Journal Entry 13th June 2012)	ineffective	players' response to defeatism
A few of the players heard and acknowledged my commands but chose to flout my coaching instructions. Through our		

many sessions I have always been able to be the coach with players. This was not the first game where it seemed that I was unable to reign in the players. I highlighted game changes to the players but I was unable to adjust their behaviour. This was not the first match where the players were evidently defiant. I issued clear coaching instructions to the players but they chose not to ignore my commands. This was not the first session where I have lost control of the team. I coached the team as I always had but I was unable to get the team to follow my lead. (Reflective Journal Entry 13th June 2012)	helplessness, loss of control	feeling defeated
PLAYER: tell them to pass properly, always back passing, we didn't have a single shot... The last three minutes no shots were taken... *COACH: Yes you are right, I told them already... Later we adjust again, we still have another half of the game...* (Audio Recording 7th May 2012, Line 54-56)	given up	players' response to defeatism
PLAYER: He stick his bloody leg just to foul me... *COACH: Yup, yup but it's a normal foul... It happens… Rest it up... How's your leg... Bruised... Is it bruise... Ok rest ah* *COACH: It is normal… When we are in the game we get those, but you got to keep your head... Next time you just take that, and take the foul, and then get free throws... I know, he is a moving screen... Ya so we will get them lah... But must control... If not we give up easy technical for nothing...* (Audio Recording 7th May 2012, Line 92-94)	frustration	players' response to defeatism
COACH: We started really strong first quarter... We start to run very quickly we were sticking to the plan... What change till the end of the first quarter was we kind of like start to rush our shots very very bad passes... In fact we didn't even make good passes, all our passes were soft pass, we roll the ball ok or light passes what we want to see is solid passes... If we don't pass solid passes the ball will never reach your teammate and then the ball get deflected, and then you get turnovers and then you get fast break... And then by the time you lose six points to eight points... As a team right you start to lose a little momentum as a team right, you know you stop working that hard any more... So everybody has to play hard... It starts from the first pass, it starts from not turning the ball over you realise the more we turn the ball over the harder the game is for us... I cannot recognise the team on the court… Come on guys, you are giving up before the game is over… Don't give up… Keep fighting to the end… (Audio Recording 7th May 2012, Line 102)	given up	players' response to defeatism
COACH: Ok it's really an emotional thing... If we can keep our emotions and play hard till the end, it would have been a really close game... It's just a few turnovers... But no blame to anybody... Everybody had their fair share of miss passes	blame	players' response to defeatism

miss catches, air balls, ok, defensive laps, everything we have today... So everybody has to work on their game... So from today we have to work hard... Don't be disheartened by our mistakes... Think about getting the next play right… (Audio Recording 7th May 2012, Line 103)		
COACH: Ok but one thing I must highlight is this ah, ok basketball although you don't expect contact because they give you fouls they award you fouls... But do expect contact, if you do get it, keep your head in the game, earn the free-throws do not give up easy technical for them... It could be an inadvertent foul, they could slap you on the hand or slap you on the face... and if you react you give them technical free-throws, we don't want that... <u>*Ok it could have been a very close game... It could be a two point game, we have given them the game... So what I want everybody to do is, don't get even by getting angry... Get even by playing a better game...*</u> (Audio Recording 7th May 2012, Line 104)	given up	players' response to defeatism
PLAYER: <u>*the thing is I can't even get the ball, cause they are not setting play up so the post is not getting the ball... I was posting the way you tell me to go then they overload... They don't throw it to me for some reason, they keep moving the ball outside but they don't move the ball in... It's like the overload work perfectly right, so you overload here, then back to this guy but for some reason instead of seeing the post... Because they think the guys got me, but I already got him but keep swinging outside, I don't know why they keep swinging out...*</u> *COACH: Ya, that's the other thing we will try to do next practice... We work on the inserting of the ball... So what happen is when the post is open we not giving them a one on one... This is working for us because we are pulling you notice that the defenders are all guarding very high, but the problem with it is the post doesn't get to do a 1 on1 like Ben doesn't get a one on one... You don't get a one on one...* <u>*Today nothing was going right.. Stay positive… We try to work out our problems for our next game...*</u> (Audio Recording 7th May 2012, Line 117-118)	frustration	players' response to defeatism
INTERVIEWEE: …<u>*sometimes when in the heat of the game, like when you are not playing properly or what then your coach subs you out, then you feel very demoralized and maybe unhappy because you feel like why am I being subbed out*</u>*. Because you still can play everything. There was once I was in a bad mood everything when he subbed me out. Actually when he first sub me out I was a bit angry, but after he came over and told me why he sub me out and why he let me play so little that day. So after he explains already then I understand what he trying to do. So at least I know what is going on in the team, I know why I'm being sub out.* <u>*Maybe I'm having a bad game. Maybe he wants a different style. So at least his players are kept in the loop. We do know what is going on and the reason for putting us in or*</u>	demonstrating care	using coach's beliefs to inspire

putting us on the bench. (Focus Group Interview 25th June 2012, Session 1, Line 153)		
INTERVIEWEE: <u>I only feel a coach must always have the mindset of the group that he is coaching</u>. Which I think, meaning to say anything that you do, if you can plan place and everything, you cannot change everybody's mindset. There is no point in doing it. (Focus Group Interview 25th June 2012, Session 2, Line 138)	getting buy in on coach's beliefs	alignment of coach's beliefs with players
FACILITATOR: So for him, in relation to the values that you just mention. Is it aligned or is it not aligned? Does he has it? *INTERVIEWEE: Yes.* *INTERVIEWEE: <u>Ya he aligns us with his values on what this basketball team is like. He wants us to believe in what we are doing. The character of the team is him and he use it to keep us focused</u>.* (Focus Group Interview 25th June 2012, Session 2, Line 145-147)	getting buy in on coach's beliefs	alignment of coach's beliefs with players

Sample of a Lived Experience Text

DEFEATISM	
feeling defeated	The accumulating losses during competition was heart wrenching. With every match, the players grew less confident in their abilities. The brightness in their eyes when we spoke of the team was no long present. The team's reputation had sunk to an unfathomable depth and there was nothing proud about our team to talk about. The players avoided the topic about the team any chance they got. They were feeling embarrassed with their association to the team and our disappointing season.
	This match was no different than the ones the players competed in this past 2 months. There were a few good sequences but the majority of our match was filled with missed passes and badly timed plays. As the evening progressed, there were less and less positives in our play. Bad plays were happening with regularity and the players were making mistakes in bunches. Their confidence was shattered and the players were visibly disheartened. They were physically present but they were no longer mentally focused. The effort to run our set-plays have stopped and the players were just figures moving in a crowd of people. The players were feeling defeated and the life of the team was gone.
coach's response to defeatism	The sight of the players succumb to their emotions was also taking its toll on me. I began to entertain negative thoughts and allowed the feeling of defeat to fester. I started to wonder if the team would even stay together until the end of the season. I had doubts that the team would survive after this horrific melt down. As I recounted the sequence of events from today, I searched my memory to explain why the players were mentally and emotionally abandoning the team. I had countless reasons for our poor performance and it all pointed to a singular conclusion, the constant losing has consumed the hope that we had. There was nothing I could do and I felt helpless. Recollecting the details of every moment, I could feel the team slipping away from me.
using coach's beliefs to inspire	Today's session with the plays ended in solemn parting. The coach and the players were emotionally beaten and there was an uncertainty about our collective future as a together. As I made my way to leave the court, I was approached by one of the players who have stayed behind. He had a question about my plans for the players and needed to hear my thoughts about the team's future. I was caught off-guard by this question. Up to now, I was in a constant struggle to think of a way for the team to perform during competition. I did not have the luxury of peace and time to contemplate about our future.
	While the question was somewhat uncomfortable since I was unable to provide a reasonable response, I allow my thoughts to flow through my words. Letting my emotions to take over the conversation, I made the statement that I intended this team to be a place where players could grow together. I believe that there was promise in turning this team into a nurturing environment. I was surprised by the sincerity of my unplanned statement. Unknowingly, I have exposed my inner most desire for coaching this team.

alignment of coach's beliefs with players	I was unprepared for the reaction that I was to observe from this player. His eyes brighten and he broken into a half grin. The gloomy expression he carried at the start of our conversation dissipated. I knew right away that we have made a connection. He agreed with my thoughts and even seemed to like it.
	I have stumbled onto an opportunity for me to connect with the players. The players were not responding to my plea to be more sensible in their play. There was however promise in aligning our commitments through our beliefs. My next step was to make a request for this player to share my ideas with his teammate. This recruitment would eventually be a success. The players replied that they were willing to work with me on my concept and help our team move forward.