Examining Sports Coaching Philosophy:
Implications for Policy, Pedagogy and Practice

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy

Deakin University
October, 2012
Candidate Declaration

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Abstract

This thesis examines sports coaching philosophy in the context of the sport of basketball in Australia. Specifically, this research critically analysed the concept of philosophy in sports coaching through a mixed-methods approach. Drawing from theoretical perspectives of philosophy in the broader context of society; and in the helping professions (of which this thesis argues sport coaching is one); and more specifically philosophy in sport coaching, this thesis sought to answer three broad questions ‘What is a coaching philosophy?’, ‘Why is philosophy important to sport coaching?’ and ‘How is philosophy learned by sport coaches?’ These questions provided a framework to explore the extant literature regarding philosophy; determine appropriate research design and method; and to advance the understanding of what philosophy is, its utility, and the processes that underpin its development in sport coaching.

This thesis employed a mixed methods research design to gain a better understanding of the concept of coaching philosophy from multiple perspectives. First, a document analysis of Australian formal coach education programs provided a perspective on what is learned about philosophy, and how it is learned in formal higher education settings (11 universities and a unit within a number of technical and further education (TAFE) institutions) as well the national industry coach education program in Australia (the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS)). Second, interviews were conducted with eight practicing, recreational and developmental Australian basketball coaches. These interviews enabled the coaches to provide their perspective regarding what philosophy is, why it is important in their practice, and how their philosophy was learned. Third, those same eight coaches were observed to determine the congruency
between their thoughts about philosophy (identified via interviews) and their actions. This methodology, of interview coupled with observation, represents a unique contribution to the development of literature about coaching philosophy in sport, and to the broader context of philosophy in helping professions in general.

Results indicated that coaching philosophy, as defined in the extant sport coaching literature and formal coach education programs, is vague and lacks the complexity and theoretical foundations of other helping professions. Therefore, education within the coaching context lags behind other helping professions, as the education and accreditation programs provide little guidance to coaches on how to operationalize their philosophy in their practice. As a result of the lack of clarity offered by formal programs in coach development, coaches who participated in this research have formulated their own version of philosophy which does not reflect what is seen in the current literature about philosophy—either in society in general, in other helping professions, or in coaching. Instead, coaches have developed their own philosophy which can more accurately be described as a “sport philosophy”. This sport philosophy better maps onto their experiences as a coach and enables them to operationalize it in ways that assists their practice, which was clearly evident when the coaches’ practice was observed (via their consistent coach behaviour). This research has shown that, despite previous assumptions of philosophy’s importance in coaching, there is little known about it. Furthermore, for it to be truly called a ‘coaching philosophy’ we must consider more than what coaches can do for their athletes. We need to continue to bridge the gap between the theory and practice of philosophy in coaching to truly understand its impact on the
practice of coaches. This thesis provides the opportunity for other researchers to challenge their own assumptions about coaching philosophy.
Chapter 1: Introduction

“Professionals are aware of what they are doing and why they do it; they have an end, a vision, in mind as well as the means” (Merriam & Brockett, 2007, p. 30).

Philosophy, one of the oldest academic disciplines, constructs and then solves questions in relation to meaning, value and morality (Hardman & Jones, 2008). As a process, philosophy seeks to answer two critical questions: ‘What do you mean?’ and, ‘How do you know?’ (Best, 1978, p. 8). Through asking these philosophical questions, one is seeking further clarification (i.e., more detail) and justification (i.e., supporting evidence) for a claim or statement (Hardman & Jones, 2008). And, when considering human morality, one may ask philosophical questions such as ‘who are we?’ and ‘what are we?’ (Sommers-Flanagan & Sommers-Flanagan, 2007). Through understanding and utilising philosophy, and having knowledge of those theories related to moral and ethical behaviours, one has “lenses through which to view a given situation” (Sommers-Flanagan & Sommers-Flanagan, 2007, p. 21).

In the helping professions, a philosophy is considered to be an important component of their practice and how they interact with and view their clients. Through understanding their own philosophy, the helping professional understands how their adopted philosophical orientation and beliefs impact upon those they help (Bryan, 2009). The helping relationship has been defined as one which contributes “in a facilitating, positive way to [an individual’s] improvement” (Shertzer & Stone, 1974, p. 5). The helping relationship has been characterised by ten elements which distinguish it from
other relationships. The helping relationship must exist through the mutual consent of those individuals involved (1). This relationship takes place because the individual needs assistance, information, advice or instruction from the helping professional (2). It is meaningful to its participants (3) and respect for each other is present in the relationship (4). A structured setting is evident (5) however collaborative effort is also shown in working towards the chosen goal (6). The helping relationship is conducted through interaction and communication (7), with the helping person needing to be approachable and exhibit stability in the relationship (8). And affect is evident (9), with change of the individual to be helped, the ultimate goal of the helping relationship (10) (Shertzer & Stone, 1974).

The helping professions have also been distinguished from other professions by two characteristics: firstly, the helping professional requires more than just science as there are no definite guidelines in their work with others; hence, they must rely more on their values. Secondly, in comparison to other professions, the helping professions have a much more onerous obligation in their duty of care; this is further complicated by the ambiguity in what is considered beneficial and what is injurious (McCully, 1966).

Although some occupations have been formally recognised as helping professions (e.g., counselling), there is another group of “informal helpers” (Winbolt, 2011, p. 13) who utilise the helping skills of those formally recognised but, as they are viewed to be secondary to their role, they may not necessarily receive training in the development of these skills (e.g., teaching) (Egan, 2010). These informal helpers utilise counselling skills such as questioning, rapport-building, supporting, listening and problem-solving (Winbolt, 2011). The sports coach (referred to as a coach in the remainder of this thesis)
could be said to use all of these skills in their practice, as well as those characteristics of
the helping profession and relationship described by Shertzer and Stone (1974). Change
through the improvement of performance is the core purpose of the coach (Lyle, 2011).
In fact, the European Coaching Council defines coaching as “the guided improvement,
led by a coach, of sports participants and teams in a single sport and at identifiable stages
of the athlete/sportsperson pathway” (Duffy, 2010, p. vii).

The coach-athlete relationship takes place because the athlete requires, amongst
other things, assistance and instruction in improving their sport performance (Côté &
Gilbert, 2009). A cooperative coaching style provides stability and structure that enables
the athlete to reach their goals through two-way communication (Martens, 2012). The
game sense approach to coaching also allows a more collaborative relationship between
athlete and coach through the use of questioning by the coach and the subsequent
development of decision-making in the athlete (Light, 2004). And, for a positive coach-
athlete relationship to develop, the coach needs to be approachable (Potrac, Jones, &
Armour, 2002) with mutual respect between the coach and athlete (Jones, Armour, &
Potrac, 2003).

Overall, in the helping professions of education, psychology, nursing and the like,
the improvement of the individual helped is core to the profession (Shertzer & Stone,
1974). The same could be said of the sports coaching profession (Lyle, 2011). Yet,
philosophy is one way in which coaching can be distinguished from these helping
professions. There are clear differences in how philosophy is defined, the importance
given, and how it is learned in the helping professions compared to that of coaching. In
essence, helping professionals are provided with a philosophical and historical foundation to what they do.

Philosophy is assumed to be important in coaching, with the view that coaches need to develop a “coaching philosophy” to be an effective coach (Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2009; Fuoss & Troppmann, 1985; Goodman, 2006). Yet, how coaching philosophy is defined is problematic, and little is known about what it is, how it impacts on coaching practice or how it is learned in comparison to other aspects of coach learning and development. This thesis will concentrate on coaching philosophy as a concept and focus, rather than as a by-product, on three broad questions that will address these knowledge gaps to create a theme throughout the thesis. This chapter begins with considering each of those questions.

1.1 What is Philosophy?

In its broadest sense, philosophy is commonly referred to as “the love, study or pursuit of wisdom, knowledge, and truth” (Lumpkin, 2011, p. 104). Originating from the philosopher Socrates, the term philosophy literally means the ‘love of wisdom’; however, the word is used in a variety of ways (Reed & Ground, 1997). In fact, dictionaries generally provide multiple definitions of philosophy with differing meanings. For example, the Oxford Dictionary defines philosophy in two key ways: 1) “the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence”; and 2) “a theory or attitude that acts as a guiding principle for behaviour” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2012). Another, the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (as cited in Stewart, 2009)
provides eight definitions of philosophy ranging from the classical definition by Socrates to definitions related to one’s philosophy of life. Although philosophy has been viewed to be an abstract term which has little relevance to one’s everyday lives (Merriam & Brockett, 2007), it is appealing as it gives a reason for action; people have a sound set of reasons for being and doing.

Central to the beliefs and actions of the helping professional, and thus the coach, is the branch of philosophy that considers one’s ethical behaviour; that is, moral philosophy. Yet, despite the recent growing interest in coaching philosophy (Bennie & O’Connor, 2010; Collins, Barber, Moore, & Laws, 2011; Collins, Gould, Lauer, & Chung, 2009; Robbins, Houston, & Dummer, 2010), and the agreement that philosophy is a crucial element of coaching (Cassidy et al., 2009; Fuoss & Troppmann, 1985; Kidman & Hanrahan, 2011; Lyle, 2002), one must go to the broader field of sport management to understand the ethical constructs that are associated with moral philosophy and, therefore, one’s ethical behaviour. In their empirically derived textbook, DeSensi and Rosenberg (2010) discuss the concepts of teleology, deontology and virtue ethics and their relevance to sport managers. As coaches have often been referred to as managers who deal with people (Reid, 2008; Robinson, 2010; Schembri, 2001), it is clear that moral philosophy and the concepts of teleology, deontology and virtue ethics are relevant to coaches as part of the sport management discipline.

When managers are faced with a moral decision which involves weighing up the costs and benefits of taking (or not taking) action, one who uses a teleological method will choose a course of action which results in the most good (Bergmann Drewe, 2000a). If this were to be translated to coaching, for example, the coach must manage their
training and, hence, weigh up the costs and benefits of the type of training adopted to ensure peak performance. Therefore, regardless of the coaches’ actions, they would be considered right if they contributed to an increase in the overall good and future success of the athletes (i.e., results focused) (Hardman & Jones, 2008). However, what is deemed ‘good’ is one of the main criticisms of teleological theories, as some individuals could purely be acting in their own self-interests (egoism) (DeSensi & Rosenberg, 2010).

For some managers, the outcomes of their actions are not their main focus; instead they take a deontological approach through focusing on their duty in maintaining well-established and accepted moral standards (DeSensi & Rosenberg, 2010). Within coaching (or any profession for that matter), a code of ethical conduct is a prime example of deontology. Here, the coach is provided with a list of do’s and don’ts from their club, association or organisation which constitute the duties and rights in their role as coach (Hardman & Jones, 2008). The origins of the principles underpinning these codes will differ, however, dependent on the type of deontological approach taken; they could stem from one’s own intuition, from their religion, or from the very nature of the principles and actions (i.e., they appear to be common sense) (DeSensi & Rosenberg, 2010).

The theories of teleology and deontology have been criticised, however, for being overly dependent on obligations to conform to certain principles. They do not consider the moral character of the manager in the ethical decision-making process (DeSensi & Rosenberg, 2010). The theory of virtue ethics, however, states that one does not need to create and follow ethical rules or obligations if they have developed into virtuous moral agents. In other words, how one acts is simply a reflection of their inner morality or their traits of character (virtues) (Meara, Schmidt, & Day, 1996). From this perspective one’s
actions are not merely based on what is deemed to be admirable; their virtues are instead linked to their intentions and motives to do the right thing. When applied to coaching, a virtuous coach will try to produce a moral environment for their athletes through possessing virtues such as compassion, fairness and honesty, as well as encouraging their athletes to develop similar character traits (Hardman & Jones, 2008). However, like the other two theories, virtue ethics has had its critics including the self-centred focus on the character of the agent (in the current thesis, the coach) and the lack of precise guidelines in ethical decision-making (DeSensi & Rosenberg, 2010).

The above discussion on the theories of moral philosophy highlights how the concept of philosophy is perceived to guide the behaviours, decision-making processes and eventual actions of people—in this case, managers and coaches. In other words, philosophy has been considered to be a useful concept in providing a framework around sometimes abstract and unpredictable environments. Further, when professionals have influential positions and responsibilities with and for others (such as the helping professions) philosophy is considered an important moral compass. However, in order for philosophy to be a practical guide, there is a need to move beyond thinking about it as a concept and to understand its operationalization. Therefore, to better understand how philosophy influences individuals’ actions, the empirical literature developed in the helping professions (described at the beginning of this chapter), in particular those closely related to coaching – education and sport psychology, are explored.

Within education, a statement of teaching philosophy has been defined as a holistic narrative of one’s thoughts on teaching including their role, their rationale for teaching methods, and the values and goals of education (Beatty, Leigh, & Dean, 2009b).
Interestingly, there has been acknowledgement that there is a lack of operational definitions in the literature on teaching philosophy (Schonwetter, Sokal, Friesen, & Taylor, 2002). Hence, Schonwetter and associates (2002) proposed their own operational definition based on a comprehensive review of the literature: “a teaching philosophy statement is a systematic and critical rationale that focuses on the important components defining effective teaching and learning in a particular discipline and/or institutional context” (p. 84). What is most interesting to note about this definition (and the one by Beatty et al., 2009b) is that it is not singularly about the beliefs and values of the teacher; although they are at the centre of the critical rationale component of this definition, there are other components related to how it is developed. This illustrates a holistic approach to the concept and operationalization of philosophy by emphasising both the importance of theoretical perspectives on teaching and learning, and the influence of context on the teacher’s practice (Schonwetter et al., 2002).

The helping profession of sport psychology in particular has discussed the importance of the practitioner’s “awareness and understanding of the theoretical roots underlying daily decisions and actions” (Stainback, Moncier III, & Tayler, 2007, p. 310). Professional philosophy in sports psychology has been defined as the practitioners’ beliefs or interest in consulting including primary intervention goals, the professional perspectives they bring to their practice and their research approach (Weiss, 1991). In comparison, Poczwardowski, Sherman and Henschen (1998) have provided a philosophical foundation to their definition of professional philosophy in sport psychology, stating that it is “the consultant’s beliefs about the nature of reality, the human being’s place in the universe, and more specifically, the nature of human
behaviour change and a human being’s basic nature” (p. 193). Later, Poczwardowski, Sherman and Ravizza (2004) conceptualised a framework of professional philosophy which incorporated five main components including the sport psychologist’s personal values and beliefs, the theoretical paradigm adopted on behaviour change, their practice model and role as consultant, intervention goals and intervention methods and techniques. In a similar vein to education, we can see that these definitions take into consideration more than just the professional’s beliefs and values. Furthermore, the definition provided by Poczwardowski and associates (1998) demonstrates a clear interaction between one’s beliefs and actions and philosophy itself.

The philosopher Plato viewed competitive sport as a moral testing ground with coaches seen as moral educators in this context (Russell, 2011). Hence, coaches play an important role in sport, not only in developing the moral character of their athletes (Bergmann Drewe, 2000b) but also in making it enjoyable for young people and, therefore, encouraging overall lifelong participation in sport and physical activity (Cuskelly, Hoye, & Auld, 2006). Coaching philosophy has been seen as central to the development of character in athletes (Collins et al., 2009), yet coaching philosophy itself has been very generally defined, and nor does it appear to consider the coach’s role as a moral educator. Although this thesis holds the view that coaching is a helping profession, coaching has failed to provide a definition of coaching philosophy that is specific to its context in the way that helping professions have done. That is, philosophy in coaching is not linked back to the concept of philosophy, nor clearly operationalized in ways that it has been in teaching and sport psychology, as the examples describe above.
Ironically, as noted previously, philosophy has been assumed to be important in coaching—for some of the same reasons that philosophy has been assumed to be important in other professions. The job of coaching has been described as having some scientific elements (and, therefore, well-defined responsibilities) but simultaneously as an art with elements that are dependent on the coach as an individual (Woodman, 1994), making the concept of philosophy not only appealing, but also perceived as a necessity. The next section of the thesis reflects on why philosophy has been seen as an important concept, firstly in helping professions, and then more specifically in coaching.

### 1.2 Why is Philosophy Important?

It has already been noted that the concept of philosophy has been considered as an important framework to guide behaviour, decisions and actions in a range of contexts. This thesis is particularly interested in the utility of philosophy in helping professions, and more specifically in coaching. It is in these contexts that individuals are expected to epitomise superior moral character regardless of the situation they may be confronted with in their role. In this way, philosophy is important in society in general, but particularly important for those in positions of helping and guiding others as part of what they do. It is of interest to explore the extant literature in the helping professions in terms of why philosophy is considered essential.

Within the realm of moral philosophy, philosophy is seen as the foundation for the ethical practice of professionals (Hiemstra, 1988). Yet, the integration of thought with action has plagued philosophers (Argyris & Schön, 1974), with the relationship between
philosophy and action one of the most difficult problems for philosophers to address (Elias, 1982). As Elias and Merriam (2005) assert: “theory without practice leads to an empty realism, and action without philosophical reflection leads to a mindless activism” (p. 4). In the helping profession of education, scholars have made some progress towards better understanding how teaching philosophy is linked with teaching practice.

In their review of the literature on teaching philosophy statements, Schonwetter and associates (2002) found that there were five key purposes to a teaching philosophy statement: 1) clarification of good teaching; 2) provision of a rationale for teaching and the guidance of teaching behaviours; 3) organisation of the evaluation of one’s teaching; 4) promotion of professional and personal development; and 5) dissemination of effective teaching. Increasingly, inclusion of a statement of teaching philosophy has also become a requirement for those applying for employment within higher education institutions world-wide (Schonwetter et al., 2002; Schussler et al., 2011).

Whitehead and Blair (2010) believed that a philosophy of teaching in physical education facilitated the development of becoming an effective teacher. The development of a personal philosophy in teaching has been seen to influence teachers’ behaviour and provide direction in their program development, and helped them to prepare their classes more efficiently, therefore improving their overall teaching effectiveness (Kearns & Sullivan, 2011; Lumpkin, 2011). Hence, the teacher’s philosophy contributes to his or her teaching style, influencing the teaching strategies chosen and the types of teaching skills used (Whitehead & Blair, 2010). Teaching philosophy can also be used as a ‘lens’ to view standards and make decisions about the curriculum (Lund & Tannehill, 2009).
However, this is not simply about understanding what others believe or why they behave a certain way; one must also know where their own values lie (Lumpkin, 2011).

There is the belief that defining one’s educational philosophy allows the educator to be more conscious of those subconscious behaviours and beliefs to critically examine any incongruence between beliefs and practice (Tisdell & Taylor, 1999). Through reflection on their teaching philosophy, teachers can determine whether there are inconsistencies between their espoused philosophy and their classroom practice; hence, the teaching philosophy statement becomes a basis for the teacher’s ongoing development and an important tool in their self-development (Beatty et al., 2009b). The articulation of a well-defined teaching philosophy is also considered to demonstrate the teacher’s deep commitment to their field (Goodyear & Allchin, 2001). Through making this teaching philosophy public, the teacher not only becomes accountable but also helps build a community within their institution (Beatty et al., 2009b). However, Beatty and associates (2009b) have highlighted that caution must be taken, as criticism of one’s teaching philosophy is a core element of one’s teaching identity and, hence, can be seen as a direct attack on the self. Overall, Lumpkin (2011) believed the failure to develop a definite personal philosophy of teaching can result in a lack of career purpose and direction for the physical education (PE) teacher; without the knowledge of where they are going it is unlikely the PE teacher will end up where they want to be.

Within the field of physical education, Ken Green (1998, 2000, 2002) has been pivotal in investigating the “philosophies” of PE teachers, including the relationship between their practice and stated “philosophies”. The use of the term philosophy in quotation marks is particularly important as the results reflected philosophies which were
ideological and practical in nature rather than having a philosophical approach; that is, PE teachers simply “do” PE (Green, 2000). Their philosophies were focused on enjoyment and the acquisition of sporting skills (Green, 2002) with many teachers having the implicit belief that a student’s character and moral development was inherent in sport (Green, 2000). Therefore, although teachers appear to be provided with a philosophical foundation to what they do (and this is an important process in their philosophy development – to be discussed in the next section), whether it is affecting PE teachers’ philosophies in the long-term is questionable.

Within the helping profession of sport psychology, professional philosophy has been described as one of eleven critical factors in the developmental process of the sport psychology practitioner (Poczwardowski et al., 1998). “A delineated professional philosophy can both guide a professional in the consulting process and allow clients to make educated choices” (Poczwardowski et al., 1998, p. 194). It also includes their ‘model of practice’; that is, the intervention framework and strategies/techniques the consultant has learned and adopted. Similarly to coaching, reference is made to the consultant’s operating context which can challenge the consultants’ philosophy. Therefore, Poczwardowski and colleagues (1998) believed that sports psychologists should clarify their role in their service delivery depending on which theoretical framework is utilised and the context in which they consult.

There has been a recent emphasis on the development of a holistic philosophy in the sport psychology literature (Bond, 2002; Friesen & Orlick, 2010; Ravizza, 2002; Stambulova & Johnson, 2010). More and more sport psychologists have come to the realisation that the improvement and growth of the athlete as a human being facilitates
their improvement and capabilities as an athlete in the sporting context (Friesen & Orlick, 2010). There has, therefore, been a shift away from the view that the primary role of the sport psychologist is the improvement of the athlete’s performance; hence the quality of life of the athlete outside the sporting context is also now considered in the consulting process (Andersen, Van Raalte, & Brewer, 2001; Friesen & Orlick, 2010). In their study of the professional philosophies of experienced sport psychologists who adopted holistic consulting, Friesen and Orlick (2010) found that their beliefs were centred around the view that athletes were regular people and, despite their elite status, needed to be considered as such. Fundamental to the sport psychologists’ values and their role as a holistic sport psychology consultant was a sense of caring for the individual athlete, especially to ensure that athletes invested in the relationship. And, despite their lack of practical experience in the field, novice sport psychology consultants in their first year of supervised practice have also been found to have a whole person approach in their professional philosophy (Stambulova & Johnson, 2010). They also understood the need to be flexible, and the importance of theoretical frameworks and professional ethics in quality practice. Their professional philosophies also considered their consulting strategies, including the importance of preparation and reflections on practical experiences in their professional growth (Stambulova & Johnson, 2010).

From the discussion above, it is apparent that the helping professions of education and sport psychology have developed clarity about not only the concept of philosophy, but why it is important to have, and to be operationalized in their respective fields. For coaching, however, the same cannot be said. In the field of coaching, philosophy has been assumed to be important to effectiveness (Cassidy et al., 2009; Fuoss & Troppmann,
1985; Goodman, 2006), athlete outcomes (Collins et al., 2009; Gilbert & Trudel, 2004b), coaching practice (Strong, 1992; Wilcox & Trudel, 1998) and ethical coach behaviour (Hardman & Jones, 2011a; Robinson, 2010). As Martens (1987) claims: “a well-developed philosophy of life and coaching will be among your best friends as you pursue your career in coaching” (p. 14). Yet, its operationalization (as will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 2 of this thesis) and the way in which philosophy can be used to actually guide behaviours, decisions, and actions to achieve effectiveness is still to be determined. Despite the perceived importance and utility of philosophy to coaches and coaching, there is less agreement about how philosophy is learned. The following section explores how philosophy is learned in the more developed helping professions to further the analysis.

1.3 How is Philosophy Learned?

Given that philosophy is considered so important not only for coaches but for society in general and related helping professions, it is important to understand how philosophy is learned. “Philosophy of education must be rooted in philosophy itself” (Van Petten Henderson, 1947, p. vii cited in Beatty et al., 2009b). However, in coaching, there is little (theoretical) philosophical basis to what coaches do in their practice. This is in comparison to the helping professions, especially in education, where philosophy appears to be fundamental to their professional learning.

The development of one’s teaching philosophy has been viewed as a relatively slow and continual process over a long period of time (Crookes, 2003). Recently, a stage-
based model was proposed for the philosophical development of personal teaching philosophies. Zeigler (2010) described five possible stages a PE teacher moves through in the development of their personal teaching philosophy: ostrich, with their ‘head in the sand’ and no awareness of the conflicting philosophies that surround them; cafeteria, an eclectic approach of picking bits and pieces of different philosophies; fence-sitter, the PE teacher who may be inclined towards a philosophic direction but has not moved on to the next stage; stage of early maturity, where a philosophical position has been developed; and the final stage of philosophical maturity in which the PE teacher has achieved wisdom through reflection, experience and diligent study. The PE teacher may move through all stages or remain at the first, but the “philosophic quest is a never-ending one” (Zeigler, 2010, p. 229).

In the broader area of education, helping professionals are provided with the philosophical underpinnings of their profession and existing educational philosophies before beginning to develop their own philosophy (Crookes, 2003; Elias & Merriam, 2005; Hiemstra, 1988; Johnson, Musial, & Johnson, 2009; Merriam & Brockett, 2007). Beatty and associates (2009b) believed that for a teacher’s philosophy to be more meaningful, it must be well-grounded and have deeper meaning and justification based on general philosophy and historical educational philosophies. Johnson and associates (2009) believed that one needs to understand why one believes what one does to be able to support one’s actions. Hence, in their textbook chapter Evolving Your Educational Philosophy Johnson and colleagues provide the reader with a detailed analysis of how ancient philosophy relates to their work as an educator, considering branches such as epistemology and axiology and specific educational philosophies such as essentialism
and positivism before the development of the student’s own philosophy of education is discussed (Johnson et al., 2009).

Overall, educators appear to be provided with greater guidance and direction on how to develop their teaching philosophy statement through textbooks (e.g., Crookes, 2003; Johnson et al., 2009), peer-reviewed literature (e.g., Beatty, Leigh, & Dean, 2009a; Kearns & Sullivan, 2011; Schonwetter et al., 2002) and in web-based examples (e.g., Coppola, 2002). In fact, an entire edition of the journal *Adult Learning* (2001) was dedicated to the topic of philosophy, including development of the adult educator’s professional philosophy and how it can be applied to practice (Boulmetis, 1999; Galbraith, 1999; Price, 1999; Tisdell & Taylor, 1999). In health education, the Health Education Philosophy Instrument (HEPI) was developed to establish health educators’ preferences and philosophical beliefs (Welle, Russell, & Kittleson, 2009). And there are also textbooks available, specifically in education, purely on the philosophical foundations of the profession; for example *Philosophical Foundations of Health Education* (Black, Furney, Graf, & Nolte, 2010) and *Philosophy of Physical Education* (Zeigler, 2010).

Within adult education specifically, various frameworks (e.g., Elias & Merriam, 2005), inventories (e.g., Zinn, 2004) and worksheets (e.g., Hiemstra, 1988) have been provided to educators to enable them to develop their personal philosophy of adult education (Merriam & Brockett, 2007). For example, the *Philosophy of Adult Education Inventory (PAEI)* by Zinn (2004) allows the adult educator to examine their own beliefs within a structured framework based on five educational philosophies (e.g., humanistic adult education). In his graduate program in adult education, Hiemstra (1988) developed
the *Personal Philosophy Worksheet*, which provides students with headings related to philosophical beliefs (e.g., what is their philosophical system?) and professional practice (e.g., what are their education aims?) to begin the process of developing their personal statement of philosophy. Future educators are also provided with examples of the author’s own philosophies to provide a foundation to their philosophy development (Brockett & Hiemstra, 2004; Hiemstra, 1988).

This is not to say that education has not grappled with the abstract nature of philosophy and how to teach it to their professionals (Elias & Merriam, 2005). In fact, one of the key goals of an article by Beatty and colleagues (2009b) was to “rediscover the philosophy in teaching philosophies” (p. 101). However, as the previous paragraphs show, at the least, they have recognised their shortcomings and attempted to bridge the gap between theory and practice (Elias, 1982). Even in the relatively new profession of sports psychology, there has been discussion about the importance of delving further into philosophical issues for the education and training of sport psychologists (Poczwardowski et al., 2004).

The development of a sport psychologist’s philosophy has been seen to be a dynamic process which should be developed over their career (Poczwardowski et al., 1998). Novice sport psychology practitioners’ philosophies of practice (and theoretical orientations) often depend on what is learnt in training, in which a dominant method of service delivery (e.g., psychological skills training [PST]) is presented without necessarily understanding this method’s philosophical underpinnings (Lindsay, Breckon, Thomas, & Maynard, 2007). Although practising sport psychologists such as Bond (2002) and Ravizza (2002) have expressed their own personal philosophies in the
empirical literature, based on philosophical constructs such as existentialism and humanism, it appears that sport psychologists are not provided with the same plethora of resources as education in the development of their professional philosophy. As Keegan (2010) asserted when reflecting upon his own development as a sport psychologist, “I wish someone had told me about this” (p. 48).

It has been suggested that sport psychologists’ service philosophy should be actively questioned to help underpin their applied work (Lindsay et al., 2007). This may be completed through the supervision process, the sport psychologist’s own reflective practice, or through further reading of chapters/books (Keegan, 2010). However, Keegan (2010) has underlined the difficulty in teaching what he refers to as “consulting philosophy”, believing that no matter what approach is taken, “specific tools and techniques cannot readily be derived” (p. 49). Therefore, it appears that the sport psychology profession, although beginning to better understand and examine the philosophical underpinnings of their service delivery, overall, have little knowledge of how a sport psychologist develops their philosophy (Stambulova & Johnson, 2010). The same could be said in coaching.

Within the coaching literature, there has been an increased focus on coach learning and development (Cushion et al., 2010; Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2006; Werthner & Trudel, 2009; Wright, Trudel, & Culver, 2007). Yet, this focus has rarely extended to that of coaching philosophy, despite the importance given to its development, as discussed earlier in this chapter. Furthermore, the coaching literature – in the form of formal coach education manuals (e.g., Goodman, 2006), textbooks (e.g., Martens, 2012) and popular industry magazines (e.g., Parish, 2007) – generally provides coaches with
prescriptive information on how to develop their coaching philosophy. Hence, coaches are not provided with specific tools or inventories in their philosophy development, nor are there any philosophical underpinnings to the coaches’ practice.

1.4 Research Context

As seen from the discussion thus far, philosophy is an important concept to understand and it has been suggested for coaching where moral, ethical and consistent behaviour would be required. However, as noted, coaching philosophy has not been defined in a way specific or meaningful to its context in the way that philosophy has been defined in other contexts. Its importance has been assumed, yet the empirical evidence to show its utility is limited. Further, how philosophy is learned in the coaching context has been given little equivalence in terms of its importance.

The research context of this thesis will involve the sport of basketball in Australia using a “collective case study” (Stake, 1995, p. 4) approach. For coaches of basketball in Australia, the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS) is the main formal coach education avenue in their development as a coach (and also their philosophy development); hence, the first study, a document analysis, investigates how philosophy is delivered in this and other formal coach education programs. Although some research has been conducted on the coaching philosophies of lower level coaches (e.g., McCallister, Blinde, & Weiss, 2000), there is little knowledge of these coaches’ philosophy development and understanding of the concept. Hence, recreational and developmental basketball coaches from three prominent basketball clubs in the state of Victoria were interviewed and then observed to determine not only their understanding of coaching
philosophy, but also whether their stated philosophies were implemented in their coaching practice. These coaches’ views on the NCAS were also elicited to determine its role in their coaching philosophy development.

The research context of this thesis is rich in that it examines the relevance of philosophy to the volunteer coach who works in a variety of different contexts (with athletes of different age and competitive levels). There is a range of ways in which individuals enter into coaching – from a young coach through their own basketball program to the older coach through their own children. And although previous research (e.g., Timson-Katchis & North, 2008) has shown coaches to hold formal coaching accreditation, coaches can still work at any level and not have accreditation. The participants in this thesis demonstrate the complexity of coaching at the lower levels, after coming into coaching for various different reasons, coaching in a diverse range of contexts, and with one coach holding no formal coach accreditation.

The structure of this thesis will be as follows. Chapter 2 will be structured around the three broad questions introduced in this chapter. The literature surrounding coaching philosophy will be reviewed by examining how philosophy is defined; why it is considered important in coaching effectiveness, athlete outcomes, coaching practice and ethical coaching; and how formal, informal, and nonformal learning situations impact on coaching philosophy development. 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 delivery of coaching philosophy in Australian formal coach education programs, with an emphasis on the sport of basketball in Australia. Chapter 5 explores how formal coach education programs such as
those discussed in Chapter 4 impact on the understanding and development of personal coaching philosophies. And Chapter 6 examines the observation of the philosophies of those coaches interviewed in Chapter 5 to determine whether the coaches’ stated philosophies match those implemented in their coaching practice. The concluding chapter, Chapter 7, will again consider the three broad questions introduced in this chapter through consideration of the results of the present study and the implications for policy, pedagogy and practice.
Chapter 2: Philosophy in Coaching – A Critical Review of the Literature

This chapter provides an analysis of the coaching literature in relation to coaching philosophy utilising the three broad questions that were introduced in Chapter 1 – 1) ‘What is a coaching philosophy?’, 2) ‘Why is coaching philosophy important?’; and 3) ‘How is coaching philosophy learned?’ As noted in Chapter 1, understanding philosophy in the helping professions provides a foundation to the discussion of coaching philosophy.

In line with the questions above, this chapter is organised into three main sections that will assist in providing a better picture of coaching philosophy in youth coaching, and provide the theoretical foundation for the three studies that follow. The first section asks the question, ‘What is a coaching philosophy?’ and examines philosophical foundations and how philosophy has been defined in the sports coaching literature. The second section asks the question, ‘Why is coaching philosophy important?’ and examines the significance of coaching philosophy in coach effectiveness, athlete outcomes, coaching practice and ethical coaching. The third and final section asks the question, ‘How is coaching philosophy learned?’ and examines the formal, informal and nonformal learning contexts of the coach in their philosophy development. This will set the scene for the case study to be investigated in this thesis.
2.1 What is a Coaching Philosophy?

Philosophy in its broadest sense is often considered to be one’s overall outlook on life and originates from the Greek word meaning ‘love of wisdom’ (Elias & Merriam, 2005). Philosophers such as Plato, Kant and Aristotle have examined fundamental beliefs and questions about the ‘meaning of life’ and one’s existence in the world (Elias & Merriam, 2005), including those associated with one’s ethical and moral actions (DeSensi & Rosenberg, 2010). Included in the discussion in Chapter 1 were the ethical theories of teleology, deontology and virtue ethics which are central to the branch of moral philosophy (DeSensi & Rosenberg, 2010) and to the beliefs and actions of the helping professional, and, more importantly, the coach. Although there is an abstract and theoretical association which comes with the term ‘philosophy’, when one questions why they are doing something, what is important to them or what they want out of life in a systematic way, they are ‘philosophizing’ (Merriam & Brockett, 2007).

In this thesis, coaching has been referred to as a helping profession, as noted in Chapter 1. Helping professions have been differentiated from other professions through their greater responsibility in duty of care of their clients and higher reliance on values in their practice (McCully, 1966). As discussed in Chapter 1, despite their lack of training in helping skills, coaches could be considered “informal helpers” (Winbolt, 2011). The development of definition and understanding of a philosophy that is specific to coaching (referred to as a ‘coaching philosophy’) has been derived somewhat from that literature, but has developed independently from that foundational literature. This section of the thesis explores how the field currently understands coaching philosophy.
Coaching philosophy is used widely in literature about and for coaches. That is, the term philosophy appears in text books designed for the development of coaches (e.g., *Sports Coaching Concepts* by Lyle, 2002); empirical research that explores sport coaching (e.g., Collins et al., 2009); popular industry magazines written by coaches for coaches as a means to converse about industry practice (e.g., *Sports Coach* in Australia); as well as in popular books (biographies and autobiographies) about high profile or successful coaches (e.g., *They Call Me Coach* by Wooden & Tobin, 2004). This has led to a variety of definitions of coaching philosophy and various ways in which the term has been used and defined. In some cases it is used interchangeably with “good practice”, and as will be seen later in this chapter, is considered to be a key part of coach success.

Despite the different sources of definitions of philosophy, there are elements that are consistent in the literature—that is, a coaching philosophy is a set of beliefs and values that is assumed to guide coaching practice (Cassidy et al., 2009; Kidman & Hanrahan, 2011; Lyle, 2002; Vealey, 2005). Importantly, the literature has been consistent in assuming that coaches use their belief system (that is, their coaching philosophy) to guide their coaching practice. However, it is not clear that this is indeed the case. It is not clear that coaches have a philosophy in the first place, nor is it clear that it is used to guide practice. This thesis explores these issues. Therefore, it is at first necessary to understand how coaching philosophy has been defined in coaching.

The field of coaching as a practice has a long history (MacLean & Pritchard, 2008; Phillips, 1999), yet empirical research in the field is relatively recent (Gilbert & Trudel, 2004a). The earliest sources of discussion about what coaching is, and specifically for this thesis, what coaching philosophy is, appear in books that were
designed for the development of coaches (more recently known as textbooks). In one of the earliest discussions of philosophy within a coaching text, Tutko and Richards (1971) assumed that a coaching philosophy was comparable to the coach’s attitude. They believed that this coaching philosophy should be closely related to their philosophy of life, with the emphasis on the total development of the athlete – both personal and sport-related. The development of philosophy for coaching was viewed by the authors as a way of enabling the coach to handle their athletes effectively. They also identified that a coaching philosophy may take years to develop but a philosophy alone did not guarantee coaching success (Tutko & Richards, 1971). In a later coaching text, Fuoss and Troppmann (1985) believed that a philosophy was essential for coaching, whereby without one coaches would have uncertainty of values and beliefs and, in turn, cause confusion and disorder and, therefore, an unsuccessful sports program and a disgruntled coach. They also believed that a coach’s philosophy was an interrelated concept involving one’s personal philosophy of life and one’s view of one’s position which was acquired through events experienced in one’s lifetime (Fuoss & Troppmann, 1985).

In his chapter about coaching philosophy (1999) and text about coaching concepts (2002), Lyle was more prescriptive about what a coaching philosophy is, and how it links to coaching behaviour. He noted that without the derivation from practice, a coaching philosophy was simply an “ideological statement about preferred values” (Lyle, 2002, p. 168) not tested through implementation. In his text, a coaching philosophy was considered as “principles that guide coaching practice” (Lyle, 2002, p. 167). He believed a coaching philosophy was something that changes over time, should specify the practical manifestation of the belief (that is, in what situation that statement applies) and reflect the
practice of the coach. In this way, as it is clearly linked to practice, he believed it could be objectively evaluated (Lyle, 2002). A list of criteria for the evaluation of coaching philosophies including indicator of practice, consistency and value clarity was later suggested by Lyle (2002). In a similar critical approach to that of Lyle, Cassidy, Jones and Potrac (2004; 2009) have also produced a textbook in sport coaching that highlights that a coaching philosophy is a “prerequisite to good practice” (2004, p. 53). They believed that a coaching philosophy provides the coach with focus and direction about the ‘how’ of coaching and should be seen by coaches as a precursor of action, because personal beliefs affect how they understand the world of coaching, what actions they take and why they take them (Cassidy et al., 2004, 2009).

Hardman and Jones (2008; 2011b) have been instrumental in providing a variety of different topics that influence the modern coach. Hardman and Jones have been the first authors to clearly connect the historical foundations of philosophy (as discussed in Chapter 1 of this thesis) to that of coaching. In their book chapter *Philosophy for Coaches* (Hardman & Jones, 2008) the reader is introduced to key philosophical concepts (such as deontology and virtue ethics, as have been described earlier in Chapter 1 of this thesis) deemed by the authors to be relevant to modern coaching practice in that they assist in the development of “philosophically informed coaching” (p. 66). In their recent book *The Ethics of Sports Coaching* (Hardman & Jones, 2011b) philosophical concepts such as virtue ethics, and philosophers such as Aristotle and Kant were introduced to coaches in relation to their coaching practice. However, although such concepts were introduced to the coach in their textbook, they failed to translate the philosophical understandings to application in coaching in order to develop a coaching philosophy. In addition to
Hardman and Jones, another important contributor in the area of ethics in coaching has been Mike McNamee (1998, 2011). Through his pivotal chapter Celebrating Trust: Virtues and Rules in the Ethical Conduct of Sports Coaches, McNamee introduced the coach to the philosophically-based concept of the virtuous coach and their ethical conduct, including the moral dilemmas faced in their practice. Clearly, the more recent texts for coaches are beginning to have a more rigorous understanding of philosophy (which is grounded in philosophical theory, yet they still fail to interpret these concepts in a meaningful way for the development of one’s coaching philosophy).

The sport industry has burgeoned in the last 30 years and, so too, has the empirical literature in the field. Although there are many studies that address coaching per se (e.g., review of coaching literature), there is a small but growing area that explores coaching philosophy. This is somewhat surprising given that textbooks (as discussed previously in this chapter) consider having a well-developed coaching philosophy to be fundamental to coach success. Perhaps not surprising, empirical literature that explores elements of coaching and philosophy (further discussed in section 2 of this chapter) has closely followed textbooks in definitions of philosophy—and, in some cases, has directly adopted them. For example, in their study on the philosophical beliefs of coaches, Collins and associates (2009) defined coaching philosophy as “beliefs that guide our everyday behaviour” (p. 31). This reflects the consistent definition of coaching philosophy discussed earlier in this section and adopted by a number of coaching textbooks (Cassidy et al., 2009; Kidman & Hanrahan, 2011; Lyle, 2002; Vealey, 2005).

The research gap in relation to coaching philosophy has been previously identified (Cushion, 2006; Isabel, Antonio, Antonio, Felismina, & Michel, 2008; Pratt &
Eitzen, 1989). Cushion (2006), in particular, noted the gap in the existing coaching research in his article on the relationship between coaching philosophy and coaching behaviour. However, his article was designed as a way of initiating discussion on the concept of coaching philosophy, rather than being based on empirical evidence. Additionally, many of his proposed questions were originally identified by Lyle (1999, 2002); therefore, it appears that although research has recently increased in the area of coaching philosophy (Bennie & O’Connor, 2010; Collins et al., 2011; Collins et al., 2009) there continues to be little research devoted to the area in comparison to other coaching concepts, most likely linked to the problematic nature of its understanding in the coaching profession.

As the field of coaching has developed, so too has the need for coaches themselves to have an outlet where they share industry experiences and practice. This has led to the development of a range of popular industry-based (non-empirical) magazines and journals (e.g., Coach and Athletic Director). Further, as sport and coaching is part of popular culture, and coaches can sometimes be high-profile celebrities, their stories (and coaching philosophies) have become the subject of many popular books (e.g., The Coach: Managing for Success by Charlesworth, 2001). In the case of popular magazines and books, many refer to a coach philosophy, but in all cases, it is not defined or explained in any terms that reference philosophical theory, rather just assumed that the innate beliefs of the coach link to their practice, and, ultimately, are part of their success. In these sources of literature, there is little information about how philosophy might be developed or learned. It is for this reason that literature is referred to infrequently in this thesis.
Overall, coaching philosophy has been considered to be important, and fundamental to coaching success; however, as noted by a number of authors, by itself it cannot guarantee success. Cassidy and associates (2009), in agreement with Lyle (1999), note that the development of a coaching philosophy can be problematic and should not become an “insincere tidy wish-list” (p. 54). It needs to be flexible (to be able to adapt to changing conditions), functional in practice (able to guide actions) and strike a balance between practicality (helping the coach to solve everyday problems) and idealism (promoting dreams and aspirations) (Cassidy et al., 2009; Lyle, 1999). For this reason, a number of different ways in which coaching philosophy has influenced coaching practice (and, therefore, success) is of interest. Extant literature that explores why a coaching philosophy has been assumed important is discussed in the following section.

2.2 Why is Coaching Philosophy Important?

The first signal that coaching philosophy is important to coach success is that the term is prominent in literature about successful coaching (such as the empirical literature, and biographies and autobiographies written by coaches and about coaches), as well as in the literature for coaches (such as textbooks, magazines and journals designed for coach learning). For example, most coaching textbooks contain a chapter on coaching philosophy, with many positioning this information in the first few chapters. Further, expert coaches identify that a coaching philosophy is key to their success as a coach (Collins et al., 2009; Nash & Sproule, 2009). Coaches have viewed their philosophy as
the basis of their effectiveness (Bennie & O'Connor, 2010), ability to build a successful program (Vallee & Bloom, 2005) and overall success as a coach themselves (Frey, 2007).

As noted in the previous section in this literature review, the definitions of coaching philosophy are, at best, problematic. It is not surprising that when coaching philosophy is described in the extant literature in terms of how it is related to coaching success, there is some confusion. Perhaps ironically, the predominant view in the literature for and about coaching is that a coaching philosophy is crucial for a range of factors that contribute to what has been viewed as successful coaching. This chapter proceeds to outline the way in which coaching philosophy has been indirectly or directly implied in factors that contribute to coaches being labelled as “good” or “successful”. Coaching philosophy has been implicated in factors such as effectiveness (e.g., Fuoss & Troppmann, 1985); positive outcomes for athletes who experience sport (e.g., Collins et al., 2009; Gilbert & Trudel, 2004b), coaching practice (Strong, 1992; Wilcox & Trudel, 1998) and ethical coach behaviour (e.g., Hardman & Jones, 2011b; Robinson, 2010). This chapter proceeds by providing an exploration of how the role of coaching philosophy has been perceived in each of the four areas of coaching success.

### 2.2.1 Importance of coaching philosophy to coaching effectiveness

One of the consistent thrusts in the coaching literature has been to ask, “what is an effective coach?” Understanding what makes a coach effective has been the subject of much scholarly inquiry, and thus, a number of different models that represent coaching effectiveness have been developed (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980; Horn, 2008; Mageau & Vallerand, 2003; Smoll & Smith, 1989). The study of coach effectiveness and the
derivative models is probably the most comprehensive and empirically-derived understanding of coaching in the field of coaching thus far. Scholars who investigate coaching effectiveness have each viewed the concept slightly differently. As Cross (1999) highlights, “it is extremely difficult to construct an all-embracing definition of coaching effectiveness that satisfies all coaching situations” (p. 61). In addition to the coaching context, a number of terms such as ‘expert’ (Saury & Durand, 1998) and ‘experienced’ (Jones, Housner, & Kornspan, 1997) have been used interchangeably to describe the ‘effective’ coach (Lyle, 2002), adding further difficulty to an all-encompassing definition. However, despite the differing definitions and components of models of effective coaching, there is one consistency—that is, the concept of a coaching philosophy has been assumed to be crucial to effectiveness.

Côté and Gilbert (2009) provide what they term an “integrative definition” (p. 308) of coaching effectiveness. They refer to an effective coach as one who provides “the consistent application of integrated professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge to improve athletes’ competence, confidence, connection and character in specific coaching contexts” (Côté & Gilbert, 2009, p. 316). Interestingly, in much of the literature on coaching effectiveness, the term philosophy does not exist, but the core elements of philosophy (such as moral and ethical behaviour) are assumed to be part of the practice of effective coaching. For example, in the definition above (provided by Côté and Gilbert, 2009) it is assumed that coaches act in ways that are morally good/positive, and enhance athlete outcomes beyond the realm of sport. In this case, the development of character has specifically been identified as a responsibility of an effective coach, yet the coach’s philosophy has not been explicitly referenced in Côté and Gilbert’s definition.
There have been several attempts to describe the characteristics of the respected coach (Banks, 2006; Daly & Parkin, 1997) qualities of a good (Sabock, 1985) and successful coach (Douge, 1987; Pavlovic, 2007) and the skills and attributes of the effective coach (Crisfield, Cabral, & Carpenter, 1996). However, they are predominantly based on the experiences of the authors and are not founded on empirical research. They do nevertheless provide coaches with a general idea of what is required to improve coaching effectiveness. Although the skills and characteristics identified by these authors vary, there is a high level of crossover. Communication, knowledge of the sport, leadership, organisation and specific personal characteristics, such as a sense of humour, are consistently mentioned in the prescriptive coaching literature as important elements of the effective coach (Banks, 2006; Crisfield et al., 1996; Daly & Parkin, 1997; Douge, 1987; Pavlovic, 2007; Sabock, 1985). Only several of these authors, however, mention the moral and ethical standards and background of the coach (Douge, 1987; Sabock, 1985), with one specifically highlighting the coach’s philosophy as a quality of the “good” coach (Sabock, 1985). Crisfield and associates explicitly mention the legal responsibilities of the coach, including a duty of care for their athletes, and conforming to ethical codes of practice, however, there is an assumption here that the coach needs to have an ethical and moral background to be an effective coach.

Several authors have identified and provided empirical research to measure individual components of effective coaching such as those described above (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Horn, 2008; Mageau & Vallerand, 2003; Smoll & Smith, 1989). These theoretical models have also assumed that philosophy is fundamental to many of the components. For example, Chelladurai and Saleh (1978) and Chelladurai (2007) assumed
that an effective coach was a leader and, therefore, created what he called the multidimensional model of leadership (coaching). Inherent in his model of effective coaching was that the coach matched his or her behaviour to the athletes’ needs. In essence, although not explicitly stated in his model, he assumed coaches had an understanding of philosophy in that they could reflect on the behaviour of others, their own behaviour and how this behaviour shaped different situations. Chelladurai and Saleh (1978) suggested that the behaviours the effective coach should engage in are largely set by situational characteristics, including type of task and organisational context, and coach characteristics such as age, gender and skill level.

Chelladurai and Saleh’s (1978) model assumed coaches had the relevant knowledge, skill and underlying values to make such decisions about the situation at hand. Indeed, in the questionnaire used to measure effectiveness of coaches in this model, the Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS) (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980), there are no questions related to the coach’s philosophy even though it is fundamental to the model itself. This provides further evidence that philosophy was assumed rather than tested or developed in this model. The model offered little development of how or why such decisions about effective coach behaviour should be made, but assumed that coaches had the necessary philosophical grounding to make the “right” decision in any given situation. While the model is useful in suggesting that coaching behaviours should differ between men’s and women’s teams, youth and college-aged athletes, and individual and team sports, it provides little explanation of why, or how coaches might go about making decisions that have ethical and moral implications – which is at the core of philosophy.
Smoll and Smith (1989) also suggested that coaches were leaders and proposed the mediational model of leadership (coaching). Smoll and Smith argued that an effective coach’s behaviour is influenced by differences in individual coach cognitive processes, past experiences and outcomes. In addition to situational factors identified by Chelladurai and Saleh (1978) and Chelladurai (2007), they cited the specific goals and motives of coaches, as well as their behavioural intentions, as being important components in effectiveness. Once again, these authors did not cite philosophy as a component of effective coaching, but assumed that the coaches they studied had one. In this case, the coach’s own motives and understanding of the coaching context is assumed. That is, Smith and Smoll assume that coaches have an understanding of why they are coaching and a clear concept of what they hope to achieve with any given team.

Coming from the perspective of athlete motivation, Mageau and Vallerand (2003) suggested that an effective coach depends on the coach’s personal orientation, his/her perceptions of the athlete and the coaching context. Underpinning their theory is the coach belief system – which is a concept that is fundamental to philosophy but ignored as a component in this model. Here the authors integrate the athlete-centred or holistic approach to coaching in their model of coaching effectiveness through the coach’s personal orientation and autonomy-supportive coaching behaviours. Yet, despite mentioning the role of beliefs in how a coach responds to various contexts, the focus was on the motivational outcomes of the athlete rather than the links of coaching style with philosophy (with no clear definition provided of personal orientation).

In all three cases, Chelladurai and Saleh (1978), Smoll and Smith (1989), and Mageau and Vallerand (2003), there is recognition that the coaching context is complex
and a coach can work with a range of different athletes with a variety of needs. However, there is an assumption that coaches already have the capacity to understand the reasons why they are coaching (regardless of the situation). The coach is always assumed to be reacting to the athlete and the coaching context rather than reflecting on their own practice and development. Côté and Gilbert’s (2009) integrative definition of coaching effectiveness considers the intrapersonal knowledge of the coach (including reflection) as an important component of the effective coach. However, philosophy is still not explicitly mentioned in this working definition despite the connection between philosophy and the process of self-reflection.

Horn’s (2008) model of coaching effectiveness appears to go one step further than these other highly situational and contextual-based models of an effective coach. Considering not only the impact of the coach’s behaviour on the performance and development of an athlete and the context within which they work, the framework specifies the antecedents that influence behaviour; that is, the coach’s expectancies, values, beliefs and goals. The most significant factor is the coaches’ behaviour, with the underlying assumption that the coaches’ behaviour can have a major effect on the athletes’ performance and overall wellbeing (Horn, 2008). In this case, although the beliefs and values of the coach are an important component of coaching effectiveness, the link between one’s beliefs and values and one’s philosophy is not taken into consideration or assumed to be one and the same.

From the perspective of a coaching philosophy it is clear that models of coaching effectiveness certainly recognise that the coaching context is complex. That is, researchers and practitioners alike have understood that coaches work with a range of
different groups, with a range of different needs and outcomes sought from their experience. In this way, scholars and practitioners have recognised that coaches must have an appreciation for the way in which they must interact with different groups and different individuals within groups. Although there is an assumption that coaches come into their role with a ‘working’ understanding of the moral and ethical beliefs that would underpin their behaviour in different contexts and situations, it is never explicitly discussed in any model of coaching effectiveness, nor is it ever measured as part of a scale, observation technique or interview process. It seems that philosophy is understood as fundamental to effective coaching, but the term philosophy is rarely used to describe an effective coach nor is philosophy part of models of coaching effectiveness. To this end, coaching philosophy has rarely been considered as an important component in its own right and, therefore, has not been explored as a concept that has an impact on effectiveness, rather it is assumed.

2.2.2 Importance of coaching philosophy to athlete outcomes

Much of the research that has been conducted on coaching philosophy has generally considered coaches’ beliefs and objectives about their particular sport, and how the sport context can provide positive outcomes for their athletes (Collins et al., 2011; Collins et al., 2009; McCallister et al., 2000). In particular, the focus has been on the holistic development of the athlete (Bennie & O’Connor, 2010; Nash & Sproule, 2009; Nash, Sproule, & Horton, 2008). In fact, those coaches who are perceived to demonstrate good coaching philosophies are those who prioritise the development of the person through the sport context rather than other outcomes such as winning.
Philosophy has most often been linked to broader value-sets about sport that position sport participation as fun, and a learning environment where sport and life skills development are desirable outcomes—and these are usually reinforced to coaches in early coach education as being the basis of a good coaching philosophy (Nash et al., 2008). Hence, it is not surprising that these values have been found to be a coach’s primary objectives in studies investigating the personal coaching philosophies of volunteer and youth sport coaches who have undertaken formal coach education (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, 2004b; McCallister et al., 2000; Nash et al., 2008; Wilcox & Trudel, 1998). One key objective found in the philosophies of youth sport coaches is the development of sportsmanship in their athletes (McCallister et al., 2000; Strong, 1992). For example, when coaches were asked to rate five objectives for playing youth sport – developing sportsmanship, developing discipline, developing skills, providing fun and winning – coaches rated winning as least important and learning sportsmanship as the most important reason for playing youth football (Strong, 1992). This was later confirmed in a study on the coaching philosophies of youth baseball and softball coaches, in which coaches were generally in agreement in terms of what values and life skills should be taught in youth sport programs, with various elements of sportsmanship the most common (McCallister et al., 2000). Overall, McCallister and associates (2000) found that coaching philosophies were similar between coaches, with most indicating the importance of children having fun and learning skills. Further probing by the interviewers also revealed the value of participation regardless of ability, with youth sports providing children with the opportunity to develop their physical skills rather than placing emphasis on winning and competition (McCallister et al., 2000).
And for those coaches who have received no formal coach education training, their coaching philosophies have been found to reflect the same objectives described above in those coaches who have undertaken formal coach education. In their study on pre-service coaches (PSCs), Collins et al. (2011) found that the coaches’ philosophies were predominantly athlete-focused, including the development of values such as hard work, respect and sportspersonship in their athletes, as well as creating a fun learning environment, treating athletes equitably, and developing the athlete as a whole. However, a key limitation of this study appeared to be the differing use of definitions of coaching philosophy in the methodology. For example, PSCs were provided with the following definition: “philosophy is defined as the beliefs and principles that guide your actions” (Collins et al., 2011, p. 22) and then asked to reflect upon their coaching beliefs before completing a coaching philosophy statement. However, when completing their analysis, the research team used a different definition: "beliefs or principles that help you achieve your objectives" (Martens, 2012, p. 6). Although containing similar components, the one provided to PSCs focuses predominantly on coaches’ behaviours, whereas the one used by the researchers considers more than just coaching practice. Hence, some PSCs’ statements may have been excluded based on the definition used by the research team.

Although a number of studies have found an emphasis on the athlete in coaches philosophies, the socially-accepted view of winning in sport is still apparent (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, 2004b; Wilcox & Trudel, 1998). For example, in their case study of a youth ice hockey coach, Wilcox and Trudel (1998) found that winning was central to 16 principles in the coach’s belief system (in addition to overall player development). However, despite their data analysis producing over 200 coaching beliefs and principle
statements, a detailed analysis of them was not provided, with the focus of the study more on the validation of the specific methodology used (Wilcox & Trudel, 1998). Winning was also found to be one of the five internal components (dynamic views/attitudes of youth sport coaching) of youth sport coaches’ role frames (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, 2004b). However, despite common values and beliefs being identified by coaches in a number of studies, coaching at a youth level could be viewed as “too complex to suggest one all-encompassing model role frame” (Gilbert & Trudel, 2004b, p. 40). And, no matter whether coaches have undertaken formal coach education training or not, the popular understanding of what sport can do for its athletes is clouding coaches’ understanding of philosophy.

The coaching philosophies of expert and successful coaches have also been found to contain similar terminology to that of inexperienced and youth sport coaches. In his study on the coaching philosophies of senior coaches, Lyle (1999) found that those words frequently mentioned by coaches included enjoyment and fair play, professional and honesty, winning and wellbeing, and respect and individuality. More recently, in their study on life skills development in successful coaches, Collins and associates (2009) asked coaches to rank their beliefs about winning, fun, physical development and psychological and social development. Nine out of ten coaches ranked psychological development as the most or second most important, with winning only ranked by four coaches as most or second most important in their coaching philosophies (Collins et al., 2009). However, through increased coaching experience, coaches have changed their view of their role as coach. Therefore, more experienced coaches have developed a
greater understanding of the holistic nature of coaching compared to that of lower level coaches who may have limited appreciation of their role (Nash et al., 2008).

The use of different terminology further complicates coaching philosophy. In their study on youth sport coaches, Gilbert and Trudel (2001, 2004b) have used the terms “approach to coaching” and “role frame”, which can be said to have similarities to the popular definitions of coaching philosophy in the literature. For example, in their 2004 article, Gilbert and Trudel provide an example of how coaches construct their approach to coaching: “some coaches may place a greater value on winning and technical skill development, while other coaches may be more concerned with fun and social development” (p. 21). Here, the authors discuss components previously found in the peer-reviewed literature on coaching philosophy (McCallister et al., 2000; Wilcox & Trudel, 1998). The participants themselves have even used the term “philosophy” in their response despite the authors using the term “role frame”: “my philosophy is that you learn by playing, not by watching, and if kids are going to be on the side, they are not going to learn” (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, p. 25). Here the coach is describing role frame (or philosophy) components of personal growth and development, sport-specific development and equity when discussing the coaching issue of player substitution during games.

Despite doubts about the humanistic approach to coaching in a performance-based coaching context being questioned (Lyle, 2002), a number of studies on expert or successful coaches have found coaches’ philosophies to be athlete-focused (Bennie & O’Connor, 2010; Bloom, 1996; Collins et al., 2009; Jones et al., 2003; Lyle, 1999; Nash et al., 2008; Robbins et al., 2010; Vallee & Bloom, 2005). Coaches, therefore, view
athletes as people, not just competitors (Nash & Sproule, 2009), despite coaches being highly competitive (Collins et al., 2009) and the constant demand to win at the professional level (Bennie & O'Connor, 2010).

Coaches believe that the personal development of the athlete is just as meaningful as winning and can be developed in conjunction with physical skill development (Bloom, 1996). The coach’s vision (i.e., their coaching philosophy) has been seen as central to the holistic development of the athlete (Vallee & Bloom, 2005), with winning not explicitly mentioned as crucial for coaching effectiveness (Bennie & O'Connor, 2010). In their study on expert coaches, Bloom (1996) found that coaches’ philosophies demonstrated care for their athletes and reflected a desire to maintain the coach-athlete relationship through reciprocal respect, effective communication and creation of a positive working environment. As Lyle (1999) has described, “they are clearly in the people business” (p. 35), or what has been described earlier as a “helping profession”. An “every player being equal” (Gucciardi, Gordon, Dimmock, & Mallett, 2009, p. 1491) philosophy in coach’s practice and the prioritisation of the holistic development of the athlete over the coach’s own success, have also been found to be pivotal in the development of key mental toughness characteristics such as self-belief and a strong work ethic amongst players.

Although expert coaches discuss a caring and humanistic approach to coaching their athletes (Lyle, 2002), coaches have also highlighted the difficulties faced by such coaches in having an athlete-centred coaching philosophy in an environment where the key outcome is to win. For example, in their study on the coaching philosophies of wheelchair and stand-up basketball coaches, Robbins and associates (2010) found that although coaches wanted to do what was best for their athletes, some coaches who
wanted to be tougher on their athletes highlighted the difficulty in finding a middle ground between being caring and tough. And, in their life-story approach to understanding the development of a coach’s professional knowledge, Jones and colleagues (2003) found that despite being considered a “players’ coach” (p. 217), professional soccer coach Steve was somewhat contradictory in his philosophy in relation to how he conducted his coaching sessions. Steve believed that although his role as coach was to support players as individuals, he also held the belief that he needed to foster the players’ perception that as coach he was in charge and in control. Hence, although he wanted to create positive working relationships and, ultimately, develop independence and confidence in his players, he was at the same time creating separation between himself and his players. This was observed through his concise and frequent instruction in his coaching sessions, which he explained was required to not only ensure his team was prepared but also to maintain his employment as coach (which was based on results) (Jones et al., 2003). Therefore, although a coach may have an athlete-centred philosophy, they ultimately have to consider what is best for them.

A crucial component in the holistic development of the athlete is the development of life skills. Coaches believed that players were there to not only learn about sport-specific skills but also skills related to life (Bennie & O'Connor, 2010; Holt, Tink, Mandigo, & Fox, 2008). In a study on how experienced and successful high school coaches taught life skills and built character in their players, coaching philosophy was identified as an important component in developing life skills. Coaches used football as a “vehicle” for developing life skills, with the majority of coaches believing that these skills were crucial to short-term success on the field and long-term success in the players’
lives (Collins et al., 2009). Even coaches who have had little or no experience coaching have been found to have life skills such as work ethic and discipline as critical components of their philosophies (Collins et al., 2011).

Despite the increasing evidence of expert and successful coaches expressing coaching philosophies for the holistic development of the athlete, they need to be viewed with caution. As Lyle (1999) found in his study on the philosophies of senior coaches, philosophy statements can be written in an ‘aspirational’ style (i.e., what the coach should be or do). In addition, a major limitation of these studies is that coaches have not been observed in practice; hence, although coaches may state an “athlete-first, winning second philosophy” (Martens, 2012, p. 30), whether they do this in their coaching practice is undetermined (Collins et al., 2009).

2.2.3 Importance of coaching philosophy to coaching practice

“Scant research has been reported concerning any association between coaching philosophy and coaching practice” (Nash et al., 2008, p. 550). Despite this, as previously discussed in the prescriptive coaching literature, coaching philosophy has been seen to guide coaching practice (especially effective coaching practice). Two important concepts related to coaches’ philosophies and their coaching practice are espoused theory and theory-in-use (Argyris & Schön, 1974). When a coach is asked about how they would act in a given situation, their response is generally their espoused theory; hence they are communicating their “philosophy”. The coach openly endorses and believes that their practice is guided by this “philosophy”. However, Argyris and Schön state that it is
actually one’s *theory-in-use* which guides their practice. A coach’s theory-in-use (i.e., their coaching practice) may be formal or self-generated and is internalised, hence the coach may not be conscious of this “philosophy” (Argyris & Schön, 1974).

When a coach’s espoused theory (i.e., “philosophy”) and their theory-in-use (i.e., coaching practice) are congruent, the coach’s conscious thoughts fit with their actions (Argyris & Schön, 1974). The coach’s espoused theory may, however, be incongruent with their theory-in-use. Furthermore, the coach may have little awareness of this incompatibility between their “philosophy” and their coaching practice. This incongruence can result in less effective coaching practice (Argyris & Schön, 1974).

Argyris and Schön (1974) believed that one’s theory-in-use needs to be observed through one’s behaviours, rather than simply by asking them (especially when they are not aware of their theory-in-use). Yet, there are only two studies in the coaching literature that have considered the observation of coach’s “philosophies” or, in the case of Strong (1992), the coach’s objectives in relation to youth sport, and Wilcox and Trudel (1998), the coach’s principles and beliefs. Strong conducted an ethnographic study of youth football teams and their coaches to investigate objectives of youth sport. Despite viewing sportsmanship as most important and winning as least important, these beliefs were not seen in the coach’s behaviours and actions in practices and games. Winning was prioritised by coaches with players rated the ‘worst’ by coaches given little game time, despite the team being well ahead in those games won. And, despite one coach acknowledging there was a specific problem with unsportsmanlike behaviour, physical and verbal intimidation by dominant players was allowed to occur without reprimand by the coach (Strong, 1992).
However, the use of a quantitative method (i.e., a questionnaire) by Strong (1992) was questioned by Wilcox and Trudel (1998) as it may not have truly reflected the views of the coaches. Therefore, Wilcox and Trudel (1998) examined youth ice hockey coaches and their principles and beliefs through the implementation of a new methodology, verbal cueing stimulated recall interviews (V.C.S.R.I.). Through the process of V.C.S.R.I. the coaches were provided with verbal cues by the researcher prior to video evidence being presented; thus, the coach’s recall was validated rather than stimulated through videotaped segments. Interviews were conducted pre- and post-game to obtain game plan intentions and implementation, with Type I (coach reported decisions) and Type II (researcher selected unreported decisions) events presented in the V.C.S.R.I. sessions one or two days after each game (Wilcox & Trudel, 1998). The results revealed approximately 200 statements related to coaching beliefs and principles, with winning and player development (social and hockey skills) found to be central to 16 principles of coaching in one coach’s belief system. However, as mentioned previously, the study appeared to be more about the validation of the V.C.S.R.I. methodology, with only one example provided of coaching beliefs and principles. Furthermore, although this study provided some valuable insight into the decision making processes of coaches through focusing on exact moments or occasions during games, behaviours that may have also been associated with the coach’s beliefs and principles did not appear to be recorded in a systematic way (Wilcox & Trudel, 1998).

Although not directly observed in their study on coaches’ philosophies and teaching values in youth sport, McCallister and associates (2000) found that although coaches could state their coaching philosophies, their actual implementation in their
practices and behaviours was different. Inconsistencies were shown in the areas related to winning and participation, with fewer discrepancies shown in the areas originally identified by the coaches - making the participation experience fun and teaching skills (McCallister et al., 2000). In addition, Collins and colleagues (2011) concluded that although coaches were well versed in their philosophies, there was a disconnect within PSCs’ philosophies and incongruence between their beliefs and behaviours. This may be due to coaches not viewing their coaching philosophy to be important in framing their role or practice as coach, even if they hold well-developed beliefs in regard to their coaching practice; hence resulting in a disconnect between their philosophy and actions as coach (Nash & Sproule, 2009). However, coaches’ behaviours were not actually observed in these studies, rather their behaviour was implied through statements and examples given by the coaches which were compared to their stated coaching philosophies (Collins et al., 2011; McCallister et al., 2000).

Coaches have demonstrated understanding of the need to be flexible in their coaching approach dependent on the coaching context (Collins et al., 2011). Coaches’ philosophies have been found to be bounded by the age group and competitive level of their athletes (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, 2004b). Despite such situational factors influencing the coach’s approach, the influence of the athlete and the overall coaching context on a coach’s philosophy has received little attention. The gender of the athlete coached could affect the focus of the coach’s philosophy and their resultant behaviour and coaching style in practice (Gilbert & Trudel, 2004b). In their study on female athletes’ expectations and evaluations of their coaches, Fasting and Pfister (2000) questioned the possibility of coaches having a “female coaching philosophy”. Athletes in
the study believed female athletes should be coached differently from male athletes because of the psychological differences between men and women. Overall, they appeared much more satisfied with the female coaches, feeling as though they were not taken seriously by their male coaches (Fasting & Pfister, 2000). However, one of the earliest studies on coaching philosophy did find that the coaching philosophies of male coaches of male teams were collectively more traditional, autocratic and demanding in comparison to that of coaches of female teams (Pratt & Eitzen, 1989). Although coaching philosophy was not directly examined in the study by Fasting and Pfister, it does raise the issue of whether coaches’ philosophies change based on the gender of their athletes.

The development of an inclusive philosophy has been viewed as important for coaches of athletes with a disability (Australian Sports Commission, 2010c; Basketball Australia, 2005). Yet, only one study has examined the philosophies of those coaching disabled athletes. Robbins, Houston and Dummer (2010) compared the expectations and philosophies of wheelchair and stand-up basketball coaches. The results showed that there was little difference between the two coaches in their perspectives on coaching, philosophies on success and individual differences of athletes. Both groups of coaches discussed flexibility in their preferred coaching style to meet the individual differences, needs and preferences of their athletes. Overall, the number of similarities and differences between and among wheelchair and stand-up coaches was the same (Robbins et al., 2010).

The articulation of their philosophy to support staff and players has also been considered important by coaches (Bennie & O'Connor, 2010). However, in several studies, coaches have had difficulty articulating their coaching philosophies (McCallister
et al., 2000; Nash & Sproule, 2009). In their study on youth sport coaches, McCallister and associates (2000) found that coaches struggled to articulate how they taught the values and skill identified in their coaching philosophies. And, although pre-service coaches (PSCs), who had little or no experience coaching, were able to articulate how they prioritised winning in their coaching practice, they were less clear in explaining how they helped athletes develop intangible skills (e.g., self-confidence) deemed crucial for athlete success (Collins et al., 2011).

Despite whether a coach can articulate their coaching philosophy, it may not match that of the organisation or association within which the coach works. In their study on the stressors of elite sport coaches, Olusoga, Butt, Hays and Maynard (2009) found several coaches identified the incongruence of their philosophy with that of the organisation or performance director as a stressor in their coaching practice. As one coach described, it “can be stressful because obviously if you really believe in it [own coaching philosophy] you’re gonna kick against it [an opposing coaching philosophy]” (Olusoga et al., p. 450). Therefore, adopting the philosophy of their employer may result in the coach feeling conflicted as it may directly go against their own values and beliefs; on the other hand, the coach may feel stressed if they revert to their own philosophy as it could result in their termination as coach. Despite this, coaching philosophy has been found to be used by coaches in the management of stress in their coaching practice, with an emphasis on fun in a coach’s philosophy and keeping their philosophy in mind acting as coping strategies for college coaches in the management of coach-related stress (Frey, 2007).
2.2.4 Importance of coaching philosophy to ethical coaching

The limited amount of coaching literature that explores ethics has provided reference to the importance of coaching philosophy to good coaching, yet scholars have made few connections between coaching philosophy and its impact on ethical coaching practice. Sport has long been regarded as an activity that builds character, with the notion reaching back as far as the philosophical writings of Plato, who viewed competitive sport as a moral testing ground (Carr, 1998; Russell, 2011). The coach is seen as playing a significant role in the life of the young sports person, influencing their early sport experiences and their values and attitudes toward sport and participation (Cuskelly et al., 2006). Therefore, the coach, particularly the youth sport coach, could be viewed as a moral agent (Cassidy et al., 2009; DeSensi & Rosenberg, 2010) who, through their own ethical (or unethical) behaviour, shapes the moral growth and development of their athletes and ensures their moral standards in relation to sportsmanship and respect for others (Russell, 2011). Coaches should recognise that part of their coaching role is the development of their athletes’ moral character through leading by example and exhibiting themselves the virtues they teach (Bergmann Drewe, 2000b), with this development not simply a consequence of the sport or activity they are participating in (Cassidy et al.). Coaches can play a part in their athletes’ moral development through teaching the ‘rules of the game’, as, although it may be necessary to follow the rules, morally it may not (Steenbergen & Tamboer, 1998).

On the other hand, coaches and/or athletes may also break the ‘spirit of the rules’ (Bergmann Drewe, 2000b), with fouling in basketball a good example of this. Although the rules of basketball do not allow unsportsmanlike/intentional fouls, when a team is
behind in a close game, athletes can deliberately foul the opposition to get them to the free throw line and to eventually gain possession of the ball. This type of behaviour, related to the win at all costs view, is primarily driven by the coach teaching athletes this strategy; therefore, how and what athletes are taught is dependent on the coach’s own moral character (Bergmann Drewe, 2000b; Cassidy et al., 2009). Hence, if a coach has a ‘winning first, athlete second’ philosophy (Martens, 2012), breaking the ‘spirit of the rules’ is more likely as a result of their overriding desire to win rather than concentrating on the holistic development of the athlete.

As has been noted in Chapter 1 of this thesis, philosophy has been considered important for those in professions who help others. In the case of a coach, this can be with athletes who are minors, making their ethical conduct even more important. In the sport context, it has been recognised that the coach has a clear responsibility to provide a range of services that would constitute a duty of care to their athletes (Hemphill, 2011; Telfer & Brackenridge, 2011) especially when coaching young athletes. Duty of care is a “legal duty that requires a person to take care of another person and not cause them harm” (Australian Sports Commission, 2010b, "Glossary"), but, as noted by Telfer and Brackenridge (2011), there can be a fine line between doing what is best for the athlete and what is best for the team and/or sport performance. The components that constitute a duty of care for a coach can be difficult to determine as they are dependent on a number of factors including the age of the athletes, experience/expertise and level of danger of a particular activity (Collins, 1993). The coach’s philosophy is assumed to be able to guide his or her ethical behaviour regardless of the situation faced in the sport context.
Martens (2012) believes that coaches have nine legal duties which relate to duty of care, in particular, to reduce the chances of negligence of the coach in the sport setting. In a study of athletes’ perceptions of various types of non-ethical behaviour in coaching, Reynolds and Taylor (2002) found through their interviews that female athletes believed strongly that it was the coaches, rather than the sport (as coaches believed), which contributed to the development of eating disorders. In addition, although ‘pushing athletes beyond their physical limits’ was a view on physical abuse shared by athletes and coaches, athletes did generally view it as abusive behaviour as they believed that whenever they began to hurt, they should have been able to stop (Reynolds & Taylor, 2002). This study demonstrates that although a coach may believe they are doing what is in the best interests of the athlete in regard to increasing athletic performance, it may not be the same view held by the athlete.

For a coach to fulfil their duty of care to their athlete(s) “they must be both qualified to teach the particular activity and to coach to the standard [they] are coaching” (Collins, 1993, p. 292). Therefore, not only should the coach have an understanding of their duty of care in their coaching role, their coaching philosophy should also reflect their duty of care through an ‘athlete-first, winning second’ philosophy (Martens, 2012). Despite the notion that scholars have made a clear link (at least from a legal perspective) between a coach’s philosophy and their ethical conduct, there is a general disconnect in the coaching literature between philosophy and ethics. This is mainly seen in coaching texts in which coaching philosophy and coaching ethics are presented in separate chapters (Cassidy et al., 2009; Lyle & Cushion, 2010; Martens, 2012). An exception to the general coaching literature is Lyle (1999) who discussed coaching philosophy and ethics within
the same chapter, albeit still under distinct subheadings. He did, however, express that “some elements in a code of ethics are closely linked to coaching philosophies” (Lyle, 1999, p. 43). Nevertheless, generally when a coaching text or coach education course for that matter (e.g., Goodman, 2006) discusses the development of a coach’s philosophy, it is not in the context of ethical practice. Two ethical considerations related to coaching philosophy are the ethical conduct of the coach and how the coach deals with ethical dilemmas faced in their coaching practice.

Most professions have codes of ethics or conduct which provide guidelines or rules on how professionals should behave. The reasoning behind such codes is to protect the public which the professionals serve and also to protect the profession for which they work and represent (Meara et al., 1996). The principles within these codes are prescriptive in the sense that they provide the professional with guidance on what they ‘ought to do’ (Meara et al., 1996) or, more accurately, what is not appropriate (Lyle, 2002). However, ethical codes cannot encompass all of the situational contexts and changing of standards of a profession (Meara et al., 1996) such as in coaching.

This rule-based approach has been criticised within coaching for this very reason, for once the professional has avoided the obvious wrongdoings, there is little guidance in how to address the moral dilemmas that will arise throughout their career (Cassidy et al., 2009; McNamee, 2011). Although these codes of ethics have been deemed to have some merit, they are considered to be ‘underdetermined’; that is, too simplified and too limiting to have much of an impact on coaching practice, let alone guarantee ethical behaviour (Lyle, 1999; McNamee, 2011).
The ideals included in codes of ethics or conduct cannot be enforced; rather they are expected to be considered by professionals in making ethical decisions. Meara and associates (1996) believe that these ideals could conceptually be considered similar to virtues and, therefore, have value in what is deemed proper conduct by professionals. As virtue ethics are embedded in the community, professionals can gain knowledge of what particular virtues or ideals the individual or community defines as significant, allowing them to successfully engage with communities that are becoming increasingly multicultural. Hence ethical conduct can be more sensitive with the addition of virtue ethics, enhancing the character of the professionals which, in turn, increases public trust in these professionals (Meara et al., 1996).

A virtue-based approach to coaching should, therefore, consider the coaching of persons rather than athletes (Hardman & Jones, 2011a). This directly relates to the “athlete-centred” or humanistic approach to coaching (and coaching philosophy) which is becoming more prominent in the coaching literature (Kidman & Lombardo, 2010; Lyle, 2002; Martens, 2012). It is critical, therefore, that coaches do not simply adopt a professional code of ethics or conduct without question but also examine their own values and beliefs (i.e., coaching philosophy) (Telfer, 2010).

Although a coach may have access to a code of ethics/conduct or even sign such a code before undertaking coaching practice, the rules and principles within them do not provide a complete representation of morality without reference to virtues (McNamee, 2011). Thus, when a coach is faced with a moral or ethical dilemma, it is not a rule book or code of conduct which enables him or her to make a decision; rather it is the coach’s grounded self that asks, “what will I do here in the light of what I conceive myself to
be?” (McNamee, 2011, p. 34). A coach’s philosophy has previously been identified as influencing the coaching issues identified by coaches and chosen for reflection and, therefore, what strategies are created to deal with these issues (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001).

A study by Bergmann Drewe (2000a) investigated the ethical dilemmas faced by coaches and how they resolved them in their practice. Nine university level coaches were firstly asked to define an ethical dilemma; the most common theme was in relation to what was best for the team versus what would be better for the individual, including the coach. The most common ethical dilemmas involved whether to play an injured athlete or a player who had missed practice. In addition, ‘grey areas’ of coaching were also identified including intentionally harming opponents versus playing hard, pushing the rules and pushing the athletes, and potential intimate relationships developing between the coaches and their athletes. When coaches discussed how they resolved such dilemmas, coaches most commonly utilised their own morals, values and ethical beliefs, as well as what was in the athlete’s best interests. Several coaches also specifically referenced the common dichotomy of winning versus maintaining their beliefs when making an ethical decision. One coach in particular referred to their coaching philosophy and core values when faced with an ethical dilemma, stating that, “if you’re going against what you believe in, then that’s pretty well answering your question as to what to do in your decision-making process” (Bergmann Drewe, 2000a, p. 152). The author suggested that the coach should be explicit in stating the nature of their coaching philosophy to athletes to allow them to make a decision (i.e., informed consent) about playing under that coach or choosing to go elsewhere (based on their coaching philosophy). However, like the majority of studies that have considered the philosophies and values of coaches,
exactly how the coaches used them in their coaching practice to resolve ethical dilemmas was not observed. There is also little evidence of how a coach’s philosophy is utilised in the ethical decision-making process.

To be able to make ethical decisions and be ethical in their coaching practice, coaches need to understand how to go about the process (Telfer, 2010). In other helping professions, models of ethical decision-making are available to professionals to assist with the process, such as the ethical decision-making (EDM) model developed by Brockett and Hiemstra (2004) in adult education. A key element of the EDM model are one’s personal values, and central to those values is one’s personal philosophy; hence, to be able to move through the EDM model, a professional must develop a personal philosophy that is central to their own practice (Brockett & Hiemstra, 2004). More importantly, models such as these are rooted in philosophy (DeSensi & Rosenberg, 2010) and provide a guide to professionals in resolving ethical dilemmas based on ethical theory, rather than the more prescriptive techniques and basic codes of ethics and conduct found in the coaching literature (Brockett & Hiemstra, 2004).

Coaching philosophy has been assumed to be important for four reasons: 1) coaching effectiveness; 2) athlete outcomes; 3) coaching practice; and 4) ethical coaching. However, the development of one’s coaching philosophy has received little attention in the empirical literature despite the importance given for the reasons discussed in this section. As it is seen to be important, this thesis will now explore how coaching philosophy is learned.
2.3 How is Coaching Philosophy Learned?

There has recently been an increased focus within the coaching literature in regard to coach learning and development (Cushion et al., 2010; Nelson et al., 2006; Werthner & Trudel, 2009; Wright et al., 2007). Previously, much of the research was focused on coaching behaviours and athlete development and little was understood about how the coach learned their trade. In particular, there was little understanding of the learning sources used by coaches in their professional development and their learning preferences (Cushion et al., 2010). Although there has been a greater focus on coach learning in the literature, coaching philosophy has been given little precedence despite the importance given in coaching effectiveness (as discussed in the previous section). Therefore, although we are beginning to gain a greater understanding of how a coach learns to coach, there is little understanding of how a coach, particularly a volunteer coach, develops their coaching philosophy.

In the adult education literature, Peter Jarvis (2006, 2007, 2009) has contributed greatly to understanding the importance of the learner, particularly his theory of lifelong learning. Concepts including biography and the role of the social context in learning are especially relevant to the area of coaching and, more importantly, formal coach education (discussed further in the next section). Lifelong learning has been defined by Jarvis (2006) as the following:

‘The combination of processes throughout a lifetime whereby the whole person – body (genetic, physical and biological) and mind (knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs and senses) – experiences social situations, the perceived content of which is then transformed cognitively, emotively or practically (or
through any combination) and integrated into the individual person’s biography resulting in a continually changing (or more experienced) person.’ (p. 134)

Jarvis (2009) has viewed learning not only from a sociological and psychological aspect but also a philosophical perspective. Although his discussion is brief, Jarvis contends that by simply looking at learning from just one or two perspectives, we cannot understand how a person learns to become a whole person. The philosophical issue, therefore, is that it is the person who learns, yet the focus of the literature has been on the educator (Jarvis, 2009). In their recent review of the literature related to coach learning and development, Cushion and colleagues agreed, maintaining that learning often takes place without teaching, meaning the coach learner is integral to the learning process but the coach educator is not (Cushion et al., 2010). Yet, despite the popular belief that a coach’s philosophy underpins their coaching practice, the fact that the coach as learner is influenced by philosophy (whether it be their coaching, life or professional philosophy) no matter the learning source or experience, has not been considered by the recent literature on coach learning.

Central to the view that it is the person who learns, the process of learning must, therefore, be considered not only from a formal standpoint but must also take into consideration informal and nonformal learning experiences (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974; Jarvis, 2007) such as the experiential and reflective practices that occur in coaching (Nelson et al., 2006). Coombs and Ahmed’s (1974) model of learning has been utilised in the adult learning literature (Jarvis, 2004; Merriam & Brockett, 2007) and, more recently, in the coaching literature (Cushion et al., 2010; Mallett, Trudel, Lyle, & Rynne, 2009; Nelson et al., 2006). Using the term education as a synonym for learning, Coombs and
Ahmed (1974) have distinguished between three modes of education (informal, formal and nonformal) within which the learner (e.g., coach) learns. In a similar fashion to Cushion and colleagues (2010), this framework will be used in the following sections on the learning preferences of coaches, including the current literature on how coaches learn philosophy.

### 2.3.1 Formal learning and coaching philosophy

A formal learning situation has been defined as one which involves an “institutionalised, chronologically graded and hierarchically structured educational system” (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, p. 8). Formal learning situations are, therefore, driven by the educator, such as is seen in traditional large-scale coach education programs which result in certification or accreditation (Trudel, Gilbert, & Werthner, 2010) and coaching and sport science specific higher education courses (Nelson et al., 2006). Over the last decade or so there has been a large body of empirical research investigating formal coach education (Cassidy, Potrac, & McKenzie, 2006; Demers, Woodburn, & Savard, 2006; Gilbert & Trudel, 1999; Jones & Turner, 2006; Vargas-Tonsing, 2007) with a special edition of *The Sport Psychologist* even dedicated to the topic in 2006. Coaching philosophy, on the other hand, consistently appears as a learning module or component within these formal coach education programs (Australian Sports Commission, 2005b; Basketball BC, n.d.; sports coach UK, 2004), yet, how it is learned and the subsequent development of a coach’s philosophy in such programs has, to the author’s knowledge, rarely been investigated.
Formal coach education has been viewed by coaches themselves as improving their coaching practice (Dickson, 2001). However, despite a number of reviews investigating coach learning and education literature (Cushion et al., 2010; Trudel & Gilbert, 2006; Trudel et al., 2010) there has been a lack of evaluation and research in regard to the impact of coach education programs on coaching practice (Lyle, 2007; Trudel et al., 2010). Much of this relates to the difficulty in identifying the appropriate methodology that incorporates the complexity of levels, sports and governing bodies, and overcomes the sheer scale of national coaching programmes such as the NCAS (Lyle, 2007). Below is a discussion of a selection of studies undertaken to date evaluating small-scale, university-based and large-scale coach education programs. A more comprehensive overview of the coach education effectiveness literature can be found in the review by Trudel and associates (2010).

Cassidy, Potrac and McKenzie (2006) evaluated a new initiative in coach education, the CoDe (Coach Development) program for the New Zealand Rugby Union. When asked about their perspectives on the CoDe program in comparison to previous experiences of coach education, the coaches appreciated the CoDe approach in focusing predominantly on the process of coaching, rather than the technical side experienced previously. Coaches had had little or no exposure to the concept of athletes as learners, including the impact on the instructional methods utilised by coaches and the learning preferences of their athletes. Therefore, the CoDe program provided coaches with solutions specific to their own sport as well as the thought processes and reasons behind why they coached (Cassidy et al., 2006).
Demers, Woodburn and Savard (2006) evaluated an undergraduate competency-based program, the Baccalaureate in Sport Intervention (BIS) at a university in Canada. Separating itself from the typical university framework of segmented units managed by various academics, the BIS consists of a number of professional competencies delivered through “learning pathways” with a team of faculty members supporting students in each pathway. One of these professional competencies is ‘making ethical decisions’ which was described as the ability of coaches to respond ethically to coaching situations consistent with Codes of Ethics and values of the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP). Despite the link between a coach’s philosophy and their behaviour (i.e., ability to respond ethically), there was no specific reference to philosophy in the description of this professional competency. Interestingly however, the authors stated that when the competency for ‘making ethical decisions’ was evaluated it was found that 60% of students had what was described as a “shopping list of values but were unable to show how their values were reflected in their coaching practice” (p. 171). Overall, the authors concluded that a limitation of programs such as the BIS is the high demand on the faculty in terms of assessments and personal discussions with students (Demers et al., 2006).

Gilbert and Trudel (1999) developed an evaluation strategy for large-scale coach education programs and tested it utilising a youth ice hockey coach who had completed a NCCP Level 2 course. The evaluation process involved the theory component of the course or, more specifically, how the course was conducted, whether sport science knowledge was gained by the coach, and the influence of the course on the coach’s behaviours. The authors conclude that there was a lack of evaluation of the effectiveness of course conductors themselves (e.g., the course was over six hours short of the
recommended time) and questioned the effectiveness of such programs in improving
various areas of coaching (e.g., little change was found in the coach’s instructional
behaviours) (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999).

Despite increasing literature on formal coach education, specific research related
to the learning materials involved in such programs is severely lacking (Lyle, Jolly, &
North, 2010). Although weaknesses in regard to delivery and design of formal coach
education have been acknowledged (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Cassidy et al., 2009;
Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003), there is little evidence of its effectiveness (Lyle et al.,
2010). However, views on formal coach education from the participants themselves
(particularly volunteer coaches) have received greater attention in the literature (Cassidy
et al., 2006; Dickson, 2001; Gould & Martens, 1979; Lyle et al., 2010; Silvestri, 1991;

Coaches’ views on the value of formal coach education in their coaching practice
have varied from overwhelming support to little attribution to their development as a
coach. Volunteer youth sport coaches have been found to view their participation in
formal coach education as a positive experience (Vargas-Tonsing, 2007; Wiersma &
Sherman, 2005). In fact, when Vargas-Tonsing (2007) questioned youth sport coaches’
beliefs about coach education, the majority believed that certification should be
mandatory for all coaches. However, not all coaches believe participation in formal coach
education programs to be critical in their coaching development. In their study on
volunteer coaches’ views of coach education, Silvestri (1991) found that only a small
number (11%) of coaches believed that coach education influenced their coaching. Some
volunteer youth sport coaches have even acknowledged that their attendance at formal
coach education courses was only because of a compulsory requirement to attend (Wright et al., 2007). And, in a study on the origins of elite coaching knowledge, Irwin, Hanton and Kerwin (2004) found that only 36 per cent of elite coaches ranked coaching courses as the most important in their coaching knowledge development. These coaches also questioned the accuracy of the information they acquired through completion of formal coach education courses earlier in their careers (Irwin et al., 2004).

When coaches have been asked to identify the benefits of undertaking formal coach education, one of the key themes to emerge is the value of peer learning through sharing views (Turner & Nelson, 2009), exchanging ideas (Dickson, 2001) and establishing a network with other coaches (Lemyre, Trudel, & Durand-Bush, 2007). In fact, in their study on volunteer youth sport coaches’ perspectives of coaching education/certification, Wiersma and Sherman (2005) found that discussions with other coaches would be a major attraction to coaches attending formal coach education programs. For elite coaches, when they first started coaching, formal coach education courses provided them with an opportunity to mix with more experienced coaches (Irwin et al., 2004). The more experienced coaches themselves have been found to value the opportunity to talk to other coaches (Cassidy et al., 2006). However, coaches have recognised that for such forums to be meaningful to coaches, they need to be mediated or facilitated (Cassidy et al., 2006). Other benefits of attending formal coach education programs mentioned by coaches include providing coaches with initial interest and enthusiasm (Irwin et al., 2004), advancing their technical knowledge and improving communication techniques with their players (Dickson, 2001). In addition, coaches with less experience as a coach or athlete have found attendance at formal coach education
programs useful (Wright et al., 2007) and have appreciated the practical content in such programs (Lemyre et al., 2007). More experienced coaches have also appreciated the inclusion of pedagogical knowledge on how to teach in formal coach education programs (McCullick, Belcher, & Schempp, 2005).

However, as previously discussed, not all coaches viewed formal coach education in a positive light. For example, coaches who have experienced coach education courses which were rigid and prescriptive found them useless, feeling as though they were ‘jumping through hoops’ (Piggott, 2011). Often coaches attend a formal coach education course with the information covered already acquired and put into coaching practice (Irwin et al., 2004). Certification programs have also been viewed by coaches as lacking focus on the individual needs of novice coaches (Turner & Nelson, 2009), with the theoretical material covered in some courses considered by coaches to be too abstract to be valuable in their everyday coaching practice (Lemyre et al., 2007). The lack of practical coaching opportunities is also a concern for coaches (Turner & Nelson, 2009). Interestingly, when Turner and Nelson (2009) investigated graduate perceptions of a coaching module pathway in a university program, coaches were found to view less favourably the coaching awards they were required to undertake concurrently with the university program. Although viewed as necessary for their professional development, the timeframe of the National Governing Body (NGB) coaching awards was seen as insufficient to cover the theoretical concepts underpinning the coaches’ practice. In comparison, the coaching module pathway was seen by graduate coaches to have fast-tracked their coaching development, provided them with transferable skills and increased their employability (Turner & Nelson, 2009).
Barriers to participating in formal coach education have been identified by coaches. One of the major barriers for volunteer coaches is time; the time demands placed on volunteers to complete such programs (Wiersma & Sherman, 2005); and the decreased time availability of volunteer coaches due to other commitments (Vargas-Tonsing, 2007). Other barriers identified include inconsistency and poor quality within coaching courses (Wiersma & Sherman, 2005), the availability of courses for online delivery (Vargas-Tonsing, 2007) and the high cost, limited frequency and location of courses (Misener & Danylchuk, 2009).

Coaches have also been asked to provide recommendations to improve formal coach education programs. The volunteer youth sport coaches in the study by Wiersma and Sherman (2005) provided a number of recommendations for coaching certification, including mentoring relationships for the novice coach, ongoing training throughout the season, practical (‘hands-on’) workshops, and content within the programs which was both age and level specific. The integration of up-to-date research into relevant subject matter, presented by credible instructors, has also been highlighted as essential in formal coach education programs (McCullick et al., 2005). In relation to preferred topics to be covered within formal coach education, motivation in particular has been identified by a number of youth sport coaches as an area which coaches ranked as a priority and required more knowledge in to enhance their athletes’ performance (Gould & Martens, 1979; Silvestri, 1991; Vargas-Tonsing, 2007). Other areas of need identified by coaches include communication and dealing with both athletes and parents (Vargas-Tonsing, 2007; Wiersma & Sherman, 2005), advanced instructional drills (Vargas-Tonsing, 2007) and the psychological aspects of coaching children (Wiersma & Sherman, 2005).
As alluded to earlier in the previous section, Jarvis’ (2006) lifelong learning theory has particular relevance to formal coach education, especially in relation to his concept of ‘biography’ (i.e., the context of the learner). The premise behind biography is that “learners bring their lifetime experience to the learning situation” (Jarvis, 2006, p. 73). In their article in the special edition of *The Sport Psychologist*, Werthner and Trudel (2006) discussed a similar concept, ‘cognitive structure’, which like biography represents the learner at any point in time. Therefore, the impact of coaches’ individual profiles (such as their beliefs and values) can affect the effectiveness and usefulness of formal coach education programs. The popular definitions of coaching philosophy in the literature have deemed the beliefs and values of the coach to be instrumental in guiding their coaching practice (Cassidy et al., 2009; Kidman & Hanrahan, 2011; Lyle, 2002; Martens, 2012). Thus, it would be safe to assume here that a coach’s philosophy is a component of their cognitive structure or ‘biography’. Yet, the philosophy of the coach is not explicitly mentioned in this or the more recent book chapter by Trudel and associates (2010), despite the general assumption that coaching philosophy underpins all that coaches do, which includes what they choose to learn and pay attention to. What is interesting, however, is how coaching philosophy is depicted by the authors in one of their scenarios of coaches’ development in relation to biography in their chapter on coaching effectiveness (Trudel et al., 2010).

Fictitious parent coach “Paul” has just attended a coaching training course after being obligated to coach because of a lack of coaches for new team members, including his daughter. Information on ethical behaviours and coaching philosophy appear obvious to him; what he requires are drills to plan his practices. On the other hand fellow course
attendee “Louis” found the information on planning a practice just confirmed what he already knew; coaching philosophy and ethical behaviours were, however, very useful. This scenario reveals the difficulty in presenting a topic such as coaching philosophy to coaches with various biographies, as “Paul” has come into coaching as a parent with a variety of life experiences but little experience in the sport, compared to “Louis” who has played the sport all of his life and understands the drills and skills required, yet may have little understanding of the ethical behaviours and pedagogy required to be a coach (Trudel et al., 2010).

The social context (i.e., the context of the coach’s practice) in which we learn is another fundamental aspect of the learning process (Jarvis, 2006, 2007). As Jarvis explains: “we always learn in a social context and the learning processes are themselves affected by the relationships within which we function” (Jarvis, 2007, p. 20). Therefore, although learning is an individual process, it also takes place within the wider context of society (Jarvis, 2009). The coach’s practice is also influenced by the social system within which the coach exists (Cushion et al., 2010). Although the primary role of the coach is to improve the performance of the player and/or team, the coach is a social being that has to operate within a social environment (Jones et al., 2003). The social context of the coach can be considerably varied, with the athlete’s age, competition level, gender and motives all influencing the coach’s philosophy and, subsequently, their coaching practice (Gilbert & Trudel, 2004b). Overall, it can be said that “formal learning situations can hardly please every participant because of the differences in their biography – different life experiences, sport knowledge and motives” (Trudel et al., 2010, p. 148). The same could be said for coaching philosophy.
The context of the learner and the context of the coach’s practice are two key concepts which relate not only to formal learning situations but also have particular relevance to coaching philosophy. The context of the learner in coaching differs for the majority of participants who enter formal learning situations upon completion of secondary education in other helping professions such as teaching and psychology. Coaches come into coaching with various motives for their involvement (Busser & Carruthers, 2010; Timson-Katchis & North, 2008), level of sporting knowledge and experience and overall life experiences (Trudel et al., 2010). Coaches may, therefore, complete their coach accreditation as a young athlete with years of experience in the sport, as a parent who has been asked to coach due to a lack of coach availability, or as an older individual who can no longer participate due to age or injury (Timson-Katchis & North, 2008).

The context of the coach’s practice, on the other hand, can be extremely diverse in comparison to other helping professions who generally specialise in an area (e.g., the primary school teacher). Although coaches may focus on a particular context, coaches can work with a range of athletes with different motives for sport participation in a variety of contexts/competition levels (all at the same time) (Gilbert & Trudel, 2004b). Coaches may simultaneously coach youth athletes at an elite level looking to move into professional sport, in addition to senior athletes at a recreational level playing sport for social and enjoyment aspects. However, for the majority of formal coach education programs, the context of the learner and the context of the coach’s practice are not considered in their development and implementation. Yet, both of these directly influence
the development of a coach’s philosophy, what comprises this philosophy and, therefore, what is learned.

Nash and associates (2008) have raised the issue of presenting the concept of coaching philosophy in large-scale formal coach education programs due to its individual nature, complexity and dependency on the coaching context. There is an assumption that coaches enter into formal coach education programs as ‘empty vessels’ that are waiting to be filled with information on various aspects of coaching (Cushion et al., 2003). As has been previously discussed, however, coaches come into formal coach education with different biographies and to coach in a variety of different contexts. Therefore, inclusion of coaching philosophy in such programs may have little impact on coaches’ well-established coaching philosophies and resultant coaching practice (Gilbert & Trudel, 2004b). For those coaches in the earlier stages of their career, there appears to be little understanding of the concept or the importance of coaching philosophy in their practice; hence its inclusion within the initial levels of coach education is also questionable (Nash et al., 2008). This is despite most coach education programs emphasising the development of a sound philosophy in the initial stages (Collins et al., 2009), and the view of the coaching literature that a coach’s philosophy should be developed in the early years of the coach’s development (Fuoss & Troppmann, 1985; Tutko & Richards, 1971).

It is no surprise then that formal coach education experiences have not been attributed as a factor in the development of coaches’ philosophies (Nash et al., 2008). In their study on how coaches framed their role and formed their coaching philosophy, Nash and associates (2008) found that as the level of coaching expertise increased, so did the level of understanding of the coach’s role and their coaching philosophy. Coaches’
viewpoints widened as they increased their experience and qualifications, demonstrating an understanding of the problematic nature of coaching and the differing roles required dependent on the coaching context. The most experienced and qualified coaches acknowledged the evolving nature and profound change in their role throughout their coaching careers and stated a more profound coaching philosophy, demonstrating a better understanding of the concept and its importance in their coaching practice (Nash et al., 2008).

The extent to which the topic is covered and how it is delivered is pivotal in increasing the awareness and understanding of coaching philosophies (Nelson & Cushion, 2006). There is currently an increased push to develop an athlete-centred coaching philosophy (Kidman & Lombardo, 2010). This can be seen in formal coach education manuals in which it is “suggested” coaches adopt such a philosophy which focuses on the holistic development of the athlete (den Duyn & Saddington, 2008). However, lecturing coaches on the importance of role frame components such as fun or equity may have little influence on the coach’s philosophy (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001). In addition, an athlete-centred philosophy and alternative instructional models such as game sense may not be relevant to high-level performance coaches whose focus (and coaching philosophy) is on winning performances (Roberts, 2010). Furthermore, those coach educators coming from a more traditional approach have expressed concern over the exclusion of technical content and have demonstrated unease with alternative instructional models they have little or no experience in (Roberts, 2010). Hence, there may be an incongruence between the individual coaching philosophies of the coach
educators and the philosophy behind the more alternative coaching models they are presenting in formal coach education programs (Roberts, 2011).

An investigation by Nelson and Cushion (2006) on the development of a coach education program in the UK is the only study, to the author’s knowledge, which has examined the use of philosophy within a formal learning setting (albeit indirectly). The data from the interviews with those involved in its construction suggested that the National Governing Body (NGB) recognised coaches’ practice was influenced by their philosophy and past experiences. Course documents also revealed the NGB’s stance on the type of coaching philosophy to be adopted by coaches. Through dedicating a section to increasing the coach’s role frame awareness through exploration of their value, attitudes and ethics, they hoped to reduce the likelihood of coaches solely adopting the prevalent ‘winning first’ philosophy considered inappropriate for many children (Nelson & Cushion, 2006). Gilbert and Trudel (2001) have also suggested that formal coach education programs could engage coaches in problem-based learning through typical coaching issues and by identifying strategies to address such issues in developing the coach’s philosophy.

Overall, there is little evidence on how formal coach education contributes to the development of a coach’s philosophy. Informal learning situations, on the other hand, do appear to play a role in coaching philosophy development.

2.3.2 Informal learning and coaching philosophy

Informal learning has been defined as “the lifelong process by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences
and exposure to the environment” (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, p. 8). As Coombs and Ahmed (1974) describe, the majority of a person’s lifelong learning occurs in these unsystematic and unorganised learning situations. For volunteer coaches in particular, formal coach education may initially provide them with a baseline coaching knowledge (Lemyre et al., 2007). However, the recent influx of research into the learning sources of the coach have revealed that for many coaches informal learning situations are often the main source utilised in learning to coach (Cushion et al., 2010; Erickson, Bruner, MacDonald, & Côté, 2008; Irwin et al., 2004; Lemyre et al., 2007; Timson-Katchis & North, 2008). Informal learning situations have also been identified by coaches as important in their coaching philosophy development (Bennie & O'Connor, 2010; Collins et al., 2009; Jones et al., 2003; Schinke, Bloom, & Salmela, 1995).

Coaching practice (i.e., putting skills into practice) has been acknowledged by coaches as the learning source most utilised (93%) and considered most important (98%) since their coaching career began (Timson-Katchis & North, 2008). In their study comparing actual versus preferred sources of coaching knowledge, Erickson, Bruner, MacDonald and Côté (2008) found that 58 per cent of coaches identified ‘learning by doing’ as an actual source of coaching knowledge. Interestingly, however, only 37 per cent of coaches actually identified their coaching practice as a preferred source of coaching knowledge. Along with higher preferred sources in mentoring and formal coach accreditation, these results suggested that coaches’ preferences lay with more guided learning situations rather than learning through trial and error (Erickson et al., 2008). Coaches themselves have acknowledged that learning to coach through trial and error is not a good method; however, they have also expressed that learning this way isn’t
necessary by choice – for some they cannot afford or don’t have access to more formal methods of coach education (Irwin et al., 2004).

Cushion and associates (2003) have argued that during their development as a coach, coaches serve an “apprenticeship of observation” (p. 217). Firstly, as an athlete themselves they observe their own coach in practice; then secondly, as a beginner coach, they observe and work with more experienced coaches (Cushion et al., 2003). Past experience as an athlete has been identified as a source of knowledge used by elite coaches (Irwin et al., 2004; Jones et al., 2003; Werthner & Trudel, 2009), successful high school coaches (Gilbert, Lichtenwaldt, Gilbert, Zelezny, & Côté, 2009) and volunteer youth sport coaches in their coaching practice (Lemyre et al., 2007; Wright et al., 2007). For example, in their large-scale study of UK coaches, Timson-Katchis and North (2008) found that almost 90 per cent of coaches used their experiences as a participant in their sport as a learning source. For coaches, experience in learning the skills and knowing how the skills felt to perform were advantages of being a past performer in the sport they coached (Irwin et al., 2004). In addition, coaches learnt from the different coaches they were exposed to as a player themselves (Wright et al., 2007). However, the importance given to past athletic experiences has varied with some coaches considering it an important aspect of their development as coach (Timson-Katchis & North, 2008) whilst other coaches have viewed it as an advantage but not a necessity (Irwin et al., 2004).

The second phase of coaches’ apprenticeship of observation is the observation of other more experienced coaches (Cushion et al., 2003). In Silvestri’s (1991) study on volunteer baseball coaches, 71 per cent of coaches learnt how to coach by observation of other coaches. This was confirmed more recently by Timson-Katchis and North (2008) in
the UK coach tracking study, where 85 per cent of coaches identified working with and observing coaches as a learning source they utilised in their coaching practice. However, despite coaches using observation of coaches to gain greater coaching knowledge, not all coaches rank it as an important (Irwin et al., 2004) or a preferred source of coaching knowledge (Erickson et al., 2008). Coaches may instead prefer to discuss ideas and strategies directly with coaches (Erickson et al., 2008) or initiate a mentor relationship with more experienced coaches themselves (Werthner & Trudel, 2009).

Elite coaches have identified mentor coaches as the most important source of learning in developing their coaching skills (Irwin et al., 2004) and in their overall development as a coach (Werthner & Trudel, 2009). Youth sport coaches have also reaped the benefits of a formal mentoring relationship (Wright et al., 2007). Mentor coaches help coaches learn basic coaching strategies (Irwin et al., 2004) and, through mediated learning, direct the learner to relevant information (Erickson et al., 2008). Although only 60 per cent of coaches had a coach mentor in the UK coach tracking study, 93 per cent of them believed mentors were an important learning source (Timson-Katchis & North, 2008). Erickson and associates (2008) also found that almost half of the coaches identified a mentor coach as an ideal source of knowledge, despite only 29 per cent of coaches currently using them as an actual knowledge source. There has also been some reluctance by coaches to use the term ‘mentor’ in describing those coaches they have learned from (Werthner & Trudel, 2009).

Those informal learning sources that have been found to influence the development of the coach have also been found to influence the development of the coach’s philosophy in the limited literature available in this area (Bennie & O’Connor,
Coaching experience and previous employment as a coach have been found to play a part in the development of coaches’ philosophies (Bennie & O'Connor, 2010). A link has also been found between coaching experience and well-developed coaching philosophies, with coaches mentioning how they had refined their philosophies over time through increased experience and confidence in their coaching (Collins et al., 2009).

One of the main influences on coaches’ philosophies appears to be their early sport experiences (Nash & Sproule, 2009). So, not surprisingly, the coaching philosophies of those coaches who have little or no experience coaching and who have not undertaken any formal coach education training have been found to be highly influenced by their previous experiences as an athlete (Collins et al., 2011). Coaches’ personal coaching philosophies began to take shape through experiences with their initial coaches in their early sport participation. Negative experiences as players, such as humiliation and hardships, resulted in coaches ensuring their own coaching philosophies did not mirror that of their initial coaches (Schinke et al., 1995). Previous experience as a professional player has also been found to influence coaches’ philosophies (Bennie & O'Connor, 2010). As a professional coach explained, his philosophy and actions were based on “what I would have responded to as a player” (Jones et al., 2003, p. 220).

Observation of other coaches has been found to influence the development of coaches’ philosophies (Bennie & O'Connor, 2010). In their study on how a professional coach constructed their expert knowledge, Jones and colleagues (2003) found that the coach’s personal philosophy was predominantly influenced by the observation of other
coaches’ practice. Steve, the professional soccer coach, believed strongly in learning from others, including what not to do in their coaching practice (Jones et al., 2003). And, through observation of their rival coaches, youth sport coaches have used coaches’ different philosophies as a learning source (Lemyre et al., 2007).

An effective mentor can help coaches in the development of their coaching philosophy (Erickson et al., 2008). Discussions with mentor coaches about coaching values and their transference in practice may be beneficial for less experienced coaches (Collins et al., 2009). The information provided by mentors and more experienced colleagues has been found to help in the coaching philosophy development of a professional coach (Jones et al., 2003). Elite basketball coaches have also been found to further develop their philosophies through their interactions with coaches in their master’s degrees who became their mentors during their developmental coaching stage (Schinke et al., 1995).

Schinke and associates’ (1995) research has shown that once coaches have reached the international elite coaching stage of their careers, the priorities of their coaching philosophies are redirected from athlete development to winning, because of the nature of their work, which depends more on results to ensure their job security. However, despite increasing evidence of informal learning’s role in coaching philosophy development, overall little is known about the influence of informal learning at different stages of the coach’s career and how the coaching context influences the development of coaches’ philosophies.
2.3.3 Nonformal learning and coaching philosophy

Nonformal learning has been defined as “any organised, systematic, educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system” (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, p. 8). Although nonformal learning situations share similarities with those of formal learning, such as their common goal of improving upon individual’s informal learning experiences, they differ in their funding, structure, and educational objectives and tend to focus on a particular subgroup of the population (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974). Within coaching, clinics, workshops, seminars and conferences are examples of nonformal learning situations (Nelson et al., 2006). They are generally designed to bridge the gap or build upon formal coach education programs, rather than replace them.

Within the small body of research which has considered the learning sources of coaches, nonformal learning situations such as coaching clinics, workshops, seminars and conferences have been identified by coaches as important in their development as a coach. Volunteer youth sport coaches have been found to enjoy those coaching clinics available outside of large-scale coach education courses (Wright et al., 2007). Coaching clinics exposed coaches to effective ways to teach specific drills and exercises in their sport (Deek, 2011) and allowed coaches to hear from professional coaches, who covered topics not taught in their formal coaching certification (Wright et al., 2007). They provided coaches with an opportunity to discuss ideas with other coaches, bringing coaches out of the isolation of coaching (Irwin et al., 2004). Coaching clinics, seminars and conferences have also been found to be the number one source coaches utilised when receiving new sport research ideas and one of the main sources used when searching for new ideas in their coaching (Reade, Rodgers, & Hall, 2008).
The importance given to coaching clinics and the like in coaches’ development has varied in the literature. Over 70 per cent of the coaches surveyed in the UK coach tracking study utilised workshops and training events, with just over 90 per cent of those coaches believing them to be important in their development (Timson-Katchis & North, 2008). Referred to as ‘squad sessions’, 27% of elite coaches identified coaching clinics as a very important source of knowledge in their coaching development, ranked fifth in importance overall (Irwin et al., 2004). However, in comparison to other actual and preferred sources of knowledge, overall coaching clinics have been reported infrequently by coaches (Erickson et al., 2008). The effectiveness of these clinics as learning sources has also been mixed (Wilson, Bloom, & Harvey, 2010). In fact, few coaches endorsed coaching seminars or clinics when they were faced with an urgent question or problem related to coaching (Reade et al., 2008).

Overall, there has been little investigation into the specific role nonformal learning situations play in coaches’ development. To the author’s knowledge, nonformal learning situations have not been identified in the development of coaching philosophy. In nonformal learning situations such as coaching clinics, however, coaches are exposed to the ideas and coaching philosophies of their fellow coaches (Irwin et al., 2004), as well as professional coaches (Wright et al., 2007) which must have some impact on their own coaching philosophies.
2.4 Summary

The aim of this chapter was to provide an analysis of the coaching literature in relation to coaching philosophy using the three broad questions that were introduced in Chapter 1 – What is a coaching philosophy? Why is coaching philosophy important? And, how is coaching philosophy learned? The philosophical foundations and how philosophy has been defined were explored, the significance of coaching philosophy to effectiveness, athlete outcomes, practice and ethical coaching were examined, and the learning contexts of the coach in their philosophy development were discussed. Chapter 3 will introduce the methodology used to explore the delivery of coaching philosophy in Australian coach education programs, coaches’ understanding and development of coaching philosophy and the implementation of coaches’ personal philosophies in their coaching practice.
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 demonstrated that there is limited understanding of coaching philosophy, especially at the volunteer level, and its implementation in coaching practice, despite the importance given in coach education programs and coaching based materials. The literature on helping professions such as teaching and psychology suggests that when developing a personal philosophy, a greater historical background of philosophy is presented and, hence, a deeper understanding of philosophical topics such as moral philosophy is gained (Beatty et al., 2009b; Elias & Merriam, 2005; Johnson et al., 2009; Shertzer & Stone, 1974). There also appears to be a better link between philosophy and ethical considerations such as the role of the helping profession in the duty of care of those they help, compared to the disconnect found in the coaching profession (Brockett & Hiemstra, 2004; Poczwardowski et al., 2004). The current evidence in the coaching literature (Kidman & Hanrahan, 2011; Martens, 2012) and Australian coach education programs (den Duyn & Saddington, 2008; Goodman, 2006) reflects a more prescriptive approach with less consideration on the philosophical foundations of the development of a personal philosophy. This thesis aims to examine the delivery of coaching philosophy in Australian coach education programs, coaches’ understanding and development of coaching philosophy and the implementation of coaches’ personal philosophies in their coaching practice.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a rationale for the research methods utilised in this investigation and to illustrate the implementation of these methods. The
research participants are introduced, the process of data collection is discussed and justification for the data analysis is provided. This chapter also explains the process of how the data were analysed and how validity of results was established.

3.2 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is a “situated activity that locates the observer in the world” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). Qualitative researchers attempt to make sense of the meanings people bring to the world through interpretation of phenomena in their natural settings (Denzin & Lincoln). Hence, perceptions, opinions, beliefs and practices of individuals are considered in qualitative-based research (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). This methodological approach, therefore, supports the research intention of seeking to understand coaching philosophy, its delivery in coach education, and coaches’ understanding, development and implementation in practice of coaching philosophy.

One such qualitative method is the case-study through which, a deeper understanding about a concept (in this case, coaching philosophy) is achievable (Yin, 2009). Gaining such in-depth knowledge of situations that are complex and involve individual nuances (such as the nature of coaching philosophy) would not be possible through the use of purely quantitative measures such as surveys (Cohen et al., 2007).

By using both a qualitative and quantitative research methodology (as will be described further below) there is a more in-depth investigation into basketball coaches’ philosophies and philosophy development by allowing coaches to describe and display their own approach to coaching. These methods also provide insights into the role of
coach education in coaching philosophy development and the influence of formal learning on overall coach development; in this particular case, the sport of basketball in Australia.

3.2.1 Mixed methods approach

A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was used to investigate in more detail the coaching philosophies of basketball coaches, adding rigor and depth to the inquiry (Flick, 2002). A mixed methods approach can be used for complementary purposes (Sale, Lohfield, & Brazil, 2002). For example, in the current study a document analysis was conducted to investigate the delivery of coaching philosophy in formal coach education in Australia (Chapter 4). This was complementary to the study undertaken through semi-structured interviews where the coaching philosophies of basketball coaches were examined, including their understanding of the concept of coaching philosophy and their own philosophy development (Chapter 5). These coaches were then observed in training and game settings to determine whether their stated philosophies were congruent with their coaching practice (Chapter 6). These studies will be discussed further in relation to the research participants and in the methods sections of the following results chapters. Utilising a mixed methods approach is also seen to enhance internal validity through the process of triangulation (Merriam, 1998).
3.3 Case Study

The case study seeks to answer the “how” and “why” (p. 9) questions of research, focusing on contemporary phenomena in a real-life context (Yin, 2009). This thesis aimed to answer three such questions through the “collective case study” (Stake, 1995, p. 4) approach:

1) What is coaching philosophy?
2) Why is coaching philosophy important?
3) How is coaching philosophy learned?

Both Merriam (1998) and Stake (1995) use the term “collective case study” to identify when researchers examine multiple case studies. For example, in the current study coach education documents were considered from multiple universities around Australia; and basketball coaches’ understanding of coaching philosophies and views on coach education, as well as the observation of those coaches’ philosophies in practice, were considered from multiple basketball clubs, resulting in three separate but complementary studies. The purpose of using multiple cases was to enhance the understanding of the phenomenon of coaching philosophy and to gain broader insights from both pedagogical and practice-based views. Although this study is not aimed at creating theories in relation to coaching philosophy, it is anticipated that further discussion of coaches’ philosophies and their development will be promoted through the in-depth details provided from two main perspectives: 1) the coach education programs; and 2) the coaches themselves. The knowledge gained in this detailed case study will provide the sport of basketball in Australia and its coaches with a deeper understanding of how philosophy is delivered in
its coach education programs, the influence of coach education on philosophy development, and how coaches’ philosophies are implemented in their coaching practice, including the ethical practice of its coaches.

3.4 Case Study Limitations

Although there are advantages with the case study approach, as with any research methodology there are limitations. One criticism of case studies, as with much qualitative research, is the difficulty in making generalisations to the general population. However, it is a chosen research design “because the qualitative researcher wishes to understand the particular in depth, not to find out what is generally true of the many” (Merriam, 1998, p. 208). In addition, small-N qualitative research allows the researcher greater proximity to reality and a greater understanding of the participants compared to quantitative or structural-based research (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

Subjectivity of the researcher of a case study can also be a concern; the researcher may simply concentrate on data which support their theory, in turn, ignoring data which do not (Yin, 2009). This “bias toward verification” (p. 221), however, is no more evident in the case study than any other methods of inquiry and, in fact, the case study appears to have greater bias towards falsification as researchers have typically reported hypotheses to be erroneous (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Clarification of the researcher’s assumptions at the outset of the study can help reduce researcher bias, thereby enhancing the internal validity of the research (Merriam, 1998). For example, the lead researcher in the current study attempted to reduce bias through self-reflection of their beliefs and expectations
about themes central to the research, such as their understanding of coaching philosophy and experiences in formal coach education programs. In addition, debriefing sessions were also held with the second researcher to discuss themes and coding decisions to reduce researcher bias (Stake, 2010).

3.5 Research Participants

Data from two different groups of participants were used in this investigation. In the study in Chapter 4 the educators of coaching at universities provided information about delivery of coaching philosophy in their courses. In the studies in Chapters 5 and 6 a group of Australian basketball coaches was interviewed on the topic of coaching philosophy, including content, development and understanding, and views on coach education, and then observed to determine the implementation of philosophy in practice.

3.5.1 Chapter 4: Analysis of coaching philosophy delivery in formal coach education

The first study of this thesis examined how coach education is delivered in Australian universities, Technical and Further Education (TAFE) colleges and the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS). The initial analysis conducted via the Internet provided a good summary of the number of institutions which offered coach education in some form; a singular unit (undergraduate or postgraduate), an undergraduate and/or postgraduate degree.
However, the availability of information on the delivery of coaching philosophy within these coach education programs varied. NCAS and TAFE coach education documentation provided sufficient information on whether coaching philosophy was covered within these programs, however, there was limited information provided on the delivery of coaching philosophy within the coach education programs of the universities (apart from several including coaching philosophy as an aim or objective within their unit/subject outline). Hence, further information was requested from the academics and/or administrators in charge of the specific unit and/or degree via email to gain an understanding of how and when coaching philosophy is delivered within these programs.

3.5.2 Chapter 5: Examining understanding and development of coaching philosophy and views on coach education

The second study was designed primarily to gain an insight into coaches’ understanding of coaching philosophy, the development and implementation of their personal coaching philosophy, as well as their views on coach education. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight active coaches in the sport of basketball in Melbourne, Victoria (an assessment conducted after these eight interviews determined that saturation had been reached). The participants were from three prominent basketball clubs at both domestic (recreational) and representative (developmental) levels, with the collection of coaches interviewed deemed by the researchers to be a representative sample of the majority of coaches working within the sport of basketball in Australia (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006). As higher level coaches have been found to have already well-established and well-developed coaching philosophies (Bennie & O'Connor, 2010; Nash
et al., 2008) and there is little understanding of how lower level basketball coaches develop their coaching philosophies, higher level coaches were not interviewed for the purposes of this study.

### 3.5.3 Chapter 6: Investigating the implementation of coaching philosophy in practice

For the final study, systematic observations were conducted for each of the eight basketball coaches who participated in the study in Chapter 5. The aim of this study was to examine the implementation of the coach’s philosophy in practice. The importance of conducting this study was two-fold: 1) if importance is placed on teaching coaching philosophy within formal coach education programs, is this knowledge being transferred into the coach’s practice?; and 2) is the coach’s practice congruent with their stated coaching philosophies? Coaches were each systematically observed in one game and one training session using modified methodology developed by Lacy and Darst (1984), with those coaches coaching two teams observed separately for both teams. Only one game and one training session were observed due to limited resources (i.e., only one researcher available) and time constraints (i.e., observations were conducted in the latter part of the competitive season).

### 3.6 Data Collection

Due to the limited understanding of coaching philosophy, a case study approach was considered the most appropriate method to gain an insight into coaches’ understanding of
the concept, as well as the development and implementation of individual coaching philosophies. Through the coaches’ own words and the information gathered through administrators and/or academics of coach education programs, a high level of understanding of coaches’ thoughts on coaching philosophy, development of their individual beliefs and views on coach education could be achieved. Although commonly qualitative in nature, the case study does not lend itself to any particular methods of data collection; the researcher chooses their methodology based on what they want to know (Merriam, 1998). For this study, multiple methods were used to collect the data. The data collection methods included: 1) document analysis of coach education delivery in Australian universities, TAFE colleges and NCAS through online and email resources; 2) semi-structured interviews conducted with recreational and developmental basketball coaches; and 3) systematic observation of these basketball coaches utilising a modified event recording form. Ethics approval was granted for all processes of the research (refer to Appendices A and B).

3.6.1 Document analysis

The document analysis can be used as a primary source of data or as a supplement to information obtained from observations or interviews (Tenenbaum & Driscoll, 2005). In the current research a document analysis of publicly available (i.e., online) documents and resources from Australian universities, TAFEs and the NCAS was conducted. The purpose of the document analysis in this research was two-fold: first, to examine the ways in which coach education was offered in Australia; and second, to determine how and when coaching philosophy was implemented within these coach education programs.
The collation of this information was critical in gaining an overall understanding of the delivery of coach education in Australia, but especially crucial in understanding the role of coach education in the development of coaches’ individual coaching philosophies. A greater picture will, therefore, be provided on the quality and importance of coaching philosophy delivery in such programs, and the resultant coaching philosophies discussed in Chapter 5, and implementation in practice in Chapter 6.

3.6.2 In-depth semi-structured interviews

The interview is “the main road to multiple realities” (Stake, 1995, p. 64). As most case studies consider human affairs, interviews provide important insights into behaviour and feelings that may not be able to be directly observed (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009). Although interviews range from structured to unstructured in nature, for this research the semi-structured interview was selected as it is easier to conduct and, therefore, considered a more appropriate tool for the novice researcher (Tenenbaum & Driscoll, 2005). Through the use of open-ended questions, the semi-structured interview ensures that all areas of interest are covered, either through the natural course of the interview or with specific probing by the researcher (Tenenbaum & Driscoll, 2005). Questions for this research were drawn from the literature discussed in Chapter 2 (see Appendix C for the interview schedule).

Through the use of in-depth, semi-structured interviews, this research serves two purposes: first, to gather information on coaches’ understanding of the concept of coaching philosophy and the development of individual coaching philosophies; and second, to determine the coaches’ views on coach education and, more specifically, the
role of coach education in the development of their coaching philosophy. The overall aim of these interviews was to gather information about coaches’ individual coaching philosophies to investigate the implementation of coaching philosophy in practice through systematic observation (Chapter 6).

The interviews were conducted at a location and time preferable to the participant. Through a predetermined location (e.g., pre-booked meeting room) the researcher ensured that the participant felt comfortable and secure to talk freely (Cohen et al., 2007) with interruptions kept to a minimum. As it is impossible to remember all details of an interview (Silverman, 2005), a digital recording device (Zoom H2 digital recorder – Zoom, Tokyo, Japan) was used to record all interviews which were then transcribed by the researcher soon after the interview process. Although tedious and time-consuming, the self-transcription of interviews allows the researcher a greater familiarity with the data, especially those researchers new to this type of methodology (Merriam, 1998). Reflection post-interview was also conducted by the researcher to identify key points and insights, essentially beginning the data analysis process (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). This process involved the researcher taking ten to fifteen minutes post-interview writing down their reflections in a notebook, including their thoughts on the participants’ responses (such as their understanding on the concept of coaching philosophy) and any research questions/considerations that came to mind as a result of the interview.

Although internal validity is a strength of qualitative research (Merriam, 1998), the main threats to the interview process are the researcher and participant themselves. Each bring to the interview certain expectations and beliefs which can influence the process and outcomes of the interview. Ultimately, the onus is on the researcher to ensure
that it is minimised through building rapport with the participant (Cohen et al., 2007),
avoiding leading questions, and taking a sensitive and non-judgemental stance (Merriam,
1998).

3.6.3 **Systematic observation**

Observation is unique in that it provides the researcher with a firsthand ‘live’
view of a phenomenon, rather than relying on interviews which provide a second-hand
account (Merriam, 1998). Observation provides a reality check; what people say they do
may, in fact, differ from what they actually do. More specifically, systematic or
structured observation enables the researcher to record an event without issues such as
memory influencing the outcome (Cohen et al., 2007). The use of systematic observation
in this research served one main purpose: to determine whether coaches implemented
those coaching philosophies stated in the semi-structured interviews.

Systematic observation is designed to provide a set of guidelines that enable a
trained person to observe, record and analyse interactions, ensuring that there will be
agreement with data recorded by others viewing the same events (Darst, Mancini, &
Zakrajsek, 1983). Observations were conducted using an all-purpose event recording
form (van der Mans, 1989) with definitions from the Arizona State University
Observation Instrument (ASUOI) (Lacy & Darst, 1984) modified to reflect up to four
components of each coach’s philosophy. For this study event recording was used as it
allowed the researcher to determine the frequency of behaviours observed (Cohen et al.,
2007); this was important in determining: a) which philosophies were implemented, and
b) which philosophies were implemented more than others.
In the current research the researcher was the “complete observer” (Merriam, 1998, p. 100); that is, the researcher was not a participant of those observed but was in full public view of the participant. The main concerns in any kind of observation, however, are the influence of the researcher as observer, especially on the behaviour of the participant, and that of bias by the researcher (Cohen et al., 2007). Observer bias can be reduced and reliability increased through the use of multiple observers (Yin, 2009); however, as resources did not permit, observations were video-taped to allow for further review by the researcher (Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 1987). This allows researchers to conduct multiple reviews of the data, thereby increasing the accuracy of observations (Cooper et al., 1987).

3.7 Data Analysis

Case studies can result in a considerable amount of raw data which can be overwhelming to the researcher if not managed well. Hence, analysis of the qualitative data in the current study was conducted simultaneously with the data collection (Merriam, 1998).

The document analysis (Study 1) involved the analysis of a number of different documents from various formal coach education sources within Australia (i.e., universities, TAFE institutions, the NCAS, and Basketball Australia). For the analysis of Australian universities that offered coach education, Microsoft® Access (Microsoft Corporation, Santa Rosa, USA, 2010) was used. This database allowed the researcher to determine the type of delivery (i.e., unit, course or both) and level of delivery (i.e., undergraduate, postgraduate or both) of those institutions that offered coach education.
Once further information was received from those Australian universities that offered coach education, the documents provided (such as unit outlines and lecture notes) were examined by the researcher soon after they were received to determine how and when coaching philosophy was discussed in their programs. This information was then collated and summarised using Microsoft® Excel (Microsoft Corporation, Santa Rosa, USA, 2010) to determine any similarities and/or differences between institutions in coaching philosophy delivery. This same process was conducted for all TAFE institutions which offered coach education. For the analysis of those documents related to the NCAS (and the relevant sport NSO – Basketball Australia), course manuals and curriculum documents related to the beginning (Level 1) and intermediate (Level 2) coaching principles courses were examined in regards to the delivery of coaching philosophy, in addition to Australian Sports Commission (ASC) and Basketball Australia annual reports for any information relevant to coach education within these organisations. Comparisons were also made between the information found online and in hard copy for the NCAS beginning coaching general principles course to determine the congruency of this information between each format.

The audio tapes from the semi-structured interviews were transcribed soon after completion and once transcribed into Microsoft® Word (Microsoft Corporation, Santa Rosa, USA, 2010) transcripts were then re-read several times by the researcher, with initial themes identified through the use of track changes. The emerging themes were cross-referenced with themes identified in the review of the literature, as well as themes that have not appeared in the literature being revealed. This initial ‘within-case’ data analysis analysed each individual case separately to gain an understanding of the specific
context within which the case was positioned (Merriam, 1998). The next stage of data analysis involved collating individual participant data and searching for common themes between each individual case in an attempt to build a general explanation to fit all cases (Yin, 2009). After completion of the initial coding through track changes, each individual’s interview transcript was imported into QSR NVivo 9.0© (QSR International, Doncaster, Australia, 2010) where the final higher order, second order and lower order themes were determined. In the final stage of analysis, internal validity of the current study was enhanced through the process of triangulation, with additional data analysis provided by a second skilled researcher, and consensus reached on the emergent themes (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009). Upon completion of data analysis and final validation through triangulation, an accurate picture was drawn about the pedagogical delivery of coaching philosophy and basketball coaches’ understanding of coaching philosophy, including their individual philosophies, philosophy development and implementation in practice.

Upon completion of the live observations of coaches, the frequencies of each coaching philosophy (observational categories are discussed in detail in Sections 6.5 and 6.5) were collated and entered into a spread sheet using Microsoft® Excel. The data was then converted to rate per minute (RPM) by dividing the total frequency of each coaching philosophy category by the total number of minutes the coach was observed in that training or game. RPM was utilised in the analysis of the observational data due to the difference in length of trainings and games between teams coached. As only one researcher viewed the live observations due to the resources available (Cooper et al., 1987), a random sample (n = 5) of the videotaped observations were coded two weeks
post-observation to determine intra-observer reliability, with agreeability found to be greater than 85% (Siedentop & Tannehill, 2000). Video tapes were coded in the same fashion as the live observations, utilising a written all-purpose event recording form (van der Mans, 1989) to record the frequency of coaching philosophies, with the resultant data input into Microsoft® Excel alongside the live observation data. Due to the resources available, no inter-observer reliability tests were conducted (discussed further in Section 7.5). Detailed descriptions of the methods and the data from the three studies described above are provided in the following chapters.
Chapter 4: The Delivery of Coaching Philosophy in Australian Formal Coach Education Programs

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore the types of formal coach education programs in Australia and the delivery of coaching philosophy (i.e., how and when) within such programs. Chapter 1 showed that in the helping professions of teaching and psychology, a philosophical foundation is provided to students in the development of their personal and professional philosophies (Beatty et al., 2009b; Elias & Merriam, 2005; Johnson et al., 2009; Shertzer & Stone, 1974). Those individuals in the helping professions are provided with a variety of tools in their philosophy development including philosophical scales (Zinn, 2004) and detailed examples of experienced professionals’ own philosophies (Bond, 2002; Ravizza, 2002). In addition, the duty of care of the helping professional’s clientele is more explicit with a greater link between the ethical considerations of the professional and their aligned philosophy (Brockett & Hiemstra, 2004; Poczwardowski et al., 2004).

In comparison, there is currently limited knowledge about coaching philosophy, and in particular how it is learned and its importance in coaching practice. As discussed in Chapter 2, the prescriptive coaching literature (Kidman & Hanrahan, 2011; Martens, 2012) and formal coach education programs (den Duyn & Saddington, 2008; Goodman, 2006) have continually emphasised the importance of developing a coaching philosophy, despite the fact that coaching philosophy research has only strengthened in recent years (Bennie & O’Connor, 2010; Collins et al., 2009; Nash et al., 2008). Similarly, there has
been a lack of research in the physical education teaching domain in relation to philosophy, with a single author contributing to the majority of the research into physical education teaching philosophies (Green, 1998, 2000, 2002).

The literature on coaching philosophy indicates that coaches, particularly less experienced coaches, generally do not have a good understanding of the concept and do not attribute the development of their philosophy to formal coach education (Collins et al., 2009; Nash et al., 2008). It is important, therefore, to determine how and when coaching philosophy is delivered in formal coach education programs, to gain a greater understanding as to why coaching philosophy development is not attributed to these programs and why the concept is poorly understood. Hence, the purpose of this study was to examine the delivery of coaching philosophy in Australian formal coach education programs, with an emphasis on the sport of basketball in Australia.

4.2 Method

Within Australia there are three main forms of formal coach education: universities, technical and further education (TAFE) institutions and the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS). Three separate document analyses were, therefore, undertaken of Australian universities, TAFE institutions and the NCAS, with an internet search of all publicly available documents being the main method utilised. Sufficient information was available to determine coaching philosophy delivery in NCAS programs, however, contact via email was a second method of data collection utilised for Australian universities because insufficient information was available online on the delivery of
coaching philosophy. TAFE institutions were not contacted, however, due to the small number offering coach education, particularly in Victoria. The one unit that listed coaching philosophy in its outline was part of a national standardised curriculum with little room for variation. Three questions were considered in this study:

1) What is coaching philosophy according to education providers?
2) Why is it considered important in education of coaches? and
3) How is philosophy education delivered?

4.2.1 Document analysis of Australian universities

An initial search was conducted of every Australian university to determine which institutions offered coach education. Each university was searched within their course and/or unit (subject) search engines, initially using the term ‘sport coaching’ and then the terms ‘coach’ or ‘coaching’ if no initial results were returned. Delivery of coach education was then classified into two categories: 1) type of delivery (i.e., unit, course or both), and 2) level of delivery (i.e., undergraduate, postgraduate or both). Despite several universities’ content summaries showing coaching philosophy as an aim within their coach education unit and/or course, there was limited information provided overall on delivery of coaching philosophy. The person listed online as the relevant contact (academic and/or administrator) was, therefore, contacted via email for further information in relation to how and when coaching philosophy was delivered within their program(s). Each university is identified by their assigned alpha level (e.g., U4). However, university quotations do not appear in alphabetical order of their assigned number.
4.2.2 Document analysis of NCAS and Basketball Australia

Two main formal coach education courses are offered through the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) and the NCAS: 1) Beginning Coaching General Principles; and 2) Intermediate Coaching General Principles. These courses are delivered through the relevant National Sporting Organisation (NSO) and State Sporting Organisation (SSO) which, for the purposes of the current case study (Chapters 5 and 6), is Basketball Australia (NSO) and Basketball Victoria (SSO), respectively. Therefore, the document analysis documents examined related to the two courses above including the online coaching course, ASC annual reports, and Basketball Australia annual reports. The Level 1 NCAS basketball course is the most common formal coach education course completed by recreational and developmental coaches. Due to the beginning coaching general principles course being offered both in hard copy and in online format, comparisons were made to determine the consistency of information presented across those formats.

4.2.3 Document analysis of TAFE institutions

Within the TAFE system in Australia coach education programs are standardised through two main course areas, Sport Development and Sport Coaching, although the units/subjects within these may vary depending on the institution. Each TAFE institution was searched within their course search engines, initially using the term ‘sport coaching’ and then the terms ‘coach’ or ‘sport’ if no initial results were returned. Delivery of coach education was then classified into level of delivery (i.e., certificate, diploma or both).
This initial search revealed there was one standardised unit of study within which coaching philosophy was delivered. At the time of data collection, very few TAFE institutions offered coach education ($n = 8$), particularly in Victoria where the participants in the second and third studies of this thesis (Chapters 5 and 6) were recruited. Of the TAFE institutions that offered coach education, all offered the standardised unit of study with the same learning outcomes and methods of content delivery. Therefore, it was determined that the information provided online would be sufficient for the purposes of the current thesis (with an emphasis on the two main forms of coach education in Australia – the NCAS and universities).

4.3 Results

The data from the document analyses were used to illustrate both the structure of formal coach education within Australia and also the delivery of coaching philosophy within these programs. The results show that full programs (i.e., diploma or degree) are relatively rare in Australian formal coach education. With over 130,000 coaches accredited with the NCAS (Australian Sports Commission, 2009), the NCAS appears to be the avenue for formal coach education in Australia, especially in relation to cost and time.

4.3.1 Australian universities

There has been little or no research conducted on coach education in Australian universities. At the time of data collection (2009), 22 Australian universities offered
coach education in some form (refer to Table 4.1). The main type of delivery of coach education was in the form of a singular undergraduate unit of study \((n = 17)\). Two universities offered coaching as a sequence within a Bachelor of Exercise and Sport Science degree, one a major sequence \((6 \text{ units of study})\) and one a minor sequence \((4 \text{ units of study})\). The place of offer for these units was evenly distributed through three main disciplines/faculties: education \((n = 5)\), health/health sciences \((n = 5)\) or exercise/sport sciences \((n = 6)\) with one university offering coaching in both education and exercise/sports science. All postgraduate units in coaching \((n = 4)\), on the other hand, were directly related to a postgraduate degree in coaching.

Table 4.1

**Document Analysis of Formal Coach Education in Australian Universities Including Type of Delivery**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of universities in Australia</th>
<th>No. of universities offering coach education</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No. of responses from universities</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DELIVERY OF COACH EDUCATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>UG &amp; PG Units</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>UG Units &amp; Degrees</th>
<th>PG Units &amp; Degrees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UG</td>
<td>PG</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[\text{UG} = \text{undergraduate}; \ \text{PG} = \text{postgraduate}; \ \text{*One university offered undergraduate unit plus postgraduate unit and degree}\]

At the time of data collection there was only one undergraduate degree specific to coaching available in Australia. Apart from the singular unit, a postgraduate degree was
the other main way to undertake formal coach education in Australian universities. These are generally in the form of a graduate certificate/diploma or masters and are aimed specifically at elite and/or highly experienced coaches. Postgraduate degrees in coach education are also predominantly available in off campus/online mode, allowing coaches all over Australia to undertake formal coach education training. This is obviously important for those coaches employed full time who are already time poor and may not have direct access to a course on campus (i.e., not offered in their state of employment).

4.3.1.1 The early introduction of coaching philosophy in Australian universities

The prescriptive coaching literature has predominantly emphasised the importance of introducing the concept of coaching philosophy early to coaches (Fuoss & Troppmann, 1985; Tutko & Richards, 1971). In Australian universities, as Table 4.2 shows, coaching philosophy was initially covered in the first three weeks in all universities who provided this information (response rate of 50%). With the exception of two of the universities, coaching philosophy was covered in the first week of their program and/or unit.

The early introduction of coaching philosophy shows the importance given by unit chairs/course directors to this area, as highlighted by university two (U2):

I believe the development of a coaching philosophy is a fundamental aspect of coaching and coaching courses. I use Rainer Martens’ text (Successful Coaching) and “Developing your Coaching Philosophy” is the first topic discussed.
Table 4.2

The Type and Time of Delivery of Coaching Philosophy in Australian Universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of universities in Australia</th>
<th>No. of universities offering coach education</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No. of responses</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COACHING PHILOSOPHY DELIVERY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How</th>
<th>When (First Covered)</th>
<th>Not Provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, several universities stressed that the development of a coaching philosophy was a long-term process and evolved over time through life experiences:

We discuss how a coaching philosophy should grow and change with the situations we encounter, and as knowledge of our sport, our athletes and ourselves grows. (U4)

This university covered coaching philosophy throughout their program: in the first two weeks’ lectures and in a tutorial specifically dedicated to the topic; reflection in practical coaching sessions; and in the last week of the unit where students were asked to rewrite and/or build on their coaching philosophy developed at the beginning of the unit.

4.3.1.2 The development of coaching philosophy in Australian universities

In a number of Australian universities, coaching philosophy was a key objective or learning outcome of undertaking a coaching-related unit of study. As discussed in the
previous section, coaching philosophy was predominantly presented in the first week of university units and/or programs. The most common approach in helping students develop their coaching philosophies was in an introductory lecture, where coaching philosophy was covered with topics such as coaching style and the role of the coach. A multiple methods approach, usually a lecture and a tutorial/practical activity, was also taken by universities when teaching the concept of coaching philosophy and assisting in the development of personal coaching philosophies. Hence, students were introduced to the concept in the lecture then their own coaching philosophy was developed through activities in a tutorial and/or practical setting.

Several universities approached the development of coaching philosophy through the use of questioning. When considering their coaching philosophy, students asked themselves questions such as, “Who am I?” and “Why am I coaching?” Universities also appeared to attempt to link the coach’s philosophy with their coaching practice, with one university having the students asked the question, “Does your coaching reflect your philosophy?” and another having students critically reflect on their coaching philosophy through practical coaching sessions. Being a reflective coach was particularly important for those students required to identify their own coaching philosophy and its development through an assessment task.

The use of experienced and/or famous coaches was another way in which Australian university coach education programs introduced coaching philosophy and assisted students with development of their own philosophies. Four of the universities used various learning approaches in helping coaches develop their philosophies, including biographies, quotes and examples of coaching philosophies, and guest coaches.
Biographies and autobiographies were mentioned by two of the coach educators, as described by U4:

> We also encourage our students to read coaching biographies and autobiographies, so that they can see how experienced coaches have developed their coaching philosophies.

Three of the universities used quotes and/or examples of coaching philosophies in their discussions on the development of a coach’s philosophy. Famous coaches used in this process, many Australian, included Joyce Brown, Ric Charlesworth, Kevin Sheedy, Vince Lombardi, and John Wooden. These quotes were mainly used in a lecture setting, with one university in particular using the strategy of having the coaching student figure out which coach had stated the quote.

As discussed previously, the majority of formal coach education within Australian universities is offered as a singular unit of study. Therefore, students may simply be undertaking the unit as an elective, either in isolation to their other studies or possibly as a part of a sequence in coaching. This may create difficulty for coach education providers in teaching coaching philosophy as its development is considered a life-long, evolving process.

4.3.1.3 Communication of coaching philosophy in the management of others

The communication of one’s philosophy was not emphasised by Australian university coach educators in comparison to NCAS programs. One university (U10) listed “develop and articulate a coaching philosophy” as their first learning outcome, with
the topic covered in a lecture in Week 3 of the unit. Only one coach educator placed importance on communication of coaching philosophy, specifically linking it with coaching practice:

The emphasis is on communicating one’s coaching philosophy through actions, not words (U2).

It is, however, difficult to determine how much importance is placed on articulation of coaching philosophy as more emphasis was placed on how and when coaching philosophy was taught in these programs.

4.3.1.4 The disconnect between coaching philosophy and ethical guidelines

Within Australian universities, the ethical side of coaching is generally discussed as a separate entity from that of coaching philosophy. For example, one university covered the development of coaching philosophy in the first week’s lecture, with the second week’s lecture considering what they described as the philosophical and ethical aspects of coaching. For another university the time between introducing coaching philosophy and the ethical considerations of sports law and safety was ten weeks. However, for those universities that provided information on unit structure there was generally only one or two weeks between discussion of coaching philosophy (first) and the ethical responsibilities of the coach.

There were, however, several universities which appeared to make some connection, albeit small, between a coach’s philosophy and ethical considerations of coaching, as reflected in the unit outline of U3:
Throughout the unit students will be encouraged to adopt and communicate a strong personal philosophy of coaching that is scientifically systematic, ethical in approach, and current in accordance with state-of-the-art coaching skills.

Another university discussed in a lecture how their philosophies would assist the coach in the development of their attitudes towards coach behaviour and ethics. However, as the detail and amount of information given by Australian university coach educator providers varied, it is difficult to make conclusions on the level of disconnect between coaching philosophy and ethical guidelines in Australian university formal coach education programs.

4.3.2 The National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS)

Currently, formal coach education through the NCAS is managed by Basketball Victoria and the basketball associations within it. The traditional NCAS curriculum (beginner, intermediate and advanced) has been undergoing a restructure in the sport of basketball, with a new structure of five levels instead of the existing three, and streams focused on the areas of development, tournaments, leagues, community and wheelchair basketball. However, despite Basketball Australia claiming this process was to be completed and introduced in 2010, the newly revised structure does not appear to have been fully implemented (Basketball Australia, 2011). The Level 1 coaching materials were revised in 2005 and it was proposed to revise the structure of the NCAS, with a revamped structure to be implemented in the latter half of 2007 (Basketball Australia, 2006). In Basketball Australia’s Business Plan for 2008-2012, developed in October
2007, one of the key achievements for 2008 was “implementation of new NCAS courses” (Basketball Australia, 2007, p. 4). However, by 2009 it appeared that this target had not been achieved, with revision of the restructure continuing with a focus group holding workshops to develop new coach accreditation and development (Basketball Australia, 2008). In addition, in Basketball Australia’s most recent Business Plan for 2009-2013, developed in April 2009, “implementation of new NCAS courses” (p. 10) was one of the key achievements to be completed in 2009-2010 with a proposed completion date of October 2009 (Basketball Australia, 2010b). The most recent Annual Report by Basketball Australia, however, makes no mention of coaching or coach education (Basketball Australia, 2010a).

In 2008 there were 3805 coaches with Level 1 accreditation in Basketball Australia’s national database, with a further 403 coaches with Level 2 accreditation (Basketball Australia, 2008). As can be seen from these statistics, the majority of basketball coaches who complete formal coach education within the NCAS do so at Level 1 accreditation; those coaches are coaching at a recreational and/or developmental level. Level 2, on the other hand, is more directed to those coaches who wish to coach at a higher level. In 2005 there was a significant redevelopment of the coaching manual for the NCAS Level 1 basketball course by Basketball Australia in association with the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) Oceania (Basketball Australia, 2005, 2006). The result was *Basketball Coaching Made Easy*, a series of five booklets: 1) Introduction, Role of the Coach, Inclusive Coaching and Sports Science; 2) Individual Body Movement and Ball Skills; 3) Individual Offensive and Defensive Skills; 4) Team Offensive and Defensive Skills; and 5) Training Drills. This manual still appears to be in
use in recent advertisements by Victorian basketball associations for NCAS Level 1 basketball courses (Basketball Victoria, 2011; Dandenong Basketball Association, 2011; Frankston Basketball Association, 2011; Kilsyth and District Basketball Association, 2011) supporting the lack of full implementation of the new NCAS basketball course structure.

The Australian Sports Commission provides support and assistance in helping NSOs implement and deliver coach education in their sport (Australian Sports Commission, 2010a). One of the key objectives is “to improve the sporting abilities of Australians generally through the improvement of the standard of sports coaches” (Australian Sports Commission, 2010a, p. 44). Previously, NSOs such as Basketball Australia were required to meet the Level 1, 2 and 3 structure of the NCAS; however, after a review, NSOs are now able to determine their own accreditation structures (Australian Sports Commission, 2007). This does not necessarily appear to be beneficial to the NSO, as can be seen with Basketball Australia and their continual struggle over a number of years to implement a new accreditation structure.

There are two general coaching principles courses offered by the ASC: Beginning Coaching General Principles and Intermediate Coaching General Principles. The Beginning Coaching General Principles course was designed for entry level coaches and has now been developed into an online course, allowing better access to new coaches to complete the course at their own pace, especially as a large majority of coaches at this level have other commitments such as full-time employment which makes it difficult to attend face-to-face coach education courses. The Intermediate Coaching General Principles course was designed for those coaches moving beyond the beginner level who
wanted to improve their skills knowledge at a club and/or regional level (Australian Sports Commission, 2007). These courses are now optional for the NSO to include in their NCAS programs; however, for entry level accreditation, minimum competency standards outlined in the beginning coaching general principles program must be met (Australian Sports Commission, 2005b). As stipulated by the ASC, “this is to ensure that there is a minimum standard of competency set for coaches across the entire NCAS” (Australian Sports Commission, 2005b, p. 2).

4.3.2.1 The early introduction of coaching philosophy in the NCAS

Within the NCAS, coaching philosophy is covered early in both general principles courses and the standardised NCAS Level 1 basketball coaching course manual *Basketball Coaching Made Easy*. The first chapters of both the beginning coaching and intermediate general principles manuals contain a section on the development of a coaching philosophy. In the *Beginning Coaching General Principles* manual, coaching philosophy is covered towards the end of Chapter 1, The Role of the Coach (Goodman, 2006). Interestingly, the concept of coaching philosophy is introduced to coaches before it was defined:

"Effective coaches have developed a philosophy of coaching (Goodman, 2006, p. 25)."

When the concept of philosophy *was* introduced to coaches, the definition used reflected that of the coaching literature, as discussed previously in Chapter 2 (e.g., Lyle, 2002):
A philosophy is a set of guidelines to govern our actions (Goodman, 2006, p. 22).

In the *Intermediate Coaching General Principles* manual, coaching philosophy is introduced in Chapter 1, The Essence of Coaching, and is discussed in more detail compared to the *Beginning Coaching General Principles* manual. The significance of a coach’s philosophy is again emphasised:

> The development of a sound coaching philosophy should be given as much attention as the development of technical knowledge of the sport (den Duyn & Saddington, 2008, p. 14).

Similarly, the definition of coaching philosophy provided in the *Intermediate Coaching General Principles* manual is more detailed than the outline in the *Beginning Coaching General Principles* manual:

> The set of personal guidelines they [the coach] have about how they will operate as a coach and what they expect from and want for themselves and those in their charge (den Duyn & Saddington, 2008, p. 14).

The manual then further clarifies this definition by stating that a coaching philosophy consists of the coach’s objectives and their principles/beliefs on achieving these objectives (den Duyn & Saddington, 2008).

Coaching philosophy is introduced in Chapter 3, Role of the Coach, in *Basketball Coaching Made Easy*, with the first two chapters covering the history and rules of basketball. Hence, coaching philosophy is one of the first topics discussed, with the importance given to this topic reflected in the opening line:
To become a truly successful coach you must first develop a coaching philosophy (Basketball Australia, 2005, p. 19).

Coaching philosophy is also discussed in the subsequent chapter ‘Basketball for People with a Disability’ in relation to the development of an inclusive philosophy and, again, the relationship with coach effectiveness is shown:

Effective coaches adjust to accommodate individuals. Adopting an inclusive (social model) philosophy to your coaching will benefit you and your athletes, regardless of whether they have a disability or not (Basketball Australia, 2005, p. 36).

However, unlike the Beginning Coaching General Principles and Intermediate Coaching General Principles manuals, Basketball Coaching Made Easy did not provide coaches with any formal definition of coaching philosophy.

Overall, consistent with the prescriptive coaching literature, coaching philosophy was introduced to coaches in the first chapter in all three course-related documents. Therefore, the development of one’s coaching philosophy is viewed as an important process in the NCAS.

### 4.3.2.2 The development of coaching philosophy in the NCAS

As discussed in the previous section, the development of a coaching philosophy is considered an important process in becoming an effective coach in NCAS programs. However, in terms of providing coaches with the tools on how to develop their coaching
philosophy, the section on coaching philosophy development in the *Beginning Coaching General Principles* course manual lacks detail, especially given its importance (Goodman, 2006).

The learning activities associated with the beginning coaching course are varied in their approach to assisting a coach with the development of their philosophy. The first provides the coach with a coaching situation, giving them the opportunity to consider their own coaching style. The second discusses a game sense scenario, asking the coach to discuss the benefits of using this approach in their coaching (Australian Sports Commission, 2011). Although both coaching style and the type of training approach utilised in coaching are linked to the coach’s philosophy, neither appears to make an explicit link to coaching philosophy. This is especially crucial when coaches are asked to outline their coaching philosophy in a worksheet which forms a part of the coach’s assessment (Australian Sports Commission, 2005a). From the information provided in the *Beginning Coaching General Principles* course manual, it is questionable whether participants undertaking this course are gaining a good enough understanding of coaching philosophy to be able to properly articulate their own personal philosophy.

Similarly, in *Basketball Coaching Made Easy*, coaches are provided with little information on exactly how to develop their coaching philosophy. It is suggested coaches ask themselves “why coach?” as the first question when developing their coaching philosophy (Basketball Australia, 2005). Coaches are also provided with reasons as to why coaches coach and why athletes take part in sport. Learning activities associated with coaching philosophy development were not publicly available, thus, what detail or
what assistance is provided in helping these coaches develop their coaching philosophies is unknown.

In the *Intermediate Coaching General Principles* course manual, coaching philosophy is discussed in more detail in the chapter, The Essence of Coaching. Although there does not appear to be a continuation from the beginning coaching course, coaches are provided with more guidance on coaching philosophy development. In developing their coaching philosophy, it is suggested that coaches ask themselves a number of questions including “Why do I coach” and “How can I achieve my objectives and help my athletes and others achieve theirs?” (den Duyn & Saddington, 2008, p. 15). Coaches are also given advice in relation to the specific focus of their coaching philosophy. Common elements of “healthy coaching philosophies” (p. 15) are discussed, including the philosophy being centred on the athlete, concern for the holistic development of the athlete and ensuring that athletes understand the importance and embrace the value of teamwork (den Duyn & Saddington, 2008). A quote from a popular coaching textbook (Kidman & Hanrahan, 1997) is also given on what is deemed a healthy coaching philosophy.

Overall, the *Intermediate Coaching General Principles* course manual discusses how a coaching philosophy is developed over time, what influences a coaching philosophy, and how a coaching philosophy can be used by the coach in their coaching practice. The importance of congruence with the philosophy of the coach’s club or organisation is also discussed (den Duyn & Saddington, 2008). Compared to the beginning coach course, a more explicit link is made between the coach’s philosophy and coaching style:
The coaching philosophy that a coach adopts will influence how they see their role as a coach and, subsequently, their coaching style – that is, the way they approach their coaching and deal with people and issues (den Duyn & Saddington, 2008, p. 16).

The coach then needs to be able to communicate their coaching philosophy to those around them, with coaches required to discuss how coaches can communicate their coaching philosophy to their athletes in an assessed worksheet (Australian Sports Commission, 2008).

4.3.2.3 Communication of coaching philosophy in the management of others

Despite the various methods of presenting and developing coaching philosophy in formal coach education courses in Australia, a key theme to emerge from the courses associated with the NCAS was the importance of the communication of a coaching philosophy. In both general principles manuals and the standardised manual for Level 1 NCAS basketball, the communication of a coach’s philosophy to athletes, parents, carers and administrators was emphasised. How to do this, however, varied slightly amongst the three documents, with some manuals providing more guidance than others.

In the Beginning Coaching General Principles course manual, the communication of a coach’s philosophy is emphasised particularly in reference to parents, but is considered important for those surrounding the coach:
It is important that coaches communicate their coaching philosophy to the participants, their parents and carers, and the officials and administrators they work with (Goodman, 2006, p. 22).

As mentioned previously, the concept of coaching philosophy was not discussed in detail before being introduced to coaches through the section on involving parents. Here it was suggested that coaches explain their coaching philosophy and expectations of both the athletes and parents at the beginning of the season through a pre-season meeting. An example of a letter of invitation was provided to demonstrate to coaches how to briefly outline their philosophy and indicate what would be covered in the meeting.

The communication of a coach’s philosophy is again emphasised in the Intermediate Coaching General Principles course manual, with consideration to coaches of both youth and senior teams:

Once a coach has developed their coaching philosophy, it is important to communicate it to those in their charge and establish a mutual direction. In the case of junior sport teams this might include parents, helpers or carers, and administrators, as well as athletes. In the case of more senior teams, it might involve support staff, administrators and helpers or carers, as well as athletes (den Duyn & Saddington, 2008, p. 16).

How to articulate their coaching philosophy is not covered explicitly in the manual although it is a question in the worksheet for the chapter, The Essence of Coaching. Here coaches are asked, “How can coaches communicate their coaching philosophy to athletes and establish a mutual direction?” (Australian Sports Commission, 2008, p. 2). Therefore,
unlike the beginning coaching course manual, more emphasis appears to be placed on the athlete rather than the parents.

In the Level 1 NCAS basketball manual *Basketball Coaching Made Easy*, communication of a coach’s philosophy (and communication in general) is considered an important component of coaching:

> It is important for coaches to be able to communicate with players, referees, other coaches and parents…Clearly identify your philosophies, plans and objectives (Basketball Australia, 2005, p. 21).

Although not clearly stated, a newsletter was suggested as one way a coach could not only communicate their coaching philosophy but also other important information such as game times and training. Communication with parents on a regular basis was also recommended for coaches in gaining parental support. However, unlike the *Beginning Coaching General Principles* manual, how to specifically do this is vague; it may, however, be covered by the course presenter of the Level 1 NCAS basketball course.

### 4.3.2.4 The disconnect between coaching philosophy and ethical guidelines

Within NCAS-related beginner courses there appears to be less of a disconnect in relation to the distance between the presentation of coaching philosophy and the ethical aspects of coaching compared to Australian universities. In the *Beginning Coaching General Principles* course manual, both the ethical responsibilities of the coach and coaching philosophy are discussed within the first module, Role of the Coach. This is also the case in the online general principles course where the topic of ethical issues
directly follows coaching philosophy. Furthermore, the NCAS Level 1 Basketball manual *Basketball Coaching Made Easy* also discusses coaching philosophy and the legal responsibilities and duties of the coach in the same chapter, Role of the Coach. However, overall there still appears to be little connection between the two topics as, at no time, is the coach’s philosophy mentioned when discussing the ethical responsibilities of the coach and vice versa. For example, in the *Beginning Coaching General Principles* worksheets completed by coaches on the course, the coaches are asked to outline their coaching philosophy in the worksheet for module 1, yet it is not until module 3 (Risk Management) that coaches are asked about their duty of care and legal responsibilities as coach (Australian Sports Commission, 2005a). Although coaches are asked to consider issues such as drugs in sport and the treatment of others, including their athletes, there is no connection made between the coach’s philosophy and their ethical responsibilities as coach.

The *Intermediate Coaching General Principles* course manual discusses both coaching philosophy and the ethical considerations of the coach in the chapter, The Essence of Coaching. Unlike the NCAS-related beginner coaching courses, however, it does make a connection between the ethical dilemmas faced by the coach and how the development of a coaching philosophy assists the coach in such situations:

A written coaching philosophy also provides a tangible reference point that can be revisited to ensure their behaviour is consistent with their philosophy…It helps a coach make choices, set priorities and ensure a consistent approach at any time, but especially when faced with difficult situations or ethical dilemmas where they
may feel uncertain about the correct decision to make (den Duyn & Saddington, 2008, p. 14).

However, it does not go into detail as to specifically how a coach would use their coaching philosophy to help in making ethical decisions in the example dilemmas provided. Overall, there appears to be a disconnect between coaching philosophy and the ethical responsibilities of the coach in Australian formal coach education programs.

4.3.3 Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutions

At the time of data collection there were 56 TAFE institutions in Australia, with eight of them offering coach education in either a certificate (II, II and/or III) and/or diploma (refer to Table 4.3 for an overview). In addition, nineteen TAFE institutions offered a certificate and/or diploma of sport (development) in which coaching was an optional stream, with five of them offering both sport (development) and sport (coaching).

It should be noted, however, that although sport (coaching) courses were listed by TAFE institutions, three institutions were currently not offering one or more of them, with one institution specifically stating that their suite of sport (coaching) courses (i.e., all three certificates and the diploma) was only being offered to schools or community groups.
Table 4.3

Document Analysis of Formal Coach Education in Australian TAFE Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of TAFEs in Australia</th>
<th>No. of TAFEs offering Sport (Development)</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No. of TAFEs offering Sport (Coaching)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>19*</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8*</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DELIVERY OF COACH EDUCATION

Certificate in Sport (Coaching)                               Diploma in Sport (Coaching)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4#</td>
<td>3#</td>
<td>6#</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Of these TAFE institutions, five offered both Sport (Development) and Sport (Coaching); #Three TAFE institutions offered all three certificates; ^Two TAFE institutions offered both the diploma and certificate(s)

4.3.3.1 The early introduction of coaching philosophy in TAFE institutions

In contrast to Australian universities and NCAS programs, it appears that the development of a coaching philosophy is given less importance in Australian TAFE institutions. The unit *Operate in Accord with Accepted Coaching Practices, Styles and Legal and Ethical Responsibilities* has seven learning outcomes/competencies, with the last being “develop a philosophy of coaching” (Challenger TAFE, 2011, SRSCGP001A/07). Although it cannot be determined when this unit is presented within the Sport (Coaching) or Sport (Development) courses due to a formal course structure not being available, the positioning of coaching philosophy does appear to differ significantly from Australian universities and NCAS programs, where it is one of the first topics discussed.
4.3.3.2 The development of coaching philosophy in TAFE institutions

The final learning outcome/competency of the TAFE unit *Operate in Accord with Accepted Coaching Practices, Styles and Legal and Ethical Responsibilities* is “develop a coaching philosophy”. Although further information was not obtained directly from TAFE institutions on this unit, the unit outline states that coaches will “clarify personal philosophies relating to sportsmanship, winning/losing and holistic development of the athlete in relation to particular situations and athlete groups” (Challenger TAFE, 2011, SRSCGP001A/07). In addition, stages of athlete development in relation to appropriateness of competition levels and activities, as well as the role of the coach in regard to sport-specific skills and knowledge of the sport through State and National coach education bodies, are listed as competencies within the development of a coaching philosophy. Although it is unknown exactly how the coach’s philosophy is developed within this unit, the athlete-centred focus of developing a coaching philosophy is consistent with that of the NCAS programs.

4.3.3.3 The disconnect between coaching philosophy and ethical guidelines

Compared to Australian universities and NCAS programs, there appears to be less disconnect between coaching philosophy and ethical guidelines in the TAFE unit *Operate in Accord with Accepted Coaching Practices, Styles and Legal and Ethical Responsibilities*. The third learning outcome/competency of this unit is “operate in accord with the ethical responsibilities of a coach” (Challenger TAFE, 2011, SRSCGP001A/03). Within this learning competency the ethical responsibilities of the coach in relation to
rules, policies and regulations of the coach’s sport; principles of athlete confidentiality; and best practice principles of the coach’s sport/activity, are key areas to be implemented by the coach. Complementing this is the second learning outcome/competency of this unit, “operate in accord with the legal responsibilities of a coach” (Challenger TAFE, 2011, SRSCGP001A/02). Applying the legal responsibilities of the coach specific to the coaching situation, environment and athlete group and the principles of natural justice, as well as ensuring the safety of the athlete(s), including the development and implementation of a risk management plan, are key learning outcomes listed. And as discussed previously, developing a philosophy of coaching is the final learning outcome/competency of this unit. Although the direct relationship between ethical guidelines and coaching philosophy is unable to be determined from the information gained from this unit outline, the fact that these concepts are discussed in the same unit suggests they are considered by TAFE institutions to be linked.

4.4 Summary of Key Findings

The document analysis of universities, TAFE institutions and the NCAS revealed the varying degrees of coaching philosophy delivery in formal coach education programs in Australia. Although the NCAS is the main formal education pathway for coaches in Australia, coaches can also undertake studies in coaching in universities (predominantly through singular units) as well as certificates and diplomas at TAFE institutions. However, overall there are few alternative pathways in formal education for coaches
outside the NCAS, especially at university level, with a very limited number of undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

As discussed in Chapter 2, coaching philosophy has been considered crucial for coaching effectiveness (Cassidy et al., 2009; Fuoss & Troppmann, 1985), athlete outcomes (Collins et al., 2009; Gilbert & Trudel, 2004b), coaching practice (Strong, 1992; Wilcox & Trudel, 1998) and ethical coaching (Hardman & Jones, 2011b; Robinson, 2010). Yet, despite the prescriptive coaching literature devoting entire chapters to coaching philosophy (Lyle, 2002; Martens, 2012), there are few resources provided to coaches in developing their coaching philosophy in the main formal coach education pathway of the NCAS. Compared to other topics such as planning, risk management and sports science, in both the beginning and intermediate coaching principles manuals, coaching philosophy is given very little attention, particularly in the manual designed for beginner coaches (Goodman, 2006). This is despite the fact that both manuals, in addition to the manual made for NCAS Level 1 basketball coaches (Basketball Australia, 2005), explicitly stress the importance of developing a coaching philosophy (den Duyn & Saddington, 2008; Goodman, 2006). The importance of coaching philosophy was also reflected in the information provided by universities and the NCAS course manuals, which showed that coaching philosophy is presented very early in these programs.

Compared to that of other helping professions (Elias & Merriam, 2005; Johnson et al., 2009; Shertzer & Stone, 1974), learning philosophy in formal coach education programs was generally not grounded in traditional philosophical theories, particularly in NCAS based courses. Although several universities appeared to provide some philosophical foundation to coaching, the limited information provided by universities
made it difficult to determine how it specifically related to coaching philosophy. Hence, there was a disconnect between coaching philosophy and ethical guidelines in the NCAS and university coach education programs, with these topics predominantly considered separate entities rather than intertwined concepts (although there appeared to be some link in TAFE programs).

Consistent with the coaching literature (e.g., Kidman & Hanrahan, 2011), learning coaching philosophy was very prescriptive in nature, with those sources available in universities and NCAS programs providing coaches with very basic guidance on how to develop their coaching philosophy, especially when compared to the tools provided by the other helping professions, as described in Chapter 2 (e.g., Zinn, 2004). This was particularly evident in how coaches should use coaching philosophy in their ethical decision-making, considered one of the main reasons why a coach should develop a coaching philosophy in the first place (den Duyn & Saddington, 2008). NCAS programs also stressed the importance of communicating one’s philosophy in people management, yet coaches are provided with little guidance on how to do it. The studies in Chapters 5 and 6 build on the knowledge about coaching philosophy development and its implementation in coaching practice from the perspective of recreational and developmental basketball coaches who have participated in formal coach education in Australia.
Chapter 5: Examining Understanding and Development of Coaching

Philosophy and Views on Coach Education

5.1 Introduction

The first study of this thesis examined the formal coach education programs in Australia and the delivery of coaching philosophy within those programs. The concept of coaching philosophy was introduced early in formal coach education programs; however, despite the importance given to developing a coaching philosophy for successful and effective coaching in these programs, overall they lacked the tools to assist coaches in their philosophy development. They appeared to be more prescriptive in nature, especially the beginner level courses through the NCAS (Goodman, 2006). Furthermore, there was a general disconnect between coaching philosophy and ethical guidelines despite the fact that the coach’s practice is influenced by their philosophy.

This chapter explores how formal coach education is viewed by those who undertake such programs, the coaches, and the impact on the understanding and development of personal coaching philosophies. In order to establish an accurate understanding of coaching philosophy and the importance of coach education, it was necessary to conduct personal interviews with recreational (where participation and skill development are emphasised) and developmental (where athletes are selected based on tryouts) basketball coaches (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006).
5.2 Method

In order to establish an accurate picture of coaches’ understanding of coaching philosophy, including their personal coaching philosophies and their views on coach education, it was necessary to conduct semi-structured interviews with a number of coaches of varying levels of experience at the recreational and developmental levels.

5.2.1 Participants

As previous research has found higher level coaches to have well-established and well-developed coaching philosophies (Bennie & O'Connor, 2010; Nash et al., 2008), the focus of this thesis was on the views and behaviours of recreational and developmental coaches (as there is little understanding of how lower level coaches develop their coaching philosophies) (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006). Furthermore, to gain a greater understanding of the importance of formal coach education in the development of coaches’ philosophies, all participants were required to have either a Level 1 or 2 NCAS basketball qualification. However, for one developmental coach it was found that they had not completed any coach accreditation, even though this is generally required by representative basketball clubs. Despite this, the views of this participant provided some interesting contrasting views on the values of coach education and how a coaching philosophy is developed without formal coach education; therefore, this coach was included in the data analysis.

Eight Australian basketball coaches were interviewed for the current study. Participants were initially recruited through the researcher’s own coaching networks (i.e.,
a convenience sample); further participants were then recruited through these initial participants (i.e., snowball sampling) (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Two additional coaches (recruited through snowball sampling) were contacted via email on two occasions for participation in the study; however no response was received from either coach by the researcher. Furthermore, as can be seen in Table 5.1 below, the eight participants that were interviewed were diverse in their age, years coaching experience and coaching and educational qualifications; therefore, it was determined by the research team that this sample was sufficient in providing a case study of the development of coaching philosophies of basketball coaches in Australia.

The eight participants were recreational and developmental coaches currently coaching players aged 8-34 years from three basketball clubs within the Eastern suburbs of the city of Melbourne, Australia. Coaches ranged in age from 21 to 52 years and had an average 8.5 years’ coaching experience. Coaching qualifications ranged from one coach having no formal basketball coaching qualification to postgraduates with sport-related degrees. Four coaches were currently studying at the higher education level, two of these in a sports related field – physical education and honours in sports science. Another coach had completed two years of a sports coaching degree before transferring into an IT teaching career. Seven of the eight participants had completed either a Level 1 or 2 NCAS qualification and were currently accredited as a coach with Basketball Australia. As coaches were predominantly volunteers or were provided minimum reimbursement costs by their local club, all coaches interviewed supplemented their income with part-time or full-time employment (most in non-sport related occupations).
Table 5.1 provides an overview of the eight participants in terms of gender, age, number of years coaching and both coaching and non-coaching related qualifications.

### Table 5.1

**Demographics of Participants in Semi-Structured Interviews**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coach</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>No. of Years Coaching</th>
<th>Current Level Coached</th>
<th>NCAS Qualification (Year completed)</th>
<th>Highest Educational Qualification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>Level 2 (2007)</td>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Developmental</td>
<td>Level 2 (2008)</td>
<td>Postgraduate*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Developmental</td>
<td>Level 1 (2006)</td>
<td>Undergraduate*#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Developmental</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>Level 2 (1999)</td>
<td>Further Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>Level 1 (2006)</td>
<td>Further Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>Level 2 (1994)</td>
<td>Further Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Developmental</td>
<td>Level 2 (N/A)</td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Completed two years of a sports coaching degree; #Completed an undergraduate unit in sports coaching; N/A = Not Available

#### 5.2.2 Procedure

Each coach was contacted initially either by telephone or email and asked to participate in the current research study. Upon confirmation of interview time and location, a plain language statement and consent form were sent to each participant. A copy of the plain language statement and consent form is provided in Appendix B.
Participants were contacted the day before the scheduled interview for final confirmation of interview time and location. The plain language statement was discussed with the participant to provide an opportunity for questions and to ensure participant understanding of the study. Once the participant was satisfied with the anonymity and confidentiality protection and the consent form was signed, interviews were conducted.

Before the commencement of the interviews, the interview guide was pilot tested with two fellow researchers; the first researcher was a lecturer in sports coaching and a coach with over 30 years’ experience; and the second researcher was a lecturer in sports management with expertise in conducting interviews with sports managers including coaches. Suggestions provided by each researcher were utilised in the finalised interview guide. A mock interview was also conducted with the first researcher to ensure the flow of questions. This interview guide was taken to the interview by the researcher and it was explained to the participant that it was for the benefit of the researcher to ensure that all areas of interest were covered in the interview. A copy of the questions can be found in Appendix C. Upon completion of the interviews, each participant was sent a thank you email for their involvement in the study.

The semi-structured, in-depth interviews ranged in duration from 40 to 60 minutes. An alphabetical labelling system was used to identify each participant, e.g., “Coach A”. The interview guide used in the current study comprised a series of broad, predominantly open-ended questions relating to topics relevant to the coaching philosophies and experiences in coach education of basketball coaches. Coaches were asked about their understanding of the concept of coaching philosophy, what their
coaching philosophy was and how and when this philosophy was developed. Coaches’
views on formal coach education were also canvassed.

A digital audio recording device (Zoom H2 digital recorder – Zoom, Tokyo,
Japan) was used to record each interview, which was then transcribed and coded into
common higher and lower order themes through collation of all participant data. All
written data collected was de-identified and audio files stored securely upon completion
of the study. Data collection and data analysis were conducted simultaneously once
interviews commenced and were subsequently transcribed. The rich detailed data which
was generated from the research was then analysed using a multifaceted approach.

5.2.3 Data analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research involves a detailed examination and
interpretation of the data which can see the investigator moving back and forth between
concrete and abstract, and inductive and deductive reasoning (Merriam, 1998). Once the
semi-structured interviews were transcribed by the lead researcher, a systematic process
of coding the data into themes was conducted. This process involved identifying words,
sentences and/or paragraphs of data which were then coded using a descriptive name,
through the initial use of Microsoft® Word (Microsoft Corporation, Santa Rosa, USA,
2010) which, ultimately, led to higher order, second order and lower order themes being
determined through the use of QSR NVivo 9.0© (QSR International, Doncaster,
Australia, 2010) (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

After eight interviews a comprehensive assessment was conducted by the lead
researcher and associate researcher to determine whether further interviews were required
or saturation had been reached. Common themes that were identified through this process were focused around the three broad questions introduced in Chapter 1, and the role of coach learning (formal, informal and nonformal) in coach development. Triangulation was then conducted on these common themes between the lead and associate researcher to ensure consensus on the emergent themes of the investigation was reached (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009). Saturation was determined to have been reached when the researcher had encountered the same information throughout the analysis of the eight interview transcripts and no new themes had emerged upon identification of common themes (Pitney & Parker, 2009).

Quotes from the coaches have been included in the results below. Each coach is identified by their assigned alpha level (e.g., Coach A). However, coach quotes do not appear in alphabetical order of their assigned letter.

5.3 Results

Consistent with previous chapters in this thesis, coaches were asked to provide information about philosophy, which is presented here according to three themes based on the perspective of the coach:

1. What is philosophy?
2. Why is philosophy important?
3. How is philosophy learned?

The second section of this results chapter reflects on the coaches’ views on coach education and coach learning. In the same way as how “philosophy” was learned,
informal and nonformal learning contexts contributed most to the professional and personal development of the coaches in the current study.

5.3.1 What is philosophy? The coach’s perspective

Participants were asked to explain their understanding about the concept of philosophy, with particular reference to their own coaching philosophy. As noted previously in Chapter 2, a coaching philosophy is considered to be what guides the coach’s practice (Lyle, 2002) compared with a coaching style, which is how the coach carries out their duties (Goodman, 2006). The responses from coaches about their coaching philosophies varied considerably, with all coaches struggling to articulate what a coaching philosophy was in ways that are consistent with theory, as noted in Chapter 2, or with any underpinning knowledge that is supposedly developed through the coaching courses, as noted in Chapter 4.

All coaches had difficulty in explaining the concept of coaching philosophy. Indeed, coaches did not use the word in their responses. Thus, the reader will note that in many of the quotes presented in this study, the researcher has been required to add the word “philosophy” in square brackets [] to identify that this is the subject of their conversation. Many coaches suggested that “philosophy” and coaching style were one and the same. One noted, “I guess it [a coaching philosophy] is just the way in which the coach approaches their coaching, it’s just their way of going about it, I guess... at the end of the day, I am the decision-maker. I am not sure if that is my coaching philosophy or if that’s my coaching style” (Coach B). This was consistent with what was seen in Chapter 4, where learning activities within the NCAS beginning principles coaching course did
not make an explicit link between coaching philosophy and coaching style. In essence, this coach noted an inability to articulate a coaching “philosophy” beyond the practice of coaching itself.

Further, other coaches were unable to articulate a coaching “philosophy” beyond what they described as their philosophy for their own personal lives. For example, one coach explained, “if you put your hand up to coach... you have some pretty set philosophies about how they [coaches] do things” (Coach F). Another coach noted, “it [a coaching philosophy] is what your principles are in everyday life” (Coach G).

Indeed, it was necessary during interviews to prompt most coaches several times to articulate their views specifically about a coaching “philosophy”—which was unexpected given the importance placed upon it by the coaching industry as well as accreditation courses (as seen in Chapter 4). The passage on the following page (where researcher questions are identified in italics) demonstrates the way in which the question about philosophy needed to be rephrased several times and the coach was “pushed” to provide an answer:

_Researcher:_ What is your understanding of coaching philosophy?

Coach F: Um, I think you’re there to purely develop the kids, for coaching kids [the coach] is there as a developmental role…

_Researcher:_ How would you define it if somebody asked you to define what a coaching philosophy is, what would you say it would be?

Coach F: Um, development, basically development…And that philosophy is, whatever sport it is.
Researcher: What do you actually believe philosophy is? You have spoken about the principles of it, but what does philosophy mean to you?

Coach F: What it involves to me is, it’s not about winning that’s for sure, I mean winning is not the be all and end all as far as coaching goes. It [a philosophy] is about seeing the individual develop.

Another coach was more direct in immediately stating their inability to explain philosophy, but when prompted, coaches defined the concept based on the outcomes they focus on in their coaching. For example, one coach linked their “philosophy” to the development of individuals—through teaching. For example, they noted:

I don’t know, to be honest [what philosophy is]… [To have a philosophy is] probably to have a set of key principles that you stand by. Whether you formulate them from the start of the season or whether they’re kind of a general overview that you try to abide by whilst teaching (Coach D).

When probed about how they would define the concept of philosophy, Coach C also discussed the way in which it provided a consistent way of behaving for them in their coaching practice. The omission of the word “philosophy” is also clearly evident in their speech. For example, this coach stated:

I like to think of things [of philosophy] with the foundation and structure and those sorts of things…I think that things work better in general, particularly in sports settings, when you have a structure, a way of progressing things, a way of underlining why you have chosen a certain drill, rather than I did this drill as a
thirteen-year-old and I really enjoyed it, so I’m going to give it to these kids. There’s got to be a reason for it (Coach C).

Notice how Coach C actually suggests that foundation and structure and having an underlying reason for doing things are more appropriate terms than using the word “philosophy” (that they do not use in their vernacular). As one coach explained, this could be related to the lack of everyday use of the term “philosophy” in their coaching practice:

To be honest, nobody has really asked me what my coaching philosophy is before, no-one’s ever, you might hear it every now and again, whether it’s been a DVD I’ve watched or going to the clinics. Or whether you’ve heard it, I don’t know, once a year around Friday night basketball club or whatever (Coach E).

Perhaps even more demonstrative of the irrelevance of the word “philosophy” to the coaches was that participating in the research study and answering the questions from the researcher, for some coaches, was the first time they had considered the concept. For example, one coach noted, “not until tonight have I ever spoken so much about it [philosophy]” (Coach E). Another coach had a similar experience and stated, “I didn’t think I had one [a philosophy] until today…but I guess I have got one” (Coach H). It was of interest to further clarify what the word “philosophy” meant to coaches.

As noted in Chapter 2, previous research has found that as coaching expertise increases so does the coaches’ understanding of coaching philosophy (Nash et al., 2008). However, two determinants of coaching expertise used in Nash and associates’ study, age and level of coaching experience, were not found in the current study to be determinants
of coaches’ levels of understanding of the concept of coaching philosophy, or their willingness to embrace and use the term. In fact, the youngest and most inexperienced coach articulated an understanding of coaching “philosophy” which best aligned with the extant empirical literature about coaching philosophy, yet still didn’t use the word in their speech. This coach stated:

It [philosophy] is kind of like your belief or value system that underpins the way that you are going to coach. The actions you display and the behaviours you display when you’re coaching (Coach C).

In comparison, the oldest and most experienced coach in this study noted their confusion in defining coaching “philosophy”, reflecting on the researcher’s topic of inquiry by self-reflecting with a question about the focus and content of a coaching “philosophy”:

I don’t know, it [a philosophy] could vary a lot. Holistically, is it about the self-esteem of the kids and how you handle the self-esteem of the kids. And it [a philosophy] is part of you making an impact on the kid’s life journey. Or is it more tactical? [Like] what sort of offence are you into, what defence are you into, are you more defensively oriented or more offensively oriented? I’m not sure what part of philosophy…? (Coach A).

Clearly, the term “philosophy” did not resonate with coaches and did not describe their experience of what coaching is. Indeed, their understanding of philosophy was grounded in and considered to be no different from how they practised coaching, as one coach explained:
I think I understood what they were talking about [coaching philosophy] but it did take me a while to develop my own because, again, you have to reflect on your own coaching and quite often when you’re just doing something, you don’t know why you’re doing it, you just do it. And being able to put that into words is a challenge (Coach B).

This fundamental confusion led to coaches in this study having an understanding of coaching that was more situational in nature. For example, when describing their experiences of coaching and attempting to reconcile their experiences with what they believed a philosophy to be, most coaches understood that what they defined as their “philosophy” was not stagnant, and changed dependent on two variables - the age of the players they were coaching, and the level of competition of the players they were coaching. Interestingly, when asked the question, ‘what is your coaching philosophy?’ over half of the coaches discussed the variables of age and level of their players before explaining their coaching “philosophy” in more detail. One coach explained:

It [my philosophy] has varied because I have coached a lot of junior teams, essentially all junior teams, and so it varies depending on the age group and the competition level (Coach C).

Four coaches mentioned the age of players as one context that influenced their coaching “philosophy”. Coaches in this study could not separate their “philosophy” from their coaching practice, and were clear that age was a variable and had an impact. One coach explained:
I’d change [my philosophy] a little depending on the age group, so with 12s it is a lot more about involvement and, as I said, enjoyment, just to keep them active (Coach H).

For some coaches who were coaching two teams concurrently, they were able to accommodate this in their notion of “philosophy” or practice in decision-making. For example, Coach A was coaching two teams at different age levels, and explained:

I have a very different philosophy [with the Under 18 age group compared to the Under 14 age group]. With the U14s I am much more strict, but with the U18s I’m not as tough because I realise they have a lot going on with their VCE [final year of secondary school]. And I try to devolve some of the decision-making to them. Like with the U14s, they don’t decide on anything, so I’m always deciding the strategy. But with the U18s, I say, guys here’s what I’m seeing, there’s a couple of options we can do here which way do you want to head? And so I involve them more in it (Coach A).

The age of the players also had an impact on coach “philosophy” in terms of skill development. One coach explained:

At the senior level it’s very much tactics, whereas the junior level it’s very much skills and that’ll be your emphasis…I guess in the juniors it is purely involvement and confidence, whereas seniors, players do know their role within a team and they know it’s not going to be equal court time. In juniors there’s even player
policy that they should be getting this number of minutes, whereas there is nothing saying they should even be playing at all [in seniors] (Coach B).

The level of competition of the players was another context that affected what coaches described as their “philosophy”. Five coaches mentioned competition level bounded their “philosophy”, with differences varying from the type of skills developed to the level of enjoyment of their players. One coach explained:

I was thinking about that [coaching philosophy] the other day, and I think it depends on the level you’re coaching. I guess at the senior level here, it’s more, success really comes through enjoyment and learning…It’s more getting them involved in the learning experience for myself and passing their knowledge onto other players as well, so I guess it’s sharing that role…Coaching the soccer team [school team] it’s purely skills stuff…and letting the kids go out and have a run, more just involvement more than anything (Coach B).

Overall, coaches were aware that contexts such as the age and competition level of their players did influence what they described as the way they coach. One coach used the term “philosophy” to mean the way they coached. They summed up their experience this way: “I used to have a cookie cutter philosophy, like, I’ll only coach this way. But you soon learn the different skill teams and different levels of teams that a good coach adapts their philosophy to what makes a team a better team” (Coach A). The experience of coaches in terms of their notion of “philosophy” as practices that are changeable and adaptable seems to be in contrast to the formal coach education programs discussed in Chapter 4, where it was suggested that coaches have one all-encompassing “philosophy”.
5.3.2 Why is “philosophy” important? The coach’s perspective

Once coaches had articulated their own understanding of philosophy, the way in which they interpreted philosophy to be synonymous with their coaching practice became more apparent when they were asked why the notion of “philosophy” was important. Their interpretation of why it was important to have a set of principles (such as their coaching practice rather than “philosophy”) was based on outcomes. They believed that having a consistent coaching practice was important for the core outcome of sport skill development and life skill development of their players. They believed that their coaching practices would facilitate life and skill development by providing a fun and enjoyable environment that promoted players’ self-esteem and increased participation through equity in playing time. Indeed, a consistent way of behaving across contexts was seen to be as important for coaches to have for decision-making, and essential for effective coaching practice. One coach noted:

So, I really think that it’s important to have that philosophy to make sure that you’re coming from a standard way of thinking for yourself, so whenever you come across a situation, there might be a little dilemma, some tough decisions to make but, if you go back to those philosophies, you can follow that through and say, ok, if my focus really is on development than maybe I do give more court time to those guys who are less experienced and sacrifice winning. Or, if my philosophy really is to win, then maybe those guys get two minutes a game so it makes decisions easier (Coach C).
This view was consistent with what coaching courses in Chapter 4 stated the purpose of a “philosophy” to be. However, the lack of focus on “philosophy” in these courses in Chapter 4 was also reflected in a quote by Coach A. They explained:

I realise how crucially important it [having a philosophy] is. It’s like a foundation, like a pillar...you’ve heard me say that it’s a fundamental building block for any coach. And the thing is that when you start coaching you don’t realise how important it is, you’re just worried about how am I going to teach about this skill or that skill. You don’t realise how important it is (Coach A).

Note from the quote above, a consistent way of practising is key to skill development of players. Although most coaches in this study suggested that their coaching practices (referred to here as their interpretation of “philosophy”) were adapted to their coaching contexts, coaches also believed that they each had a core set of principles and values that remained consistent throughout their time as a coach, and this was important as coaches were unable to separate themselves (their own personalities) from their coaching practices. For example, one coach noted:

I think the philosophy has expanded a lot but it’s still the same principles that are there. Um, in terms of being equal, fair and adjusting to the team that you are coaching, in a sense, division 1 versus division 7 or, you know, something like that. But I wouldn’t, the same principles are still there but it’s just widened (Coach E).
Note how this coach recognises that they have a set of principles, but they do not even own the word “philosophy” to describe them – in their language they refer to it as “the” philosophy as opposed to “my” philosophy. This coach then goes on further to use the word principles to explain what makes more sense to them regarding “philosophy”. This coach also reflected the general belief by a number of the coaches that their “philosophy” did not need to be directly communicated to their players:

I guess that the kids and the players, when you’ve been in a club so long, just get to know who you are and what to expect from you as a coach, and what you’re going to come out with…I’ve never said anything to them ‘here are my coaching philosophies’ and this is what I go by but, certainly, in Saturday domestic I think they’d all know by now (Coach E).

Again, this reflects the coaches’ inability to separate who they are as a coach from who they are as a person. However, consistent with information presented in NCAS coaching courses in Chapter 4, coaches did believe that the communication of their “philosophy” to the players’ parents was important.

In general, coaches in this study understood that despite the different teams they may coach, what they believed to be the most important aspect of their coaching practice remained the same despite the context. For example, one coach discusses ensuring that their players enjoy their experience in the sport. They noted:

I’m going to have different focuses depending on different teams that I’m coaching, but right through my coaching I think that the enjoyment for the game has been a big thing that has carried through with me (Coach B).
All coaches mentioned the development of skills as a major component of their coaching practice. The coaches believed that it was their role as coach to develop the skills of their players, and once they had reconciled that “philosophy” was about “how” they do things, coaches were articulate in determining the kinds of skills that they developed. For example, one coach discussed technical, sport-specific skills:

My role is more of a developmental role within the club, individual offence is a big thing and you are developing players for them to step straight up into a spot in the division one team. So, if they have got the ability and basic skills to head straight up, then that is really my job accomplished (Coach B).

Another coach noted that they ensured players experienced skill development through their coaching practice. This coach explained:

I have moved into going from a purely developmental coach to now coaching a [team] and running a program where the aim is to win. But I’ve still kept my principles of developing fundamental skill to enhance them for the following years (Coach D).

All of the coaches in this study understood their core role, and consistent coaching practice was one of skill development. For example, one coach noted:

In coaching the [developmental] team I think it’s my responsibility to develop all players, so if I’m not getting them on the court I’m not helping their development (Coach B).
Coaches were adamant about their role in player development, so much so that Coach F below uses the word “policy” to describe the consistent nature of their practice in developing skills. They explained:

I think you’re there to purely develop the kids, for coaching kids this is, [the coach] is there as a developmental role. I certainly have the policy ‘it’s fun’ and the kids have got to enjoy themselves, but they are there to play basketball and so it’s a very fine line sometimes between discipline and progression and learning (Coach F).

Several coaches also reported that their practice involved the development of tactical skills and decision-making in players. For example, one coach noted how they interpreted “philosophy” – in this case, the way in which their players could use the term to provide consistent behaviour on the court. This coach stated:

I teach a lot at the younger age groups, I talk a lot about basketball philosophy, to use the term in a different way. In terms of how I want them thinking on court [in defence], like if you’re in the open court, don’t try to steal the ball or drive it towards the sideline, drive it towards the corner of the backcourt because they can’t shoot the basketball from the corner but they’re really dangerous at the centre…so, really try to develop it (Coach A).

Sport was also considered to be the perfect setting in which the coach could teach life skills to their players, which many of the coaches in this study saw as a crucial part of their coaching practice. One noted:
It’s become apparent to me that it is important to teach them some of those life skills that are very easy to teach in a sports setting, especially team sports setting, things like cooperation and work ethic (Coach C).

Four coaches highlighted the significance of life skills development in their players using sport as a vehicle for their development. For these coaches the type of life skills that players needed to develop varied, but coach practices played a vital role:

You look at really good coaches on the planet, the ones you really respect and…who are successful and have a big impact on their people, and they do teach about life. It’s more than just coaching and winning and losing, they teach the kids about life or teach the men or women about life. And I think that’s really important (Coach A).

Teamwork was one life skill that coaches believed could be developed through sport. Four coaches in the current study considered the development of individual players as valuable team contributors an important outcome of their sport participation. One coach noted:

[For] basketball particularly, [my coaching practice] is trying to get kids to be a team. And you see a lot of kids who’ve got lots of ability and may be incorrectly graded, but to make them realise they are part of a team is, I think, a very important point the coach has to make to them (Coach F).

Note that it is a crucial role for the coach to develop the skills of players to work in a team environment. Another coach explained it differently:
So, I suppose my philosophy is to, you can improve, you know you can go along and play games and teach skills, but you know if you improve them as a person you are going to get a lot more out of them. You know if they can actually communicate with other people, if they can, you know, if you can improve their learning skills you generally get, and I’ve found over the years the kids who listen and who are willing to interact end up being the best players in the long-term and generally the best kids in the long-term (Coach G).

This coach also noted that there were some limitations in their ability to develop life skills given the limited time they had in which to interact with their players. They explained:

It’s hard with only an hour session a week, but you try and [im]part those skills on them (Coach G).

Coaches in this study believed that their coaching practices facilitated the development of the sport and life skills of their players. One important component of their practice was ensuring that their players had fun. The coaching practices of four coaches in the present study considered the players’ fun/enjoyment of the game of basketball. Although these coaches believed in the importance of teaching skills, they believed that their coaching practices needed to ensure that they coached consistently in a positive and fun environment:

Like, if the kids are having fun and they’re getting some sort of enjoyment out of it and they’re learning new skills, and yeah new skills and how to play the game
better in terms of the smarts of them, you know, then I’ve done my job I think (Coach E).

This was not without difficulty, however, as coaches attempted to maintain the balance between fun and learning:

The main thing, one of the other main things is probably enjoyment, making sure that basketball isn’t a chore, which is difficult at times because sometimes your drills feel like they are just chores and that you are constantly doing the same thing (Coach D).

Coaches also noted that fun and enjoyment of their players could be facilitated in different ways, depending on the context. Coach B believed that they facilitated enjoyment for their players (of an intermediate level of skill) by providing role clarity in the team environment so that all players were clear about what they needed to do and how they contributed to the team performance. This process was complex and involved personal communication with each individual. This coach explained:

Just before the season started we ran individual interviews with the players and, I guess, we had a run down on where they saw themselves and the level they were at, and where I saw them being at. And then there’s just a bit of goal-setting and just things that they needed to work on throughout the season to get to the next level…there were some players who had unrealistic goals for the season, so we made sure that we were on the same page. I think when you don’t know where you stand with someone, you don’t enjoy it as much (Coach B).
Unique to the more experienced coaches was the way in which they clearly articulated the way in which their coaching practices to build self-esteem facilitated sport and life skill development in their players. Experienced coaches in this study continually emphasised the important role that their coaching practice played in improving their player’s self-esteem and confidence. For example, one coach noted:

I see my coaching ability is trying to get them to improve and to be confident in their own…foster their own abilities (Coach F).

For coaches, there was a direct relationship between the development of players’ skills and increasing their players’ self-esteem and confidence. One coach explained:

It’s very important that their self-esteem is improved…Trying to have a positive impact on the kid’s self-esteem as well as growing their skill level in basketball too, which sort of feeds hand-in-hand. If they are not improving the skills, then their self-esteem doesn’t improve either (Coach A).

The two coaches quoted above were the oldest of the eight coaches interviewed in the present study as well as being two of the most experienced in years coached. The younger coaches did not discuss the importance of their coaching practice in building self-esteem and confidence of players.

Unique to the coaches who coached the youngest players was their belief that a consistent way of practice that could provide skill development that was fun was, for their coaching practice, to reflect equity in decision-making. Consistently practising
fairness and equity for all players, regardless of their level of skill, was considered important for coaching practice. For example, one coach noted:

> It’s a learning environment that, you know, everybody has a chance to improve, so you’re not favouring one person over the next or you’re not favouring the top player as opposed to the bottom player, you’re giving everyone a chance to achieve something, whether it’s to hit one foul shot or to hit nine foul shots in a row (Coach G).

Coach G described in detail the way in which they achieved equality in court time with a policy of substituting each of their nine players in the team every two minutes. Coach H also had a consistent practice regarding equality of court time which emphasised involvement for all players through even distribution of minutes of playing time on the court.

### 5.3.3 How is “philosophy” learned? The coach’s perspective

It was noted in Chapter 2 that coaches can learn to coach through a range of learning contexts including formal, informal and nonformal settings and situations (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974; Cushion et al., 2010). All learning contexts were found to have played a part in the way in which coaches described how they had learned their “philosophy”. It was clear from the results of the current study that the development of coaches’ “philosophy” was most influenced by their learning in informal contexts. Indeed, the informal context was reported by coaches in the current study to be the most effective in
their learning, followed by nonformal and formal. These contexts will be discussed in turn.

With the exception of one coach, all coaches in this study participated in the formal learning context of coach accreditation via the NCAS. These coaches had attained Level 1 basketball accreditation, with over half of the coaches attaining Level 2 basketball accreditation. Two coaches had also undertaken study in a coaching-related unit which covered coaching philosophy.

There is common agreement that the development of a coaching philosophy is a lifelong process (Fuoss & Troppmann, 1985; Martens, 2012; Tutko & Richards, 1971). The majority of the coaches in the present study believed this to be the case, with the development of their coaching “philosophy” seen as an evolutionary process:

I think that it is something that is always evolving, I mean, I’m in my fourth year so I’m still learning so much about coaching and only my second year coaching rep [representative], so it’s a different kettle of fish altogether to have the pressure of having to win as well as development (Coach C).

Overall, coaches viewed the development of their coaching “philosophy” to be an ongoing process through formal, informal and nonformal learning situations. However, the issue of when to introduce the concept of coaching philosophy was highlighted by coaches.

As discussed in Chapter 2, there is a belief in the coaching literature that a coach’s philosophy should be developed early in the coach’s career (Fuoss & Troppmann, 1985; Tutko & Richards, 1971). Chapter 4 demonstrated that coaching philosophy was
presented early in formal coach education programs, particularly in the NCAS where coaching philosophy was discussed in the first chapter of both the beginning and intermediate coaching course manuals. Coaches in the present study discussed how the early development of their “philosophy” could have helped them in their overall development as a coach. One coach explained:

Someone starting off is not going to get anything, they’ve got to have their own experience but, my goodness, if someone had mentored me with it [philosophy] early on I would have grown much more rapidly as a coach. And I would have been a far better coach (Coach A).

As highlighted by Coach A, despite the importance given to the early introduction of “philosophy” in formal coach education programs, coaches may not understand the concept at first. The two youngest coaches in the study, in particular, expressed concern about the early introduction of “philosophy” to coaches. For example, younger coaches may have difficulty in comprehending the concept of “philosophy”. One coach noted:

If you’re a junior coach, like a very junior coach first off, I don’t think it would mean as much to you at that age…if I was doing Level 1 now I would find it [philosophy] important but eight years ago when I first did it, I probably couldn’t have cared less about it (Coach H).

On the other hand, older coaches (particularly parents) may already have well-developed philosophies. One coach explained:
If they’re (parents) just volunteering and they just want to coach their kids…because they needed a coach, it might not be within their interests to develop a standard way of behaving and approaching issues…they might already have their own philosophy on how they deal with things (Coach C).

Despite these concerns, overall, coaches in the current study held the view that “philosophy” was an integral component of their coaching and the early introduction of the concept in programs such as the NCAS was crucial. Yet, in spite of the importance given by coaches to “philosophy” delivery in formal coach education programs, Chapter 4 showed that the concept of coaching philosophy had minimal coverage in comparison to other topics in the curriculum. Coaches believed that “philosophy” was neglected by the NCAS courses. One coach noted:

In the course [Level 1] it was just the basic concept of coaching philosophy, it was probably glossed over a little bit I’d say, and it was mainly then sort of moving onto drills and skills. But I think it’s important for younger kids to look at those issues and to have the building blocks of this philosophy behind what they do (Coach F).

Coaches believed that there should be a continuation of “philosophy” in the NCAS courses, beginning at Level 1 and further expansion at Level 2. One coach explained:

I think definitely for Level 1 it should be there as a chunk, so to say. And Level 2 people have probably, by the time they have got to that stage, have already somewhat got their coaching philosophy, so it probably just needs to be touched
Coaches were asked if these formal coach education programs had contributed to the development of their “philosophy”. Recall on the concept was limited but coaches believed that these programs had had little impact on their “philosophy” development:

It was about the same time we were doing it at uni, I think…I can’t remember if we were required to come up with our philosophy in that or not, or whether that was at uni. But it certainly was covered (Coach B).

In fact, one coach sought further information through other means to better understand the concept of coaching philosophy. They explained:

I began to sort of work on it when I started to hear about it, I began to write things down about how I would behave in certain situations and started to look things up like websites and books about the issue and the whole area about developing a philosophy. I wouldn’t have understood it fully at the time, it was certainly something that I had to delve into and come across those issues in real life before I…OK, that is how it actually applies (Coach C).

The difficulty in presenting the concept of coaching philosophy in large formal coach education programs has been highlighted (Nash et al., 2008) with several coaches in the present study recognising this problem. One coach explained:
It [philosophy] would have to be handled the right way [in the NCAS course] otherwise it could be a yawn session…if it’s just someone up there preaching about philosophy it would be shocking. And as I said, philosophy has got to be driven by the individual, everyone has to have their own philosophy so I wouldn’t think there’s one right philosophy (Coach A).

As discussed in Chapter 2, this lack of attribution of formal coach education programs in the development of coaches’ philosophies has been previously established (Collins et al., 2009; Nash et al., 2008). On the other hand, consistent with previous research (Bennie & O’Connor, 2010; Collins et al., 2009; Jones et al., 2003), informal learning contexts such as self-reflection, coaching experience, observation of other coaches, previous playing experience and mentors were mentioned by coaches as influences on the development of their “philosophy”.

For many coaches their first experience of “philosophy” will be through their experience as a player themselves. Three coaches identified their previous playing experience as having influenced the development of “philosophy”. One coach explained:

I’d say, having gone through the same program and starting my player career where I’m now coaching. Having all of the different personalities that have influenced me basketball-wise over the years, I’ve tried to steal bits and pieces from each of them to form my own way of coaching (Coach D).

However, the two oldest coaches in the study who did not have extensive experience as players themselves, were not hindered in their “philosophy” development. One coach noted:
One thing about it, I certainly have the attitude even, and I played basketball…if you’ve got the right philosophy about coaching you don’t really need to know the ins and outs of the sport, you don’t have to play it, you don’t have to have played the sport to be the coach (Coach F).

When developing their “philosophy”, five coaches in the present study observed other coaches. Through observing other coaches they were able to select aspects of those coaches’ philosophies they wanted to bring to their own “philosophy”:

And my philosophy, in terms of actually writing things down specifically about my philosophy, it was probably somewhere in that first season where I picked up on things that other coaches were doing. I thought that was a really good way to teach, or I really like his or her approach there and I would just write it down (Coach C).

For some coaches this was done instinctively as part of the process of learning to coach, whereas for other coaches observation of other coaches was deliberate in nature. These coaches went out of their way to observe coaches in practice, whether it be sitting on the bench or arriving earlier to their game. One coach explained:

I think that’s an important part. Observing and saying what you do think are the good points and bad points of someone else coaching. One good thing about basketball, you know [venue] you will have four games going on and you always get there early, you’re looking around, you’re looking at the way people are coaching (Coach F).
Mentors were mentioned by three coaches in the development of their “philosophy”. Although these mentoring relationships differed in their nature, all appeared to have a large impact on the development of their “philosophy”:

I guess the influence of, like, my coaches and, like, mentors, I suppose my mentors…sort of allowed me to improve my philosophy or give me some direction in my coaching. You know, what do you want to achieve? (Coach G).

This was especially so for Coach A, who although attributing other forms of informal learning as important in the development of their “philosophy”, viewed a particular coach as pivotal during the initial stages of their coaching career. This coach explained:

At the [university] I was very lucky at that point of time there was a coach by the name of [coach name] who was there and the guy was a legend. And he was very much a part of growing the individual so when he…if they went onto professional basketball it might only last another two to five years, ten max…then they need to live the rest of their lives, so building the individual to become a respected part of society…Certainly [coach name] undoubtedly had the biggest impact (Coach A).

Although considered a mentor by Coach A, there was no direct relationship between the coaches, hence, the coach discussed in the quote above may be considered more of a role model than a mentor in Coach A’s “philosophy” development.

Five coaches identified that their “philosophy” developed through their own increased coaching experience, as coaches gained more confidence in their coaching and better understood the coaching process through trial and error. One coach noted:
It took a lot of coaching to get there. I mean because through experience you, you get experience of what works in situations, what works with kids and what doesn’t, and are you being too tough or not tough enough. And one of my personal philosophies is that you are learning throughout life and so I hope I am always improving as a coach (Coach A).

For Coach E their “philosophy” developed through coaching experiences at different levels and in different competitive environments, although they were unsure as to exactly when their “philosophy” developed. They explained:

I guess that it’s not until you coach those two different levels [division 1 vs. division 7] on a Saturday that you realise what the players want to get out of it as well…So I don’t know when it actually developed or whether it was a matter of, you know, yeah…or maybe even when I started coaching [representative club name] even then, you know, comparing the differences of the kids and their attitudes as well (Coach E).

Overall, it was difficult for the majority of coaches to articulate a specific time when they began to develop their coaching “philosophy”. The coaches viewed the process of coaching “philosophy” development as an evolving process through self-reflection.

Six coaches considered reflection on their coaching an important process in the development of their coaching “philosophy”. This process of self-reflection was used in a variety of ways by coaches, such as reviewing their coaching practice:
I don’t think there was a set time, I just sort of built upon it each year as I became more confident in my coaching and watching other coaches. I had four years at rep level at 12s, and sort of each year you look back and think how you can improve and where you needed to improve, what worked, what didn’t work (Coach H).

Reflection was also used as a way of ensuring consistency in their coaching “philosophy”, and therefore “philosophy” development:

If you’re not setting something that is achievable in a certain timeframe, when you’re struggling throughout a season, a philosophy is something that you can fall back on. So “Why am I coaching?” “How am I coaching?” and “Am I actually sticking to this?” and perhaps you can go back and re-evaluate and just go from there (Coach B).

Coaches, however, may not have been specifically aware at the time that they were reflecting upon their coaching “philosophy”. Although one coach had a general understanding of how their coaching “philosophy” had developed, they appeared unaware of how self-reflection may have contributed to this process:

You don’t really stop and think, and go, I wonder what my coaching philosophies are? Well, I know that I haven’t (Coach E).

Overall, these informal learning experiences enabled coaches to initially identify the philosophies of other coaches through playing the game, observation of other coaches
and mentoring relationships. Then, through their own coaching experience and reflection upon their coaching, the coaches developed their “philosophy”.

Nonformal learning contexts were also valued by coaches in the present study in their “philosophy” development. Nonformal learning settings are those organised, educational activities that occur outside the framework of formal programs (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974). In coaching these include seminars, workshops, coaching conferences and clinics (Nelson et al., 2006). Coaching clinics run by the state basketball association were the key nonformal learning contexts that contributed to the development of the coaches’ “philosophies”. One coach noted:

The clinics outside [NCAS]…so the specialist coaching, coaches coming in and showing things like that [coaching philosophy]…I find them valuable (Coach H).

As Coach D demonstrates in the below quote, coaches observe high level coaches in these clinics and, through participation in them, are exposed to coaches with well-developed coaching philosophies:

Some of them [clinics]…we’ve had some that have talked about philosophies and the way that they go about things and that’s also been in the clinics as well which has also been very good. They’re probably more about their individual philosophies and how they go about things individually. The last kind of year-and-a-half we’ve done Brian Goorjian and Lindsay Gaze and they were both very specific about ‘this is what we do and this is how we make them do it, and if they don’t do this then x and y happens’. Talking about going back through processes was good (Coach D).
And as discussed previously in regard to informal learning contexts, observation of other coaches was considered by over half the coaches to be important in their coaching “philosophy” development. The coaching clinics, therefore, are providing coaches with a more formal setting in which to develop their “philosophy” through coach observation without the requirement of compulsory attendance.

5.3.4 Coach learning

Although an important part of the coaching process, there has been limited research on coach learning, particularly across coaching domains (Cushion et al., 2010). As discussed in the previous section on the role of coach learning in philosophy development, formal, informal and nonformal settings and situations can influence coach learning (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974). The following sections will focus on the learning of the coaches in the present study in a broad context, including their views on formal coach education, and how formal, nonformal and informal learning experiences have influenced their coaching development.

5.3.4.1 Formal learning

Formal coach education and coaching certification has been found to be of value to volunteer coaches in their development as a coach (Vargas-Tonsing, 2007). Seven of the eight coaches in this study had a sport-specific basketball coach accreditation certificate with the NCAS, with over half of them at Level 2, which is the highest available for coaches at the recreational and developmental coach level in Australia. The
coaches from one club in particular are required to have, at minimum, a Level 1 award to be able to coach, with young coaches undertaking an ‘apprentice’ year as an assistant coach before having a team of their own. On the other hand, the coach who did not have a formal coach education qualification was advised by the coaching director of their club that it was not required.

5.3.4.1.1 Benefits to coach development

Although coaches generally did not attribute the development of their philosophy to formal coach education programs such as the NCAS, coaches did believe there were benefits to such programs. Learning from their peers was considered to be one of the most important benefits of attending formal coach education programs. Reflection on the ideas and practice of other coaches for their own coaching practice was highly valued by half of the coaches:

I hate teaching the same skills over and over again, so I look at different ways to teach them, what’s the most effective way? So, even to watch another coach, you know, do a drill that I would completely not have used for a certain skill and people seem to be picking up a different skill that they’re not focusing on, then I might, you know, choose that drill (Coach G).

Bringing coaches together in one forum and considering the coaching process from different viewpoints were seen by coaches as the main benefits of formal coach education attendance, especially to enhance their professional coaching development:
It helps you develop as a coach. It helps you to see what, as a coach, to see what other coaches are doing out there and how you may adjust to, you know, use what they’re doing or not use what they’re doing. Overall, I wouldn’t go unless I didn’t want to become better. So, from my point of view it’s really seeing what other people are doing and use that to help me become better (Coach E).

In addition, coaching courses such as the NCAS were viewed as a way to invigorate their coaching, and provide motivation and greater variety in their training sessions:

Everybody has got their way of coaching and it’s nice to hear a few different ones so you can adapt the right one to your technique. And coaching can become a bit stale if you don’t have a bit more input, outside input. And I guess it can motivate you as well, they’re long seasons and if you go out and do any of the education things, it will motivate you to try something different (Coach H).

Improvement and consistency in coaching standards was also mentioned by several coaches as a benefit of coaches undertaking formal coach education courses:

I guess more than anything it’s consistency amongst coaches. Your Level 1’s should all be able to coach and teach at a certain level, same with your Level 2’s, and so, no matter which coach a player has they should be getting a consistent message. No coach is going to coach the same player for their whole life so I think through coach education getting consistency amongst coaches is important (Coach B).
To further develop their coaching, coaches also had to improve their coach knowledge, with three coaches viewing their NCAS course as particularly important in this evolutionary process of coach development:

Oh goodness, no one knows it all so you just continue to improve as a coach. So it’s just a part of continuing to grow as an individual and always evolve. And to do a better job for the players under your care, which all has an impact on improving self-esteem of the kids, I think (Coach A).

Improvement of coaching knowledge was seen as a benefit by one coach despite the previous knowledge they brought to the course from other learning experiences:

I think that the benefits are introducing coaches to a variety of topics that they might not have a lot of expertise in. So coming from a sports science background, obviously that was a huge knowledge base for me compared to other coaches, but I didn’t have a huge knowledge of the basis of teaching drills and watching game situations…There were some parts that were like, how do I actually, if I’ve got kids that can’t run or catch a ball, how do I teach that? And that was probably my first introduction to teaching fundamental movement skills in basketball; I didn’t even consider that before I did the course. So I think that a really important part of the coach education process is introducing parts of coaching that are not well-known to particular coaches (Coach C).

This does, however, raise the question as to whether formal coach education courses such as the NCAS can cater for the variety of knowledge bases of coaches that attend such
courses. Additionally, coaches suggested that there was a lack of opportunity for coaches to undertake further education in coaching in the formal setting unless they possessed a desire to coach at a higher level:

Those clinics that are run are the only real courses, apart from if you’re professional, you’re Level 2/Level 3; they’re the only other chances you’ve really got of seeing, of advancing your coaching (Coach F).

Therefore, for many of the coaches the coaching clinics presented by Basketball Victoria were the main opportunity for coaches to develop their coaching in a semi-formal setting with some form of structure and high calibre coaches. Overall however, the majority of coaches in the present study believed coach education programs such as the NCAS to be important in improving coach effectiveness:

Yeah, I think they do. They certainly make you realise what should be taught and they give you a way of teaching it. But at the end of the day, speaking from my own experience, I’ve probably learnt more than other coaches and just being involved in different programs (Coach B).

Therefore, although formal coach education appears to have its place in coach development, other learning experiences are also considered to be important (and, for many more, beneficial in their learning as coach). These informal and nonformal learning experiences will be discussed in further detail later in the thesis. The reasons coaches may not value formal coach education programs as much as these learning experiences will be discussed in the following section.
5.3.4.1.2 Accreditation as due process

Attending coaching certification has previously been found to be due to the compulsory nature of the course, rather than a need or requirement of the coach (Wright et al., 2007). Although coaches in the present study generally valued formal coach education programs such as the NCAS, over half of the coaches in the present study believed that participation in the coach accreditation programs was a matter of going through the motions:

It’s great (Level 1) but it’s just basic. And it’s gotta just be that broad, sort of course that yeah, which you’ve just gotta do. That’s the way I felt about it but probably to a sixteen year old, fantastic. You know, the Dad going along whose done all that, who knows half the drills or all that sort of stuff, well it’s just a matter of going through the due process (Coach F).

Gilbert and Trudel (1999) found that although the coaching certification had a small impact upon the knowledge of a youth hockey coach, they already possessed the knowledge and understanding of the course content, therefore, it just reinforced the concepts they already knew. The NCAS basketball coaching courses, particularly the Level 1 award, appeared to be predominantly skill/drill focused and was of little value to coaches who had played the game previously or had knowledge of these drills:

When I did my Level 1, I was probably, I don’t know whether it’s too young for it or whatever, it was probably Year 10 and I was playing [representative basketball] at the time, so some of the stuff they were covering was a lot of the things that we did in our training anyway. It’s not like I went, oh wow, I didn’t
know that drill exists, whereas other people who were on that course who didn’t play [representative basketball] may have got more out of it because they weren’t exposed to that level or those drills (Coach E).

This again raises the issue of the “one-size-fits-all” coaching course. Coaches understood that the fundamentals of basketball were required in Level 1, but the way in which they presented and taught to coaches could have been improved:

It’s a bit like attending school, it’s a bit like a teacher-student type of thing and just to go through and tick off all the drills is pretty straightforward. It’s all there in the manual so it’s a bit like, you know, there’s the book and they’re standing up there telling us what’s in the book (Coach F).

Two other coaches also mentioned coach presenters when discussing the NCAS courses, with one coach appreciating how their presenter personalised the course for the coaches:

The guy that we had delivering the Level 1 was really good at helping us learn those things that we were deficient in, and he took the time to make sure that we covered all the things that we felt we weren’t very good at…At the very start of the course he said, you know, look - what are things that you want to cover? (Coach C).

However, another coach highlighted the lack of preparation of the coach presenters when undertaking their Level 2 course:
I don’t really think or feel that the course was that well run. While it was good to have different coaches every week, they brought different ideas and different ways of doing things. There were some coaches who were sort of called up at the last minute and weren’t well prepared, so we didn’t get the full…we didn’t get as much out of it as we could have (Coach B).

Although these coaches held differing views of the effectiveness of their coach presenters, research has found that course instructors can deviate from the program guidelines (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999; Hammond & Perry, 2005). This includes the way the information is delivered, with one study finding that coaches received information passively for the majority of the course despite the recommendation that it should be delivered predominantly in a practical way (Hammond & Perry).

Too much classroom activity has previously been found to be a weakness in formal coaching certificates (Lyle, 2007). Several coaches indicated that unlike the Level 2 course, the Level 1 lacked relevancy in terms of putting theory into practice:

[Level 1] there was a lot of theory-based I remember rather than on court stuff, that sort of thing…[Level 2] we got to go to BV [Basketball Victoria] camps and do an assignment which was handy (Coach H).

Observation of higher level coaches through such camps was considered to be a great component of the Level 2 course. One coach in particular enjoyed this experience, but believed the course needed more access to these experiences:
With Level 2, what I would have liked to have had more exposure to is they only give you one experience with rep basketball, players and coaches, that had a huge impact on me, I would have loved to have more exposure to that. It was a one-day session and they had kids who were trying out for the Victorian State team, so they were trying their guts out, and they had some top national, state coaches there. Just hearing them talk about how, what their thoughts on different things, on what players should be doing and running through the drills, it was excellent (Coach A).

This also reflects the general preference of the coaches in the present study for coaching clinics rather than the NCAS accredited courses (discussed further in the section on nonformal learning). The coach who did not have any formal coach education certificate had an indifferent view of the NCAS:

I don’t think it would have helped or hindered me at all, I think that it probably would have just given me a certificate to say that I’ve done something (Coach D).

Interestingly, this coach was from a club which did not have any requirements for coaches to undertake formal coach education training. In fact, as described by Coach D below, the preference was for coaches who had come through their junior program thus reflecting the club’s lack of value placed on formal coach education:

I asked the then director of coaching whether or not I should do one (NCAS course) and he wasn’t a big fan of them and he said…you’ve gone through the
program and you’ve continued to learn, as long as you coach you’re going to be
learning (Coach D).

Coaches were asked what should and should not be included in the NCAS basketball
courses, and it became apparent that although a lot of the information was relevant, there
were areas that these courses were deficient in which coaches considered important, such
as parent management:

Level 1, from memory, was more about the rules and the different defences they
have. I think, as a junior coach, dealing with parents is a major factor. And that
wasn’t introduced. But I know a lot of coaches that have stopped coaching
because of parent problems (Coach H).

Coaches in previous studies have revealed interaction with parents as an area lacking in
their coaching education (Hellstedt, 1987), with communication skills with parents the
most preferred coach education topic for continuing education (Vargas-Tonsing, 2007).
There were also areas in which the coaches believed the courses needed less information
and concentration on, such as safety management:

Oh, they carried on and on and on about safety and such, I mean, of course it’s
important but, goodness me, it didn’t need to be a full unit (Coach A).

Coaching courses have previously been found to cram too much information into a short
timeframe (Lemyre et al., 2007). Although coaches were generally happy with the NCAS
courses, several coaches mentioned that, for a beginner level course, the Level 1
accreditation needed to be more basic, with one coach in particular highlighting the large amount of information in the course:

There is definitely too much information in it [Level 1], there’s too much information for two levels, it would probably take you a couple of days [to read it] and you would probably forget what you read at the start anyways (Coach G).

Lack of time has been found to be a deterrent to coaches in obtaining coaching qualifications (sports coach UK, 2004). The time constraints of undertaking these courses were also considered to be an issue with two of the coaches, with the length of the course over an extended period of time a downfall of the courses. Holding the course over one day or two days on the weekend was considered by these coaches to be the best approach in dealing with this issue:

I think it’s a good, I mean, the 4/6 week course is a good base, beginning to give yourself the qualification. I’d probably rather see it a little bit different, rather than doing, six weeks is a long time for anyone these days, to put aside a whole day for a course. I’d rather see it, probably a bit like some of the professional ways that you get accredited these days, make the base course a lot shorter and then if you should be attending, if you attend some of these clinics that Basketball Victoria are running, and what have you, you should then get points for that sort of thing. Because they’re on at night, it makes it a lot easier and a lot more flexible too, a lot more flexible. So I think a little more flexibility in the way the courses are done rather than, you know, six weeks is a pretty dry old time (Coach F).
The suggestion from the coach above again highlights the difficulties in providing a ‘one-size-fits-all’ coaching course. In updating their accreditation, coaches can put coaching clinics towards the overall points required to maintain accreditation but, compared to other activities, clinics appear to be considered less important in coach development (Basketball Australia, 2010c).

5.3.4.1.3 Regular updating

Seven of the eight coaches in the current study had completed, at minimum, Level 1 NCAS in the sport of basketball, with five accredited as Level 2 coaches (the highest level qualification possible for recreational and developmental standards). However, many of the coaches had undertaken the formal coaching qualifications a number of years ago:

Level 1…look, that was ’98 maybe ’99, that was years ago, so I don’t really remember a lot of that. I remember it being held at [venue] and we had the classroom sessions but not specifically what it was on (Coach E).

This lack of regular updating may be due to the lack of courses provided by basketball associations and the time commitment required to complete such courses, which may mean that coaches are not able to attend courses when needed:

But, again, there’s not that many courses that come up and the time commitment meant that I wasn’t able to do it until it was more convenient…Certainly, being on a Sunday afternoon, most coaches are involved in actually coaching at that
time so they probably need to fit more in, not just compact it, but run it over less
days but more hours in that day. Yeah, perhaps have a whole weekend rather than
2 or 3 hours spread over 8 weeks (Coach B).

Coaches are more likely to pursue further study in coach education when it is a
requirement of the league or association in which they coach and the topics are relevant
(Vargas-Tonsing, 2007). When the coaches were asked if they wanted to pursue further
study in coaching or a higher level of the NCAS the responses were varied. Four of the
coaches who had completed their Level 2 NCAS basketball qualification expressed a
desire to undertake further study at some point:

Yeah, I wouldn’t mind…doing an additional course or anything like that, absolutely…I’d love to do more courses but I would only go and do those further
courses, like I’m happy to do the [clinics] and all this, but if there was a Level 3
and a Level 4/5 coaches course whatever, I’d be happy to do it only if I was
coaching representative or higher. I wouldn’t do it while I’m just coaching
domestic (Coach E).

A desire to coach at a higher level has also been found to have some impact on coaches’
intentions to pursue continuing education (Vargas-Tonsing, 2007). For the four coaches
who did not express a desire to undertake further study in coaching, the main reason was
the lack of relevancy in continuing education at their current recreational level of
coaching:
I won’t do my Level 2 but I’m always attending basketball clinics. I think if I was going to do rep coaching I’d do Level 2, but for domestic basketball Level 1 is enough (Coach F).

And for the coach who had not undertaken any NCAS accreditation, they did not believe that their coaching practice had been affected by their lack of formal coach education:

No, it’s not really an issue or a goal. I think that as long as I’m continuing to learn through [other methods]…It hasn’t been detrimental to how I’m coaching or the development of the boys (Coach D).

Although the coaches in the current study attended nonformal coach education training through clinics and also undertook informal self-education, these coaches could be missing out on vital information that may have been introduced in such courses more recently. One coach had completed both their Level 1 and Level 2 accreditation in successive years over 15 years ago. NCAS qualifications expire after a period of four years and, although Basketball Australia has a formal accreditation renewal system in place, coaches do not have to participate in formal coach education to gain re-accreditation.

5.3.4.1.4 The learner in context

The context in which these coaches come into coach education is an important component of their learning motives and outcomes. The coaches in the present study entered coaching for various reasons including player injury, through their children’s
involvement in sport and by being approached to help out a school team. For four coaches, however, it was their direct involvement in their basketball club as a player, either through being approached to help out or general encouragement by the club to coach. For coaches with considerable experience as a player, coach education courses may not be as relevant as for those coaches who have come through other avenues such as their children’s involvement in sport:

It’s not like I went, oh wow, I didn’t know that drill exists, whereas other people who were on that course didn’t play (representative basketball) may have got more out of it because they weren’t exposed to that level or those drills (Coach E).

Yet, as the coaches highlighted, they were all completing the same course despite coming into the course with various levels of experience in basketball, coaching and life:

At Level 1 you get a mixture of teenagers up to parents wanting to coach and, I think, even for the kids it needs to be stressed that they are a role model and that’s what you should base your philosophy on, not just what you were taught. And I guess it’s hard, it depends on the level of intellect of the coach and maturity as to how much they take on board (Coach G).

Overall, coaches appeared to have an awareness of the limitations of formal coach education based on the context of the learner, in that the programs faced difficulties in being able to present topics relevant to all coaches in attendance.
5.3.4.2 Informal learning

Learning situations of an informal nature are wide-ranging and include any learning that occurs outside the formal settings of coach education programs as well as nonformal settings such as clinics and workshops (Cushion et al., 2010). Although coaches did see formal learning settings as beneficial to their development, there was a feeling amongst coaches that their role was limited:

I think that at this point of time my learning from other coaches is to be of more benefit, especially after what we have covered at uni and the like, you’re learning so much from Level 1 and 2 but, at the end of the day, there is only so much that can be covered in an actual course. It comes more down to experience and learning from actually being on court with better coaches and learning from them in real-life situations (Coach B).

Interaction and learning from other coaches and coach observation have previously been found to be important learning sources for volunteer coaches (Erickson et al., 2008; Lemyre et al., 2007; Timson-Katchis & North, 2008). Several coaches even suggested that some of the benefits of formal coach education, such as peer learning, could be presented in a more informal setting:

You could get coaches, even just coaches talking amongst each other, and feedback and so forth, I think that would also improve as well if they weren’t doing set courses (Coach E).
Other forms of informal learning utilised by volunteer coaches include books, DVD/videotapes and the internet (Erickson et al., 2008; Lemyre et al., 2007; Wright et al., 2007). For the coach who had not completed any formal coach accreditation, their main source of coach development was via self-learning through the internet:

I think the internet is a fantastic tool for coaching because you see different…the way the game is played across the world is so different, and you get to see all of it, whereas if I’d just stuck to Australia then I’d only ever know how to coach one way. So that is quite important to me (Coach D).

As discussed previously in the section on the role of coach learning in philosophy development, informal learning was considered to be the most important learning source for coaches in the development of their coaching philosophy, despite the stated benefits of formal coach education. Although coaches were not asked specifically about the role that informal learning played in their overall development as coach, the coaches in the current study did appear to utilise these sources, albeit spasmodically.

5.3.4.3 Nonformal learning

Separate from formal learning situations are those that are semi-structured in nature but do not necessarily result in coach accreditation. Coaches have been found to engage in these nonformal learning activities (Erickson et al., 2008; Schempp, Templeton, & Clark, 1998). Coaching clinics organised and run by Basketball Victoria were mentioned frequently by coaches as important in their coach development.
3.4.3.1 Coaching clinics

Previous research has found coaching clinics to be an important learning source of volunteer coaches (Erickson et al., 2008; Wright et al., 2007). These coaching clinics provide coaches of all levels exposure to high level Australian and international coaches, and the opportunity to advance their coaching through a semi-structured environment outside the formal (and often theory-based) settings of NCAS accreditation. Six coaches highlighted the importance of coaching clinics in the development of coaches:

I reckon looking at the response I get from the clinics and basketball coaching sessions that have been put on, the attendance they get is fantastic. There is always probably a hundred to a hundred-and-fifty people in the clinics I go to, they are always a good sell out…A lot of good knowledge etc. comes out of those clinics that are conducted and, again, they do have good quality presenters etc. so that does make it (Coach F).

These coaches understood the role of attending the coaching clinics in furthering their coach education and subsequently their coaching knowledge and effectiveness as a coach:

I think if you mean clinics and that kind of thing by coach education then certainly yes [improve coach effectiveness]. Once again, I don’t know what’s involved in the actual accreditation but I think that, yeah, the clinics are incredibly important to try and get to because it just gives you so many…every time you go
to one it just gives you so many new tools to use when you come back to your team (Coach D).

However, for two of these coaches the relevance and application of the knowledge acquired at these coaching clinics for the recreational coach was problematic:

I do try to attend the sessions they have, I find the sessions are excellent. I guess a criticism I have is some of the sessions are very focused on rep basketball level, and maybe have some relevance to coaching a division 1 team in the [basketball association name]...So I've found a lot of it can’t be adapted to community basketball (Coach A).

Therefore, although these coaches valued coaching clinics in their coaching development, the high level of information presented (e.g., tactical plays) was not pertinent to coaches who were coaching teams and individuals at a more basic level.

Overall, coach learning, whether it is in a formal, informal or nonformal setting was important in the development of a coach. For coaches these learning settings were particularly important in the development of their coaching philosophies and for their focus on the holistic development of the player:

I think the most successful coaches are the ones that invest a bit more time than that and invest a bit more of themselves and their effort in their preparation. And, unfortunately, take it home with them and sometimes that’s good and bad for the coach, but I think it’s best for their performance that they have a real investment in how they deliver their coaching rather than just one or two hours a week. So I
think that’s what coach education is really useful for, to show that it [coaching philosophy] is very important and it has a lot of influences on the development of the players as young people and as basketballers as well (Coach C).

5.4 Summary of Key Findings

The first broad question that this second study sought to answer was ‘what is a coaching philosophy?’ The results of the semi-structured interviews illustrated coaches’ overall lack of understanding of the concept of coaching philosophy. As discussed in Chapter 2, previous research has shown coaches’ understanding to increase with the age and years of coaching experience (Nash et al., 2008), however, neither of these factors were determinants of coaches’ understanding in the current study. Coaches rarely used the term “philosophy” in their responses, which were focused on their coaching practice; as one coach explained, they “just do it”. Hence, when coaches spoke of their “philosophies” they were, in fact, describing the way that they coached (i.e., their coaching behaviours). These “philosophies” were bounded by the age and competition level of the players they coached, consistent with previous research on role frames by Gilbert and Trudel (2004b) as discussed in Chapter 2.

The second broad question that this second study sought to answer is ‘why is philosophy important?’ Coaches believed they had a core set of principles that enabled their coaching practice to be consistent yet also adaptable to the coaching context. These consistent coaching behaviours or “philosophies” facilitated the life and sport skill development of their players in a fun and enjoyable environment. Coaches, therefore,
appeared to be replicating the “player-centred philosophies” of the formal coach education programs discussed in Chapter 4. All coaches believed that one of their main roles as coach was the development of their players’ skills. Coaches also saw sport as a vehicle by which to develop life skills such as a player’s ability to work in a team, as well as developing their self-esteem and confidence. For several coaches creating an equitable environment through equal playing time was also critical in their “philosophy”.

The third broad question that this second study sought to answer is ‘how is philosophy learned?’ Consistent with previous research (Nash et al., 2008), coaches did not attribute the development of their “philosophies” to formal coach education programs such as the NCAS. Coaches had difficulty in even recalling whether the concept of coaching philosophy had been covered in their course. However, coaches believed that “philosophy” required greater emphasis in the NCAS despite several coaches raising concerns about coaches’ understanding of “philosophy” early in their careers. Informal learning situations were, therefore, central to the development of coaches’ “philosophies”. Previous playing experience, observation of other coaches, mentors and increased coaching experience were all viewed by coaches as contributing to their “philosophy” development, which was seen as an evolutionary process through the coach’s self-reflection. Nonformal coaching clinics also provided coaches with access to high-level coaches’ “philosophies”.

Coaches were also asked broader questions on their views on coach education. Formal coach education programs such as the NCAS were seen as beneficial by coaches through interaction with other coaches, rejuvenation of their coaching, increasing coaching knowledge and overall coaching standards. There was, however, a lack of
formal education opportunities for those coaches who had completed their NCAS Level 2 and were not considering coaching at a higher level, which was also reflected in the lack of regular updating by coaches of their NCAS courses. NCAS accreditation was generally viewed by coaches as “due process” which, overall, did not appear to consider the context of the learner in the course curriculum. Hence, coaching clinics run by Basketball Victoria, seen as valuable by coaches in their development, were the coaches’ main opportunity for furthering their coach education in a formal context.
Chapter 6: The Implementation of Coaching Philosophy in Coaching Practice

6.1 Introduction

The first study in this thesis examined the delivery of coaching philosophy in Australian universities, TAFE institutions and NCAS programs. The results showed that coaching-based modules/units in Australian universities and NCAS programs delivered coaching philosophy within the first few weeks, with the development of a coach’s philosophy generally prescriptive in nature, and the communication of one’s philosophy as coach considered important in the management of others. There was also an apparent disconnect between coaching philosophy and ethical guidelines in these programs, despite the presumed link between coaching philosophy and coaching practice.

The second study in this thesis examined the coaching philosophies of recreational and developmental basketball coaches and their views on coach education. The results highlighted that, overall, coaches’ lacked understanding in relation to the concept of coaching philosophy, with coaching experience and age not a factor in the level of understanding. Coaches’ personal philosophies evolved over time and revolved around the values and objectives of sport, such as development of skills, fun/enjoyment and self-esteem/confidence, with coaching philosophies bounded by the age and competition level of their players. Generally, coaches did not attribute the development of their coaching philosophies to formal coach education, but rather to informal learning such as observation of other coaches and non-formal learning settings such as clinics which were considered more important sources of coach learning.
To ensure there is a valid and reliable link between coaching philosophy and coaching practice, observation of coaches in practice was required. The third, and final, study in this thesis, therefore, examines the coaches’ philosophies in practice and in competition settings to determine whether coaches’ stated philosophies matched those implemented in their coaching practice.

6.2 Method

In order to establish whether the coaches in the study in Chapter 5 implemented their coaching philosophies in practice, it was necessary to conduct systematic observations of those coaches in both a practice and competition setting.

6.3 Participants

The participants in this study were the eight recreational and development coaches who participated in the semi-structured interviews reported in Chapter 5. Coaches ranged in age from 21 to 52 years, with an average of 8.5 years’ coaching experience, who had obtained, at minimum, the Level 1 NCAS award in basketball (with the exception of one coach). These coaches were coaching players aged from 8 to 34 years from three basketball clubs within the Eastern suburbs of the city of Melbourne, Australia.
6.4 Instrument (Event Recording Form – The ASUOI)

In Chapter 5, each coach described their understanding of their coaching philosophies to the researcher. From the semi-structured interviews, two to four components of the coach’s philosophy were chosen for observation to determine whether philosophies were implemented in coaching practice. Table 6.1 below provides an overview of these components, with an explanation and definition of each of these components provided in Table 6.2.

Table 6.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coach</th>
<th>Development of Skills</th>
<th>Fun/Enjoyment</th>
<th>Other Components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-esteem/Confidence, Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Defence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Relationship, Life Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>✓*</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>*Technical and Tactical Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-esteem/Confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Individual vs. Team, Equal Court Time, Life Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Equal Court Time, Life Skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Coach E spoke specifically about the importance of technical (i.e., sport specific skills) and tactical (i.e., decision-making) skills and hence these were observed as separated categories.
As there was no specific observation instrument available to measure coaching philosophies, an all-purpose event recording form (van der Mans, 1989) was used to record frequency of coaching philosophies (refer to Appendix D). To enable these coaching philosophies to be observable in practice, definitions of the majority of these philosophies were adapted and developed from the Arizona State University Observation Instrument (ASUOI), as devised by Lacy and Darst (1984). Originally designed by Tharp and Gallimore (1976) for the collection of coach behaviours in the practice environment, a variation of this instrument was used in the current study, as coaches described nothing more than their coaching behaviours when they discussed their philosophy. Furthermore, the utilisation of the behavioural categories within the previously-validated ASUOI somewhat combatted the fact that the current adapted version was not validated.

The ASUOI consists of 14 behavioural categories, of which eight were used in the current study to measure coaching philosophies in a training session and game setting. Of the coaching philosophies identified by two or more coaches, four of them were specifically related to the behaviour categories of the ASUOI. Table 6.2 describes these observational categories based on the coaching philosophies identified in Chapter 5 (refer to Table 6.1), with the following sections providing an overview of previous research conducted to justify the use of each category in the measurement of these coaching philosophies.
Table 6.2

Coaching Philosophy of the Participants and Definitions Used for Observation in Coaching Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coaching Philosophy</th>
<th>No. of coaches</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of skills</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Instruction through verbal statements or demonstration (positive or negative modelling) related to execution of the skill#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun/Enjoyment*</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Praise – verbal or non-verbal compliments, statements or signs of acceptance (e.g., smiles or pats on the back)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem/Confidence*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Questioning – any question to player(s) concerning strategies, techniques, assignments, etc. associated with the sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>One-on-one interactions (verbal and nonverbal) with player Verbal statements related to individual offensive skills that affect the team as a whole (e.g., ‘head up’, ‘protect the ball’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Verbal statements related to both individual and team defensive plays and movements (e.g., ‘stick to your player’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual vs. Team</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Praise was used as a measurement for both fun/enjoyment and self-esteem/confidence, however, coaches were only measured on one of these philosophies. #Definition of instruction adapted from multiple behaviour categories of the ASUOI (pre-instruction, concurrent instruction, post-instruction, positive modelling, negative modelling)

6.4.1 Development of skills: Instruction/positive and negative modelling

For the coaching philosophy of ‘development of skills’ the ASUOI behaviour categories of instruction in combination with modelling (demonstration) were used. As it
was not the focus of the present study to concentrate on the types of instruction used, the definition for ‘development of skills’ was generalised to include all types of instruction as well as demonstration (positive or negative modelling) used by the coach in relation to the execution of a skill.

A large body of research in systematic observation of coaches has found instruction to be the predominant behaviour of both novice and elite coaches (Isabel et al., 2008; Lacy & Darst, 1985; Tharp & Gallimore, 1976). Athletes have also perceived increased coach behaviour such as instruction (and positive feedback) in skill improvement, although prediction of skill development in individual sport athletes was associated with more instruction compared to less instruction in team sport athletes (Alfermann, Lee, & Würth, 2005). And practice sessions of lower level coaches have been found to often focus on teaching fundamental skills to their athletes (Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1979; Smith, Zane, Smoll, & Coppel, 1983) compared to higher level coaches whose instructional practice behaviours are focused on teaching tactical strategies such as offensive and defensive strategies in basketball (Bloom, Crumpton, & Anderson, 1999). The definition “Instruction through verbal statements or demonstration (positive or negative modelling) related to execution of the skill” (Lacy & Darst, 1984, p. 60) was therefore considered an appropriate measure of the coaching philosophy ‘development of skills’.

6.4.2 Fun/enjoyment and self-esteem/confidence: Praise

For the coaching philosophies of ‘fun/enjoyment’ and ‘self-esteem/confidence’ the ASUOI behaviour category of praise was used. As no coaches in the Chapter 5 study
had described both of these coaching philosophies, it was considered acceptable to use praise for both concepts as there would be no crossover in the observation of coaching behaviours associated with this behaviour category.

Praise has been found to be used by coaches to increase the confidence of athletes as well as develop an overall supportive environment (Potrac et al., 2002; Potrac, Jones, & Cushion, 2007). Higher levels of enjoyment have also been found in athletes who perceived that their coaches gave more praise following desirable performances (Black & Weiss, 1992). Coaches who display more encouragement and positive reinforcement have been found to have athletes with higher levels of self-esteem and enjoyment (Smith, Smoll, Barnett, & Everett, 1993; Smoll & Smith, 1992). Positive coach support and satisfaction with an athlete’s performance has also been found to be predictive of greater enjoyment in their athletes (Scanlan, Carpenter, Lobel, & Simons, 1993). The definition “praise - verbal or non-verbal compliments, statements or signs of acceptance” (Lacy & Darst, 1984, p. 61) was, therefore, considered an appropriate measure of the coaching philosophies ‘fun/enjoyment’ and ‘self-esteem/confidence’.

For one coach, ‘hustles’ were used in combination with praise to measure the coaching philosophy of ‘fun/enjoyment’. Coach B referred to the role of enjoyment in motivating the players to succeed. Hustles are defined as “verbal statements intended to intensify the efforts of players” (Lacy & Darst, 1984, p. 61) and can be used by the coach to motivate their athletes. Hence, hustles were also observed and used in the measurement of ‘fun/enjoyment’ implemented by this particular coach.
6.4.3 Responsibility: Questioning

For the coaching philosophy of ‘responsibility’, the ASUOI behaviour category of questioning was used. Therefore, on each occasion the coach used the questioning strategy in instructing their players, this behaviour was recorded. Chambers and Vickers (2006) found that athletes who had a bandwidth feedback (where feedback is provided when performance is within pre-set criteria) and questioning coach took more responsibility for and awareness of their learning. Questioning by the coach enables the athletes to learn solutions to various sport-related problems (Potrac & Cassidy, 2006), develops player independence and involves athletes in the overall decision-making process (Light, 2004). The definition “questioning - any question to player(s) concerning strategies, techniques, assignments, etc. associated with the sport” (Lacy & Darst, 1984, p. 60) was, therefore, considered an appropriate measure of the coaching philosophy ‘responsibility’.

6.4.4 Life skills

The coaching philosophy of ‘life skills’ was more difficult to measure as all coaches who identified the importance of teaching life skills in their coaching philosophies mentioned more than one life skill. In addition, the teaching of life skills by the coach was not suitable in terms of event recording and frequency of life skills due to the potential length of the ‘life skill lesson’. Hence, rather than concentrating on frequency of life skills taught, specific ‘teachable moments’ were considered in
measuring the life skills identified by coaches. These moments will be described further in the results section.

6.4.5 Equity

The coaching philosophy of ‘equity’ was identified by coaches predominantly in relation to ‘equal court time’. Due to this, ‘equity’ was only measured in the game setting through player substitutions. Coaches who identified ‘equity’ in their coaching philosophies differed slightly on what was meant by ‘equal court time’. For example, Coach G stated that substitutions would be made every two minutes to ensure equal court time for players in games, whilst Coach H spoke about equal court time in a more general sense. Hence, for Coach G the time of substitution was recorded whilst for Coach H both the playing number of the person substituted and the time of substitution was recorded every time the coaches made a substitution.

6.5 Procedure

The eight participants were observed in one training session and one game towards the latter end of their respective basketball seasons. For those coaching two teams, observation of two training sessions and two games was conducted. It should be noted here that a limitation of this study was that the coach observation was conducted towards the latter stages of the season, which may have influenced results due to a possible higher emphasis on upcoming finals. Unfortunately, this was difficult to avoid due to the timing of data collection, especially for developmental coaches who have only one competitive
season compared to two for recreational coaches. Previous systematic observation research has typically observed behaviours taking place during the fundamental part of the training session, excluding conditioning segments (Lacy & Darst, 1985). Due to the recreational and developmental level of the coaches involved in this study, however, there was little or no conditioning involved in training sessions, hence the whole training session was observed (drinks breaks were excluded).

A stopwatch was used to record the time of sessions. The total amount of time coded for each training session ranged from 30 to 93 minutes \( (M = 62) \) and each game from 30 to 73 minutes \( (M = 48) \). The large ranges in time observed for both training sessions and games were due mainly to the level of the coach, with recreational coaches having shorter training sessions \( (M = 53) \) and shorter game times \( (M = 40) \) compared to that of developmental coaches \( (M = 79 \text{ and } M = 62, \text{ respectively}) \). Total amount of time observed for each coach ranged from 81 to 207 minutes \( (M = 152) \). The discrepancies in total time observed were predominantly due to those coaches who coached two teams, although for one developmental coach (81 minutes observation) total observation time was predominantly less than expected due to the presence of a guest coach at the time of the training session observation. Coaches were observed for a total of 686 minutes for training sessions and 528 minutes for games, totalling 1214 minutes of observation for all participants (please refer to Table 6.3 below for observation times of each coach).
Table 6.3

Observation Times of Each Coach by Training, Game and Total Minutes Observed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coach</th>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Game</th>
<th>Total Minutes Observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>686</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>1214</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data were collected by the primary researcher either standing on the side of the basketball court in training sessions or sitting behind the bench in game settings to accurately record the participants’ behaviours. All coaching sessions were videotaped with the consent of coaches. As players under the age of 18 may also have been videotaped during this process, parents were provided with a letter (Appendix E) outlining the use of the video camera in the study, including the focus being on the coach rather than the player. Coaching sessions were videotaped and viewed two weeks later to reduce observer bias and increase reliability, as resources did not permit the use of
multiple observers (Cooper et al., 1987; Yin, 2009). Tests for intra-observer reliability exceeded the 85 per cent criterion for each of the five sampled coach observations (Siedentop & Tannehill, 2000).

6.6 Data Presentation

Each coaching philosophy/behaviour category was computed into a total number of behaviours and a percentage was determined from the total behaviours observed. Rate per minute (RPM) and percentages were also calculated for each coaching philosophy/behaviour category. To calculate RPM the total of each category was divided by the total of minutes observed. As stated earlier, the coaching philosophies of ‘equity’ and ‘life skills’ were not measured using the event recording technique due to the multifaceted nature of those philosophies.

6.7 Results

This thesis aimed to answer three questions: 1) What is coaching philosophy? 2) Why is coaching philosophy important? and 3) How is coaching philosophy learned? In this study, philosophy was measured through the behaviours of coaches to determine whether the behaviours matched the philosophy statements in Chapter 5, and to determine the frequency of behaviours in various coaching contexts. The systematic observation of coaches’ behaviour is vital in establishing the importance of coaching philosophy in coaching practice, especially the differences in behaviours that may occur dependent on the contexts, such as the practice setting (e.g., game or training session) and type of
player coached (e.g., age and competition level). As illustrated in Table 6.4 below, a total of 2788 behaviours related to coaches’ described philosophies in this study were recorded.

Table 6.4

*Frequency, Percentage and Rate per Minute (RPM) of Total Behaviours Related to Coaches’ Philosophies in Training Sessions and Games Using an Event Recording Form*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Training Session</th>
<th>Game</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Skills</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun/Enjoyment</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem/Confidence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual vs. Team</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>N=8</strong></td>
<td><strong>1497</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* RPM has been calculated based on the minutes observed for each behaviour related to the coaches’ philosophies; N = total number of participants observed; n = number of participants observed for each behaviour.
All coaches identified ‘development of skills’ as an important component of their coaching philosophy and, unsurprisingly, instruction (i.e., ‘pre-instruction, ‘concurrent instruction’, ‘post instruction’, ‘positive modelling’, and ‘negative modelling’) accounted for almost two-thirds of all coded behaviours in training sessions (62.99%) and well over a third of all coded behaviours in games (41.21%). Four coaches identified ‘fun/enjoyment’ in their coaching philosophies, and praise in relation to this philosophy represented 18.37 per cent of the total coded behaviours in training sessions and 32.46 per cent of the total coded behaviours in games. Two coaches identified ‘self-esteem/confidence’ as an important component of their coaching philosophy, and praise in relation to this philosophy represented 9.69 per cent of the total coded behaviours in training sessions and 9.14 per cent of the total coded behaviours in games. In total, praise accounted for just under a third of all coded behaviours (28.06%) in training sessions, and well over a third of all coded behaviours in games (41.6%). The remainder of the philosophies (responsibility, relationship, individual vs. team, and defence) measured via the event recording form were much lower in frequency, mainly due to the singular identification of these philosophies by coaches. Most notable, however, were total coded behaviours observed in games by these coaches for the philosophies of ‘individual vs. team’ and ‘defence’ which represented 7.51 and 7.59 per cent, respectively.

Table 6.5 provides an individual breakdown of the most observed behaviour (i.e., instruction) related to the coaching philosophy of ‘development of skills’, which was identified by all coaches who participated in the study. For the majority of these coaches, instruction was the highest behaviour utilised in training.
Table 6.5

Comparison between the Observed Behaviour of Instruction Utilised by Coaches A-H Related to the Coaching Philosophy of ‘Development of Skills’ as Recorded Through the Event Recording Form (Total Behaviours, RPM and % of the Total Behaviours of All Coaches)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coach</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Game</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>RPM</td>
<td>% of total behaviours</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>RPM</td>
<td>% of total behaviours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A#</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>14.68</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>12.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>5.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>9.03</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>5.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>16.54</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>30.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E#</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>12.58</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>15.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>5.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G#</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>24.84</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>16.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>12.26</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>8.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#Coaches who coached two teams have had their frequencies and percentages averaged to make better comparisons between coaches; RPM has been included here to demonstrate the frequency of the coach’s behaviour in their own practice.

Table 6.6 provides an individual breakdown of the second most observed behaviour (i.e., praise) related to the coaching philosophy of ‘fun/enjoyment’. Four coaches identified ‘fun/enjoyment’ in their coaching philosophies and for the majority of these coaches praise was the highest behaviour utilised in games. The similarities and differences
between coaches for these coaching philosophies identified by two coaches or more will be discussed in the following section.

Table 6.6

Comparison between the Observed Behaviour of Praise Utilised by Coaches B, D, E and H Related to the Coaching Philosophy of ‘Fun/Enjoyment’ as Recorded Through the Event Recording Form (Total Behaviours, RPM and % of the Total Behaviours of All Coaches)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coach</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Game</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>RPM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E#</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#Coach E, who coached two teams, had their frequencies and percentages averaged to make better comparisons between coaches; RPM has been included here to demonstrate the frequency of the coach’s behaviour in their own practice.

6.7.1 Differences between coaches

The coaching philosophies of ‘development of skills’, ‘fun/enjoyment’, ‘life skills’, ‘equity’ and ‘self-esteem/confidence’ were identified by two or more coaches in the second study of this thesis (Chapter 5). As a result, direct comparisons could be made between coaches to determine which coaching philosophies (and coaching behaviours)
were implemented in practice, the frequency of those coaching philosophies (and coaching behaviours) and, therefore, the importance of philosophy in coaching practice.

6.7.1.1 Development of skills

‘Development of skills’ was identified by all participants in their coaching philosophies and, consistent with previous observational research in basketball (e.g., Tharp & Gallimore, 1976) instruction, including demonstrations, was most utilised by coaches. As was seen in Table 6.4, when comparing the total number of behaviours related to coaches’ philosophies, instruction accounted for 62.99 per cent in training sessions and 41.21 per cent in games.

When comparing differences between coaches, Table 6.5 reveals that in training sessions Coach G (24.84%) utilised instruction and the coaching philosophy of ‘development of skills’ most in their coaching practice, whereas for the game setting the highest utilisation was by Coach D (30.46%). Both coaches stressed the importance of developing fundamental basketball skills when discussing their coaching philosophies in Chapter 5. In comparison, Coach B and Coach F were relatively low in their instruction in both training sessions (4.52% and 5.65%, respectively) and game settings (5.66% and 5.39%, respectively). These results reflect those of Chapter 5, where the emphasis was placed on providing an enjoyable environment by Coach B and the development of player confidence by Coach F. Coach C was also low in instruction in the game (5.39%) but this may be due to their role as assistant coach (although instruction in training was also relatively low compared to other coaches).
The importance given to coaching philosophy ‘development of skills’ and the level of instruction utilised by the participants in training sessions appeared to decrease as the age and years of coaching experience of the coaches increased (refer to Table 6.7). For those coaches under the age of 25 years \((n = 3)\) instruction was highest in training sessions \((M = 65.39\%)\), with those coaches between the ages of 25-35 years \((n = 3)\) utilising instruction less \((M = 55.93\%)\), and coaches over the age of 35 years \((n = 2)\) utilising instruction least \((M = 52.06\%)\). Similarly, for those coaches with less than 5 years’ experience \((n = 2)\) utilisation of instruction was greatest in training sessions \((M = 67.63\%)\), with those coaches with between 5 and 10 years’ experience \((n = 3)\) utilising instruction less \((M = 57.16\%)\), and coaches with over 10 years’ experience \((n = 3)\) utilising instruction the least \((M = 53.71\%)\). Thus, the older, more experienced coaches are providing more of a facilitator role in their coaching with less instruction in comparison to the younger, less experienced coaches who are predominantly focused on skill development. In training sessions, female coaches \((n = 3; \ M = 64.16\%)\) utilised instruction more than their male counterparts \((n = 5; \ M = 64.16\%);\) however, in games male coaches \((n = 5; \ M = 44.04\%)\) utilised instruction slightly more than the female participants \((n = 3; \ M = 40.58\%)\). Overall, there were no large discrepancies in age, gender and years of coaching experience between participants in relation to the coaching philosophy of ‘development of skills’.
Table 6.7

Comparison of Mean Age, Gender and Years of Coaching Experience for the Coaching Philosophy ‘Development of Skills’ (Total Behaviours and % of the Total Behaviours in Parentheses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Game</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>82 (55.12)</td>
<td>54 (44.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>70 (64.16)</td>
<td>34 (40.58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;25 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>78 (65.39)</td>
<td>55 (50.82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-35 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>87 (55.93)</td>
<td>46 (33.65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;35 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>63 (52.06)</td>
<td>33 (44.26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;5 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>66 (67.73)</td>
<td>27 (42.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>95 (57.16)</td>
<td>65 (43.89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;10 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>68 (53.71)</td>
<td>32 (41.95)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* RPM has not been included here as the purposes of this table was to make comparisons of what behaviours were observed most, rather than how often these behaviours were observed (i.e., their frequency).

6.7.1.2 Fun/enjoyment

The coaching philosophy of ‘fun/enjoyment’ was identified by four participants, and consistent with previous research findings (e.g., Potrac et al., 2007) praise was found to be frequently used by coaches. As was seen in Table 6.4, when comparing the total number of behaviours related to coaches’ philosophies, praise (for ‘fun/enjoyment’ alone) accounted for 18.37 per cent in training sessions and 32.46 per cent in games. When comparing differences between coaches, Table 6.6 revealed that Coach B used praise to the greatest extent in both the training session (33.33%) and game (35.58%). This was
consistent with the results in Chapter 5, where Coach B described their fundamental belief that if their players were enjoying their basketball, they would be more motivated to succeed. In comparison, Coach H was relatively low in praise in both the training session (8.8%) and game setting (19.33%). This is not surprising considering Coach H’s basic coaching philosophy and overall lack of understanding of the concept, as discussed in Chapter 5. The importance given to ‘fun/enjoyment’ and the level of praise utilised by the participants in training sessions and games differed dependent on the gender of the coaches (refer to Table 6.8).

Table 6.8

*Comparison of Mean Gender and Age for the Coaching Philosophy ‘Fun/enjoyment’ (Total Behaviours and % of the Total Behaviours in Parentheses)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Game</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>69 (43.33)</td>
<td>85 (40.64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>39 (31.49)</td>
<td>78 (64.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;25 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>43 (29.64)</td>
<td>58 (48.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-35 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>95 (60.90)</td>
<td>90 (55.56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;35 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* RPM has not been included here as the purposes of this table was to make comparisons of what behaviours were observed most, rather than how often these behaviours were observed (i.e., their frequency).

For the male participants, praise was utilised highest in training sessions (43.44%) in comparison to their female counterparts who utilised praise most in games (64.14%). The age of participants also appeared to influence the frequency of praise in coaching.
practice, with those coaches aged between 25 and 35 years \( (n = 3) \) showing higher levels of praise in both training sessions \( (M = 60.9\%) \) and games \( (M = 55.56\%) \) in comparison to coaches aged under 25 years \( (M = 29.64\% \text{ and } 48.78\%, \text{ respectively}) \). Coaches greater than 35 years of age did not identify ‘fun/enjoyment’ in their coaching philosophies; however, praise was measured in relation to ‘self-esteem/confidence’ which will be discussed in the next section.

Overall, the results show that for the four participants that identified both ‘development of skills’ and ‘fun/enjoyment’ in their coaching philosophies, praise was the highest utilised behaviour and, therefore, ‘fun/enjoyment’ was the most observed philosophy in their coaching practice.

### 6.7.1.3 Self-esteem/confidence

The coaching philosophy of ‘self-esteem/confidence’ was identified by two coaches in Chapter 5, with those coaches also the two oldest and most experienced coaches in the study. As was seen in Table 6.4 (refer to page 194), praise in relation to the coaching philosophy of ‘self-esteem/confidence’ was the third most frequent behaviour utilised by coaches under study, accounting for 9.69 per cent of total behaviours in training sessions and 9.14 per cent in games. When comparing the two coaches, Coach F utilised praise most in both training sessions \( (56.79\%) \) and games \( (66.1\%) \), in contrast to Coach A \( (M = 35.55\% \text{ and } 38.53\%, \text{ respectively}) \).

Overall, for Coach F, ‘self-esteem/confidence’ appeared to hold the most importance in their coaching philosophy, whereas for Coach A, although ‘self-esteem/confidence’ was greatest in the game of their youngest/lowest division team,
‘development’ of skills’ appeared to be the most important component of their coaching philosophy with higher frequencies in general. As Coach A and Coach F were both male, as well as being the oldest and most experienced coaches, no comparisons could be made in relation to gender, age and years of coaching experience.

6.7.1.4 Life skills

Four coaches in Chapter 5 identified in their coaching philosophies life skills which could be taught through the game of basketball. All coaches mentioned teamwork; other areas included resilience (coping with wins/losses), respect for others (including the coach) and work ethic (versus natural ability). However, despite all coaches referring to teamwork in their coaching philosophies, it was respect for others where two instances were observed.

Coach G discussed teaching principles from everyday life, specifically teamwork and respect for others. The life skill of respect for others was observed directly in a training session where the coach was teaching a skill to the playing group. One player, appearing to not understand the skill, asked Coach G a question about this skill; however, when the coach began to answer the player’s question the player was not paying attention to the coach and instead was bouncing their basketball with their head down. Upon realising that the player was not listening to their response, Coach G gained the attention of this player and pointed that they were not being respectful to them as coach, especially as they had asked the question. The coach ensured that the player understood what they meant in terms of respecting them as coach before continuing with teaching the skill;
respect for the coach was not discussed in any further detail with the individual player or the rest of the playing group.

Coach C discussed the importance of teaching skills both on and off the court, especially in a team sport setting, with cooperation (team work) and work ethic (versus natural ability) explicitly mentioned. However, there was an instance of teaching the life skill of respect for others in a game where an individual player was becoming increasingly frustrated with the officials. On several occasions when a foul was called against this player they spoke back to the official(s) venting their frustration as to why they were being awarded the foul. This occurred within a short time frame and the coach, observing this increased frustration and outbursts at the officials, substituted the player out of the game. Coach C then spoke to the player individually away from the rest of the team, emphasising that it was not respectful to speak to the officials in that way and that their focus should be on the game not the officials. The player was then given an extended rest on the bench to calm their emotions and re-focus their attention on the game.

These two examples reflect the life skill of respect for others, in relation to the two most important authority figures the players will face in their sporting career – the coach and the official. Interestingly, the players involved in both situations were in the younger age groups. There were, however, several limitations in measuring life skills’ development in the current study: 1) Only one training session and one game was observed for each team coached; 2) Coaches were observed towards the end of the competition when their focus may have been on other areas (i.e., finals); and 3) Coaches
may, in fact, have been teaching life skills in their coaching but this did not occur in the training sessions/games observed.

6.7.1.5 Equity

The coaching philosophy of ‘equity’ was identified by two coaches in Chapter 5, with those coaches responsible for some of the youngest players in the study. For those coaches equity was in reference to equal playing time on the court, hence, this philosophy was only measured in the game setting. The two coaches approached this philosophy in different ways in their coaching behaviour; Coach G explained that equity in playing time would be achieved through two-minute substitutions throughout the game, whereas Coach H did not specify in Chapter 5 how equity would be attained.

Coach G was responsible for two teams and despite the time of substitution varying in both games, the average time of substitution was two minutes and thirty seconds for their youngest team, and two minutes and three seconds for their oldest team. There was little variability between the halves of the game in the youngest team; however, the second half of the game in the oldest team saw the coach complete more frequent substitutions on average (every minute and fifty seconds) compared to that of the first half (every two minutes and eighteen seconds).

Coach H had nine players on their team which they identified in Chapter 5 as a difficult number in providing equal court time for all players. Despite this difficulty, the range of playing minutes ranged from approximately sixteen minutes to approximately twenty-six minutes, with an average playing time of twenty-two minutes (refer to Figure 6.1). The game was fully timed (i.e., clock is stopped on the referee’s whistle) and thirty-
two minutes in length (four eight-minute quarters); therefore, all players at minimum played half of the game (i.e., the lowest playing time being sixteen minutes). Overall, results showed that despite their different approaches, both Coach G and Coach H successfully accomplished their coaching philosophy of equity in the games observed.

![Figure 6.1: Players’ Court Time in a Game as a Representation of Coach H’s Coaching Philosophy of Equity](image)

6.7.2 Differences between teams (coaching contexts)

Three participants in the study, all recreational coaches, were responsible for two teams, hence, a total of two training sessions and two games were observed for those coaches. Comparisons could then be made between coaching philosophies based on the boundaries to coaching philosophy: competition level and age of the players coached.
Coach A coached a younger team in the lowest division and an older team in the highest division and indicated that their coaching philosophy would differ dependent on which team they were coaching. One coaching philosophy where Coach A suggested there would be a difference dependent on the age group of the team was ‘responsibility’; the older team would be given more responsibility and involvement in game day decision-making in comparison to the younger team for which all decision-making would be by the coach. As Table 6.9 below shows, there was little difference in the responsibility given between teams in training sessions, however, when it came to game day, no responsibility was given to the younger team (no behaviours recorded) in comparison to the older team (0.25 RPM). Therefore, Coach A did implement their stated philosophy of ‘responsibility’ in their coaching practice.

Table 6.9

Comparison of the Coaching Philosophies of Coach A between the Two Teams Coached
(Total Behaviours and RPM in Parentheses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Development of Skills</th>
<th>Self-Esteem</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Game</td>
<td>Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younger/Lowest Division Team</td>
<td>57 (1.78)</td>
<td>62 (1.38)</td>
<td>42 (1.31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older/Highest Division Team</td>
<td>125 (2.27)</td>
<td>31 (1.11)</td>
<td>57 (1.04)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. As the duration of observation differed between teams in training sessions and games, rate per minute (RPM) was determined to be a better variable to use to compare teams.
Coach E coached a younger team in the highest division and an older team in a lower division, and discussed differences in coaching philosophy dependent more on the competition level of the players (although this was more related to recreational vs. developmental coaching rather than differences between divisions at recreational level).

Coach E made comparisons about the ratio of ‘fun/enjoyment’ versus ‘development of skills (technical)’. ‘Fun/enjoyment’ was considered important by Coach E as a recreational coach, and the results in Table 6.10 below reveal that in the game setting this coaching philosophy was the highest utilised by the coach for both the youngest/highest division team (2.31 RPM) and older/lower division team (2.30 RPM).

Table 6.10

*Comparison of the Coaching Philosophies of Coach E between the Two Teams Coached (Total Behaviours and RPM in Parentheses)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fun/Enjoyment</th>
<th>Development of Skills (Technical)</th>
<th>Development of Skills (Tactical)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Game</td>
<td>Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younger/Highest</td>
<td>50 (0.82)</td>
<td>95 (2.31)</td>
<td>62 (1.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division Team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older/Lower</td>
<td>68 (1.24)</td>
<td>92 (2.30)</td>
<td>72 (1.31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division Team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. As the duration of observation differed between teams in training sessions and games, rate per minute (RPM) was determined to be a better variable to use to compare teams.*
In comparison, ‘development of skills (technical)’ was highest in training sessions, with a higher percentage seen in the highest division team (1.31 RPM) compared to the lower division team (1.02 RPM). Therefore, Coach E did implement their coaching philosophy of ‘fun/enjoyment’ in their coaching practice at the recreational level.

Coach G coached two young teams, both in the same division level in their respective age groups, and predominantly discussed the teaching of life skills in their coaching philosophy (described in the previous section). However, the ‘development of skills’ was also considered important in their coaching philosophy, especially fundamental skills for the age groups coached, with ‘skill set’ sheets provided to players to work on their skills both in the training session and at home in their own time. The results in Table 6.11 below show the coaching philosophy of ‘development of skills’ was very highly utilised through the use of instruction by Coach G in training sessions for both teams (2.57 RPM for the youngest team and 2.48 RPM for the oldest team).

Table 6.11

Comparison of the Coaching Philosophies of Coach G between the Two Teams Coached
(Total Behaviours and RPM in Parentheses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Development of Skills</th>
<th>Individual vs. Team</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngest Team</td>
<td>157 (2.57)</td>
<td>49 (1.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldest Team</td>
<td>151 (2.48)</td>
<td>70 (1.63)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. As the duration of observation differed between teams in training sessions and games, rate per minute (RPM) was determined to be a better variable to use to compare teams.
Although less utilised on game day, overall instruction and ‘development of skills’ was still high (1.17 RPM for the youngest team and 1.63 RPM for the oldest team). The small difference between teams in the game may be due to the coach concentrating more on individual players at the younger age group, with more focus on overall team skills at the older age group. Therefore, Coach G did implement their coaching philosophy of ‘development of skills’ in their coaching practice.

6.8 Summary of Key Findings

The results suggest that despite coaches’ limited understanding of the concept of coaching philosophy shown in Chapter 5, coaches have a consistent way of behaving in their coaching practice. This was to be expected considering coaches were predominantly discussing a set of behaviours when referencing their coaching philosophy in Chapter 5. Consistent with previous research on coaching behaviours in basketball (e.g., Tharp & Gallimore, 1976), there was a high level of instruction provided by coaches, particularly in training sessions. However, the level of importance given to instruction decreased as the age and years of coaching experience increased. Additionally, consistent with the research on youth sport coaches (e.g., Smith et al., 1983), the level of praise given by coaches was also high compared to other coach behaviours (particularly in game settings), reflected in the ‘player-centred’ philosophies of increasing the self-esteem and confidence of their players in a fun and enjoyable environment. Praise was highest in those coaches aged 25-35 years (fun/enjoyment), and over 35 years (self-esteem/confidence), which mirrors the decrease of instruction by the older coaches. Behaviour was also consistent for those coaches who identified participation for all
players in their philosophies, with even spread of court time demonstrated by both coaches in game settings. However, despite four coaches identifying life skills in their philosophies, respect for others was the only life skill observed on two occasions in coaches’ practice. Overall, coaches consistently demonstrated coaching behaviours related to values found in formal coach education programs (McCallister et al., 2000) and the ‘player-centred’ approach to coaching which has become prevalent in the coaching literature (Kidman & Lombardo, 2010).

Coaches also understood the differences in coaching behaviours required in their practice dependent on the context of their practice, such as the age and competition level of their players, as well as the practice setting (i.e., game vs. training session). As discussed previously in Chapter 5, coaches were aware that there was not a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to their coaching practice and adapted their coaching behaviours in practice to match the given situation. This was reflected in those coaches responsible for two contrasting teams where coaching behaviours associated with the coaching philosophies of responsibility, fun/enjoyment and development of skills differed dependent on competition and age level of their players.
Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion

This thesis aimed to provide a detailed, critical analysis of the concept of philosophy in sports coaching. It began with an exploration of philosophy in the broader context of society, and used three broad questions – ‘What is philosophy?’ ‘Why is philosophy important?’ and ‘How is philosophy learned?’ – to guide this exploration of philosophy’s role in the helping professions, and more specifically in coaching. It has clearly identified that coaching, as a helping profession, assumes philosophy to be important, but is limited in the way it has empirically defined the term, understood its usefulness to the coaching role, and how it is learned. Further, the context of coaches as learners, who can come into the profession at any age with a range of different life experiences, has not been recognised as influencing how coaches learn philosophy.

This chapter of the thesis, consistent with other chapters, uses the three broad questions to provide analytical discussions of the outcomes of this research. It then goes further to provide an integrated discussion of the implications of this research for coach education, coaching practice and further research.

7.1 What is Coaching Philosophy?

As Chapter 1 of this thesis demonstrated, philosophy has been defined in a multitude of ways. For the purposes of this thesis, however, philosophy in its broadest sense was defined as a discipline which enables one to examine, in a systematic way, their existence in the world, overall outlook on life, and ethical and moral actions (DeSensi & Rosenberg, 2010; Elias, 1982). In the review of the literature in Chapter 2, coaching
philosophy was found to be generally defined as the values and beliefs that guide coaches’ practice, or more specifically, a consistent way of behaving (Cassidy et al., 2009; Kidman & Hanrahan, 2011; Lyle, 2002). The formal coach education manuals analysed in the first study of this thesis (Chapter 4) reflected the coaching literature in their definitions of coaching philosophy (den Duyn & Saddington, 2008; Goodman, 2006). Similarly, the coaches in the second and third studies of this thesis (Chapters 5 and 6) viewed philosophy as important in their consistency as a coach, and themselves demonstrated consistent coaching behaviours; however, these coaches had their own version of philosophy or what could be referred to as a “sport philosophy”.

Chapter 1 of this thesis introduced the notion of the sport coach as a helping professional (Shertzer & Stone, 1974). A key difference noted, however, between coaching and the helping professions of education and sport psychology in particular, was how philosophy is defined. Chapter 1 illustrated that the definitions of philosophy in education and sport psychology considered more than just the beliefs and values of the professional (Beatty et al., 2009b; Poczwardowski et al., 2004; Schonwetter et al., 2002). Therefore, the helping professions considered not only their own impact on the person helped (i.e., their beliefs and values) but also the theoretical frameworks behind what they do (including their philosophical underpinnings) and their own development as a helping professional. Furthermore, the utilisation of the term “professional” when referring to one’s philosophy within the sport psychology literature, clearly demonstrates the importance placed on developing a philosophy within professional practice (Poczwardowski et al., 1998; Poczwardowski et al., 2004; Weiss, 1991). In fact, in adult education there is the belief that both the knowledge of philosophy related to the field
(i.e., philosophy of education) and the adoption of a personal philosophy of teaching are what separate professional educators from beginner teachers or para-professionals (Elias & Merriam, 2005; Galbraith, 2004).

Chapter 2 of this thesis demonstrated how definitions of philosophy in coaching only consider one aspect of the coaching role; that is, how the coach’s values and beliefs guide their coaching practice (Cassidy et al., 2009; Kidman & Hanrahan, 2011; Lyle, 2002; Vealey, 2005). Furthermore, the empirical coaching literature discussed in Chapter 2 showed that coaches’ philosophies (i.e., their beliefs and values) were primarily focused on how the sporting context can provide positive outcomes for athletes (Collins et al., 2011; Collins et al., 2009; McCallister et al., 2000). Therefore, unlike the helping professions, there is no consideration of the philosophical underpinnings behind what coaches do (i.e., there is no “philosophy” in coaching philosophy). Despite utilisation of the term coaching philosophy, in which it would be assumed that the coach is central, the coach’s own holistic development as a helping professional (not just their athletes’ development) is not a significant concern. In essence, it is questionable whether a coaching philosophy is, in fact, that, when the coaches themselves are not considered in the definition.

This thesis set out to explore the concept of coaching philosophy in three ways: 1) a document analysis of formal coach education programs in Australia; 2) recreational and developmental coach interviews in the sport of basketball; and 3) observation of those coaches interviewed in the second study. The formal coach education manuals reviewed in Chapter 4 of this thesis revealed that, at best, and similar to the coaching literature, coaching philosophy is ill-defined; however, they clearly state that the development of a
coaching philosophy is crucial to being a successful coach – and, in the case of basketball which is the focus of this thesis, it is mandatory (Basketball Australia, 2005). It was, therefore, not surprising to see that the coaches in the second study of this thesis (Chapter 5) had an overall lack of understanding of the concept of coaching philosophy, regardless of their age or experience, and despite the fact that previous research has found the level of coaches’ understanding of coaching philosophy is determined by their level of coaching expertise (i.e., the more coaching experience one has, the greater one’s understanding of coaching philosophy) (Nash et al., 2008).

Importantly, however, the term “philosophy” was rarely used by coaches when interviewed by the researcher, as reported in Chapter 5. Indeed, coaches actually needed to be pushed to use the word philosophy, and when they did, they used definitions that really described what they did (in practice) rather than a philosophy that might be rooted in ethics or professional development as seen in other helping professions (Beatty et al., 2009b; Poczwardowski et al., 1998; Poczwardowski et al., 2004; Schonwetter et al., 2002). Interestingly, when coaches were prompted to describe their “philosophy”, what they expressed were three interrelated concepts: coaching practice, coaching style and a broader “sport philosophy”. Therefore, coaching philosophy was not part of the coaches’ vernacular, nor was it operationalised by the coaches in the way that philosophy is in other helping professions (Poczwardowski et al., 2004; Schonwetter et al., 2002).

It seems from the results of the second study of this thesis (Chapter 5) that coaching philosophy did not describe what coaches perceive it is that they do. This could be seen especially in the coaches that appeared to confuse coaching style with coaching philosophy. As the NCAS coaching manuals themselves had difficulty in providing a
clear difference between the two interrelated concepts (as described in Chapter 4) this is not surprising. In fact, one of those coaches confused about the differences between the concepts, even used the same language as that in one of the NCAS manuals when defining the concept of coaching philosophy. Furthermore, coaches could not make a distinction between their coaching practice and their values and beliefs as a coach – for them they were one and the same. This was also reflected in the coaches’ understanding of the role that the coaching context played in how they went about their coaching practice. Despite those formal coach education manuals analysed in Chapter 4 highlighting the adoption of one all-encompassing “philosophy”, coaches were aware of the influence of athletes’ age and competition level on their coaching practice (as was reported in Chapter 5). This is consistent with the coaching literature in Chapter 2 in which age and competition level (as well as athlete gender) have been found to determine the role frames (i.e., coaching philosophies) of youth sport coaches (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, 2004b).

In saying this, however, coaching philosophy did appear to assist them with being consistent in their coaching practice (as was reported in Chapter 5). Also, as the coaching behaviours observed in the third study of this thesis (Chapter 6) demonstrated, coaches did, in fact, have a consistent way of behaving in their coaching practice. This would perhaps lead us to conclude that in regard to a consistent way of behaving, coaches did have what has been defined by the coaching literature (and by several coaches themselves) as a coaching philosophy (Cassidy et al., 2009; Kidman & Hanrahan, 2011; Lyle, 2002). However, coaches in the second study of this thesis (Chapter 5) were, in essence, describing a “sport philosophy” in that their responses reflected what sport can
do for their athletes rather than any deep-seated philosophical reflections about what coaching could do for them or their progression as a coach.

Overall, an analysis of the thoughts and behaviours of the coaches who participated in this research (as discussed in Chapters 5 and 6) demonstrated that there are clear parallels with what they say they do and what they learned in formal coach education programs (Chapter 4). So, if they are behaving consistently and, on the surface, in ways that reflect a coaching philosophy, the reader may well ask, “what is the problem?” Although some coaches in the second study of this thesis (Chapter 5) expressed an understanding of philosophy similar to what is found in the coaching literature and the coach education manuals in the first study of this thesis (Chapter 4), they lacked awareness of the theoretical origins of philosophy (Stainback et al., 2007) or any sense of a coaching philosophy beyond a philosophy of sport. Thus, what they have learned as “philosophy” was not consistent with the broader understanding of a philosophy seen in the helping professions, which is based in the roots of philosophy itself (Beatty et al., 2009b)—and has proven to be successful in those professions (as noted in Chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis) for the development of individuals. Further, and directly related to the lack of association to philosophical foundations, philosophy in coaching is vague and lacks complexity and depth in comparison to that in the helping professions (Beatty et al., 2009b; Poczwardowski et al., 1998). As stated previously, the definitions of philosophy in the helping professions consider more than just the outcomes for those helped (Poczwardowski et al., 2004; Schonwetter et al., 2002; Weiss, 1991). In comparison, the coaching literature (as discussed in Chapter 2), the formal coach education manuals (as described in Chapter 4) and coaches themselves (as reported in
Chapter 5) only consider one aspect of the coaching role, that is, how philosophy is linked to the outcomes for others (i.e., their athletes) in the context of sport. Hence, coaching philosophy as it is currently defined could be considered narrow in its approach, and narrow in the way it is preparing coaches for their role and responsibilities.

The lack of preparation in the education of coaches and the lack of complexity in understanding and teaching of coaching philosophy may be a contributing factor as to why coaching philosophy was not part of the vernacular of the coaches in the second study of this thesis (Chapter 5), and why their responses reflected what has been referred to in this thesis as a “sport philosophy”. The coaching context is complex – the coaches understood this, particularly those coaches observed in the third study of this thesis (Chapter 6) who coached athletes of different age and competitive levels and had, therefore, adapted their coaching behaviours to match the given situation. They viewed philosophy as a fluid and flexible concept in their coaching practice that was more related to the context of the situation in which the athlete was competing. The four reasons why coaching philosophy has been assumed to be important will be discussed in the following section.

7.2 Why is Coaching Philosophy Important?

In the beginning of this thesis it was noted that philosophy has been deemed important in society for many years, providing an important framework in guiding behaviour, decision-making and actions in a range of contexts (DeSensi & Rosenberg, 2010; Hiemstra, 1988). The helping professions of education and sport psychology have not
only developed clarity on the concept of philosophy, but also understand the importance of having a philosophy and ensuring that it is operationalised by individuals in their respective fields (Brockett & Hiemstra, 2004; Poczwardowski et al., 2004; Schonwetter et al., 2002). In comparison, the field of coaching has yet to clearly determine the operationalisation of philosophy in the behaviours, decision-making, and actions of coaches. However, as Chapter 2 discussed, coaching philosophy is prominently placed at the front of most coach text books (e.g., Cross, 1999; Martens, 2012). Furthermore, in Chapter 4 it was noted that philosophy is one of the first topics presented in formal coach education programs and manuals (den Duyn & Saddington, 2008; Goodman, 2006), highlighting the perceived importance of philosophy in coaching. This is despite the fact that until recently there has been little empirical literature to demonstrate the utility of coaching philosophy in the coaching role and in the four areas in which coaching philosophy has been assumed to be important: coaching effectiveness, athlete outcomes, coaching practice and ethical coach behaviour.

Philosophy allows an individual to appreciate and understand what it is that they do (Hiemstra, 1988). Both education and sport psychology professions consider philosophy to be critical to workers’ effectiveness as helping professionals (Poczwardowski et al., 2004; Schonwetter et al., 2002). Philosophy has been understood by education scholars as informing the complex interaction of contexts, personal characteristics, and learning principles that result in effective teaching, with the development of a clear teaching philosophy statement understood as defining the parameters of teaching effectiveness (Schonwetter et al., 2002). For sport psychologists, realisation of their own philosophical underpinnings has been viewed as maximising the
effectiveness of their service delivery and consulting decisions (Poczwardowski et al., 2004).

In coaching, as noted in this research, philosophy is seen to be equally important in the effectiveness of coaching. Indeed, as discussed in Chapter 2, scholars of coaching have assumed that it underpins the very nature of effective coaching (Cassidy et al., 2009; Fuoss & Troppmann, 1985). This is despite the fact there has been difficulty in defining coaching effectiveness due to the range of coaching contexts (Cross, 1999) and the use of various terms to describe the ‘effective’ coach (Jones et al., 1997; Lyle, 2002; Saury & Durand, 1998). In addition, coaching philosophy has often been left out of discussions of coaching to the point where it was not explicitly referenced in a recently-coined definition of coaching effectiveness by Côté and Gilbert (2009).

The place of philosophy in coaching is in direct contrast to the helping professions of education and sport psychology where philosophy is central to, and helps define, the effectiveness of its professionals. Poczwardowski and associates (2004) in particular discussed the importance of having philosophical foundations to effective practice. However, the NCAS coach education manual that is the basis of beginning coach accreditation, as noted in the first study of this thesis (Chapter 4), simply asserted that an effective coach had developed a coaching philosophy (Goodman, 2006). It is assumed that coaches already come to the role with a formed philosophy, or perhaps develop one by osmosis throughout their coaching experiences, rather than by a structured and defined pathway as noted to be typical of other helping professions. This is not surprising considering that coaching philosophy was not explicitly mentioned in the coaching effectiveness models discussed in Chapter 2 (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Horn,
2008; Mageau & Vallerand, 2003; Smoll & Smith, 1989). Furthermore, it is unclear whether the coach is effective because they have a philosophy, or conversely, if being an effective coach enables them to develop a philosophy. The link between philosophy and effectiveness, therefore, appears to be more muddied in the coach setting than it is in education (Schonwetter et al., 2002) and sport psychology (Poczwardowski et al., 2004), as has been discussed in this thesis.

The coaches who participated in this study did believe that having a version of coaching philosophy was essential for being an effective coach. They believed that their own version of philosophy guided them to make consistent decisions in their coaching practice (as noted in Chapter 5). Despite the seeming irrelevance of the term to the coaches (as noted in the previous section), it is probably not surprising that when asked directly coaches agreed that philosophy was important for coaching effectiveness. Who would argue that philosophy is not important when the term has been widely used and accepted for thousands of years (Best, 1978), and is understood to be an important part of human behaviour? (DeSensi & Rosenberg, 2010). Yet, it was clear that coaches had difficulty articulating how it actually assisted them in terms consistent with philosophy as seen in other helping professions (Poczwardowski et al., 1998; Poczwardowski et al., 2004; Schonwetter et al., 2002). Indeed, when pushed to discuss their philosophy, coaches reverted to a more narrow "sport philosophy" which was centred on what sport can do for the athlete, and the role that a coach can play in that (also reflecting the empirical coaching literature discussed in the previous section).

Chapter 1 defined the helping professional role as one where the improvement of the individual is core to the profession (Shertzer & Stone, 1974). The helping profession
of sport psychology, in particular, has seen a shift towards the development of a holistic philosophy where the role of the sport psychologist extends beyond the mere improvement of the athlete in the sport context to the athlete as a contributing member of broader society (Andersen et al., 2001; Friesen & Orlick, 2010). Chapter 2 demonstrated that the same shift has also been occurring in coaching where scholarly and industry literature implicates the influence of the coach beyond the sport setting (Collins et al., 2009; Cuskelly et al., 2006), and as such there is an increased focus on the development of coaching philosophies that are centred on the holistic development of the athlete beyond sport (Kidman & Lombardo, 2010; Martens, 2012).

From the results of this thesis, it is clear that formal coach education programs (as analysed in the first study of this thesis, Chapter 4) in Australia suggest coaches adopt a “healthy” coaching philosophy that is centred on the development of the individual or person beyond the mere athletic setting (den Duyn & Sadddington, 2008). It is not surprising, therefore, that the coaching philosophies of the coaches interviewed in the second study of this thesis (Chapter 5), who would have studied from the manuals associated with these programs, were very much focused on the holistic development of the athlete (their “sport philosophy”). Furthermore, early coach education usually reinforces to coaches (at least conceptually) that desirable outcomes for sport participation should form the basis of a good coaching philosophy (Nash et al., 2008). How a healthy coaching philosophy is operationalised (that is, what coaches should do) is not addressed despite its presumed importance.

Despite the lack of operationalisation of the “healthy” coaching philosophy throughout their training, results from Chapter 5 clearly demonstrated that the coaches’
philosophies consisted predominantly of elements centred on the athletes’ outcomes of life and sport skill development in a fun and enjoyable environment. That is, what they believed in and, indeed, what they did (Chapter 6) was consistent with the “healthy” coaching philosophy espoused in the coaching manuals in Chapter 4. Perhaps more perplexing is that despite one coach receiving no formal coach education (and, therefore, no exposure to coaching manuals as such) their coaching philosophy (and behaviours in Chapter 6) still reflected athlete outcomes such as fun/enjoyment and sport skill development. This may reflect the socially-accepted position of sport in society rather than what is learned through coach education manuals. Understanding the link between coaches’ philosophies (their “sport philosophies”) and their coaching practice (which were, in fact, found to be one and the same) was an important component of this thesis.

The relationship between philosophy and action has plagued philosophers for thousands of years (Argyris & Schön, 1974; Elias, 1982). However as discussed in Chapter 2, the helping profession of education in particular has attempted to bridge the gap between theory and practice (Elias & Merriam, 2005). This could be seen in the concepts of espoused theory (i.e., philosophy) and theory-in-use (i.e., practice) (Argyris & Schön, 1974). Particularly important is one’s awareness of any potential incongruence between one’s philosophy and practice. Overall, there was the belief that one’s practice (or theory-in-use) needed to be observed through one’s behaviour (Argyris & Schön, 1974) with any inconsistencies in philosophy (or espoused theory) exposed through such observations (Shertzer & Stone, 1974).

In comparison, there has been little connection made between coaching philosophy and practice in the empirical research literature (Nash et al., 2008). In fact, to
the author’s knowledge, only two studies to date has attempted to make any link between a coach’s philosophy and their practice through observational methods (Strong, 1992; Wilcox & Trudel, 1998). This is extraordinary considering that the definitions of coaching philosophy in the coaching literature (as examined in Chapter 2) are focused predominantly on the coach’s practice (e.g., Lyle, 2002), as are the NCAS coaching course manuals in Chapter 4 (den Duyn & Saddington, 2008; Goodman, 2006). As Lyle (2002) put it, coaching philosophy should reflect the practice of the coach.

This is not to say, however, that coaches in the second study of this thesis (Chapter 5) didn’t have a clear understanding of their coaching practice and their influence as a coach. Indeed, all coaches were very mindful of the way in which their actions may have an impact on others. The coaches believed that they could facilitate the development of their players – in sport and beyond – through consistent coaching practice. This links back to the views of the coaching literature in Chapter 2 which considered a coaching philosophy to be important in providing coaches with focus and direction and, of course, effective coaching practice (Cassidy et al., 2009; Fuoss & Troppmann, 1985). However, what coaches were describing was their “sport philosophy”.

When coaches were observed in practice in the third study of the thesis (Chapter 6), they did demonstrate consistent coaching behaviours, which were also consistent with the previous literature on coaching practice (Smith et al., 1983; Tharp & Gallimore, 1976). Coaches demonstrated a high level of instruction (reflecting the coaching philosophy of sport skill development) and praise (reflecting the coaching philosophies of fun/enjoyment and self-esteem/confidence) in their coaching practice. However, what
was lacking in the coaches’ practice overall was the teaching of those life skills important outside the sporting domain that coaches saw as a crucial component of their “sport philosophies”, as was reported in Chapter 5 (although one coach did note the time limitations in doing so). Although there has been scant research on the observation of the teaching of life skills in coaching practice (with studies such as those conducted by Collins et al., 2009 asking rather than observing coaches), little direct teaching of life skills has been observed in previous research where life skills have been an important component of their coaching philosophy (Holt et al., 2008).

Coaches in the second study of this thesis (Chapter 5) also believed that consistency in their coaching practice was enabled by a core set of principles (their “sport philosophy”); yet, at the same time, they also understood that there was not a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to their coaching practice. This was particularly evident in Chapter 6 with those coaches responsible for two teams demonstrating differing behaviours (and “sport philosophies”) dependent on the competition and age level of their players. The need to be flexible in practice dependent on the coaching context has been seen previously in the coaching philosophies of youth sport coaches, as was discussed in Chapter 2 (Collins et al., 2011; Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, 2004b). Overall, coaches reflected in their behaviours consistency, flexibility and a focus on the developmental outcomes of the players they coached.

Philosophy has been viewed as underpinning one’s ethical behaviour (Hiemstra, 1988). As discussed in the beginning of this thesis, unlike other professions, the helping professions rely greatly upon their own values in helping others, with a more onerous obligation in their duty of care (McCully, 1966), for even though the helping professional
may have a code of ethics or conduct, such codes simply cannot encompass the situational contexts and changing standards of a profession (Meara et al., 1996). Hence, the development of a philosophy enables the helping professional to provide a framework to the values which contribute to their ethical behaviour.

Competitive sport has been seen as a moral testing ground in which one builds character (Carr, 1998; Russell, 2011). In Chapter 2, the notion of the coach as a moral agent within competitive sport was introduced (Cassidy et al., 2009; DeSensi & Rosenberg, 2010). Through exhibiting the virtues they teach in their own behaviour (Bergmann Drewe, 2000b; Russell, 2011) and teaching the rules of the game (Steenbergen & Tamboer, 1998) coaches play a role in the development of their athletes’ moral character. The development of a coaching philosophy has been viewed as important for ethical coaching practice (Hardman & Jones, 2011b; Robinson, 2010) which, in turn, may also influence the development of the ethical behaviour of their athletes (when seen as a moral agent).

One of the key themes to emerge from the first study of this thesis (Chapter 4) was the overall disconnect between coaching philosophy and ethical considerations in formal coach education programs. This was despite the view of one of the NCAS coaching manuals that the development of a coaching philosophy could enable coaches to make ethical decisions (den Duyn & Saddington, 2008). Although previous research (as discussed in Chapter 2) has found coaches use their coaching philosophies when resolving ethical dilemmas in their coaching practice (Bergmann Drewe, 2000a), there is little evidence on the utility of coaching philosophy in the ethical decision-making process. Hence, it is not surprising that formal coach education programs, particularly the
NCAS, did not provide any guidance for coaches about how to utilise their coaching philosophy to ensure ethical coaching practice. And as Chapter 2 highlighted, a code of ethics is not enough on its own to guarantee ethical behaviour (Lyle, 1999; McNamee, 2011). This is in direct contrast to other helping professions such as adult education which have provided a philosophically-based model to assist in the ethical decision-making process (Brockett & Hiemstra, 2004).

It, therefore, comes as no surprise that when coaches were interviewed about the concept of coaching philosophy in the second study of this thesis (Chapter 5), there was no reference to the use of philosophy as a tool in ethical decision-making. Rather, as discussed previously, coaches explained that their version of philosophy, their “sport philosophy”, simply helped in their consistency as coach and in ensuring the developmental outcomes of their players. Despite this lack of focus on trying to be an ethical coach, when the coaches were observed in practice (Chapter 6) they could be said to have been behaving in an ethical way. This could be seen in the high levels of instruction and praise which went hand-in-hand with the athlete outcomes (and philosophies) of sport skill development, fun/enjoyment and self-esteem/confidence.

Overall, coaches’ thoughts and behaviours were focused on the outcomes of their athletes, and their behaviours were consistent and ethical in their coaching practice – all considered important factors of coaching philosophy in the coaching literature, which reflected what was learned in formal coach education programs. So, again, the reader may ask “what is the problem?” Currently, much of what we know about philosophy in coaching is based on assumptions – coaching philosophy is assumed to be important for coaching effectiveness (e.g., Cassidy et al., 2009; Fuoss & Troppmann, 1985); it is
assumed to link to positive outcomes for athletes who experience sport (e.g., Collins et al., 2009; Gilbert & Trudel, 2004b); it is assumed to guide coaches’ practice and behaviour (e.g., Strong, 1992; Wilcox & Trudel, 1998); and it is assumed to be important in ethical coach behaviour (e.g., Hardman & Jones, 2011b; Robinson, 2010). Yet, no coaching effectiveness model explicitly mentions coaching philosophy (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Horn, 2008; Mageau & Vallerand, 2003; Smoll & Smith, 1989), only one study to the author’s knowledge has attempted to make any link between a coach’s philosophy and their practice through observation (Strong, 1992), and there is a clear disconnect between coaching philosophy and ethics in the coaching literature (Cassidy et al., 2009; Lyle & Cushion, 2010; Martens, 2012) and formal coach education programs (as reported in Chapter 4). Furthermore, as was discussed in the previous section, the “sport philosophy” described and understood by coaches was not consistent with the broader understanding of philosophy seen in the helping professions (which considered more than just the outcomes of those helped) (Poczwardowski et al., 2004; Schonwetter et al., 2002).

A core issue for scholars has been the blind acceptance of coaching philosophy as being an important facet of coaching, with understanding of the concept unchanged and the true importance of the concept rarely questioned. There has been a lack of critical evaluation of coaching philosophy in the literature (Lyle, 2002, and Cassidy et al., 2009, being exceptions) with little consideration of what it actually is, why it is important, and how it is learned. It is this lack of empirical evidence, specifically in linking coaching philosophy with coaching effectiveness, athlete outcomes, ethical coaching and coaching practice, which reflects a lack of operationalization of coaching philosophy. As already
noted in the thesis, the majority of studies in coaching philosophy have investigated coaches’ views and beliefs without observing these coaches in practice. Furthermore, as the results of Chapter 5 show (and which has also been reflected in studies by Nash et al. 2008 and McCallister et al. 2000), coaches lack an overall understanding of the concept of coaching philosophy and how to operationalize this in their coaching practice. Therefore, although there may be a number of resources such as coaching texts which dedicate chapters to coaching philosophy, this is not translating into coaches’ understanding of coaching philosophy. Although it could be said that lower level coaches are still developing their coaching philosophies, coaches need to be able to understand the concept and how it relates to their coaching practice (whether or not their behaviours are consistent).

This thesis has shown that the philosophy, as it has been described and understood by coaches in the second study of this thesis, could not be considered a coaching philosophy when, in fact, it only considers one facet of coaching (that is, the outcomes of athletes). More importantly, however, there has been little application of a methodology that empirically tests if what coaches say they do (in terms of their philosophy) is actually what they do. The methodology of this thesis has shown that despite coaches’ developing a “sport philosophy” that does not necessarily match with a coaching philosophy, nor how philosophy is seen in the helping professions (Poczwardowski et al., 2004; Schonwetter et al., 2002), they do consistently implement and operationalise their “sport philosophy”. This thesis also sought to better understand the role of coach learning in philosophy development, as will be discussed in the following section.
7.3 How is Coaching Philosophy Learned?

To this point, how philosophy has been defined and its importance in society, helping professions and coaches has been discussed. As Chapter 1 of this thesis noted, however, it is also important to understand how philosophy has been learned. For helping professionals, the development of their philosophy begins with learning about philosophy itself (Beatty et al., 2009b). The helping profession of education, in particular, has demonstrated the importance of providing a philosophical foundation to educators in their philosophy development (Elias & Merriam, 2005; Hiemstra, 1988; Zinn, 2004). Education has also acknowledged the abstract nature of philosophy and of teaching it to professions (Elias & Merriam, 2005); yet, as has been discussed previously, they have at least attempted to bridge the gap between theory and practice (Elias, 1982). Despite beginning discussions on the importance of philosophical underpinnings within training programs (Poczwardowski et al., 2004), sport psychology appeared to have some way to go in better understanding the philosophy development of their professionals.

The profession of coaching has found itself in a similar position to that of sport psychology, as described above. Despite the increased focus on coach learning in the literature (Cushion et al., 2010) and the importance given to coaching philosophy (as discussed in the previous section), little is known about coaching philosophy development. Furthermore, in comparison to the helping profession of education, how philosophy is learned in the coaching literature (as discussed in Chapter 2) is generally prescriptive in nature, with no philosophical background and few tools provided to assist coaches in the development of their coaching philosophy (Goodman, 2006; Martens, 2012; Parish, 2007). The NCAS (the predominant formal coach education provider in
Australia) coach education manuals reflected the coaching literature in Chapter 2. Within these manuals, coaches were provided with questions which focused on their motivations for coaching and the outcomes of the athletes they coach (den Duyn & Saddington, 2008; Goodman, 2006). Although these factors are important for coaches to consider in their coaching philosophies (and, therefore, coaching practice) there is no philosophical underpinning to their practice as coach. This is in contrast to the helping professions (particularly education) where philosophy is embedded in their professional development (Beatty et al., 2009b), and a variety of tools are provided to guide the philosophy development process (Beatty et al., 2009a; Bond, 2002; Hiemstra, 1988; Zinn, 2004).

Considering the importance in broader society of philosophy in guiding behaviour, decisions and actions, particularly for those in positions of helping others, there appears to be a large gap in the learning of philosophy in formal coach education programs such as the NCAS in Australia. Hence, it was no surprise to see that the coaches in the second study of this thesis (Chapter 5), who had completed these programs, articulated coaching philosophies which reflected what they were taught – “sport philosophies” focused on the outcomes of their athletes (as was discussed in the previous section) with no philosophical basis to the way they operated as a coach. Coaches’ practice (as reported in Chapter 6) also reflected those values often found in formal coach education programs (McCallister et al., 2000). As was discussed in the previous section, coaches’ practice reflected that of the coaching literature in that coaches behaved ethically and demonstrated behaviours that were consistent with the athlete-centred approach to coaching practice (also found in the formal coach education programs of Chapter 4).
As Chapter 2 highlighted, there has been little consideration of the fact that the coach is integral to the learning process (Cushion et al., 2010; Jarvis, 2009). This is especially so for the coach who, despite initially learning their trade through formal coach learning situations, will utilise predominantly informal learning experiences (and also nonformal learning situations) during their lifelong journey as a coach (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974; Cushion et al., 2010). Chapter 2 introduced the lifelong learning concepts of biography (lifetime experiences including their coaching philosophy) and the social context of the learner (which varies considerably for the coach) that had particular relevance to formal coach education (Jarvis, 2006, 2007, 2009). Whilst helping professionals generally enter formal learning situations upon completion of secondary schooling as a career choice and then specialise in an area, in comparison, coaches may enter formal coach education programs as a young athlete, a parent, or a retired athlete, or a combination of any three (Timson-Katchis & North, 2008) and work in a range of contexts (Gilbert & Trudel, 2004b). However, these factors are generally not considered in formal coach education even though at the very grassroots or developmental level of coaching, education is increasingly being required by sport governing bodies for all individuals (regardless of the skills or qualifications they enter coaching with). In this way, sport governing bodies are attempting to professionalise coaching but without considering the context of the learner in the same way that other helping professions do. This is even more, concerning considering both the coach’s biography and the social context influence their coaching philosophy development (Jarvis, 2006, 2007, 2009).

This lack of consideration for the coach learner is particularly relevant to the level-based NCAS programs investigated in the first study of this thesis. As Chapter 4
explained, coaches who undertake the NCAS courses in Australia do so in a sequential manner (e.g., Level 1 must be completed before Level 2). The coach manuals related to these courses have a set curriculum and minimum competency standards which NSOs (in the case of this thesis, Basketball Australia) must meet when delivering these courses (Australian Sports Commission, 2005b). One of these competency standards is the demonstration of a coaching philosophy (Australian Sports Commission, 2007).

Chapter 4 showed that the coach manuals associated with these NCAS courses used terminology such as ‘inclusive’, ‘holistic’ and ‘healthy’ when referring to the type of coaching philosophy that coaches should adopt (den Duyn & Saddington, 2008; Goodman, 2006). An example of what constitutes a healthy philosophy was even provided to coaches in one manual (den Duyn & Saddington, 2008). Yet, the range of contexts (e.g., athletes’ age, gender and competitive level) in which a coach works could vary dramatically, especially for those coaches undertaking the beginner coach’s course (i.e., Level 1). Furthermore, for some of these coaches, including those in Chapter 5 and 6, they may work in two very different contexts simultaneously. As was discussed in the previous section, coaches spoke themselves of the differences in their “sport philosophies” dependent on the context in which they worked (particularly the age and competition level of their athletes). Therefore, although their “sport philosophies” contained elements of what the NCAS courses referred to be as being inclusive, holistic and healthy, they also understood that their philosophy could not be the ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach of these programs. For coaches this meant that their behaviours (and, therefore, their “philosophies”) in their coaching practice differed dependent on the needs of the athletes they coached (as was seen in Chapter 6 of this thesis). The context of the
environment in which they were coaching also influenced the behaviours observed, with differences found in games versus training sessions. For example, there was a greater level of instruction in training sessions (the philosophy of ‘development of skills’) compared to praise which was greatest in games (the philosophy of ‘fun/enjoyment’).

The way in which coach accreditation is delivered in Australia (and in other countries) is problematic in accommodating the lifetime experiences of the coaches who undertake these courses. The examples of fictitious coaches “Paul” and “Louis” from Chapter 2 are prime examples of the differences in biographies of coaches who attend formal coach education programs and the possible influences on their coaching philosophies (Trudel et al., 2010). The coaches in the second study of this thesis (Chapter 5) were aware of the limitations of formal coach education on delivering courses which would accommodate the variety of knowledge bases and biographies in attendance. In fact, over half of the coaches believed that attending the NCAS Level 1 course, in particular, was simply a matter of due process – they either knew the content or the content lacked relevance for their coaching practice. Furthermore, coaches understood the difficulty in presenting the concept of coaching philosophy in formal coach education programs (which has been previously highlighted by Nash et al., 2008) – young coaches may not understand the concept, yet older coaches may have already developed a philosophy (hence, formal coach education may have little impact). The variety of biographies of the coaches in this thesis could also be seen in Chapter 6 where there were some differences in the types of coach behaviours. The age, gender and years of coaching experience of the coaches all influenced the “sport philosophies” of sport skill development and fun/enjoyment. For example, the older, more experienced coaches
appeared to facilitate their athletes with less instruction and more praise, whereas the younger, less experienced coaches focused predominantly on the skill development of their athletes.

Consistent with the literature in Chapter 2 (Fuoss & Troppmann, 1985; Martens, 2012; Tutko & Richards, 1971) and the coach manuals analysed in Chapter 4 (den Duyn & Saddlington, 2008; Goodman, 2006), coaches believed the development of their “sport philosophy” was an evolutionary process. However, somewhat contradictory to the coaching literature in regard to coaching philosophy being developed early in a coach’s career (Fuoss & Troppmann, 1985; Tutko & Richards, 1971), Chapter 4 showed that the coach education manual provided to intermediate level coaches in the NCAS expressed the view that coaching philosophy development is as important as the coach’s technical knowledge of the sport (despite the fact the topic was provided with little coverage in comparison to other topics) (den Duyn & Saddlington, 2008). Yet, those coaches who would undertake this course would be doing so at Level 2 which generally requires completion of a Level 1 certificate. The coaches in Chapter 5 believed that “philosophy” as they knew it had been neglected in these NCAS courses, and that there needed to be a continuation of learning “philosophy” from Level 1 to Level 2.

Overall, coaches did see the benefits of participating in formal coach education but they were generally not attributed to the development of their coaching philosophy (consistent with previous research by Collins et al., 2009 and Nash et al., 2008). The limited empirical literature discussed in Chapter 2 showed that informal learning situations were more influential than those of formal coach education programs in the development of coaches’ philosophies (Bennie & O'Connor, 2010; Collins et al., 2009;
Nash & Sproule, 2009; Nash et al., 2008), with not much known about the impact of nonformal learning situations. It was a similar story for the coaches in the second study of this thesis (Chapter 5), with self-reflection, coaching experience, observation of other coaches, previous playing experience and mentors all being influences in the development of their “sport philosophies”. What this thesis has added to the knowledge about coaching philosophy development in particular is the influence of nonformal learning experiences (i.e., those organised and systematic activities outside formal settings). Coaching clinics were considered by coaches to be valuable in their development as a coach by exposing them to the wide-ranging and well-developed coaching philosophies of elite level coaches. This was particularly important for a number of coaches who had completed their formal coach education accreditation years ago. The nonformal learning setting of clinics allowed coaches to further their coaching knowledge and develop their “sport philosophies” in a more formal setting.

Sport has undergone intense specialisation and professionalisation in the past 25 years in Australia (Shilbury & Kellett, 2010) and internationally (Kikulis, 2000), as have all of the personnel involved in the industry. Professions in all sectors of society have become increasingly complex, as have careers (Hubbard, Cocks, & Heap, 2007). Learning within a profession can occur both within and outside the context of formal education (Cushion et al., 2003; Jarvis, 2004; Nelson et al., 2006), with the recent focus of the coaching literature on coach learning a testament to the increased emphasis on the coach as learner (Cushion et al., 2010). However, as the results of this thesis suggest, how coaching philosophy is learned lags behind the other helping professions and, perhaps, other sectors of society in general. With the exception of a few critical evaluations of
coaching philosophy in the textbook literature (Lyle, 2002; Cassidy et al., 2009), the literature on coaching philosophy has remained stagnant (reflected in the formal coach education manuals analysed in Chapter 4), with little progress in understanding how a coach develops their coaching philosophy. It may be the case that the coaching philosophy literature has not kept up with the changing nature of work in society and, in particular, the changing landscape of work and careers in sport and learning environments for coaches.

Sport participation has also become more complex, with opportunities to participate becoming more frequent, that is, greater numbers of people have the opportunity to be involved in sport across larger age ranges and abilities (Beaton, Funk, Ridinger, & Jordan, 2010). Further, there are greater ranges of structures, pathways and processes, and organisations involved in the delivery of sport (Newland & Kellett, 2012) of which coaches are a part. As a result, it may not be surprising that coach education has not kept up with the needs of coaches and the different ways in which they can and do work in modern sport systems. One exception is Canada’s National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) which has shifted its focus from “what a coach knows” to “what a coach can do” (Coaching Association of Canada, 2009) and has implemented a model based more on the learner’s social context (that is, community, competition or instruction coach) and biography through providing levels within these contexts (e.g., initiation and ongoing participation for the community coach) (Deek, 2011). As the NCCP takes into account a range of issues that this thesis has suggested are important when considering how philosophy is learned, the design of the NCCP program may provide a good foundation for the future of coach education in particular when thinking
about how and why coaches learn philosophy. Although research has been undertaken on coaches’ awareness and perceived value of the revised NCCP program (Misener & Danylchuk, 2009), and the program is being packaged and sold to other countries (Coaching Association of Canada, 2012), whether this contextual model increases the competency and effectiveness of coaches has yet to be determined.

### 7.4 Implications and Further Research

This thesis has demonstrated that, as a helping profession, coaching takes a very different approach from other helping professions such as education and sport psychology in defining and teaching philosophy. These helping professions define philosophy to include more than just the outcomes for those helped, providing their professionals with a philosophical foundation to what they do, with education in particular providing detailed tools to develop their professional philosophies. In comparison, definitions of coaching philosophy in the coaching literature and coach education programs are vague and lack complexity, with a prescriptive approach taken to helping coaches develop their coaching philosophies. This has led to coaches’ overall lack of understanding of the concept of coaching philosophy (in the case of this thesis – recreational and developmental basketball coaches) which, in turn, has resulted in the concept not mapping onto their experiences as a coach. Yet, despite all of this, coaches do behave in a consistent way (which is consistent with their own “sport philosophies”) with behaviours flexible and ethical in nature, and reflecting the values deemed important to coaching practice.
There is the possibility that coaches may have learned their “sport philosophy” from the mediated images and portrayal of sport and been more influenced by social understandings of sport rather than what was learned through formal coach education courses. It must be noted that this is a strong possibility given one coach in this thesis did not complete any formal coach accreditation yet shared the same “sport philosophy” as the other coaches. While it was beyond the scope of this thesis to explore this area, coaches did have little recall of the concept of philosophy as a component of their formal coach education courses. This highlights the need for scholars to better understand the relationship between social or mediated images of sport and how coaches learn about their role, and associated practices as part of being a coach.

This thesis has explored coaching philosophy in the sport of basketball in Australia (noted as a limitation in the next section). As was discussed in the previous section, the sport industry has professionalised rapidly and the changing nature of the coaching role in this rapidly expanding industry may have an impact on coaches’ “philosophy”. It may be that the predominant one-size-fits-all philosophy, as mentioned previously, may not be enough for the current coaching climate. This leaves the coaching profession with two options:

1) Abandon the use of the term coaching philosophy; or

2) Reform understandings of philosophy in coaching to either reflect that of other helping professions (deeply rooted in philosophy) or to reflect and build upon what is understood by coaches – a “sport philosophy”.
The first option stated above may not necessarily mean completely discarding the idea of having ‘something’ to guide the practice of coaches – it may require a new term for coaching philosophy which coaches can understand and better relate to. For a profession where the vast majority are volunteers, the term ‘philosophy’ could be considered too abstract for coaches who simply ‘do coaching’. At the same time, the author acknowledges that the concept of philosophy may resonate more with elite sport coaches, as the empirical coaching literature has demonstrated. Yet, the author also views the current empirical literature on the coaching philosophies of elite coaches with apprehension as there has been little critical analysis of the concept of philosophy, its utility, or how it has been learned.

The second option, on the other hand, implies the retention of the use of the term ‘philosophy’ in the coaching literature, but on the assumption that the term itself and the use of it receive a complete overhaul. This means the term and its use in coaching must, first, better reflect what is meant by philosophy in the helping professions and broader society; second, gain evidence to support the utility of philosophy in coaching; and, third, clearly articulate how it is learned, and what the application of philosophy means for coaches and coaching. This thesis demonstrated that the use of the term ‘philosophy’ in coaching is vastly different to the way it is utilised elsewhere; hence, it is losing its true meaning in the prescriptive and vague manner in which it is taught in coaching. A philosophical foundation is important in gaining a better understanding of what it is that coaches do. Furthermore, coaching philosophy needs to consider more than just what coaching can do for athletes – coaches also need to consider what coaching can do for them and for their overall development as a coach.
As a result of this thesis, there are a number of areas of particular interest to future researchers: 1) Examining coaching philosophy in different sports – this thesis has focused solely on basketball coaches yet there may be distinct differences in understanding of philosophy dependent on the sport, especially individual sports where there is a dearth of research; 2) Critically examining the coaching philosophy of elite coaches – for the purposes of this research, only recreational and developmental level coaches were considered, however, although the empirical coaching literature has previously investigated the philosophies of elite coaches, coaching philosophy has been an assumed concept that this thesis has demonstrated to be something very different; 3) Conducting a more longitudinal study of how coaching philosophy develops over time, especially in the initial stages of coach development – there is an overall lack of understanding of how coaches develop their philosophy and, as it assumed that philosophy development is a lifelong process, future research needs to look at more than just a snapshot of philosophy at a point in time; 4) Observing coaches’ “philosophies” in practice – an acute lack of research investigating coaching philosophies in practice goes directly against the assumption that a coaching philosophy guides the practice of coaches; 5) Simultaneously observing the behaviours of the coaches’ athletes, especially in relation to skill development and fun/enjoyment, could provide valuable supporting data to the observation of coaches’ “philosophies” in practice; 6) Conducting a more in-depth investigation into the training and learning of coaching philosophy, especially within formal coach education programs which has not been attributed to philosophy development; and finally 7) Examining how a coaching philosophy extends beyond
athlete development to consider the coach and the broader community (especially in regards to values and virtues).

7.5 Limitations

All research has its limitations and this thesis is no different. A collective case study approach was used in this thesis to investigate coaching philosophy from the perspective of formal coach education programs and coaches themselves through their own thoughts and behaviours. However, this approach has been criticised for the difficulty in making generalisations to the general population and concern for researcher bias in data analysis (Yin, 2009). Another limitation of this research was the small sample size of the coaches interviewed and observed. Although a number of key studies in the empirical coaching literature have used small sample sizes in their research on coaching philosophy (e.g., Collins et al., 2009; Gilbert & Trudel, 2004b) and saturation was believed to be reached in the coaches’ responses in the second study of this thesis (Chapter 5), the findings of this thesis may have varied more widely with a larger number of participants. Therefore, caution must be taken when generalising these findings to the general population of coaches. Other limitations of this thesis in relation to the third study of this thesis include the use of a single researcher in the live observation of coaches in the third study of this thesis (videotape was used to reduce observer bias and to determine intra-observer reliability, as reported in Chapter 6), no inter-observer reliability tests of the coding of the videotapes, and the use of an observation instrument which has not been validated (an adapted version of a previously-validated instrument for coaching behaviours, the
Unlike the majority of research on coaching philosophy, this thesis has taken a more critical approach in the examination of coaching philosophy from multiple perspectives. Through triangulation of data from where coaching philosophy is learned (Chapter 4), views on those who learn philosophy (Chapter 5), and observation of the impact of philosophy on practice (Chapter 6), this thesis has gained a more holistic understanding of the concept of coaching philosophy without the preconceived assumptions of past literature. Further research needs to continue to explore the issue of coaching philosophy (if, indeed, it is deemed to be important) in a range of different coaching contexts beyond basketball, and beyond the Australian setting where this research has been focused.

7.6 Conclusion

This thesis asked three broad but critical questions about philosophy in coaching and has challenged its definition; its utility; and the education processes that underpin learning it in the profession of coaching. Coaching philosophy, as it is currently defined, is vague and lacks the complexity of other helping professions. It is assumed to be important for effectiveness, athlete outcomes, practice and ethical coaching; and is given less emphasis than other coaching processes, with an overall lack of guidance in its development. Furthermore, there is limited empirical research that solely addresses coaching philosophy and, in addition, it assumes that it is part of what coaches automatically have,
or have by default. Perhaps it is too hard to conduct research on a concept that is so vaguely defined, in a profession which is complex and so contextual in nature and relies so heavily on those in voluntary or part-time roles. Or, it could be the fact that it has just never been questioned – of course, everyone has a philosophy! One can have a philosophy about life, a philosophy about their profession outside coaching, why wouldn’t coaches have a coaching philosophy?!

Ironically, as pointed out in Chapter 1 of this thesis, there is no evidence to suggest that a coaching philosophy is not important; therefore, we continue to assume that it is. One might suggest that there is a social responsibility to retain philosophy as part of any curriculum for coaches, and to continue the discussion in industry journals due to its social acceptance. In other words, who in their right mind would publicly say that philosophy is not important, particularly in a role where one helps others, the majority of whom are children or young people? Coaching has always, and currently still struggles for legitimacy as a profession, so questioning the importance and utility of philosophy to the profession (particularly with no evidence that it doesn’t work) would be professionally irresponsible. As noted at the beginning of this thesis, the *Oxford Dictionary* defines philosophy in two key ways: 1) “the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence”; and 2) “a theory or attitude that acts as a guiding principle for behaviour” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2012). This thesis has explored philosophy through the lens of coaches in order to illustrate that a coaching philosophy, as described in the literature and coaching textbooks and manuals, does not map onto the reality of coaches or coaching. However, it has uncovered a new reality through the existence of a “sport philosophy” that is more closely aligned with what they know (i.e., their “truth”);
what they perceive as their impact on others (the “wisdom” they can impart to athletes); and how it guides their behaviour.

As the quote at the beginning of Chapter 1 stated: “professionals are aware of what they are doing and why they do it; they have an end, a vision, in mind, as well as the means” (Merriam & Brockett, 2007, p. 30). From the standpoint of a philosophy of research this thesis began with the vision of bridging the gap between the theory and practice of philosophy in coaching. In this thesis the researcher allowed the voices of coaches to be heard regarding a concept (coaching philosophy) that has always been assumed to be relevant to their role; observed how coaches demonstrated their philosophy in practice; and contrasted this with how coaching philosophy was learned. The study of philosophy, it’s utility in coaching, and the way it is learned is embryonic. This thesis provides the opportunity for other researchers to challenge their own assumptions about coaching philosophy.
References


Boulmetis, J. (1999). One's philosophy: How can you know you're doing it, if you don't know what "it" is? *Adult Learning, 11*(2), 2.


Appendix A: Ethics Approval

5 May 2009

Dear Kylie & Pamm,

BL-EC 16/09 – Title: Examining Sport Coaching Philosophy- Implications for Policy, Pedagogy & Practice

Thank you for submitting the above project for consideration by the Faculty Human Ethics Advisory Group (HEAG). The HEAG recognised that the project complies with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (2007) and has approved it. You may commence the project upon receipt of this communication.

The approval period is for three years. It is your responsibility to contact the Faculty HEAG 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 changes to the research team or changes to contact details
- Any events which might affect the continuing ethical acceptability of the project
- The project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.

You will be required to submit an annual report giving details of the progress of your research. Failure to do so may result in the termination of the project. Once the project is completed, you will be required to submit a final report informing the HEAG of its completion.

Please ensure that the Deakin logo is on the Plain Language Statement and Consent Forms. You should also ensure that the project ID is inserted in the complaints clause on the Plain Language Statement, and be reminded that the project number must always be quoted in any communication with the HEAG to avoid delays. All communication should be directed to katrina.fleming@deakin.edu.au

The Faculty HEAG and/or Deakin University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) may need to audit this project as part of the requirements for monitoring set out in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (2007).

If you have any queries in the future, please do not hesitate to contact me.

We wish you well with your research.

Kind regards,
Katrina
Appendix B: Plain Language Statement and Consent Form

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY
PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM

TO: Participant

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Date:

Full Project Title: Examining Sports Coaching Philosophy – Implications for Policy, Pedagogy and Practice

Principal Researcher: Dr. Pamm Kellett

Student Researcher: Ms. Kylie Wehner

Associate Researcher: Mr. Andrew Dawson

This Plain Language Statement and Consent Form are 6 pages long. Please make sure you have all the pages.

1. Your Consent
You are invited to take part in this research project.

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.

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.

You will be given a copy of the Plain Language Statement and Consent Form to keep as a record.

2. Purpose and Background
The purpose of this project is to explore the coaching philosophies of basketball coaches and how they implement these in their coaching.

A total of 20 people will participate in this project.
Previous experience has shown that despite the lack of research on the relationship between coaching philosophy and coach effectiveness (Lyle, 1999), the development of a coaching philosophy has been seen as a significant factor in becoming an effective coach (Fuoss & Troppman, 1985) and has been included as a key learning outcome in coach education programs such as the NCAS. In addition, previous research has shown that although coaches can state their coaching philosophies, the actual implementation of these in their practices and behaviours are different (McCallister, Blinde & Weiss, 2000).

You are invited to participate in this research project because you are a current basketball coach who has completed at minimum an introductory level course through the NCAS. You were selected through your response to our advertisement based on these criteria in addition to your years of coaching experience and coaching context (that is, recreational, developmental or elite coach).

The results of this research may be used to help researcher Ms. Kylie Wehner to obtain a Doctor of Philosophy degree.

3. Funding
There is no external funding of this project.

4. Procedures
Participation in this project will involve two components. The first component will be a one hour interview (audio taped) at a time preferable to the participant where they will be asked questions related to the investigation including the coach’s personal coaching philosophy and their views on coach education. For the second component participants will be observed in practice at training sessions and competition to record and analyse interactions with their athletes. Observations will be based on information provided in interviews to identify behaviours that match and/or do not match the coach’s philosophical statements; for example if the participant’s core philosophy is participation this will be observed in practice through concepts such as court time and the principle of recovery. The observer will be stationed courtside in an unobtrusive setting and will change position dependent on the coach’s movements to allow the observer to better hear comments and witness behaviours. Participants will also be videotaped to allow the researcher to confirm their observations at a later date.

Consent for participation in this project includes both the interview and observation components; if the participant withdraws from one study then the data from the other study will not be used. The research will be monitored by the Associate Researcher Mr. Andrew Dawson.

5. Possible Benefits
Possible benefits include a better understanding of their own coaching philosophies as well as the alignment of the coach’s values with their practice. Improvement of ethical principles will enable the coaches to practice their coaching based on a more definitive code of conduct compared to the proscriptive ethical codes currently available to coaches. For the wider community, a better understanding of coaching philosophy within the coaching profession will justify the inclusion of the concept within large scale coach education programs such as the NCAS. The resulting improvement of ethical principles in coach education will have a direct impact not only on the coaches who participate in such programs but also their athletes and the wider basketball community. We cannot guarantee or promise that you will receive any benefits from this project.
6. Possible Risks
There are no anticipated risks, side effects and discomforts as a result of participation in this research. Participants can withdraw from the research at any stage without any consequences.

7. Privacy, Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information
Any information obtained in connection with this project and that can identify you will remain confidential. It will only be disclosed with your permission, subject to legal requirements. If you give us your permission by signing the Consent Form, we plan to publish the results within sport science, sport management and coaching journals such as the International Journal of Coaching Science, Journal of Applied Sport Psychology and Journal of Sport Management.

In any publication, information will be provided in such a way that you cannot be identified. All identifiers will be removed from the raw data then coded and combined with the data from other participants. This data will then be analysed and represented in the results as a group based understanding of the concept of philosophy in coaching. Audio tape of the interviews will be transcribed via computer and audio tapes will be destroyed once transcribed. Transcripts of the interviews will be stored on the researcher’s password protected computer and hard copies of transcripts will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at Deakin. Videotapes will be destroyed or erased by the researcher once viewed. Information will be stored for a minimum of 6 years after publication at which time the data will be destroyed.

8. Results of Project
Results will be presented through the production of a master’s thesis. As each participant’s data will be de-identified and coded and grouped into themes with other individual’s data it will not be possible to provide you with individual feedback. Participants will be able to view the results of the study once it is published.

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 until the data is processed or the participant’s identifying details are removed. Any information obtained from you to date will not be used and will be destroyed. However since participants are not identifiable, it is not possible to withdraw their data once identifying details have been removed.

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 health risks or 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:

The Executive Officer
Human Research Ethics Committee
Deakin University
221 Burwood Highway
Burwood Victoria 3125
Telephone: 9251 7123
Facsimile: 9244 6581
Email: research-ethics@deakin.edu.au
Please quote project number BL-EC 16/09.

12. Reimbursement for your costs
You will not be paid for your participation in this project.

13. 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 or associate researcher.

The researchers responsible for this project are:

Dr. Pamm Kellett
School of Management and Marketing
221 Burwood Highway
Burwood Victoria 3125
Telephone: 92446936

Ms. Kylie Wehner
School of Management and Marketing
221 Burwood Highway
Burwood Victoria 3125
Telephone: 0430078811 (Bus & AH)

Andrew Dawson
School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences
221 Burwood Highway
Burwood Victoria 3125
Telephone: 92517309 (Bus)
TO: Participant

Consent Form

Date:

Full Project Title: Examining Sports Coaching Philosophy – Implications for Policy, Pedagogy and Practice

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

I freely agree to participate in 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.

I consent to being videotaped during the observation component of the study.

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 ……………………………

Ms. Kylie Wehner
School of Management and Marketing
221 Burwood Highway
Burwood Victoria 3125
Telephone: 0430078811 (Bus & AH)
Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Examining Sports Coaching Philosophy – Semi Structured Interview Guide

Preamble:
As you have read in the plain language statement, the main aims of this study are to investigate the coaching philosophies of basketball coaches and the inclusion of the concept of coaching philosophy in coach education programs such as the NCAS. This interview is the first part of the study in which you will be asked a number of questions in relation to your personal coaching and your views on coach education. You will then be observed in practice in training sessions and competition to record and analyse interactions with your athletes to identify if the philosophies stated in your interviews are consistent with those implemented in your practice. We may need to contact you again after the completion of this interview for clarification of any information provided by you.

Demographics:
- Sex
- Age
- Qualifications
- NCAS Level
- Employment (Paid/Volunteer)

Coaching History:
- Number of years coaching (Basketball)
- Number of years coaching overall
- Other sports coached?
- How did you get into coaching?
- Do you see yourself coaching in the future?
- What do you think of coaching as a career/profession?

Coaching Philosophy:
- What is your understanding of coaching philosophy?
- If not, what makes someone like Brian Goorjian such a good coach?
- What is your coaching philosophy?
- When did you develop your philosophy?
- Is your coaching philosophy made known to your athletes/club/assistant coaches?
- How do you articulate this philosophy to these people?
- Give an example of how you implement it in your coaching (do you apply it in an active way?)
- Does having a coaching philosophy make you a more effective coach? Why/why not?
Coach Education and Coaching Philosophy:
- How did you acquire your philosophy? i.e. through a coach education or other means (mentor)
- Was coaching philosophy covered in any of the NCAS courses you completed?
- How was the concept of philosophy covered?
- What do you think about the inclusion of coaching philosophy in such courses?
- Is it appropriate at the level acquired? Why/why not?
- Did you understand the concept?
- What did you think of the concept at the time and what do you think of it now?

Views on Coach Education:
- What are the benefits of coach education?
- What should/should not be included?
- Do you want to do further study in coaching or a higher level of the NCAS? Why/why not?
- Do you think coach education programs such as the NCAS improve coach effectiveness? Why/why not?
Appendix D: Event Recording Form

Coach: ________________ Date: ___________________ Location: _______________
Activity: _______________ Time Started: ________________ Time Ended: ____________

Definitions:
1.
2.
3.
4.

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Totals: _______ _______ _______ _______

Behaviours Total frequency Rate per minute
1
2
3
4

Comments:


Dear Parent,

My name is Kylie Wehner and I am a PhD candidate at Deakin University. I am currently undertaking a study investigating the coaching philosophies of basketball coaches to provide a better understanding of the use of philosophy in the coaching profession. The first component of the study involved interviewing your child’s coach about their philosophies. The second component involves observing them in practice in a training session and game to identify if the coach’s stated philosophy is consistent with those implemented in their practice.

The observation component involves videotaping the coach to enable me to confirm my observations at a later date and increase the reliability of my results. The main focus is the coach and therefore the camera will concentrate on the coach and their actions. However your child may be videotaped in certain situations such as time outs and one-on-one discussions. The videotape will only be viewed by myself and my supervisor and once examined will be erased or destroyed.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at kylie.wehner@deakin.edu.au or on 09251 7320 if you have any queries or concerns.

Kind Regards,

Kylie Wehner