Coach-to-Coach Mentoring in a Youth Soccer Academy

Applying Theoretical Knowledge Within Relevant Contexts of Practical Sport Coaching

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Abstract

Most Canadian youth soccer players develop under the tutelage of volunteer coaches, whose training and expertise can be limited (e.g., soccer knowledge, age-appropriate teaching strategies). Moreover, a gap exists between coaching theory learned during coach education courses and practice on the field with sport teams. Theory can be better learned and contextualised in environments that hold immediate relevance for developing coaches. Mentoring, in which reflection unites thought and action, enhances coach education by uniting theory and practice. Coaches forget less, implement more, and more closely discern relevant environmental cues.

This thesis is comprised of six chapters. Chapter I overviews Canadian coach education, exploring mentoring from a theoretical perspective. Inquiry questions are posed: How can mentoring affect grassroots soccer coach training and development? What role can mentors play in coach education programs? What effect can mentoring have on novice coaches? Chapter II reviews theories of teaching and learning, describing a need for changes in current sport-coach education, building a case that mentoring can affect such changes.

Chapter III describes the inquiry method, including a rationale and possible limitations / areas of future concern. Three coaches (novice, intermediate, advanced) collaborated during a twelve-week coach-to-coach mentoring program in a youth soccer academy to enhance each other’s knowledge, skills, and attitudes as soccer coaches. Mentoring approaches were tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of each coach. The ‘novice’ coach was defined as having very limited sport-specific knowledge and / or experiences with coaching groups of young athletes. The ‘intermediate’ coach was defined as having completed introductory level coaching courses and having some successful coaching experiences with young athletes. The ‘advanced’ coach was defined as having completed significant coaching qualifications, possessing a distinctive track-record of successful coaching with youth teams (beyond team results), and demonstrating leadership in coach education.

Chapter IV discusses inquiry outcomes, which confirm a mentoring framework proposed in the review; five distinct mentoring roles are confirmed (model, enculturator, supporter, sponsor, and educator). A sixth role is proposed: professional. Chapter V conceptualises the notion of professionalism in some detail. Chapter VI is a conclusion, revisiting the inquiry questions, summarising the study, and suggesting areas to consider as others pursue mentoring in the future.
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Rationale

"No matter how effective a coach education course may be in terms of its structure, it is impossible to give novices a real understanding of the nature of coaching unless they actually see coaches at work."

- Wendy Piltz, Director of Coaching - Lacrosse University of South Australia (1999)

Volunteer parents are responsible for the lion's share of grassroots soccer coaching in Canada. (By grassroots, I mean community centre / recreational club soccer). Over and above soccer training, however, the purview of grassroots coaches is the holistic growth and development of children and youth, a job requiring education, training, dedication, and expertise. Unfortunately, while the number of certified soccer coaches is increasing, few are able to approximate the work of child growth and development professionals. Indeed, while school teachers must obtain university degrees and legal accreditation from professional colleges, volunteer coaches may take charge of somewhat similar responsibilities without even a criminal record search! If they are certified at all, these volunteers have attended National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) weekend courses lasting from thirteen to thirty hours (depending on the level of advancement) that cover general coaching theory (e.g., role of the coach, parent issues, safety, physiology) and sport-specific issues (e.g., soccer skills, training drills, tactics, team selection). Since the benefits of sport for children and youth are well documented, as is the power wielded by coaches, much is at stake in the hands of our volunteer coaches. One wonders, given such careful regulation of the teaching profession, how or why this state of affairs persists in amateur sport.

Perhaps it is too much to expect professional level solutions of parent-volunteers, yet the coach education courses on offer are deficient and require a remedy: address the inherent gap they sustain between theory and practice, between academic classrooms and relevant contexts of practical sport coaching. Even those coaches who attend such courses risk falling into the gap because they might learn theory incorrectly or else learn theory correctly but apply it inappropriately upon returning to their teams (assuming they remember any at all). According to Carson (1992), "...we have fragmented and abstracted the human experience in such a way that we no longer understand it as it is embedded in life itself" (p. 112). Carson also states that "...a deep and fundamental split [exists] between theory and practice" (p. 112), a phenomenon which Galvin (1998) has identified in coach education and labelled the "coaching gap." Clarke (1998) says knowledge is "personally constructed, socially mediated, and inherently situated" (p. 48). Dan Pratt from UBC adds that these qualities exist in a triad relationship, where each is "co-constitutive of the other" two (Pratt, 2001, personal communication); together, they "co-
constitute" three interrelated aspects of learning. In short, coach education courses are
deficient and yield poorer learning in participants because the courses situate participants into
inappropriate inherent contexts. Thus, the coaching gap is a significant and common obstacle,
blocking improvements to grassroots soccer coaching.

Mentoring is one potential solution to overcoming the theory-practice coaching gap. As
a teaching method, mentoring is utilised the main vehicle for educating coaches nationally by
the eight National Coaching Institutes (NCIs) across the country (National Coaching Institute,
2001) and locally by Douglas College (Douglas College, 2001) in diploma programs. Apprentice
coaches are assigned for one season to master coaches at elite-levels in their sports before
taking on teams of their own. The Australian Coaching Council also uses mentor coaches to
educate students enrolled in its National Coaching Scholarship Program (Piltz, 1999). The
effectiveness of these adult / post-secondary programs is self-evident, as all of these institutions
have sound reputations in producing coach educators, but they do not spell out a complete
situation.

Another obstacle that hinders grassroots coach education is the time and commitment
required for (1) coaching youth sports and (2) learning how to coach youth sports. "The demon
that conspires to thwart ... practice is time, a commodity in extremely short supply ..." (Rossi,
1996, p. 189). The Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA, 2000a) in San Francisco has recognised
that volunteer coaches must “make the time for training in ... a hectic, fast-paced schedule” (p.
6). This correlates closely with many coach education programs, which typically occur on
weekends and demand a coach’s exclusive attendance and attention for the duration of the
course. Mentoring, on the other hand, if structured around regularly planned, on-site meetings
between participants, can fit more readily into peoples’ busy lives.

Currently in sport coaching, mentoring is found in the BC Amateur Hockey Association’s
Initiation Program (similar to the NCCP’s Level I Technical course). In this program, senior
players assist coaches and lead younger players by demonstrating and modeling appropriate
skills, practices, and behaviours. The leadership is both social- and skill-oriented, “[setting] the
stage for senior players to become future coaches and leaders in [their] organisations” (Bill
Ennos; 2001, telephone interview). Participants learn not only game-related knowledge but also
possible roles for themselves when they retire from playing. According to Ennos, this is the
“longest-lasting effect of the program.”

Badminton BC also uses a similar scheme of mentoring, in which carded athletes are
required to serve a set number of hours under the guidance of a master coach, as specified in
their contracts (Badminton BC, 2001, questionnaire response). Role modeling is one significant
benefit of Badminton BC’s mentoring, and demonstrations and information are effectively communicated to young players by older peers (Badminton BC, 2001). Mentoring is also found in various non-sport professions, like teacher education, law, medicine, even culinary arts. Big Brothers and Sisters organisation (Curran, 2000) and other at-risk youth services describe their support programs as ‘mentoring’. The very word, mentoring, is derived from Ancient Greek mythology.1 Collins, Brown, and Holum (1991) assert that apprenticeship is the most natural way to learn, and that apprenticeships characterised learning before the advent of modern schools, whether learning entailed speaking a language or running an empire.

Andy Waughman, Director of the North Okanagan Youth Soccer Association (NOYSA) plans to implement a player mentoring system in upcoming seasons, and early experiments have proven successful (Waughman, 2001, personal communication). Being a grassroots program, the NOYSA movement is a small but encouraging step forward. Hayes (1999) found that mentoring does take place in recreational sport informally (perhaps unintentionally). In the Lower Mainland, for-profit soccer academies have begun selling their services to recreational community programs, and the BC Soccer Association, of which I am a part, is also embracing the idea of staff coaches aiding volunteer moms and dads who coach local children. Informally, often on an ad-hoc basis, there is a lot of soccer coach mentoring happening in the Lower Mainland.

Despite these diverse examples illustrating mentoring’s utility, most of Canada’s grassroots soccer coaches are not mentored in ways that are both deliberate and effective. None of Canada’s national or provincial soccer governing bodies has any formal mentoring program at work below the most elite levels of coaching. Overall, in spite of Hayes (1999) findings and the apparent local scene in BC, coaches suffer developmentally from a lack of mentoring; logically, so do players, and so do Canada and Canadian soccer, since coaching has a powerful influence on the growth and development of young people (LeBlanc & Dickson, 2000; Martens, 1997; Mills, 1998; PCA, 2000; Schempp, 1998). Yet mentoring has the potential to address the inherent deficiency in our coach education courses, leaving one to wonder why mentoring remains under-utilised at this level.

Possible explanations lie in the obstacles to implementing mentoring programs, which include mentor-intern compatibility, mentor preparation and / or an associated lack of qualified mentor trainers, availability of mentors (willingness / ability to take on an intern), and associated

1 In Homer’s epic, The Odyssey, King Odysseus of Ithaca leaves for the Trojan War, entrusting the education of his son, Telemachus, to his elderly friend and counsellor, Mentor. Mentor, a simple man, yet has a vast life experience and the trust of his master, and Odysseus, confident that Mentor will guide Telemachus in his quest for knowledge, skill, and wisdom, departs for Troy.
difficulties in implementing a program (spatial, temporal, financial, geographical). Sullivan (1992) states that, in school teacher mentoring, philosophical differences between the mentor and either the intern or a controlling organisation are the major obstacle in developing mentoring programs. Portner (2001) finds that a teacher-mentoring program can instil distrust and anxiety amongst participants due to poor communication from the outset. Wong (2001) reports that the process of finding mentors for the Simon Fraser University Mentorship Co-op was long, challenging, and included determining (1) whether candidates had suitable personalities to be mentors, and (2) whether they would offer a safe environment in which apprentices could learn. The SFU interns (called protégés) were also required to demonstrate maturity, focus, discipline, and the flexibility and willingness to grow. "Choosing the right people [guarantees] a successful program" (Wong, 2001, p. 2); the assertion illuminates the requisite importance of recruiting techniques and, naturally, the hazards as well. All agree that most obstacles are eclipsed by the potential benefits of a mentoring program (Sullivan, 1992; Portner, 2001; Wong, 2001). Deeper research into grassroots sport coach mentoring is therefore warranted.

Research and successful models will help to convince grassroots soccer organisations to plan and implement mentoring programs for their coaches. How might such a program look? What roles would mentors and coaches play? What benefits or detriments might these programs have on novice-intern coaches specifically and on coach education generally? How might such programs be evaluated? Will players be affected by these programs and, if so, to what extent? Both adult and teacher education are closely related to coach education (Gould, Giannini, Krane, & Hodge, 1990), and a wealth of literature exists to support mentoring in various contexts. With coach mentoring research earnestly being conducted in Australia, the future has arrived for grassroots soccer coach mentoring. In that case, applying mentoring to coach education is not difficult to envision and well worth further investigation.
Inquiry Questions

The purpose of this paper is to establish that the deficiency in our coach education courses can be dealt with by a solution that is at once simple but potent; namely, mentoring. This paper also identifies further avenues of inquiry that arise out of and flow into deeper examination of the subject generally.

The inquiry questions are structured to cover a range of aspects of grassroots soccer coach mentoring: the effects of mentoring, the role(s) of mentors, and the implications of mentoring. Questions two and three seek to make specific knowledge claims in the context of the study itself, while question one addresses the study’s rationale, making more general claims. While questions one and three are similar, there is subtle though significant difference in their scope.

1. How can mentoring affect grassroots soccer coach training and development?
2. What role can mentors play in coach education programs?
3. What effect can mentoring have on novice coaches?

During the data collection process, data were regularly compared to the questions to determine whether or not they were being addressed. As a result, upon completion of this process, the questions have remained answerable as-is, with little need for rewording or changing.
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

“It is not, in my view, possible to implement a successful strategy for soccer development without addressing the problem of teacher and coach selection, training, and appointment. ... And the willingness of volunteers is a guarantee of nothing other than willingness.”

- Allen Wade, *Principles of Teaching Soccer*, p. 10

Sport coaching is a vocation for few, a pastime for most. Expertise in sport coaching is rare at the grassroots level, since coaches at this level are frequently volunteers. As such, the possibility that these coaches possess any background or training (sport-specific or not), as an athlete or a coach, is hit or miss. In addition, because volunteer coaches often manage their teams, all of the organisational, administrative, and managerial hats rest on their heads as well. For novice volunteers, who often have enough challenges with the sport-specific content, this is too much to handle. More alarming is that these coaches are charged with developing children and youth without any professional training or accreditation in age-appropriate pedagogies. Of course, sending all of Canada’s volunteer coaches to college is not possible, so an alternative training method is proposed: mentoring.

This literature review discusses sport coach mentoring in conjunction with teacher education mentoring because *mentoring in sport coaching* is not deeply explored in the sports literature. Gould, *et al.* (1990) likewise invoke “the parallels in teacher and coach education” (p. 333), not only on the basis of knowledge but also on the teleology of mentoring in general: to bridge gaps between theory and practice. Additionally, because of shortfalls in Canada’s sport coach education programs, this literature review attempts to persuade readers and to advocate for further research on mentoring as a possible direction for coach education to take. Encouraging inquiries into sport coach mentoring is the goal, with a long-term aim of raising the standard of grassroots sport coaching across Canada, for the benefit of the entire nation — a grandiose claim to some, but well within the parameters established by research on the influential effects of sport coaches and of sport itself.

The Need for Sport

To begin, the first piece of evidence supporting this “grandiose” claim comes from Mills (1998). He concludes that sport enjoys an unmatched importance in the lives of Canadians, significantly contributing to our economy, cultural identity, and general health and well-being. He reports that, during the mid-1990s, sport produced more of Canada’s entire economic output than forestry, fisheries, or the aircraft industry, and employed over 262,000 people (Mills, 1998). Canadians spent nearly $8 billion on sport-related activities in 1996 and attracted another $4 billion in tourism expenditures (Mills 1998). The benefits of sport also include a healthier
population, meaning less money spent in the future on health care, less absenteeism at work, better productivity, lower crime rates (Health Canada, 2001; Mills, 1998) and greater economic returns for sport manufacturers and retailers across the country (Harvey, Lavoie & Saint-Germain, 1998). Without question, “Sport … is everyone’s business” (Mills, 1998, p. 1).

Participation in sport also expresses the culture of a particular nation. (Here I refer to anthropological culture. For example, we Canadians are certainly fond of our ice hockey, an essential ingredient of Canadian culture). In short, I feel the essence of culture is not expressed merely by particular elites or by what the entertainment industry offers. Rather, anthropological culture is the total of inherited attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviours that have meaning in the lives of one nation, “the arts, customs, and institutions of a nation, people, or group” according to the Oxford English Dictionary, or “the total range of ideas and activities of a people” according to Collins Concise English Dictionary. Participation of some kind in sport means contributing – to whatever extent – to the life of the community, of the nation, and of the culture, by together putting our parks and recreational facilities to use.

Schempp (1998) states: “Our social worlds offer no immunity to sport fields and gymnasia” (p. 1). He also argues that, since “contemporary societies value the pedagogical enterprise of sport and physical activity,” this makes “the educational enterprises of sport socially significant sites” (p. 2). Sport plays a crucial role in crafting identities – of both individual participants and larger social groups – yet, he continues, sport pedagogy remains relatively untapped as a research field. Schempp declares that ethnography is well suited to the study of sport pedagogy since, by understanding the world of the practitioner, one better understands the social forces at work in the sport environment.

What specifically makes sport so crucial to the lives of people? Sport contributes to our lives by enhancing confidence, self-esteem, discipline, wellness, and state of mind; of these effects there is overwhelming evidence. LeBlanc and Dickson (2000) highlight specific benefits for youth: sport puts children into contact with enforced rules of conduct and social values (e.g., fair play, responsibility, commitment), reveals the benefits of teamwork and cooperation, gives perspective to winning and losing, and teaches people to respect one another, even in competitive situations. They also explain that the notion of sport instilling a sense of fairness or justice is from 19th century Britain, “where many believed the playing fields were the training ground for the discipline necessary to produce leaders in adult life,” and where “physical activity … was [believed to be] a social experience that powerfully influenced attitudes and values.”
According to LeBlanc and Dickson, coaches "... are figures of authority and role models ..." (p. 125) and "...the most important link in providing a healthy sport experience" (p. 127). These authors note the power of sport leaders in general: "In the hands of the right people with the right attitudes, sport can be a positive, character-building experience" (p. 13). This discussion on power will be developed later. The Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) (2000b) also believes sport is a powerful agent, transforming the lives of youth by developing character traits that will yield success in all life's endeavours. Finally, Martens (1997) asserts that sport develops moral character, a code that is transferable from sport to life (p. 7).

The Desire for Coach Education

"Club directors of coaching ... ought to do an annual review for each coach. Just give 'em a topic and go and watch – so as to re-emphasise the correct principles.

"It's good to belong to a club where the coaches get together once every so often as friends and kick around ideas and remind everyone of things that need to be done but get lost."

- V-Soccer, Internet chatroom user Madison, WI (2001)

SOAR International, a revenue generation company commissioned by the BC Ministry of Government Services, Sports, and Commonwealth Games Division, distributed a multiple-choice survey to 658 parents at eleven different sport settings (i.e., rural and urban athletes, winter and summer sports, indoor and outdoor sports, team and individual sports, contact and non-contact sports, professional and volunteer coaches) (SOAR, 1995). Most athletes were community-level children under twelve years of age. On the survey, parents discriminated and prioritised a 'basket' of preferred response choices (top three to five) for each question, and they could offer their own ideas to a basket as well. Results were scored and ranked by establishing a weight for each result, and all were tabulated and calculated as descending percentages of the whole. The total for each possible choice was then added to determine its final overall ranking. These calculations were performed by a computer program called 'Survey It!', designed to analyse survey questionnaires with multiple responses.

The outcomes demonstrate that today's parents expect a wide variety of benefits from sport for their maturing children, that some benefits are relatively more important than others, and that parents expect coaches to deliver these benefits (SOAR, 1995). Therefore, coaches should be encouraged to utilise Canada's network of coach education programs. These include the NCCP, the Premier Sports Award Program, the Getting Started book series, SportsAid,

2 Unfortunately, 19th century Britain was also the place where children were deemed to be "miniature adults" (Wein, 1999, p. 2), an idea that has stunted young athlete development programs for decades.
Fairplay, post-secondary programs, NCIs, and sport-specific development programs like those offered by Volleyball Canada and Swimming / Natation Canada (SOAR, 1995). Yet this support network of coach education resources goes almost unnoticed, as “many coaches remain unaware ..., uncertified, or mystified as to [the network’s connectedness] to the overall coaching process” (SOAR, 1995, p. 30). Related to this, the majority of parents responding to the SOAR questionnaires identify “the use of community coaching consultants [and] mentor coaches to ‘coach the coaches’” (SOAR, 1995, p. 21) as their most preferred mode of coach education. Parents acknowledged their desire for their children to have trained, competent instructors, and they were willing to pay between five and twenty dollars more annual registration fee to pay for this training of coaches. (Indeed, parents commented that registration was the cheapest aspect of their child’s participation in sport!) Few parents felt that coaches ought to pay for their training (SOAR, 1995).

Parents overwhelmingly believed their children’s coaches require more training, and they were concerned about developing a support network for coaches, centred upon the Community Coaching Consultant – a coach’s coach (SOAR, 1995). Such support would be unlike the present system in that it would be implemented “on a continual basis in an environment ... easily accessible to their children’s coach” (SOAR, 1995, p. 21). A program like this could kickstart development initiatives “as well as monitor or mentor coaching behaviour and development” (SOAR, 1995, p. 21) on an ongoing basis. Since coaches develop young athletes into “caring and responsible adults” (SOAR, 1995, p. 36), an initiative like this would require careful investigation prior to implementation.

In another study, 38 parents of children aged eight to twelve participated in focus group interviews to share their expectations of youth sport experiences (Litherland, 1997). Parents sought fun, developmentally appropriate, fair, and educational experiences, and they saw the coach as a major influence on the quality of their child’s sport experience. They felt that coach education programs should consider the total child, not simply the child-athlete. Parents argued for coach education to provide a forum for conveying goals and objectives that guide sport programs. Finally, parents believed that coach education programs should place greater emphasis on practical application of coaching theory.

Gould, et al. (1990) administered a voluntary, open-ended survey to 130 coaches from over thirty US Olympic sports attending either a national conference or the Pan-Am Games. Results indicate that elite-level coaches desire education programs with mentors, in order to advance to higher levels of coaching. They also desire more workshops, seminars, and
courses in coaching science. Coaches across all identified categories (gender, experience, educational background, type of sport) responded similarly. These results indicate that coaches are taking their roles seriously, and that they appreciate the accountability they owe to their athletes as well as to society in general.

Significantly, societal demands for accountability are perhaps most poignant at the grassroots level, since most Canadian coaches are recreational volunteers with little training or expertise (Canadian Soccer Association [CSA], 2001). Gilbert and Trudel (1999) address the professional-volunteer debate, in which certified school teachers are delineated from certified volunteer coaches. Although both groups have similar responsibilities for developing children and youth, only school teachers are professionally accredited, and only they are required to have extensive training and education in the field of pedagogy. On the other hand, volunteer coaches might be assigned without even a criminal record search! Fortunately, this is becoming more rare as we seek to protect children more and more from abuse, thereby necessitating that clubs demand deeper accountability from their coaches.

The Need for Coach Education

"Coaches tend to continue with old habits rather than continually rethinking what has to be done and how... Many have not even noticed that the information they obtained years before has diminished in value."

– Horst Wein, Center for Research and Studies, Royal Spanish Soccer Federation (1999)

"Most youth sport coaches are volunteers and are not required to obtain coaching certification" (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, p. 16). In their study, Gilbert and Trudel discuss the process of creating coaching knowledge from experience in light of Schön's (1983) experiential learning theory. They conducted interviews and observations to examine, in six case studies, how youth coaches developed their coaching strategies via reflection. Selected coaches were not necessarily representative of all sport coaches; they were certified, community volunteers, recommended by their organisations based on a proactive attitude towards learning, respect within their community, and a child-centred philosophy of coaching. “The importance of having access to knowledgeable and respected coaching peers [was] critical to facilitating the reflective process” (p. 32), and reflection was found to provide “a framework for explaining the process of learning coaching through experience” (p. 30).

Wein (1999) emphasises the character of the coach as a major factor in the teaching and learning process. He believes that academic qualifications are only one part of the solution; equally important is the coach’s ability “to incorporate pupils in the learning and coaching process, in order to unlock and develop their innate potential to the utmost” (p. 4). The notion is
similar to that of Dewey's *dialogue*. Evan Pellerud (2001), the Canadian Soccer Association [CSA] Women's head coach, stresses the relationship between coaches and players as the most important factor determining success in soccer. He also describes a back-and-forth style of communication, echoing the notion of dialogue and introducing the idea that coaches possess a certain amount of power to include their athletes in (or exclude them from) the learning process. In fact, this power is in the hands of all coaches by virtue of the position held, regardless of age or experience – it comes with the position. However, the CSA (2002) evaluates its present Coaching Development Program as a "token effort at improving the standards and education of coaches across Canada" (p. 1) and highlights the growing need to develop coaches even as national programs expand. The CSA's overall development programs aim "to produce 'successors' and, in that respect, such programs must be long-term and ongoing" (p. 1). As for coaching, the CSA desires a Development Program "that services members at all levels, not just with certification ... but also with regard to general coaching education" (p. 1). What might such a program teach Canada's soccer coaches?

Tomlinson and Strachan (1996) identify a "... movement towards professionalism in sport coaching and the need to address ... the ethical use of power [by coaches]") (p. 3). They define 'power' as the ability to get things done, the capacity to act, or the ability to choose what will happen. "Coaches," they say, "continually use their power through the choices they make about how they relate to athletes and others in sport" (p. 3). They further suggest that any professional approach to coaching (or any professional approach by other practitioners like physicians, lawyers, or teachers) is characterised by trust that the practitioner is respectful, competent, and ethical. As a result, these relationships contain inherent power imbalances: physician over patient, lawyer over client, teacher over student, coach over athlete.

"[Power] is synonymous with action" (Tomlinson & Strachan, 1996, p. 5). To develop athletes and players, coaches need power; without it, they are impotent. "[They] need power to act" (Strachan & Tomlinson, 1997). As mentioned, this is the very nature of the position of authority. Naturally, negotiating power in relationships requires discernment and morality if a coach is to be ethical and responsible. Society demands from coaches who wield such power accountability – that they improve their understanding of power's nature and its appropriate implementation. Researchers agree: "Just as coaches work with athletes to enable them to perform to the best of their ability, ... so coaches need training to enable them to [do the same]" (Strachan & Tomlinson, 1997, p. 1). Yet the notion of power is regrettably underdeveloped in coach education (Strachan & Tomlinson, 1997). As an NCCP Course Conductor for Douglas College, I deliberately address the issue more rigorously than course curricula suggest.
Recently, course participants of mine carried forward a stimulating debate on the issue, and the bottom line was accountability for coaches and empowerment for players: each side of the coach-player relationship (often involving family or parents too) owed the other a level of personal responsibility to meet goals and expectations, to maintain an honest, constructive relationship, and to work for the benefit of others as well as self. These checks and balances, they decided, serve to alleviate abuses of power. Therefore, practitioners must be aware of the imbalance and curb their potential to abuse power with "... values that enable [them] to use their power positively in their interactions with [their charges]" (Tomlinson & Strachan, 1996, p. 3).

More and more, rising standards of professionalism are encompassing sport coaches at all levels of experience because of the desire for coach education and because of recognition of the importance and impact of sport on culture and society. Interestingly, 'professionalism' here encompasses not merely salary or earning a living but also behaviour, demeanour, or philosophy, distinguishing its connotation from that of any careless, throw-away use of the word.

Yet neither one's philosophy, competence, or ethics nor one's dominant communication style (dialogue) is easily or quickly altered, having been developed over years of one's life, so all appear to be critical determinants of the effectiveness of whichever practitioner one singles out; in other words, a practitioner's character traits and communication style go a long way to predicting how well that person will interact with others. While these traits are often the most effectual ones at their disposal, unfortunately, for many sport coaches, they can also be the most poorly developed. Too often, I have witnessed coaches whose characters left much to be desired as far as philosophy, ethics, or competence were concerned. Too often, I have witnessed coaches whose communication skills were clearly more authoritative than dialogue-oriented. The experience and expertise of these coaches seems to matter little; indeed, often the most disappointing behaviour comes from coaches with years of sport behind them. The results of such coach-athlete relationships are, in most cases, fruitless and discouraging. So given their influential position when coaches are at work, they possess unbalanced power for leveraging relationships with athletes for better and for worse. The idea of relational power, it seems, is a relevant learning objective for coach education programs.

The notion of power is underdeveloped in coach education due to the "increasingly complex and specialised body of knowledge" coaches are expected to master (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999, p.1), like "...anatomy, pedagogy, physiology, nutrition, and sport psychology" (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, p.16; Martens, 1997). Coaches often take on the dominant role as planners of team field trips (Hubball & Robertson, in press-b), and they are also implicated in the team selection process – the power of their influence reaches so far as to determine who will comprise the team. "A successful team selection try-out hinges not only on the quantity and
quality of the player-pool from which selections are made but also on the qualities of the coaches implementing the process, including the degree of preparation and reflection required to make informed decisions about individual players" (Hubball & Robertson, in press-a, p. 2). In part, the underdevelopment of these power issues in coach education results from compartmentalising sport coaching knowledge (PCA, 2000b; Strachan & Tomlinson, 1997; Wein, 1999). The PCA appreciates the need for volunteers and amateurs to receive easily consumable information but call the pieces "bite-size insights" and imply that sport-specific, technical aspects do not represent the full extent of coaching knowledge. The PCA's solution is to translate research into lay terms that are more easily accessible and applicable to novice volunteers. Critical thinking strategies and holistic development are stressed in their Positive Coach Mental Model (PCA, 2000b).

Wein (1999) similarly warns that traditional pedagogical theories attempt to "compartmentalise [soccer coaching] into discrete disciplines (techniques, tactics, fitness, and mental preparation)" (p. 4) instead of allowing coaches and players to learn holistically. Elsewhere, Wein (2001) stresses the importance of coach education for "... all coaches, from novices to the experienced, [so they can] revise their ways of coaching and tailor their [work] to the children they are teaching" (p.viii). Wade (1997) suggests that coaches "... should seek experience at the most primitive levels of player and skill development [because] each rung in the ladder of progress may have relevance to 'new learning' for top professionals or for the youngest schoolboy" (p. 2). In other words, nobody ever knows all they need to know about soccer coaching! Another way of looking at it is from Crow and Matthews (1998), who point out that "content has technical and cultural aspects. ... Technical aspects include learning 'how things are done,' [and] cultural aspects include learning 'how things are done around here'" (p.13). I would add that coaches need to learn how things are done around here for players at different age and experience levels.

Currently, formal grassroots coach education programs are still in their early stages (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999), and their teaching-learning strategies and their long-range effects have been questioned (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001). Further evidence is provided: "...fewer than one percent of ... coaches registered with the NCCP in Canada will [advance beyond] the first three levels of the five [levels offered]" (Gilbert and Trudel, 1999, p. 1). Additionally, Canada's grassroots coach education programs tend to devote more attention to declarative coaching knowledge (technical skill performance, instructional design and planning, fitness assessment, and performance evaluation) and less to procedural coaching knowledge (how to perform consistently and efficiently; how to reflect upon coaching performance; how to hone leadership skills; how to nurture relationships with athletes, parents, and others; how to use power wisely
and prudently; Strachan & Tomlinson, 1997). My own experience at Douglas College affirms these observations.

So we return to Gilbert and Trudel (1999, 2001) drawing attention to the lack of research on the process of transforming coaching experience into knowledge. Although frameworks exist in other domains, for Gilbert and Trudel (1999), the process in sport coaching of developing expertise from experience remains "a mystery" (p. 2). However, they feel that Schön's (1983) emphasis on domain-specific knowledge in professional contexts looks promising for coach education curriculum designers. Qualitative data indicate that experience is a primary source of coaching knowledge, although "[simply accumulating] experience does not guarantee coaching competence" (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, p. 17). Data from Gould, et al. (1990) support this conclusion. Wein (2001) reports: "Few coaches look beyond their specialty and combine, mix, or synthesise [new knowledge from diverse sources] with the teaching and learning process. Consequently, the majority of players and coaches must continue learning from accidents, mistakes, and trials rather than from the instruction received" (p. 5). In that case, future studies on coaching might do well to explore coaches' receptiveness to reflective analysis (Martens, 1997) because, as Kruse (in Gilbert & Trudel, 1999) asserts, reflection upon experience is "a dialectic process of thought and action" (p. 2). Reflection – undertaken via reciprocal thought and action – permits examination of the power relationship implicit in coach-athlete relationships ... assuming coaches are respectful, competent, and ethical!

One possible solution to Gilbert and Trudel's "mystery" is a greater emphasis on reflection. Reflection is found in environments with "... a high priority on flexible procedures, differentiated responses, qualitative appreciation of complex processes, and decentralised responsibility for judgement and action" (Schön, 1983, p. 338). "Reflection is the process that mediates experience and knowledge" (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, p. 17). Coach education programs could enhance coaches' knowledge and experiences via reflective analysis. Yet effective reflection must be ongoing; a weekend course will neither ensure long-term change nor instil the habit. The Australian Coaching Council, for example, uses an ongoing video / workbook program to introduce self-reflection to coaches (Bunt & Eggins, Abstract, 1996), which has more promise than finite weekend courses. Programs could heighten coaches' responsiveness to current situational needs (short- and long-term, broad or particular), their flexibility to face impediments, and their willingness to remain open-minded to learning. Presently, the NCCP program only aids in elucidating personal philosophies.

Knowing one's personal philosophy is only partially sufficient. One also must understand the ramification of how one's philosophy applies to specific contexts, which can yield
a deeper, more relevant, responsible regulation of the use of power. Unlike a one-off discovery in a weekend classroom setting, though, ongoing reflection about one's team or athletes can foster this awareness. Moreover, if simply accruing experience is not sufficient for developing expertise (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999; 2001), then reflection via mentoring (and also action research) would be an effective tool for advancement. In their investigation of experiential learning theories, Gilbert and Trudel (1999) cite Dewey, Kolb, Lave, and Schön; the common thread is that knowledge and learning are fundamentally embedded in an activity, its context, and the surrounding culture, echoing Clarke in Chapter I. Thus, interdependent relationships should be established between coaching theory and practice, specifically within an individual coach's praxis.

"Before teaching a specific sport like soccer, coaches should fully understand how a child, adolescent, or adult learns best and analyse the mechanisms that intervene and influence learning in each of the evolutionary stages of the student."

- Horst Wein, Center for Research and Studies, Royal Spanish Soccer Federation (2001)

Applied Theory – The Rationale

In her report on coach mentoring in lacrosse, Piltz (1999) notes the inadequacy of classroom-based coach education:

"No matter how effective a coach education course may be in terms of its structure, it is impossible to give novice coaches a real understanding of the nature of coaching unless they actually see coaches at work. Much of what the good coach does is 'knowing in action,' and it cannot be described in a classroom environment. It can, however, be observed, noted, and queried by a novice coach working alongside their mentor in a cooperative relationship" (p.1).

Embedded in these words is the notion of praxis, a concept at the heart of mentoring in all contexts.

Praxis, meaning "'informed, committed action,'" (Carr and Kemmis in Malderez, 1998) is derived from Aristotle’s model of thought, phronesis (Malderez, 1998). Phronesis consists of sunesis, or understanding, and praxis, or action. Malderez connects phronesis to another Aristotelian idea, prudence, defining prudence as "the practical application of general moral principles to specific situations" (p. 2). Citing Hobart (1997), Malderez (1998) argues that twentieth century praxis (informed, committed action) has been curbed by analysis (decontextualised, fragmented technical knowledge), echoing the PCA (2000), Strachan and Tomlinson (1997), and Wein (1999).

Hobart (in Malderez, 1998) links theory to practice via "a collection of epistemological methods that model understanding as a contextualised and historically situated mediation
between the universal and the particular" (p. 2). Hobart’s link connects phenomena with situations based on what people already know from experience, suggesting how they will apply their knowledge to any given case down the road. Lave and Wenger (1991) describe “situated cognition,” saying that effective learning requires authentic – or coherent, meaningful, and purposeful – activity. This implies that learning stems not from doing something, but from being someone doing something in context, from doing something “around here” (Crow & Matthews, 1998, p. 13). To Lave (1993 in Malderez, 1998), learning is “… a process of changing understanding in practice; that is, learning” (p. 2), but this change is not immediate for novices, who likely require an exemplary model as well as time for reflection. The process is gradual as novices learn in context from experts, and they develop mastery or expertise, advancing into higher Zones of Proximal Development (ZPD).¹ This process of learning – testing, texturing, and restructuring new information with existing information – yields the product of learning, a qualitative change in knowledge or understanding. Piltz’s (1999) description of lacrosse coach mentoring fits well into Lave and Wenger’s model above. As for developing expertise, three key factors aid in successful ZPD progression (based on Brown, et al., 1989 as referred to by Johnson & Pratt, 1998):

- Active, not passive, learning experiences
- Social, cooperative, or collaborative experiences
- Authentic, enculturated experiences

Drawing on the field on teacher education, Malderez and Bodoczky (2000) assert that “…the primary concern in teacher education [is becoming] one of helping learner-teachers develop their own thinking, … in tandem with appropriate practices which [sic] mediate the learning of their pupils” (p. 4). The students might benefit from the learner-teacher’s reflections as well. Also, they state: “…the kind of knowledge needed by teachers … cannot be divorced from their practice” (p. 5). Additionally, Malderez and Bodoczky suggest that research should appropriately inform teacher education and training – not behaviourist training, like teaching a dog to sit or teaching a coach to uncritically duplicate a particular strategy, but more open development that accounts for all the complexities and dynamics one might encounter with a group of (novice) learners. The very heart of teaching is the complexity created by the dynamics of human interaction, fuelling the argument that teaching (or coaching) is somewhat of an art, a craft, a science, even a vocation (Malderez, 1998), and that there is no “correct” solution to a given situation other than what one can justify based upon one’s experience and belief system.

¹ Vygotsky’s (1978) Zone of Proximal Development is an interactive system within which people work on a problem that (at least) one of them could not do alone. Within the Zone, people operate relative to the parameters of (1) their personal developmental histories and (2) the support network created by other people and / or other resources.
Malderez (1998) also mentions that "good teaching seems to come from a teacher's ... interpretation of events transformed into contextually appropriate and effective actions" (p. 7); in other words, praxis implemented with prudence. (Malderez assumes that "good" is learner-centred, selfless teaching). "The core of what teachers need to know requires supported gradual immersion in real school and teaching contexts" (Malderez and Bodoczky, 2000, p. 2). "Mentors (Grenfell's 'new training professionals') are crucial in supporting the development of ... 'core teacher knowledge'" (Malderez, 2001). Support means "one-on-one support [for people to] do with help what they could not do without help ..." (Malderez, 2001). Put another way, support advances learners within Zones of Proximal Development.

Care will ensure that support does not become a crutch for learners. By seeking to understand "... what it is teachers need to know [including more than simply content], how they come to know it, and how others ... can support this learning," teacher education researchers are expanding not only the breadth of "'core teacher knowledge' (Leinhardt's 'situated knowledge'; Carter's 'personal practical knowledge')" (Malderez, 2001), but also the way prudent support might be provided. Essentially, mentors can assist at holistically developing novices' discrete, technical skills (e.g., board work, questioning, wait time, grouping skills, lesson planning) as well as their more ephemeral, intuitive skills (e.g., when / how to implement a newly demonstrated technique), at once addressing the complexity of content (Crow & Matthews, 1998), the weaknesses in teacher and coach education (Malderez, 1998; PCA, 2000; Strachan and Tomlinson, 1997; Wein, 1999), and the range of expertise found at different levels or stages of experience (Wein, 2001; Wade, 1997). Mentoring is inherently situated: on-the-spot and in-the-moment. Therefore, researchers investigating methods of support that aid in contextual development and situated learning ought to study mentoring relationships.

The Benefits of Mentoring

"... where theoretical 'models' of mentoring exist they are partial and inadequate."


In The Odyssey, Telemachus receives from Mentor an education that encompasses "every facet of his life; that is, physical, intellectual, spiritual, social, and administrative" (Clawson, 1980 in Crow & Matthews, 1998, p. 2). In short, Mentor “[teaches] Telemachus to think and act for himself” (Kay, 1990 in Crow & Matthews, 1998, p. 2). One may imagine numerous benefits from such an holistic education. As Collins, Brown, and Holum (1991) suggest, as an approach to teaching and learning, mentoring naturally preceded modern schooling on account of its utility and effectiveness.
In fact, mentoring derives many benefits, of which Maynard (1997) distinguishes four for mentored student-teachers: networking colleagues from differing environments, requiring teachers to 'open doors' to colleagues, demanding mentors to justify praxis even as they share with their interns, and encouraging and enhancing the provision of in-services and professional development. Crow and Matthews (1998) list others for school administrators in both roles of a mentoring relationship, including: renewed enthusiasm for the profession, opportunities for risk-taking with reduced chance of damaging outcomes, new insights and ideas, validation of one's praxis, increased self-confidence, and improved reflective / evaluative skills. They discuss how learning yields reform if administrators are able "... to change their practice and values" (preface, pp. ix-x). The same idea is borne in sport coaching by Wein (1999): "A major obstacle for the progress of [soccer coaching] is the force of habit" (p. 3). "Coaches tend to continue with old habits rather than continually rethinking what has to be done and how ... Many have not even noticed that the information they obtained years before has diminished in value" (Wein, 2001, p. 5). Mentoring can be an eye-opener to reflecting upon one's praxis.

All the literature in this review supports mentoring as a reciprocal relationship in terms of learning and development. Like an in-service or refresher course that invests in observation and explanation, mentoring refines a mentor's knowledge base even while cultivating an intern's. Mentors enhance their own capabilities in their fields of practice while serving as a "monitored gate into a profession" for interns (Reilly, 1992, p. 235). As well, Reilly (1992) cites Levinson, et al. (1978) and Erickson (1980), who posit that middle-aged people have an urge to aid younger adults, and that this aid produces feelings of satisfaction and a "rejuvenated spirit" (Reilly, 1992, p. 233). The mentor-intern relationship is based on accountability, as each side encourages and inspires the other to learn and improve. Due to the trust in this relationship, the focus falls on what people know rather than on what they do not know (Malderez, 2001). The environment is positive and safer, encouraging risk-taking and better learning. The result for each side is increased confidence and self-esteem.

Clearly, mentoring – specifically, sport-coach mentoring – has a powerful and influential role to play in shaping our society and its culture. Reilly (1992), quoting Levinson (1978), takes things as far as to claim "the reluctance to form mentorships 'is a waste of talent, a loss to the individuals involved, and an impediment to social change'" (p. 240). "Mentoring is a win-win situation ..." (Schulz, 1995, p. 64) that benefits society-at-large, providing chances:

- for people to meet who might never have encountered each other
- for people to expand networks and to step beyond their social boundaries
- for talent to surface that might otherwise have remained dormant
• for ideas to be fashioned, refined, or explicated
• for senior citizens to contribute meaningfully to younger learners while yet making room for up-and-comers
• for facilitating and encouraging a society of self-regulated, lifelong learners.

All these benefits implicate mentoring as an excellent tool for educating grassroots soccer coaches. Who better to inculcate developing Canadian athletes than coaches who have been trained in safe environments to be reflective, confident, and full of self-worth? Thus, mentoring, like sport, enhances holistic or “complete” learner development (Wein, 1999a; 1999b). Also, mentored coaches tend to create stronger bonds between general theory and their own practice, forget less, become more discerning over which environmental cues they respond to, and implement more effective teaching and learning strategies because of enhanced “relevance structures” (Marton & Booth, 1997, p. 143). “Learning how to observe experienced teachers and understand the different skills that they are using is an achievement in itself; [student-teachers] need to be taught how to do this” (Maynard, 1997, p. 45). As such, mentoring — under-utilised and under-researched — ought to be in the forefront of Canada’s sport coach research and education programs.

What is Mentoring?

In a survey of mentoring literature, Taylor and Stephenson (1996) conclude there is not enough evidence about mentoring, about its contextual variations, about ‘successful’ mentoring, about transferability, or about differing mentor-intern perceptions of mentoring for there to be any clear and reliable definition or prescription for mentoring. “There are no certainties” (p. 35), and any mentoring relationship can “reinvent mentoring for themselves according to their own particular context” (Monaghan & Lunt, 1992 in Taylor & Stephenson, 1996, p. 35). However, the result of this, state Taylor and Stephenson, is a needs-driven, evidence-led, proactive development of mentoring, enriching and flexible, founded in situ by whomever is involved. The downside, as I see it, is that anyone can hang a shingle, call themselves a “mentor,” and remain unaccountable (unless whomever they serve are discerning enough to care). There is no assurance that what goes on in the mentorship is of any use or quality. We need a global definition that describes valid, reliable mentoring roles and outcomes.

Crow and Matthews (1998), studying and reporting on the development of school administrators, understand mentoring to be a personalised, focused, career-long, reciprocal socialisation experience between institutions and individuals, occurring within all practising contexts. Mentors may be confidants or adversaries, or they may remain out of the spotlight, observing, unless and until they are needed. In their view, the mentoring relationship is comprised of three parties: the traveller (i.e., intern), the guide (i.e., mentor), and passengers
students. For mentors, or guides, the act of travelling the same route many times becomes "mindless" (Langer, 1989 in Crow & Matthews, p. 62); conscious attention is not given to the journey. However, mindless travel helps neither the guide nor the traveller "to explore the knowledge, skills, behaviour, and values" (p. 62), so a mentor is responsible for proactively facilitating active, reflective exploration on the part of the intern. This facilitation might take the form of prompting journal responses, brainstorming alternatives to a situation, storytelling, modeling, and sharing visions of future possibilities. Crow and Matthews, citing Gehrke (1988), suggest that mentors give two gifts to interns: wisdom, or a new way of thinking, living, and seeing things; and awakening, or an establishing of vision, possibility, and future potential. The intern, of course, plays an active role and must be willing to receive these gifts.

Malderez (2001) broadly defines mentoring as "the support given by one (usually more experienced) person for the growth and learning of another, as well as for their integration into and acceptance by a specific community" (p. 1), reminiscent of situated learning. According to Malderez, mentors perform a variety of roles for interns, each with unique, corresponding functions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td>to inspire, to demonstrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enculturator</td>
<td>to show around, to aid in familiarising with local culture and customs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporter</td>
<td>to be there, to listen for venting or as a sounding board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor</td>
<td>to 'open doors,' to introduce the 'right people,' to help 'make things happen.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educator</td>
<td>to listen and coach, to help set goals and objectives, to create appropriate learning opportunities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 – The Roles of Mentoring (Malderez, 2001)

These roles vary in degree and importance from mentor to mentor and from case to case. Maynard's (1997) Stages of Mentoring finds interns advancing through four phases:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning Intern</td>
<td>mentor as model, intern observes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervised Intern</td>
<td>mentor as trainer, intern observes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralisation</td>
<td>mentor as critical friend, intern reflects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Teaching</td>
<td>mentor as co-enquirer, intern is more self-regulated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 – The Stages of Mentoring (adapted from Maynard, 1997)

These stages are to be understood not as discrete but as cumulative. In Stage 1, the intern observes the mentor's performance, learning 'to see.' The mentor selects topics for the intern to observe, so the student will improve his or her ability to discern relevant from non-relevant cues. The intern grows accustomed to daily routines and focuses on ways of
establishing and maintaining the environment. In Stage 2, the intern regularly observes the mentor's performance using specific criteria, in order to grasp teaching competency, but relating all data back as a self-reflective engagement. Stage 3 is a gradual, focused shift of energy and attention. At this point, a mentor ought to direct the intern towards the process of decentralisation: “devoting attention to a pupil’s learning and appropriate ways of teaching that support this learning, rather than simply focusing on [the intern’s] own performance” (Maynard, 1997, p. 46). As I see it, Stage 3 is a move from “dependence to independence” (Covey, 1990). Finally, at Stage 4, the intern grows more self-regulated, accepting greater individual responsibility and self-selecting observational foci. Now, mentor and intern co-focus on issues of mutual interest or agreement, and the relationship becomes more equitable and “interdependent” (Covey, 1990). By this stage, the intern possesses a deeper comprehension of teaching and learning complexities, as well as of social, moral, and political dimensions that accompany the profession. Each stage is described more practically in Chapter IV’s discussion of the intern-coaches behaviour from the study data. Also, the entire notion of teaching / coaching as a profession will be explored.

To begin this study, my working definition of mentoring was "a one-on-one relationship supporting the development of coaches at any level of sport" (Robertson, 1999); the paper from which this definition is taken comprises Appendix A of this thesis. In this mentoring relationship, the mentor functions as a facilitator and a mirror for the intern by questioning, challenging, actively listening, and directing him or her during the process. Mentoring strategies include assessing needs, setting and evaluating goals, observing and offering feedback, and questioning and actively listening to the intern. In this respect, I believe mentors strengthen the link between knowing and doing by making each coaching experience a learning experience through a self-reflection cycle. Galvin’s model, the Self-Reflection Cycle (Galvin, 1998), is central to sport coach mentoring.

![Figure 1 - The Self-Reflection Cycle](image)

Figure 1 – The Self-Reflection Cycle is a review of a past event to find new alternatives for future events. Self-reflection links theory and practice but requires a catalyst to spark the process. A coaching event, like a practice or competition, serves perfectly (Galvin, 1998 adapted from Gibbs, 1988)

Coach education programs, like any educational endeavour, should be founded upon a practical model such as Galvin’s Self-Reflective Cycle or a similar model, like Heidegger’s
Hermeneutic Circle, a reciprocal learning process that involves theorising, practising, and reflecting (Kesson, 1999).

**Heidegger's Hermeneutic Circle**

![Diagram of Heidegger's Hermeneutic Circle](image)

Figure 2 – “The continuous reflection on the details of practice in light of selected critical theorising and, reciprocally, the continuous critique of the critical theorising in light of practical experience” (Kesson, 1999, p. 106).

Both Galvin’s Self-Reflection Cycle and Heidegger’s Circle are feedback loops, lending practical form to Krall’s (1988) statement that “…self-understanding, when pursued reflectively, rather than leading to a constricted and egocentric worldview, is the primary link with the world” (p. 486). Peoples’ identities are not separate from what they do – each daily choice we make contributes to the person we become, which reciprocally influences choices we make. Hamlet (III, iv, 167-171) suggests a similar thought to his mother about choice and reflection:

> “And that shall lend a kind of easiness  
> To the next [choice]; the next more easy;  
> For use almost can change the stamp of nature,  
> And either the devil, or throw him out  
> With wondrous potency.”

Hansman (2001) extends mentoring possibilities beyond the singular or one-on-one relationship into “situated cognition,” where a group of peers meets and shares a common experience through practice, discussion, critique, and community. However, note that in all of the definitions of mentoring, **applying knowledge within a context is the focal point**. Coach education, in which theory and practice are often distinct and separated by a gap, requires an effective tool for facilitating learning. Mentoring is one way to bridge the gap. During this study, while I was discovering these references, I was able to apply them myself to my experiences with the intern-coaches. Generally, though, I relied upon my paper’s definition of mentoring coupled with Clarke’s aspects of learning (i.e., personally constructed, socially mediated, and inherently situated): mentoring is a one-on-one relationship facilitating the personal development of coaches on-site at a specific level of sport coaching.
The Coaching Gap

"The gap between expected competencies and the typical youth sport coach profile (i.e., volunteers with sparse formal training) has long been considered a major challenge for youth sports" (Ewing, et al., 1996 in Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, p. 16). The coaching gap phenomenon (Galvin, 1998) is the acquisition of theory in inappropriate contexts, yielding less meaningful learning and inadequate coaching performances in practical settings. Lack of accountability (i.e., volunteer coaches are rarely evaluated by grassroots soccer clubs) perpetuates these problems. As the culprits primarily responsible for this insufficiency, many grassroots coach education programs fail to enhance the praxis of volunteer coaches, thus failing in their primary objective. Anecdotally, the coaching gap is evident in Canada and the USA, and Galvin has pinpointed it in English and Australian sport coaching as well. He suggests that deliberate strategies are needed that will shape future coach education programs, in order to bridge the coaching gap. As noted, the PCA (2000b) has made similar recommendations, as have Malderez (1998; 2001), Malderez and Bodoczky (2000); my own recommendations are contained in my mentoring paper (Appendix A). Furthermore, the coaching gap exacerbates poor coaching, since theory is forgotten or never learned at all. Either way, young athletes are receiving inadequate sport coaching. One might cynically conclude that coaches are better off simply not attending education programs. With a focus on situated learning, however, mentoring has the potential to overcome the coaching gap and serve the learning and developmental needs of coaches and athletes across all levels of sport.

Applied Theory – The Method

Exploring the notion of mentors as teachers (more accurately, as teachers of teachers), Malderez and Bodoczky (2000) cite Habermas (1984), delineating between the art and the science of teaching, as described in Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION TYPE</th>
<th>INVOLVES</th>
<th>CRITERIA FOR JUDGEMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teleological</td>
<td>cognition, belief, intention</td>
<td>'truth,' efficacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic</td>
<td>as above; also involves 'the anticipation of decisions on the part of at least one other goal-directed actor</td>
<td>as above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramaturgical</td>
<td>'presentation of self' involving 'stylising expressions of one's experience with respect to an audience,' rather than 'spontaneous expressive behaviour'</td>
<td>sincerity, authenticity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative</td>
<td>interpretation + negotiating definitions of situations which admit to consensus</td>
<td>reaching an understanding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 – Habermas’ (1984) Actions of Teaching in Malderez and Bodoczky (2000)

The Action Types most relevant to this review are Communicative Actions, similar to earlier assertions that relate to Dewey's notion of dialogue between teacher and student.
Communicative Actions involve active listening that yields the criterion for judgement: reaching an understanding between teacher and student. It is imperative for teachers to communicate in this way and to establish safe environments in which students may communicate with teachers and with each other. Just as “coaching is communication” (Martens, 1997, p. 19), so also is the coaching of coaches; communication is indubitably a key factor in mentoring.

Malderez and Bodoczky (2000) contend that mentoring encourages practitioner research via gathering, interpreting, assessing, and evaluating of observational data. The process alleviates tension between theory and practice – between pundits and practitioners (Malderez & Bodoczky, 2000) – and bridges the coaching gap by encouraging the growth of core knowledge, the nature of which is personal, practical, and situated in-context (Malderez & Bodoczky, 2000). This knowledge has been alternatively described as “personal practical knowledge” (Carter, 1990), “situated knowledge” (Leinhardt, 1988), and “craft knowledge” (Grimmett & Mackinnon, 1992). As I have mentioned, mentoring “strengthens the link between knowing and doing” and accomplishes far more than simply listening to lectures in a classroom. The elite coaches studied by Gould, et al. (1990) determined that “active involvement in the learning process is essential” and that mentoring relationships “should be developed as a way to facilitate and monitor [the] experiential education of ... coaches” (p. 342). Martens (1997) shares these conclusions. Gould’s subjects deemed that mentoring education would be effective for their personal advancement and development, as well as for that of novice and grassroots coaches too.

Malderez and Bodoczky (2000) also predict the future growth of mentoring. First, it will become central to teacher education, not just at the novice level but also in the praxis of policy-makers, administrators, and the community-at-large. Second, mentoring “will permeate education” as teaching (and coaching) skills grow increasingly more complex, specialised, and open. As a result, third, mentoring will encourage collegiality and integration between different role-players in education (students, teachers, mentors, administrators, researchers). All will seek to understand each other’s context, forging new relationships and richer communities in which to practise (Malderez & Bodoczky, 2000). When communities spend time growing together, they become not only more skilled but more understanding. Mentoring is “…important to us as teachers ..., as life-long learners, and as members of communities [school, local, national, professional]” (Malderez, 2001).

Mentoring also encourages accountability. Mentors assign appropriately challenging tasks to interns, and they counsel and guide the process from start to finish, from goal-setting to reflective evaluation (Galvin, 1998; Malderez, 2001). For intern coaches, the first assignment...
ought to be a match-up with a more experienced coach, since experiential knowledge and observation of other coaches play crucial roles in a coach’s development (Gould, et al., 1990). Learning is purposeful, positive, and professional (Malderez & Bodoczky, 2000), and mentors structure their teaching according to interns’ needs and circumstances. Perhaps this explains the teleology of teaching: for a practitioner, the trick is to know why, under the circumstances, one does what one does.

“In the 'knowing what to do,' there is both knowledge and action ... bound together in almost instantaneous, intuitive and seemingly effortless responses and reactions .... [This ‘knowing’] is tied to the vision [or motive] ... of promoting learning in a particular group ...” (Malderez, 1998, p. 5).

Here, then, is the rationale for any effective mentoring program. Primarily, reflection and communication assist interns at enhancing their teleologies and at deciphering their own experiences, intuitions, and philosophical applications from within their own action settings.

The limited research in coach education and sport coach mentoring should not be discouraging, since much information exists on mentoring in other comparable areas. This is certainly not to discourage future sport coaching research! The impact of sport on the lives of all people suggests that coaching in general and mentoring in particular deserve greater attention. Additionally, discovering how to plan and implement successful mentoring programs in coach education deserves attention because of mentoring’s potential as a teaching and learning strategy. Moreover, training adult coaches closely resembles training adult teachers, and lessons from mentoring teachers should transfer agreeably to coach education. Gould, et al. (1990) propose that university teacher educators take the lead in this endeavour on account of these similarities. Coach education programs are far from adequately addressing prudent coaching praxis, and they suffer from pedestrian attendance in any case, despite parents’ expectations for their children’s coaches (SOAR, 1995). The onus falls on coach educators to investigate alternative solutions to these problems and make appropriate educational opportunities available to all coaches across Canada. Our coaches, our athletes, and our country can only benefit from the effort.
CHAPTER III: METHOD

In this study, I was the mentor, playing the role and performing the activities laid out in my mentoring paper (Appendix A) – the expertly qualified coach. Two potential intern coaches were approached – one, the father of a player, I only knew from the soccer environment – the novice qualified coach (Mike, a pseudonym). The other, a teaching and coaching colleague of mine, I knew very well both in and out of soccer environments – the advanced qualified coach (Ken, a pseudonym). Each agreed to participate in the study. Needs assessments and goal-setting for the intern-coaches were undertaken in the opening week, with the intention of developing a rapport over the next few sessions as all the coaches shared their plans, goals, and ideas.

Eight local Under-8 boys attended an independent, twelve-week Team-and-Player Soccer Enhancement Academy one day a week. The three coaches instructed the sessions. Aside from being the mentor, I was also directing the Academy program. Participant players and families were aware of my coaching role but unaware of my mentoring role.

I recognise that research is an endeavour of wonder and questioning, and I appreciate the importance of suspending my prejudice (anticipating results) in the case that some new insight or unexpected surprise results from the study. I hope, by reflecting upon the data during and after the process – by myself and with my advisors – that I was able to discover useful knowledge without seeing only what I had hoped to see prior to the study. Having said that, I did anticipate that the mentoring would affect the intern-coaches not only in Academy coaching sessions but also in their “outside” soccer coaching endeavours.

Pre-, mid-, and post-program interviews were conducted between the mentor and the intern-coaches; the mentor completed a weekly post-event questionnaire, and the intern-coaches completed post-event questionnaires after their coaching sessions; and the mentor wrote regular fieldnotes / reflections after any inquiry-related event during the program. Video footage of the intern-coaches during week 7 and again during week 11 was analysed by all coaches, against which relevant interview and questionnaire responses were compared. Upon completion, all coaches evaluated the program. A member-check follow-up was conducted one year after the program ended, to investigate its lasting significance in the intern-coaches’ praxes.

Data were analysed to ascertain recurring themes, confirm or refute mentoring roles and functions as outlined by Malderez (2001), and to answer the three inquiry questions. First, all the data were scoured and examined to identify and confirm Malderez’s five roles of mentoring at work and to determine the effectiveness of the mentoring process from the perspective of the
three participant coaches. Next, for each mentoring role, relevant quotations and situations or examples were found in the data as evidence to support that role's existence and to elucidate the answers to the inquiry questions. Lincoln and Guba's (1985) constant comparative method was used to move from raw data to the final mentoring roles and broader themes that constitute answers to the inquiry questions.

Rationale for Research Methodology: Possible Limitations and Future Directions

This inquiry was a case study analysing mentoring in an expertly arranged and conducted soccer environment, not necessarily representative of a typical grassroots soccer environment. At first, team and player needs were determined and addressed by the expert mentor, but coaching duties gradually shifted from the mentor to the intern-coaches. Data were interpreted and reported in order to explore what (if any) effect mentoring had on the intern-coaches, in relation to the inquiry questions. As the study was exploratory in nature, the more formal setting used in this inquiry permitted flexibility to experiment and review the mentoring concept, which might not have been as thoroughly accomplished in more informal grassroots soccer settings. Since this study's focus was principally on mentoring and not grassroots soccer itself, I felt this accommodation was both a reasonable and justified way to proceed.

To gain greater insight than this inquiry affords, the mentoring of intern / novice coaches could be analysed as case studies in more realistic contexts, representative of the majority of Canadian grassroots soccer. In such environments, team and player needs would be more directly determined by intern / novice coaches, who know their players well, whilst mentors would assume more peripheral roles. Unlike this study, since the mentors would not control the environment, the coaches' learning issues would be less predictable; the mentors would simply be guests of the coaches and teams they would help. Certainly, a mentor might encourage an intern-coach to follow particular paths of learning, yet unforeseeable situations could still arise because of that mentor's unfamiliarity with the players, coaches, parents, program, or club / association. By interpreting and comparing the data from future studies to this inquiry, two outcomes can result: (1) describing and relating more accurately the effects of coach mentoring on intern / novice coaches in grassroots soccer environments, as opposed to more expertly arranged environments; (2) exploring any effects that mentoring might have on coach development or performance generally.
CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

"Leaving the mentoring and socialising of [interns] to chance counters the professional ethic of education."
- Crow and Matthews (1998), p. ix

The inquiry questions cover a range of aspects of grassroots soccer coach mentoring (i.e., the effects of mentoring, the roles of mentors, and the implications for mentoring to coach education). In this chapter, I will analyse the study data and suggest their resulting significance, and I will try to uncover answers to the inquiry questions, according to Malderez's (2001) framework of mentoring roles and their corresponding functions. This framework is best understood as an holistic description of the mentor's activities where roles overlap rather than as a list of discrete duties that a mentor might undertake. Nevertheless, I will discuss each role separately, for the purpose of analysing the data in detail.

Malderez (2001) broadly defines mentoring as "the support given by one (usually more experienced) person for the growth and learning of another, as well as for their integration into and acceptance by a specific community" (p. 1). According to Malderez, mentors perform a variety of roles for interns, each with unique, corresponding functions (Table 1).

**Model**

Perhaps the mentor's most apparent role is that of a model. Malderez (2001) suggests that, by modelling, a mentor demonstrates to and inspires within an intern appropriate behaviour. The data here suggest overwhelmingly that (1) modelling is a mentoring role, with examples occurring every session, (2) inspiration and demonstration are both significant actions, and (3) different outcomes occurred for each of the intern-coaches as a result of the modelling, suggesting that as a coach grows in knowledge and experience, his or her capacity to observe demonstrations and to be inspired can change.

The effect of the two actions, demonstration and inspiration, on the novice intern-coach seemed to be spontaneous at times:

*At first, I was unsure how to help in the skills practice. After a minute or so, I stepped in with an idea because I saw and modelled [the mentor] – that was helpful.*

*It was very exciting to watch the kids play – I was holding back the urge to jump in and help out [with coaching].*

*Simply observing was of benefit – I will use some of [today's practice] at the next club session.*

At other times, the effects of the two actions appeared to result from the intern-coaches reflecting long-term on their observations and experiences:

*Observing sessions has raised my confidence [for coaching on my own].*
I enjoy bringing players in for discussion and questioning and all its benefits – something I observed in this program.

The mentor demonstrated patience and respect for the kids.

Modelling appeared to inspire Mike, the novice inter-coach, personally ("... happy to be learning ... glad [to be] participating") as well as collegially and even professionally ("... collegial sense gave me more idea of professionalism to my coaching"). Also, Mike was inspired by a discussion we had while problem-solving for his own team. He wished to approach his team differently than he had been up until then, in order to maintain his sideline composure during matches. After we talked through the issue, he decided to enlist the help of a parent on his team to undertake some of the match-day coaching duties so that Mike could step away from the team and remain calmer. He also would ask a second parent to quietly observe his behaviour at practices and report to Mike his observations of Mike's demeanour and emotional control. Both situations, after four or five weeks, rewarded the team: Mike reported that parents felt more connected due to increased responsibilities, and that "... the players have benefited" because of his more deliberately conscious approach to soccer coaching. Our discussion served as a useful time for reflection, and I feel Mike was inspired from having shared the experience of the study program – he was made aware that things could be different than what he was doing on his own, and he had observed firsthand how to accomplish it because he had a model. Mike's summary from his Post-Program Reflections is well-put: "I find myself reflecting on how [the other coaches] would act when I am interacting with the kids." The modeling role apparently has some staying power.

Ken, the advanced intern-coach, generally seemed to experience more long-term effects from modelling than Mike: "[My goal] to act more professionally is being realised by exposure to the [study program] environment, like osmosis." However, Ken also had an epiphany of sorts thanks to the model study program. "[Observing the study program] has enhanced my notion of fun and play during a practice." His soccer background told Ken that play and fun were distinct from effective training. Watching the study program's sessions, however, enhanced his notion of play and practice functioning together, fostering participation, and encouraging learning. This directly affected Ken's coaching. "Simply having the players play during the opening and closing of the session is fun and a chance to work on skills under pressure ... I was able to use what I saw and learned ... in my own program."

Overall, modelling served to inspire and lift the intern-coaches' confidence, motivation, collegiality, enjoyment, interest, and eagerness to (1) coach and learn in the future, (2) demonstrate alternative strategies of soccer coaching, and (3) foster personal and professional development. They reflected as a result of mentor modelling because their observations
provided alternatives to reconsider with regard to their own coaching. In this environment, observations held more meaning because the mentoring and modelling was the deliberate intention of all the coaches in the first place, thus heightening the energy and attention they devoted to their observations.

Watching has revealed sport-specific areas to improve on in [my] knowledge and skills. My observations have added to my toolbox / repertoire [of coaching strategies].

Had the coaches not been seeking to enhance their sport-specific knowledge and skills or their 'toolboxes', their observations of the mentor's model praxis would not have been as focused. However, simply observing the other coaches was enriching as well: "The fact that [the program coaches'] styles are clearly different also gives me confidence that my particular instincts are as valid in certain circumstances." Modelling raised coaches' confidence levels and self-esteem.

Both intern-coaches felt as though they were aiding players in other programs because of the changes they had begun to implement in their own coaching. Ken began "...modelling the practice structure – Game, Skill, Game" within his local club soccer sessions, structure that "...[the mentor] showed me with [the study program]." Likewise, Mike "...[brought] a new heightened awareness / consciousness to my regular [club team] coaching." This is a significant effect of the modelling because it helped to amplify the accountability to which the intern-coaches subjected themselves. In that regard, modelling became a touchstone for gauging their performance and their growing expertise. This enhancement in the intern-coaches' discernment of their skills was fascinating to discover. For instance, not only was Mike able to be reflective, to step back and be more objective, to reason "...one step outside the event," in order to observe if learning was occurring amongst the players, but he also felt he possessed the capability to observe and critique other coaches too. This outcome, self-regulated thinking and learning, is one of the ends of mentoring. When Mike made these connections during his club team training, he surmised from his observations what other teams could do and what alternatives he might attempt himself. Mike, in these instances, was engaged in a higher order of critical thinking, making comparisons, inventing and predicting possible alternatives, and seeing other viewpoints.

Another useful source of modelling came from videotaped recordings of different sessions (Week Seven and Week Ten). Both intern-coaches felt the benefits of reviewing their practice via video recordings. "I was able to use what I saw [the mentor doing]." "I was impressed with the video; [it became a watershed realisation that] I did a good job." By watching and contrasting himself on the video with the mentor and with Ken, Mike listed a number of areas in his practice requiring attention:
Ken, on the other hand, felt the video was reaffirming and a positive source of feedback, assuring him that what he practised was what he felt he had practised. This had the effect of maintaining – perhaps even boosting – his confidence and motivation to continue coaching.

As the mentor, I also reflected on my own praxis, feeling self-induced pressure to set a good example as a role model. Each time the intern-coaches and I were together, I sought to be positive and well-prepared. This way, the intern-coaches would have as much as I could provide for their observation and analysis, and I felt they would progress more quickly toward self-regulation and accepting more personal responsibility for the study program coaching. This did occur. Ken routinely coached at least a portion of each session on his own. Mike, by Week Seven, was exuding greater confidence and was willing to embrace the so-called teachable moments and to “take the lead,” as he put it, during sessions. Some of the pressure I felt, I believe, was the recognition that my behaviour was impacting well beyond the boundaries of the program, and I felt compelled to act professionally and responsibly. The intern-coaches responses were positive feedback for me that I was serving as a good role model.

Indeed, this aspect of modelling became, for me, the most satisfactory one of all. Mike explained that as he would step aside to watch me or Ken coach, he found more objectivity, enabling – even forcing – him to reflect and refine his ideas. Mike was developing his “relevance structures” Marton and Booth’s (1997, p. 143), and we all were amazed to hear and discuss the various factors of practice sessions upon which each of us had cued. For instance, Mike was accustomed as a coach to react instantaneously to his team’s errors, whether they were the lesson focus for the session or not. This inevitably sidetracked him so that his club team’s practices devolved into discussion, criticism, and lots of standing around. When he began to observe my coaching, Mike saw that I ignored certain errors or rule infractions, as long as the players were achieving basic lesson outcomes. Occasionally, I would be sidetracked too, but less frequently or disruptively than Mike had been. Even if what he saw during a practice was the same as what I saw, yet the attention and concern I devoted to a given cue was a function of my experience and intent; therefore, my decisions to address or ignore specific cues were often very different and – as a result – eye-opening for Mike, and for Ken too, at times. From these observations, Mike learned to be more patient and discerning during practice
sessions ("... absolutely ... patience and respect [the mentor] gave the kids [aided my coaching]").

As a novice, Mike seemed to fall right in line with Maynard's (1997) progressive stages of mentoring development. In Stage 1, he was primarily concerned with learning 'to see' the ways of establishing and maintaining the environment, and he felt comfortable merely watching to "get a feel for how things worked." His stated goals from Week One reflect as much:

- to get a sense of what makes effective training
- to learn how to make players listen
- to get them moving and on-task

Based on these goals, I selected specific topics for him to observe, with the intention of enhancing Mike's ability to discern relevant and non-relevant cues from the practice session. For example, because he wanted to learn how to become more objective and less wound up during practice sessions, I asked Mike to note the timing of my interventions as well as the type and amount of information I provided. Generally, our post-event discussions, the videos, and Mike's own written reflections all contributed to his learning and served usefully to assess his progress. By Week Seven, Mike had apparently advanced to Stage 2, when he was able to relate feedback about his coaching to himself. "I wasn't aware ... like the way I was dressed [i.e., jeans and sweatshirt]. It was pretty eye-opening looking at [the mentor] and Ken compared to me." By program's end, Mike was clearly reaching Stage 3, where selfless concern for learners rather than selfish concern for praxis became his focus, simultaneously meeting his goals from Week One: "[The opportunity to observe and coach in the program] has helped me facilitate players' learning more effectively."

Ken likewise demonstrated passage through Maynard's stages, hovering near Stage 4 for the duration of the study. Having set goals around learning to design a program of his own and bouncing ideas off me as a sounding board for feedback on his own thinking, Ken was more self-directed than Mike. Frequently during the study, Ken mentioned how a composite view of several coaches at work was enriching, and he was "... appreciative of the opportunity to coach and learn with the [other coaches' alternative approaches]." Finally with regard to Maynard, both he and Mike found satisfaction during the study thanks to mutuality on issues between the coaches. Perhaps Ken said it best in his pre-study interview:

*Here [in the program], there are other coaches to provide feedback, differing ideas, reinforcement, and the chance to debrief with each other. New ideas from highly experienced coaches [like the mentor and a guest coach] — [we can] tap into this knowledge, [and I can add] another voice for the coaching mix.*
In short, we modeled varied coaching styles and ideas for each other, which contributed to an environment where everyone felt comfortable and familiar with each other. In that environment, we could learn and thrive. This was even evident in Week One; I can attest to all three of us feeling a camaraderie and energy to assist one another equitably, even interdependently, as Maynard suggests. Even before we had really begun, our modeling was priming us for the enculturating and supporting roles of mentoring.

Enculturator

Malderez’s second mentoring role is an enculturator. As an enculturator, the mentor shows the intern around the community and aids the intern to become more familiar with local cultures and / or customs. I believe that mentors act as a second set of eyes-and-ears for interns, drawing attention to appropriate cues and situations as required, and as a conscience, cueing the intern to stimuli that otherwise might pass unnoticed. Also, I felt that encouraging a team atmosphere, in which collegiality and camaraderie were encouraged and fostered, was appropriate to my role as enculturator. This was because (1) establishing a safe learning environment is recommended throughout educational literature, (2) a trusting atmosphere would mitigate potential discomfort if an intern-coach were to step outside the culture or customs of soccer coaching, and (3) a team atmosphere was congruent with the overall needs of a soccer team’s coaching staff. The data in this study suggest that the intern-coaches detected and appreciated the mentor’s enculturation role; each intern-coach experienced benefits that became meaningful in his own soccer community.

Ken was satisfied simply to be present in the study program environment. “I am very appreciative of the opportunity to coach and learn with [the coaches].” Ken’s behaviour and attitude reflected this appreciation. During Weeks Six and Eleven, for example, he juggled two separate personal incidents, making second and third efforts to reach me, and he managed to attend the sessions anyhow, with minimal impact upon the program. Later, Ken related to me his understanding of the need for consistency and commitment from the coaches to the players and to the study. He stressed that the professional environment in which the study was enacted contributed to his feelings, and he felt obliged to meet the standards that had been established during Weeks One and Two. This I noted after Week Eleven: “... Ken’s reinforcing his professional behaviour and commitment” by demonstrating concern and by accepting responsibility for his role as a leader of the study program. I concluded that the environment we had all helped to create was, to a certain extent, fostering Ken’s attitude but that the rest came as a result of Ken’s own character and personality (see also Professional). One might also interpret from my conclusion that enculturation amplifies the character of an intern-coach because enculturation clarifies present conditions, permitting an intern to fit him or herself into
the scene more comfortably, facilitating appropriate goal-setting and a vision of future possibilities. All this raises one's confidence as one grows into the community.

Mike's confidence as a 'teacher', in the environment we established, rose and, in the study program, he overcame general anxiety that existed while coaching his own team by focusing on (1) the content of training sessions and (2) the processes of teaching and learning that he experienced in the study environment. "The [study program] was a kind of 'how-to' for coaching generally." Through his participation in this context, Mike began to discern a difference between how he coached his own team and how he was coaching during the study: "I tried to remain conscious throughout [the study program session] about 'teaching' rather than just running a drill." In these words, Mike demonstrates awareness of (1) being flexible with regard to content, and (2) not simply going through the motions of his practice plan, disregarding unexpected situations. Mike focuses not merely on the anxiety of covering session content, but on the dynamic relationship between teaching and session content. He is more cognisant of session expectations and objectives, participants' roles and responsibilities, and the environment that contains and comprises it all. These are important distinctive realisations for coaches and teachers, the lack of which I have commonly encountered, even amongst experienced practitioners (so proving that we all need to renew and review accountability). Moreover, these realisations encompass the broader issue of the coach-player / teacher-student relationship in educational contexts and cultures across the board. The mentoring helped Mike to appreciate and undertake a highly effective strategy of reflection in precisely this kind of environment, and he is a better 'teacher' because of it.

Another example of Mike's growing confidence, which also reifies the role of modelling, is exemplified by his performance at the beginning of each study program session. I had encouraged Mike and Ken to take the lead during the opening ten minutes of every session and get the players warmed up before training, and I had demonstrated what this looked like during Weeks One and Two. After several weeks, Mike was participating more and more in these activities until, in Week Seven, he organised the players entirely on his own, without any prompting (or even hinting) on my part. Since Ken was not present at the time, I can only conclude that Mike was confident and motivated enough to undertake the activity by himself. I believe the established study program environment, which encouraged reflection, fostered honest sharing of feelings, and maintained a higher standard of coaching performance than that found in club soccer, helped to make possible Mike's advancements in confidence and the processes of teaching and learning. The mentoring revealed to Mike appropriate behaviours within the context of coaching eight-year old soccer players in a high performance development academy.
Generally, Ken and Mike felt that, as a mentor, I served them positively as a second set of eyes-and-ears, exposing them to an expertly planned and implemented soccer program, helping them to see relevant cues in-the-moment, and aiding their self-reflection cycles after program activities. Self-reflection is a necessary tool for effective coaching, even a natural part of its culture, but since I will explore this idea in the discussion on professionalism, it is enough to say here that Ken and Mike, on account of their enculturation in this environment, made self-reflection a habit. Mike summarises the point succinctly: “The collegial sense gave more the idea of professionalism to my coaching.” In other words, because he was learning in and valued the genial, supportive, expert program environment, Mike better understood (than that to which he was previously accustomed) what it takes and what it means to be a higher-level soccer coach, where higher standards of performance are demanded by the needs and wants of the participants. The significance of this outcome lies not in the fact that higher levels of practice require more refined skills, although that point deserves mention. The significance is that, when Mike returns to coach at lower levels of soccer, he will bring his enhanced praxis with him, and players and teams under his leadership will benefit all the more. The job of the mentor is to ensure that this can happen.

Supporter

The third role in Malderes’ list is the supporter. The supporter is there to listen to an intern, sometimes as a sounding board for ideas and strategies, other times as a counsellor to whom the intern may confide or even vent! The supporter’s role has already been revealed within the roles above, reinforcing the idea that these roles are not as discrete as the list might imply. I have found that the intern-coaches vented primarily in positive ways, reflecting on outcomes and accomplishments. “Ken expressed the value of what he’s learning – he’s venting on a ‘good’ topic” “Mike says just observing has raised his confidence significantly.” I feel both of these revelations were meaningful to the intern-coaches not just because they realised them, but also because they expressed them aloud to me; saying them and hearing them made the revelations more real because they were shared between us, thus becoming more tangible, more legitimate.

I also noted a new level of confidence demonstrated by the coaches – in Mike, particularly, during Week Six. Prior to teaching a lesson on defending technique to the players, and I had asked Mike to join in as a helper when he felt comfortable stepping in. In this situation, we knew Mike understood the technique fairly well, and he was able to demonstrate its key points to me. Where he needed to focus his attention as a learner, he believed, was in his instructional strategies: the way he presented and explained what he knew to the players,
and the extent to which he balanced that information with a guided discovery approach, which would permit the players to teach themselves. The results, in my opinion, were successful, in terms of raising Mike's confidence. "Mike became quite involved, once he got his feet wet during the [lesson]." "I was taking the lead," he said after the session. He was functioning as a coach, demonstrating his declared intentions, and although his instructional strategies were not implemented with highly refined skillfulness, yet it was evident that he was trying, that he did have a clear intention as to what he wanted to achieve (based on our prior planning), and that he and the players were enjoying themselves. From modelling my behaviour came elucidation of Mike's learning goals; from sharing and support came pursuit of Mike's learning goals and, using me as a sounding board, he felt safe enough to try things on his own. The supporting role positively affected Mike's confidence.

Ken's confidence in coaching environments outside the study program was raised as well. As revealed elsewhere in this discussion on mentoring roles, Ken was able to transfer what he observed and what he tried in the study program to a different coaching environment and, during our discussions, when he compared 'new' practice with 'old', he felt he had learned some enriching, refreshing alternatives. Frankly, I feel this had everything to do with his confidence level, especially in terms of elaborating his palette of coaching tools and instructional strategies. With a broader range of experience, Ken became more well-rounded than he was before the study program. Today, this will permit him a greater range of responses when he is confronted with players of varying needs and abilities, since Ken's inventory of knowledge and skills is now enhanced.

From these examples, the supporting role of mentoring appears to be well-suited to spurring practice, to fostering action, because it helps to create – from the intern's perspective – a safe environment. The intern's perception of his or her performance is also important to consider since, as I mentioned, Mike's actual performance as a coach was not very refined, yet he was doing well enough to get his point across, to engage the players, and to feel good about the whole affair – enough so that he was willing and eager to continue. And as with any skill, practice and feedback were going to help him improve. In the meantime, as a mentor, I felt that establishing a positive learning environment for Mike and Ken to discuss their coaching was paramount to their success as learners in the study program.

Mike also expressed his appreciation of support from the mentoring after seeing the video from Week Seven: "[The mentor] confirmed the value of many of the things I noticed about my performance" and again after seeing the video from Week Ten: "[The mentor] gave me confidence about my instincts." Finally, from the post-program responses, Mike said: "... the
positive feedback from [the mentor] has also been useful in terms of confidence-building – practical corroboration ... affirmation [of my coaching abilities]." In all three statements, the mentor is a positive sounding board and a source of feedback for Mike, and there is a hint of the Educator role in these statements as well. Ken similarly affirmed the value of the mentor as a sounding board in his pre-program interview, in a statement I have already included to support the modelling role: "... Here [in the program], there are other coaches to provide feedback, differing ideas, reinforcement, and the chance to debrief with each other."

One area of video that requires attention is the intrusiveness of the camera. Mike expressed in his post-session responses that the videotaping during Week Seven was "... distracting ..." because he was "... aware of how [he] acted differently as a 'student'," which made him "... uncomfortable." He also said that the presence of a camera gave him "... a heightened consciousness to what [he] was doing." While this self-consciousness relates to self-reflection, still it is difficult to justify the method by which it came about. If reflective thinking is initiated by means that undermine an intern's confidence in the safety of the learning environment, then perhaps those means are inappropriate. Fortunately, during the second video session in Week Ten, Mike appeared less distracted by the camera, as he concentrated more on the players' behaviours in his post-session responses: "[The lesson] was a little cumbersome to set up and functioning – but once there was good. The boys learned to look, pass, move." Of course, Mike might simply have chosen to write on this topic instead of the video camera, but since there was only attention devoted to lesson outcomes, and no mention of the camera at all, I believe he overcame his discomfort and felt supported once again, understanding that the video was a useful aid to improving his coaching. I believe that, having watched the Week Seven video and appreciating the valuable learning that resulted from this experience, Mike's comfort conquered his discomfort. No discomfort was expressed by Ken during either taping session, so Ken might be less predisposed to feeling self-conscious, he might be more confident on account of his higher level of experience as a coach, or both. Whatever the case, Ken did not feel the camera was intrusive. These outcomes suggest that a period of familiarisation with potentially intrusive means of assessment can be prudent.

**Sponsor**

Malderez's next mentoring role is the sponsor, someone who 'open doors' and / or introduces interns to people that can help make things happen and advance their careers. The most immediately significant sponsoring benefits were experienced by Ken, who sought through his goal-setting to advance his coaching career via networking. During Week Two, outside the study program, Ken was hired as a technical coach / advisor for a local club. He was able to make the connection and apply for the job on account of a contact he received from me, the
mentor. "I appreciate the reference to [the outside club's director]. It has turned out to be fantastic." This job further led to Ken working with BC's Provincial soccer program and, subsequently, to larger responsibilities with a club in the USA, where he coaches now. Ken identified in his post-program reflections that "networking" was a principle benefit offered by the mentoring because it played a part in blazing his career path. He repeated the idea in the second Post-Program Reflection, carried out a year later: "[The study program] gave me another year of youth coaching, which aided in my obtaining employment [in the USA]." Ken's situation is certainly a dramatic example of the sponsor role of mentoring at work!

Although Mike’s personal goals and circumstances did not lend themselves to the kind of networking pursued by Ken, nevertheless, he did meet other coaches like Ken, me, and a third expert 'guest' coach, and he met other coaches and managers whose paths otherwise would not likely have crossed his own. Simply by participating in the mentoring, Mike reached a level of sponsorship that heretofore he had had no exposure. Also, he found resolution to an issue with his local club team, an 'open door' which perhaps Mike had not seen or through which he simply needed a push. The issue was simple and related to his study program goals: he felt too wrapped up with nerves and excitement during matches to coach his team effectively, and he wanted a way to step back from the situation for more objectivity. After discussing with me possible alternatives and scenarios, Mike decided to enlist the aid of parents, who would serve as assistant match-day coaches as well as monitor Mike's demeanour during the day and inform him whether or not he was too vocal or strident. The notion I find here of sponsorship is that of an opportunity for Mike to step forward with new leadership, affecting his reputation and image amongst the parents from his team.

In fact, the result was significant. Parents noticed a change in Mike's coaching and commented to him that his approach generally was more proactive and careful than before. Opening this door to higher esteem within his club team community helped to elevate Mike's profile and increase the trust and respect he received from the parents and players. Interestingly, his solution to the problem, enlisting the aid of two parent helpers, also exhibited sponsorship at work, since those parents had doors opened to them to participate on the team in ways they had not had before. Furthermore, I detected other roles at work with this issue because Mike, by stepping back, found the chance not only to observe his team from a distance but to observe and model opposing coaches as well, which then provided further reflection for evaluating himself, and so on. Here is a good example of how the mentoring roles, clearly extensive and influential in their own rights, are simultaneously intertwined with the other roles.
Educator

Malderez's final mentoring role is that of an educator, one who listens and coaches the intern, helps the intern to set goals and objectives, and creates or enables the intern to experience appropriate learning opportunities. Generally, all of the study data reflect the impact of the educator role, since the established environment made learning and education through a variety of strategies possible for all the participants. However, there is distinct information that elucidates the educator role specifically, mostly from my perspective as the mentor.

To begin, establishing an appropriate environment for learning was one of my goals as educator. Essentially, I wished to promote reflection for everyone and begin the process of evaluating our goal achievements. However, before this was possible, I felt I needed to establish a safe learning environment for the players so that the intern-coaches would not be up against any additional challenges. Thus, creating a stable program atmosphere was my primary focus from Week One to Week Four. At this point during the study, I felt as though the mentoring was not going well. Having mentored coaches in the past, the results of which were highly satisfying, I felt as though this time was somehow stale, without the excitement or passion for learning I had shared with previous interns. My inclination was that my multiple roles in the study program were stretching me too thinly: (1) as a coach for the players, (2) as a manager/director for the parents and the program, and (3) as a mentor for the intern-coaches, and (4) as a student researcher. However, I did not feel overworked or stressed by too much on my plate, so I concluded that something else must also be at work to suppress the enthusiasm displayed by the intern-coaches, particularly Mike. Since he was more ambivalent about things generally, I next thought that it came down to personalities. This explanation felt more agreeable, not least because it shifted the onus from me to other people! However, even then I was not convinced, and I could not determine what was wrong. At the same time, I worried that I was reporting and reflecting more on the players and their soccer than on the coaches and their coaching.

Because I have to coach the sessions, I am not mentoring (goal-setting aside). So far, it's been my practice and their observations. I guess modeling is the first step, but it's coming to Week Five!

I run the sessions but, in the back of my mind, I feel like I'm not ... devoting appropriate or needed attention to the mentoring process itself.

The mentoring won't really take off until I can step back and let Mike and Ken coach.

I am not mentoring because I am wearing several hats, which makes me worry over not giving 100% attention to my job as mentor. Mentoring is more difficult when it's my team because I am worrying as much about the players as the coaches.

I need to be a mentor more now, and a coach a little less.
In creating and strengthening the soccer academy environment, I had neglected the mentoring environment. During another course presentation, someone suggested that, given my familiarity and control over the environment, the mentoring was being guided down certain paths by me more than by the intern-coaches. In other words, I was setting goals that the interns were to meet rather than letting them explore issues that impassioned them. I might have been forcing the coaches' learning in certain directions to ensure that they followed the format in my earlier mentoring paper (Appendix A). In fact, all the excitement that had seemed missing was still there, only I was usurping it and leaving none for the intern-coaches to enjoy as they took control of their own learning. This, as much as I hated to admit it, felt genuinely like the problem, and I knew I had to back away or risk squeezing the intern-coaches out of their own apprenticeship. Reflecting on this situation, I appreciated all the more the amount power the mentor possesses in the relationship. I remembered sitting with each intern-coach at the start of the study, building a rapport and setting goals for the next twelve weeks, but I recognised that my influence in planning the players' sessions was finding its way into the intern-coaches' spheres. I also realised that, by "determining" what the intern-coaches "needed" to work on, I was neutralising their role in the self-reflective cycle. They were, in effect, reflecting not on what had happened to them but on what I had structured for them, on what I felt was important. My influence had been subtle but potent.

I asked my grad advisors for a bit of advice, and they reassured me that I was not losing sight of things too much – the fact that I was concerned at all was a good sign! They encouraged me to carry forward with the mentoring plan (e.g., a videotaping schedule), which would help to allay some of that anxiety, since I could implement the plan and do some mentoring. To help shift my focus, I asked Mike and Ken how satisfied they were with their goal achievements thus far. (The intern-coaches goals are included in Appendix B of this paper.) "Ken expressed the value of what he was learning" and Mike stated that the mentor "... brought up points I did, which I did well, but wasn't really conscious of doing." Finally, after some anxious delays, my effort to establish an appropriate learning environment for the intern-coaches was bearing fruit.

With the program running strongly, the players enjoying themselves, and the intern-coaches generally satisfied, I was then determined to maintain mentoring as my top priority. Earlier plans, which included formal / informal interviews (as well as tape-recording interviews for later transcription, but which I did not do), goal-setting, videotaped sessions, post-session assessment forms, and questionnaires, took shape as I stepped away from my program-coach role into the mentor-coach role, allowing the intern-coaches more freedom to perform, reflect, and learn. Wearing the two hats (program-coach and mentor-coach) had been somewhat of a
hindrance during the early weeks of the study program, and I do not recommend one undertake both tasks unless the program is well-established and one is comfortable that participants may step in safely from the start.

A second, more complicating dual role was that of mentor-coach and researcher. For instance, in Week Five, my own reflection had taught me to "... get the coaches working, then reflecting with them; coach less myself, so [the intern-coaches] could pursue their own goals and take ownership of the process." By Week Eleven, my reflections were pointing in a different direction: "... commit the coaches to a more formal schedule of performance, week-to-week, whether for part or for the entire session." In the first example, my concern was that of a facilitative educator wearing a coach's skin: the intern-coaches needed to undertake more responsibilities and accept more control of their learning and development as coaches. However, in the second example, my concern was that of a researcher in a coach's skin: as I saw it, the intern-coaches needed me to undertake more responsibility and control of their learning ... at least, that is how I felt during Week Eleven. Later, by reflecting on Week Eleven, I realised that I had been focusing too much on me and the mentoring process and not enough on Mike and Ken's needs as they pursued their goals. I did not fully comprehend this issue I was reviewing and reflecting on the following passage: "I feel like the grad studies aspect - a little cloudy to me as I learn it - overwhelms the mentoring aspect, which I know how to do but, for some reason (emphasised for this discussion), am not doing the way I'd like." (Interestingly, even in these words, I am self-absorbingly worried about "I" but not "they.")

As a mentor, I was less interested in collecting data than in helping the intern-coaches analyse things for themselves but, as a researcher, I was collecting data from all aspects of the study program, with a selfish eye to making sense of it. This became the greatest hurdle of all; unfortunately, it partially suppressed the interns' individuality and control of their own learning. The effect on Ken was to build resistance to any help at all, since I think he felt I was becoming too prescriptive. Mike's enthusiasm to participate waned as my drive to collect and interpret data overshadowed my educator role; I was trying to force the intern-coaches down preconceived paths of where mentoring should go because I had an expectation of what ought to happen next. By zeroing in on Malderez's roles and Maynard's stages, I risked nullifying them. On the bright side, after Week Twelve, Mike was "... very complimentary about the quality of the program, [appreciating] the benefits it [was having] on his own coaching with his local team," so my efforts were not without reward from a mentoring viewpoint.

I include this issue in the discussion at the risk of discrediting everything we accomplished in the study program. However, this is simply an unforeseen outcome that
deserves prudent attention in the future. For the sake of the participants' learning, the educator's establishment of an appropriate learning environment cannot be undermined. The mentor's role must not be superseded by anything, if the full value of mentoring is to be obtained by the interns. In retrospect, I think I was fretting over a situation I had unwittingly created, once again, by wearing more than one hat. I had lost sight of my role as a mentor-educator and was forcing the two intern-coaches to engage in a mentoring relationship (as I understood the dynamics), because my perspective was skewed, and I did not see much "mentoring" (i.e., my own efforts) happening. I wanted to get the intern-coaches back on track—learning—and, suddenly, what I wanted them to learn mattered more than what they wanted to learn. This, I think, contributed in part to Mike's ongoing ambivalence and to Ken believing he needed less 'help' altogether.

Despite all of this, the study program was not too one-sided and did not fail to teach the intern-coaches a thing or two about soccer coaching—the rest of this discussion proves it! In fairness to me, I recognise that much good did occur thanks to the mentoring; I was not tyrannical! Much of the data reveals that the intern-coaches were making personal connections and experiencing positive growth and development. However, the aspect of control and power is important because of its potential to override a learner's autonomy, and mentors and interns ought to be wary of the possibility of someone arrogating—even dominating—the goal-setting, the self-reflection, and the learning. These incidents and pitfalls are simply worth noting because they are interesting, factual, and useful for planning future mentoring endeavours. This mentoring role of educator was certainly an education for me and hopefully for others down the road!

This aspect of the study foreshadows another possible trouble-spot; namely, that of accountability. Who assesses the mentor? Who makes sure the mentor is aiding, not harming, the intern? As will be discussed later, accountability strikes at the very heart of mentoring's validity, so checks-and-balances would serve first the relationship and second all people who eventually fall under the tutelage of the mentors and the interns. The influence that coaches and teachers have on players and pupils leaves a legacy for future lifetimes; the potency of mentoring can span generations.

Returning to the data discussion, once the program passed Week Five, the intern-coaches found learning opportunities more frequently, as did I. Typical of such learning was after watching the Week Seven video, when Mike mentioned that the mentor had "great insights," implying that the mentor, like a catalyst, facilitated Mike's reflection on his own praxis. In my own notes from this session, I wrote: "Mike was able to address a couple of goals he set
in the beginning of the program [namely, using more capable players to help less capable ones, and involving players as much as possible in session activities]." Moreover, this session "... confirmed the value of many of the things [Mike] had noticed about [his] performance," a sentiment he shared again in his Post-Program Reflections: "The positive feedback from the mentor has been useful in terms of confidence-building, affirmation of my intuitions, and I've picked up some useful techniques." Also in his Post-Program Reflections, Mike expressed overall satisfaction with his learning: "I certainly feel more confident, can stand back [from the play] to look at the big picture, and facilitate the kids' learning more effectively." These remarks specifically address Mike's goals as well. Therefore, through the establishment of an appropriate learning climate, including the use of positive feedback, mentoring was able to educate Mike as a coach.

Ken also felt the Week Seven video was reaffirming, offering him a chance to reflect on his own performance: "... upon reflection [i.e., watching the video], the session went a lot better than I originally thought." In this case, watching the tape was an educational eye-opener for Ken because of what the session did not include (i.e., he was expecting to see worse). From this experience, Ken learned to be more confident with his coaching, something perhaps that no other feedback except video could have taught him. During Week Ten, Ken mentioned that the program environment was rubbing off on him ("more professional"). In his Post-Program Reflections, Ken expressed a number of times recognition of and appreciation for the mentor's multiple roles:

[The mentor served as] a second set of eyes-and-ears and definitely a mirror for the reflection of my own coaching.

The reflection was quite quick as I went from [the study program] to several different groups and ages.

Mentoring aided me in each aspect [or role] – basically, an all-of-the-above kind of answer.

In Ken's words are found the specific roles of model, supporter, and enculturator, and he clearly describes growth of his coaching knowledge – that is to say 'learning' – which he applies to other coaching contexts.

I believe all these examples highlight the incursive potency of mentoring's educator role, a power brokered by reflection. The examples build a case that 'educator' is the most significant role on Malderez's list. Considering the overall point of mentoring, to help novices acquire expertise, the case is strong. Education lies in everything we do, as long as we want to learn. In this study, education occurred intentionally through discussing and reflecting on experiences and observations, writing reflective notes and journals, reviewing videotaped
coaching performances, meeting and / or interviewing people, participating in new cultures or communities, sharing and implementing new ideas, and setting and pursuing goals and objectives. Because the educator role of mentoring encompasses the other four, everything under the sun, upon reflection, is something new to be learned.

Professional

There is a sixth role suggested by the data, not included in Malderez's list: the role of professional – a kind of hybrid between model, enculturator, and educator but significantly different enough in effect and potency to warrant its own distinction. By acting as a 'professional', the mentor helps the intern to learn, appreciate, and (begin to) assume a standard of professional conduct or behaviour simply from exposure to a mentor whose demeanour exemplifies and encourages such behaviour. This role became evident to me only after many weeks had elapsed, in feedback provided by the intern-coaches about their experiences in the study program and in my own reflections:

*I'm very grateful for the exposure to the professionalism of the whole scenario.*

[The] collegial sense gave more idea of professionalism to my coaching.

*Ken's reinforcing his professional behaviour and commitment …*

*Mike was very complimentary to me about the quality of the program, and he appreciated the benefits it has had on his own coaching!*

*As for our program, parents are satisfied with its 'professional' quality.*

Throughout the study program, I have been able to trace a change in attitude and outlook of the intern-coaches, which I believe is profound. (In the next Chapter, I will outline the rationale for this profundity; here, I will simply describe the change itself.) For example, Mike, the novice coach, entered the study program as a parent who had volunteered to coach a recreational soccer team comprised of seven year-olds. How interested could he be, I wondered, to learn how to coach players in an advanced 'academy' setting? How much expertise was he seeking? How much did he need? How much soccer-specific versus sport-general information was appropriate for him? Essentially, I had reservations over his participation. "I am concerned by his commitment to the program because of his recreational, parental focus. I think he has different [long-term] expectations than I do." Of course, one would expect us to have differing expectations, but the whole idea of a mentor trying to educate a (possibly) ambivalent intern seemed pointless! Mike added fuel to this fire during the Week One interview, clearly explaining that he had no intention of coaching beyond his son's youth soccer career and that, in fact, he had been 'roped into' coaching to begin with! I grew anxious that Mike might even drop out of the study: "He might feel he needn't commit as an intern, since it's not his team."
Despite my worries, Mike remained in the program – not as dedicated as I originally envisioned, but there nonetheless. And he made advancements in his attitude toward soccer-specific coaching and toward coaching generally: “Mike’s progressing – more objective about his own practice.” “Mike feels he has improved his own practice.” “Mike is patient, questioning, thinking about the process of coaching with phrases like, ‘This seems evident to me because …’” “[I] tried to remain conscious throughout about ‘teaching’ rather than just running drills – boys learned to look, pass, move.” By Week Twelve, Mike was discussing coaching philosophically and examining his own rationale in detail.

... what was confirmed [by my experience in the program] was the value of good coaching of kids who are serious about playing well. Coaching is less about knowing and applying highly advanced techniques than consistent, thoughtful, responsive interaction with the kids. Good exercises are helpful, but perhaps as important is playing with the kids and helping them to improve their capacities at the individual and group level by well-timed, appropriate interventions.

These are heady thoughts for a volunteer dad with no coaching aspirations beyond being ‘roped into’ his seven year-old son’s recreational soccer team. They bespeak fundamental growth in Mike’s understanding not simply of the nuts-and-bolts tasks of teaching and coaching young learners, but of the complexity found in various contexts, the differentiation required to assess and respond to the plethora of environmental cues, and the principles of learning like individual-group dynamics, active involvement, and meeting learners where they are at instead of forcing them down predetermined paths (BC Ministry of Education, 2002). “Teachers and coaches should concern themselves first and last with what players bring to the learning situation and even more importantly what they take away from it” (Wade, 1997, p.3). Clearly, Mike decided – at least to a certain extent – that he was willing and able to pursue a level of expertise he had not envisioned at the start of the program.

Having set a goal to pursue professional soccer coaching in a club or university setting, Ken literally sought to advance professionally during the twelve weeks. At first, I noticed a subtle change in Ken’s personal approach to situations, from carefree and casual to more formal and humble; as time passed, he seemed to sincerely appreciate the opportunity to learn and improve. The change in Ken spanned from his demeanour while introducing simple activities or leading lessons to his mind-set over prioritising and scheduling his time (e.g., balancing program commitments with other events in his life, as I discussed earlier). The study program rose in importance among his priorities, and his behaviour reflected this. I mentioned to him that I noticed these changes, and Ken made it clear that his desire to meet his commitments came from “… standards that had been established” and because the program offered “… a great chance to see an organised coach run a team.” He did not want to take
anything for granted. One of his rewards for this was to find the coaching position outside the program, which became simply another motivator for him to maintain his new appreciation for responsibility, to evolve his new apprehension of professionalism.

Another time, during Week Ten, Ken called me for advice. He wanted to help out a woman he knew with her soccer training. What struck me as professional in this case was that Ken felt compelled to assist this player simply because she needed help. He was not responsible for her – she was not on a team of his – yet he was moved to help her to empower herself. His unsolicited call to me told me that Ken felt he could – perhaps even should – offer service to someone, based on his growing expertise, on his own time, with his own resources. There is a selflessness embedded in Ken’s motives – and to a certain degree Mike’s as well – that I believe is at the core of coaching and teaching in all contexts. As I will discuss later, I believe Ken’s motivation was internally driven, a part of what makes him who he is: a professional soccer coach.
CHAPTER V: CONCEPTUALISING PROFESSIONALISM

“A preoccupation with how students learn is a necessary precursor to being curious about one’s own practice. When reframed in terms of “how students learn” [as opposed to ‘student learning’], inquiry is embedded in practice and teacher learning as a natural (unavoidable?) outcome. ... when a teacher ceases to be inquisitive about his or her practice – inquisitive about how students learn – then his or her practice ceases to be professional. Without inquiry, practice becomes perfunctory and routinised.”

- Clarke and Erickson (2003), p. 5

As with the other roles, the key to the mentor’s role to aiding in an intern’s professional development is deliberate reflection. Mentors assist interns to create fresh perceptions of how to apply theory appropriately in specific contexts. The assistance can yield profound realisations and developments. Wells (2001) remarks: “The theory that guides teachers’ practice is typically based ... on ‘personal practical knowledge,’ ... is heavily imbued with values, and is integral to a teacher’s personal identity” (p. 16). The idea is Cartesian: intentions are not separate from actions or – more significantly, as time passes – existence. One tells oneself: ‘Who I am and what I do are inseparable because each daily choice I make contributes to the person I become, which reciprocally influences choices I make.’ Mentors change what people know and, consequently, what people do. “This re-learning how to perceive is not merely a matter of changing one’s mind ... It may mean, in fact, a matter of changing one’s circumstances or changing one’s habits of living” (Sumara and Carson, 1997, Preface). Both Mike and Ken’s changes of behaviour, which I noted in the previous discussion of the data, seem to confirm this. The process of re-learning is inherently, inevitably contextual, and it translates negatively if the learning context is not specific to the practising environment (i.e., the coaching gap). In athletic training, the principle of specificity proclaims the same idea. Mike and Ken’s changes of behaviour, based on their comments in the data, seemed to result directly from their exposure to the study program, its events, and its relevance to their own lives.

Praxis, or “informed, committed action” (Carr and Kemmis in Malderez, 1998), thus invokes a personal philosophy, providing "a point of reference in decision-making and problem-solving" (Wells, 2001, p. 16). Vaines (in Peterat & Smith, 2001) asserts: “' ...professionals ... undertake a reflective examination of what it is they do and why, [which leads] to modes of practice consistent and compatible with ethical action” (p. 10). This public acknowledgement displays that ‘who I am’ and ‘what I do’ are inseparable; Vaines verily defines professional behaviour as a personal disposition. Fischer (2001) discusses action research the way I discuss mentoring: a useful way to link theory and practice. Indeed, there are strong parallels between action research and mentoring. Fischer (2001) states that action research is “a natural part of teaching” (p. 29) and his declaration of professional teaching behaviour is provocative:
To be a teacher means to observe students and study classroom interactions, to explore a
variety of effective ways of teaching, and to build conceptual frameworks that can guide
one's work. Teaching also involves reflecting on the nature of human development,
examining the place of schools in society, and developing a personal philosophy of
education. All this is a personal as well as a professional quest, a journey toward making
sense out of and finding satisfaction in one's teaching (Fischer, 2001, p. 29).

Vaines concludes: "... Embracing reflective practice is ... [to become] a person choosing to
make visible ... all that one believes, knows, and does" (p. 10).

So being professional is not merely acting like a teacher but thinking like one, feeling like
one, being like one: to be professional is to live out the profession, at all times, in all
circumstances, private and public, since one's energy is devoted to "reflecting, examining, and
developing, personally as well as professionally," and "to finding satisfaction in one's [chosen
profession]." Just as writers must live the lifestyle in order to really be writers, so too must
teachers or researchers live a teacher's or researcher's lifestyle, (Sumara & Carson, 1997;
Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 1993), or I would add, coaches a coach's lifestyle. Wade (1997) argues
a similar case, but the subtle differences are fascinating to consider, if only briefly:

Assumed 'know how' based upon playing experience is likely to be more illusory than
real. ... teaching and coaching success depend much more on personality and applied
intelligence than on soccer skill. 'Personality', as I use the term, is the impression which
[sic] teachers create in order to exert influence on others. The best teachers appear to
have certain 'natural' qualifications for success in the job, although the extent to which
they are entirely 'natural' is questionable. Not only are there no born soccer players,
there are no born teachers (p. 10).

Wade carries on with a breakdown of 'personality' traits like leadership, painstakingness,
initiative, persistence, sociability, and humour, all of which relate to a teacher's personal ability
to interact with players in the learning environment and to apply their knowledge with savoir-
faire. These areas of expertise are learned and have little to do with one's soccer-playing
background. This flies in the face of my coaching circles during the past fourteen years, in
which playing experience seems to have counted for more than anything else! Where Wade
differs — questioning the 'natural' or innate occurrence of these qualifications in teachers (nature
versus nurture) — is hardly something people have been able to prove in any event. Wade
offers nothing more than his opinion on the matter so, unperturbed, I return to Fischer (2001),
who maintains that professional behaviour is indeed a "natural" part of teaching, an intrinsic
aspect of the occupation, closely linked to Hamlet's "stamp of nature," an innate trait found
within certain practitioners.

But if one is innately a writer, teacher, researcher, or coach, is there no hope for one to
adopt a lifestyle and pass through discrete stages of development, like Maynard's, in a different
field? And what of people who are in fields of practice for which they are not suited? How did
they end up there at all? How will they — indeed, how can they — ever improve? In my experience, coaches and teachers who have been externally motivated to improve their practices undertook the task without meaningfully significant enthusiasm. Did they have no internal motivation? If not, could they have developed any? Would it have been genuine motivation, prompted by curiosity and a drive to improve? Here is an issue exemplified in the study process by Mike, who I feel did not always demonstrate meaningfully significant enthusiasm, unlike Ken, who was so determined to improve his practice and professionalism that he set specific goals for these two dimensions of his praxis. Was this difference between the two intern-coaches on account of their personalities (nature), or was Ken further along in experience (nurture) and thus, more motivated by what he could envision? As before, I suspect that particular question is unanswerable but, generally, I believe there needs to be a willingness to reflect, to learn, and to improve one’s practice, a desire to change or empower oneself.

"[D]ecision is the link between motivation and action" (Lewis in Hobson, 1996, p. 5). If one recognises that every decision will develop a certain type of person, then by following through with decisions, one deliberately determines the person whom one becomes.

"I propose that teachers’ approaches to teaching are – or should be – much influenced by their understanding of learning ...” — Robert Leamnson, (2000)

**Fischer and Shakespeare: Two Sides of a Coin**

**Constructivist**

According to Fischer, since the teaching profession is comprised of “natural” activities like action research, mentors are necessarily prescribing, bending, and shaping interns to fit a certain professional mould that includes the self-reflection cycle; whether an intern is really meant for the profession (i.e., possesses the “stamp of nature”) is hit-and-miss. At the heart of Fischer’s viewpoint is a curricular concern that reflects power in the mentoring relationship: the extent to which a mentor imparts knowledge to an intern versus the extent to which an intern develops knowledge on his or her own. What will that curriculum include and exclude? Are there any hidden agendas that can be (or must to be) detected, to ensure the learning remains positive, productive, and beneficial for the participants? In whose favour should the curriculum be tilted, and is that appropriate? Can biases be predetermined, in any case? In short, Fischer raises the question of delineation of responsibility for developing outcomes and strategies of

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4 By 'personalities', here I do not intend Wade’s (1997) use of the term, but a more common, everyday meaning.

5 A mentoring relationship's curriculum is determined by the participants — perhaps as few as two people, the complexity of which is far simpler than what one might find in a public school system, for example. The questions that arise, though, are just as potent.
implementation and assessment / evaluation: who is primarily responsible for developing the
curriculum in a mentoring relationship? By implication, who ultimately controls the mentoring
relationship?

To begin, I believe curricula should anticipate learners' needs, permit learners to learn
more than to be taught, and engage learners concretely (real-life applications) as well as
abstractly (theoretical applications). If curricula have "multiple levels of engagement depending
on the learner's purpose and prior understandings" (Overly and Spalding, 1993, p. 148), then
curricula in mentoring relationships will vary by context. For example, one intern might study
methods of providing feedback and communication; another is fascinated by the arrangement of
activities during training sessions; a third explores the personal significance of coaching
alongside his outlook on life. To that end, curricula should address learners' "readiness [or]
appropriate level of prior knowledge or experience" (p. 149). Any limitations between curricula
"as planned," "as delivered," and "as experienced" reflect the complexity of relationships
between people in knowledge-building endeavours, since all biases will impact on the final
product of learning.

Naturally, bias and influential power are inevitable, but curricula that prescribe only a
single, "correct" message provide a disservice to learners because they compartmentalise the
potential for learners to grow more and more "ready." (This, as I have mentioned, was a flaw in
my study. I was so caught up in having the intern-coaches follow the process of mentoring that
I lost track of what they wanted to learn. I hijacked the curriculum, and the results, insofar as
they were positive, yet indicate that this was undesirable.) Therefore, I believe that curricula
should avoid proscribing any potential direction or pursuit. They should "help learners to
confront, define, and grapple with recurring human themes" that arise during praxis (Overly and
Spalding, 1993, p. 145), echoing Vaines work on professional behaviour and personal
disposition. A curriculum ought to facilitate progressive, personal growth of creative,
imaginative, and interpretive skills as well as more technical, utilitarian skills, and it ought to
frame such growth as much as possible via learner-input, so that knowledge is constructed
personally and meaningfully.

Of course, this is agreeable as long as all participants subscribe to a curriculum founded
on constructivist paradigms (e.g., knowledge is personally constructed, socially mediated, and
inherently situated) or other related foundational principles. After all, to be meaningful in the
long-term, curricula need a consistent, relatively stable paradigm. If curricular principles
changed frequently, previous learning could potentially be undermined. Fortunately or

6 I defer to Wein's (2001) definition of readiness: "the disposition of a certain degree of maturity" (p. 1) in each
to learner to tackle a given concept.

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unfortunately, such principles often cause more debate than the curricula they support! But by addressing on principle the nature of learning, appropriate learning environments, peoples’ learning needs, and so on, curricula can account for the complex, interwoven nature of relationships between people. (There is syncretistic danger: embracing all principles, even contradictory ones, but that is for another paper!)

To me, good curricula are holistic and cater to individuals who together comprise a society rather than to society-at-large. Osborne (1999) argues against socially deterministic curricula that stream learners down certain paths. School curricula, Osborne asserts, are being usurped by employers and businesses, with the intention of training workers rather than independently-minded citizens. While I can appreciate employers’ longings for an ideal world that, like Plato’s Republic, assesses and guides people down career paths according to their gifts and endowments, I yet cannot imagine a method for reliably determining gifts and endowments in the first place – this without even addressing the issue of free will! Taken to the extreme, where we have witnessed streaming (i.e., behind the Iron Curtain) is where children have been predetermined to pursue careers (e.g., Olympic athletes) at the behest of higher authorities. This again echoes the problem I faced in this study (although I certainly would not equate myself with the Soviet Bloc). Nonetheless, given these potentially extreme ramifications, one is hard-pressed to make a case that socially deterministic curricula are good for learners or for society over the long term.

Significantly, I would further Osborne’s case with this point: in a knowledge-based society, knowledge is useful only when one knows how to apply it to situations. Consider that socially deterministic curricula channel the potential of people to grow, invent, create, and evolve down certain paths, so communities are at risk of becoming stolid, mechanical, derivative, and diffident. Alternatively, individually oriented curricula encourage people to learn how to apply the content of knowledge. This is a skill everyone needs to hone, or else content just sits idly, impotently, uselessly. Problem-solving, decision-making, critical thinking, teamwork, alternative points-of-view – these are all important skills that people need to master if they are to contribute their knowledge to communities. Therefore, I think meeting the skill-needs of knowledge application individually, one-on-one if possible, supersedes meeting the skill-needs of society-at-large (e.g., fulfilling an employer’s prescriptive checklist for employability skills), since the content of knowledge is limited to specific contexts, which would pigeon-hole learners and stultify growth. In my Republic, developing skills to apply knowledge encompasses everybody – ideal, perhaps, but worth pursuing. Osborne’s employers, I think, would still find workers because individual learners comprise a mosaic of gifts and endowments that are waiting to be released via application. So while many believe that meeting society’s
needs improves society, I believe that meeting individuals’ needs improves society. Individual gifts will thrive when nurtured, and individuals will contribute to society’s needs according to those gifts. Each learner requires facilitation from mentors, teachers, and coaches as he or she blossoms from novice intern to expert practitioner, whatever the field of study. I believe good curricula acknowledge this principle of learners and their learning because it respects learners and their gifts.

Determinist

On the other hand, according to Hamlet, only people appropriately “stamped” by Nature are cut out for a given profession; only they will ever really behave professionally. Regardless of a mentor’s influence or a curriculum’s principles, one’s nature determines one’s future. At the heart of Hamlet’s viewpoint is discovering and mastering your destiny, since a “stamp” is a predisposition for excelling at some particular thing. One’s best efforts, it would seem, should be directed at finding these predisposed gifts and endowments as quickly as possible, in order to get on with life. Conversely, seen from an ideal perspective, everyone is happily discovering their life’s work, blossoming as professionals, making the world a wonderful place — how nice.

For me, Hamlet’s thought holds water but leaks a little. First of all, it is quite hopeless to think that, try as you might, no matter your passion, a given profession is simply unattainable if you are not predisposed to it. “To be, or not to be …” indeed! Free-willed, holistic self-discovery becomes not an exploration of unlimited possibility so much as an exploration of limited potential, not a matter of asking, “How far can I go?” but rather asking, “Where will I stop?”

Then again, logic suggests that one’s potential to master “natural” professional activities would be limited by whatever innate gifts he or she possessed. Curriculum would then become a list of rules or criteria, a clarification of who could fill the bill in a given profession, a set of standards describing the perfect practitioner. In this case, even if mentoring relationships utilised self-reflection and emancipation, the outcome would be predetermined. Prescriptions would become meaningless since, ultimately, no goal or objective one chose would make a difference. There would always be a ceiling effect at work. Interestingly, Hamlet lends a way out by saying that “use almost can change the stamp of nature ….” Perhaps, if we pursue our profession diligently, we can change our stamp of nature, and our potential, by sheer practice and rehearsal. Hamlet “lends” to us a constructivist escape from socially deterministic curricula. (Curiously, Jaques reiterates a deterministic sentiment in his words from As You Like It: “All the world’s a stage; and all the men and women merely players.” This fatalist view of oneself

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7 Another principle is that of mentors, teachers, and coaches letting go of learners’ hands, as it were, so learners can assume control and contribute according to their gifts. Mentors, teachers, and coaches facilitate meaningful change within their personal relationships, but rather than impacting society-at-large, they need only impact their little corners of it, leaving the impact upon society-at-large to a chain reaction, as individual learners grow more independent.
playing a predestined role echoes Hamlet's discouragement; perhaps Shakespeare never thought of himself as having a choice to be anything but a writer!

Frankly, I can reconcile determinism despite the fatalism. I just feel that I have a personal "stamp of nature" for teaching and coaching and that I am slowly blossoming as a professional because my motives are internally driven. But did I stumble into teaching, was I destined to teach, or did I rehearse and develop a knack for it? In retrospect, I spent nine years just discovering my personal "stamp," so I lean towards a fence-sitting answer that encompasses all three possibilities. My professionalism is equally hard to pinpoint. Am I stamped with a personal discipline that fosters professionalism, or am I personally disciplined because the profession demands it of me? It is simply the nature versus nurture debate. Many teachers and coaches I have witnessed - with irate demeanours, hard-done-by attitudes, and berating advice - seem so ill-suited and poorly disciplined for their professions that I wonder how they ever took up the career. If things are so bad, why do they continue to practise? If they care enough to continue practising, why do they not evolve? Is their will not strong enough? Do they fall back onto old habits? Are they well paid? What are their motives? Some professionals stagnate, while others thrive. Are our understandings of our deterministic 'stamps of nature' misinterpretations, or downright wrong? Are our professional careers a matter of development, timing, luck, or some combination of these? By asking these sorts of questions, we are able to ponder and reflect upon ourselves, a deliberate, disciplined approach to learning and improving our praxis for the benefit of those we teach. I think that is a worthy motive, and it induces within me self-reflection.

Despite my personal attraction to determinism, Fischer's constructivist position is still palatable. His paradigm permits individual autonomy while still accounting for social mediation or influence upon knowledge. By mediation, I mean that a stimulus from the environment helps the learner to decide what to pay attention to, a process in which the learner is actively (but not necessarily intentionally) involved: personal construction of knowledge. The attention devoted to a stimulus is determined by the complexity of one's awareness of relevant cues in the environment, which subsequently prioritises one's responses. Therefore, learning as a mediated activity depends on context, inherently situated in whatever one is doing. Moreover, that our contexts include and rely on other people is more or less a given, so knowledge is not unrealistically defined as socially mediated. Construction of knowledge is embedded in active membership in a community, and it is integrating thoughts with actions (as opposed to separate mind-body dualisms found in individually oriented learning perspectives, where intellect rests on a higher plane, disconnected from action or practice). Our thoughts induce our actions, which
stimulate new thoughts, and so on: the Self-Reflection Cycle. The personal construction of knowledge is the personal construction of identity.

So my preference for two profoundly different perspectives on learning is, for me, satisfactory; although my understanding for each is only partial, the perspectives themselves are not wholly, unquestionably evinced yet either. Wenger's (1998) complex holistic approach to learning, which I have learned since becoming a member of the Graduate Program's community, has affirmed my seemingly incongruous preference for differing perspectives. With that debate addressed, I am comfortable casting my coin – with Fischer on one side and Shakespeare on the other – so as to include deliberate reflection (inside or outside of mentoring relationships) as part of what constitutes professional behaviour and as a desirable outcome of coach education. Let those who are internally motivated for this brand of teaching step forward and thrive! Let those who are willing to try, step forward and be supported! Let those who cannot (or will not) accept the new standard fall by the wayside. Fischer's declaration for “professional” teaching should be, in my opinion, what “being a coach” and “being professional” is all about.

The Best Path Forward?

“There is a vast difference between knowing how to do a thing and always doing it. It is not mere knowledge, but habit that we want.”
– Alhambra G. Deming, Washington School Principal Winona, MN (1914)

Wondering about experiences is an everyday occurrence for coaches and teachers; indeed, everybody wonders about events in life all the time. Keeping a diary or journal is a popular, deliberate method of reflection and is a suggested strategy for developing youth sport coaches (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001). Such a “repeating spiral of appreciation, action, and re-appreciation … [is] triggered by dilemmas of practice” and bound by individuals' professional paradigms (p. 17). But formal mentoring – deliberate, purposeful, emancipating acts that improve practice by meaningfully applying theory in specific contexts alongside helpful people – is not as mainstreamed (in my coaching circles anyway) as it is, for instance, in teacher education or medical residency.

In his seminal research, Schöen finds that professional growth is achieved via experience through reflective dialogue with oneself. Schöen’s (1983) reflection specifically develops knowledge for professional practice in contexts of professional activity: professional knowledge that is personally constructed with immediacy in social contexts. Similarly, reflection and collaboration are the heart of this development of professional knowledge and cultivation of expertise in mentoring relationships, and the results of this study suggest that mentors and
interns construct professional knowledge along the lines Schon describes. The development of
coaches via reflective dialogue (with self and / or with others) would be a strong first step
towards raising professional standards of coaching generally and holding people to greater
account for behaving appropriately as coaches. In the same way, the professional behaviour
inculcated by mentoring would help to weed out those who coach children for inappropriate
reasons (e.g., vicarious experience). While youth soccer coaches might, like Mike, have no
coaching aspirations beyond their own children's teams, they still do impact on the lives of a
dozen (or more) players. Mentoring, and all it reveals to novices about coaching, could
enlighten people about undertaking a coaching position, and perhaps even discourage them.
However, I believe that a deeper understanding of coaching will, as witnessed with Mike, inspire
and motivate coaches to undertake more coaching, since their confidence grows as they
advance through Zones of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978). Mentoring can open
coaches' eyes, even attract new blood to the scene. Developing young athletes is
accomplished more effectively without uninformed and / or half-hearted practitioners at the
helm. As outlined in the Literature Review, our society desires and will benefit from more
reflective, skillful coaches.

A common definition of "professional behaviour" would go a long way to serving the
interests of all stakeholders in both coach education and youth soccer. I follow the lead of
Kesson (1999), who urges teachers to make explicit what has been, up until now, tacit; to make
problematic what has been, up until now, accepted: in this case, that coaches ought to behave
professionally. Frankly, there is little sense of 'professional' collegiality (as I will define
'professional') I can recognise in my own coaching circles. The feeling I do have in my circles is
more of an unspoken camaraderie, the quintessential 'old boys' network, in which everyone
understands the game because everyone has a history playing and coaching it – often together
– and everyone knows their place in the game's community because they presume a place for
themselves within it. Coupled with this haughtiness in my circles are the notions of earning your
stripes (which I can understand) and of commanding respect based upon the age of the players
whom you coach (which I cannot understand). Coaching, in my circles, is a practice; coaching
is procedural knowledge; coaching is something you do. Coaching in my circles is not
professional, as much as its proponents would like to think it is, and I have yet to encounter
professional coaching behaviour in my circles outside of the study program. I am sure it is out
there, but I do not know where.

Coach education programs could improve by having more definitive standards of
professional conduct, which should come from the top of the chains-of-command for each sport.
While professional and amateur coaching and sporting associations (in Canada and
internationally) participate and endorse coach education programs, there are no formal, global cultures or governing sets of rules by which coaches may assess their behaviour as there is with, say, the Legal Bar. Global sport federations, likewise, have sport-specific standards for conduct but no enforcement bodies or accountability measures. As far as I have experienced, local soccer clubs enforce standards of behaviour for coaches, which becomes hit-and-miss, depending on (1) a club's desire and ability to uphold their standards, and (2) the general outcry from concerned adults (or perhaps from concerned players) that a coach should be investigated. Our regional provincial association is an administrative advocate (that involves itself at the practical level) but is not in a position to enforce anything, since the local clubs – the membership – are the money-base and, therefore, the power-brokers. So bridging the theory-practice gap on any grander scale than 'local hit-and-miss' will be accomplished by altering individual grassroots practitioners' perceptions about what "being a coach" or "teacher" really entails.

One way to alter individual perceptions about "being a coach" or "teacher" is by 'preaching to the choir' or '... to the converted', as it were. US political veteran, John W. Gardner, suggests that most movements do just that (Thompson, 2001). What is gained from bickering or knocking heads with an opponent? Rather, tell supporters again and again, through continual positive rallying, about why something needs to be done, and a movement gains momentum; hence, the title of the PCA's newsletter, Momentum. The best one can do is go public, Gardner suggests, and hope the momentum catches on – people will change if they believe in the cause.

However it is accomplished, professionalism should infuse coach education programs, steeping learners from Day One with professional attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviours. Coaching as a practice should distinguish itself, not for self-aggrandisement, but for earnestness, maturity, and self-respect. As a professional development tool, mentoring has proven its effectiveness to the extent that it is utilised, but its relevance extends only as far as its utilisation. If mentoring could be embraced and implemented worldwide as an indispensably crucial facet of the coaching profession, we would enrich the profession from the inside-out, thanks to the work of practising 'professionals'.

Reliability in Mentoring

On account of the long-term, influential roles that mentors assume when they shape and develop interns, mentoring proponents should probe the depth and breadth of the practice comprehensively and with care. Such a potent and far-reaching tool as mentoring, with as diverse an impact as it has on learners' futures – evinced by the six mentoring roles – ought to
be prudently investigated for two reasons. First, as much as possible, the benefits and pitfalls should be uncovered via deliberate research (not trial-and-error). The more deeply we understand mentoring, the more we will be able to counter the possibility of ill practice or abuse of power in relationships, which can both harm learning and development. A mentor privileged with wielding power and control in a relationship should accept this responsibility, as well as be held accountable for the type and quality of development and learning that occur. (Interns are similarly obliged by the process, which I will discuss more closely in the next section.) Also, the better we understand mentoring, the more ably we can ensure that mentoring is a reliable learning tool that produces positive rather than negative learning outcomes. After all, some kind of impact will be made upon theory and practice, whatever the mentoring has been like; the onus is on us to ensure that the impact is as positive as possible. Second, the more positively and assuredly we understand mentoring and its potential, the more consistently we can enact reliable, healthy mentoring relationships that inform both theory and practice.

Ascertaining how reliably mentoring informs theory and practice naturally raises several questions: How effectively does mentoring, as we presently understand it, strengthen the link between knowing and doing via reflection? How consistently do currently identified mentoring roles affect people in the ways purported by definitions like Malderez’s? In other words, were my results, which confirm those role definitions, a fluke? In retrospect, my study has been but a step towards confirming the reliability of mentoring. Further questions come to mind: what might the mentoring process look like in other contexts and how, if at all, will effects on participants differ in each?

Phillips, Latham, and Hudson (1996) initiated a case study exploring geographical and institutional differences between two school-university partnerships in PE teacher education. According to Phillips, et al. (1996), novice PE teachers have tended to be enculturated via "performance-based pedagogy" (p. 136), not reflection. However, characterising both institutions, Philips, et al. report that the subject partnerships “espouse the notion that if teachers are to be fully professional (rather than ‘merely’ competent), they need to have developed a critically reflective approach to their work” (p. 136). No mention is made of ‘mentoring’, but much is described of the relationships between sponsor- and student-teachers. Approaching mentoring from a different perspective, though, Gore (in Rossi, 1996) and Williams (in Phillips, et al., 1996) point out that reflection in teaching exists on a continuum ranging from no-frills, practical skill development to the view of education as critical problem-solving and renovating theoretical knowledge. So even while teachers in Context ‘A’ feel they are practising reflectively, teachers in Context ‘B’ feel they are not. When one considers the numerous contextual factors (e.g., geographical, institutional, environmental, relational) along with views
like Gore or Williams's that query reflective behaviour, one finds it more difficult to pin down any common, reliable definition of mentoring or how practices such as reflection might be enhanced in those being mentored. And if reflection does exist as a continuum, how can we be sure that mentoring roles are consistent, or that mentoring achieves in one context similar outcomes as in another context? If they are not similar, to what extent do different contexts impact upon learning outcomes? If they are not similar, can we still call what happens in one of those contexts 'mentoring'?

I find some room (perhaps merely fence-sitting room) for both perspectives in Wells's (2001) words on practising-in-context: “... we each search for ways of enacting the principles on which we are all agreed (my emphasis) in a manner that is appropriate to local conditions ... although we share the emphasis on communities of inquirers or learners ... we have no party line [so] our work remains close to the concerns and aspirations of the majority of [individual practitioners] ...” (p. 3). This is to say that by applying general guidelines to our specific situations, we each interpret experiences and theory in ways that are meaningful to our own practice. Unfortunately, “on which we are all agreed” can be troublesome because, if we are not agreed, there exists the danger of relativism: what you interpret becomes true and valid for you, and what I interpret becomes true and valid for me – herein lies potential for conflict, paradox, and syncretism. Mentoring’s reflective cycle is perhaps less reliable than it appears and perhaps also invalid, which I will discuss next.

Validity in Mentoring (Part One)

As I see it, valid mentoring has two parts. The first begins with a reflective cycle, a "quality circle" (Phillips, et al., p. 136) that ensures accountability. The "quality circle" means that mentoring reaches beyond the scope of an individual to at least one other person, permitting a wider distribution of potential benefits, of relevance and meaningfulness, and of possible interpretative viewpoints that relate the significance of an experience to existing general theory. The same principle governs police officers that collect eye-witness testimony and piece together a composite image of an event – the more testimony they hear, the more richly their picture develops. Taylor and Stephenson (1995) have found that this kind of accountability can be absent in mentoring; mentoring relationships typically seem informal, private, local, and unreported. Hobson (1996) notes the accountability in sharing beliefs and approaches with colleagues, a true test of colliding opinions and paradigms, and I believe this to be one of the richest outcomes of mentoring. So reflection partially validates outcomes of mentoring when the process is shared.
However, reflection only partially validates mentoring because individually, anyone's perception in any context is a subjective 'reality'; others cannot authenticate someone's experience beyond their own confirming or refuting subjective perceptions. One who remains alone or aloof during a learning experience, which is unique even for people in the same context, diminishes validity (outside his own brain), since his individualism restricts any meaningfulness others might ascribe in their assessment of the same experience, as well as any composite benefit that might have been gained by sharing perceptions. (Perhaps others who are intimately aware of someone's experience could assess it, although even that has obvious limitations – one cannot literally be someone else.) Conversely, remaining alone or aloof denies the application of any standard of measure (e.g., collegial consensus) against which one might compare experiences. Unshared reflection is living and learning upon Gore and Williams's reflective continuum within a reflective vacuum, serving the needs of no one but the reflector. The only theory informed by this situation is that contained inside one's head – a kind of 'private' theory. There is no value served to a greater community by informing theory this way, since 'public' theory is never informed.

Important to remember is that 'public' theory – or simply 'theory' – is mutual and purports generalisations accepted by many practitioners: Wells' "principles on which we are all agreed." Theory is not specific case-by-case explanations but rather the result of practitioners putting their understandings to work in case-by-case practice, and to update theory when they publish their findings. As Wells (2001) puts it, "... any theory ... necessarily has to be adapted and modified according to local conditions" (p. 16). But theory should not remain local, isolated, and individual. Informing theory perpetuates knowledge over time – this is a more appropriate circumstance. Accumulated knowledge, theory that survives over time, is that which has been upheld by human experience – even incorrect theory. Ironically, Galileo sets a good example as one whose aloofness (albeit under duress) was eventually beneficial to society; fortunately for us, his adamant position – local, isolated, and individual – was far from inappropriate! How often history demonstrates that human perception is not always reliable, that it can send us theorising down the wrong paths, sometimes alone, sometimes with everyone else! (This same history lesson on perception applies to coercion.) However, note that nothing whatsoever came of Galileo's aloof theorising until he shared it.

Correct or not, theory provides parameters within which to inquire, and known data continually refine contemporary theory, perhaps only at the individual level if we cannot agree. Thus, partial validity could be considered the same as relativism: what you interpret becomes

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8 The idea here is not to debate existentialism, post-modernism, or relativism but simply to acknowledge that we all live as individuals and possess unique perspectives.
true and valid for you, and what I interpret becomes true and valid for me. Of course, the
greatest question we face is: “What is Truth?” Without opening the debate in this paper, I
simply assert that there is verifiable truth — although we can never know it with complete
certainty — and that there must be a way to ensure that mentoring (or any task) can be
undertaken with a high degree of corresponding validity. By to-ing and fro-ing, by researching
and reporting, by reciprocally questioning and re-evaluating, individual researchers make each
other accountable as together they refine theory and practice. For that, the reflective cycle
contributes partially to the validity of mentoring.

Validity in Mentoring (Part Two): Mentoring and Action Research

At the heart of mentoring, the reflective cycle is also found at the heart of action
research. I have already quoted Wells (2001), who is writing about action research, and his
words are very appropriate in this mentoring discussion. Carson (1992) makes remarkably
specific statements about action research that, in principle, describe mentoring: "...we may
simultaneously inform and change ourselves" (p.102) and "...action research intends to draw
together theory and practice..." (p. 102). Peterat and Smith (2001) also state: "...the singular
potential of action research is the pursuit of professional wisdom, [which is] all about the
particulars of events, people, and conditions" (p. 12). In these quotations, they highlight
context-based learning, theory-practice dichotomies, and individual praxis, reflection, and
professional development, all of which apply equally well to mentoring contexts. Other action
research references are also remarkably similar: "...trying out ideas in practice as a means of
improvement and as a means of increasing knowledge ..." (Kemmis & McTaggart as cited by
McNiff, et al., 1996, p. 9); "...deliberate intention to intervene in your own practice to bring about
improvement" (p. 17). Hobson (1996) states: "As teachers share their beliefs and approaches
and as they reflect and act upon their reflections, they are engaging in a form of teacher action
research" (p.6). Practical, contextual application of theory and subsequent reflection are evident
in each example.

Of action research, Waterman (1998) explains that reflection, the dialectical process,
"...increases understanding and abstraction of ideas alongside and in between real world
improvements and is one of the prime indicators of the validity of action research" and, I would
add, of mentoring. In other words, since theory informs practice and practice informs theory,
over time, the end result has foundation. Each is valid on account of the other. Praxis is
validity: thinking, doing, and thinking about doing, reminding one again of Cartesian philosophy.
That the practice-in-question is competently executed is the point to be made: sharing and
publishing procedures and results will hold practitioners to account for their competence
amongst their peers. Dialectical processes, according to Waterman, gradually feed a growing,
global body of theoretical knowledge and abstraction, which is then applied appropriately and with adjustment by individual practitioners in their own contexts. In part, the immediacy of circumstance must govern practical application of theory, since one can only know what one is doing (or will do) because of existing abstract knowledge upon which to draw in the first place. This is the core, situated, or personal practical knowledge referred to in the Literature Review, what I and others (e.g., Grimmett & Mackinnon, 1992) call craft knowledge, and it comes from learning about history.

The benefits of mentoring, like the teleology, correspond similarly to action research too: "...teachers become more systematic and deliberate ... action research [empowers] practitioners to change situations ... work cooperatively ... the practitioner identifies his / her own problems to investigate [and this produces] more meaning for the individual" (Hittman in Peterat & Smith, 2001, p.11). Here are highlighted intention, discipline, emancipation, cooperation, contextual self-awareness and diagnosis, and "relevance structures" (Marton & Booth, 1997, p.143). Thanks to reflection, mentoring – like action research – can purposefully and meaningfully strengthen the link between knowing and doing, actively involve people in the learning process, encourage ongoing self-reflection, nurture collegial relationships, and induce a responsibility to answer questions like: Why do it this way? What is a better way? Answers to these questions are as good a test of validity as any, since proofs are uncovered by analysing the means and the ends of any mentoring endeavour.

Compared to my own working definition of mentoring, "a one-to-one relationship supporting the development of [practitioners]," I detect mutual themes of change and development, collegiality and relational support, structured one-to-one formatting, and an implied context of practice. (While there should also be deliberate intent in mentoring [e.g., assessing needs, setting and striving for goals, improving praxis] as in action research, still one can be mentored without seeking to be mentored or without deliberately structuring the relationship.) Mentoring and action research are collegial but, more significantly, each relies primarily on reciprocity, on cyclical reflection and sharing, to foster learning. Therefore, like action research, mentoring is a deliberate, purposeful, even emancipating act intended to improve practice by meaningfully applying theory in specific contexts alongside other people. At its heart, mentoring is a mutual relationship in every companionable sense that we understand the phrase. As I see it, deliberate mentoring is a form of collaborative action research, giving deeper insight into Gauthier's (1992) statement: " ...if one comments that action research associates theory and practice, then I will accept the statement providing the following questions can be answered: Is it the only type of research having such an association, and what particular behaviours does it yield?" (p. 185). Deliberate mentoring can be described...
as one of Gauthier's "particular behaviours," a form of action research. Conversely, a mentor and intern might conduct action research as part of deliberate mentoring.

In any case, what is the second part of valid mentoring? Valid mentoring is a matter of the mentor and the intern respecting as well as acting upon moral and professional responsibilities: to themselves, to each other, to subjects, to colleagues, and to communities outside their immediate surroundings. Valid mentoring is not simply a matter of sharing but a matter of trust, honesty, and sincerity.
CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION

"Teaching is a practical matter, not a theoretical exercise. [Turning it into a theoretical exercise] ... has been of little benefit to the profession, to the practice of teaching, or to those at the receiving end."

— Allen Wade, *Principles of Teaching Soccer*, p. 11

**So What?**

Much has now been said about the roles of mentoring, its reliability and validity, and its effectiveness as a tool for professional development. But where does this leave grassroots soccer coaches: volunteer moms and dads, young adults looking for a way to stay in the game, or retirees who love to spend time with children, yet who may not even know which end is up on a soccer pitch? What can they hope to gain from coach education programs that offer mentoring relationships? Addressing the inquiry questions will help to answer these pragmatic questions. I will address them in order of immediacy to the coaching context, not in the order of presentation in Chapter I.

1. **Question Two: What role can mentors play in coach education programs?**

   The study data reveal six possible roles that mentors can play, confirming Malderez’s framework as well as adding one additional role. These roles, far from being discretely separate items on a list, reflect the complexly intertwined and holistic nature of dynamic interaction that one would expect to find in human relationships.

   | Model     | — to inspire, to demonstrate |
   | Enculturator | — to show around, to aid in familiarising with local culture and customs. |
   | Supporter  | — to be there, to listen for venting or as a sounding board. |
   | Sponsor    | — to ‘open doors,’ to introduce the ‘right people,’ to help ‘make things happen.’ |
   | Educator   | — to listen and coach, to help set goals and objectives, to create appropriate learning opportunities |
   | Professional | — to develop appreciation for and encourage the undertaking of standards of professional conduct or behaviour |

   Table 4 — The Roles of Mentoring (adapted from Malderez, 2001)

2. **Question Three: What effect can mentoring have on novice coaches?**

   The study data reveal that mentoring can be inspirational, demonstrative, eye-opening, and reaffirming. Mentoring can promote a sense of collegiality, kindle or renew interest in one’s *praxis*, provide personal and professional fulfillment and satisfaction, enrich visions and clarify future goals, improve patience and responsiveness / flexibility in the face of impediments or unexpected circumstances, and boost confidence and motivation for a number of reasons:
i) interns / novices see in action approaches to practice they may only have heard about as theory

ii) interns / novices observe and model alternative coaching styles / strategies, which they transpose into their own practices

iii) interns / novices step back with increased objectivity because the mentoring process facilitates learning via the self-reflection cycle

iv) interns / novices differentiate and discern increasingly complex / relevant cues from the learning environment

3. Question One: How can mentoring affect grassroots soccer coach training and development?

The study data reveal that mentoring opens doors to new opportunities and provokes continual growth and development for coaches with varying qualifications or different levels of experience (i.e., novice or beginner, advanced or intermediate, expert or master). The labels are less important than the notion that every coach stands to benefit from the learning that occurs in the mentoring relationship. Mentors can affect coach education programs as role models, resource pools, sounding boards, second sets of eyes-and-ears, mirroring agents, and professional resources of conduct and accountability. Mentoring can enable all participants to perceive new conceptualisations of their praxis, demonstrating the value of learning about learning, and it can encourage them to make conscious efforts to think about thinking. Mentors can help interns / novices to set and achieve goals that fulfil individual needs via self-reflection, which means that learning is more meaningful and development is more gratifying — greater efficacy in each case. Mentoring enhances the end-product of grassroots soccer coaching, so players receive better instruction and learn to improve, the effect of which percolates beyond sport into our culture and society. However, questions must be considered: Is coach development coming at the risk of player development? Can a mentoring program be implemented with minimal detrimental impact upon players' needs? How will potential mentors and interns / novices be selected and matched together? What alternatives are there for mismatched relationships? Will mentors coach existing teams that interns visit, or vice-versa? Finally, who will train or mentor the mentors?

A look back at the study data week-by-week has revealed to me some general principles for anyone undertaking a mentoring relationship in a soccer coaching environment:

- If one is mentoring a coach of one's own team, be sure the program is strong and well-looked after before devoting time and energy away from players in favour of intern-coaches.
- As a mentor or an intern-coach, reflect regularly and review these reflections frequently, with sincere commitment to learn and understand one's experiences.
- As a mentor, commit intern-coaches to as formal a schedule as circumstances will permit, which fosters stability and progression.
As a mentor, coach less and have intern-coaches working and reflecting more, according to their comfort levels, so they can take ownership of their learning.

As a mentor, be well-prepared, so intern-coaches have more resources to observe / absorb.

As a mentor, be careful to make gradual progress while shifting responsibility to intern-coaches, so they do not face too much too soon.

Addressing and – to a certain extent – mitigating these issues will find mentoring’s benefits more readily transposed by mentors and interns / novices to various sport coaching contexts (e.g., age, gender, skill level) and even various professions (e.g., teaching, medicine, dentistry).

Summary

I believe intentional, collaborative, sincere context-based reflection is the solution to the theory-practice coaching gap. Coach education, in which theory and practice are often distinctly separated, requires an effective tool for implementing intentional, collaborative, sincere context-based reflection that can facilitate learning for coaches of all levels and ranges of expertise and experience. Mentoring is one effective tool for reflection and an appropriate bridge to the coaching gap, and the times, it seems, are changing in its favour: “The return to interpretation is now an effort to reground our understandings in practice” (Carson, 1992, p. 113). Sumara and Carson (1997) also state: “… one’s evolving sense of identity and one’s daily practices must always be, in some way, interpreted in relation to one another” (Preface). Not only can mentoring help us to analyse, interpret, and learn from our experiences, it can pave the way forward to professional and personal identity. This is a new paradigm from which to see professional development, which fundamentally changes one’s approach to even the most mundane of in-services or seminars; even to use the term ‘mundane’ is ironic!

Coaches and practitioners grandfathered by such an outlook could find themselves facing a paradigm-shifting decision: meet the new professional demands or find a new profession. In other words: those who can, teach. Those who can, coach. Deep, significant, lasting changes are possible by altering the institutional frameworks from which coaches emerge. As I quoted Peterat and Smith (2001) in Chapter V: “...the singular potential of action research is the pursuit of professional wisdom ...” (p. 12). I believe the same may be said of mentoring. Professionalism is at the very core of mentoring. Even where mentoring is utilised merely as a grassroots learning tool for sport coaches, the environment is still likely to foster a respectful appreciation for the coaching profession. Something is bound to rub off. That can only be a good thing for youth soccer, for people in general, and for Canada at-large.

Changing Canada’s approach to soccer coach education will go a long way to improving player development, since no national professional league exists to develop our top players.
Mentoring, based on learning and not dollars, acknowledges our limitations and accentuates our strengths. Canadian grassroots coaches must learn what constitutes effective soccer coaching. Grassroots coach education programs, like the National Coaching Certification Program, are attended primarily by moms and dads who coach their own children. Additional efforts at coach education like mentoring, far from being redundant, will actually be reiterative – even unprecedented – for volunteer coaches. Teaching our young players the skills and strategies for superior sport performance should not be left entirely in the hands of expert Provincial and National coaches because these experts only coach a small number of players. How many players in B.C. and Canada do not receive quality coaching simply because there is none available? We have neither the elite camps nor the professional junior teams found in Europe, and we cannot send every player to Provincial and National programs. Programs like mentoring, supplementing ones like the NCCP, can offer expertly enhanced coaching to more players and athletes across Canada. We all stand to benefit from that.
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Appendix A

Mentoring:
An Overview for Community Sport Organisations
and their Coaches

Presented by Scott D. Robertson, B.H.K.
to Gordon May,
Manager, Coaching Association of British Columbia
March 9, 1999
The most influential person in an athlete's life is the coach. In Canada, this person is frequently a volunteer: a mom or a dad, a young adult in college or high school, or perhaps a retiree, each offering a part of their lives to sport. Often these coaches have already participated in their chosen sport, and they are familiar with its challenges. Yet equally often, they are not. Occasionally, these coaches are skilled at teaching others, and they find the demands of the learning environment very fulfilling. More frequently, they have no formal teaching skills, and they find the learning environment frustrating, chaotic and unrewarding. As a result in these situations, the most influential person in the athletes' lives is overwhelmed, under stress and generally less effective.

To help coaches in this situation, the Coaching Association of Canada, along with government and sponsors like 3M, offer the National Coaching Certification Program. The NCCP has trained and educated volunteer coaches in coaching theory and technique in all sports since 1973. The program is delivered in classrooms and on-site throughout Canada, with coaches spending time away from their teams, together learning and sharing before they return, certified and more confident. Unfortunately, the time spent away from their teams leaves in coaches' minds a gap between direct connections of knowledge they gain and ways they behave. Upon returning, they do not – or simply cannot – apply the same information in their own team environment. This is called the Coaching Gap, and it exists within the current NCCP system. The Coaching Gap is particularly evident at the early levels among novice coaches, who are in need of the most help.

While the NCCP is structured in a way to limit the Coaching Gap, including both Technical and Practical components which enhance the Theoretical base, most coaches still do not improve their actual coaching behaviour when they increase their theoretical knowledge, and the Coaching Gap remains. A study of coaching programs conducted in Australia (Douge, et al, 1994 in Galvin, 1998) reached a similar conclusion. The Coaching Gap is unavoidable under the present system because the time and resources available to organisers limit Coaching Education Programs like the NCCP. With the exception of major urban centres, participants are widely dispersed, and they are constrained by time and money as well since, let us remember, they are volunteers. Coaches must leave their teams in order to learn coaching theory because the program is not available one-on-one. However, there is a way to overcome this limitation and bridge the Coaching Gap in Canada. The solution is literally a practical one, but it too begins with knowledge.
Anyone may tell you: “Knowledge is power.” As the new millennium progresses, and our world becomes increasingly computer-dependant (remember the Y2K scare?), this statement sounds more and more true. The new power brokers are those programmers and technicians who have procedural, or “how-to,” knowledge: how to program, how to install, how to service and repair. So anyone who tells you that knowledge is power seems to be right. But they’re not.

At least, not exactly.

Take that most alarming moment in a parent’s life, when they realise their child is no longer the helpless, innocent tyke who tips over on bicycles, but a capable, free-thinking individual with refined technical skills. More alarming still is when the nine-year old illustrates this by setting up the family’s new Pentium computer while mom and dad watch wide-eyed from the hallway. Or when dad asks his little one to solve the Scanning Error, and she solves it before he’s back from the kitchen! Of course, mom and dad are very proud that their baby knows so much but, secretly, don’t they feel just a little humbled as they dole out that extra scoop of ‘well done’ ice cream?

In fact, this child has one major advantage over her parents. Not only does she know what to do, she knows how to do it, how to apply her knowledge and debug the Run-Time Error, through sheer repetition of the process: at home, at school, at a friend’s house and so on. (Fortunately, in the case of computers, parents are narrowing the gap between their own and their kids’ procedural knowledge: at work, at home, at school, at a friend’s house ...) In any situation, a person’s knowledge is only an advantage when it is applied or put into action, and even then only if it is applied consistently.

So anyone who tells you that knowledge is power must be slightly more specific. Knowledge is potential power and is only real power at the moment we apply it. Put another way, what we learn is only useful if we use it. Sounds almost too simple! Conclusion: nine-year olds ought to coach computer lessons! Further conclusion: Applied Knowledge is the solution to the Coaching Gap.

Now, we know what the Coaching Gap is, and we know Applied Knowledge (AK) will solve it. Of course, unless we apply this solution and state how AK will solve it, we fall into the Coaching Gap ourselves. AK for any activity is best described to a beginner by someone who has already done it since, without a major stroke of luck, no beginner will discover this knowledge effectively on their own. Many professional programs depend on this expert-novice
relationship. For example, in public schools older teachers sponsor student teachers. Sous-chefs in fine restaurants apprentice with master chefs, and medical students in residency intern under the supervision of established doctors. Even the experts stay current through skills upgrades and in-servicing. In all these relationships, the beginner or protégé learns the "reality" behind the theory from the expert or mentor. A mentor shows not just what to do but also how to do it. In learning from the experts how to apply what they know, the beginners become experts themselves.

Example Through Illustration

Jerry Wallace, looking for ways to improve his son's baseball team, signed up for a Level I Coaching Theory class. Not only did he experience new and revealing thoughts during the class, he remembered them the following week and included them in the rest of his practice plans. Jerry applied the knowledge he learned, his son's team advanced to the semi-finals as a result, and everyone enjoyed every inning of the season.

Jerry was very lucky. He avoided the Coaching Gap by himself, even though he was a beginner. Not all beginners are so fortunate. However, there is a way to provide beginners with the savvy, the patience and even the luck that Jerry had: mentoring.
What is Mentoring?

In Ancient Greek mythology, King Odysseus of Ithaca, upon leaving for the Trojan War, entrusted the education of his son Telemachus to his elderly friend and counsellor, Mentor. Mentor was a simple man, yet he had a vast life experience and the trust of his master. Odysseus was confident that, during his absence, Mentor would guide Telemachus in his quest for knowledge, skill and wisdom. The word mentoring is derived from this story and today means a developmental process in which someone with more experience – a mentor – helps and guides less experienced individuals – protégés. Indeed, although the benefits of mentoring programs are now being rediscovered, this style of human resource development was once the only type of training in existence ...

At its simplest level, mentoring is a one-to-one relationship supporting the development of coaches, at any level of sport. By breaking this definition into parts, mentoring can be examined in detail.

One-to-One Relationship

Mentors and protégés can partake in the following activities together:

- attend competitions and practices together
- watch video-taped competitions and practices together
- meet regularly to discuss, analyse, evaluate or just chat

These activities can serve as icebreakers when coaches first meet.

At the first meeting, a rapport ought to be created between the two coaches in a more formal environment. The coaches can share information:

- current coaching level
- qualifications (if any)
- coaching philosophy
- self-assessment (strengths / weaknesses)
- ambitions / goals / aims

Both sides must aid the other to understand their aims and objectives:

- clarify expectations - What can I do for you? What do you hope to gain?
- agree on priorities - This must be done first, then this, then that ...
- set goals - specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timely (SMART)

Once they are familiar with each other, and each other’s coaching goals, a schedule for mentoring sessions can be arranged. A single, well-planned mentoring session should include four basic stages:

- pre-session meeting to set session goals / expectations
- activity / observation of the practice session / competition event
post-session evaluation / discussion to analyse goal achievement
action points to consider for next session

Over time, a certain chemistry grows between the two coaches, the relationship becomes more informal and relaxed, and planning flows from one session to the next as the need arises.

**Development of Coaches**

People are said to have **learned** something after they demonstrate a permanent change in their knowledge or behaviour. More importantly, **improved** performance is a permanent behavioural change for the better. The only way to monitor this change over time (before, during, after mentoring) is to compare present behaviour with a set of standards that define **ideal** behaviour. Successful Coaching Education Programs **permanently change** the behaviour and practice of coaches for the better. They spell out clearly what ideal coaching is. Mentoring ensures permanent improvement (*i.e.*, learning for the better) and must be an essential part of the learning process. Mentoring has three developmental thrusts:

1. Strengthens the link between knowing and doing.
2. Makes each experience a learning experience.
3. Relates each experience specifically to that learner's needs.

Sometimes coaches can't see the learning opportunity in a problem, in a chance occurrence or in a run-of-the-mill event, or else they only see it by accident. A second set of eyes and ears (a mentor or peer coach) can mean fewer accidents and more, relevant lessons.

**Any Level of Sport**

Mentoring accomplishes similar goals at all levels of coaching experience (*e.g.*, novice, intermediate, advanced):

- improves / refines coaching skills
- challenges the basis for current practice / coaching style
- encourages the adoption of new coaching methods

At each level, too, there are unique outcomes. For instance, mentoring helps and empowers novice coaches to control the learning process for themselves. With advanced coaches, mentoring broadens present beliefs and values in order to deepen their understanding of roles and tasks.

**What do Mentors do?**

Every mentor in every sport performs similar **activities** with coaches and, to accomplish this, each mentor must master certain **skills** and fulfill basic **requirements**.
Mentoring Activities

Needs Assessment: investigating and discovering those coaching tasks, skills, and requirements you must undertake in order to improve.

Goal Setting: developing, prioritising, and writing down a list of coaching tasks you wish to accomplish.

Evaluation: measuring / deciding a coach's success, as compared to pre-set standards of performance.

Dialogue: an honest, productive exchange of opinions between two people.

Time Management: planning, controlling, and using time as efficiently as possible while completing coaching tasks.

Mentoring Skills

Observation: monitoring a coach's behaviour (e.g., video, tape recorder, checklist, eyes-and-ears) as unobtrusively as possible for future discussion.

Feedback: critical information and / or praise from a mentor to a coach delivered in a positive, constructive way.

Active Listening: considering the words, feelings, and body language of a coach without bias or distraction; paraphrasing and devoting attention to a coach to ensure the mentor hears what was intended.

Questioning: guiding a discussion meaningfully and uncritically towards reflective self-analysis by posing questions.

example: Could you explain why you ... ?
In what other way might you ... ?
What results did you have when you ... ?

Communication: transmitting (giving and receiving) information and ideas easily and honestly with other people.

In addition, mentors must meet basic coaching requirements. They must have knowledge of coaching theory, learning theory (i.e., how people learn and behave), teaching methods (e.g., peer, task, direct, guided discovery), and technical knowledge that is sport-specific. A degree or diploma in an education or sports-related field is beneficial and coaching certification (e.g., NCCP) is essential.

Self-Reflection

The key process in the mentoring framework is self-reflection, the review of a past event to find new alternatives for future events. Self-reflection links theory and practice but requires a catalyst to spark the process. A coaching event, like a practice or competition, serves perfectly. Reflection should occur as soon as possible after the event, while it is still fresh in the mind, and it should relate directly to that event.
The Self – Reflective Cycle

1. Have the coach describe the event without opinion. Objectivity is necessary for self-reflection.
2. The coach can evaluate what went well and what needed improvement.
3. Analyse why this was so, thereby implicating the coach’s own strengths and weaknesses.
4. Draw conclusions about the coach’s performance vs. set standards and goals.
5. Develop an Action Plan for the next session that accounts for the coach’s strengths and weaknesses.

The Mentor’s Role

The mentor’s role is to facilitate learning, primarily through self-reflection. The coach must lead the process, with the mentor encouraging and challenging them to reconsider their current behaviour, and to implement the new information they acquire from Coaching Education Programs.

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<tr>
<th>Stage Of Reflective Cycle</th>
<th>Mentor’s Role</th>
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<tr>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>Analysis</td>
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<td>Directing &amp; Assisting</td>
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<td>Action Plan</td>
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Further Concerns

At present, Mentoring Programs exist at Canada’s three National Coaching Institutes, where a protégé joins a team as a new member. The expert mentor, the “regular” coach, is already in charge and the team is stable. Yet at the community sport level, the novice protégé is the “regular” coach, and the expert mentor is the newcomer. How will this affect the athletes? They must be informed as to why the mentor is there, so they do not lose confidence or respect for their own coach. Also, they must know the goals that the protégé – the “regular” coach – hopes to achieve, so they can provide the necessary feedback.

Another consideration is that of intrusion. The mentor must take care to recognise his position within each visited team and to remain somewhat distant from the social tapestry therein. Becoming too involved will spoil objectivity and disrupt team discipline and control.

Certain mentoring activities have particular considerations:

- **On Needs Assessment**
  - write down goals, objectives, aims, benchmarks
  - discuss / re-assess these throughout the year
  - shape goals, etc. to needs of individual coach
  - be flexible, be specific
- allow for growth - do not just check off completed tasks
- let coach lead discussions while mentor anticipates coach’s needs

- On Evaluation
  - continual, daily, immediate
  - observation, video, discussion, checklists
  - avoid evaluation of undiscussed topics
  - identify benchmarks to reach for each session
  - consider athlete feedback informally (monthly questionnaires, team meetings)
  - discuss athletes’ needs and performances as a measure of coach’s success

- On Dialogue
  - inconsistent expectations and feedback result in decreasing trust and respect of opinions
  - different people require different approaches - there is no single, correct style
  - a mentor’s “I’m here to learn from you too” attitude is very positive
  - interventions can be formal (objective, checklists, video, etc.) or informal (subjective, opinions, perceptions, etc.)

- Things to Avoid
  - criticism in front of peers / athletes
  - being too negative - look for the positive, constructive side
  - non-communication - there must be regular / continual feedback
  - dominating the experience / “holding the reins” too tightly
  - trying to change too much at once
  - upholding one way as “the right way” - remember differences can be strengths
  - teaching - a mentor is a guide and a facilitator
  - expecting top quality too soon - learning takes time, practice and confidence
    (However, remember that only **PERFECT** practice makes perfect in the end)

- Things to Achieve
  - working **WITH / ALONGSIDE** the coach
  - an open, mutually helpful atmosphere between mentor and coach
  - constant and consistent feedback, both formal and informal
  - considering a coach’s strengths as well as areas needing improvement

**Summary**

A mentoring session, like any practice or class, must be well planned. The coach’s needs must be clear, and the mentor’s input must be relevant. There must be a positive relationship between the mentor and the coach established with open lines of communication. Both people must know why the other is there and what each can provide for the other; it is not just a learning experience for the coach alone. Indeed, the self-reflective process is equally useful to mentors as they assess their own duties. Mentors do not have to be more experienced people either. Discussion and insight can be shared between coaches of equal standing; sometimes, coaches find a peer less intimidating. Also, coaches with varied backgrounds (e.g., former players, degree-holders, retirees) all have unique perspectives to offer, complementing each other’s experience.
Frequently, the mentor's first meeting with a coach follows a Coaching Education Program, and the coach is overflowing with new ideas and information. Rather than adding to the knowledge stew, the mentor assists the coach in selecting and applying appropriate ideas in a timely way; the mentor facilitates the process by which coaches use their own knowledge to improve their behaviour. Mentoring is a process more than an event, and mentors are managers more than teachers. At this stage of development, coaches need no more theory from a teacher. They need guidance from a mentor.

References


Appendix B

INTERjuniors: Coaches' Mentoring Program

Mentoring is ...
- one-to-one (Coach X ↔ Coach Y)
- learning-centred (for each Coach)

Both Coaches must:
1. Clarify expectations – What strengths can I offer to you? What strengths can you offer to me?

2. Agree on priorities – "For me, this Coaching Skill / Strategy is most important, then this, then that."

3. Set goals (for the program overall, and for each week to get there)
   - Specific: exactly what Coaching Skills / Strategies will be accomplished.
   - Measurable: how you will know you have accomplished them.
   - Timely: how long from now you wish to accomplish them.

I, ________________, agree to work with my coaching partner, ________________, in order to assist both of us in sharpening our knowledge and skills, and in order to build a stronger respect between ourselves as coaches and as colleagues.

Signed: ____________________ Date: ____________________
**Overall Program Goals:**

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<th>Strategy(s)</th>
<th>Attitude(s)</th>
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