Measuring and Evaluating Coaching Performance Using a 360° Feedback Process: A Development and Pilot Study

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the development, design and potential use of 360° feedback in a sport coaching setting, specifically within the sport of athletics in Australia. Drawing from the literature on sport coaching and performance evaluation in other occupations, this thesis sought to answer two broad questions; ‘What are the roles and responsibilities of a sport coach and how should these be evaluated?’ and ‘Can 360° feedback work in a sport coaching setting?’ These questions provided the framework to explore the extant literature regarding coaching and performance evaluation; determine appropriate research and design method; and to advance the understanding of measuring and evaluating performance in the sport coaching role.

This thesis employed a mixed methods research design to gain a better understanding of the concept of measuring sport coaching performance, in particular from the viewpoint of coaches themselves. First, interviews with eleven practicing athletics coaches were conducted. These interviews enabled coaches to provide their own perspective regarding what the roles and responsibilities of a sport coach are and what should be included in any evaluation or measurement of their work. Second, a further eight Australian athletics coaches participated in a focus group to gain further insight into how they felt their work should be evaluated or measured, and whether the 360° feedback tool designed as a result of the findings of the interviews was appropriate, accurate and could be useful in a sport coaching setting. Third, a further six athletics coaches participated in pilot testing of the designed 360° feedback process to ascertain its suitability and usefulness in measuring and evaluating sport coaching performance, and to answer the question ‘can 360° feedback work in a sport coaching setting?’ This methodology and the direct involvement of coaches in the development and design process of the 360° feedback tool, represents a unique contribution to the coaching performance and evaluation literature.

Results indicate that, the job of a sport coach is a varied and complex one at any level of participation or performance; and, that 360° feedback is capable of providing a useful and insightful means of evaluation and feedback. The coaches who participated in this research reported that they had never previously received any form of feedback or evaluation, in spite of the evidence in the literature about the importance of feedback for development and performance. Despite previous acknowledgement of the importance of
coaches to the sporting landscape at all levels in terms of athletic development and performance; this research has shown that simply using outcomes in competition to measure and evaluate coaching performance overlooks many aspects involved in their complex work. Furthermore, it has shown that 360° feedback processes may be capable of providing them with this much needed feedback to aid their development, and consequently their performance, as a coach. It is necessary to continue to bridge the gap between the understanding of coaching work and the way in which the performance of this work in measured and evaluated to truly understand its impact on the practice of coaches, and consequently the performance of athletes. This thesis provides the opportunity for other researchers to challenge their own beliefs regarding the measurement and evaluation of sport coaching performance.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“The role of the coach is central to the overall performance of any team or athlete and how this performance is managed and evaluated may have significant impacts on overall sporting success” (O’Boyle, 2014, p. 233).

Sport represents one of the most pervasive social institutions in present day society (Spreitzer & Snyder, 1989). Evidence of this can be seen in its permeation into everyday popular culture via the amount of news coverage, number of spectators and participants, and its use in advertising anything from cars to breakfast cereals. The sport industry contributes to the social and economic benefit of the nation, with the sport and recreation industry accounting for approximately 1.8% annually of Australia’s gross domestic product (ABS, 2012). Australia has a long history of engaging in an active sporting lifestyle, which has often led to international success (ABS, 2012).

Over the past two centuries, Australian athletes have been renowned world champions in sports as diverse as athletics, cricket, cycling, field hockey, rowing, rugby (both league and union), swimming and triathlon, and there is no doubt that sport has had a significant effect on the evolution of the nation (Bloomfield, 2003). People in many societies link their country’s sporting pursuits to feelings of national pride and a sense of national identity; most also have no second thoughts about displaying national flags and playing national anthems at sporting events in demonstrations of patriotism (Coakley, 2007). These sentiments tie into the reason that many give for studying sports; because sport has special meaning to particular people in societies and is tied to important ideas and beliefs in many cultures (Coakley, 2007). Sports are also connected with the major spheres of social life such as family, religion, education, the economy, politics, and media (Coakley, 2007). In short, researchers choose to study sport because it has become an important part of everyday social life around the world (Coakley, 2007). In Australia the nation has fostered a reputation for being obsessed with success in sports of many different kinds (Stoddart, 1986). It is a general assumption that
coaches play a significant role within sport, particularly in the development of sporting
talent (Martindale, 2008), and many sports would not exist without their input (Nash,
Sproule & Horton, 2008).

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012) reported that coaching is an essential
element of a well structured and delivered sport system and the sporting pathway as a
whole. However, determining the value of coaching to the Australian sport system and
the athletes and sport organisations they support, has rarely been discussed beyond the
sports media (Mallet & Côté, 2006) and popular coach biographies (e.g. Charlesworth,
2001; Talbot, 2003).

Yet, evidence has suggested that, particularly within elite sport, coaches are often
hired and fired on the basis of their ability to produce winning athletes and teams (Mallet
& Côté, 2006). In their review of the literature, examining the pressures on high school
coaches over four decades of research, Scantling and Lackey (2005) found that 124
coaches had been dismissed from high schools over a ten year period. The main reason
provided for these dismissals was an unacceptable win-loss record (Scantling & Lackey,
2005). The Australian Government (2008) has even recognised that in many ways, the
country’s future sporting success is dependent on coaches and their development.
Nevertheless, little is understood about how coaches’ work is evaluated. There is a
considerable body of literature that examines athlete performance, yet there is a paucity
of literature examining coach performance. It seems remiss that coaches have been
ignored given their undoubted influence on sporting success. This thesis aims to explore
how coaches’ work is defined and evaluated by their athletes, peers, supervisors, and by
the coaches themselves.

1.1 The complex work of the sport coach
Numerous research publications, as well as more popular literature, discuss coaches and
the many roles that they fulfil within their work (ABS, 2008; Banks, 2006; Jones,
Armour & Potrac, 2003; Launder, 2004; Lavallee, 2006; Lyle, 2002; Mallet & Côté,
2006; Massengale, 1974; Pyke, 2001). This body of literature is also consistent in
demonstrating the ways in which sport coaches provide strategies to enhance the
performance of athletes. In 2010 in Australia, 643,300 people were involved in sport as a
coach, instructor or teacher (Hajkowicz, Cook, Wilhelmseder & Boughen, 2013), a number that has seen a decline in recent years. Australian coaches work with more than seven million people, in different settings and contexts, who participate in sport every week (Shilbury, Deane & Kellett, 2006). These individuals are likely to commit between 3 and 9 hours per week to their coaching role, with the majority (78%) doing so on an entirely voluntary basis (ABS, 2008). Similarly, Dawson et al. (2013) found that even coaches employed full-time contribute a substantial amount of unpaid overtime to their work. Of those part-time coaches who do receive payment, 60% earn less than $5000 per year (ABS, 2008). Nonetheless the influential nature of the coaching position has been well recognised throughout the literature (e.g. Gilbert & Trudel, 2004) and is essential to the way in which people experience sport. Coaches are role models and mentors and it is often the case that a junior athlete’s commitment and enthusiasm for a sport is based almost solely on the quality of their coach (ASC, 2008).

The work of sport coaches is complex. A coach has been recognised as fulfilling multiple roles such as a manager (ABS, 2012), a teacher (Pyke, 2001), a counsellor (Banks, 2006), a strategist (Pyke, 2001), a leader (Lyle, 2002), a decision-maker and problem-solver (Abraham, Collins & Martindale, 2006), and a ‘jack-of-all-trades’ (Launder, 2004). Whatever role they are required to perform, Woodman (1993) believed that the job of the coach is ultimately to help their athletes achieve their best possible level of performance. Broadly, coaching can be defined as preparing athletes for competition (Woodman, 1993). This, according to Woodman (1993), can encompass a wide range of duties including teaching basic skills to beginners, planning and implementing long-term training programs, guiding immediate pre-competition preparation, and providing technical advice throughout a competition or performance. They work to develop individual athletes or teams of athletes, in settings ranging from non-competitive to school level and amateur through to professional competitions and Olympic level performances. This emphasises the importance of studying how coaches are evaluated. Coaches must also be able to implement, evaluate and modify training programs for the effective development of the athlete, and then incorporate this into an effective competition plan (Côté, Salmela & Yardley, 1995), as well as building in recovery and regeneration sessions to reduce the chance of injury and overtraining.
(Côtè, Salmela & Yardley, 1995). On top of this, coaches must have well developed skills in planning and administration, be competent communicators in both oral and written forms, have a broad vision of their sport, be able to integrate higher levels of performance with lower levels of sport development and be innovative and open-minded (Woodman, 1993). From these descriptions of the way coaches work, it is clear that their work is very complex and yet the only measure of a coaches competency in the role is their ability to win or continually produce winners (Mallett & Côtè, 2006).

As previously highlighted, the coach has been likened to many other professionals, including managers (Lauder, 2004), teachers (Banks, 2006; Pyke, 2001), psychologists (Lauder, 2004), and medical professionals (Schembri, 2001). However, these professions have established systems of performance measurement and evaluation, and subsequently training programs in place to address key areas for professional development. For the Australian sport coach, however, the development systems in many non-professional sports (such as Athletics) have not evolved beyond the basic technical skills education programs administered by National Sporting Organisations (NSO) and accredited through the National Coach Accreditation Scheme (NCAS) (Dawson & Phillips, 2013). This oversight for coach development is at odds with the stated objectives and goals of the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) and of many National Sporting Organisations. Importantly, these organisations are linked to federal government aims and policies relating to increased sport participation within the community for improved mental and physical health and wellbeing, as well as achieving and maintaining status as a strong and proud sporting nation (ASC, 2008).

In contrast, the development and evaluation of the athlete has received extensive attention for more than a quarter of a century with the research and development from the disciplines of sport psychology and sport sociology being a major focus (Lavallee, 2006). As such, the ways in which athlete performance is evaluated are now apparent. For example, VO\textsubscript{2max} has long been used as an evaluator of aerobic performance, particularly within endurance running (Bassett & Howley, 2000). The same cannot be said of coaches who have been overlooked by researchers. In particular, there has been an absence on how coaching is evaluated and measured, especially considering the
sizeable role coaches are recognised as playing in athletic outcomes, the way they are central to athlete development, as well as the way in which people experience sport.

Our understanding of the nature of sport coaching has grown considerably in the past 20 years (ICCE, 2013), which has resulted from the realisation and acceptance that coaches are far from merely technicians engaged in the process of knowledge transfer (Cushion, et al., 2010). It is now understood that coaches are practitioners who engage in a complex socio-cultural process that involves a wide range of interacting variables (Cushion, Armour & Jones, 2003; ICCE, 2013; Jones, 2000; Lyle, 2002; Mallet & Côtè, 2006). There has also been increased recognition that there are a number of social pressures and constraints impinging upon the coaching process (Cushion, et al., 2010); including those that are ideological, institutional, cultural, ethical and national in nature (Jones, 2000). Consequently, coaching performance does not operate in a vacuum that is purely dependent on the application of a sequential coaching process, but on the quality of interactions occurring between the coach, athlete(s), and context (Cushion, et al., 2010). Therefore, Cushion et al. (2010) argue that coaching should be viewed as part of the complex realities that are associated with modern sporting environments, and involve interactions between individuals of different ages, class, genders, experiences, philosophies, race and values (Potrac, Jones & Armour, 2002). Consequently, as it has been argued extensively within the literature that coaches are social beings operating in a social environment, it stands that they need to be understood, explained and finally, evaluated as such (Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2003).

1.2 Evaluating coach performance

At the present time, too many coaches and their employers, both professional and voluntary, base success upon winning (Broom, 1990; Mallet & Côtè, 2006), and sadly the old coaching adage, “you are only as good as your last win” is often unfortunately true (Flanagan, 2001). If this is the case, and winning is the sole criteria, then the majority of athletes and coaches are bound to fail. Broom (1990) stresses the need for coaching to have its primary focus on the pursuit of excellence; with excellence being measured both against the performance of others as well as one’s own performance. At the participation and recreation levels of sport, it is even more important that coaching
performance and ability are not judged solely on win/loss ratios. This undue pressure to succeed may lead to coaches, more of whom would be volunteers at this level, walking away from their position, which in turn decreases the pool from which to draw successful coaches. Decreases in the number of practicing coaches also have a knock-on effect in decreasing the number of athletes, once again limiting the depth from which talent can be drawn. It is estimated that Australia’s elite athlete talent pool is approximately 200,000 athletes, compared to the United States’ 2 million and China’s 20 million elite athletes (ASC, 2008). It is therefore important to have a strong coaching system in place to enable the best talent to be fully utilised and consequently, continue Australia’s tradition of “over-achieving and out-performing” (ASC, 2008). The lack of appropriate means by which to evaluate coach performance makes employment, management and development of coaches difficult.

1.3 The importance of feedback

The positive effect of offering feedback has long been recognised as an essential element in the process of learning and development (AlHaqui, 2012; Costa, 2006; Ende, 1983; Glover, 2000; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Broadly speaking, feedback is defined as any information one person gives to another person about that first person (Costa, 2006), and, as Clynes and Raftery (2008) state the main aim is to provide individuals with an insight into their performance. The positive outcomes of feedback are also supported empirically. In their meta-analysis of feedback intervention research, Kluger and DeNisi (1996) concluded that the vast majority of feedback interventions lead to improved performance of whatever the particular task, role or work being performed was.

One such method of feedback provision that has gained momentum in recent times is multi-source feedback, also known as 360° feedback (Bailey & Austin, 2006; Spurgeon, 2008). This form of feedback has traditionally been applied in business settings (Morgenson, Mumford & Campion, 2005), but is now also popular in the medical professions and has proved to be particularly useful for student doctors (Spurgeon, 2008). Essentially, 360° feedback involves collecting feedback from all around the focal individual to evaluate their performance of day-to-day activities (Spurgeon, 2008; Whitehouse et al., 2007). The number and nature of evaluators can
vary dependent on the situation but typically will involve gathering feedback via survey from supervisors or superiors, peers or co-workers, subordinates or direct reports, as well as the inclusion of a self-evaluation (Morgenson, Mumford & Campion, 2005; Spurgeon, 2008; Wood et al., 2006). Wood et al. (2006) suggest that it is the inclusion of this self-evaluation that increases the value and success of the feedback as the self-evaluation can provide additional insights into issues that may not be accessible via other, more one-dimensional, methods of evaluation.

Given the multiple viewpoints multi-source feedback is capable of capturing, it has been shown to be particularly useful when applied to situations where the work performed is complex and multifaceted; hence the contention of this thesis – that 360° feedback could prove to be a valuable tool in the difficult task of measuring and evaluating coaching performance.

1.4 Research aims
Existing literature from sport coaching highlights that there is a lack of appropriate means by which to fairly and effectively evaluate overall coaching performance beyond the results they produce (Mallet & Côtè, 2006). Literature from the business sector has indicated that 360° feedback has been widely used, and accepted, as a means of giving managers developmental feedback about their performance from different perspectives (Brutus, Fleenor & London, 1998) and suggests that 360° performance appraisal is a tool that can enable organisations to reach the next level of success (Gallagher, 2008). As coaches are the main managers of athlete performance it seems remiss that they too have not benefited from such a process. Therefore, this thesis aims to develop and pilot a 360° feedback inventory in a sport coaching setting to determine its suitability for evaluating the performance of coaches across all the domains involved in coaching. Specifically, two research questions were addressed:

1) What are the roles and responsibilities of a sport coach and how should these be evaluated? (Study 1)
2) Can 360° feedback work in a sport coaching setting? (Study 2)
1.5 Research context

The discussion thus far has highlighted that the work of the coach is not only complex but also vital to sporting performance and participation. Likewise, evaluation and feedback are important concepts for personal improvement and development. However, as noted, coaches and coaching work lacks a specific or meaningful way in which to provide such evaluation and feedback. While the literature has recognised this need (Mallet & Côtè, 2006; O’Boyle, 2014), few solutions have been proposed.

The research context of this thesis will involve the sport of athletics in Australia using a mixed methods approach; that is, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches to research (Stake, 1995). Athletics is one of the nation’s oldest and most established sports and its history is well documented. It contains all the elements of an established sport in Australia in terms of coaching, governance, education and development (Bloomfield, 2003; Elliot, 2004; Philips, 2000). For coaches of athletics in Australia, the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS) is the main formal coach education avenue in their development as a coach. However, athletics is unique in that, rather than an accreditation scheme that is provided by the sport’s National Sporting Organisation (NSO) – Athletics Australia (AA); it is provided by a second major stakeholder - the Australian Track and Field Coaches Association (ATFCA).

Although previous research has discussed the complexity of the coaching role (Banks, 2006; Cassidy, Jones & Potrac, 2004; Launder, 2004; Lyle, 2002; Schembri, 2001) and others have suggested questionnaires or tools to measure certain aspects of this (e.g. coach effectiveness, CBAS; Smith, Smoll & Hunt, 1977), there is little evidence of coaches being involved in the development of such methods. Therefore, Study 1 of this thesis, in-depth interviews with athletics coaches (Study 1A), investigates what coaches themselves believe to be the roles and responsibilities of the job and how performance in the coaching role should be evaluated. The second part of Study 1 (Study 1B) involved coaches’ participation in a focus group in order to gain their feedback and input on the specific design and structure of the 360° feedback tool. Study 2 sought to trial the 360° feedback tool in a small pilot study with six coaches to ascertain its suitability and usefulness within the context in which it was designed.
The research context of this thesis is rich in that it examines the relevance and importance of evaluation and feedback to coaches who work in a variety of different contexts (with athletes of different ages and competition levels). There is a range of ways in which individuals enter coaching – from the young coach who enters via their own participation in athletics to the older coach through the participation of their children. The participants in this thesis demonstrate the complexity of coaching at any level and highlight the difficulty in providing appropriate evaluation and feedback to those in the coaching role. However, just because it is difficult does not mean it should not be done and much of this difficulty stems from a lack of appropriate tools capable of providing such evaluation and feedback.

1.6 Thesis structure
The structure of this thesis will be as follows. Chapter 2 will provide a review of the literature. The roles, responsibilities and importance of the sport coach will be discussed; how feedback affects the development and performance of individuals will be reviewed; and the knowledge and practices of evaluation and feedback from other occupations will be examined. Chapter 3 will introduce the research methods utilised in the current study, including the research participants, process of data collection and how the data were analysed. Chapter 4 will examine the development and design of a 360° feedback tool for use in a sport coaching setting using in-depth interviews. Chapter 5 will build upon the knowledge gained in Chapter 4 to further refine the design of the tool with the input of coaches via a focus group. Chapter 6 examines the implementation of the 360° feedback tool via a pilot study. The concluding chapter, Chapter 7, will consider the results of the research and the implications for coach performance, evaluation and development.
The introduction highlighted the importance of sport in modern day society, particularly within Australian culture, and the crucial role played by coaches in the delivery of, and participation in, sport. The following discussion will provide an examination of the empirical and normative literature on performance evaluation and feedback methods and their influence on continual personal and professional development, performance enhancement and benefit to individuals and the organisations they work in. By drawing from the theory and practice in the non-sport literature this review will seek to compare and contrast with the current knowledge of coaching performance, success and evaluation. The non-sport literature provides a sound theoretical framework for the analysis of the performance, evaluation and feedback of coaches.

This chapter is organised into sections that will aim to clarify the current state of coaching evaluation and provide the framework for the two studies that follow. The first section examines the sport coach and their role within the Australian sport system. The second section looks to knowledge from other occupations as to how to develop and enhance performance using evidence-based multi-rater evaluation and feedback mechanisms. This will set the scene for the studies to be investigated within this thesis.

2.1 The sport coach

The influential nature of sport coaching has been well recognised throughout the literature (e.g. ASC, 2008; Gilbert & Trudel, 2004) and is essential to the way in which people experience sport. Coaches are regarded as important in society (Cuskelly, Hoye & Auld, 2006) and the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) refers to them as teachers, mentors, parental figures and managers, playing a pivotal role in the success of athletes and sport organisations (ASC, 2008). A coach has been recognised as fulfilling multiple roles, such as a manager (ASC, 2008), a teacher (Pyke, 2001), a counsellor (Banks, 2006), a strategist (Pyke, 2001), a leader (Lyle, 2002), and a ‘jack-of-all-trades’ (Launder, 2004). Whatever role they are required to perform, Woodman (1993) believed that the job of the coach is to help athletes achieve their best possible level of
performance. In broad terms, coaching can be defined as preparing athletes for competition, which, according to Woodman (1993) can encompass a wide range of activities including; teaching basic skills to beginners, planning and implementing long-term training programs, immediate pre-competition preparation, and providing technical advice throughout a competition or performance. Coaches must also be able to implement, evaluate and modify training programs for the effective development of the athlete, and then incorporate this into an effective competition plan, as well as building in recovery and regeneration sessions to reduce the chance of injury and over-training.

For individual sports such as athletics, (the research setting for this investigation) coaches are often responsible for the development of multiple athletes, competing at a variety of performance levels. The athletics coach must perform this process with each individual athlete to ensure they are achieving their personal goals. On top of this, coaches must have well developed skills in planning and administration, be excellent communicators in both oral and written forms, have a broad vision of their sport, be able to integrate higher levels of performance with the lower levels of sport development and be innovative and open-minded (Woodman, 1993). From these descriptions of the way coaches work it is clear that their work is very complex and yet little is known about the complexity of their effectiveness as a coach.

Coaches have been important contributors to Australia’s sporting success as far back as the 1860’s. From this period, cricket clubs and state associations in New South Wales and Queensland began to employ cricket coaches, but it was not until the 1930’s that coaches were employed on a full-time basis (Phillips, 2000). In the 1970’s, the more dominant sports that were financially supported by television and commercial sponsors, such as the World Series Cricket and Australian rules football, could afford to pay coaches a wage and so full-time coaches became much more common place (Phillips, 2000). Up until that time, coaches at the highest level in these sports were still required to work outside their coaching commitments in order to earn a living (Phillips, 2000), much like the majority of Australian athletics coaches operating in the present day. Currently, other sports (including rugby league, rugby union, golf, motor sports, tennis and swimming) have been able to capitalise upon the commercial appeal of their sports, as well as government funding, enabling them to employ coaches and team managers on
a full-time basis. However, at the grassroots level, and even up to state level in the vast majority of sports, volunteer coaches provide the bulk of the services to participants and are integral to the success of sport throughout Australia (ABS, 2012). It is apparent that coaches have multiple responsibilities extending beyond the technical instruction of athletes to improve performance, yet they are rarely recognised for this input and are often deemed responsible only for the outcome produced by their athlete or team. Gilbert and Trudel (1999) believe that the lack of appropriate coach evaluation methods impairs the capacity of managers to accurately judge and make decisions about a coach’s work and career. This thesis will seek to evaluate the appropriateness of using multi-rater feedback to evaluate coach performance, as this will take into account the range of roles and responsibilities a coach performs.

2.1.1 The complexity of coaches’ work
Complexity is a key feature in the way coaches work and this is also true of their various working relationships. Their careers often appear to work in cycles, rather than the typical linear career progression that has come to be the norm in more structured, large organisations (Nicholson & West, 1989). Nicholson and West (1989) propose that the vast majority of the working population have occupations in less structured work settings, such as coaching, that result in their careers being, for the most part, either unplanned reactions to unstable situations where they worked in order to stay employed, or a constant search for a more appropriate and fulfilling occupation. This lack of occupational stability is familiar from what we know of sport coaches, as their careers frequently appear to be out of their own control and mostly dependent upon external forces (Dawson & Phillips, 2013). For example, the numerous occasions when a coach is fired at the half-way point of a season by their managers or administrators due to circumstances beyond their control, such as player injuries or a run of sub-par performances (Charlesworth, 2001; Talbot, 2003; Salmela, 1996).

Perhaps more significantly, coaches are also expected to produce outcomes that are linked to the objectives of governing bodies such as the Australian Sports Commission and their respective National Sporting Organisations. These objectives are then linked even more broadly to the policies of state and federal government(s) aimed
at increasing sport participation for preventative health outcomes, both physical and mental, and as a means of maintaining Australia’s reputation as a proud sporting nation. On top of this, the achievement of such outcomes also provides the basis for funding of sports and programs (Talbot, 2003). Yet, all of these objectives are expected to be achieved without the existence of regulated standards on which to base an evaluation.

2.1.2 The complex role of coaching within the Australian sport system

It is commonly regarded in the sport coaching literature that coaches’ work is complex (Banks, 2006; Launder, 2004; Lyle, 2002; Schembri, 2001), hence it is important to have a clear understanding of their place within the Australian sport setting and how their performance can be aided and supported.

The base of the Australian sport system is made up of mass participation in sport (an estimated seven million people), which is governed by local clubs and regional sporting associations, who all exist to organise the weekly competitions of more than 120 sports around the country (Shilbury, Deane & Kellett, 2006). It is here that the majority of coaching in Australia occurs. The coaches at this level are predominantly volunteers (59%); and many are not qualified or properly accredited with the national bodies (Dawson et al., 2013; Shilbury, Deane & Kellett, 2006). Coaches not only work at the mass participation level of performance, but are responsible for the development of athletes who are at all levels of performance from those who compete at local, state and national levels, to those at the international level, and it is not uncommon in many sports for a part-time or volunteer coach to train an Olympic level athlete (Launder, 2004).

The variety of occupational classifications within coaching (i.e., volunteer, part-time, full-time, professional) is complicated enough, but adding to this complexity are the amount of time and resources at the coach’s disposal, as well as the way in which they view their job (Dawson et al., 2013; Launder, 2004). On one hand, an individual may take up coaching in order to help their child, or their child’s team, for a few years, on the other hand an individual retiring from a professional sporting career may transition into coaching with a view to developing a professional coaching career. The time available to spend on the job may vary due to other work and career commitments,
family commitments, and whether the individual is trying to focus on coaching full-time or still needs to supplement their coaching work with some other form of part-time work.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), approximately 643,300 coaches, instructors or teachers work at all levels within the Australian sport system, from the mass participation level of community and school sport, to Olympic and professional sports (Hajkowicz, Cook, Wilhelmseder, & Boughen, 2013). In 2014, approximately 100,000 coaches were registered under the ASC’s National Coach Accreditation Scheme (ASC, 2014). A small proportion (12%) of the individuals worked as sport coaches, instructors or teachers in Australian sport (ABS, 2012). This low proportion of registered coaches means that almost 80% of the coaching structure, upon which Australian sport is based, have little or no formal training in their role that would qualify them for registration. Of the 643,300 people working as coaches, instructors or teachers, those that received payment (146,000) were in the minority and received less than $5000 per annum (ABS, 2008). Those who received payment (146,000) were in the minority and received less than $5000 per annum (ABS, 2008). This has been more recently supported by Dawson et al. (2013). Despite this, coaches are expected to be professional in their conduct and in the quality of service delivery, ethical in their behaviour, and produce outcomes for their athletes, be these fun and safe basic skill acquisition for children or medals at world championships. If coaching is the backbone of Australian sport, and their athletes’ continual high performance is contingent on high-performing, effective coaches, it is remiss that there is little known about the effectiveness and performance of coaches.

It is the considerable gap in the knowledge about how is it possible to ensure a high standard of practice amongst the coaching community when so many operate outside the bounds of the governing body, and about how coaches are evaluated and developed that this thesis aims to address. This appears to not only be an Australian problem, but also one that exists in Canada and the United Kingdom. The majority of coaches surveyed by Reade et al. (2009) state that they have never been formally evaluated.
2.1.3 Research setting: Athletics coaches in the Australian sport system

Athletics is predominantly an individual sport, except for the few cases where individuals come together to compete in sprint relays (Carr, 1999). Therefore, as opposed to a team sport such as rugby, the majority of an athletics coaches’ time is spent engaging in a one-on-one relationship between themselves and their athlete. They often also work with squads, or groups, of athletes training at the same time of day to achieve their individual personal goals.

Athletics coaches work in a variety of settings in a variety of ways. These settings include: National Sporting Organisations (NSO) and State Sporting Organisations (SSO) who employ professional coaches directly on either full- or part-time short- or long-term contracts (Dawson et al., 2013). Depending on their specific roles and the structure in place within the particular system, professional coaches may also be responsible for conducting and coordinating assistant coaches and support staff, whom are also employed by the NSOs and SSOs (Dawson et al., 2013). Likewise, it is becoming more common for athletic coaches to also be employed on a contractual basis in professional sports such as rugby league, to offer specialist training such as strength and speed development (Dawson & Phillips, 2013). Some coaches chose to operate on an individual basis, where they are self-employed and working on a fee-for-service basis for athletics clubs or with individual athletes (Dawson et al., 2013). However, the majority of athletics coaches work as volunteers, at athletic clubs or directly with individuals in different settings and with a wide variety of ability levels. Currently, athletics coaches can work with athletes at any level within the sport participation pyramid (ATFCA, 2014). Coaches, who complete the training via the NCAS, as well as the number of non-accredited individuals operating as coaches, can work with athletes at all levels of ability and performance. There is no alignment within the accreditation system (i.e., level 0 to level 5) to mirror the sport participation pyramid (ABS, 2012). For example, a level 0 coach may work at community levels or with Olympic level athletes. Similarly, an individual with the highest level of coaching education; a level 5 coach, may only work with high school athletes. Other sports such as swimming and Australian Rules football have a coaching education structure that is aligned with athlete
performance (i.e., the highest accredited coach works with the highest performing athletes). Athletics is far less structured and appears more complex and fractured.

Despite all the roles that coaches are proposed to fulfil, there are no processes in place to evaluate them as the teachers, mentors, parental figures and managers as they are expected to work.

2.1.4 Coaches’ working relationships
As it stands, coaches would appear to have uneasy relationships with the administrators who employ them, as they are often at the mercy of them (Dawson, 2009). Administrators and managers in sport recruit, retain and dismiss coaches readily, on occasion with little comprehension of why they are doing so (Dawson, 2009). The administration of Australian sport is also strongly volunteer-driven and in many instances, these individuals are not qualified to make decisions in relation to what they need and expect from a coach depending on the club position, or what specific skills a coach may bring to their club (Shilbury, Deane & Kellett, 2006). An estimated two thirds of Australian sport volunteers have little or no appropriate training and skills that are important and relevant in enabling them to effectively perform their roles (Shilbury, Deane & Kellett, 2006). Crucially, this also includes making decisions about coaching staff and careers without a basic understanding of the way coaches work, what they require to work effectively or the specific technical needs of the club. Professional coaches at the elite level are often the models that club administrators have of coaching; when in reality the bulk of coaches do not operate in this way. Insecurity develops when the coach does not have access to the information and resources needed to perform the role to the level which they strive to achieve (Frey, 2007; Woodman, 1993).

It is recognised that the lack of support and direction from sports administrators, absence of clear job specification and vague evaluation processes, is the source of substantial stress for coaches (Capel, Sisley & Desertrain, 1987). This misunderstanding of expectations is unfortunate as coaches often look to administrators to provide them with resources to develop and enhance their practice and performance, yet they are often disregarded as the administrators do not understand what is required or why the coach is asking for something, despite the fact that coaches are viewed as crucial to the sport
experience and “the most tangible manifestation of organisational quality and effectiveness” (Cuskelly, Hoye & Auld, 2006, p.121) at all levels of sport. It is not surprising then, that Hawkins et al. (1994) revealed that coaches believed that they are not valued by sport administrators.

Within sports such as athletics, coaches seem to be constantly taking on new athletes at different ages and stages of performance; as such, they need to develop strong relationships with their athletes in order to get the best out of them. The coach-athlete relationship exists because the athlete requires, amongst other things, assistance and instruction in improving their performance (Côté & Gilbert, 2009). For a positive coach-athlete relationship to develop, the coach must be seen to be approachable (Potrac, Jones & Armour, 2002), with a mutual respect developing between athlete and coach (Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2003). It could be said that the very core of the sport coaching profession is the improvement of the individual helped (Lyle, 2011); as such a healthy relationship here is vital to the achievement of any athletic potential. Previous research has indicated that coaches are acutely aware of this and that they demonstrate a care for their athletes and reflect a desire to maintain the coach-athlete relationship through reciprocal respect, effective communication and the creation of a positive working environment (Bloom, 1996).

Similarly, in her extensive work on coach-athlete relationships, Jowett (2007; 2009) has emphasised how a healthy relationship and mutual understanding will benefit both sides while also contributing to better athlete performance. Traditionally, the coach-athlete relationship has been one of coach authority and athlete obedience. However, research has continually shown that the coach-athlete relationship is not an add-on to, or by-product of, the coaching process, not is it based on the athlete’s performance, age or gender, instead it is the very foundation of coaching (Hampson & Jowett, 2014; Jowett, 2007; Jowett, 2009; Jowett, Yang & Lorimer, 2012; Rhind & Jowett, 2012). Research supports the notion that the coach and the athlete intentionally develop a relationship over time that is characterised by a growing appreciation and respect for one another as individuals. (Hampson & Jowett, 2014; Jowett, 2007; Jowett, 2009; Jowett, Yang & Lorimer, 2012; Rhind & Jowett, 2012). As a result of such research overtime, Jowett (2007) developed a model framework that helps improve the quality of the relationship,
and also worked to establish a vocabulary when looking at the key features of the coach-athlete relationship. Termed the “3+1 Cs”, Jowett’s (2007) framework includes closeness, commitment, complementarity and finally, co-orientation. Each is defined as follows:

- **Closeness**: Reflects the emotional tone of the relationship and reflects the degree to which the coach and the athlete are connected, or the depth of their emotional attachment. Expressions of like, trust, respect and appreciation indicate a positive interpersonal relationship and affective relationship.

- **Commitment**: Reflects the intentions of the coaches and athletes, or the desire to maintain the athletic partnership over time. It is viewed as a cognitive representation of the connection between the coach and the athlete.

- **Complementarity**: Defines the interaction between the coach and the athlete that is perceived as cooperative and effective. It is also reflective of the affiliation motivation of interpersonal behaviours and includes behavioural properties such as being responsive, friendly, at ease and willing.

And finally, the “+1 C”;

- **Co-orientation**: A method to determine the perceptions that the coach and athlete have of each other.

It is known from the multitude of previous research how pivotal the quality of the coach-athlete relationship is for athletes’ and coaches’ experiences of sport, and the framework devised by Jowett (2007) nicely captures key contributing elements, and while the key to achieving the “3+1 Cs” is daily communication about athlete variables such as training loads, attitudes/moods, and injuries/soreness, many other factors may have an impact on the state of the coach-athlete relationship. For example, if a coach is not organised, if the athlete is not completing the training program as planned, or if athlete is no longer enjoying what they are doing, these are all variables that can impact upon the state of the coach-athlete relationship. It is therefore important to educate both athletes and coaches at all levels of participation on the vital role played by effective coach-athlete relationships in their ultimate success and satisfaction (Jowett, 2007; 2009).
Bloom (1996) also found that coaches believe the personal development of the athlete is just as meaningful as winning and can be developed in conjunction with physical skill development. Therefore, winning is not considered or explicitly mentioned by coaches as a crucial measure for coaching effectiveness (Bennie & O’Connor, 2010), yet the majority of coaching performance measures in existence consider this as one of the only key performance indicators.

Another important relationship formed by coaches throughout the course of their work is the one they appear to form with other coaches (Massengale, 1974). According to Massengale (1974), the occupation of coaching consists of multiple links between the individual and the social group with which they interact; many aspiring coaches are coached by representatives of the subculture, therefore they are continually and often subconsciously learning what is to be expected and accepted within the job. If this is true in sport, then coaches advance their careers via the support of other coaches and that support is gained by conforming to the coach-based values that are learned both formally (i.e. through accreditation courses) and informally (i.e. through mentoring processes) as they develop as a coach (Massengale, 1974).

2.1.5 Coaching success

As previously stated, the role of the coach has been likened to that of a teacher. However, a measure of a good teacher is not judged solely on student performance and overall grades, as this would be seen to be unfair given the number of students a teacher is generally responsible for, and the wide variety student of ability levels (Changli, 2005) which is again similar to a coach-athlete relationship.

Much normative and empirical literature exists about what makes a coach successful. Jones, Armour & Potrac (2003) posited that successful coaches are confident, highly enthusiastic, organised, progressive, reflective of their own, and their athletes’, performance, and supportive of their athletes, as well as displaying a strong commitment to the overall coaching process. Massengale (1974) however, believed that the prevalent coaching subculture in North American collegiate sport displayed traits of
aggression and high levels of organisation, as well as abnormally high psychological endurance and persistence, and it is these traits that make them successful.

Other studies have highlighted personal traits such as sincerity, realism, an encouraging and supportive nature; debate about coaching styles, such as autocratic versus democratic; emphasise the importance of possessing good organisation skills and strong leadership skills, as well as the ability to develop rapport and long-lasting, effective relationships with individuals and groups, and strong decision making skills and adaptability (Baker, Horton, Robertson-Wilson & Wall, 2003; Banks, 2006; Becker, 2009; Becker & Wrisberg, 2008; Bloomfield, 2003; Boardley et al., 2008; Charlesworth, 2001; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980; Douge & Hastie, 1993; Flanagan, 2001; Jones, 2000; Jones & Wallace, 2005; Kavussanu et al., 2008; Kenow & Williams, 1999; Lauder, 2004; Lyle, 2002; Mallet & Côtè, 2006; Schembri, 2001; Talbot, 2003). What can be drawn from these numerous studies is that coaching is a highly complex and interrelated process. The success of an individual as a coach is contingent on many interpersonal, intrapersonal and external factors, many of which are beyond the coach’s immediate control. Yet, they must balance these various roles of expert coach, manager, and developer of athletic talent, with the extrinsic factors, such as funding and resources, to ensure longevity and continued success (Schembri, 2001; ICCE, 2013).

Irrespective of the plentiful literature on coaching skills and coaching behaviour, and the many roles and responsibilities of a coach, it still appears that ultimately athlete or team success decides a coach’s tenure. Simply, a winning team or athlete goes a long way towards ensuring coach career longevity, whilst a losing team or athlete can render a coach unemployed before they have the opportunity to turn it around (Flanagan, 2001).

2.1.6 Performance evaluation in sport coaching

Despite the necessity of the coach to fill these multiple and complex roles, they are very rarely evaluated beyond the final results they produce (Mallet & Côtè, 2006), which neglects to take into account the complex knowledge and skills involved in sport coaching, as well as the often held view that coaches are instrumental in the overall development of athletes, not only their sporting skills (Côtè & Gilbert, 2009). Chelladurai (1986) and Ewens (1986) believed that not understanding the complexities
of coaching contributes to the “winning at all costs” attitudes of sports participants, fans, administrators and managers (Ewens, 1986, p. 97). As a result of this, many studies have tried to determine the characteristics possessed by ‘effective’ (winning) coaches (Becker, 2009; Becker & Wrisberg, 2008; Horn, 2008; Kavussanu, Boardley, Jutkiewicz, Vincent & Ring, 2008). Effective coaching occurred when coaches could implement their knowledge and skills to positively affect the learning and performance of their athletes – that is, effectiveness is concerned with the outcomes or results one produces (Kavussanu et al., 2008). However, this is self-limiting and Kavussanu et al. (2008) have suggested that coaches are also responsible for positive psychological outcomes in their athletes – but little is known about these aspects of coach performance. This thesis aims to identify what athletes, managers, and coaches themselves believe to be important measures of coach performance and effectiveness.

Different participation levels of sport coaching exist, and as such there are different roles to fulfil, and skills required, to be successful at each level (Hylton & Bramham, 2008), making the use of results an unfair and inaccurate judge of coaching performance. According to Lyle (2002), sports coaching can perhaps be best conceptualised in three forms: participation, development and performance. These ‘forms’ of coaching are differentiated by their levels of preparation, performance standards, competition involvement, both athlete and coach development objectives and the scope of the coaching process (Hylton & Bramham, 2008). There is a different set of skills and abilities required at each level of coaching, therefore different roles are required when coaching at participation and development levels as compared to coaching for international success, nevertheless, coaches play a vital role at any level (ABS, 2012).

The training of coaches is considered by Mallet, Trudel, Lyle and Rynne (2009) to be central to sustaining and improving the quality of sports coaching, however measuring which areas of coaching knowledge, expertise or experience require training is a difficult task in itself, and is compounded by the numerous skills that contribute to the performance of coaching at any level (Ford, Coughlan & Williams, 2009). Although the different roles of the coach have previously been conceptualised within the literature; such as counsellor (Banks, 2006), teacher (Pyke, 2001), physiologist (Ford, Coughlan &
Williams, 2009), administrator (Ford, Coughlan & Williams, 2009), and manager (Pyke, 2001), the different skills and roles that a coach is required to perform need to be employed at the correct time and place in order to be successful. As such, the coach may need to perform a number of these roles at the same time, in any single situation, making it difficult to separate some aspects of coaching performance from others (Ford, Coughlan & Williams, 2009). To complicate matters further, coaching performance is also heavily influenced by the context in which the coaching takes place (Ford, Coughlan & Williams, 2009). Even within a single coaching process, which on the surface would appear similar, such as an elite coach of a World Champion long jumper, multiple contextual factors are present that differ compared to a coach who is also working at the sporting event with a comparable athlete at the same level of competition. These factors can include the time of the competition cycle, budget constraints, facilities and equipment available in training, recent performances, as well as the athletes situational variables (Ford, Coughlan & Williams, 2009). All these factors combined can make the evaluation of coaching performance a difficult task and as a result, it is not surprising that many coaches state that they have never been formally evaluated (Reade et al., 2009). This thesis aims to determine the key coach performance criteria that can be evaluated so as to enable the coaches to facilitate their own development. Well-funded, organised and established sport organisations such as the Australian Football League and Cricket Australia, have, through their respective governing bodies, implemented sophisticated coach training and accreditation schemes that reflect athlete skill transition (Shilbury, Deane & Kellett, 2006), yet how do they know such schemes and training are effective and providing the correct information and expertise in order to enhance the performance of their coaches?

Despite this, several of the state and territory institutes and academies of sport within Australia have begun to evaluate the performance of coaches through the use of key performance indicators that are drawn from the management literature (Mallet & Côtè, 2006), yet, as previously stated, it is the specificity of these tools that makes them most useful (Atkins & Wood, 2002). Boardley, Kavussanu and Ring (2008) have emphasised the importance of the athletes’ perceptions in examinations of coach effectiveness, stating that the athletes’ perceptions of coaching behaviours play a central
role in affecting athlete-related outcomes. Consequently, if 360° feedback is to be used as a tool in measuring coach performance, it is imperative that it is tailored to assist coaches’ development and to inform coaching managers to support developing coaches in order to enhance their performance (and consequently service to their athletes, as many effective coaching behaviours fall beyond managerial key performance indicators). Such behaviours need to be considered when evaluating coach performance. Designing an effective evaluation tool will also start to answer the question of whether or not 360° feedback is an appropriate evaluation method for coach performance. DeNisi and Kluger (2000) suggest that the ideas underlying 360° or multi-source appraisals are good and there is potential for such appraisals to help organisations to better manage their employee performance. This is particularly useful as Nicholson and West (1989) believe that high-performing individuals leave organisations not because of low job satisfaction, but because of organisational neglect in terms of failing to provide them with encouragement to develop personally and professionally. This has significant implications for the ongoing development of successful, high achieving and performing athletes if the high quality coaches are choosing to walk away as a result of job dissatisfaction.

Several instruments aimed at the measurement of specific aspects of coaching effectiveness can be found within the literature such as the Coach Behaviour Assessment System (CBAS; Smith, Smoll & Hunt, 1977), the Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS: Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980) and the Coaching Behaviour Questionnaire (CBQ, Williams et al., 2003). However, as noted by Mallet and Côté (2006), they focus on specific aspects of coaching and do not take into account the experiences of coaches’ and athletes’ or the importance of the coach-athlete relationship. It is therefore necessary to look beyond the sport coaching literature to the practices employed by other occupations in evaluating job performance.

### 2.2 Knowledge from other occupations

The analogy of coaches being a blend of teacher, psychologist and manager (Banks, 2006; Launder, 2004; Lyle, 2002; Schembri, 2001) is of interest to the study of performance feedback in the current thesis. In each of these occupations it is considered
important for the individual to obtain evaluation and feedback on their performance so as to highlight areas for continual development and to measure progress.

Established professions such as teaching, psychology, and business management have clear indicators and structured measures of performance level, often known as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which must be achieved within the individual’s job; and certain tools are implemented in order to measure these. Coaching, however, becomes much less clear cut and difficult to measure due to the multi-faceted nature and roles, and the differing expectations depending on the participation level of both coach and athlete. It also becomes difficult for coaches to receive performance evaluation feedback due to a lack of appropriate means to do so, uncertainty as to who should provide such feedback, and a general ambiguity in the role description and performance expectations of coaches.

When it comes to evaluating coach performance, several important questions that are yet to be addressed arise. Firstly, how has coach performance been evaluated in the past? While written assignments that form part of coaching courses are easily administered, the assessment of the practical performance of coaches is significantly more difficult (Douge & Hastie, 1993). Anecdotal and limited literary sources suggest that the results produced by the coach have been the key performance indicator for a number of years, however there is a growing body of literature suggesting that this is an unfair measure of coaches’ work. Saury and Durand (1998) also believed that the activity of any individual in any real world situation must be analysed by taking into account the constraints defining the task at hand. For example, is it appropriate that a participation coach working with developing athletes is judged on the outcome of performances in the same way that an elite coach would be? Probably not, however Ford et al. (2009) propose that it is possible for an individual to become an “expert” in any category of coaching, including participation coaches, and not just those working with elite athletes. Therefore, it is important that there are appropriate tools to evaluate these individuals so as to assist their development and hence their potential of becoming an expert coach.
Performance measures for sport coaches beyond win/loss ratios, the attainment of medals and championships, and other tangibles, is scarce. To better understand performance measurement we must look to other occupations outside of sport.

2.2.1 Performance measurement
As discussed previously, academic teachers are subject to specific and defined performances targets and reviews (VIT, 2013). No equivalent process exists for sport coaches, despite performing important and influential work with people across a broad range of ages and abilities. Teachers, like coaches, are expected to develop students into successful performers and they have clear performance indicators and evaluation methods, such as standardised evaluation criteria that must be met to achieve full registration (VIT, 2013), that enable them to do so. However, an important question arises when trying to determine how to evaluate coach performance – what is an appropriate method to utilise?

Many of the most successful business organisations use some form of structured feedback process to evaluate employees work, provided them with performance feedback, and develop and enhance their performance so they become more productive contributors to the organisational operations (Morgenson, Mumford & Campion, 2005). Multi-rater feedback, also known as 360° feedback, has been defined as “evaluations gathered about a target participant from two or more rating sources, including self, supervisor, peers, direct reports, internal customers, external customers, and vendors or suppliers” (Dalessio, 1998, p. 278). The popularity of such feedback programs has grown dramatically over the past twenty years (Morgenson, Mumford & Campion, 2005), with Atwater and Waldman (1998) reporting that 90% of Fortune 1000 firms use some form of multi-source assessment.

The knowledge on the use of 360° feedback has previously been limited to the management literature (Morgenson, Mumford & Campion, 2005), but in recent times has also gathered momentum within the medical professions (Spurgeon, 2008). The literature suggests that it is an increasingly popular way for managers at all level of organisations to assess their employees, as well as being a core tool of professional development, with one in five organisations currently utilising this form of feedback
(Armour, 2003; Luthans & Peterson, 2003; Weiss & Kolberg, 2003). The appeal of implementing 360° feedback methods stems from the notion that the job of manager has become so complex that different individuals (subordinates, peers, superiors) may legitimately view the same manager's performance differently (Brutus, Fleenor & London, 1998). It is also a psychometric truism that multiple assessments can increase reliability and validity (Morgenson, Mumford & Campion, 2005).

It has been suggested that the implementation of a 360° feedback program can have several benefits, including; encouraging goal setting and skill development, improving managerial behaviour and effectiveness, highlighting important performance variables otherwise neglected or that are weaknesses, and increasing the focus on service delivery (Morgenson, Mumford & Campion, 2005). Research has also examined the outcomes of a 360° feedback program in the long-term. Hegarty (1974) was perhaps the first widely cited study in this respect and found that managers who received upward feedback about their supervisory behaviour significantly improved their behaviour and consequently improved subordinate ratings of managerial performance. Walker and Smither (1999) looked at the effects of an upward feedback program over a five year period of annual administrations, finding that managers’ upward feedback scores improved overtime, and managers who initially had the worst ratings improved the most. They also found that managers who had discussed their previous year’s feedback with subordinates experienced notable improvements in subordinate ratings the years following (Walker & Smither, 1999). Subsequently, Morgenson et al. (2005) concluded that there is now sufficient evidence to support upward feedback improving job performance, particularly for those with initially low levels of performance.

An area of 360° feedback programs that is still not completely understood is the means by which it positively impacts managerial behaviour, though several different theoretical explanations have been proposed (Morgenson, Mumford & Campion, 2005). Smither et al. (1995) proposed two potential explanations. Firstly, they suggested that the implementation of a 360° feedback program indicated that performance in certain areas is being measured, and as it is being measured, it is seen to be important to the organisation (e.g. communication). Managers can then use the items in such feedback programs to set specific behavioural goals. Secondly, they suggest that the managers
who have the largest discrepancy between feedback and performance standard will be most motivated to change behaviour to improve their performance. Johnson and Ferstl (1999) likewise suggested that managers who observe the largest difference between their own performance ratings and those of others (e.g. subordinates, peers) will demonstrate the largest performance gains. However, they also suggest that feedback consistent with self-perceptions is unlikely to stimulate motivation to improve, even if performance is low to begin with. Equally, if managers have subordinated ratings that exceed their own self-ratings, they would not be motivated to improve (Johnson & Ferstl, 1999).

There has been some debate on how 360° feedback information should be used. Tornow (1993), for example, identified four possible uses of 360° feedback data; developmental purposes, assignment purposes, appraisal purposes, and to aid in the process of organisational change. However, a great number of authors have expressly cautioned against using 360° feedback for anything other than managerial development purposes (Morgenson, Mumford & Campion, 2005). Bernadin, Dahmus and Redmon (1993) found that supervisors were generally in favour of subordinate appraisal programs as a valuable source of feedback, but exception was taken when it was used as a basis for determining pay or promotion. Additionally, there is a difference in the perception of what is at stake for the individual receiving feedback (Morgenson, Mumford & Campion, 2005). When development-oriented programs are utilised, individuals focus on improving skills. Whereas in appraisal-oriented programs the focus is on the achievement of good ratings and may not assist in the identification of weaknesses and skill deficiencies (Morgenson, Mumford & Campion, 2005).

Some 360° feedback programs have been found to be useful because they can be adapted to suit particular organisational situations and can include a variety of different measurable performance dimensions. London, Wohlers and Gallagher (1990) suggested that it is important to gain input from employees at all levels in the design of a 360° feedback program, to enable it to be as specific and relevant as possible to the particular organisations needs and roles. The wide variety of performance dimensions that have previously been measured by 360° feedback programs include; leadership, communication, planning and organising, occupational and technical knowledge,
motivation and the ability to motivate others, provision of feedback, personal adaptability, problem analysis, fairness, integrity and respect, valuing diversity, personal organisation, and time management (Morgenson, Mumford & Campion, 2005). Each of these dimensions of performance also has relevance to the role of sport coaching.

![Diagram of 360° feedback](image)

Figure 2.1. 360° feedback as applied to a traditional business environment.

Like business management, the complexity of coaching work requires complex evaluation methods such as 360° feedback. The literature on management performance measurement and evaluation indicates that there should be two key elements of a 360° process: 1) it should be measured in such a way that is supportive, useful and highlights continual development; and 2) support should be provided to reinforce the results of the evaluation in such a way that enables and promotes performance enhancement, and consequently primarily aims to help develop performance (Kindall & Gatza, 1963).

Using 360° feedback inventory for evaluating job performance involves collecting work performance data from an employee’s peers, supervisors, and subordinates, and communicating this data back to supervisors and individuals to enable a clear picture of the individual’s performance to be presented in order to improve their professional development (Weiss & Kolberg, 2003). In traditional performance appraisal, supervisory ratings are often the sole source of evaluation data. However, when 360° feedback data are included in the evaluation process, no single component is considered to be the single or most important source of the evaluation (London & Beatty, 1993). The basic premise of the 360° process is that individuals with different relationships to the ratee have different perspectives on that particular individual’s job
performance. By combining data from these different perspectives, it should therefore be possible to construct a more complete picture of the individual’s strengths and development needs (Bartholomew & Hannum, 2006). Table 2.1 highlights the differences between traditional performance appraisals and 360° feedback in a traditional business environment (O’Boyle, 2014). Bartholomew and Hannum (2006) suggest that perhaps due to the 360° performance assessment beginning as a practitioner’s tool applied almost exclusively in development settings, the method was initially somewhat slow to acquire the attention of academic researchers. However since the 1990s a glut of empirical research has produced what is now an extensive body of work that addresses topics from how this form of assessment can improve performance and gain a competitive advantage (London & Beatty, 1993; McDowell & Kurz, 2008; Sangwong, 2008; Weiss & Kolberg, 2003), how to analyse and implement the feedback effectively (Gallagher, 2008; London & Beatty, 1993), and conversely, arguments against the utilisation of the 360° feedback method, such as the generation of tension between the manager and the raters, feedback that is too negative or dishonest, and establishing a culture of competition between individuals and their scores (Morgenson, Mumford & Campion, 2005). Weiss and Kolberg (2003) believe that the 360° feedback process is effective for several reasons, including providing a benchmark against which to measure success in work performance and the effectiveness of development and training programs, as well as reinforcing a climate of open communication.

Table 2.1: Traditional performance appraisals compared to 360° feedback methods in a traditional business environment (adapted from O’Boyle, 2014).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Traditional Performance Appraisals</th>
<th>360° Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why?</td>
<td>To provide an evaluation on past performance from a single source</td>
<td>To provide an evaluation and feedback on behaviour and development needs from multiple sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raters</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Peers, subordinates, superiors, self, external individuals and groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Manager cannot have anonymity</td>
<td>The multiple sources of feedback are able to remain anonymous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Either quantitative or qualitative methods can be used</td>
<td>Both quantitative and qualitative methods can be used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Salary, bonuses, promotion, demotion, transfer, training and development</td>
<td>Strong focus on training and development to improve future performance. May also be linked to bonuses and promotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>Continuous, not limited by specific time frames</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicability</td>
<td>All employees</td>
<td>All employees (unless staff numbers are too vast)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sangwong (2008) reported that implementation of a multi-rater form of appraisal system enabled staff to effectively evaluate, recognise and accept their own performances and to utilise this information to improve their performances. There is evidence however that the results of 360° evaluations are not well used or correctly interpreted (Luthans & Peterson, 2003). This poses a limitation in using this method of employee evaluation and development, however Atkins and Wood (2002) emphasise the importance of well-defined criteria and the need for job-related, specific statements to define the competencies surveyed in order to be most useful. If this is done accurately the literature suggests a high degree of worth in the evaluation of employee performance via this method (Atkins & Wood, 2002; Luthans & Peterson, 2003; Weiss & Kolberg, 2003).

2.2.2 The importance of feedback for performance

As introduced in Chapter 1, feedback has long been recognised as an essential element in the process of learning and development (AlHaqui, 2012; Costa, 2006; Ende, 1983; Glover, 2000; Hattie & Timperley, 2007), and the positive outcomes associated with the provision of constructive feedback are supported empirically (Kluger & De Nisi, 1996). Gopee (2010) proposes that the role of feedback is to fill the gap between the expected level of performance and the actual performance level displayed. Similarly, Rose and Best (2005, p.63) note that, “feedback can therefore be positive or negative depending on whether the task was completed well or not.”

Previous theoretical perspectives discussed in the feedback literature have debated the potential consequences of receiving negative feedback; that is, ratings that indicate a shortfall in performance, relative to standard (Bailey & Austin, 2006).
Researchers have hypothesised that individuals will be motivated to reduce any discrepancy and make efforts to improve their performance (Bailey & Austin, 2006). Indeed, empirical evidence from applied settings does support this view (Bailey & Austin, 2006; Brutus, London & Martineau, 1999; Maurer, Mitchell & Barbeite, 2002). However, Bailey and Austin (2006) advise caution when providing this kind of feedback as part of a developmental process to employees who may be less confident in their ability level, such as new hires. Despite the need to apply a degree of caution when implementing any form of feedback process, studies have shown overwhelming support for the ability of feedback to enhance an individual’s performance and render them to feel confident and competent in their role (AlHaqui, 2012).

One of the unique benefits offered by 360° feedback processes is its ability to not only measure and evaluate performance in a given role or job, but to also provide constructive and direct feedback, from multiple perspectives, about all the aspects involved in fulfilling the role or job. The coaching process lends itself to gathering this feedback from multiple perspectives given the relationships involved in the coaching process, such as coach-athlete. It is therefore appropriate to involve them in the evaluation process of coaches.

2.3 Gap in the knowledge

There exists a body of knowledge from the coaching literature on the skills and competencies required to be a coach and empirical and normative literature suggests that coaches’ technical skills are well developed through accreditation pathways (Vargas-Tonsing, 2007). There is also literature on the behaviours of successful coaches, and it would appear that these are generally learned through mentoring-type processes (Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2003). Less is known, however, about how to effectively measure a coach’s performance and provide them with feedback based upon this, enabling them to perform at the level that they wish to, for the benefit of both their coaching careers and their athletes’ performances. Currently it appears that the basis for this judgement of coaching performance and success is solely the results produced by the athletes under their guidance. However, there is a growing body of literature to suggest that this is an inappropriate measure of what coaches do as the appraisal is too narrow (MacLean &
Several studies have begun to broaden the definition of what it means to be a successful coach, by also taking into account the opinions of the coaches themselves and their athlete(s), which can provide a clearer overall picture of the coaches' ability, their strengths and weaknesses, and the areas where development or education programmes may be of assistance (Boardley et al., 2008; Côté et al., 1999; Feltz et al., 1999; Kavussanu et al., 2008; Mallet & Côté, 2006). Similarly, within business management, a multi-rater or 360° feedback process often takes place in order to gain input from multiple sources so as to rate an individuals' overall performance and provide feedback and guidance for future development. A multi-rater feedback process adapted to sport-specific requirements could be used to provide coaches and their managers with much needed performance feedback and clarification of evaluation methods. A validated coach-based 360° feedback process would resolve some of the ambiguity surrounding the expectations of their role as a coach. The studies in this thesis seek to develop such a process, implement it within a population of coaches and to assess its usefulness and applicability in a sport-based setting.

Figure 2.2. 360° feedback as applied to a sport coaching environment.

2.4 Summary

It is evident from the sport career and coaching literature that coaches are the key performance managers of athletic performance (Baker et al., 2003; Becker, 2009; Becker & Wrisberg, 2008; Boardley et al., 2008; Côté & Gilbert, 2006; Côté, Salmela &
Russell, 1995; Ford et al., 2009; Gilbert & Trudel, 2004; Mitchell, 2009; Schembri, 2001; Woodman, 1993), yet they are not evaluated like similarly employed performance managers in other industries. From the non-sport performance management literature it is evident that managers and professionals in occupations such as teaching and business have clear means of performance evaluation, are provided with useful feedback to enhance and develop their careers, and are also supported with the resources to do so, as this continual process is of benefit to the organisation within which they operate, and at the end of the day, the company’s bottom line. From the sport based literature it is evident that coaches play a vital role in the development, performance and success of athletes. It is also apparent that they are often evaluated by inappropriate means, (such as winning and losing when such criteria results in the majority of athletes, and by association, potentially their coaches, being ‘losers’) and lack the appropriate feedback in order to enhance their performance and consequently their service provision to the athletes. Given the role of the coach as the ‘manager of athletic performance’, and that high quality coaches are necessary to produce high quality athletes at all levels of sport, the study of methods to assist and enhance coaching performance is warranted.

Coach performance measurement and evaluation should have two key features: 1) it should be measured in such a way that is supportive, useful and emphasises continual development; and 2) individuals should receive the support and resources in order to use the results of the evaluation in such a way that enables and promotes performance enhancement (Kindall & Gatza, 1963). Underlying such a process is the coach experience. The empirical literature on building the technical skills of coaches is abundant (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999). The empirical literature on coaching performance measures however, is lacking, and it is proposed that such a multi-rater or 360° feedback tool could be used to fulfil this gap in the literature.
CHAPTER 3: METHOD

Chapter 2 demonstrated that there is a limited understanding of how coaching performance can be appropriately and fairly measured, and how this information can then be used as a means to develop and improve overall coaching performance. The non-sport performance evaluation literature, particularly that from the management sector, suggests that it is imperative not only for the performance of the individual, but for that of the organisation as a whole, to receive timely, regular and structured feedback and to use this information to continually guide performance development within the particular role. There is little evidence in the domain of sport coaching, particularly Australian sport coaching, of appropriate measures to firstly gain this evaluative feedback and secondly, to then use this feedback to aid the individual in developing their performance in the coaching role. The purpose of this thesis is to develop a 360° feedback process, similar to that used in management but tailored to a sport coaching setting, and to use the feedback obtained to guide the development of sport coaches. In doing so it aims to answer the question of whether this is an appropriate tool to use in the evaluation of coaching performance and if it is, how useful is it in guiding the development for improved coaching performance.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a rationale for the research methods utilised in this thesis and to provide preliminary detail as to how those methods were implemented. Specific detail related to each study is provided in subsequent chapters. This chapter also explains the data analysis process for establishing the validity of the results. When discussing the methodological process, particular attention has been paid to the process of collecting data and providing a justification for the data analysis employed.

3.1 Method

In order to establish an accurate understanding of the perceptions of athletics coaches in terms of what they feel are important factors to consider when providing feedback on the work that they perform within the role, it was necessary to conduct semi-structured interviews with a number of coaches of different levels of experience and work type. To
ensure that the 360° tool in development was kept as relevant to the coaches and their work as possible, their input was gathered in two stages and as such, Study 1 was spilt into two parts – Study 1A and Study 1B. Study 1A consisted of semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 11 coaches, while Study 1B consisted of a focus group conducted with 8 coaches. Study 2 then sought to apply the 360° feedback tool designed in Study 1 to a group of coaches in order to ascertain its suitability, usability and appropriateness. Ethics approval for the project was obtained from the Deakin University Human Ethics Advisory Group for the Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences.

3.2 Participants
The work of the coach varies greatly from individual to individual and the work experiences of each coach can be quite complex. For this reason, the coaches involved in both Study 1 and 2 were selected based on the following criteria; a) currently working as an athletics coach on either a full-time, part-time or voluntary basis; b) possess accreditation of any level from the national body; c) working at either International, National, State or club level. These criteria were implemented in order to capture a broad cross-section of athletics coaches, as well as ensuring that all had completed at least one level of formal accreditation as provided by the ATFCA.

3.3 Qualitative research
Approaches to sport studies tend to recognise the creative and contextual character of human interaction (Hammersely, 1989). This means that research designs centred on studying human beings in their physical cultural domain are a useful method to adopt when studying novel research topics (Andrews, Mason & Silk, 2005). This is because qualitative research is a situated activity that places the observer in the world so that qualitative researchers can study things in their natural settings and attempt to make sense of, or interpret phenomena, based upon the meanings that different people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Qualitative research is based upon the premise that we make sense of the world around us based on our individual values and experiences, and therefore everyone interprets events within their lives, and even shared events, in a different manner (Amis,
2005). Thus, qualitative research pays specific attention to the perceptions, opinions, beliefs and practices of individuals (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). This approach therefore supports the research intention of seeking to develop a 360° feedback tool to measure and develop coaching performance – made by coaches, for coaches. By using a predominantly qualitative, mixed-methods approach, a deeper understanding of what coaches feel is important to performance, and how they feel they should be evaluated was achievable. This information was vital in the task of designing the feedback tool to be used for the 360° process within Study 1 (both 1A and 1B), and it was necessary for it to be obtained via qualitative methods as it allowed for the consideration of the complexity inherent in the sport coaching domain that just could not be quantified via techniques such as surveys (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000).

Qualitative research aims to gather an in-depth understanding of human behaviour, treating each individual case and its uniqueness as equally important in furthering our understanding of the topic of interest (Stake, 1995). It pays specific attention to the perceptions, beliefs, opinions and complexities of each individual (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). Therefore, this approach supports the research intention of seeking to understand how coaches believe their performance should be evaluated.

### 3.4 In-depth, semi-structured interviews

Interviews are essential sources of case study information and are often used in research as they provide the opportunity to gather data that is of a higher quality and in larger quantities than many other data collection methods (Yin, 2003). Interviews have previously been frequently used in coaching research due to their suitability in gathering data of a higher quality and in a larger quantity than other methods (Jones, Armour, Potrac, 2003). This is particularly useful in a relatively novel field of research. In-depth semi-structured interviews were chosen as a data collection method as they enabled specific questions to be prepared prior to each interview. These questions were developed utilising methods based on those used by Dawson, Leonard, Wehner and Gastin (2013), where questions were drawn from both sport and non-sport career literature around the role of the coach and factors usually included in methods of
performance measurement. The semi-structured approach enabled the flexibility of using the questions to frame the interviews, whilst also having the freedom to probe more deeply or explore ideas further when the circumstances were appropriate. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) promote the semi-structured interview as its flexibility allows the interviewer to explore responses in greater depth within the interview. This served to ensure that all areas of interest were covered with each interviewee.

By using the method described, each coach was provided with the opportunity to tell his or her own story, whilst also providing the flexibility to probe and expand yet still maintain the overall basis of questioning with each participant as seen in the interview guide (see Appendix C). Questions included “what would you say are the roles of the coach?” and “what do you believe are some of the key characteristics of successful coaches?” and “how do you assess your own coaching performance; what kind of things do you take into consideration?” The interviews were conducted at a place convenient to the coach, generally at the training venue, pre- or post-coaching session. These locations were chosen for two reasons; firstly for convenience to the participant, and secondly the familiarity of the environment can work to offer the participant a sense of security and comfort that can enhance their concentration and responses during the interview (Stake, 1995). Each of the interviews completed as part of Study 1A was of 30-45 minutes duration and was recorded using a digital audio recorder. This data was then transcribed and coded into common themes by combining the data collected from all eleven participants. The data was removed of all identifying information and securely stored at the conclusion of the investigation.

One threat to the validity of the interview process arises from the effect of personal factors such as bias of the interviewer and perceptions of the participant (Merriam, 1998). Throughout the interview, both the interviewer and the interviewee bring with them various preconceived expectations and attitudes that can influence the process of the interview. This potential limitation of the interview can be addressed by taking a sensitive and respectful approach to the interviews (Merriam, 1998). As the investigator was responsible for selecting the questions, sorting the data and reporting the results, it is inevitable that personal factors can influence the direction to some
extent. However, it is hoped that this is overcome to some degree through the triangulation process used in the analysis of the data.

3.5 Focus groups
Focus groups are a data collection technique that capitalise on the interaction between members of a group in order to gain detailed experiential data (Asbury, 1995). Generally, a focus group is made up of 6-12 individuals who share a similarity of some kind (Asbury, 1995), although Kruger (1995) has stated that, “increasingly the most effective focus groups are composed of 6-8 participants” (pg. 529). These individuals then come together to discuss a particular issue of interest to the research; in the case of the present thesis, the suitability and structure of a 360° feedback tool for coaches. By design, focus groups rely on the dynamic created via the group interactions to stimulate ideas and therefore contributions from each of the participants within the group (Asbury, 1995). The verbal contributions from each participant that a focus group situation elicits, provides the researcher with rich, detailed perspectives that could not otherwise be obtained via other research methodologies (Krueger, 1994; Morgan, 1993). This interaction also has the benefit of yielding more and richer information than individual interviews with the same participants (Asbury, 1995; Murphy, Cockburn & Murphy, 1992). It is the specific similarity that is of interest between the members of the group that facilitates initial bonding and makes participants feel free to offer their input (Krueger, 1994); in this case, the shared background of the participants is that they are all athletics coaches. However, focus groups are typically used in conjunction with other methods (Asbury, 1995) and, as noted by Carey (1994), they are particularly suited for needs assessment, interpretation of results or findings and, development or refinement of instruments. In the case of the current research, it is the latter that is of interest and therefore why a focus group methodology has been employed as the means of data collection for Study 1B.

3.6 Three hundred and sixty degree feedback survey
In a business environment, 360° feedback is feedback that comes from a number of members of the employee’s immediate work circle (Fleenor & Prince, 1997). Most
commonly, 360° feedback will include input from the employee’s peers, subordinates, supervisor(s), as well as a self-evaluation. It may in some cases also include feedback from external sources, such as customers or other interested stakeholders (Fleenor & Prince, 1997). The fundamental premise being that information gathered from multiple perspectives is thought to be more comprehensive and objective than that gained from only one source, with each rater possessing a unique and valid perspective from which the performance of the employee can be assessed (Fleenor & Prince, 1997). The ideas behind this are not new; the German military developed assessment centres during World War II and recognised the value in gaining knowledge on performance from various perspectives (Fleenor & Prince, 1997). Early use of 360° feedback methods within business gathered employee opinions via surveys and prior to 1980s the use of 360° feedback for individual assessment purposes was rare. However, managers now realise the importance of employee development to ensure continued and sustained growth, and have recognised that the first step in development is to discover what specifically requires developing (Fleenor & Prince, 1997). In order to discover what needs to be developed, specific tools are required in order to gather the required information. More frequently, the tool being used for these purposes is 360° feedback (Hirsch, 1994; Jones & Bearley, 1996; Lublin, 1994; McGarvey & Smith, 1993), mainly due to the several advantages it holds over single-source assessment (Fleenor & Prince, 1997). Fleenor and Prince (1997) propose that the benefits of this method can be grouped into four categories:

1) 360° assessments can provide new perspectives by which an individual’s skills, behaviours, abilities and/or performance can be judged because feedback is coming from varied perspectives and as such can create a more complete picture of an individual’s performance and skills. The focal employee can see how their behaviour is perceived by, and affects, those around them.

2) 360° assessments may alleviate some of the previously recognised, top-down, single-source assessment deficiencies as this method may not produce feedback that is fair and valid. Having multiple perspectives permits the ratings to be averaged across a number of respondents and therefore may provide a truer evaluation of the focal employee’s performance (Denton, 1994).
3) 360° assessments provide a unique opportunity for individual’s to assess their own performance and consequently also get them to think about the tasks involved in the job they are actually performing. Self-evaluation adds another perspective from which performance and behaviours can be observed, and if completed honestly may enhance the value of the assessment process itself and uncover areas for personal as well as professional development.

4) 360° feedback can be used to reiterate the values and vision of an organisation and when assessments are aligned with these, the individual feedback may become more valid for use in that organisation.

However, for these benefits to be realised, the raters should be in positions that enable them to observe the employee’s behaviour and performance on a regular basis. Another decision that is of great importance to the effectiveness of the 360° feedback is how many raters to include in total for each employee, as well as how many from each different group of raters (Hirsch, 1994; Milliman et al., 1994). This is particularly important in terms of confidentiality for each of the raters; if an employee only has one direct report then it is not possible for their feedback to be provided in a confidential manner and therefore it is likely to be affected by bias (Fleenor & Prince, 1997). Carey (1995) also reiterated that for the feedback to be productive it must be anonymous. For this reason, in the current research, each coach provided the details of a number of possible participants for each group of raters (athletes, peers, and supervisors); the research then chose the feedback participants via a process of random selection. In this case, random selection came from within each group of raters (i.e., the participating athletes were randomly selected from the participants proposed by the coach). This step was also deemed to be necessary as London and Smither (1995) argue that ratings from the various sources should not be combined into a composite “other” rating, rather as these sources often have different perspectives and relationships to the focal employee, they should be presented separately in order to maximise usefulness. For example, the self-assessment ratings may be in agreement with the ratings of peers but not those of managers. If this feedback was to be combined, the individual cannot ascertain if their ratings agree or disagree with the ratings from the varying sources (London & Smither, 1995). For this reason, each of the focal coaches was provided with the pooled data from
each of the groups, that is, the data from three athletes were averaged and provided to the coach as ‘athlete feedback’. This also again insured the confidentiality of each of the individuals providing the feedback.

Bracken (1994) developed a system for a 360° feedback process to be successful. Elements of this system include: process design and planning, instrument development, instrument design, administration, feedback processing and reporting, with careful consideration of specific and relevant questions prior to the implementation (Bracken, 1994). These steps guided both the formulation of the studies in this thesis, as well as the questionnaire itself. Crystal (1994) noted that a comprehensive 360° feedback tool should include interpersonal skills, communication skills, administrative skills, and other aspects of leadership effectiveness, factors that were all considered in the development of the coaching-specific tool designed here, and through the coaches’ input in parts A and B of Study 1, were included in the final questionnaire.

Yukl and Lepsinger (1995) state that when designing a questionnaire certain qualities are desirable. Firstly, it should be well researched to assure that the items can be directly linked to effectiveness in the role being measured. Secondly, the items should measure behaviours that are specific and observable. Thirdly, the behaviours should be described positively and worded in a manner that pertains directly to the focal individual. Lastly, the questionnaire should specify the relationship between the rater and the ratee; it may be necessary to consider a separate questionnaire for each group, i.e. self, peers, subordinates. As such, the current research utilised separate questionnaires for each feedback group (see Appendix E), with each copy being worded slightly differently depending on the relationship between the rater and the ratee, but still asking the same question.

Yukl and Lepsinger (1995) also suggest that the feedback report should present the data from each rater group separately, proposing that self-ratings be compared to others’ ratings. This was taking into consideration in the presentation of the results both here, and in what was presented to each of the participating coaches in their report. The graphs presented show clearly the ratings from each group in comparison to one-another.

Sweet (1995) strongly believed that 360° feedback is an important and useful method in the search for reliable, fair and valid evaluation and O’Boyle (2014) asserted
that it could be readily adaptable and functional in a sport coaching environment, offering a valid option to the current lack of appropriate methods of performance evaluation in sport coaching.

Chapters 4-6 will provide details of the specific methodology applied to each study involved in this thesis.
CHAPTER 4: STUDY 1A – DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN OF A 360° FEEDBACK TOOL FOR USE IN A SPORT COACHING SETTING: INITIAL INTERVIEWS

The aim of this study was to develop and design a 360° feedback tool for use in a sport coaching setting. Using those designed for use in a business management setting as a template, Study 1 sought input from coaches of all levels and years of experience within athletics in order to develop and design a feedback tool that was suitable, useable and valuable to coaches in the sport. Chapter 2 discussed the current knowledge regarding coach evaluation and performance measurement, and the perceived lack of fairness offered by some of these methods. The use and relative success of 360° evaluations within the business sector were also presented. Given that coaches are seen to be the key performance managers within sport, it was proposed that a similar 360° tool could be adapted and utilised within the sporting setting. However, as the literature states, a key determinant of the success of such tools is their specificity to the setting in which they are being utilised (Atkins & Wood, 2002). To that end, the purpose of Study 1, "Development and Design of a 360° Feedback Tool for use in a Sport Coaching Setting" was to gain the input of accredited coaches, into the content and structure of such a tool, specifically within the sport of athletics in Australia. To ensure that the 360° tool in development was kept as relevant to the coaches and their work as possible, their input was sought in two stages and as such, Study 1 was spilt into two parts – Study 1A and Study 1B. Study 1A consisted of semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 11 coaches, while Study 1B consisted of a focus group conducted with 8 coaches.

4.1 In-depth, semi-structured interviews
Eleven Australian athletics coaches were interviewed for the current study. All of the participants were active coaches who worked in a number of different ways, however none of them classed themselves as a full-time coach (which is probably a fair reflection of the nature of athletics coaching within Australia), with each working at least one other job to supplement their work as an athletics coach or being retired and in a position
where coaching was more of an enjoyable hobby. One of the coaches was employed part-time by an athletics club to coach members and had formed their own squad within the club and supplemented this work with personal training/strength and conditioning work. One of the coaches was a volunteer and was happy to take on any athlete who approached him or her about coaching. One of the coaches coached through an athletics club but was not employed by them and charged athletes a fee for their services themselves. Three coaches were aligned with a club and coached only club members but on a voluntary basis. Two of the coaches were parents of athletes and had found themselves in coaching positions by coaching their own children and had acquired other athletes along the way; both were voluntary and coached only club members. The remaining coaches were retirees who were continuing with athletics coaching as a hobby or a way to stay involved with the sport when they could no longer be involved as a participant; two accepted small fees from the athletes they coached, however this was mostly too small to even cover travel costs for the coach to get to the training venue. Table 4.1 provides an overview of the Study 1A participant demographics.
Table 4.1. Study 1A participating coach demographics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years Coaching</th>
<th>Events Coached</th>
<th>Accreditation Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coach A1</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>15+</td>
<td>Middle Distance Steeple Chase Athletes with a disability</td>
<td>Level 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach A2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>Long &amp; Middle Distance Steeple Chase Cross Country Young athletes</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach A3</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>15+</td>
<td>Jumps Sprints</td>
<td>Level 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach A4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>70+</td>
<td>15+</td>
<td>Long &amp; Middle Distance Steeple Chase Cross Country</td>
<td>Level 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach A5</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>Middle Distance</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach A6</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>15+</td>
<td>Sprints Throws Long &amp; Middle Distance Cross Country</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach A7</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>Jumps Sprints ThROWS Young athletes</td>
<td>Level 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach A8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>70+</td>
<td>15+</td>
<td>Long &amp; Middle Distance Steeple Chase Cross Country Athletes with a disability Young athletes</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach A9</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>Sprints Young athletes</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach A10</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>Middle Distance Cross Country Young athletes</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach A11</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>15+</td>
<td>Hurdles Sprints Relays Young athletes</td>
<td>Level 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The coaches interviewed had experience participating in athletics themselves prior to coaching, ranging from club level only to international level medallists.
The participants also had a broad range of experience in coaching in terms of years worked as a coach, from three years for one club to more than fifty years for a former international athlete who now sees coaching as a hobby and a way to give back to their sport. All possessed official accreditation ranging from level 1 to level 5, and coached a range of disciplines. In terms of the achievements of their athletes the coaches ranged from club level athletes and juniors who compete in inter-club/little athletics and state competitions, to coaching elite and professional athletes (who compete for prize money) and Olympians/Commonwealth Games competitors (who represent their country at the highest level). Out of the eleven coaches interviewed, only two were female.

4.1.1 Procedure

All participants were initially contacted via the Australian Track and Field Coaches Association (ATFCA) website by email and invited to participate in the current research study. A total of 50 coaches were initially contacted via the email address listed on their profile page of the ATFCA coaching database, after being chosen by a process of random selection. Participants interested in being interviewed were then sent a further email with a plain language statement and consent form attached. A copy of the plain language statement and consent form is provided in Appendix B. Once participants consented to participate, an interview time and venue was confirmed, again via email.

The day prior to the scheduled interview, the author sent one further email as a reminder and confirmation of the date, time and location. Provided that the participant was still available and satisfied with the anonymity and confidentiality aspects of the interview, as discussed in the plain language statement, the interviews were subsequently conducted.

An interview guide was also taken to the interview, and placed in full view of the participant. It was explained that this was only for the benefit of the interviewer to ensure that the semi-structured discussions with each of the participants covered the same basic elements that were of interest in Study 1A. A copy of the questions can be found in Appendix C. After the interviews, the author sent letters to thank the participants for their involvement.
All of the interviews were conducted in person, recorded using a digital audio recording device and lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. Each participant was assigned a label such as “Coach A1”, “Coach A2”, “Coach A3”, etc. The interviews were transcribed by the author and all identifying material was edited out. All edited transcripts were sent back to the participants for their perusal and to check for accuracy before they were analysed in this research. Three of the participants wished to make changes to their transcripts in order to clarify certain points or add material that they had neglected to mention during the interview.

The intention of the interviews was for participants to recall, reveal and describe important aspects of their coaching work, and to discuss the key elements they felt were important in the coaching role and consequently the factors they believe a coach should have their performance based upon. The interviews followed a conversational style of questioning and there were only minor interjections from the interviewer. The interview guide that was utilised to gain responses contained a series of questions that were quite broad in order to investigate the complete spectrum of the athletics coaches’ work and what they felt should be taken into consideration when their performance in the role was under review. The interview guide helped focus the person being interviewed and ensured that there was continuity in the content between interviews (Minichello et al., 1999). However, due to the natural flow of conversation between the author and the different participants, the exact wording and order of the questions varied from participant to participant, to allow for any leads or new topics to arise and be followed up with further discussion (Hudelson, 1994). The interview guide used for the research in Study 1A contained open-ended questions that related to topics that were relevant to both the literature on sport coaching, as well as the non-sport performance evaluation literature, so as to cover all content specifically related to the function of the athletics coaching job, as well as to be able to relate it back to the more established performance evaluation methods used outside of sport, such as communication with others and organisational skills. There was constant interplay between data collection and data analysis, interviews were transcribed within hours of completion so that the discussion was still fresh in the author’s mind and any leads could be followed up quickly with the participant. This also enabled subsequent interview questions with other participants to
be modified slightly if needed. The research generated richly detailed, qualitative data on topics that required a multifaceted data analysis approach.

### 4.1.2 Data analysis

The data analysis entailed a detailed examination, summary and interpretation of information collected from the research. It involved a process of systematically examining, arranging and interpreting the collected data in order to understand the results (Browne & Sullivan, 1999). The responses were distilled using a content analysis technique, as described by Woods, Priest and Roberts (2002). This initially involved allocating comments, phrases and responses to the key questions used as prompts to elicit answers in the study (master themes); a process also known as coding (Punch, 2005). The coded data may have been single words, phrases or larger chunks that interrelated categories of information or highlighted specific themes of interest relating to the research. Coding was the starting point for data analysis and provided the foundation for further stages of the analysis process. Second- and third-level coding were then undertaken to identify the core themes within each of the master themes (Spurgeon, 2008). Within each level of coding, a thematic interpretation of meaning took place to ensure that the essence of the responses was understood; a method also utilised by Spurgeon (2008). This data was then triangulated before being further analysed using the QSR NVIVO (Version 10.0; QSR International Pty Ltd, Melbourne) software program. Researcher triangulation involved the inclusion of two or more researchers to analyse and code the data and reach a consensus as to whether the data had covered enough of the dimensions that were being investigated in the study (Punch, 2005). The researchers involved all possessed previous experience in dealing with and triangulating data of this nature. After individually reading through each of the transcripts, the researchers elicited the themes they believed to be of importance and consistently mentioned by each of the participants. These were then discussed with the other researchers involved in the triangulation process, and the key themes were agreed upon. The data was analysed further using the QSR NVIVO (Version 10.0; QSR International Pty Ltd, Melbourne) software to ensure that nothing within the data had
been overlooked. The information collected was de-identified and audio files were deleted from the recording devices and securely stored at the completion of the project.

After ten interviews, a comprehensive assessment of the data took place to ascertain whether saturation of the data had been reached, or whether there was a need to conduct further interviews in order to gain greater insight. Saturation was reached when common themes repeatedly and consistently emerged from the data (Punch, 2005). Complex data analysis methods including researcher triangulation were required to analyse the detailed data that this research produced. After ten interviews it was clear that saturation of the topics of interest had been reached, however one further interview was conducted to ensure this was the case. After the final eleventh interview was conducted and analysed via triangulation, consensus was reached and the researchers agreed that the data had in fact reached saturation point. This is supported by Stake (1995) who stated the fact that ten is generally the number at which saturation of the data occurs.

In the results, quotes from the coaches have been included, often just as single key words or phrases rather than complete sentences. Each coach has been identified by their assigned alpha label. Coach quotes do not appear in alphabetical order of their assigned letter, rather the coach that best articulated the topic of interest has been quoted.

### 4.2 Results

As discussed in the earlier chapters of this thesis, Study 1A sought broadly to determine what the roles and responsibilities of a sport coach are and how these could be evaluated, as suggested by coaches themselves. From the data, ten key or master themes emerged. These could be considered to be the core roles and responsibilities of a sport coach. Each key theme contained sub-themes that helped to build a clearer understanding of coaches’ experiences of the role and the work involved, as well as what aspects they viewed as important when talking about performance evaluation within the role; as such, these were used to form the questions within each section of the 360° feedback tool.
4.2.1 The roles and responsibilities of the sport coach

The results from the Study 1A interviews with athletics coaches are structured along ten key themes: 1) coach-athlete relationship; 2) communication; 3) development; 4) enjoyment; 5) improvement; 6) knowledge; 7) organisation; 8) role modelling/mentoring; 9) teaching and learning; and 10) monitoring performance. It should be noted that the coaches were very passionate about their work, regardless of whether it was a paying vocation, and as such discussed their views in considerable detail with the interviewer. The richness of the interviews was considered an important part in the exploration of the coaching role and way in which it could be evaluated, factors which were considered of utmost importance when trying to develop the coaching feedback tool. As such, where necessary, lengthier quotes have been paraphrased and key words from responses used to highlight key points and themes.

The overall role of the sport coach was first considered, before discussing the specific aspects relevant to performance evaluation and measurement. This was primarily done to observe whether the beliefs of the coaches interviewed were consistent with what has previously been reported in the literature on coaching roles and responsibilities. The general perception of the eleven coaches interviewed was that, “the coach is more of a mentor” (Coach A1) and should, “look to impart knowledge” (Coach A2) by being “more of a tutor” (Coach A4) “involved in a process of education” (Coach A5) than an authoritative, imposing figure (Coach A1). They also strongly believed that it was, “the relationship with the athlete that was more important than the workout” (Coach A1) and that it was vital that they, “make a point of talking to each athlete personally” (Coach A4) “one-to-one” (Coach A4). This obviously involved being, “able communicators” (Coach A4) as well as being, “regular and consistent with training and instructions” (Coach A4) and, “trying to avoid any confrontations appearing within the training group” (Coach A4), functioning as somewhat of, “a psychologist” (Coach A4).

Keeping, “abreast of the developments in the athletic world” (Coach A4) and, “developments in knowledge” (Coach A1) was seen as a fundamental component of continued success and performance within the coaching role. Likewise, “providing support” (Coach A1), “praise” (Coach A4) and, “making sure the athletes are enjoying
the sport” (Coach A5) “making sure it’s fun and trying to make it not too boring so it’s an enjoyable experience” (Coach A6) were viewed as basic coaching roles.

Likewise, “technique correction and making sure all other aspects of their training, strength work, conditioning are correct” (Coach A6), in order to help the athlete, “progress each year and achieve the goals they set” (Coach A5) should be the foundation of any coach’s role. Being a role model to the athletes, “in life as well as coaching” (Coach A2) and a, “mentor to other coaches, particularly if they are a senior coach” (Coach A2) was a role more often expressed by the senior, more experienced participants, but nevertheless a recurring theme and an important one to what they viewed as a successful, well-rounded coach.

Essentially, the coaches viewed themselves as somewhat of a ‘jack-of-all-trades’, with one participant even stating that they were, “also a taxi driver at the moment as well!”. However, from the interviews with participants and the discussions around the key coaching roles and what they believed their performance should be evaluated on, the ten dimensions that were the most recurring and so chosen to make up the sections within the tool are as outlined in the following sections.

4.2.2 Coach-athlete relationship
Coaches were generally in agreement that the relationship between a coach and their athletes was imperative to athletic performance, with several coaches stating that they believed the relationship is in many ways more important than the workout itself. Coach A2 stated that the first factor they looked at when assessing their own coaching performance was, “my rapport with my athletes.” The training environment was also essential to the facilitation of this relationship as coaches recognised the importance of, “trying to create a good environment where you’ve got a group that work well together, can cope well with each other, enjoy each other’s company” (Coach A2). Such quotes formed the basis of the questions for category 1 of the 360° feedback tool, which can be seen in Appendices E.
4.2.3 Communication

The emphasis placed on communication with the athlete, whereby the instructions are both clear and understood and the athlete also felt their opinion was heard, was expressed by all of the coaches, regardless of years of experience or coaching level. Communication skills were repeatedly mentioned as an area that should be included in any form of performance evaluation, often being the first factor stated by the coaches when asked “What do you believe your coaching performance should be evaluated on?” Responses included “You’d certainly look at communication skills,” (Coach A2) “Often it comes back to communication,” (Coach A3) and “Being able to communicate what you want with them” (Coach A6). Coach A4 placed particular emphasis on the importance of one-to-one communication and, “making sure you get round to each of the athletes every session, even just to ask how their day was”; as such, a specific question pertaining to this was included in the questionnaire.

4.2.4 Development

All participants stated in one way or another that a good coach needs to be able to recognise what an athlete needs to do to develop their performance, as well as what they need to do to continually develop their performance as a coach. Both areas were felt to be of utmost in the evaluation of overall coaching performance, “you have to look at the overall development of the athlete” (Coach A1) as well as “one of the major roles is to keep abreast of the developments in the athletic world. Developments in knowledge” (Coach A4). Interestingly, the coaches spoke of self-directed learning as their main source of development, coming primarily from the reading of articles on relevant topics, rather than their attendance at structured courses or workshops.

4.2.5 Enjoyment

A factor that is of particular importance within participation or grass-roots sport is that of enjoyment. It is important for both the athlete, as well as the coach to enjoy being involved in the sport and attending training and competition, with Coach A4 stating “my main role is to make sure that the athletes are enjoying the sport. So it’s not a burden to come to training, they actually enjoy it and look forward to it.” While Coach A6 aimed
“to make sure it’s reasonably fun for them, try and make it not too boring so it’s an enjoyable experience.” The participating coaches stated that lack of enjoyment was probably the number one reason coaches and athletes gave a sport away. They also believed that it was primarily their role to make the training and competition environment an enjoyable one for their athletes.

4.2.6 Improvement
Improvement was spoken about by the participants both in terms of improvement in their own coaching ability, as well as improvement in their athletes’ ability. The interviewed coaches felt that a key responsibility of theirs was to encourage goal setting and be able to observe progression in the athletes’ skills and abilities, as well as their own. They stated “sometimes I’m just changing the way they are thinking about how they are racing or workouts or other things, and as long as I can see that improvement” (Coach A3) and “improvement and they feel that they are getting something out of it” (Coach A6).

4.3.7 Knowledge
Knowledge of the sport they are actively coaching and the technical models needed to achieve strong performances from athletes are fundamental to coaching ability and performance. The coaches interviewed stated that a strong understanding of the event they were coaching and the skill sets involved to be successful was crucial, particularly in the more technical events such as pole vault, with Coach A2 stating, “I would look at my technical skills, so my knowledge of the event. I think obviously if you have not got good technical knowledge of the event well then you can’t impart good technical skills.” The coaches also recognised the importance of continually updating and developing their knowledge, despite the lack of formal ways for them to do this. The most common way that knowledge was gained for these coaches was through reading articles.

4.2.8 Organisation
Being organised is an important trait for an effective coach to have as they are generally time-poor people, they need to make the most of the time they have with their athletes to
make it worthwhile, and it is no use turning up to training without a plan of what the session is. So planning and preparation are vital to be successful in the role. “Just being organised is hugely important, as you need to be able to plan for the season” (Coach A2). From these and similar comments, three questions were formed to cover the theme of organisation; ‘my coach is on time to training sessions’, ‘each training session is well prepared and set out’, and ‘my coach plans ahead for key events/periods throughout the season’; with specific wording of each question dependent on questionnaire version (athlete, coach or supervisor).

4.2.9 Role modelling and mentoring
The participating coaches spoke both of being a mentor or role model to their athletes, as well as being a mentor to other coaches or having a mentor to learn more of the practical aspects of coaching from. They also liked the idea of being a positive influence on their athletes not just in terms of athletics and the way they conduct themselves as a coach, but in everyday life as well. Coach A1 suggested that the whole role of a coach was to be “More of a mentor,” while Coach A2 suggested that it was perhaps more of “the role of the senior coach in particular is to mentor other coaches.” Coach A3 really enjoyed the opportunity that coaching presented “to be a role model in life I guess as well as in coaching and skills in coaching.”

4.2.10 Teaching and learning
In terms of teaching and learning, the coaches were quick to point out that coaching involves teaching the athletes rather than just telling them what to do. They viewed successful knowledge transfer as a major part of the coaching role. The coaches felt that it was fruitless to just keep telling the athletes the same thing over and over, as this is not likely to lead to any progression in performance. As Coach A1 stated, “you could impart the right knowledge and after, say, three four years, they would be able to adequately look after themselves”. The coaches also saw themselves as lifelong learners as there are always new techniques, methods and research coming out and they must stay on top of these to gain a competitive edge as evidenced by the quote from Coach A5 “open to learning from everyone, whether that be a coach who has been coaching for six months
or someone that has been coaching for sixty years, you have always got to be willing to learn and not think that you know everything… take every bit of advice on just to confirm what you know, or to learn something new.”

4.2.11 Monitoring performance
Lastly, the monitoring of performance is important for the coaches to know they are on the right track with what they are doing with the athletes. Interestingly, contrary to the majority of the literature and the media’s measures of performance, coaches placed little emphasis on the outcome in terms of winning and losing, and highlighted the importance of rewarding and encouraging effort, particularly over the course of a long season, as exemplified by Coach A4 in saying ‘I like to see them doing good performances or their personal bests as they call it. And that gives me as much satisfaction, sort of seeing the less athletic people succeeding, or completing a fun run or you know doing something.”

4.3 Summary
Apart from the key roles in coaching performance, a further interesting theme to emerge from the semi-structured interviews was that none of the participating coaches had previously had their performance in the role evaluated in anyway by anyone, either at the clubs they were associated with or by their national or state sporting organisation. For example, Coach A2 commented that “the officials, no they don’t ever ask me what I’m doing; they are just pleased when it all happens! They don’t interfere at all; they just respect you and just assume that you are doing it right!” It was also interesting to note Coach A4 stating that after passing the written accreditation exam “I don’t think anybody has ever watched, not to see what I do but even perhaps to see, to see how you manage a group and all that so that it might help them with other coaches.” The only form of feedback any of the coaches received was from their athletes in terms of how they felt they were progressing and how they were enjoying the sessions prescribed. For some, this involved formal, scheduled meetings, while for others it was as simple as “you can see when they are smiling; they are having a bit of fun. So yeah, I guess there is no formal sort of thing there, you can just sort of tell by the way they are going and whether they seem to be enjoying what they are doing” (Coach A7).
All participants were open to the idea of performance evaluation beyond their athletes’ results or performances and believed that it could work well within the coaching environment as a means to not only encourage continual improvement, but to also ensure coaches were thinking about what their responsibilities actually are. This was expressed well by Coach A2’s response, “I think it would definitely work… there is always room for improvement, it doesn’t matter what you are doing, and if people don’t tell you, you’re never going to know are you? So I think it would work well.”

From the individual interviews with the coaches and the triangulation and coding of the data processes that followed, three to four questions pertaining to each of the ten categories were drafted. It was felt that this provided good coverage of each area without being unnecessarily lengthy. These questions formed the initial draft of the 360° feedback questionnaire that was then taken to the focus group as part of Study 1B for further input, clarification on content and refinement. The questions were developed after careful consideration of the interview data, as well as integrating the findings of previous coaching research.
CHAPTER 5: STUDY 1B – DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN OF A 360° FEEDBACK TOOL FOR USE IN A SPORT COACHING SETTING: COACHING FOCUS GROUP

Using the emerging themes from Study 1A, and based upon the pre-existing performance evaluation literature (Côtè & Gilbert, 2009; Mallet & Côtè, 2006; O’Boyle, 2014), a draft 360° feedback tool for sport coaches was subsequently designed. This draft tool was then taken to the focus group that formed Study 1B so as to ascertain comment from coaches on the structure, content and design of the tool. This was considered to be an important step in order to make it as relevant to their coaching role and performance as possible, as well as to include coaching input throughout the development of the 360° feedback tool for sport coaches.

5.1 Coaching focus group

Eight Australian athletics coaches participated in the focus group for the current study. Like the participants in Study 1A, all of the participants in Study 1B were active coaches who worked in a number of different ways, however none of them classed themselves as a full-time coach with each working at least one other job to supplement their work as an athletics coach or being retired and in a position where coaching was more of an enjoyable hobby. None of the participants involved in Study 1A were involved with Study 1B so as to remove any bias and to gain fresh perspectives on the dimensions of interest. Three coaches possessed level 2 qualifications, two were level 3, one was level 4 and the remaining two had gained the highest level of qualification being level 5. The average number of years coaching experience was 12 and the mean age of the participants was 53. Out of the eight participants in the focus group, only one was female. Similar to the participants involved in Study 1A, they were mostly operating through their local club to provide a service to its members and were operating either completely on a voluntary basis or received a small fee from the athletes for their time. This fee was not however set by the athletics club in any of the individual cases. Three of the participants were retirees and again viewed their continuing coaching involvement
as a hobby rather than a job. Two coaches had initially become involved to train their own children who were now representing Australia at the highest level internationally; they were still involved in a mentoring like role with their child and had also taken on several other athletes over a number of years who were also considered semi-professional athletes. One coach was themselves a very competent club level athlete and had acquired a number of athletes over several years that they “mentored rather than coached.” The final two coaches had themselves been athletes and viewed coaching as a way to give back to the sport, especially as they now had their own children who were competing. Table 5.1 provides an overview of the participant demographics for Study 1B.
Table 5.1. Study 1B participating coach demographics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years Coaching</th>
<th>Events Coached</th>
<th>Accreditation Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coach B1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>Hurdles, Jumps, Young athletes</td>
<td>Level 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach B2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>Long distance, Middle distance, Steeple chase, Cross country, Young athletes</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach B3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>15+</td>
<td>Race walking</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach B4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>Long distance, Middle distance, Steeple chase, Cross country, Young athletes</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach B5</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>Long distance, Middle distance, Steeple chase, Cross country</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach B6</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>Long distance, Middle distance, Cross country, Young athletes</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach B7</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>15+</td>
<td>Sprints, Young athletes</td>
<td>Level 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach B8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>15+</td>
<td>Race walking</td>
<td>Level 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The focus group was conducted in person at a location central to all participants and was approximately 50 minutes in length. The specialty areas of the participants involved in the focus group covered each of the disciplines in the sport of athletics, with the exception of the throwing classification. The long distance, middle distance, steeple
chase and cross country qualification being held by 50% of the participants, two held the race walking qualification, one coach focused on sprints and one coach specialised in hurdles and jumps. Five of the coaches also possessed the additional accreditation to coach young athletes. In terms of the achievements of their athletes the coaches ranged from club level athletes and juniors who compete in inter-club/little athletics and state competitions, to coaching professional athletes (who compete for prize money), Olympians and Commonwealth Games representatives (who represent their country at the highest level of competition).

5.1.1 Procedure
All participants were initially identified via the Australian Track and Field Coaches Association (ATFCA) or Athletics Victoria (AV) state sporting organisation website, and subsequently contacted by email and invited to participate in the current research study. Participants interested in being part of the focus group were then sent a further email with a plain language statement and consent form attached. A copy of the plain language statement and consent form is provided in Appendix B. Once participants consented to participate, an interview time and venue was confirmed, again via email.

An interview guide was also taken to the focus group, and placed in full view of the participants. It was explained that this was only for the benefit of the interviewer to ensure that the focus group discussion covered the elements of interest that had arisen out of Study 1A. A copy of the questions can be found in Appendix D. After the conclusion of the focus group, the author sent letters to thank each of the participants for their involvement.

Each participant was assigned a label such as “Coach B1”, “Coach B2”, “Coach B3”, etc. The focus group recording was transcribed within hours of completion so that the discussion was still fresh in the author’s mind and detail requiring clarification could be followed up quickly with the participants. The edited transcript was sent back to the participants for their perusal before being used in this research. The focus group recording was transcribed by the author, with all identifying material edited out. As was the case in Study 1A, three of the participants wished to make changes to the transcript.
in order to clarify certain points or add material that they had neglected to mention during the focus group.

The focus group was conducted over approximately 50 minutes, with the first goal of the focus group being for participants to recall, reveal and describe important aspects of their coaching work, and to discuss the key elements they felt were important in the coaching role and consequently the factors they believed a coach should have their performance based upon. The second aim of the focus group was to present the participants with the initial 360° feedback tool to gain their input on the content, structure and general design of the questions included, and also on whether they believed such a process could; firstly work, and secondly, be a valuable tool to coaches within the athletics community. Each participant was presented with a hard copy of the questionnaire and provided with time to review the content and structure individually before discussing with the other participants of the group. The focus group followed a conversational style of questioning and there were only minor interjections from the interviewer. Each of the themes was discussed in sequence as set out in the questionnaire.

5.1.2 Data analysis
The collected data was then triangulated by three skilled researchers before being further analysed using the QSR NVIVO (version 10.0; QSR International Pty Ltd, Melbourne) software program. The information collected was de-identified and audio files were deleted from the recording device and securely stored at the completion of the project.

As in Study 1A, a question guide was utilised to gain responses on an initial series of questions that were quite broad, in order to investigate the complete spectrum of the athletics coaches’ work. The questions then became more focussed and specific in relation to the performance evaluation literature and their thoughts and comments on the initial draft of the 360° feedback tool. The focus group guide helped focus the group discussion and ensured that all topics of interest were covered within the time frame. However, due to the natural flow of conversation between the author and the different participants, the exact wording and order of the questions varied on the day, to allow for any leads or new topics to arise and be followed up with further discussion (Hudelson,
The question guide used for the research in Study 1B contained open-ended questions that related to topics that were relevant to both the literature on sport coaching, as well as the non-sport performance evaluation literature, so as to cover all content specifically related to the function of the athletics coaching job, as well as to be able to relate it back to the more established performance evaluation methods used outside of sport. However, the majority of the discussion focused upon the development and design of the 360° feedback tool to gain comment and input in order to be able to make the necessary revisions to the tool to make it as specific, relevant and useable by the sport coaches as possible. The research generated richly detailed, qualitative data on topics that required a multifaceted data analysis approach.

Once the focus group data had been analyzed, this feedback was then utilized to further refine the structure, content and overall design of the 360° feedback tool. The second draft of the tool was then sent out to the participants of the focus group for further comment before a final draft of the tool was developed and the consensus reached from all Study 1B participants that they were satisfied with all aspects the 360° feedback tool. Study 1A participants were not also consulted regarding the tool as it was felt that feedback from eight coaches was sufficient.

5.2 Results
As was the case in Study 1A, the results presented here included quotes from the coaches that are often just as a single key word or phrase rather than a complete sentence. Each coach has been identified by their assigned alpha label. Coach quotes do not appear in alphabetical order of their assigned letter, rather the coach that best articulated the topic of interest has been quoted.

The purpose of the focus group was to take the results from the semi-structured interviews (Study 1A) to a new group of coaches, bringing with them a fresh perspective, to enable a deeper level of feedback to be gained. The discussion of the results from the athletics coach focus group is structured along the presentation of key themes emerging from the discussion. These were: 1) coaching work and roles; 2) structure and content; 3) suitability of the process; and 4) specific design features of the 360° tool. It should be noted that the coaches were very passionate about their work and
the way in which their performance in the role may be measured or evaluated and as such, discussion of their views on particular points of interest with the focus group facilitator was, at times, considerably detailed. The richness of the focus group response was considered an important part in the exploration of the coaching role, the way in which it could be evaluated and the suitability of the proposed method to be utilised by this research, factors which were considered of utmost importance when trying to refine the coaching feedback tool.

5.2.1 Coaching work and roles
The coaches participating in the focus group as part of Study 1B were in agreement with the views of those who had participated in Study 1A as to what the main roles and responsibilities of the coach were, and believed that the ten categories chosen for inclusion in the initial draft of the questionnaire were a good representation of these. As Coach B1 articulated, “I think one of the good things from this is it reminds you of what you are supposed to be doing as a coach. It reminds you of all the particulars that you have got to do, and when you are just coaching from day to day, it’s easy to get into a routine where you forget the bigger picture.”

5.2.2 Tool structure and content
The coaches were of the opinion that the developed 360° questionnaire was, “very thorough” (Coach B3) and “asked all the right questions” (Coach B4). They were also in agreement that it was concise enough to not be, “too big and overwhelming” (Coach B5). After further discussion with the fellow coaches, Coach B1 added that, “we sat down and we came up with a few little bits that could be added, but… where do you stop? I think overall this is wide ranging and very good… none of the questions are bad.” The coaches did however show some apprehension about the wording of question J.4 (relating to the idea that the main coaching focus is performance outcomes in competition) and the way in which it was negatively geared; that is, a higher score for that particular question is viewed negatively. After considering this feedback, it was decided that the structure of this question would be left this way. Previous research has indicated the importance of wording questions in a slightly different manner
occasionally as a way to help insure that the participant is actually reading the question correctly (Sangwong, 2008). Question J.3 also raised discussion around the specific wording of the question and it was concluded that rather than, “My coach rewards my efforts and achievements”, the question should read, “My coach recognises my efforts and achievements”, as the coaches pointed out that, “often it's just a ‘well done’ isn’t it?” (Coach B1) and that, “athletes really appreciate just that small gesture” (Coach B2). Several other questions underwent basic wording changes but the overall structure and content remained. All eight coaches agreed that the Likert scale was appropriate and would work well with 1 being ‘never’ and 5 being ‘always’. A copy of the final questionnaire utilised in Study 2 can be found in Appendix E, with athlete, coach and manager versions included respectively.

5.2.3 Suitability of a 360° feedback process in sport coaching

While the coaches were of the belief that a 360° process could work and be of value in a sport coaching setting, they were not without their doubts, particularly given the nature of the track and field coaching structure and how it is very different between individuals. Of particular focus was the communication category of the questionnaire, as Coach B6 recalled a time when he, “had fifty (athletes) to a training session a couple of weeks ago… in terms of communication it gets to be challenging.” Coach B3 also showed concern over this particular area, “we have probably all found that where you are trying to communicate with an athlete on a one-to-one basis, in a group of maybe anything above half a dozen, maybe less, it is a big ask.” For this reason, the wording of the specific one-on-one communication question (QB.1) was changed to read, “I/My/The coach makes a regular effort to speak to me/each of the athletes on a one-to-one basis.”

The coaches, given that the majority of them had previous experience with junior athletes were keen for the questionnaire to be adapted for use by juniors, as they are such an important demographic in terms of participation and growth of the sport, however, due to ethical requirements, that was beyond the scope of the current research. If such a questionnaire was to be utilised by the junior track and field participants, the focus group also saw value in gathering feedback from another response group; the parents.
5.2.4 Specific design features of the 360° feedback tool

Within the literature, Fleenor and Prince (1997) identified that one of the trends in 360° feedback is the growing popularity of electronic methods, including the use of computer-based systems, for the administration and purposes of feedback reporting. In the current research, electronic methods were utilised to capture the data. This was done for a number of reasons; the coaches all agreed that they were very busy people, with most of them balancing full-time employment, a family, their own physical activity and their coaching duties. Having the questionnaire online meant that it could be completed at a time that was most convenient for them. It would also make the data collection process much easier as an appropriate software program would collect and collate the feedback instantaneously. Finally, it also allowed for greater efficiency of communication, ease of collecting the data and speed of receiving the feedback results.

As previous research has indicated that written and descriptive 360° feedback may be of more use than rating-scale information (Antonioni, 1996), the participants in the research were also provided with the opportunity to give qualitative feedback via several short-answer questions. This was a feature that was well received by the focus group participants, as Coach B4 stated,

“I think it’s good in the way it’s open-ended. It certainly allows them to touch on any points… it’s a way of them providing that feedback and maybe you don’t have to have that confrontation or at least you can get that information and maybe make changes to what you are doing, sort of without putting the athlete offside or anything like that.”

Coach B1 agreed, noting that “It’s always good to have an open-ended section in any questionnaire, because it’s the things from left-field which often come out that don’t get reflected in ‘circle from 1 to 5’, which then sometimes turn out to be the really useful answers.”

Finally, all the coaches involved with Study 1A and 1B were of the opinion that the 360° feedback process could be readily applied to a sport coaching setting and provide useful, informative feedback that would help direct a coach’s development and ultimately, enable them to continually improve their performance within the role. While the focus group coaches did acknowledge the potential for the process to be received
negatively by some coaches or for some of the feedback provided to be of a negative nature, as Coach B1 succinctly stated, “You would not be staying with a coach unless you were happy with them”. While individual athletes may have small pieces of negative feedback for their coach, it is highly unlikely that the majority of the feedback, or even just one significant point, would be overwhelmingly negative. If this were the case, the athlete would need to ask themselves why they were still with that coach as it is clearly not a relationship that is working to provide the best outcome for either party. In this sense, it is these small pieces of negative feedback that provide the opportunity for continued development and areas to improve upon for a coach, and 360° feedback provides a good medium to collect such information due to its anonymity.

After the focus group had taken place, it was clear that saturation of the data in terms of the key functions involved in coaching work and the facets that should be included in any evaluation of performance within the role had been reached. It was therefore evident that the design of the 360° feedback tool was viewed to be, on the whole, suitable for its intended purpose, with only minor amendments to wording and structure required, and that the participants were satisfied with the overall content.

Using the feedback from the present study, a final 360° feedback tool for sport coaches was designed. This tool was then used in the pilot study that formed Study 2.
CHAPTER 6: STUDY 2 – IMPLEMENTATION OF A 360° FEEDBACK TOOL FOR USE IN A SPORT COACHING SETTING

The first study (both Study 1A and Study 1B) in this thesis examined the development and design of a 360° feedback tool for use in a sport coaching setting, utilising input from coaches themselves throughout the process. The results highlighted the key areas of coach’s work that coaches felt were important to consider when providing feedback on their performance within the role, rather than the more traditional approach of looking at the results produced by their teams and athletes. The coaches also highlighted the current lack of alternative means by which to provide feedback on their work within the role, and the general consensus that a 360° feedback tool, similar to that used within the business sector but designed specifically for sport coaching purposes, could fill this void.

The final step to determine the appropriateness and usefulness of a sport coaching-based 360° feedback tool was to actually implement the tool within its intended setting and to therefore ascertain if 360° feedback can work in a sport coaching setting.

6.1 Three hundred and sixty degree feedback

In order to establish the applicability of a 360° feedback process in a sport coaching setting, it was necessary to utilise the tool within the population of interest to this particular research study. In order to determine the usefulness and appropriateness of the 360° feedback method within sport coaching, the tool was trialled using a small population of coaches in the sport of Australian athletics. The implementation of the 360° feedback tool in Study 2 involved 6 coaches, with each receiving feedback from at least 2 of their athletes, 1 manager and 1 peer coach; a total of 32 participants were involved in the present study.
6.1.1 Participants

The way in which coaches work within the sport of athletics in Australia varies greatly from individual to individual and the variety of work experiences coaches have is, at times, very complex. In order to gain a clear picture of a coach’s performance in the role and to be able to provide adequate feedback whilst also protecting the anonymity of the feedback providers, the coaches involved in Study 2 were selected based upon the following criteria: a) currently working as an athletics coach on either a full-time, part-time or voluntary basis; b) possess accreditation of any level from the national body; c) working at either International, National, State or club level; d) coaching athletes ≥ 18 years of age; and, e) coaching > one athlete.

Initially, 50 coaches were contacted and invited to participate in Study 2. These initial 50 coaches were randomly selected via the publicly available ATFCA coaching database. Of this first pool of coaches, 10 coaches were excluded due to their athletes being under the age of 18, 17 coaches were excluded as a result of them being unable to provide a sufficient number of evaluators due to the way in which they worked as a coach, and 8 coaches asked to either be withdrawn from the study or were not interested in participating to begin with. A further 9 coaches were linked to incomplete data; in most cases, the coach had completed their feedback but an insufficient number of other evaluators had at the end of the data collection period. For this reason their data has been excluded from the final results.

All six of the coach participants involved in the present study were active coaches who worked in a number of different ways, however none of them classed themselves as a full-time coach with each working at least one other job to supplement their work as an athletics coach. Three of the participants’ professions were in a related or sport-based field; two were physical education teachers at secondary schools and one worked for a national sporting organisation. The other three participants worked in non-sport based roles and were coaching as a hobby or outside interest. All coaches involved in Study 2 received payment for their coaching, either set by themselves or the athletics club they were aligned with, and so could be said to be part-time coaches. All six participants were male and based either in Victoria, New South Wales or the Northern Territory.
While six participants may be viewed as too small, previous research has been conducted with as few as six focal participants and as many as 400, with six being found to be manageable and provide just as valid results as the larger groups (Fleenor & Prince, 1997). The small sample size may relate to the perceived sense of threat and scrutiny that some people may experience when undertaking self-evaluations (Spurgeon, 2008). Some of the invited coaches may have opted not to participate due to the timing of the study, with the data being collected towards the end of the Australian athletics season when many key events are held; thus, the coaches may have been preoccupied and lacked the time to participate.

6.1.2 Procedure

All participants were initially identified via the Australian Track and Field Coaches Association (ATFCA) coaching database (publicly available on the ATFCA website), and contacted by email inviting them to participate in the current research study. Initially, 30 coaches were contacted and asked to participate. Participants interested in being part of the 360° feedback study were then sent a further email with a plain language statement and consent form attached. A copy of the plain language statement and consent form is provided in Appendix B. Once participants consented to participate and had met the inclusion criteria (> 18 years old, coaching athletes > 18 years old, in a coaching environment that enabled them to provide details of two or more athletes, two peer coaches and two individuals in a supervisory/administrative position), they were required to discuss with the potential feedback providers if they would also be willing to participate. Once the coach had completed these discussions and achieved the required numbers for each feedback group, contact details for these groups were forwarded on to the researcher. The researcher then randomly selected the feedback participants from each group via assigning the potential raters a number and then drawing numbers out of a hat. Dependent on each individual coach’s situation, the raters were at least two athletes (but up to four) and one each of peer coach and superior. The selected participants were then contacted via email with a plain language statement and consent form attached. Once these had been received, each individual participant was emailed a link to complete the 360° feedback survey online using the Qualtrics (Qualtrics LLC,
Utah) software. These links were specific to the respondent and their particular relationship to the coach, i.e. athlete, peer/supervisor, or coach (self assessment). The respondents were required to answer the questions based upon the performance and behaviours of their focal coach. A copy of the questionnaire and the questions corresponding to each feedback category can be found in Appendix E. The questionnaires were coded for each coaching cluster (the coach and all their feedback providers) so as to enable the researcher to identify the focal coach in each case for the purposes of reporting the feedback to the individual. The links to the questionnaires stayed active for a period of three weeks and the participants were emailed weekly reminders until the questionnaire had been completed. After this period of time, any incomplete data was excluded leaving complete data for six coaches, provided by 32 participants in total. After data analysis had been completed, the six focal coaches were provided with their own feedback report, presented similarly to the results in this thesis. Once they had received this report, they were asked to rate and provide some feedback on the overall 360° feedback process and whether they felt it to be beneficial to their coaching practice.

6.1.3 Data analysis

Data analysis involved collating the questionnaire data collected via the Qualtrics surveys. Each participant rated the coach’s performance and behaviours in each section using a Likert scale numbered 1 (never) to 5 (always) and also had the option to select ‘Not Applicable’. The results from each question in each category were pooled into rating groups; athlete, peer (superior and peer), and the focal coach as a self-rater, and the mean and standard deviation for each calculated. As each coach worked in an environment where they only had one superior and one available peer coach, it was necessary to pool the two into one category, termed ‘peer’. Respondents also had the opportunity to provide qualitative feedback pertaining to performance and behaviours exhibited by the coach relating to each category.
6.2 Results

The broad aim of Study 2 was to investigate whether a 360° feedback process could work in a sport coaching setting. The questions covered by the 360° feedback questionnaire were related to the ten categories of: coach/athlete relationship, communication, development, enjoyment, improvement, knowledge, organisation, role modelling/ mentoring, teaching and learning, and monitoring performance. Given that each coach and their evaluators (and consequently their evaluations) will differ, the data presented provides an example of one cluster; that is, one coach and the evaluation from their selected athletes and peers or supervisors. The data is presented in this manner so as to provide a more in-depth summary of the research findings.

Overall, the feedback for the coach was overwhelming positive, with most questions scoring between 4 and 5. The few areas where the coach scored slightly lower were a result of more participants selecting a 4 (often) rather than a 5 (always). It was rare for the coach to receive a score of 3 (sometimes) or lower. Future versions of the 360° feedback tool may need to include a larger scale (i.e., a response range from 1 to 7) so as to capture greater differences in scores for each question.

6.2.1 Category 1: Coach-athlete relationship

As shown in Figure 6.1 the results from the coach/athlete relationship feedback shows that generally the coach and the athlete are close in their ratings of the coach’s performance, while the peers judged the relationship more harshly. The athletes enjoyed training with their coach marginally more than the coach believed they did (Q1.1). The athletes felt that they could communicate easily with their coach about most things (Q1.2), and that their coach was friendly and approachable (Q1.4). The peers however, felt that the coach did not tend to allow much input from the athletes in the overall coaching process (Q1.3). The qualitative feedback regarding this area was overwhelmingly positive, particularly from the athletes themselves, with one stating that, “he is more than just my coach. He is my friend, he is my mate. I feel I would remain in contact with him regardless of whether I was being coached by him or not.”
Table 6.1: Coach-athlete relationship questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The athletes/I enjoy training with their/my coach/me.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>The athletes/I feel they/I can talk to their/my coach/me about most things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>The/my coach/I value the athletes'/my input with regard to training decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>The/my coach/I am/is friendly and approachable.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.1: Feedback data for category 1: Coach-athlete relationship. Data collected on a Likert scale of 1-5, and summarised in the figure on a scale ranging from 1 (never) – 5 (always).

6.2.2 Category 2: Communication

As shown in Figure 6.2, the feedback provided on the communication aspect of coaching revealed some larger discrepancies out of all the coaching competencies. The athletes
and peers suggested that the coach could make more of an effort to speak to each athlete on a one-to-one basis (Q2.1) and could provide slightly more feedback on performance (Q2.4); however the athletes were happy that their coach appeared to listen to their input (Q2.3) and gave them understandable instructions (Q2.2). It is notable that the peers rated the coach closer to 4 for the delivery of understandable instructions (Q2.2), while the athletes rated much closer to 5. From the qualitative feedback in the area of communication, the athletes praised the multiple communication techniques utilised by the coach, so that they were receiving as much information as possible. “He communicates to me via email, Facebook, SMS, and phone, as well as face to face,” “he shows me videos; he sends me emails with information about certain things he is trying to teach me. For example, when I needed to adjust how I was running he spoke to me about it, then he took video of me and showed me what adjustments I needed to make.”

Table 6.2: Communication questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>The/my coach/I make(s) regular efforts to speak to each athlete on a one-to-one basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>It is easy to understand the/my coach’s/my training instructions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>The/my coach/I listen(s) to the athletes when they have something to say.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>The/my coach/I provide(s) the athletes with valuable feedback as to how they are performing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 6.2: Feedback data for category 2: Communication. Data collected on a Likert scale of 1-5, and summarised in the figure on a scale ranging from 1 (never) – 5 (always).

6.2.3 Category 3: Development
As shown in Figure 6.3, the provision of feedback on the category of development highlighted the largest discrepancy across all of the areas of feedback. This may be due to differences in expectations and outcomes held by the three separate groups. The athletes and peers were more satisfied than the coach was that he recognised what needed to be done in order for them to develop as an athlete. However, some of the athletes did not feel as though their personal development away from athletics was taken into consideration at times. The peers showed some level of agreement on this. Interestingly, for both Q3.2 and Q3.3, the coach gave themselves a 5. All groups were satisfied that the training matched performance and was adjusted accordingly during
times of tiredness, soreness or illness. All were impressed and greatly satisfied with the individualised training plans they each received. Even the peers made mention of the way the coach “monitors the athletes as they progress through these programs. He also assists with diet and other complementary functions.” The athletes were particularly complimentary of the goal setting process the coach goes through with them and felt that, “his coaching has let me improve my overall performance by a lot more and a lot faster than I could have on my own.” One athlete specifically cited the longevity of their partnership as vital to their development as an athlete, “as he has seen me evolve from an inexperienced junior to a mature athlete, he has been there for any problems that have come my way.”

Table 6.3: Development questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3.1</th>
<th>The/my coach/I recognise(s) what each athlete needs to do to develop as an athlete.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>The/my coach/I show(s) an interest in the athletes’ personal development outside of athletics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>As the athlete develops, the/my coach/I develop(s) and adapt(s) their/my coaching accordingly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.2.4 Category 4: Enjoyment

As shown by Figure 6.4, enjoyment of training, competition and coaching is high, although the athletes were also quick to state that they recognised that they are not so much, “at training to have fun anyway.” The peers stated that, even though they do not always work side by side with the coach, “the group always seem happy and I often see them sharing a joke.” The coach made it clear that they did not go out of their way to, “make training fun,” but the athletes were appreciative of the fact that, “he is always changing the programs (within reason) to keep it from getting boring.” One athlete in particular articulated nicely the overall tone of the responses in saying that, “I think I speak for all of the athletes that train with him when I say that we are all there because we love athletics (training and competing), however when our coach is always set up exactly the same each session and ready waiting for us before the designated start time, because he is just as keen to see us achieve the final goal for all the effort we put in at training, there is no doubt that his presence there is a major factor in why I keep coming back week in, week out.”

Table 6.4: Enjoyment questions:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>The /my coach/I enjoy(s) going to training and competition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>The/my coach/I help(s) to create a good social environment within the training group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>The/my coach/I am/is motivated and happy to be at training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>The/my coach/I include(s) a lot of variety in training.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.2.5 Category 5: Improvement

As shown in Figure 6.5, feedback provided for question 5.2 may suggest that the coach undertakes evaluation of the athletes’ progression in training and competition via methods that the athlete may not be directly aware of. The qualitative feedback provided suggests that peers were generally impressed by the coach’s commitment to the athletes’ improvement, with one commenting for example that the coach, “realised that one athlete would be a better sprinter and now trains with the sprints group. That to me shows a concern more for the athlete than some coaches who just seem to coach for the money.” It is interesting to note that the athletes were more confident in the coach’s ability to recognise what works best for each individual athlete to enhance their improvement than the coach was in their ability to do so (Q5.4).
Table 6.5: Improvement questions:

<p>| | | | | |</p>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>The/my coach/I encourage(s) the athletes to set goals.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>The/my coach/I evaluate(s) how each athlete is progressing in training and competition.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>I have noticed progression in the athletes’/my ability since being with the/my coach.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>The/my coach/I know(s) what works best for each athlete to perform well and individualise training accordingly.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.5: Feedback data for category 5: Improvement. Data collected on a Likert scale of 1-5, and summarised in the figure on a scale ranging from 1 (never) – 5 (always).

6.2.6 Category 6: Knowledge

As shown in Figure 6.6, coaching knowledge is an area of particular strength for the coach, with all ratings ≥ 4.5. One peer mentioned in the qualitative comments that they

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believed this was due to previous personal experience as an athlete, while the athlete group recognised the hours and hours the coach put in researching online, journals, magazines and attending courses. One athlete was specifically impressed by the fact that the coach regularly, “looks to the past for techniques that may have been overlooked; he has many old books that are still very useful.”

Table 6.6: Knowledge questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The/my coach/I have/has a good understanding of athletics and the event coached.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>The/my coach/I am/is up to date with the tactical and technical aspects of the event coached.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>The/my coach/I am/is up to date with the latest training and recovery methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>The/my coach/I apply/applies knowledge and skills from outside athletics in their/my coaching.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.6: Feedback data for category 6: Knowledge. Data collected on a Likert scale of 1-5, and summarised in the figure on a scale ranging from 1 (never) – 5 (always).
6.2.7 Category 7: Organisation

As shown in Figure 6.7, there is some disagreement between certain aspects of the organisation category of feedback. All groups were in agreement that the coach does well when planning for key events or periods throughout the season (Q7.3). Interestingly, the coach rated themselves the lowest for preparedness in training and competition (Q7.2).

Table 6.7: Organisation questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The/my coach/I am/is on time to training sessions and competition.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Each training session is well prepared and set out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>The/my coach/I plan(s) ahead for key events/periods throughout the season.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.7: Feedback data for category 7: Organisation. Data collected on a Likert scale of 1-5, and summarised in the figure on a scale ranging from 1 (never) – 5 (always).

6.2.8 Category 8: Role modelling/mentoring

As shown in Figure 6.8, the area of role modelling/mentoring presented some of the larger discrepancies. In general, the athletes believed the coach to be performing in this area to a greater level than the coach did. The peers also indicated that this may be an
area for future development, although they did not provide any qualitative details as to why this may be the case. The athletes were predominantly impressed with the manner in which the coach conducted themselves, using the qualitative responses to describe the role modelling qualities of the coach as, “excellent; he always presents himself as a very respecting and calm person, which rubs off on the athletes he trains.” Another athlete recognised that, “as a role model, he has done everything he is trying to get his athletes to do (and more most of the time) and he used to be a school teacher, so I believe that he has (and uses) the skills to be a great mentor and as for being a role model, he used to be a top elite athlete and demonstrates how an athlete should act if they want to achieve their goals.” Whilst the coach stated via the qualitative responses that they had not had any formal mentoring experience, others commented that, “there is always free-flowing advice between training groups, especially when it comes to recovery and equipment.”

Table 6.8: Role modelling/mentoring questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The/my coach/I am/is a good role model for the athletes and other coaches.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>The/my coach/I show(s) respect for others and promote good sportsmanship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Other coaches look up the the/my coach/me and ask for their/my opinion on coaching-related matters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>The/my coach/I ask(s) other coaches for advice regarding coaching matters if they/I need assistance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 6.8: Feedback data for category 8: Role modelling/mentoring. Data collected on a Likert scale of 1-5, and summarised in the figure on a scale ranging from 1 (never) – 5 (always).

### 6.2.9 Category 9: Teaching and learning

As shown in Figure 6.9, teaching and learning is another area in which the coach appears to excel with scores for each question from each rater ≥ 4.5. The coach was viewed by the athletes as knowledgeable, a good teacher and encouraging rather than critical of the athlete. Within the qualitative feedback provided, the athletes readily acknowledged that their coach goes “above and beyond” to provide them with information that could help their learning in the sport, “by books, DVDs, internet pages,” “emailing links for articles to read, telling me when there is an event to watch on TV, and explaining other runner’s techniques.” They were also quick to highlight that, although these extras undoubtedly helped develop their knowledge, “the main source of development is when we talk at training.” The athletes appeared to have every confidence in their coach, this may be due
to the coach being an ex-international athlete themselves, and so the athletes were more than happy to just listen and learn. The peers likewise provided very positive feedback on their coach in this area.

Table 6.9: Teaching and learning questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q9.1</th>
<th>The/my coach/I can teach the basic skills required in the event.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q9.2</td>
<td>The/my coach/I use(s) encouragement rather than criticism when correcting technique and skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9.3</td>
<td>The/my coach/I teach(es) the athletes about the event/training/skills, rather than just telling them what to do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9.4</td>
<td>The/my coach/I know(s) the answers to the athletes’ athletic-related questions, or will find out the answer and get back to them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.9: Feedback data for category 9: Teaching and learning. Data collected on a Likert scale of 1-5, and summarised in the figure on a scale ranging from 1 (never) – 5 (always).
6.2.10 Category 10: Monitoring performance

As shown in Figure 6.10, the area of monitoring performance highlights one key discrepancy. For question 10.4, the coach and peers indicated that often ‘The coach's main focus is performance outcomes in competition’. Conversely, the athletes were of the belief that the coach rarely just looked at results as the sole focus of performance. The athletes also took into consideration social aspects of their training and competition, as well as enjoyment, on top of their competition outcomes when considering performance. The coach and peers, on the other hand, looked only to outcomes in competition as these are measurable and comparable. Herein lies the main purpose of the proposed 360° feedback method and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7. All groups appeared to be satisfied with the amount of recognition the coach was giving to the athletes when they performed well, with one athlete stating that, “when he praises me on my performance I know I have really earnt it, and with a great performance comes a handshake. That is when you know you have made him happy and that is all I ask; I wouldn’t want objects or presents.” One athlete especially enjoyed their performance being rewarded with, “the next day off training and an easy week of training!” The athletes also valued the recognition via Facebook, group emails and articles, as these made their achievements feel special and important.

Table 6.10: Monitoring performance questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The/my coach/I encourage the athletes/me to think about/reflect on their/my training and progress.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The/my coach/I reflect(s) on their/my own performance and ways to continually improve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The/my coach/I reward(s) the athletes’ efforts and goal achievements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The/my coach’s main focus is performance outcomes in competition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.3 Feedback from the open-ended questions

Within the feedback questionnaire, each respondent was also provided with the opportunity to put forward any further remarks regarding the coach’s particular strengths, areas for future development or any other general comment. Interestingly, each feedback cluster responded in a similar manner regarding these areas. The strengths of the coach were noted as being knowledge, experience (both as a high level athlete themselves as well as coaching experience), flexibility to work around each athletes’ goals, lifestyles and current or previous injuries, as well as their eye for detail. Within
the areas for future development section, five respondents could not suggest any potential areas and were very satisfied that their coach was knowledgeable, well resourced, experienced, and doing everything possible to maintain this, with one athlete responding, “they are always developing and improving themselves”. The respondents who did suggest an area for further development, including the coach themselves, all highlighted communication and people skills. The coach suggested that coaching education courses need to include modules on communicating with particular groups, such as adolescents, as this was an area they felt they needed to work on. However, the coach was seen as being a “happy, positive and enthusiastic person” (athlete respondent) in general and this enthusiasm and passion for the sport meant that they were more often than not aware of their own strengths and areas for development and doing everything they could to continually work on these and evolve as a coach, even though this was entirely left to the individual coach.

6.4 Feedback from the focal coaches
Once the focal coaches had received their individualised 360° feedback report, they were asked to provide some feedback on how they found the overall process by answering five questions:

1) Has the use of the 360° feedback process influenced your coaching practice, and if so, how?
2) Would you use the 360° feedback process again and under what circumstances?
3) If you were supervising or mentoring coaches, would you recommend the use of the 360° feedback process and if so, what outcomes would you like this to achieve?
4) What aspects, if any, of the 360° feedback tool would you change (i.e. do you feel anything was missing, or that any of it was irrelevant)?
5) Is there any other feedback you wish to provide on the overall 360° feedback process?

Although only three coaches returned feedback on the overall 360° experience, the responses were overwhelmingly positive. The coaches found that their individual feedback was, by and large, positive in nature, so this encouraged them to “continue doing what has been successful”. They also stated that they would happily use the process again because, “If I'm doing well, then it is nice to have that confirmation. If there are areas for improvement, then this is the only likely way I’ll find out as I think most athletes would be reluctant to tell their coach to his face that they think he needs to do better”. It was also a process that they would recommend to other coaches as it enables the coach to, “see the correlation (or lack thereof) between what the coach thinks s/he's doing and how her/his audience views what s/he's doing”. Positively, for the context of this research, the coaches could not think of anything to add or change and found that all questions were relevant to the practice of coaching athletics. Finally, one coach provided a nice summary of how they found the overall process of participating in the 360° feedback, stating that they would, “highly recommend any coach to do likewise. It was definitely a valuable exercise”.

6.4 Summary

Overall, the coaches received excellent feedback, as highlighted by the cluster presented in these results. The results show that not only is the coach scoring highly in each coaching competency, but the discrepancy between their own view of their coaching performance and the view of their coaching performance held by their athletes is, in most instances, small. This would seem to suggest that the coach and athletes hold similar expectations with regards to their relationship and involvement in the sport. Conversely, the peers, who may not have such direct and regular contact with the coach and training group, generally viewed the coach’s performance in a slightly different manner to that of the athletes and coach themselves, and were more likely to provide the lower scores for each of the competencies. There are a few small areas that have been presented which could be seen as potential targets for further development. Overall, the
general consensus was that the participating coaches gained some valuable feedback via the 360° process
CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This thesis has aimed to design and trial a 360° feedback tool for the evaluation and development of coaches using the input of coaches to design the tool. It began with an exploration of the roles and responsibilities of the sport coach and performance evaluation methods in the broader context of society, and used two broad questions - ‘What are the roles and responsibilities of a sport coach and how should these be evaluated?’ and ‘Can 360° feedback work in a sport coaching setting?’ - to guide this exploration of coach performance, measurement and evaluation. It has clearly identified that the work of coaches is multifaceted and, as such, measurement and evaluation of performance in the job should take this into account. The framework for the tool design was developed from the literature on both sport coaching roles and responsibilities, and the previous work on 360° feedback, as commonly used within business organisations. Importantly, we also sought input from coaches themselves to ensure its relevance and specificity to the work they perform.

This chapter provides discussion of the outcomes of this investigation and the implications of this research for coaching performance measurement and evaluation, as well as recommendations for coaching practice coach development, coach management and future research.

7.1 The complexity of the sport coaching role and its evaluation
As Chapter 1 of this thesis demonstrated, the role of the coach has been defined in a multitude of ways and, consistent with previous literature that has sought to identify the role of the coach (Banks, 2006; Cassidy, Jones & Potrac, 2004; Jones et al., 2004; Launder, 2004; Lyle, 2002; Martens, 2004; Pyke, 2001; Schembri, 2001), this research has shown that the roles and responsibilities of the coach are multifaceted. In the review of literature presented in Chapter 2, the coach had previously been described as a manager (ASC, 2008), teacher (Pyke, 2001), counsellor (Banks, 2006), strategist (Pyke, 2001), leader (Lyle, 2002), and a ‘jack-of-all-trades’ (Launder, 2004). The coaches in the first study of this thesis (Chapters 4 and 5) reflected the coaching literature in their descriptions of their roles and responsibilities as a coach.
Chapter 1 of this thesis introduced the notion of the coach as the key manager of athletic performance (Baker et al., 2003; Becker, 2009; Becker & Wrisberg, 2008; Boardley et al., 2008; Côtè & Gilbert, 2006; Côtè, Salmela & Russell, 1995; Ford et al., 2009; Gilbert & Trudel, 2004; Mitchell, 2009; Schembri, 2001; Woodman, 1993). A key difference noted, however, between coaching and other managerial positions (such as those in the business setting), was how coaching performance was measured and evaluated. Chapter 2 illustrated that, to accurately measure and evaluate the performance of an individual in a given position, all facets of performance in that position should be reviewed (Saury & Durand, 1998). Therefore, to base the performance evaluation of the coaching job purely on the results of the athletes and teams under their guidance is too narrow and overlooks a great deal of what the coach actually does. Furthermore, as Mallett and Côtè (2006) state, the idea that a coach is completely responsible for team or athlete success or failure is flawed. In fact, some coaches who have been viewed as successful have not been well regarded as a coach, and conversely, some coaches who have been held in high regard, particularly by athletes, have not achieved success in terms of performance results (Mallett & Côtè, 2006). The link between effectiveness and performance appears to be more muddied in the coach setting that perhaps it is in other professions. It has therefore been suggested that factors such as the coach-athlete relationship, an important factor impacting upon performance, should be included in any evaluation (Mallet & Côtè, 2006). It was, therefore, not surprising to see that the coaches in Study 1A of this thesis (Chapter 4) raised the coach-athlete relationship as a central element of their work and an aspect that should be included in any evaluation of their performance.

Importantly, however, the key themes raised by the coaches when interviewed were all consistent with those reported in the literature regarding sport coaching work, as reported in Chapter 4. Indeed, while the intention of this thesis was not merely to define the roles of the coach but to describe it so that coach performance could be evaluated, it is interesting to note that while both the literature, as presented in Chapter 2, and the anecdotal responses, presented in Chapter 4, are consistent in reporting of the characteristics of the coaching practice, the current methods to evaluate coaching performance do not align with these. There has been little connection made between
coaching work as a whole and its evaluation within the empirical literature. Mallett and Côté (2006) have previously argued the need to step away from evaluating coaches in terms of winning and losing, and the results from this research demonstrate that athlete results in competition were, at best, a secondary consideration for the coaches in Study 1 (both the interviews and the focus group). Given the complexity of the work performed and the important role coaches’ play in the sporting landscape, particularly at the participation level, who would argue that such a narrow definition of coaching performance is reasonable?

One of the major findings to emerge from the first study of this thesis is that the way in which coaches describe their work can be divided into ten broad categories, all of which, however, have previously been alluded to elsewhere in the literature. First and foremost, coaches are the managers of people, who forge, “relationship(s) with the athlete(s) that are more important than the workout” (Cassidy, Jones & Potrac, 2004; Chelladurai, 2006; Gilbert & Trudel, 2006; Jones et al., 2004; Kellett, 1999; Launder, 2004; Lavallee, 2006; Massengale, 1974; Salmela, 1996; Schinke et al., 1995; Taylor, 1992). The importance of the coach-athlete relationship, communication, knowledge and organisation (Côté, Salmela, Trudel, Baria & Russell, 1995; Potrac, Brewer, Jones, Armour & Hoff, 2000) to the coaching context has also long been recognised when looking at the coaching process holistically. Likewise, Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson and McKee (1978) and Hubbard, Samuel, Cock and Heap (2007) believed the mentor/mentee relationship was crucial to the career development process. Mentoring is well supported in the coaching literature from a skill development perspective (Charlesworth, 2001; Chelladurai, 2006; Flanagan, 2001; Hawkins & Blann, 1996; Jones et al., 2004; Talbot, 2003). Where this research builds on this knowledge is by developing specific questions, in consultation with coaches, intended to measure and evaluate performance in such areas.

The coaches in Study 1 of this thesis who took part in the formation of the 360° feedback tool, via one-on-one interviews and a focus group, reported undertaking a variety of responsibilities when working with athletes. These ranged from working with athletes on event-specific skill, technique and performance development and strength and conditioning, to being a role model and mentor, teacher and somewhat of a
counsellor. Again, these have all received attention previously within the literature yet continue to be overlooked when considering measurement of coaching performance (e.g., Banks, 2006; Pyke, 2001, Lyle, 2002). The participating coaches also reported spending a great deal of their own time ensuring that their knowledge was kept up to date and that they were aware of any developments in the athletic world. Outside from the initial coaching accreditation courses they had undertaken, sometimes many years ago, the coaches felt left to their own devices to ensure they kept developing their knowledge and that no formal education of this nature was offered by any of the national or state bodies. Herein lies a potential benefit of the proposed 360° feedback process; it’s ability to highlight areas of coaching performance requiring further development. Further, coaches were also clear in describing the coaching roles and responsibilities required at the different levels of the sport, i.e. performance and/or competition levels of the athletes they were coaching. The fundamental roles remained the same regardless of the level but coaches had a clear understanding of the requirements and where they felt they operated best within their own limitations. This clarity in understanding the specific roles and requirements of the coaching position provided the basis for formation of the 360° feedback tool.

As discussed in chapter 2 the majority of Australian athletics coaches are volunteers and the overriding method of performance measurement is the results their athletes achieve despite the multiple functions and roles coaches perform (Mallet & Côté, 2006; Gilbert & Trudel, 1999). The participants in this thesis indicate that coaching is about so much more than winning and losing. This is particularly true of individual-based sports such as athletics where there can only be one winner and so by definition, every other athlete and coach has failed. Particularly at the community participation level, there is always a tension between building the number of participants in the sport and producing athletes who can compete at national and international levels. If the mass participation base is looked after by skilled, qualified and educated coaches, the elite performers will continue to come through as an added bonus, but this can only be achieved if coach evaluation takes into account all aspects of the job so that, a) a significantly more accurate assessment of coaching performance is provided (O’Boyle, 2014) and, b) development and education practices can be focussed on the right areas for
each individual coach. To date, coach evaluation practices have been described as ad-hoc at best (Jones & Wallace, 2005) and non-existent at worst (Dawson et al., 2013).

Utilising what previous research has told us about the role of the coach, and given the views of the participants in the current research were consistent with this, it was possible to establish what the key roles of the coach, at any level, were seen to be, and as such, what the contributing factors should be to any performance evaluation of a coach. Identifying these roles and having them itemised in 360° feedback can also serve, as a participant in Study 1B stated “as a reminder of what a coach should actually be doing within their job.”

7.2 Using 360° feedback in a sport coaching setting
To this point, the development of the criteria for use in the 360° feedback tool and the potential of the process to not only measure and evaluate performance in these, but to also provide feedback on said performance have been discussed. As discussed in chapter 2, however, it is also important to understand the importance of feedback for performance. The positive effect of offering feedback is repeatedly recognised within the literature as an essential element in the process of learning and development, and, consequently, performance (AlHaqui, 2012; Costa, 2006; Ende, 1983; Glover, 2000; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). However, formal feedback processes such as those used in business management has been largely overlooked by the sport coaching profession. Several participants in Study 1 (Chapters 4 and 5) made mention of the fact that they had never received any form of formal or informal feedback from any superior, supervisor or administrator who may have been involved in employing them. One participant even commented that no one had even watched any of their sessions with their athletes; despite the fact they were responsible for elite athletes performing at the international level, who were also the recipients of government funding.

The profession of coaching may be failing to provide performance feedback to individuals due to a lack of appropriate means to be able to do so. If those responsible for hiring and firing coaches have no clear way through which to evaluate the performance of the coach within the complete coaching role, it is not truly possible for them to know how well the coach is performing their job. These findings are at odds
with the non-sport evaluation and development theory and practice (Fleenor & Prince, 1997). Firstly, the way in which performance within any role is measured must be specific to that particular role (Mallet & Côté, 2006); ultimately, it is the athlete who is responsible for their performance outcomes and results, not the coach. Secondly, non-sport organisations have managed to develop employees’ careers in consultation with the workers themselves (Hubbard et al., 2007; Nicholson & West, 1989). Hubbard et al. (2007) believed that a collaborative approach was vital for the development of the employees and served the interests of the organisation themselves. Evidence of this collaboration between the coaches themselves and their supervisors or the organisations they were involved with was absent. Several of the focus group coaches stated that once they have achieved any formal level of coaching accreditation, they are simply left to their own devices with their coaching (the processes, the performance, the development), unless they wish to acquire the next level of athletic coaching accreditation.

Therefore, this leaves a void in the development and skills of coaches between levels and also somewhat assumes that level 1 coaches work with beginners and the highest level accredited coaches work with professional athletes, and suggests that people stay at a level to continue working with a particular level of athlete, or progress through the levels to more serious coaching. Results from this and previous research have shown that this is not the case; a level 1 coach may work with an elite, high performance level athlete, while a level 4 coach may be working with beginner, school-aged athletes; there is no, ‘one size fits all’ approach. Three hundred and sixty degree feedback has proven to be useful here in providing each individual coach with personalised feedback on the areas where they excel and also where they can continue to develop their performance to improve their effectiveness as a coach. Herein lies another benefit of 360° feedback; not only is it able to provide feedback directly to individuals on their strengths and weaknesses, data can also be pooled to provide an overview of larger sections of the coaching workforce and hence, feedback on where formal education and development courses may be lacking. As Gould, Giannini, Krane and Hodge (1990) noted, before educators can effectively develop educational programs for
coaches, there is a need to better understand their background and their own perceived educational needs.

Chapter 2 highlighted the use and efficacy of 360° feedback (or multi-source feedback) as a method of evaluating performance and providing feedback in a range of professional work settings (AlHaqui, 2012; Fleenor & Prince, 1997; Spurgeon, 2008). The information obtained via such methods is used to develop individual skills, insights and awareness, by incorporating the findings into individualised professional development strategies (Spurgeon, 2008). As previously discussed, coaches have not as yet benefited from such processes and it seems remiss that this is the case given the nature of their work and its similarity to that of performance managers in other occupations. The existing literature on performance evaluation in other occupations, as discussed in Chapter 2, also highlights that individuals have often expressed their interest in receiving feedback on their performance (AlHaqui, 2012), and that this feedback be provided on a regular basis (Spurgeon, 2008). The coaches involved in this thesis were no different. Spurgeon (2008) also states that having a positive attitude towards the value and importance of feedback increases the success of such processes. As seen by the participants in Study 1B (Chapter 5) and in the feedback from the coaches in Study 2 (Chapter 6), the coaches themselves were very receptive to the idea of receiving feedback on their performance; however, the success of this process could only be determined by further research that would include some form of longitudinal follow-up or re-evaluation process.

Previous longitudinal studies have found that in the first one to two years of administration of a 360° feedback process, no improvement in overall scores occurred (Walker & Smither, 1999). However, in the following third and fourth years, higher scores were achieved across the board. Reilly, Smither and Vasilopolous (1996) also found that performance improved, however they reported an improvement in the first two years of administration that was then sustained over the following two years of the study. A longitudinal or re-evaluation process was beyond the scope of the current research.

The coach is acknowledged by athletes to be the biggest influence in their performance, both anecdotally and empirically. Yet, results from the athlete 360°
feedback presented in Study 2 (Chapter 6) would indicate that they do not measure their coach’s performance by their own athletic achievements and results, nor do they want their coach to solely focus on their achievements in competition. Their development as an athlete and enjoyment of the sport were much more important factors. As such, if a coach can continue to make small improvements to continually improve the athlete year on year, and create an enjoyable training environment for that athlete, these factors are much more likely to achieve the desired long-term outcomes that would be reflected in performances. These elements are overlooked when using the traditional results-based evaluation of coaching performance (Mallet & Côté, 2006), lending further support to the utilisation of 360° feedback in a sport setting as a superior method of managing and evaluating coaching performance. The old adage of, ‘looking after the processes to take care of the outcomes’, would appear to be true of the coaching process, and results here would indicate that 360° feedback is a potentially good measure of such processes. The coaches, however, still seemed to place a great deal of emphasis on the athletes’ performance outcomes in competition. The feedback provided by the 360° process will highlight to them that for their athletes, it is not always about performance outcomes when measuring either their own athletic development or their coach’s performance.

The 360° feedback achieved in Study 2 (Chapter 6) suggests coaches do need to develop elements such as communication, relationship management and general organisation, which is consistent with findings from the management literature in both sport (Shilbury et al., 2006) and non-sport settings (Hubbard et al., 2007; Nicholson & West, 1989). Positively, there are also several areas where the athletes and peers believe the coach to be performing their duties to a greater level of performance than the coach feels they are. Question 3 within Category 8: Role modelling/mentoring provides a good example of this. The athletes and peers believed that their coach was looked up to by others more so than the coaches themselves. Perhaps, like academic teachers, coaches are appreciated and valued in ways that are not apparent to them (Pyke, 2011). Through the introduction of a feedback loop, such as the 360° feedback proposed here, coaching performance across all domains involved in the process can be highlighted and better understood by those involved, especially coaches.
As discussed in Chapter 2, performance measurement for coaches beyond win/loss ratios and the attainment of medals and championships is scarce. However, this is something that has been done well by professions such as teaching and business management (Atkins & Wood, 2002; Carey, 1995; Changli, 2005; McCarthy & Garavan, 2001; Weiss & Kolberg, 2003). The methods utilised by these professions have ensured continual and focussed development to enhance individuals’ performance within their roles, as well as a fairer, more encompassing measurement of the performance in the whole job and its various requirements, rather than just the outcomes achieved, such as sales outcomes in business and student results in teaching.

It is apparent that performance appraisals and measurement systems within the sport industry and sport coaching specifically are a challenging task (O’Boyle, 2014). O’Boyle (2014) believed that the varying competencies that are required to be a successful and effective coach, as well as the nature of coaching work, add to the complexities and overall difficulty of the task. This is especially true as the majority of the task is performed when their employer is absent. An additional challenge is determining what aspects of coaching are effective and successful at different levels of participation. This is where another benefit of the suggested use of 360° feedback lies; improved communication (O’Boyle, 2014; Schrader et al., 2007; Spinks et al., 1999).

The results provided by the 360° tool in this thesis let the coach know what is expected of them from the athletes and also their employers. The feedback provided can help the coach to understand what the athlete wants from the relationship and provides them with information that the athletes’ would otherwise be afraid to say to the coach. The aspect of anonymity provided by 360° feedback allows the athlete to praise, or criticise, the coach without fear of repercussion (O’Boyle, 2014). This was particularly true in the case of Coach B1 who, through the feedback provided, learnt that their athletes felt like he was not really interested in their lives away from the track, yet this was something he felt he had previously done well. The 360° feedback process worked well to provide the coach with details on this particular weakness and the opportunity to improve upon this area in future. Traditional single-rater methods would likely not produce this same feedback for fear of confrontation as the coach would be able to know exactly who had provided this feedback.
Results from previous studies into the usefulness of 360°-style feedback have suggested that the amount of agreement between self and others was relatively low and that often self-ratings were significantly higher than the ratings of others (Nowack, 1992). This does not appear to be true of the current findings; more often the athlete rated the coach more highly than the coach did in their self-assessment. Wood and associates (2006) suggested that the inclusion of self-evaluation increased the value of the feedback process and could provide additional information and insights into issues that may not be apparent through other methods of evaluation alone. Therefore, if a coach rates his/herself particularly low in one area, perhaps it could be established that they feel this is an area of weakness for them and they would like assistance, either formally or informally, in developing their performance.

There was, however, one glaring discrepancy. Within Category 10: Monitoring performance; question 4 (‘The coach’s main focus is performance outcomes in competition’) drew a stark difference in answers from the coach and peers compared to the athletes that perfectly highlights the main purpose of this research. While the coach and peers responded that often the coach focuses on performance outcomes in competition, the athletes were of the belief that this was rarely the case. The athletes also took into consideration other factors such as their overall athletic development, their enjoyment of both training and competition, and the relationships they formed through the sport, on top of competition outcomes, when assessing performance. This evaluation would appear to do justice to the overall complexity of the coaching role. Conversely, the responses provided by the coach and peers indicate that they are currently of the opinion that performance outcomes in competition are their main focus. This view is consistent with that presented in both the normative and popular literature that, “the most common way to assess coaches’ work or performance is to evaluate athletes’ achievement in terms of win and loss records” (Mallett & Côtè, 2006, p. 214). The plausibility of whether the coach and peers have adopted this view due to the lack of alternative evaluation measures or, because this is the overriding message presented by the literature and within sporting society, can only be determined by further research.

What this research has shown, and the process of 360° feedback is capable of highlighting, is that winning in competition is only a small part of the coaching role and
athlete expectations from the relationship. This emphasises the need to move beyond winning and losing guidelines for the performance evaluation of coaches, as there is so much more to the work they perform. The results presented in chapter 6 show that this is acknowledged by the athletes and consequently needs to be acknowledged and reflected in measurement and evaluation methods as well as the literature.

The data collected via the pilot study of the 360° feedback process within a sport coaching setting, as well as the follow up comments received from the focal coaches, indicate that 360° feedback can work within this setting and is capable of providing useful and insightful feedback to the focal coach participants. Given that there is every indication that the use of 360° feedback will continue to grow (Bracken, 1994; Budman & Rice, 1994; Fleenor & Prince, 1997; Hirsch, 1994; Hoffman, 1995; McGarvey & Smith, 1993; Romano, 1993) and many publications call for further research on 360° feedback processes (Fleenor & Prince, 1997), it is possible that, as O’Boyle (2014) suggested, 360° feedback will become the superior method of measuring and evaluating coaching performance.

7.3 Implications and further research

This thesis has examined the development, design and potential use of a 360° feedback process in a sport coaching setting, specifically within the sport of athletics in Australia. The roles and responsibilities of the sport coach are vast and their purpose extends far beyond simply producing winning teams and athletes. Yet, despite all of this, both the literature and anecdotal evidence suggests that coaching performance continues to be assessed using means that take into account only a singular aspect of the coaching job, the end result. In comparison, key managers of performance, those in a traditional business setting for example, have consistently received feedback from performance evaluation and measurement systems that are specific to the work they perform and the setting in which they do it.

This thesis explored the development of a 360° feedback process specific to the sport coaching setting. Given the unique capability of 360° feedback to not only measure and evaluate performance of day-to-day activities involved in a job, but to provide feedback to the focal individual, 360° feedback for coaches represents a potentially
superior method of measuring and evaluating coaching performance, provision of direct and specific feedback and therefore, potential in the development of highly performing coaches.

Although 360° feedback may represent a more complex and time consuming method than previous options, it has the ability to capture the multifaceted nature of coaching work and performance, and the feedback gained has the potential to be of benefit in a multitude of ways for coaches and coach managers:

1) Via the provision of valuable performance feedback to individual coaches.
2) By providing a greater understanding of what is expected of the coach from others involved in the coaching process.
3) Via the opportunity for self-evaluation and reminding the coaches of what they should be doing on a day-to-day basis.
4) And, the potential to guide educational and developmental practices, both of a single coach via the individualised feedback, or possibly more broadly by grouping responses from multiple feedback clusters (for example, coaches within the same club, competition region or state) to determine if accreditation and development courses are meeting the needs of coaches.

As a result of this thesis, there are a number of areas of particular interest to future researchers:

1) Examining the number and type of individuals involved in the feedback process. In certain circumstances, particularly at junior levels, it may be important to involve parents; in more high performance situations, it may be pertinent to involve sponsors or funding providers. It is also possible that in some cases, negative feedback may be poorly received;
2) Determining how the feedback delivery process can be managed effectively, this should include de-briefing individuals on the feedback. However, there would obviously be a greater cost to the organisation involved;
3) As this research has focussed solely on the sport of athletics, additional research is needed to ascertain the usefulness of 360° feedback in other individual-based sports and particularly, when applying 360° feedback in team-based sports. It is suggested that it may be a process better suited to team sports
given the greater pool of athlete participants to provide the feedback and generally the better organisational structure in terms of management of team sports versus individual sports. The team sport structure may also make for easier implementation of the process.

7.4 Limitations
All research has its limitations and this thesis is no different. Firstly, data were not collected to be able to ascertain how close each of the athletes’ relationships with the coaches was, for example how many times per week was the athlete working with the coach? Secondly, the same data was not collected on the supervisor and peer relationship with the coach; how often would they actually see them coaching to be able to pass comment on each aspect of the 360° feedback? Thirdly, due to the low number of potential participants in each feedback group from which to collect feedback from, due to the nature and structure of the majority of track and field athletic settings within Australia, it was necessary to group superiors and peers together for purposes of confidentiality and anonymity. While these two groups provided similar feedback in terms of the raw ratings, it also meant that the feedback that the coach received did not allow them to directly compare either superior or peer feedback to the self-assessment. Fourthly, when reporting the feedback to the focal coaches they received only feedback from their cluster, it may be useful to provide some form of comparison or average score from other coaches that would enable comparison to ‘standard’. Finally, this research has been focused solely of the sport of athletics within the Australian setting. Determining it’s applicability to other sports, especially within other countries, should be approached with caution.

Unlike the majority of previous coaching performance measures, this research has sought to take a more encompassing view of the measurement and evaluation of the coaching practice, notably by including the coaches themselves in the development of the process. Through interviews to ascertain what it is coaches do and how this should be evaluated (Chapter 4), to the focus group to determine specific content, wording and structure (Chapter 5) and finally, piloting the designed tool with a small group of coaches (Chapter 6), this thesis has gained a more holistic view of coaching performance
and the difficult task of its measurement and evaluation. Future research needs to continue to explore the issue of coaching performance and how best to measure and evaluate coaches in a range of different coaching contexts beyond athletics or individual-based sports, and beyond the Australian setting where this research has been focussed.
7.5 Conclusion

This thesis set out to answer two questions regarding coach evaluation and feedback:

1) What are the roles and responsibilities of a sport coach and how should these be evaluated?
2) Can 360° feedback work in a sport coaching setting?

This thesis has achieved this by utilising coach input to both define the roles and responsibilities of the coaching position and, to participate in the development of the 360° feedback tool capable of evaluating the work of a sport coach. Furthermore, it has shown that 360° feedback processes may serve the purpose of providing them with much needed feedback to aid their development, and consequently their performance, as a coach. The development of this 360° feedback tool provides coaches, the key managers of athletic performance, with a means to evaluate their coaching performance beyond traditional win-loss, performance outcome in competition, methods. Not only is it capable of evaluating performance, it also provides valuable feedback from those involved in the coaching process; namely, athletes, peers and supervisors - feedback that can be used by both the coach and the coach manager to direct the developmental processes of the coach. This process of evaluation and feedback would appear to provide a systematic and superior approach of coaching performance measurement and evaluation than previous results-based methods, therefore potentially facilitating higher levels of sustainable long-term sporting performance and success.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A: ETHICS APPROVAL

Human Ethics Advisory Group – Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences

221 Burwood Highway,
Burwood Victoria 3125, Australia
Telephone +61 3 9251 7425
Facsimile +61 3 9251 7425
human-research@deakin.edu.au

Memorandum

To: Ms Rebecca York
School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences

From: Secretary – HEAG-H
Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing, and Behavioural Sciences

Date: 1 December 2009

Subject: HEAG-H 142/09: Managing and evaluating coach performance using a 360 degree feedback process

Approval (conditional) has been given for Ms Rebecca York, School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences, to undertake this project for a period of 2 years from 1 December 2009, with the following conditions:

Approved conditional – Sampling may only commence when support for the study is obtained from the management of Athletics Australia and Swimming Australia.

The approval given by the Deakin University HEAG-H is given only for the project and for the period as stated in the approval. It is your responsibility to contact the Secretary immediately should any of the following occur:

- Serious or unexpected adverse effects on the participants
- Any proposed changes in the protocol, including extensions of time
- Any events which might affect the continuing ethical acceptability of the project
- The project is discontinued before the expected date of completion
- Modifications that have been requested by other Human Research Ethics Committees

In addition you will be required to report on the progress of your project at least once every year and at the conclusion of the project. Failure to report as required will result in suspension of your approval to proceed with the project.

HEAG-H may need to audit this project as part of the requirements for monitoring set out in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). An Annual Project Report Form can be found at http://www.deakin.edu.au/research/admin/ethics/human/forms/ which you will be required to complete in relation to this research. This should be completed and returned to the Administrative Officer to the HEAG-H, Dean’s office, Health, Medicine, Nursing & Behavioural Sciences, Burwood campus by Tuesday 30th November, 2010 and when the project is completed.

Good luck with the project!

Steven Sawyer
Secretary
HEAG-H

Cc Dr Paul Gastin, Mr Andrew Dawson

Signature Redacted by Library
APPENDIX B: PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT

TO: Coach

Plain Language Statement

Date: July 2010

Full Project Title: Measuring and Evaluating Coach Performance Using a 360 Degree Feedback Process

Principal Researcher: Dr. Paul Gastin

Student Researcher: Rebecca York

Associate Researcher(s): Mr. Andrew Dawson

This Plain Language Statement is 3 pages long. Please make sure you have all the pages.

1. Your Consent

You are invited to take part in this research project, which is seeking to develop a means to evaluate coach performance utilising a 360 degree feedback process.

This Plain Language Statement contains detailed information about the research project. Its purpose is to explain to you as openly and clearly as possible all the procedures involved in this project so that you can make a fully informed decision whether you are going to participate.

Please read this Plain Language Statement carefully. Feel free to ask questions about any information in the document. You may also wish to discuss the project with a relative or friend. Feel free to do this.

Once you understand what the project is about and if you agree to take part in it, you will be asked to sign the Consent Form. By signing the Consent Form, you indicate that you understand the information and that you give your consent to participate in the research project. There is also a revocation of consent form attached. Please use this at any stage of your involvement in the project if you feel that you no longer wish to participate.

This copy of the Plain Language Statement and Consent Form is for you to keep as a record.

2. Purpose and Background

This project is a student project, undertaken by Rebecca York with the supervision of Dr. Paul Gastin and Mr. Andrew Dawson, lecturers in the School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences at Deakin University. The project is being conducted towards the completion of a Master of Applied Science degree.

This project aims to develop a 360 degree evaluation inventory similar to those used in business, yet modified to reflect the unique roles and work performed by coaches.

It is estimated that a total of 10 people will participate in this initial study. These 10 coaches, from differing levels of accreditation, will be interviewed about how (if) they believe they should be evaluated and what types of criteria they should be evaluated on. This information will then be used to help develop the 360 degree coach evaluation process.

Previous experience has shown that 360 degree employee evaluation methods have been used successfully in business for more than two decades and provide managers and employees with valuable insight into their work performance and a direction for their professional development (Weiss & Kolberg, 2003). However, there is little
evidence of the use of 360 degree evaluation in the sport literature, despite the fact that sport coaches are the key managers in sport performance. It seems remiss that they too have not benefited from this process.

You are invited to participate in this research project because you are currently an athletics coach working either on a full-time, part-time or voluntary basis, at either International, National, State or club level, and as such you will have strongly formed opinions and views on what is important when it comes to coaching performance. Consequently, your involvement is important in order to make the 360 degree coach evaluation process as sport-specific, relevant and therefore, useful as possible.

The results of this research may be used to help researcher, Rebecca York to obtain a Master of Applied Science degree.

3. Funding
This research is totally funded by Deakin University.

4. Procedures
This project will focus on the development of a 360 degree evaluation inventory similar to those used in business but modified to reflect the unique roles and work performed by coaches. Your participation in this project will involve providing comment on the design of the 360 degree feedback inventory via a one-on-one interview lasting approximately twenty to thirty minutes. The interview will consist of broad questions such as, "how do you think coaching performance should be evaluated?" And, "what do you feel are important characteristics for a coach to possess?" The interview will be recorded, with your permission, using a digital audio recorder. The results from the feedback gained in this study will help to develop the 360 degree feedback inventory that will be used in later studies.

5. Possible Benefits
Through participation in this first study, you will provide and gain valuable insight with regard to evaluating coaching performance, whilst also helping to identify knowledge and skill areas for further development. However, we cannot guarantee or promise that you will receive any benefits from this project. The research will also contribute new knowledge to the area of sport coaching effectiveness in general and in particular, it will seek to propose an inventory that can be used to evaluate and enhance coach performance.

6. Possible Risks
There are no direct or indirect risks or burdens to participation in this research. However, should you wish to, you have the right to withdraw from the study at anytime.

7. Privacy, Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information
All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only the researchers will have access to information on participants. Your comments and ideas expressed during the interview will be combined with those of other coaches. The interview will be recorded, transcribed and securely stored at Deakin University. During transcription, your remarks will be treated as confidential; what you say will not be attributed to you personally. Your name will not be shared with others, and at no time will you be required to identify yourself. Responses made during the one-on-one interview will be reported anonymously.

Storage of the data collected will adhere to the University regulations and kept in secure storage for 6 years. A report of the study may be submitted for publication or presented as part of conference presentations; however individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report, as only anonymous data will be reported.

8. Results of Project
The results of the project will be reported to you through a written report at the completion of the study. All participants will receive a copy of the final report. They may also be presented as conference presentations and peer reviewed journals, however your identity will be protected as individual participants will not be identifiable - only anonymous data will be presented.
9. **Participation is Voluntary**

Participation in any research project is voluntary. **If you do not wish to take part you are not obliged to.** If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage prior to the data being processed or the participant identifying details are removed. Any information obtained from you to date will not be used and will be destroyed. You may also avoid answering any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering.

Your decision whether to take part or not to take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will not affect your relationship with Deakin University.

Before you make your decision, a member of the research team will be available to answer any questions you have about the research project. You can ask for any information you want. Sign the Consent Form only after you have had a chance to ask your questions and have received satisfactory answers.

If you decide to withdraw from this project, please notify a member of the research team or complete and return the Revocation of Consent Form attached. This notice will allow the research team to inform you if there are any special requirements linked to withdrawing.

10. **Ethical Guidelines**

This project will be carried out according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007) produced by the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia. This statement has been developed to protect the interests of people who agree to participate in human research studies.

The ethics aspects of this research project have been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Deakin University.

11. **Complaints**

If you have any complaints about any aspect of the project, the way it is being conducted or any questions about your rights as a research participant, then you may contact:

Secretary HEAG-H Dean’s Office Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences 221 Burwood Highway Burwood VIC 3125 Telephone: (03) 9251 7174 Email: hmnbs-research@deakin.edu.au

12. **Further Information, Queries or Any Problems**

If you require further information, wish to withdraw your participation or if you have any problems concerning this project (for example, any side effects), you can contact the principal researcher, associate researcher or student researcher.

The researchers responsible for this project are:

Dr. Paul Gastin  
Senior Lecturer, School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences  
Deakin University  
221 Burwood Highway  
Burwood VIC 3125  
paul.gastin@deakin.edu.au  
(03) 9244 6334

Ms. Rebecca York  
Masters Student, School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences  
Deakin University  
221 Burwood Highway  
Burwood VIC 3125  
ryo@deakin.edu.au  
(03) 9244 5033

Mr. Andrew Dawson  
Lecturer, School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences  
Deakin University  
221 Burwood Highway  
Burwood VIC 3125  
adrew.dawson@deakin.edu.au  
(03) 9251 7309
Should you have any concern about the conduct of this research project please contact the Deakin University Ethics Subcommittee – Health Medicine Nursing & Behavioural Sciences at the following address:

Secretary HEAG-H
Dean’s Office
Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences
221 Burwood Highway
Burwood VIC 3125
Telephone: (03) 9251 7174 Email: hmnbs-research@deakin.edu.au
TO: Coach

Consent Form

Date: July 2010

Full Project Title: Measuring and Evaluating Coach Performance Using a 360 Degree Feedback Process

I have read, and I understand the attached Plain Language Statement.

I freely agree to participate in the one-on-one interview as part of this project according to the conditions in the Plain Language Statement.

I have been given a copy of the Plain Language Statement and Consent Form to keep.

The researcher has agreed not to reveal my identity and personal details, including where information about this project is published, or presented in any public form.

Participant’s Name (printed) …………………………………………………………………………………

Signature ………………………………………………… Date ……………………………
DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

REVOCATION OF CONSENT FORM

TO: Participant

---

**Revocation of Consent Form**

*(To be used for participants who wish to withdraw from the project)*

Date: July 2010

Full Project Title: Measuring and Evaluating Coach Performance Using a 360 Degree Feedback Process

I hereby wish to WITHDRAW my consent to participate in the above research project and understand that such withdrawal WILL NOT jeopardise my relationship with Deakin University.

Participant’s Name (printed) ..............................................................

Signature .................................................................................. Date ............................

**Please mail or fax this form to:**

Rebecca York  
School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences  
Deakin University  
221 Burwood Highway  
Burwood VIC 3125  
Phone: (03) 9244 5033  
Fax: (03) 9244 6017
APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE

To begin with, could you just tell me about how you got started in coaching, how long you’ve been doing it, what you like and what you dislike about being a coach?

1. What would you say are the roles of the coach?

2. What do you believe are the key characteristics of successful coaches?

3. How would you assess your coaching performance?

4. Do any of the club administrators, club president perhaps, talk to you about your coaching performance? If yes, what do they talk to you about? [technical, personal, developmental, career]

5. How do you think coaching performance should be evaluated?

6. Who do you think should be involved in the evaluation process?

7. What criteria do you think coaching performance should be evaluated on?

8. How would you then use this feedback? How do you think it should be used?
APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

Today we are hoping to form the basis of a survey questionnaire that can be used to evaluate coaching performance and aid in further development of coaches. Traditionally, coaches’ performance has been judged solely based upon the outcomes they produce – that is, the athletes’ results – despite the acknowledgement of the many external factors that play a role in the outcome of sporting competition. Therefore, the aim of this research is to develop a 360 degree evaluation inventory that takes into account all the important areas that influence coaching performance. This research builds upon the limited availability of methods to effectively evaluate coaches’ performance processes, as well as their outcomes and will provide valuable implications for the education, development and welfare of coaches. It will also inform sport managers and policy makers on human resource management in sport. We have invited you here to gain your input in the initial development of the questionnaire so that it accurately reflects the unique roles and work performed by coaches. We have invited people with similar experiences to share their perceptions and ideas on this topic. You were selected because you have certain things in common that are of particular interest to us. You all have considerable experience as a coach and we believe that you will be able to use this background to help us to make the questionnaire as sport-specific, relevant and therefore, useful as possible. There are no right or wrong answers, but rather differing points of view. Please share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said. We are just as interested in negative comments as positive comments and at times, the negative comments are the most helpful.

I. Introduction: Your name and something that you enjoy doing.

II. What was it that originally got you into coaching?

III. Coaching roles and responsibilities

• What would you say is the role of the coach?

• How would you describe the responsibilities of a coach?

• A coach has previously been described as a manager, a teacher, a counsellor, a strategist, a leader, a decision-maker and a problem-solver, a role model and a ‘jack-of-all-trades’. How do you feel about such descriptions?

IV. Thinking about the time you spend coaching or in coaching-related duties throughout a week, what sort of tasks would be involved?

V. Characteristics of coaches
• Could you suggest five or so of what you believe are the key characteristics for coaches to possess?

• How do you develop/improve these?

VI. Coach education and development

• Thinking about your initial coaching education to gain your qualifications, what would you say was good about it? Not so useful?

• Are such courses applicable/useful in your day-to-day coaching? Is there a difference between what is taught (theoretical) and what you actually do (practical)? Why do you think this is?

• What, if anything, do you receive in terms of ongoing development or support? From your club? Governing body?

• What would you suggest could be done in terms of the way education and ongoing development type courses are presented and the content covered within them?

VII. Performance measurement

• Research suggests that currently most coaches and those assessing coaches look solely to win/loss ratios, by what means do you assess your coaching performance?

• Are there any others, club president perhaps, that assess your coaching performance in any way? Do they ever talk to you about this?

• Given that out of a group of competitors there can only be one winner and there are other factors determining this outcome besides just coaching performance, how would you suggest is the best way to assess overall coaching performance?

• As you know, we are looking at developing a survey that assesses coach performance from multiple points of view, for example - your own, the athletes, and fellow coaches. What do you feel is important to include in such a questionnaire?

• Currently, the topic areas for the questions that we have included are: role model, risk management, leadership, fairness, coaching focus, positive reinforcement, athlete motivation, organisation, coaching skills, athlete development, communication skills, coach-athlete relationship and personal effectiveness, as well as listing 3 most
effective strengths as a coach, 3 areas you feel need further development, and space for any further comments. What do you think about this structure? Is there anything further that you would include? Anything that you would exclude?

• When it came to ranking/rating these via survey means, how would you go about this? We currently have a 5 point scale with the ratings of always, often, sometimes, rarely and never, as well as not applicable. What would be your opinion of using such a scale to assess your performance?

[Hand out a copy of the questionnaire to each participant]

• This is how the current questionnaire form looks. The goal is to develop an easy and fair way to assess coaching performance at any level, not comparing coaches to each other, rather assessing their strengths and weaknesses and utilising this information to develop and enhance individuals as coaches. Have we missed anything? What additions or changes would you like to see made?

VIII. Summary and Conclusion

• (Summarise the key points/answers to the discussion) Does this summary sound complete? Do you have any changes or additions?

• And finally, what advice do you have for us?
APPENDIX E: 360° FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

**360° FEEDBACK COACH EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE**

Please circle the appropriate coach rating in the boxes below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COACH EVALUATION QUESTIONS</th>
<th>[ATHLETE VERSION]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) COACH-ATHLETE RELATIONSHIP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) I enjoy training with my coach</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) I felt I was asked to do what was most helpful</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) I felt that my coach values my input with regard to training decisions</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) My coach is friendly and approachable</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) COMMUNICATION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) My coach makes a regular effort to speak to me on an one-to-one basis</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) I am easy to understand my coach’s training instructions</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) My coach tells me when I have something to say</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) My coach provides me with valuable feedback about how I am performing</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) My coach recognizes what I need to do to improve as an athlete</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) My coach is interested in my personal development outside of athletics</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) As I develop as an athlete, my coach develops and adapts his coaching</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) ENJOYMENT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Enjoying going to training and competition</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) My coach helps me to create a good social environment within the training group</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) My coach is motivated and happy to be at training</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) My coach includes a lot of variety in training</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) IMPROVEMENT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) My coach encourages me to set goals</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) My coach evaluates how I am progressing in training and competition</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) I have been with my coach enough time to have developed good relationships</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) My coach improves his coaching accordingly</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) KNOWLEDGE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) My coach has a good knowledge of killed and the event they are coaching</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) My coach is up to date with the tactical and technical aspects of the event</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) My coach is up to date with the latest training and recovery methods</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) My coach applies knowledge and skills from outside athletics in their coaching</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) ORGANIZATION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) My coach is on time to training sessions and competitions</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Each training session is well planned and set up</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) My coach plans ahead for key events throughout the season</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8) ROLE MODELING/MENTORING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) My coach is a good role model</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) My coach shows respect for others and promotes good sportsmanship</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Other coaches look up to my coach and ask for his opinion on coaching-related matters</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) My coach seeks advice from other coaches regarding coaching matters if they need assistance</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9) TEACHING &amp; LEARNING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) My coach can teach the basic skills required in the event</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) My coach gives encouragement rather than criticism when correcting my technical skills</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) I feel actually learning about the event is important in my coach’s role</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) My coach is willing to answer the questions of my athletes-related questions or will fill out the answer and get back to me</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10) MONITORING PERFORMANCE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) My coach encourages me to think about what I am doing well and progress</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) My coach reflects on their own coaching performance and ways to continually improve</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) My coach recognizes my efforts and goal achievements</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) My coach places his focus on performance outcomes in competition</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*If your coach’s three most effective strengths:*  

*Are there any areas of your coach’s performance you feel need further development?*  

A.  
B.  
C.  
D.  
E.  

*Please provide any further comments here:*
### 360° FEEDBACK COACH EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Please circle the appropriate coach rating in the boxes below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COACH EVALUATION QUESTIONS</th>
<th>5 ALWAYS</th>
<th>4 OFTEN</th>
<th>3 SOMETIMES</th>
<th>2 RARELY</th>
<th>1 NEVER</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>NOT APPLICABLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMUNICATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. My athletes enjoy training with me</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My athletes feel they can talk to me about most things</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I take my athletes’ feedback into account when making training decisions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am friendly and approachable</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DEVELOPMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I refer to my athletes when they have something to say</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I provide clear and concise training instructions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I listen to my athletes' needs and try to accommodate them</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENJOYMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I enjoy going to training and competing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I fully understand the coaching philosophy and goals</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I am interested and happy to be at training</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. I make a lot of effort in training</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IMPROVEMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. I encourage my athletes to set goals</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I help my athletes to achieve their goals</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I familiarize my athletes with my coaching philosophy and approach</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>KNOWLEDGE</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I possess a good knowledge of the sport and the rules</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I am aware of the latest coaching techniques and methods</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I am up to date with the latest training and recovery methods</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td><strong>ORGANIZATION</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. My coach is on time to training sessions and competitions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My coach is approachable and easy to talk to</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ROLE MODEL/INSPIRATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I am a good role model</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I emphasize the importance of sportsmanship</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I make a lot of effort in training and competing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEACHING &amp; LEARNING</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I teach the basics of the sport effectively</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I make the training and competing sessions enjoyable</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MONITORING PERFORMANCE</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I encourage my athletes to think about their ideas and take responsibility for their own performance</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I require my athletes to set goals and work towards them</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I provide feedback to improve my athletes' performance</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What are your three most effective strategies?

1. 
2. 
3. 

Are there any areas of your performance you feel need further development?

1. 
2. 
3. 

Please provide any further comments here:
**360° FEEDBACK COACH EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE**

Please circle the appropriate coach rating in the boxes below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COACH EVALUATION QUESTIONS</th>
<th>[SUPERVISOR VERSION]</th>
<th>S ALWAYS</th>
<th>O OFTEN</th>
<th>SOMETIMES</th>
<th>RARELY</th>
<th>NEVER</th>
<th>NOT APPLICABLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMUNICATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The coach makes a regular effort to speak to each athlete on a one-to-one basis.</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The coach is easy to understand.</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The coach shows respect to the athlete when they have something to say.</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The coach provides athletes with valuable feedback about how they are performing.</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DEVELOPMENT</strong></td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The coach evaluates how each athlete is progressing in training and competition.</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The coach is up to date with the tactical and technical aspects of the event.</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>4. The coach is always prepared to give suggestions when needed.</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The coach has a good knowledge of athletic and the event they are coaching.</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The coach always breaks down match statistics and relevant players.</td>
<td>S</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. The coach is always available to his staff and team members.</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. The coach shows respect for others and promotes good sportsmanship.</td>
<td>S</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TEAM-BUILDING/LEADERSHIP</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. The coach can teach the basics required in the event.</td>
<td>S</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The coach recognizes the athletes who are doing well and gives them feedback.</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the coach's three most effective strengths are:  

1.  
2.  
3.  

Are there any areas of the coach's performance you feel need further development?  

1.  
2.  
3.  
4.