

A Multi-Perspective Conceptual Analysis of Reflection in the Sport Context

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Abstract

This thesis set out to rethink reflective practice (RP) in sport coaching. RP is widely promoted in sport coaching as an important method of professional development. However, literature in this domain remains conceptually fragmented and inconsistently enacted in practice. Although practitioners are encouraged to be more reflective, the profession lacks a clear, coherent understanding of what reflection is, and what it can be, considering working constraints, personal preferences, and limitations. The aim of this thesis was to understand the concept, process, and application of RP by performing a multi-perspective conceptual analysis, guided by principles of reflexive methodology. A series of studies examined RP from theoretical (literature), third person (practitioner), and first person (experiential) perspectives. Findings informed critical evaluation of dominant approaches to RP and the development of more practical alternatives. Embedding RP in a relational framework through reflective conversations (RC) aligned more closely with the needs, constraints, and preferences of sport coaches. Overall, this thesis reframes RP as a co-constructed, relational, and developmentally significant process offering theoretically informed and practically aligned strategies to support practitioners to engage with RP meaningfully and ethically.

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Chapter One: Introduction, Justification, and Thesis Outline

Introduction

Sport coaching in the United Kingdom (UK) has become professionalised over the past two and a half decades with the UK Coaching Certificate (UKCC) in 2002 transforming standards (United Kingdom Coaching, 2017b). The UKCC aimed to support development, endorsement and continuous improvement of governing body of sport coach education programmes (United Kingdom Coaching, 2017b). At the time of writing, the UKCC recognised 49 governing bodies of sport (United Kingdom coaching, 2017a) highlighting the developing professionalism of sport in the UK. The vision of the UK coach education strategy was for “every coach to see their coaching as a development opportunity for themselves and ultimately their athletes, and see every learning experience as meaningful” (Coach education foundation, 2015, p. 7). The UKCC vision included autonomous coaches engaged in constructing meaningful insights from experience. This frames informal learning and RP as a priority aligned with this vision.

Knowles et al. (2005) demonstrated that sport governing bodies have not always seemed to explicitly nurture RP. This may have been partly due to a lack of consensus regarding understanding what reflection is and consequently how to engage in effective RP. Additionally, people who reflect well have not often adhered to systematic RP (Black & Plowright, 2010). Burt and Morgan (2014) identified the perceived barriers to RP in 10 UKCC level one and two qualified rugby union coaches. Three higher order themes explaining the barriers to systematic RP were: organisation, motivation, and time. Organisation was explained as a lack of planning from the coach and a lack of encouragement from the professional body (Burt & Morgan, 2014). Coaches were often volunteers, having full time jobs elsewhere and thus disregarded the additional responsibility and time required to systematically reflect on their practice. Some reportedly lacked the motivation to reflect systematically, instead preferring to use informal methods (Burt & Morgan, 2014). Surprisingly, participants who were the most motivated to reflect reported using non-systematic approaches, although the characteristics of non-systematic reflection were not clearly explained (Burt & Morgan,

2014). Regardless, coaches preferred informal, non-systematic RP highlighting the appeal of introspective methods and reflective conversations (RC).

To achieve the aims of the UKCC, specifically the maintenance of professional standards of coaching, it is important to understand the current and preferred developmental activities of coaches. This will enable educational methods to be aligned with preferred teaching methods and subsequently achieve higher levels of engagement and more effective learning. Mesquita et al. (2014) analysed current coach education provision by interviewing six expert coaches. These coaches revealed a dissatisfaction with current coach education, highlighting the predominance of de-contextualised and didactic classroom teaching. They recommended development of relevant educational opportunities [i.e., authentic experience] facilitating context-specific learning through reflection and the sharing of ideas between coaches, creating a community of practice. Coaches were not dismissive of formal learning opportunities but acknowledged the manner which they are delivered is not constructive to the development of their coaching. Suggestions were made to align classroom teaching methods with practical requirements of sport coaching. A student-centred approach to course design and lesson planning was warranted to add value to formal learning and individualise course content. Individualisation of formal learning by creating opportunities to create meaning from authentic experience may facilitate an understanding of how theories relate to tangible and meaningful coaching situations.

Stodter and Cushion (2017) created a grounded process of coach learning explaining that coaches often internalised coaching practices they perceived as working. Consequently, seeing the practical usefulness of methods immediately achieved buy-in. Results seemed to align with Nelson and Cushion (2006) as well as the current author's conversations with coaches in practice environments and sport conferences/workshops. Coaches seemed to value authentic learning environments and informal learning that addressed features of their own practice.

Nelson et al. (2006) reviewed literature with an aim to explore how sport coaches developed knowledge. These authors used the learning categories of Coombs and Ahmed (1974), defining

coach learning as formal, non-formal or informal. Informal learning was characterised as learning including “the accumulation of knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences within the environment” (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, p. 8). Formal education included structured learning that was organisationally regulated (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974). Non-formal education included structured learning that was not regulated by educational organisations (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974). Nelson et al. (2006) found that coaches engaged in informal modes of learning more frequently than formal and non-formal learning. Informal learning was also demonstrated to be preferred in a group of eight qualified multisport coaches (Maclean & Lorimer, 2016). These coaches accessed formal and non-formal learning, although less frequently than informal modes. Although coaches preferred to learn informally, they valued formal coach education and believed it should be mandatory for every coach. Additionally, there was a perceived need to standardise the applied knowledge and skill of novice coaches to ensure the use of safe and effective training methods. More experienced practitioners who have developed foundational knowledge might benefit from personalised and contextually meaningful learning encouraging problem solving and reflection on authentic experience. Reflection and problem solving may lead to deeper conceptual understanding because the process of constructing insight and meaning involves active cognitive engagement with an idea or experience, leading to a more coherent mental representation (Kolb, 2014). Themes describing the reasons for preferred coach learning mode included the development of professionalism and identity through formal learning (Maclean & Lorimer, 2016).

It appeared that coaching qualifications overemphasised a didactic approach to learning or otherwise encouraged reflection implicitly rather than teaching reflection overtly (Nelson & Cushion, 2006). This is understandable given the lack of publications that have explained the concept and process of reflection, making it difficult for governing bodies and educators to teach a reportedly confusing and ambiguous concept and process (Burt & Morgan, 2014; Fook et al., 2006).

Erickson et al. (2008) conducted quantitative interviews with 44 Canadian coaches (25 males and 19 females). They aimed to understand the coaches’ preferred and actual sources of coaching

knowledge. Frequency counts of quantitative reports indicated that the largest proportion of coaches reported learning more from coaching experience (58.4%), interacting with coaches and peers (42.7%) and engaging with formal learning organised by national governing bodies (32.7%). The preferred sources of learning were reported to be the national governing body (51%), mentoring (48.5%) and learning from experience (37.3%). This demonstrated a discordance between actual and preferred sources of knowledge. Coaches reported that the national governing body was the ideal source of knowledge, yet less than a third of the participants rated the governing body as the main source of knowledge. Coaches rated coaching experience as the most frequent actual source of knowledge yet rated experience much less frequently as an ideal source of knowledge. Researchers did not report follow-up interviews, making it difficult to develop a more detailed understanding. Maybe practitioners perceive information from professional bodies as being more valid compared to information from their ongoing experiences. This may be driven from personal epistemologies and understanding of, and value towards experiential learning.

If positivism (assuming objectifiable truth and certainty) is a dominant epistemology across the sport coaching profession, the validity of experiential learning through reflection would be in question and coaches are not likely to value reflectively derived insights, compared to information compiled by an official professional body of sport (Piggott, 2012). Individuals embodying positivist epistemologies would likely understand knowledge as being detached from personal bias and perspectives with truth being ascertainable via scientific methods. They might not value experience as a valid source of knowledge seeking answers to complex questions through scientific discourse alone. Conversely, an individual with a constructivist or pragmatist epistemology might understand knowledge as being developed through cognitive engagement with experience and would likely value RP as a valid approach to developing knowledge.

Cushion et al. (2010) reviewed literature including adult education and CPD, concluding that cost and time were the main deterrents to engagement with formal learning. Similarly, Burt and Morgan (2014) reported barriers to systematic RP in 10 UKCC level one and two qualified rugby

union coaches as lack of planning and lack of encouragement from the governing body. Other barriers included lack of motivation, the repetitive nature of training sessions, player behaviour and lack of time. Thus, the needs and context of an individual influence engagement with formal, informal, and non-formal modes of learning. Specifically, Burt and Morgan (2014) reported that due to coaching being performed on a voluntary basis and often for a limited duration per week, systematic RP was not a priority regardless of perceived benefits. Although these coaches were assessed as competent, having achieved UKCC levels one and two, individual goals did not align with systematic RP, as they did not intend on embarking on a career in coaching.

Piggott (2012) investigated experiences of formal coach education in 12 (eight male and four female) coaches from a mixture of individual and team sports. They used semi-structured interviews to understand coach perceptions of course delivery style. They aimed to understand the course instructors' degree of openness to students' attempts at challenging the ideas presented. They compared instructor openness and the perceived usefulness of the course. Results indicated that courses perceived as more open to ideas, discussion and experimentation were perceived as more useful. Courses perceived as more closed and prescriptive were perceived as less useful. Therefore, coach educators should aim to facilitate open discussions (e.g., encouraging RCs) and be mindful of the need to have a flexible teaching approach. It is also important for coach educators to welcome ideas from participants that encourage learning, thus facilitating openness, discussion, and collective reflection.

Framing these studies alongside the previously stated vision of the UK coach education strategy, it seems important for educational providers and governing bodies of sport to encourage autonomy-supportive practices that facilitate learning and self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2010). This might facilitate coaches' lifelong independent engagement in learning, enhancing competence and supporting athlete development, learning and enjoyment of sport and physical activity. This could encourage long-term participant engagement in activities that enhance health and wellbeing, lessening health complications related to a sedentary lifestyle. Engagement in sport and physical

activity may also enhance mental health and wellbeing. This may also be supported by the development of ethical coaching practices, guided by RP e.g., considering the effect of our interactions on others and nurturing positive relationships, supporting athlete enjoyment and commitment to sport. However, RP has many differing definitions in the literature indicating a lack of conceptual clarity and consistency. It seems important to critically examine the concept and process of reflection to understand what, how and why RP may be defined, and used in sport. This thesis will address these issues, progressing from a broad perspective considering reflection across disciplinary boundaries before examining RP in the sport context.

Research aims

The broad aim of this thesis was to develop a rigorous understanding of the concept and process of reflection by performing a multi-perspective and multi-level inquiry, using an approach inspired by reflexive methodology (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017). The results of inquiries from three perspectives (theoretical, third person and first person) were integrated through a critical synthesis. The first two studies examined a theoretical perspective aiming to understand the concept (study one, chapter four) and process (study two, chapters five and six) of reflection. Study three (chapter seven) then aimed to understand sport coach perceptions and experiences of RP (third person perspective). This study was extended to include a reframed analysis of three participants' data with a triple case study in chapter eight. Study four in chapter nine then aimed to understand how RP affected my own professional development working as a sport lecturer in a football academy through a first-person inquiry. The sport context was chosen as I was working in the sport sector as a sport lecturer in a football academy and have a background in sport coaching. Before outlining methodological choices in detail, I have described the motivation for this thesis originating from personal experiential difficulties as an undergraduate student. I outline my experiences and where relevant, integrate concepts and evidence from the literature to construct a deeper understanding of my lived experience.

'Be more critical': a personal struggle with assessment feedback.

This section was inspired by personal difficulties as an undergraduate student trying to *find my feet* in higher education and understand what assessors meant when they provided feedback on my work outlining the need to 'be more critical'. 'What does it mean?' I kept asking myself this question throughout my undergraduate studies and this later cultivated my curiosity and motivation to understand thinking processes and subsequently led me to the theory of RP. I asked my lecturers what they meant by 'be more critical', one of whom stated that it means an evaluation of strengths and weaknesses. Another defined it as an in-depth analysis. Another referred me to an article on critical thinking and tacit knowledge, but this never led to clear answers and the variety of definitions I was *receiving* caused more ambiguity than *certainty*. Note the italicised words in the previous sentence: receiving and certainty; these words seemed to represent latent clues to my epistemic assumptions at the time, specifically relating to ways of knowing and my relationship with authority. Certainty seems to refer to the assumed stability and truthfulness of knowledge. Students who conceptualise knowledge as certain likely believe that a teacher holds a body of knowledge that is stable and true. *Receiving* presupposes a passive stance in relation to knowledgeable authorities, whereby a lecturer or teacher has true knowledge that is given to students, who then commit the information to memory to be articulated in an assessment.

There is evidence suggesting epistemic assumptions influence how people reason about ill-structured problems (King & Kitchener, 1994, 2004), how they engage with information seeking behaviour (Whitmire, 2004), scientific reasoning (Hotulainen & Telivuo, 2015), self-regulated learning (Muis, 2007) and reported use of learning strategies (Cano, 2005; Dahl et al., 2005). For example, Hotulainen and Telivuo (2015) reported that secondary school students believing that knowledge is uncertain and complex were more likely to engage in scientific reasoning compared to those believing knowledge is certain and simple. Dahl et al. (2005) report students who believe knowledge is organised in complex networks tend to use less rehearsal strategies, more organisational strategies to develop connections between information, and meta-cognitive self-

regulation strategies. Those believing knowledge is simple and organised in discrete categories tended to use rehearsal strategies, less organisational strategies and less metacognitive self-regulation strategies (Dahl et al., 2005). No relationship was found between perceived certainty of knowledge and the use of rehearsal, elaboration, critical thinking, or meta-cognitive self-regulation strategies (Dahl et al., 2005). They explained the likely reason for this was due to the homogeneity of the assessed group (Dahl et al., 2005). Perceived certainty did relate to organisational strategies, indicating that those perceiving knowledge as more ambiguous and uncertain actively tried to connect information from different sources (Dahl et al., 2005).

The lack of relationship between certainty, critical thinking and meta-cognitive self-regulation strategies was like the findings of Cano (2005) who analysed the effect between epistemological beliefs and approaches to learning measured using the epistemological questionnaire and the learning process questionnaire respectively. They reported a small association between perceived certainty of knowledge and surface learning approaches, indicating individuals perceiving knowledge as certain use more surface learning approaches. They reported no relationship between certainty of knowledge and deep learning approaches or academic performance.

Some authors in this domain have used the reflective judgement interview to assess the characteristics of an individual's reasoning about ill-structured problems (King & Kitchener, 1994). Whitmire (2004) assessed students' approaches to information seeking in relation to two dilemmas of the reflective judgement interview, in parallel to assessing epistemic beliefs using the measure of epistemological reflection and an interview to assess participant information seeking behaviour. They reported that absolute believers identified information sources consistent with their own beliefs and avoided sources that opposed these beliefs (Whitmire, 2004). The same participants also approached authority figures for help in determining the validity of sources when they encountered contradictory information (Whitmire, 2004). Pre-reflective thinkers relied on heuristics such as identifying the first identified URLs in a web search, allowing a search engine to prioritise the

relevancy of information (Whitmire, 2004). Quasi-reflective thinkers looked at the URLs of websites to determine perceived authority and used this criterion as a method for judging the legitimacy of these sources. Participants were mostly pre-reflective thinkers and quasi-reflective thinkers with no participants representing the reflective thinking domain of the reflective judgement model (King & Kitchener, 1994). Although this made it difficult to judge the effect of reflective thinking on information seeking behaviour, this study demonstrated qualitative differences in information seeking behaviour across two levels of the model, providing evidence supporting the stage-like development of thinking and reasoning. Epistemological beliefs also seem to construct the psychological context within which a person develops standards for evaluating information (Ryan, 1984). Learning strategies are then adopted aligning with these epistemological beliefs (Ryan, 1984).

This brief literature review may help to understand my experience as a first-year Undergraduate student. My initial struggle to demonstrate critical thinking in written work might have been related to my way of knowing. It is likely that I entered University as an absolute knower (Baxter Magolda, 1992). This might be represented in my belief at the time of knowledge being certain, non-ambiguous and simple (i.e., organised in discrete categories) and that higher education would give me knowledge I needed to become an expert. This seemed to correspond to stage two of the reflective judgment model (King & Kitchener, 1994), whereby knowledge is assumed to be certain but not immediately available and can be obtained from authorities. To achieve my goal of getting a degree I needed to attend lectures and practical sessions, engage by reading suggested books and articles with an aim to memorise the content and effectively regurgitate it in an exam or assessment. I was using rehearsal strategies and although I was persistently made aware of the need to be an active learner engaging critically, I did not initially internalise this idea (i.e., it was not internally consistent with my beliefs about learning), and I did not engage with this suggestion. It seems logical that the recommendation to engage in active learning was not aligned with the task standards that I constructed for course assignments. These standards in turn may have been related to my epistemological beliefs, constituting the psychological context in which task standards were

set (Muis, 2007; Ryan, 1984). The assumption that knowledge is certain and can be *given* by authorities aligned with my chosen approach to learning (e.g., memorisation and rehearsal). There seemed to be an unrecognised tension at the time between the requirement to demonstrate critical thinking and my way of knowing. Being critical, in the sense of critical reflection, required a deliberate inquiry into the evidence or grounds for a belief and the assumptions inherent in these beliefs or knowledge claims (Brookfield, 2017). The Foundation for Critical Thinking. (2019) endorse the following definition: “Critical thinking is that mode of thinking — about any subject, content, or problem — in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skilfully analysing, assessing, and reconstructing it. Critical thinking is self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, and self-corrective thinking”. Through the lens of an absolute knower, self-corrective thinking is a difficult process to engage with, as from my naïve perspective in the first year of my degree, I believed that knowledge was certain, simple and that authority held the answers to my questions. Therefore, it did not make sense to question ideas or assumptions from authority, in published texts or from lecturers, as from my perspective they were correct. I took lecturers’ ideas at face value, when they instructed me against this tendency. I did not evaluate the relative weight of evidence or attempt to connect ideas from different sources. Why should I if the knowledge I was receiving from an authority figure was perceivably correct? My behaviour was directed at being more widely read and committing ideas to memory rather than engaging in self-corrective, self-directed thinking. If I could not recall information, I would get frustrated and would often catastrophise about the possible outcome of an upcoming assessment, worrying that I would not *remember the facts* well enough to perform at the required standard. Little did I know my approach to learning encouraged superficial understanding and was not aligned to higher-level assessment criteria seeking evidence of critical thinking and evaluation. A plausible reason for struggling to meet these expectations was not because I was lacking the cognitive capacity for analytical thought, but more likely because my way of knowing did not align with the inherent assumptions of critical thought. From this naïve perspective, memorisation and rehearsal were effective ways of learning. Logically however, if my

implicit conception was that knowledge is uncertain, complex and situated, then methods aligning with these conceptions would have included inquiry to grasp the connections between knowledge and to ascertain the most likely solution to a problem in each context (Muis, 2007).

My previous conception of knowledge being simple and certain is common. Baxter Magolda (1992) reports that students entering university often embody absolute ways of knowing and this seemed to result in them being dependent on authority to *give them* perceivably correct knowledge. As learners continued to engage, they often experienced discordance between their way of knowing (knowledge is certain and given by authorities) and their lived experiences (e.g., authority figures disagreeing with each other or providing alternative explanations for a phenomenon). I experienced this when lecturers provided contrasting views regarding what it meant to be more critical. This caused ambiguity and cognitive dissonance, and I began to question how multiple definitions for the same construct could co-exist; surely one of them was wrong? I also started to identify signs that authority figures did not have all the answers, and this triggered a shift in my conception of knowledge. Although ambiguity was frustrating it was the beginning of a journey of epistemic discovery. As noted by King and Kitchener (1994) and Baxter Magolda (1992), students' mental frameworks representing their way of knowing were disrupted by anomalous experiences relative to their existing way of knowing. This anomalous experience was sometimes the recognition of a discrepancy between the ideas given by authority figures (Baxter Magolda, 1992; King & Kitchener, 1994), and ongoing confirmation and contradiction, nudging students from absolute knowing to transitional knowing, independent knowing and sometimes, but not always, reaching contextual knowing (Baxter Magolda, 1992; Kegan, 1982). Confirmation means to hold or support people as they encounter changes (Baxter Magolda, 1992; Kegan, 1982). Contradiction refers to letting go or challenging people and their ideas (Baxter Magolda, 1992; Kegan, 1982). Ongoing support and challenge were suggested to facilitate learners' intellectual growth. Effective facilitation is an art of finding balance between supporting and confirming students' ideas, thus encouraging them to find and use their voice, while also challenging and contradicting their voice in a sensitive way to

promote conceptual growth and help them re-think their mental model. This aligns with the concept of a dialecticism, whereby opposing ideas interact in dialogue between two or more people seeking a deeper understanding.

Discomfort is a required condition of learning when balanced with compassion and support (Robinson, 2021). However, contradiction taken as an absolute answer by absolute knowers may risk a loss of perceived voice (Baxter Magolda, 1992). As such, the presence of discordant experiences in a challenging yet supportive environment can trigger a shift in understanding towards the idea that knowledge is complex and often uncertain, and the individual may begin to slowly dissociate from the conception that perceived authority figures are all knowing and begin to internalise a more complex way of knowing (Baxter Magolda, 1992; King & Kitchener, 1994).

The epistemological reflection model (Baxter Magolda, 1992) is conceptually like the reflective judgement model (King & Kitchener, 1994, 2004) describing three broad categories of thinking with seven stages intertwined with epistemic assumptions: pre-reflective thinking (stages one to three), quasi-reflective thinking (stages four and five), and reflective thinking (stages six and seven). In the pre-reflective category, knowledge is assumed to either exist concretely and with certainty (stage 1), be certain but not immediately available (stage 2) or be temporarily uncertain (stage 3). In the quasi-reflective category, knowledge is either uncertain (stage 4) or contextual and subjective (stage 5). In reflective thinking, knowledge is constructed for conclusions to ill-structured problems based on multiple sources of information (stage 6) or knowledge is the outcome of reasonable inquiry into solutions for ill-structured problems with the adequacy of the solutions being judged according to what is most reasonable or probable in relation to existing evidence (stage 7). Conceptions are re-evaluated if new evidence or perspectives are developed (King & Kitchener, 2004). Comparing these two frameworks, a common theme seems to be the assumed complexity and certainty of knowledge and the degree to which individuals depend on authority figures for solutions to problems. Both frameworks seem to model changes to epistemic beliefs, assuming knowledge becomes progressively more complex, uncertain, and constructed by the self. These

complex ways of knowing are associated with more reflective ways of reasoning (King & Kitchener, 1994, 2004; Ostorga, 2006). Baxter Magolda (1992) describes learners finding their own voice and subsequently using their voice when entering contextual knowing to ascertain validity of knowledge (Baxter Magolda, 1992). Complex ways of knowing (i.e., contextual knowing) seemed to create an epistemological basis for reflective thinking.

A core idea from above was those individuals embodying more complex ways of knowing engaged in more complex ways of thinking and learning. Conversely, if an individual perceived knowledge as certain, simple, and absolute then they were likely to source perceivably true knowledge and commit this to memory. If an individual believed knowledge was uncertain, complex, and contextually relative, then they may have inquired into and analysed the quality of evidence, using this to help explain an idea or experience. Muis (2007) suggested that during task definition, epistemic beliefs influenced the standards people set when goals were defined, and this determined the strategies used.

These concepts seem to help explain my difficulties as a first-year undergraduate student. This struggle inspired my curiosity to deepen my understanding of thinking processes, and this led me to explore the concept and process of reflection. The idea that epistemic beliefs influenced approach to learning seemed logically coherent, resonated with my experience, and was supported by evidence. Epistemology being central to engagement, alongside open-mindedness, motivating people to reflect is explored further in study two (chapters five and six). Study three (chapter seven) then situates reflection within the sport context by interviewing practitioners, aiming to understand their perceptions and experiences of RP. This is extended in chapter eight including three reframed practitioner case studies. Study four (chapter nine) then narrows the contextual lens further with a first-person inquiry into my practice as a sport lecturer in a football academy. A final discussion (chapter ten) and reflexive synthesis (chapter 11) then critically interprets these studies in relation to power, social reproduction, claims to authority and the selectivity of voices and concepts within the text (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017). This aligns with the aims of this thesis to achieve a multi-

perspective and multi-level inquiry, integrating and critically interpreting the results of the individual studies. The following sub-section will outline the methodological decisions for individual studies.

Brief outline of studies

A reflexive methodological approach (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2017) was used, aiming to facilitate a multi-level inquiry into the concept and process of reflection from three perspectives: theoretical, third person and first-person. Reflexive methodology aligned with the focus of this study to shift understanding and trigger different ways of thinking about reflection using different perspectives and methods of analysis (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2017). This shift in frame of reference helped understand what was previously inaccessible, challenging typical interpretations and enriching conceptualisation of data (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2017). This helped develop practical recommendations to support practitioners using RP. Research has tended to explore reflection from third-person perspectives, conducting practitioner interviews/experiments and theoretical/philosophical reasoning using literature. This has limitations due to a lack of consensus about the conceptualisation of reflection and a lack of cross-disciplinary integration of literature. A first-person perspective has also been under-used when considering long-term engagement with RP. This perspective has the potential to understand the nuances of RP, including the barriers to practical implementation, helping to shift the frame of reference to one used sparingly. Thus, reflexive methodology encouraged a different way of thinking about RP. Chapter three provides a detailed overview of study methodologies. However, the remainder of this sub-section will briefly outline and justify the studies. A framework (Figure 1) is presented representing the progression from a theoretical perspective to a third person and first-person perspective. Table 1 outlines a series of studies aligned to the principles of reflexive methodology.

Following this, chapter two considers my positioning in relation to research paradigm, axiology, ontology, and epistemology and how this aligns with the methodology. Chapter three then considers the methodology in detail. The first three studies in chapter four, chapter five and chapter six will then explore the concept and process of reflection from an initial theoretical perspective by

conducting qualitative literature syntheses. This analysis and interpretation of literature written by experts conceptualises text of literature as data. This data will be analysed and used to develop themes, helping to make theoretical judgements about the concept and process of reflection. These will then be explored in a more practical context in subsequent studies.

Study four (chapter seven) involves a contextually narrower and situated inquiry into practitioners' perceptions and experiences of RP in the sport coaching profession. This will involve thematically analysing semi-structured interviews with sport coaches (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2022) to understand how sport coaches perceive and experience RP. This will be the first primary data study in this thesis. This is important as it may provide insight helping to understand how they perceive and experience RP, including barriers, practical difficulties and misunderstandings. This will also help to develop practical and policy-level suggestions for the integration of RP into professional practice.

Study five (seen in chapter eight) involves a reframed analysis of interview data from study four aiming to understand practitioners' personal ways of conceptualising RP and the way they engage in the process of RP. This study will use hermeneutic phenomenology (Dibley et al., 2020) generating an interpretation of textual data from interviews, alongside literature. A reframed triple case study analysis will help to develop a more detailed understanding of how participants understand RP and how they engage in the process of RP. This pluralist analysis will involve examining data with differing foci and using a different analytical lens (Clarke et al., 2015; Frost, 2021). Using pluralist analytical approaches requires the consideration of ontological and epistemological views and this is presented in more detail in chapter two.

Study six (seen in chapter nine) will narrow the contextual lens further to consider experiences of RP in my workplace as a further education sport lecturer in a football academy. This includes engaging in an extended period of formalised RP over a whole academic year. This involves writing a reflective journal that will be used as data and will be the focus of a meta-reflection

considering the barriers and facilitators of RP. This helps to create a new frame of reference to contemporary RP literature.

A discussion will be presented (chapter ten) before engaging in a reflexive synthesis (chapter 11) based on the suggestions of Alvesson and Sköldberg (2017). A final synopsis will bring the findings of each study together and further reflect on their significance, considering implications for practice. Ontological pluralism (my current position) suggests differing analytical approaches can be used when they are considered dialectically (Clarke et al., 2015). These final chapters aimed to draw threads of meaning together to evaluate them critically in relation to the thesis, while also developing theoretical insights, practical recommendations and policy-level suggestions. Concepts generated throughout the thesis will be considered in relation to issues of ideology, power, social reproduction, the negotiation of multiple theoretical perspectives and the consideration of authority and selectivity of voices in the text (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017).

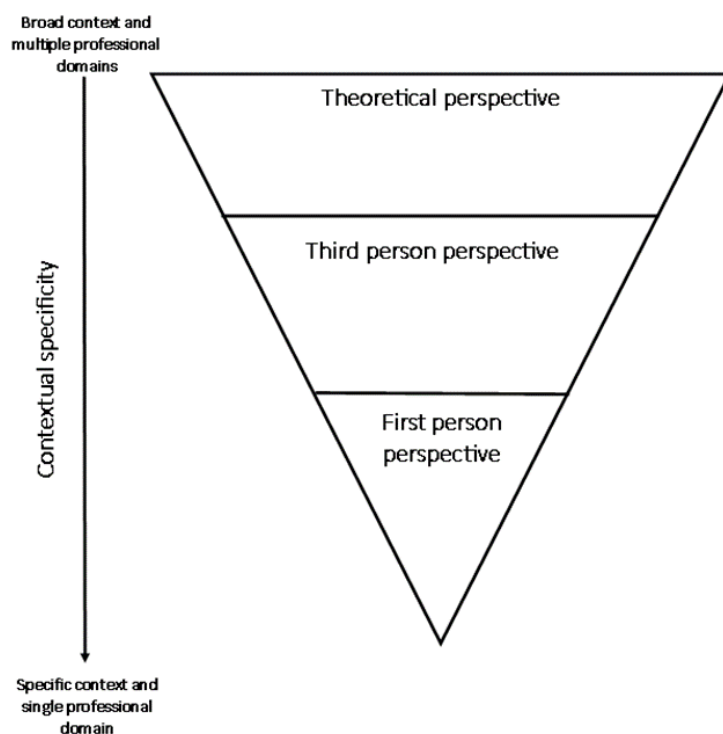


Figure 1:

A visual representation outlining the progression of studies.

Table 1:

Outline of studies aligned to levels of interpretation in reflexive methodology as described by Alvesson and Skoldberg (2017)

<i>Level of interpretation</i>	<i>Suggested methods</i>	<i>Studies one two and three – theoretical perspective (formal literature syntheses)</i>	<i>Study four– third person perspective (interviews with sport coaches)</i>	<i>Study five– third person perspective (case study (re)analysis)</i>	<i>Study six– first person perspective (reflexive study of my professional practice)</i>
Interaction with empirical material	Interviews, observation of situations e.g., personal experiences (first person inquiry)	Reviewing literature – identifying, explicating, and synthesising ideas from knowing others/experts in the field.	Interviews with sport coaches exploring their perceptions and experiences of RP.	Reframing analysis from study three to focus on exploring participants ways of conceptualising RP and engaging with the process of RP.	Engagement in the role of a sport lecturer while writing a reflective diary (first person inquiry).
Interpretation	Considering underlying meaning	Interpretation facilitated using thematic synthesis (study 1) and a formal synthesis using grounded theory methods (study 2)	Interpretation facilitated using reflexive thematic analysis and a written narrative explicating the developed themes.	Interpretation facilitated through hermeneutic phenomenological analysis	Interpretation facilitated via meta-reflection.
Critical interpretation	Considering ideology, power, and social reproduction			A synthesis evaluating the concepts derived from studies and a critical interpretation of these in relation to ideology, power and/or social reproduction.	
Reflection on text production and language use	Considering claims to authority in own text, selectivity of voices inherent in the text			A consideration of authority in own text with the identification and explication of the selectivity of voices e.g., Identifying evidence of authority in own text, searching for literature that explores the concepts (actively searching for disconfirming evidence) and a theoretical synthesis of this body of literature.	

Chapter Two: A Reflection on Paradigmatic, Axiological, Ontological and Epistemological Views

This chapter aimed to explicate my paradigmatic, axiological, ontological and epistemological beliefs to ascertain alignment with the study methodologies. This ensured that the chosen approaches to knowledge development were coherent with my way of knowing. To begin, I started by defining research paradigm, axiology, ontology and epistemology and then wrote a narrative about my current beliefs, integrating literature and logic into an account of my assumptions. I then explored alignment between my beliefs and methodological approaches used.

Paradigms and axiology

Paradigms are considered modifiable frameworks for research practices that researchers agree on at a particular time (Killam, 2013). Paradigms influence how a subject is understood and shape how people think about a subject or discipline (Omodan, 2024). A pragmatic paradigm was the basis of this thesis whereby the value of knowledge generated was evaluated based on practical and conceptual utility (Omodan, 2024). A pragmatic paradigm enables multiple analytical approaches to be used, aligning with the premises of a reflexive methodology (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2017) which was the methodological basis for this thesis.

Axiology considers beliefs about what is valuable and ethical in the context of research (Killam, 2013). Pragmatism values practical outcomes and conceptual development helping to understand experiences and act in an informed manner (Omodan, 2024). This perspective values what works in context and disregards the tendency to rigidly adhere to philosophical viewpoints (Omodan, 2024). This aligns to a reflexive methodology which uses a combination of analytical methods to provide a rich multi-level and multi-perspective analysis of a phenomenon (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2017).

Ontology and epistemology

Ontology has been described as the philosophical study of existence and what constitutes reality i.e. “the study of what things exist” (Effingham, 2013, p. 1). Ontological beliefs will inevitably direct our epistemology (i.e., our perspective on knowledge and how we come to know and

understand) and our research methodology because it is usually what we perceive as real that we aim to construct knowledge about. Also, assumptions about reality and knowledge may guide our theoretical perspective and methodological choices (Al-Ababneh, 2020) i.e., we gather data that we perceive as meaningful and analyse this in ways that we believe generates valid knowledge. Criteria for validity are likely projected into our methodological decision making through our assumptions about knowledge and how we generate valid knowledge. Thus, ontological perspectives are inevitably intertwined with epistemology and these both are likely to influence methodological decision making. As an example, I believe that knowledge is subjective and that we interact within a tangible and physical world of objects that are interpreted or constructed both passively, through implicit learning, and actively through the conscious and explicit interpretation of information. Even the concept of reality may be interpreted in different ways or at different levels and may therefore be constructed according to the developing qualitative properties of an individual's schema. Thus, my perspective aligns with ontological pluralism (Clarke et al., 2015; Cooke, 2020; Turner, 2020).

Drawing on dual process theory, the passive (or implicit) construction of knowledge occurs automatically and associatively (type one cognitive processes), whereas the deliberate and explicit rendering of knowledge (type two cognitive process) occurs reflectively and explicitly (Evans, 2019). Automatic processing enables rapid interpretation of information and can also have negative implications, as biases can influence perceptions and decisions can be unchecked. Thus, reflective processing becomes an important mode through which ideas, mental frameworks and biases can be checked and carefully considered. This view implies that knowledge (including knowledge about reality) is subjectively constructed and rationalised. If knowledge is subjective then it seems important to consider the role of emotions in the process of perception and thinking.

Emotions seem to be a real constituent of how we experience the world. They have a biological basis (Panksepp, 2004) with core affects being elicited from subcortical systems by deep brain electrical stimulation (Panksepp et al., 2019). Core affects are intertwined with the way we experience and make sense of the world. Emotions can influence the meaning we attribute to

experiences and objects (Schwarz & Clore, 1983). This could explain why people attribute different meanings to a shared event (Schwarz & Clore, 1983). As Barrett (2014) suggests, two people can construct divergent meanings (and feelings) for an event by activating different affect-laden conceptual representations into the same sensory perception. Because different people will have a different conceptual framework developed from idiosyncratic experiences, beliefs and knowledge, everyone will import different affectively charged concepts into a sensory perception of events (Barrett, 2014). People may therefore have different interpretations of an event.

A problematic notion becomes evident when argued that reflection on our experiences may be biased towards our existing knowledge, due to being limited by the constraints of our mental framework and thus may simply reinforce existing ideas and experiences (Cushion, 2016). It is therefore important that we welcome open-minded dialogue with others who might experience and understand the world differently, as this could enrich our own perspective by challenging or enlarging our ideas and beliefs. This may mean that we engage deeply (i.e., critically) with a broad range of ideas e.g., by talking to people with differing views or reading widely, some of which might confirm, challenge, or enlarge our own perspective. This assumes that some people think differently about experiences and ideas. This might be based on the concepts that they have access to, alongside previous experiences. This in turn implies that human beings have some subjective elements to their cognitive structure, helping them to navigate and adapt to the environment and survive in a dynamic world.

To adapt to the environment, human beings require malleability in their cognitive structures, including rules for living. Our environment and the associated norms and rules affect our understanding of what is acceptable (i.e., from the previous example, some adults find swearing distasteful and disrespectful). Our inter-subjective constructions i.e. norms, rules, beliefs and values manifest as a part of a subjective reality. They are not tangible but are nevertheless present in our lived experience. Social constructions may vary according to the individual, culture, time-period and sometimes due to neurological qualities (e.g. autism). Therefore, what is perceivably real seems to

be a construction consisting of implicitly assimilated beliefs and values, and those internalised through conscious reflective inquiry.

The above seems to align with Mezirow's conceptualisation of presentational and propositional construal, resulting from engagement at pre-linguistic (implicit) and linguistic (explicit) levels of awareness respectively (Mezirow, 1991) reinforcing a dual process of mind. Additionally, this seems to align with Dewey's account of human thought being un-focused and non-reflective e.g. "that loose flux of casual and disconnected material" (Dewey, 1933, p. 1) or purposeful, focused and reflective with "a consecutive ordering in such a way that each determines the next as its proper outcome, while each in turn leans back on its predecessors" (Dewey, 1933, p. 3). Specifically, the human mind seems to engage in at least two types of thinking: one disconnected, casual, and implicit and the other purposeful, logical, and coherent. Dual process theory therefore seems to describe a common theme in the work of Dewey (1933) and Mezirow (1991) regarding how we think.

Knowledge can be understood as meaningful when it helps interpret experience or inform action. Thus, elements of constructivism and pragmatism influence my conception of knowledge, aligning with the work of Hickman et al. (2020) who describe the relationship between constructivism and pragmatism. Knowledge can be judged as more or less relevant or meaningful through a process of pragmatic reasoning. However, knowledge can be understood as situationally determined, meaning that what is perceived as meaningful and relevant in one context may not be in another. If a concept or theory helps to understand or navigate the world more efficiently, then it could be judged as valid or meaningful. The concept of reality could arguably be a human construction, as schema about reality are developed by a reflecting person. There may be consistencies and invariances in the world, but these are also interpreted to exist. Even the term consistency is created to pragmatically understand and operate within the world. Thus, I identify with the following beliefs: ontological pluralism and epistemological pragmatism.

Alignment with methodological choices

Ontological pluralism rejects the idea that multiple philosophical views are incompatible (Clarke et al., 2015). Methodologies aligning with multiple philosophical perspectives can be useful when they are used dialectically (Clarke et al., 2015). This can help to create different understandings of a dataset, much like the idea of crystallisation. This concept proposes that the goal of research is “not to provide researchers with a more valid singular truth, but to open a more complex, in-depth, but still thoroughly partial, understanding of the issue” (Tracy, 2010, p. 844). The researcher’s goal is to tell a story of the data from multiple perspectives rather than to seek irrefutable truth. Using differing analytical approaches may offer a richer, more complex and in-depth understanding of a dataset. This shifting analytical approach was a theme in this thesis. The purpose of this was to engage in crystallisation by shifting the frame of reference on the phenomenon (reflective thinking and RP) both from a perspectival and analytical point of view (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017; Clarke et al., 2015; Frost, 2021), making it possible to generate insights into the concept and process of reflection.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter presents the general methodological framework before explaining specific methods of each study. An explanation of the general methodological approach is followed by an explanation of the methods of each study, including data collection procedures, quality assurance and ethics. An outline of methods details three studies exploring the concept and process of reflection from a theoretical perspective (chapter four, chapter five and chapter six). This is followed by two studies exploring practitioner perspectives of RP in the sport coaching context (chapter seven and chapter eight), before exploring methods of a first-person study of RP (chapter nine). The final chapters will include an overarching discussion (chapter ten) and critical evaluation and reflection on the findings and research process (chapter 11).

Methodological approach

Reflexive methodology aligning with the work of Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2017) provided the general methodological framework. This evolved as the initial studies were conducted. Initially, a broad theoretical study was conducted to understand the concept and process of reflection. This was initially proposed to complement a grounded theory study of the process of reflection. A decision was made to reframe the proposed studies to align with the expertise of my supervisory team.

Grounded theory methods recommend avoiding in-depth reading of literature prior to data collection (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 2017). A systematic review was published prior to beginning the doctoral programme (Marshall, 2019b), and further literature syntheses were already in process. Consequently, a reframed plan included a series of studies aiming to understand practitioner perspectives of RP. While exploring action research as a potential approach to incorporate a reflective dimension into this body of work, a first-person variation of this approach was identified that would complement the aforementioned theoretical and practitioner perspectives (Marshall, 2016). The work of Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2017) was adopted to create an overarching framework (Figure 1). This included a pluralist inquiry, aligned to a pragmatist research paradigm

(explored in chapter two), whereby a variety of analyses were used on qualitative data, believed to offer a richer and more nuanced account of participant experiences and perceptions of RP.

Alvesson and Skoldberg (2017, p. 328) describe reflexive research as a “play of reflection across various levels of interpretation”. This was achieved through interpretation of literature, interviews with sport coaches and extended immersion in RP in the context of my professional development. Thematic synthesis, grounded theory methods, hermeneutics, reflexive thematic analysis and meta-reflection were used to generate understanding of the concept and process of reflection. The following sub-section will justify these analytical methods.

Justification of analytical approach

Thematic synthesis (used in chapter four) is an established method for synthesising qualitative literature and has been described as being compatible with most qualitative methods (Thomas & Harden, 2008). This uses techniques inherent within thematic analysis and is theoretically flexible. Alternative methods were considered such as framework synthesis (Carroll et al., 2013) and meta-ethnography (Luong et al., 2023). However, due to the well-developed literature and the clear and explicit procedures while remaining theoretically flexible, thematic synthesis was chosen for this study. Also, due to the complexity of framework synthesis and meta-ethnography, thematic synthesis using an inductive approach seemed a sensible method to use in an initial qualitative synthesis.

Grounded theory methods were used in study two (chapter five and chapter six) to formally synthesise a body of literature. Methods from grounded theory have been highlighted as effective for qualitative syntheses (Ronkainen et al., 2021; Wolfswinkel et al., 2013). Also, before reframing the focus of this thesis, the initial overarching intentions of this body of work was to generate a grounded theory of reflection in the sport context. As such, grounded theory methods for rigorously reviewing literature were explored as an alternative to thematic synthesis, due to their suitability in generating explanations of social processes. Comparatively, thematic synthesis is a simple method for generating themes from textual data, extending insights from individual studies and was a

meaningful initial phase. However, to extend this further I explored more sophisticated methods that were able to generate evidentially grounded explanatory theories. These methods were complementary, helping to extend and deepen the synthesis.

Reflexive thematic analysis was used in study three (chapter seven). This enabled the development of patterns of shared meaning, offering a flexible framework to analyse qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019). This was preferred over alternative options such as interpretive phenomenological analysis, as findings could direct further analysis (e.g., at an inductive, deductive, latent, semantic, or critical level - if judged as appropriate). Inductive analysis was used in accordance with the exploratory aim to understand sport coaches' perceptions and experiences of RP. Interviews were transcribed verbatim, and due to not performing a detailed conversation analysis more complex transcription features (i.e., Jefferson protocol) were not used. Verbatim transcription was perceived adequate, enabling an understanding of participant perceptions and experiences. Reflexivity was inherent throughout the research process increasing rigour and was also resonant with the topic.

Chapter eight was an extension of chapter seven but used a more interpretive approach shifting the analytical frame of reference. This supported a reflexive stance and avoided being fixed in any one tradition of data analysis, or letting an analytical process dominate (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017), aligning with analytical pluralism (Clarke et al., 2015; Frost, 2021). Hermeneutic phenomenological analysis helped interpret participant experiences (Dibley et al., 2020). This offered a flexible interpretive process helping integrate an understanding of data with literature, creating a nuanced understanding of participant experiences.

To encourage a shift in thinking in study four (chapter nine), in accordance with reflexive methodology, it seemed appropriate to use a more open and flexible mode of inquiry aligning with the needs and focus of the study i.e., a meta-reflection. A reflective journal from ongoing RP, in the context of my teaching practice in the further education context, represented data used in an overarching reflection. This study emphasised barriers to RP and the factors that help to facilitate

engaging in RP. An overarching reflection seemed relevant and meaningful for this study due to the flexibility of integrating situated knowledge, experience and literature. Using structured methods such as thematic analysis or interpretive phenomenological analysis seemed inappropriate due to their alignment with multiple participant studies. Given this study was a first-person single participant self-study, a meta-reflection allowed more freedom for abductive reasoning (i.e., to propose plausible reasoned explanations for observed phenomena). This offered advantages over using primarily inductive or deductive processes, inherent in interpretive phenomenological analysis and thematic analysis.

Following these studies, a subsequent critical synthesis was written in line with the suggestion that: “Reflexivity arises when the different elements or levels are played off against each other” (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2017, p. 330). This drew together insights exploring areas of agreement and disagreement and involved reflecting on my assumptions and background and how these interacted with the research process.

The remainder of this chapter will explore the aims and methods used. Study one and study two (chapter four, chapter five and chapter six) explored the concept and process of reflection from a theoretical perspective using literature syntheses. Study three (chapter seven) explored reflection from a practitioner perspective by interviewing sport coaches, analysing their perceptions and experiences of using reflection in their professional development. A reframed analysis of data collected in chapter seven was presented in chapter eight as three case studies aiming to understand practitioners’ personal understanding of RP and how they engaged with RP. Chapter nine involved engaging in formalised RP (first-person perspective) in my professional practice as a further education sport lecturer, analysing my experience by reflecting on my reflective journal.

Study One (Chapter four)

This chapter included secondary analysis of published work. It was the initial literature synthesis aiming to understand reflection theoretically. It generated the foundations for this thesis

providing a platform to explore the process of reflection. The following sections will explain the literature search strategies, analysis and quality assessment processes.

Systematic search strategy.

Electronic databases (PubMed, PsychInfo, SPORTDiscus and Scopus) were searched on the 29th of January 2018 using the following search terms that were restricted to the title of publications: reflect* AND concept*, reflect* AND defin*, reflect* AND theor*. No restrictions were used for date of publication. The reference lists of retrieved articles were searched to identify additional publications that were relevant to the research question. During the initial search, 1301 article records were identified. Titles were screened initially to ensure relevance. If the article was relevant, the abstract was screened before either rejecting or downloading the full text. Following removal of duplicate records and ascertaining the relevance of the article to the current research questions, a total of 77 article abstracts and methodologies were screened in relation to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Studies that did not satisfy inclusion criteria were excluded. This resulted in 14 texts being included in a thematic synthesis. These were uploaded into NVivo 11 (QSR International Pty Ltd, 2017) and thematically synthesised (Thomas & Harden, 2008). The systematic search strategy used the PRISMA reporting method (Moher et al., 2009).

Inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Published qualitative articles that were reported in English and included reflection, RP, or reflective learning as the main topics of consideration were included. They must have explored the concept of reflection, defined reflection or tried to understand the process of reflection to be included.

Exclusion criteria included reflection, RP or reflective learning not being the primary topics (e.g. reflection may have been reported in the results but was not identified as a study variable in the methods of the study). Literature was excluded if it did not explore the concept of reflection or made no attempt to define reflection, RP or reflective learning nor contribute to understanding the process of reflection. Unpublished research (e.g., theses and dissertations) was also excluded.

Justification of cross-disciplinary search strategy.

Due to reflection lacking a consensual definition, an initial word frequency search was conducted on a collated list of definitions to facilitate an understanding of common characteristics. Three conditions were used during the word frequency search conducted in NVivo 11 (QSR International Pty Ltd, 2019). An initial search identified the number of exact word matches. A follow up search included synonyms. Finally, generalisations were included.

Thematic synthesis data extraction.

The following three phases of analysis were performed using NVivo 11 (QSR International Pty Ltd, 2019): initial coding, development of descriptive themes and the generation of analytical themes (Thomas & Harden, 2008). Where text cited secondary research, primary and secondary author citations were identified (e.g., see tables nine to twelve in [chapter four's findings](#))

Initial coding.

A process of familiarisation involved reading each article (Thomas & Harden, 2008). Initial coding ensured that every sentence was associated with at least one code (Thomas and Harden, 2008). All codes were assigned a label that was descriptively close to the text. Further reduction and interpretation were performed using constant comparison.

Development of descriptive themes.

All text assigned a code were re-examined for accuracy and precision. Codes were grouped according to perceived similarities to create descriptive themes (Thomas & Harden, 2008). Each group was checked, reduced and interpreted using constant comparison.

Development of analytical themes.

Analytical themes were developed by comparing descriptive themes against the aims and research questions (Thomas & Harden, 2008). Memos were written to facilitate reflection of categories, codes, and text (Charmaz, 2014; Thomas & Harden, 2008). The development of analytical themes required “going beyond the content of the original studies” while remaining logically coherent (Thomas & Harden, 2008, p. 7). Analytical themes were used to write up the final report (Charmaz, 2014; Thomas & Harden, 2008).

Quality assessment

Although there is no one agreed framework for assessing rigour in qualitative research, textual extracts, descriptive and analytical themes were tabulated and reported in chapter four, providing transparency regarding the contribution of each article to the final product.

Trustworthiness was enhanced through the consideration of: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Nowell et al., 2017). Credibility was enhanced through prolonged engagement with data using systematic analysis (Thomas and Harden, 2008), including constant comparison across all levels of analysis (text, initial codes, descriptive codes and analytical codes) and memo writing (Nowell et al., 2017). Transferability and dependability were operationalised through transparent reporting of textual data, descriptive, and analytical themes, and providing thick description of the data (Nowell et al., 2017). Confirmability was achieved through the achievement of the previous three trustworthiness criteria and by explicating reasons for analytical choices.

Study Two (Chapter five and Chapter six)

By inductively analysing textual excerpts via initial coding, focussed coding, constant comparison, and memo writing (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 2017; Wolfswinkel et al., 2013), articles were fragmented, sorted, and integrated to develop understanding of the process of reflection. This involved developing an existing NVivo database (study one; chapter four) whereby 21 articles were identified focussing on the process of reflection and 14 on the concept of reflection. An additional literature search explored PubMed, PsycArticles and Scopus using the search terms in Table 2. There were no restrictions on the date of publication. The search resulted in 813 articles; 75 were identified as relevant. Upon reading each of these full texts, relevant text was highlighted, or the article was excluded (n=69) in line with the inclusion/exclusion criteria (Table 3). Reasons for exclusion included not exploring or identifying a process of reflection (n=19); a predominantly quantitative approach used (n=4); not contributing to understanding factors that enable reflection (n=46). Six articles were integrated into the existing database. This resulted in 27 articles being

included in the final synthesis. Articles were uploaded into NVivo (QSR International Pty Ltd, 2019) with highlighted subsections from the initial reading being used as the focus of initial coding.

Table 2:

Search terms used to identify relevant literature to include in the current study.

<i>Database</i>	<i>Search terms</i>
PsycArticles	reflect* AND Process reflect* AND method reflect* AND approach
PubMed	(((((reflection[Title]) OR reflecting[Title]) OR Reflect[Title]) OR reflective[Title]) AND process[Title]) NOT "reflection on"[Title] NOT "reflecting on"[Title] (((reflection[Title]) OR reflecting[Title]) OR Reflect[Title]) OR reflective[Title]) AND method[Title]) NOT "reflection on"[Title] NOT "reflecting on"[Title] (((reflection[Title]) OR reflecting[Title]) OR Reflect[Title]) OR reflective[Title]) AND approach[Title]) NOT "reflection on"[Title] NOT "reflecting on"[Title]
Scopus	(TITLE (reflect*) AND TITLE (process) AND TITLE (method) AND NOT TITLE ("reflection on")) AND DOCTYPE (ar OR re)

Table 3:

Inclusion and exclusion criteria for the search exploring the process of reflection.

<i>Inclusion criteria</i>	<i>Exclusion criteria</i>
Reflection, RP, or reflective learning identified as the primary topics or areas of focus within the methods of the study	Reflection, RP, or reflective learning are not the primary topics or areas of focus
The article explores the process of reflection and/or used a specific method to illicit participant reflections	The article does not explicitly explore the process of reflection and does not overtly articulate a specific method used to illicit participant reflections
Peer reviewed and published articles with data reported in English	Quantitative research Data not reported in English

Initial coding

Initial coding involved assigning a label to text that was descriptive of the original perceived meaning helping to condense textual data. This coincided with constant comparison of codes and text to check for coherence (Charmaz, 2014).

Focussed coding

Focussed coding involved re-examining and comparing initial codes to understand similarities and variances between them. The most useful codes helping to make sense of larger amounts of data were used to prompt thinking and generate more abstract categories, thus rearranging initial codes into clusters. As further codes were developed, an iterative analysis integrated them and refined categories.

Memo writing

Memos helped to explicate analysis by examining conceptual properties of data, codes and categories. This reflective space helped to consider developments in the study, enabling overt and systematic thinking through the analysis (Charmaz, 2014). Memos were used to help write the report.

Study three (Chapter seven)

This was the first study in this thesis to collect primary data and involved an examination of the concept and process of reflection using semi-structured interviews with sport coaching practitioners. This aimed to understand coaches' experiences and perceptions of RP, situating reflection within the sport context. The following sections explain the analysis, quality assurance and ethical processes. Data collection and participant information are included in chapter seven.

Analysis

Transcripts were uploaded into NVivo 12 (QSR International Pty Ltd, 2019). Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019) involved recursive engagement with the following stages: familiarisation, initial coding, theme development and refinement. Familiarisation involved reading the developed transcripts. Initial coding fragmented the text and assigned a label representing the interpreted meaning of the text. Initial codes remained descriptively close to the perceived meaning. Initial codes were organised into clusters by engaging in analytical comparisons and reorganising initial codes (see appendix B for an overview of themes, initial codes and textual excerpts). Themes were conceptualised as patterns of shared meaning, with meaning being made explicit through data interpretation and synthesis of my understanding and interpretations of data. This recognises that there is no such thing as value-free research where biases are eliminated during analysis. Instead, biases, where relevant, were identified and reflected on individually and often through supervisory comments and discussions in team meetings. This ensured that where possible and relevant latent biases and assumptions were considered reflectively rather than influencing analysis completely unchecked.

A reflexive attitude was maintained, and this manifested when questions were posed drawing out implicit biases. For example, while writing the theme 'a reflexive and experiential inquiry' the following comment was written: 'Is this interpretation guided by a bias towards the default interventionist dual process theory model as a way of explaining critical effort/intent? Regardless, does this interpretation align with what is going on in the data? Does it explain the data?'. This led to checking a bias against available evidence, and against data, making sure that biases were consciously and explicitly evaluated, rather than remaining implicit and unconsciously driving analysis. I recognised that biases were inevitable but engaged reflexively by collaborating with my supervisory team and thought critically about personal biases, drawing explicit attention to them while considering validity. Where these ideas and assumptions were supported by evidence and/or logic, their acceptance within the final report was negotiated consciously.

Supervisory meetings were used to discuss comments and themes, often leading to critical engagement; For example, leading to a consideration of the wider context and assumptions underlying the nature of participants' engagement with reflection. This helped consider whether voluntary participation in this study could indicate an interest in reflection and bias dialogue and insights generated from the data. It was therefore important and helpful to engage reflexively and critically with the data.

Quality assurance

The following section explains how this study met a range of quality standards outlined by Tracy (2010). Quality standards were chosen to enhance and demonstrate rigour in the research process. These standards were chosen in particular because of their broad application across a range of qualitative research methodologies, meaning they are versatile and accessible. They also balance technical and subjective elements while considering research impact. Each quality standard was given a subheading, and the underlying narrative discussed characteristics and processes of this study that demonstrated alignment with each criterion.

Worthy topic

As sport coaches were reported to value but not often maintain engagement with systematic RP (Burt & Morgan, 2014) this study contributed a practitioner perspective helping to understand how coaches perceived and experienced RP. This was a useful addition to formalised conceptions of reflection, helping to develop practical recommendations. This study used practitioners situated knowledge to understand how sport coaches experienced and defined RP. This helped to elucidate potential barriers and facilitators and understand how individual conceptions, alongside context and working constraints, influenced ways of engaging with RP.

Rich rigour

Sport coaches were recruited who had a large amount of experience engaging with coach education across the various levels and were likely to have a large body of practical experience and knowledge that they could reflect on, thus contributing to the richness of data generated. Conversations across the supervisory team helped to engage reflexively with data and decide on the conceptual value of some themes. For example, the theme 'a reflexive experiential inquiry' was only represented by four participants and we discussed if this should be excluded from the final report. However, following further analysis, this theme was judged as having meaningful conceptual value and explained how reflection, as an analytical process, was applied in practice. To support reflexive engagement, memos and comments were embedded in the theme table document. These were shared and engaged with by the supervisory team, facilitating critical collaborative inquiry.

Sincerity

Methods and data were reported transparently in the report and theme table. Discussions between supervisory team members ensured multiple perspectives were involved. These conversations brought attention to biases, blind spots, awareness and facilitated critical engagement.

Credibility

Feedback and questions were received from my supervisory team, supporting critical thinking and deeper analysis. We also engaged in conversations, helping me to interpret and

understand the data. Data were reported transparently in-text where relevant and in the theme table. This transparency was intended to help the reader make judgements about how data was interpreted and abstracted into themes.

Significant contribution

This study explored sport coaches' perceptions and experiences of RP offering insights into the process of reflection from the perspectives of experienced sport coaches. This highlighted the coaches' voices about the limitations and challenges, alongside their perceptions and experiences, of RP.

Ethics

Procedural ethics

Prior to data collection, this study was approved by the University of Hertfordshire's Health, Science, Engineering and Technology ethics committee (protocol number: LMS/PGR/UH/04150; see [Appendix G](#) for ethics approval letter). Prior to each interview participants were emailed an information sheet ([Appendix C](#)), a copy of the interview questions ([Appendix E](#)), and a debrief form ([Appendix F](#)). At the beginning of each interview participants verbally agreed to participate in the study as well as signing an informed consent ([Appendix D](#)). To ensure anonymity, participant gender was not reported in extracts. This latter point will be explored further in the following subsection considering situational and relational ethics.

Situational and relational ethics

There were four ethical issues that were actively problematised and reflected on. These were emergent and specific to this study (situational ethics) while considering how my actions influenced others (relational ethics), hence the dual use of situational and relational in the subheading. These ethical considerations included the issues of combining the role of researcher while interviewing a senior colleague, my sport coaching background, issues of interviewing participants known to myself, and the low numbers of female representation in the participant sample.

The first issue concerned a participant who was a more senior member of staff at the University, although previously not acquainted. It was important to remain sensitive to issues of power and authority and how the dynamics of an interview could shift this. During initial contact, both agreed to an informal virtual meeting to discuss the study. All participants received an information sheet and consent form by email to encourage transparency about the purpose and process of the study. This included a copy of the questions that they could reflect on to help inform their decision about whether to participate. It was considered important to be as transparent and open as possible to ensure they understood the process and line of questioning when deciding whether (or not) to participate. Following the initial virtual meeting, they were happy to proceed with the study, and a separate date and time was organised to meet virtually for the interview. This ensured both interviewer and participant had time to reflect on and prepare for the interview. All other participants were emailed the questions when they agreed to participate, so this was a standardised part of the recruitment process. However, as this colleague requested a virtual meeting prior to deciding participation and they were willing to engage in the interview immediately, I believed it important to establish thinking-time between the initial meeting and interview.

A second issue considered my dual role as an accredited coach and researcher i.e., I could be considered an insider researcher (Bonello, 2021). I had a similar background to the participants and although this helped to build a rapport with and engage participants, this could also have led to unchecked assumptions influencing interpretation of participants' statements. I listened actively to participants, paraphrasing and reflecting back content to encourage further layers of reflection and dialogue (Kluger & Nir, 2010; Lavee & Itzchakov, 2023; Rollnick & Miller, 1995). Consequently, as I listened to participants' stories, there may have been a tendency to reflect concepts and experiences that resonated with me, thus subconsciously influencing the direction of dialogue. Thus, it was important to engage reflexively with data collection and analysis by engaging with research supervisors and reflecting on how the self (i.e., my beliefs, knowledge, values and assumptions)

interacted with my actions e.g., how my understanding and experience of coaching may have influenced how I interacted with participants and the questions asked.

A third issue concerns two participants who I knew in a personal capacity. These individuals included a friend who was known through postgraduate study but since 2012 had not been connected, apart from on social media. Another participant was known through a mutual interest in coaching and officiating. I had remained connected with both through social media but had infrequent contact with them at the time of conducting this study.

Although knowing these individuals supported open discussion during the interviews, on face value it could seem plausible that they might have reported their perceptions and experiences in a socially desirable way according to demand characteristics. However, there seemed to be evidence of them being self-critical and honest about their perceived limitations, and thus it seemed likely that the reported accounts were honest representations of their perceptions and experiences.

A fourth issue was the low number of female participants recruited for this study and the risk of backward identification using pronouns (e.g., she, her). At times I would find myself including pronouns when writing, particularly on the first draft of a chapter when I could still visualise the individual I interviewed. These transcripts and quotations were subsequently edited to include neutral pronouns (e.g., they) to reduce the risk of revealing characteristics that could support backward identification.

The above could also be problematised over assumptions made about gender identification (e.g., the first-draft use of he, she, her and him). In future work I should consider collecting more extensive demographic data including participants' gender identity to be able to correct these assumptions before they are inadvertently filtered into written enquiries. The modification to gender-neutral pronouns facilitated depersonalisation, limiting backward identification but also helped to avoid making assumptions about gender identity.

Study Four (Chapter eight)

A tripartite case study, involving an in-depth reassessment of previously conducted interviews was considered appropriate as it enabled a deeper understanding of participants' experiences of RP (Woodside, 2010). This helped to shift the frame of reference from a broad understanding of participant's perceptions and experiences of RP to a more focussed analysis of the way they understood and engaged with RP. This also aligned with the recommendations of Alvesson and Sköldberg (2017) suggesting reflexive research should aim to break away from a fixed frame of reference, and question weaknesses in existing modes of thought and analysis, rather than try to extend them. Reframing the focus on individual cases with a different analysis aligned with the core tenets of reflexive research (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017).

Participants

All participants from the study conducted in chapter seven were contacted by email to request further use of their data for a case study ([Appendix K](#)). Three participants replied and a follow up email was sent, including a participant information sheet ([Appendix I](#)) and an informed consent ([Appendix J](#)) that was signed by each participant. This permitted me to use this data in a follow-up analysis (C1, C3 and C6). A copy of the ethics approval notice can be found in [Appendix L](#). Participants were either lead coaches and/or held the highest qualification from their respective governing body of sport.

Quality assurance

Meetings with my supervisors facilitated reflection on ideas, and written feedback also helped to challenge my perspective. This included reflecting on biases, ensuring that they were carefully checked rather than unwittingly affecting analysis. Meetings typically occurred after written feedback had been received and this helped to focus discussion on perceivably problematic areas of the study.

Throughout the research process, I engaged with the data for prolonged periods of time, reading and re-reading the transcripts and excerpts to facilitate understanding. Verbatim quotes were reported transparently, providing rich description to support and justify interpretations.

Literature was read to generate deeper understanding of concepts, creating a “fusion of horizons” (i.e., synthesis) between participant data, literature, and the researcher’s interpretation (Dibley et al., 2020, p. 128). This helped to provide grounding for interpretations.

Analysis

Analysis included the following stages: reading the transcripts, initial coding, writing interpretive summaries, dwelling in the data, reading relevant literature (Dibley et al., 2020). Transcripts were read, and a second reading involved initial coding, whereby a descriptive label was added to the text as a comment in Microsoft Word. These labels were used to start the process of identifying relevant text aligning with the aims and objectives of the study. These labels helped to think about the data more explicitly and were used to guide and trigger the process of writing interpretive summaries (Dibley et al., 2020). Interpretive summaries were a reflective space to think about data and to weave these ideas into case studies. Repeated reading and active questioning of data facilitated an active process of “dwelling with the data” (Dibley et al., 2020, p. 125). Analysis was recursive involving comparing the developing summaries with a re-reading of the transcript and codes while reflecting on the material.

Literature that was read as a part of the latter phases of analysis primarily included the work of Dewey (1933), Schön (1983), and Mezirow (1991). However, when insights were identified in the narrative, literature that aligned with these ideas were sourced and read to deepen understanding. The above stages resulted in a synthesis between my interpretation of primary data and literature. I used these different perspectives to help navigate those of the participants and I was therefore an active agent in the process of creating interpretations. It was important to report excerpts to ground interpretations.

These analytical stages could have continued indefinitely (Dibley et al., 2020). Consequently, a pragmatic decision was made to end the process when a perceivably meaningful contribution to understanding was generated, alongside a coherent report that achieved the aims of the study. This was supported by feedback and meetings with the research supervisory team.

Ethics

Data used in this study was previously collected for study three in chapter seven. A reframed analysis helped to probe more deeply into participant understanding and processes of RP.

Consequently, the situational and relational ethical procedures were like those in study three.

However, there were some additional ethical concerns to consider in this study. Specifically, as participant data was being used again for a different purpose, it was important to re-apply for formal procedural ethical approval. This study was approved by the University of Hertfordshire's Health, Science, Engineering and technology ethics committee (protocol number: aLMS/PGR/UH/04150(2); see Appendix L). Informed consent was given by three participants to re-analyse their data.

As a case study approach might have led to backward identification of participants, names and names of workplaces and organisations were avoided by depersonalising excerpts. However, background information of each participant was necessary to contextualise the findings enabling transferability. This required careful proofreading of the chapter to ensure detail was included to support transferability and contextualisation while limiting the possibility of backward identification. This was supported by conversations and feedback from the supervisory team. Participants were informed of the risks and benefits of this study including the efforts made to depersonalise transcripts and excerpts. Each person agreed to take part in the study on the basis that these ethical processes and mitigation strategies were followed.

Study Five (Chapter nine)

Design

This study used a first-person action research approach (Marshall, 2016) with extended engagement in formalised RP during a 38-week period of the 2022-2023 academic year. This offered the opportunity to analyse the concept and process of reflection from a first-person perspective, involving an immersed and situated personal understanding of RP, thus complementing previous chapters utilising theoretical and practitioner perspectives.

Action research has been described as being an orientation to inquiry rather than a methodology (Reason & Bradbury, 2008). This develops practical knowledge, generating solutions to

situated and contextually specific problems, bringing together action and reflection (Reason & Bradbury, 2008). Action research aims to create positive changes enabling “human flourishing” (Reason & Bradbury, 2008, p. 1). According to Reason and Bradbury (2008), action research can be broadly differentiated by the following terms: first-person, second-person and third-person. First-person action research aims to foster an inquiring approach to a researcher/practitioners’ own life, including their professional practice e.g., living life as inquiry (Marshall, 2016). Second-person action research works with others collaboratively to inquire into matters of mutual concern e.g., participatory action research (Swantz, 2008). Third-person action research aims for wider impact by extending first and second-person inquiries supporting larger system-wide changes (Reason & Bradbury, 2008).

The focus of this study was on my life and practice in the context of RP i.e., a first-person perspective. I engaged in an extended period of RP with a reflective journal being used as data, alongside an overarching reflection on the experience of doing formalised RP. The focus of this reflection were the barriers to RP and factors that helped to facilitate engagement in RP. Following this chapter, I reflected on the thesis overall, considering theoretical and practical implications. This included a critical reflection on the assumptions imbued within literature, including systemic issues and a consideration of practical suggestions to improve practice, aligning with the values of third-person research outlined above.

Procedure

The study involved using an electronically written journal as a primary mode of representation used to expedite my own reflective thinking about my practice as a lecturer in the sport context. The study was conducted in my place of work at a Further Education provider in the United Kingdom.

Data was collected by creating a reflective journal involving identifying critical moments and engaging in written reflection on experiences. Critical moments were defined as experiences that stood out as meaningful or puzzling and these were often associated with an emotional or affective

response e.g., frustration, surprise, pride etc. Aligning with suggestions of Marshall et al. (2021) in chapter five, these affective/emotional responses seemed to signal a gap in knowledge or understanding as they represented unexpected experiences (Reisenzein et al., 2019). Conversely, experiences that occurred as expected were not likely to be associated with an intense affective response. Emotions seemed to signal gaps in understanding, presenting opportunities for learning i.e., developing insight to help explain the unexpected; or as noted by Crathern (2001, p. 164): “Emotion tells you where the learning is to be had. It points to things important.”. Therefore, emotionally and subjectively salient experiences or ideas were the intended focus of reflective inquiry.

All transcripts and journal entries were anonymised replacing names of people, places, and organisations with depersonalised labels. For example: [name] [place] [organisation name]. Sometimes, names referring to publicised managers remained in the journal e.g., when making analogies to help reflect on coaching leadership styles. For example, I considered Sir Alex Ferguson’s interactions with his players and his strict and disciplined leadership style, while he maintained closeness with his players who committed to him as their manager.

Participants

The focus of this study was on my experience of using RP as a mode of inquiry into my professional practice as a lecturer in the sport context. The main units of analysis were my behaviours. However, these actions were situated and interactional. Thus, my students were indirectly involved in the study and directly influenced by the study, due to my learning and development impacting their learning experience.

Students included 44 young male people, between the ages of 16-18 studying either a Level Three Diploma in Sport and Physical Activity or a Level Three Extended Diploma in Sport and Physical Activity. I taught these courses at a football academy, and football training and matches were included in the curriculum, representing half of student contact hours. As a lecturer, I was not involved in football coaching. I did deliver practical lessons and assessments when the curriculum,

my pedagogical choices, and available resources aligned with the learning needs of the group.

However, my role was primarily academic.

Ethics

Formal ethical approval was granted by the University of Hertfordshire's Health, Science, Engineering and Technology ECDA (protocol number: LMS/PGR/UH/05122; see [Appendix P](#)). An extension to the analysis period was also sought ([Appendix Q](#)). Approval from my line manager for the study to be conducted was received ([Appendix Q](#)). The study was explained to students and parents by email and supported by direct explanations to students during lessons. As the study was focussed on my practice, involving working with young people in an educational context, each student and parent was given a participant information sheet ([Appendix M](#) and [Appendix N](#)) and given the opportunity to opt out of the study. In the case of a participant opting out, any journal reference to an experience with this specific individual would have been removed. No parents or students opted out of the study. Two parents demonstrated interest in the study due to having similar experiences e.g., one conducted research to earn a master's degree and another facilitated reflective discussions as a part of their job.

Throughout the study I encountered a few situational and relational ethical issues including explicitly revealing my experience of anxiety; lack of response from parents following email prompts about the study; power-dynamics interacting with the use of an opt-out approach during long-term RP research. Each of these will be explored below while considering how I approached each issue.

During the process of RP, I wrote about experiences of anxiety in my professional work. This was challenging at first as it revealed personal struggles within my work, and I considered whether to keep this in my journal when submitting work to the University. To ensure transparency and authenticity I decided to keep the original journal entries. This helped me to be more open about personal challenges and reflect on these in relation to my personal life. Experiences of anxiety have since become clearer, and I have sought support via talking therapy to help navigate these personal challenges. This has been a transformative yet difficult experience supporting my personal and

professional growth. However, this explicit revealing of vulnerability raised ethical questions that could be more impactful during sensitive first-person action research and reflective work. Issues of vulnerability should be considered prospectively in future first-person work.

Another ethical issue related to the lack of response from parents during the opt-out process. Emails were sent to all parents to explain the purpose of my study. A detailed outline of the study was attached, and parents were informed that if they had any concerns then they could opt out of the study and any interactions with them would not appear in my journal. Only two parents replied. I reminded students throughout the study, sent a follow-up email to parents and mentioned the study during parent evenings and phone calls with them.

The concern could also have been associated with power dynamics (e.g., me as their teacher/assessor). This could have indirectly affected decisions about opting out. I assured students and parents that any references made about interactions would be anonymised and depersonalised and that if they want to opt out of the study this would not affect our working relationship. Because parents have greater psychological distance from the classroom, they may have been more likely to say if they or their child was unhappy or uncertain about being associated with the study. I also ensured interactions were respectful and non-coercive, cultivating an open and transparent classroom environment. I would frequently seek student feedback regarding our lessons. For example, I would ask them to anonymously complete an electronic form where they would reflect on our lessons, what was working and what was not working in relation to activity choices. This nurtured a culture of respect for the student voice. Parents also had access to my supervisor's email address (included in ethics forms), and my line managers contact details so they could have opted out or discussed any concerns they may have had through these channels.

Analysis

An initial deductive analysis helped to locate relevant text aligning with the aims of the study. Excerpts were then copied into a separate word document and used as material for reflection. This enabled a narrower focus, to avoid the distraction of needing to search through large amounts

of data for relevant extracts. This condensed data, making the process efficient, with excerpts easily available and relevant to the aims of the study. References to line numbers following each excerpt refer to line numbers in the original journal rather than the deductively organised extracts.

Quality assurance

This first-person study developed situated knowledge about RP aligning with a pragmatic research paradigm (see [chapter two](#)). Ideas might resonate with other practitioners' experiences and thus offer a situated and conceptual form of generalisation (Donmoyer, 2000; Gomm et al., 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

In relation to integrity and trustworthiness, I used the quality choice points outlined by Bradbury et al. (2019). These supported reflection on how this study aligns with established criteria ensuring more robust rationales and processes were included in the study. These points are outlined below as subheadings to focus my reflections.

Articulation of objectives

Aims and objectives were clearly identified, with the overarching intent to understand the process of reflection from a first-person perspective. This was achieved by writing a meta-reflection focusing on the barriers to RP and the factors facilitating engagement with RP. This was integrated into a broader reflexive methodology (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017) engaging in a multi-perspective conceptual analysis of reflection which was explained and justified.

Partnership and participation

Although this chapter was a first-person account of my personal experiences of long-term formalised RP, I was engaged in my practice with experienced others in an interactive context. Conversations with colleagues and mentors often helped to inspire reflective processes, providing material for further formalised RP. Additionally, my wife is an experienced teacher, head of department and head of year at a secondary school and our conversations often provided a dialogic backdrop that fed into my formalised RP. Our informal conversations sometimes centred on problems experienced in my practice and due to her wealth of experience and expertise she was

able to challenge or expand my ideas with reasoned practical knowledge. As such, my RP was situated and interactive, including informal reflective processes that fed-into my reflective journal.

I also engaged with my doctoral supervisory team of three experienced academics who provided feedback and facilitated RC. These conversations, alongside written feedback expedited reflexivity, further enhanced by writing reflective notes. For example, if I was experiencing a block in the formal writing process, I would sometimes write about this experience, often using freefall writing to explore the problem explicitly, as suggested by Marshall (2016).

Contribution to action research theory/practice

This chapter generated situated knowledge about the difficulties experienced when engaging in long-term formalised RP. This contributed insight from a first-person perspective providing insight about limitations of current conceptualisations and policies. This also engaged with broader socio-political ideas to suggest ways that RP can be facilitated effectively, creating impact for practitioners and the people they serve/support.

Insights were integrated with literature where relevant, to show how theory can inform the practical insights. This process supported a pragmatic critique of established ideas and expanded theory with situated insights about the limitations of RP and the strategies and approaches that supported engagement with RP and helped to overcome personal and professional constraints.

Methods and process

Methods were articulated explaining how the reflective journal was processed into a meta-reflection. Excerpts from the journal were used to illustrate how personal and professional constraints acted as barriers to RP. Sometimes excerpts relating to a barrier or a factor facilitating RP were not written in the journal but were constituted in the mode of representation. For example, I engaged in an audio-diary to circumnavigate the fatigue I had experienced with writing throughout the day, and the resulting transcript from this audio-file was evidence in the text for this mode of RP.

A meta-reflection, integrating experience with theory was considered appropriate for constructing situated knowledge as it aligns to pragmatic epistemology. This acknowledges the

constructed nature of knowledge and the pragmatic reasoning processes ascertaining the relative usefulness of varying ideas (Hickman et al., 2020). This epistemology implies knowledge is constructed, having varying degrees of practical or conceptual utility. This helps us to act in the world or understand it respectively (Hickman et al., 2020). Knowledge generated should be judged based on the degree to which it helps to understand and/or engage with RP.

Actionability

This study generated insight into the practical constraints limiting engagement with formalised RP, suggesting a broader conceptual understanding of RP than is sometimes assumed. I also considered the factors that supported continued engagement in formalised RP, generating relevant situated knowledge that might help practitioners. By engaging in a meta-reflection, this study also modelled a reflective process.

Reflexivity

My values, beliefs and role were explicitly visible within the reflective journal as I considered how I interacted with students. This manifested in reflecting on how my feelings (e.g., anxiety) might have influenced my actions in relation to over-instructing to justify my role. The meta-reflection focussed on my overarching experience of the RP process rather than re-telling narratives of my practice. As such, the focus of the final report did not report on these experiences in depth.

Context was also evident in my journal as I reflected on problems-of-practice and working constraints e.g., a relative lack of teaching resources in relation to the surplus of teaching time and a need for depth of learning. This led me to plan a range of problem-based learning (PBL) lessons that engaged learners to deepen and contextualise their understanding, using the additional learning time meaningfully. RP helped me to carefully navigate working constraints and develop learning experiences that deepened my students' learning. This development in my practice helped to shift my perceived style of teaching to a learning facilitator.

Significance

The above-mentioned developments in my practice demonstrated how powerful RP was to navigating working constraints, developing personally meaningful and situated knowledge about

how to support my students, leading to changed practice. The detailed and contextualised knowledge of my students was recognised by senior colleagues who recommended me to present ideas about how I encouraged students to connect with the curriculum at a conference. The evolution of my practice has had a lasting impact due to my overarching perspective on my role as a teacher shifting towards that of a facilitator of learning. I continue to adopt problem-based and inquiry-based learning in my teaching practice, while continuing to explore other ways of facilitating learning.

Final thoughts: a pluralist thesis

Although this pluralist thesis might risk epistemological incoherence due to the multiple methods used aligning with differing epistemologies, the body of work was anchored in pragmatism. A pragmatic research paradigm allows for epistemological diversity by prioritising the research question and achieving conceptual and practical utility (Al-Ababneh, 2020; Killam, 2013). Each chapter worked towards a richer perspective on the theoretical and practical utility of reflection, contributing greater understanding while offering practical ways of working with RP.

Qualitative syntheses offered a theoretically sound starting point for exploring the concept and process of reflection. Interviews with sport coaches offered a practitioner perspective that helped to generate practical insights to support theory, while considering barriers to RP and the factors that enable some practitioners to engage wholeheartedly with RP. A final first-person study enabled holistic experiential insights to be generated supporting situated knowledge about the barriers and factors enabling reflection in the context of my professional work as a sport lecturer in further education. A critical synthesis integrated these ideas considering them practically, conceptually and reflexively (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017). This synthesis integrated theoretical and situational knowledge, engaging dialectically to generate practical suggestions and a deeper understanding of the concept and process of reflection.

Chapter Four: The Concept of Reflection¹

Introduction

Reflection was originally defined by Dewey (1933, p. 9) as “an active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends”. This implies that reflection is a cognitive process involved in the evaluation of an idea or belief, using evidence to inform inquiry. A variety of definitions (Table 4) resulted in confusion as to what reflection is and subsequently how to engage in it meaningfully and effectively. This likely causes diverging theoretical narratives and a decrease in engagement with RP that is evidenced in the literature (Bennett-Levy & Lee, 2014; Burt & Morgan, 2014; Haarhoff et al., 2015). Burt and Morgan (2014) reported one out of ten participants being able to identify a model of reflection, indicating a general lack of understanding.

Alongside the definition above, Moon (1999, p. 155) also defines reflection as “a mental process with purpose and/or outcome in which manipulation of meaning is applied to relatively complicated or unstructured ideas in learning or to problems for which there is no obvious solution”. Kolb (2014, p. 49) defines learning as “a process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” and reflection as the “internal transformation of experience”. Black and Plowright (2010, p. 246) define reflection as “the process of engaging with learning and/or professional practice that provides an opportunity to critically analyse and evaluate that learning of practice”. Finally, Knowles et al. (2014, p. 10) define reflection as “A purposeful and complex process that facilitates the examination of experience by questioning the whole self and our agency within the context of practice”. Common ideas seem to indicate that reflection is an active and intentional mental process used to navigate complex ideas or experiences, resulting in learning. According to Moon (1999), reflection is a form of cognitive housekeeping or reorganising of existing knowledge to make better sense of what is currently known. This is similar to the ideas of Mezirow (1991) who

¹ As this chapter was published as a journal article in *Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, it will demonstrate similarities to this publication. Through ongoing inquiry, modifications to this chapter were made to frame it more effectively in the context of the overall thesis.

posits that learning involves schema or perspective transformation, thus leading to alternative insights from concepts already known.

Reflection is an important topic to explore as RP has been endorsed by professional bodies regardless of limited research exploring its efficacy (Health and Care Professions Council, 2018, 2021; The British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences, 2018; The British Psychological Society, 2017; United Kingdom Strength and Conditioning Association, 2017). Consequently, the requirement for practitioners to submit evidence of reflection-on-practice to maintain professional accreditation is based on limited evidence. Also, if reflection is an active, persistent cognitive process with consideration of beliefs, assumptions and evidence then it seems to be intertwined with conscious and self-regulated learning (Masui & De Corte, 2005). Being self-regulated seems logically associated with a lifelong pursuit of understanding potentially supporting practitioner competence. Competent practitioners will likely improve satisfaction of service users e.g., athletes in the context of sport coaching. These participants may have positive experiences in sport and develop trust and heightened cooperation with coaches, developing closeness and a sense of commitment affecting their long-term adherence to sport. Because of the range of benefits RP may offer, it seems necessary to more thoroughly understand the concept of reflection. One way that this might be conducted is through a qualitative synthesis informing subsequent studies.

Research aims.

The aim of this review is to understand the concept of reflection in relation to professional practice. A systematic approach, utilising thematic synthesis (Thomas & Harden, 2008) will be used to approach the following question: How does the existing literature explain the concept of reflection across professional contexts?

Table 4:**Existing definitions of reflection**

<i>Definition of reflection</i>	<i>Author</i>
"The active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends"	Dewey (1933, p. 9)
"The process of creating and clarifying the meaning of experience (present or past) in terms of self (self in relation to self and self in relation to the world). The outcome of the process is changed conceptual perspective. The experience that is explored and examined to create meaning focusses around or embodies a concern of central importance to the self"	Boyd and Fales (1983, p. 101)
"Those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences to lead to new understandings and appreciations. It may take place in isolation or in association with others"	Boud et al. (1985, p. 19)
"The process of critically assessing the content, process, or premise(s) of our efforts to interpret and give meaning to an experience"	Mezirow (1991, p. 104)
"An active and deliberate process of critically examining practice where an individual is challenged and enabled to undertake the process of self-inquiry to empower the practitioner to realize desirable and effective practice within a reflexive spiral of personal transformation"	Duffy (2007, p. 1405)
"The process of engaging with learning and/or professional practice that provides an opportunity to critically analyse and evaluate that learning or practice"	Black and Plowright (2010, p. 246)
"The practitioner's ability to access, make sense of and learn through work experience, to achieve more desirable, effective and satisfying work"	Johns (2010, p. 23)
"A deliberate process that actively engages an individual in exploring his or her experiences. The exploration of decisions, thoughts and feelings should inform and improve practice"	Gentile (2012, p. 102)
"Reflection is a multifaceted process (not a simple product) in which a person's cognitive and emotional capacities are activated for constructive learning purposes that may result in attitudinal or behavioural changes"	Cleary et al. (2013, p. 69)
"A mental process with purpose and/ or outcome in which manipulation of meaning is applied to relatively complicated or unstructured ideas in learning or to problems for which there is no obvious solution"	Moon (1999, pp. 155-156)
"A purposeful and complex process that facilitates the examination of experience by questioning the whole self and our agency within the context of practice"	Knowles et al. (2014, p. 10)
"The internal transformation of experience"	Kolb (2014, p. 49)

Results**Word frequency count of existing definitions**

Word frequency counts of available definitions of reflection can be found in Table 5. This analysis identified that practice (n=6/7/0), experience (n=5/8/0), active (n=0/6/36) were present across two conditions, while the five most frequently used words in available definitions of reflection were: cognitive (n=0/0/44), active (n=0/6/36), changed (n=0/0/36) and process (n=10/12/26) and content (n=0/0/23) occurring when word inclusion was expanded to include generalisations of the identified word. Results imply reflection is a cognitive process and may be generalisable across professional contexts. It is unlikely that cognitive processes are different according to occupation. Therefore, a cross-disciplinary search is a reasonable starting point to begin a systematic search to synthesise reflection literature.

Table 5:

Word frequency count of available definitions of reflection (frequency of occurrence is presented in parentheses and citations indicate sources including the identified words)

<i>Exact matches (frequency)</i>	<i>Synonyms included (frequency)</i>	<i>Generalizations included (frequency)</i>
Process* (10) (Black and Plowright, 2010; Boyd and Fales, 1983; Cleary, et al., 2013; Duffy, 2007; Gentile, 2012; Knowles, et al., 2014; Mezirow, 1991; Moon, 2013)	Process* (12) (Black and Plowright, 2010; Boyd and Fales, 1983; Cleary, et al., 2013; Duffy, 2007; Gentile, 2012; Johns, 2011; Knowles, et al., 2014; Mezirow, 1991; Moon, 2013)	Cognitive (44) (Black and Plowright, 2010; Boud, et al., 1985; Boyd and Fales, 1983; Cleary, et al., 2013; Dewey, 1933; Duffy, 2007; Gentile, 2012; Johns, 2011; Knowles, et al., 2014; Kolb, 2014; Mezirow, 1991; Moon, 2013)
Practice# (6) (Black and Plowright, 2010; Duffy, 2007; Gentile, 2012; Knowles, et al., 2014)	Experience# (8) (Boud, et al., 1985; Boyd and Fales, 1983; Gentile, 2012; Johns, 2011; Knowles, et al., 2014; Kolb, 2014; Mezirow, 1991)	Active# (36) (Black and Plowright, 2010; Boud, et al., 1985; Boyd and Fales, 1983; Cleary, et al., 2013; Dewey, 1933; Duffy, 2007; Gentile, 2012; Johns, 2011; Knowles, et al., 2014; Mezirow, 1991; Moon, 2013)
Experience# (5) (Boyd and Fales, 1983; Johns, 2011; Knowles, et al., 2014; Kolb, 2014; Mezirow, 1991)	Practice# (7) (Black and Plowright, 2010; Duffy, 2007; Gentile, 2012; Knowles, et al., 2014; Moon, 2013)	Changed (36) (Black and Plowright, 2010; Boud, et al., 1985; Boyd and Fales, 1983; Cleary, et al., 2013; Dewey, 1933; Duffy, 2007; Gentile, 2012; Johns, 2011; Knowles, et al., 2014; Kolb, 2014; Mezirow, 1991; Moon, 2013)
Learning# (4) (Black and Plowright, 2010; Cleary, et al., 2013; Moon, 2013)	Learning# (7) (Black and Plowright, 2010; Boud, et al., 1985; Cleary, et al., 2013; Dewey, 1933; Johns, 2011; Moon, 2013)	Process* (26) (Black and Plowright, 2010; Boud, et al., 1985; Boyd and Fales, 1983; Cleary, et al., 2013; Dewey, 1933; Duffy, 2007; Gentile, 2012; Johns, 2011; Knowles, et al., 2014; Mezirow, 1991; Moon, 2013)
Critically (3) (Black and Plowright, 2010; Duffy, 2007; Mezirow, 1991)	Active# (6) (Boud, et al., 1985; Boyd and Fales, 1983; Cleary, et al., 2013; Dewey, 1933; Duffy, 2007; Gentile, 2012)	Content (23) (Black and Plowright, 2010; Boud, et al., 1985; Boyd and Fales, 1983; Cleary, et al., 2013; Dewey, 1933; Johns, 2011; Knowles, et al., 2014; Kolb, 2014; Mezirow, 1991; Moon, 2013)

*Present in all conditions

Present in two conditions

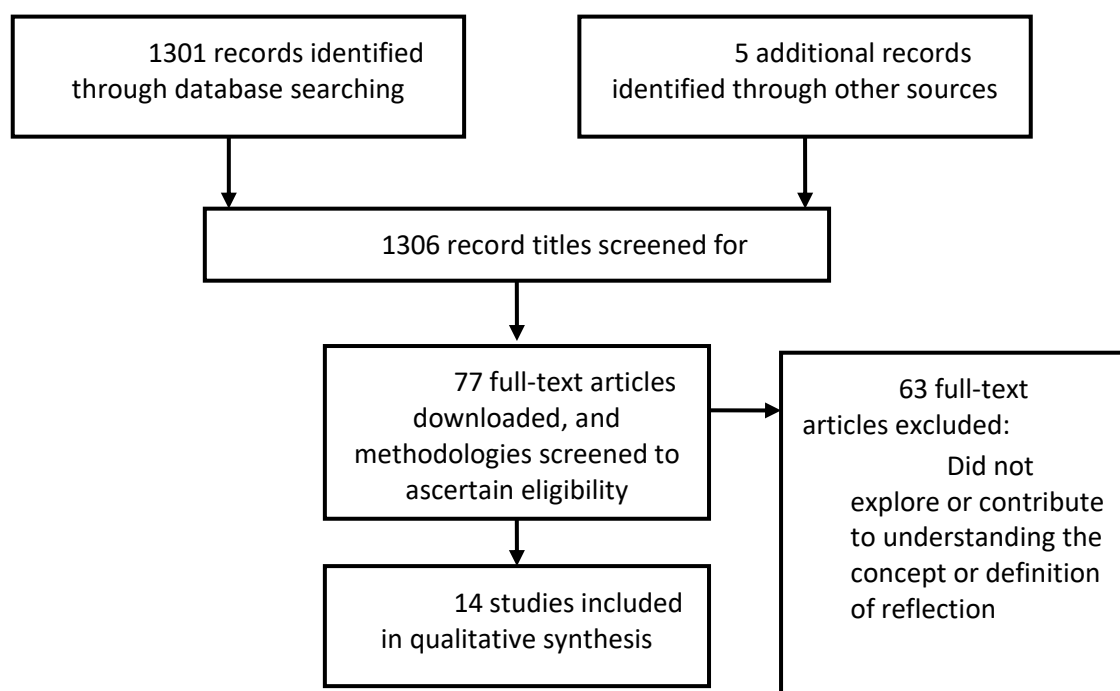


Figure 1:

PRISMA flowchart describing the stages of the systematic literature search

Table 6:

Inclusion and exclusion criteria for selected studies

<i>Inclusion criteria</i>	<i>Exclusion criteria</i>
Reflection, RP, or reflective learning identified as primary topics or areas of focus.	Reflection, RP or reflective learning are not the primary topics or areas of focus (e.g., reflection may have been reported in the results but was not identified as a study variable in the methods of the study)
The article explores the concept of reflection and/or tries to define reflection or understand the process of reflection.	The article does not explore the concept of reflection and makes no attempt to define reflection, RP or reflective learning or contribute to understanding the process of reflection.
Peer reviewed and published research with data reported in English or book sources that explore the concept of reflection.	Unpublished research or thesis or book sources that do not explore the concept of reflection.
Qualitative or mixed method design	Quantitative research design
	Data not reported in English

Table 7:**Descriptive information of studies included in a thematic synthesis**

<i>Author</i>	<i>Format</i>	<i>Approach</i>	<i>Aim</i>	<i>Participants</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Data collection method</i>
Black and Plowright (2010)	Journal article	Qualitative	Develop a theoretical understanding of reflection	26 post-graduate pharmacy students	Pharmacy	Focus group (n=13), individual interviews (n=18); number of participants who completed both types of data collection (n=5)
Gilbert and Trudel (2001)	Journal article	Qualitative	Examine how model youth sport coaches learn to coach through experience	6 youth team sport coaches (soccer n=3; ice hockey n=3)	Sport coaching	Background interviews, documents, observations, on site interviews, interval summary interviews, and member check interviews.
Stodter and Cushion (2017)	Journal article	Qualitative	Develop an understanding of sport coaches' professional learning processes.	25 youth soccer coaches (mean age: 31.6 years; 22 male, three females; average years coaching: 8.5)	Sport coaching	Baseline and follow-up interviews. Semi-structured interviews (pre:3, post: 2), stimulated recall interviews (pre: 11, post: 13)
Nguyen et al. (2014)	Journal article	Qualitative	Develop a theory-informed unified definition of reflection.	N/A	General	Systematic review and exploratory thematic analysis
Duffy (2007)	Journal article	Qualitative	Clarify the concept of RP	N/A	Nursing	Concept analysis (Rodgers, 1989)
Goulet et al. (2016)	Journal article	Qualitative	Examine the development of RP definitions and the varied use of the term reflection within nursing and education.	N/A	Nursing and education	Literature review
Dewey (1933)	Book	Qualitative	To find a single consistent meaning of thought.	N/A	General/philosophical	Literature review
Schön (1986)	Book	Qualitative	Explore an epistemology of practice to understand and evaluate the types of knowing of competent practitioners	N/A	General/professional	Literature review
Hong and Choi (2011)	Journal article	Qualitative	Develop a conceptual model of reflection	N/A	Design (architectural, software, engineering and instructional)	Literature review
Ixer (2016)	Journal article	Qualitative	Review the evidence of reflection and the problematic nature of defining reflection	N/A	General	Literature review
Jay and Johnson (2002)	Journal article	Qualitative	To describe a pedagogy of reflection while preserving the inductive and non-prescriptive reflective processes	N/A	Education	Literature review

Jordi (2011)	Journal article	Qualitative	To develop a holistic theory of reflection.	N/A	General	Literature review
Rogers (2001)	Journal article	Qualitative	Clarify ambiguity related to the concept of reflection.	N/A	Education	Literature review
Ryan (2012)	Journal article	Qualitative	Explore definitions and processes of reflection.	N/A	Education	Literature review

Body of evidence

Twelve journal articles and two books were included in the final analysis (see table 7). Three sources included the collection of primary data in the sport (n=2), or pharmacy professions (n=1) and the remaining sources were either literature reviews (n=9), concept analyses (n=1) or systematic reviews (n=1). Professional contexts included sport (n=2), education (n=4), nursing (n=2), pharmacy (n=1), design (n=1). The remaining four sources explored reflection from a general or philosophical perspective (n=4). All sources used a qualitative approach.

Findings

Thematic synthesis resulted in the construction of four abstract themes describing reflection (Table 8): Cognitive, integrative, iterative, and active. Reflection seems to be an active process involving cycles of expression and re/evaluation, developing meaning through refinement and integration of meaning schemes (Mezirow, 1991; Moon, 1999). Moon (1999) describes reflection as a cognitive process facilitated through explicit forms of representation. Additionally, Dewey (1933) originally conceptualised reflection as a cognitive process and this was supported by numerous authors who implicitly or explicitly describe reflection as involving cognition, reasoning or the exploration of meaning (Black & Plowright, 2010; Boud et al., 1985; Boyd & Fales, 1983; Cleary et al., 2013; Duffy, 2007; Gentile, 2012; Johns, 2010; Knowles et al., 2014; Kolb, 2014; Mezirow, 1991). There seems to be convergence on the assumption of reflection being a cognitive process facilitated by explicit representation. Reflection supported by symbolic representation seemed to be a common theme in numerous studies that have used written and/or verbal accounts as a method of reporting reflection (Haigh, 2005; Knowles et al., 2006; Nash & Sproule, 2011; Whitehead et al., 2016). Studies have used structured approaches to document the reflective process (Carson, 2008; Hughes et al., 2009; Knowles et al., 2001; Peterson et al., 2009; Thorpe, 2004; Tsang, 2011; Whitehead et al., 2016). Consequently, it seems likely that reflection is a cognitive process that is facilitated through an overt expression of ideas.

Table 8:

Summary of analytical and descriptive themes developed from the thematic synthesis related to the characteristics of reflection (Analytical themes included in the header row with parentheses indicating the number of sources used to construct each analytical theme).

<i>Integrative (9)</i>	<i>Active (5)</i>	<i>Cognitive (13)</i>	<i>Iterative (9)</i>
People learn from a variety of different sources of information (Stodter and Cushion, 2017)	Informal learning experiences are often self-directed (Black and Plowright, 2010)	Reflection involves persistent exploration of a line of inquiry (Dewey, 1933; Gilbert and Trudel, 2002; Hong and Choi, 2011; Nguyen, Fernandez, Karsenti, & Charlin, 2014; Rogers, 2001)	Reflection is cyclic with further experiences being guided by newly formed perspectives (Black and Plowright, 2010; Dewey, 1933; Gilbert and Trudel, 2002; Jay and Johnson, 2002; Nguyen, et al., 2014; Rogers, 2001; Stodter and Cushion, 2017)
Critical reflection involves integration (Jay and Johnson, 2002)	Reflection involves an active conscious effort (Duffy, 2007)	Reflection is a cognitive process (Dewey, 1933; Hong and Choi, 2011; Ixer, 2016; Jay and Johnson, 2002; Jordi, 2011; Nguyen, et al., 2014; Rogers, 2001)	Reflection involves continuous cycles of thought (Dewey, 1933)
Every experience is different and the weight of value of a source of information (emotions, prior learning, visual, auditory etc.) depends on each situation (Jordi, 2011)	Reflection is deliberate and involves a clear intention (Hong and Choi, 2011; Rogers, 2001)	Reflection is a higher cognitive process involving purposeful meaning making (Duffy, 2007; Jay and Johnson, 2002; Jordi, 2011; Nguyen, et al., 2014; Schön, 1986; Stodter and Cushion, 2017)	The use of unexpected outcomes to redefine the problem (back talk) is characteristic of reflection for problem solving (Hong and Choi, 2011)
Reflection integrates multiple sources of information (Duffy, 2007; Jay and Johnson, 2002; Jordi, 2011)	Reflection is an active and deliberate practice (Goulet, Larue, & Alderson, 2016)	Reflection examines personal ways of thinking and often leads to changes in perspective (Hong and Choi, 2011; Ixer, 2016; Stodter and Cushion, 2017)	Reflection can be a rigorous or superficial process depending on the time spent reviewing previous ideas and thus developing deeper insight (Rogers, 2001)
Reflection integrates the 'new and known' (Stodter and Cushion, 2017)	Reflection is an active process that can be used to solve problems (Hong and Choi, 2011)	Automatic pre-reflective processes related to the recognition of perceived experiences is involved in reflection in-action (Ixer, 2016; Jordi, 2011; Stodter and Cushion, 2017)	It is essential that we continue to question the output of reflection (Ixer, 2016)
Reflection considers multiple forms of information (Jordi, 2011)	Reflection requires active engagement (Rogers, 2001)	Reflection may be tied to or framed by our values (Ixer, 2016)	Reflection for problem solving involves experience, reflection, action and analysis of the new and prior action (Hong and Choi, 2011)
Developing schemas informs further learning (Dewey, 1933; Stodter and Cushion, 2017)	Reflection is selective and purposeful (Rogers, 2001)	Reflection involves a change in meaning or perspective (Black and Plowright, 2010; Dewey, 1933; Duffy, 2007; Gilbert and Trudel, 2002; Goulet, et al., 2016; Hong and Choi, 2011; Jay and Johnson, 2002; Jordi, 2011; Nguyen, et al., 2014; Rogers, 2001; Schön, 1986; Stodter and Cushion, 2017)	
The wide variety of available knowledge requires practitioners to be reflective to synthesise and make sense of multiple		Reflection facilitates moral thinking leading to more ethical and responsible practice (Goulet, et al., 2016; Hong and Choi, 2011; Ixer, 2016)	

sources of information (Gilbert and Trudel, 2002)

Reflection seeks coherence before 'widening the lens' to consider socio-political factors constraining application (Jordi, 2011)

Transformation involves the development of insight by integrating differing views (Duffy, 2007)

Reflection is multi-dimensional (Black and Plowright, 2010; Nguyen, et al., 2014)

Reflection involves multiple functions and characteristics (Nguyen, et al., 2014)

Reflection has multiple aims and potential outputs (Black and Plowright, 2010)

Reflection promotes creativity and innovation (Duffy, 2007; Gilbert and Trudel, 2002; Goulet, et al., 2016; Jay and Johnson, 2002; Rogers, 2001; Schön, 1986; Stodter and Cushion, 2017)

Reflection facilitates exploration of the self in context and thus guides professional behaviour and problem setting/solving (Iser, 2016)

Reflection develops clarity and understanding (Goulet, et al., 2016)

Reflection utilises multiple forms reasoning (Rogers, 2001)

Reflection facilitates learning in multiple contexts (Black and Plowright, 2010; Goulet, et al., 2016; Nguyen, et al., 2014)

Ongoing reflection is empowering and develops confidence and a habit of being reflective (Black and Plowright, 2010; Dewey, 1933; Duffy, 2007; Gilbert and Trudel, 2002; Goulet, et al., 2016)

Table 9:

Textual data from existing publications used to construct the cognitive theme [secondary authors indicates references used by the primary author]

<i>Quote</i>	<i>Primary authors</i>	<i>Secondary authors</i>
"An interactive and interpretive skill in the analysis and solution of complex and ambiguous problems"	Cushion (2016, p. 4)	Schön (1986), Gilbert and Trudel (2001)
"reflection, as a specific form of thinking, differs from other thinking processes"	Nguyen, Fernandez, Karsenti, and Charlin (2014, p. 1179)	
"Reflection differs from other thinking processes in that it also requires thinking aimed at one's understanding of the problem rather than aimed simply at trying to solve it"	Nguyen et al. (2014, p. 1181)	Mezirow, (1991)
"reflection is a cognitive process or activity"	Rogers (2001, pp. 40-41)	
"Reflection is the process by which individuals transform their meaning schemes and meaning perspectives, resulting in transformational learning"	Rogers, (2001, p. 41)	Mezirow (1991)
"The seven theoretical approaches revealed several common definitional elements. These included reflection as a cognitive and affective process or activity"	Rogers, (2001, p. 41)	
"Reflection prepares the individual for new experiences and leads to new skills, ideas and even new cognitive maps. The process leads to a new interpretation involving a change in the individual's meaning schemes or a transformation of meaning perspectives"	Rogers, (2001, p. 45)	Mezirow (1991)
"Reflection is a means of identifying, scrutinizing, and reconstituting the assumptions that underlie one's thoughts and actions"	Rogers, (2001, p. 45)	Brookfield (1990)
"Reflection can operate at a number of levels and suggests that to achieve a second element (reimagining), one must reach the higher, more abstract levels of critical reflection"	Ryan, (2012, p. 208)	
"Learning involves both the cognitive process of incorporating new knowledge into existing schemas, but it also involves the cultural conditions and opportunities for learning in the social context"	Ryan, (2012, p. 209)	Kalantzis and Cope (2012)
"The idea of meaningful, transformative learning rests on the open-minded transformation and implementation of conceptions in practice, through reflective linkage with existing knowledge"	Stodter & Cushion, (2017, p. 13)	Moon (2001), Mezirow (1991)
"Based on these views of reflection, we define reflective thinking in the context of solving design problems as conscious mental activities that examine designers' courses of action, decisions, and their inner selves in given situations throughout a design process"	Hong and Choi (2011, p. 689)	

Table 10:

Textual data extracted from existing publications used to construct the integrative theme [secondary authors indicates references used by the primary author]

<i>Quote</i>	<i>Primary authors</i>	<i>Secondary authors</i>
"Facilitates the integration of theory and practice, bridges the theory-practice gap"	Duffy (2007, p. 1405)	(Atkins & Murphy, 1993; Landeen et al., 1995; Rolfe, 1997; Upton, 1999; Wong et al., 1995)
"Reflective practice, it is maintained, facilitates student learning as well as the integration of information"	Goulet, Larue and Alderson (2016, p. 147)	(Taylor, 2012; Trauth-Nare & Buck, 2011)
"By no means, a "last step," critical reflection is rather the constant returning to one's own understanding of the problem at hand. This is the process in which, as Schön (1986) describes it, one "may then find a way of integrating, or choosing among, the values at stake in the situation". In other words, having viewed the matter for reflection in several different ways, one makes a judgement or a choice among actions, or simply integrates what one has discovered into a new and better understanding of the problem"	Jay and Johnson (2002, p. 79)	Schön (1986)
"In spite of reflection's reputation for distilling rational knowledge from the mess of human experience, I will argue that RPs have the potential to do the opposite—to integrate a range of cognitive and nonconceptual elements that make up our experience and consciousness"	Jordi (2011, p. 2)	
"I would argue that this is not just a cognitive dissonance requiring an afterthought, but that it is instead a complex mix of bodily held feeling, memory, external stimulus, internal emotions, ideas, and new and old information that require integration and meaning making"	Jordi (2011, p. 6)	Illeris (2007)
"These dissonances that lie within the shadows of strictly cognitive RPs need to be brought to light. I propose that their emergence points to an inclination or yearning toward integration and meaning making and resolving the feeling that something remains unfinished, and that this proclivity is intrinsic to human consciousness and experience"	Jordi (2011, p. 6)	
"reflection as a cognitive and affective process or activity that (1) requires active engagement on the part of the individual; (2) is triggered by an unusual or perplexing situation or experience; (3) involves examining one's responses, beliefs, and premises in light of the situation at hand; and (4) results in integration of the new understanding into one's experience"	Rogers, (2001, p. 41)	
"The idea of meaningful, transformative learning rests on the open-minded transformation and implementation of conceptions in practice, through reflective linkage with existing knowledge"	Stodter and Cushion (2017, p.13)	Mezirow, (1991) Moon, (2001)

Table 11:

Textual data extracted from existing publications used to construct the iterative theme [secondary authors indicates references used by the primary author]

<i>Quote</i>	<i>Primary authors</i>	<i>Secondary authors</i>
"Participants discussed experiences that differentiated between immediate/on-the-spot reflection and delayed reflection. Such examples seemed to imply a qualitatively superior reflective process, in relation to the target of reflection, with the passage of time"	Black and Plowright (2010, p. 252)	
"The words don't say what you felt, or thought at the time, so you have to go back and re-arrange them to make it right, or make it say what you thought"	Black and Plowright (2010, p.254)	
"An additional theme that emerged from the data was the notion of returning to the written word at a later date. This resulted in an even deeper level of reflection on their learning"	Black and Plowright (2010, p.254)	
"Strategy generation (4), experimentation (5), and evaluation (6) comprised a subloop in a reflective conversation. For example, when addressing coaching issues, the coaches often cycled through this subloop many times"	Gilbert and Trudel (2001, p. 22)	
"Reflective thinking helps designers to increase the frequency of iterations during a design process. Iterations in a design process are frequently observed in experts' behaviours. The process of iterations involves designers being actively engaged in reflection where they review the definition of a problem repeatedly so that they can reshape the appropriate problem space and carefully re-examine their proposed solutions"	Hong and Choi (2011, p. 690-691)	(Adams, 2001; Adams et al., 2003; Atman et al., 2007)
"The frequent transitions between problem definition and solution generation coincide with Schön's idea of the situation's back-talk"	Hong and Choi (2011, p. 691)	Schön (1986)
"It is the cycle of appreciations of the situations, actions, and re-appreciations that drives the iterative design process"	Hong and Choi (2011, p. 691)	Schön (1986)
"By no means, a "last step," critical reflection is rather the constant returning to one's own understanding of the problem at hand"	Jay and Johnson (2002, p. 79)	
Because each author has his or her preference, we contend that a better approximation is that reflective thinking must be attentive, critical, exploratory and iterative (ACEI).	Nguyen, Fernandez, Karsenti and Charlin (2014, p. 1181)	
"Reflection is the process of engaging the self in attentive, critical, exploratory and iterative interactions with one's thoughts and actions, and their underlying conceptual frame, with a view to changing them and with a view on the change itself"	Nguyen, Fernandez, Karsenti and Charlin (2014, p. 1182)	
"The process of reflection does not always have a defined beginning and end. Thus, it should be viewed as continuous, much like an ever-expanding spiral in which challenging situations lead to reflection and ultimately to new interpretations or understanding"	Rogers (2001, p. 45)	
"Coaches were seen to constantly work through a cycle of constructing and linking new knowledge, which was tightly bound to context-specific practice, into their existing knowledge structures"	Stodter and Cushion (2017, p. 11)	
"The choice between rejecting and adapting conceptions, as part of the reflective feedback loop, was a significant feature of the learning process"	Stodter and Cushion (2017, p. 12)	

Table 12:

Textual data extracted from existing publications used to construct the active theme [secondary authors indicates references used by the primary author]

<i>Quote</i>	<i>Primary author</i>	<i>Secondary author</i>
"It is a disciplined way of thinking grounded in scientific inquiry"	Duffy (2007, p. 1401)	Dewey (1933)
"Most authors conceive RP as a conscious, deliberate process. It is thus not an intuitive practice but tends more to be planned and pedagogically oriented"	Goulet (2016, p. 146)	(Kaasila & Lauriala, 2012; Ryan, 2011; Ryder, 2011)
A critical component that drives individuals in the reflective process is their intent. Although others can intervene with strategies to facilitate their reflection, whether or not and how much they reflect are their own decisions.	Hong and Choi (2011, p. 689)	Boud et al. (1985)
"Active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends, constitutes reflective thought. Any one of the first three kinds of thought may elicit this type; but once begun, it is a conscious and voluntary effort to establish belief upon a firm basis of reasons"	Dewey (1933, p. 9)	
"The authors' general definitions also implied that reflection requires the individual's active engagement"	Rogers (2001, p. 41)	
"reflection as a cognitive and affective process or activity that (1) requires active engagement on the part of the individual"	Rogers (2001, p. 41)	
"a deliberate and intentional return to the experience"	Rogers (2001, p. 44)	Boud et al., (1985)

Discussion

Figure 3 outlines a model representing the characteristics generated through this thematic synthesis. The cognitive process of reflection is the core construct that the three additional characteristics converged into to manifest in a reflective process of inquiry. The following discussion will explain these four characteristics, considering how they operate in the activity of reflective writing.

Cognitive

Reflection seemed to be a cognitive process supporting making sense of complex and ambiguous problems (Cushion, 2016; Jones & Wallace, 2005; Schön, 1986) triggered by the perception of perplexing information (Dewey, 1933; Gilbert & Trudel, 2001; Hong & Choi, 2011; Jay & Johnson, 2002; Kinchin et al., 2008; Moon, 2004; Rogers, 2001). The presence of puzzling stimuli presupposes that the individual's existing knowledge and understanding are insufficient, necessitating careful and deliberate examination of experience. The result being the development of explanatory hypotheses tested through experience and reflection (Kolb, 2014). Thus, reflection

seems to be a method by which experience is conceptualised into actionable and testable hypotheses (Kolb, 2014).

Dewey (1933, p. 2) conceptualised reflection as a purposeful and focussed act of thinking involving a coherent sequence of thoughts logically connected leading to a conclusion. The notion of reflection being a specific form of thinking (Nguyen et al., 2014) used to make sense of ambiguity (Jones & Wallace, 2005) and characterised by being focussed, purposeful and leading to a conclusion (Dewey, 1933) can be operationalised through reflective writing (Moon, 2004). As one mode of representation, writing overtly represents ideas allowing phases of editing and re-examination. Overt representation through writing may act like a filter recording relevant and meaningful ideas from the loose flux of thinking, contributing to an emergent line of inquiry. Through writing, ideas are refined alongside one's internal representations of knowledge. Thus, changes in meaning can occur inductively through the process of reflective writing, involving phases re-examination. Writing therefore provides the structure and discipline for deep thought (Black & Plowright, 2010). Reflection could therefore be suggested to be a cognitive process facilitated through overt modes of representation.

Integrative

Reflective processes explore and synthesise multiple ideas and perspectives constructing a coherent explanatory narrative (Goulet et al., 2016; Mezirow, 1991; Stodter & Cushion, 2017). This can be examined in relation to experience, leading to abstract yet experientially grounded interpretations (Jordi, 2011; Kolb, 2014). It involves examining new experience in relation to existing knowledge (Jay & Johnson, 2002; Jordi, 2011; Mezirow, 1991; Rogers, 2001; Stodter & Cushion, 2017), therefore providing 'a vehicle' through which practitioners explore personal subjectivity [e.g. beliefs, meaning, perspectives, emotions] in relation to direct experience, thus integrating new and the known.

Iterative

Overt modes of representation (Moon, 2004) allow a frequent return to one's interpretation of an experience or idea (Jay & Johnson, 2002). Modes of representation [e.g., writing] enable cycles of idea expression and re-examination, and this does not always have a clear beginning and end, but instead evolves (Rogers, 2001). Sustained reflection, characterised by re-examination of ideas, leads to further integration and differentiation of internally represented meaning schemas (Mezirow, 1991) and a qualitatively superior reflective process (Black and Plowright, 2010). Persistent reflective inquiry enables one to construct and link knowledge through the process of writing. The evolving product can be re-examined developing an emergent and coherent account of a concept or experience. Reflection can therefore be described as an ongoing cyclical process (Nguyen et al., 2014; Rogers, 2001).

Active

Reflection seems to be a disciplined way of thinking (Dewey, 1933; Duffy, 2007) involving conscious and deliberate intent to make sense of an experience or idea (Goulet, 2016; Hong and Choi, 2011; Mezirow, 1991; Dewey, 1933). Consequently, reflection is characterised by active involvement (Goulet, 2016; Rogers, 2001; Dewey, 1933). Reflection involves cycles of idea expression and re-examination that, if performed persistently, acts to refine a 'working product' of an individual's evolving understanding. Because writing makes internally represented ideas explicit (Black & Plowright, 2010; Kinchin et al., 2008), while enabling immediate or longer-term cycles of re-examination, practitioners are able to take time to actively integrate ideas. Resulting insight may provide the necessary coherence, making sense of an experience or idea. Thus, reflection enables the development of new insight through bringing together ideas in the form of an evolving narrative.

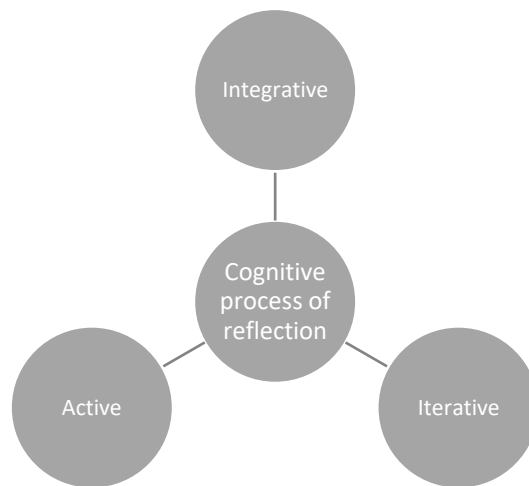


Figure 3:

A visual representation of four themes generated to characterise the concept of reflection

Working definition

The following working definition is proposed to synthesise these characteristics: Reflection is a careful examination and bringing together of ideas to create new insight through ongoing cycles of expression and re/evaluation.

Limitations and recommendations for further research

The current author's pragmatic epistemological perspective guided this synthesis. The review explored the existing literature constructing a definition aligning with thematic constructs that have been attributed to reflection. The literature search was conducted under the premise of reflection being a cognitive process. This is a reasonable assumption because cognition is consistently referred to implicitly or explicitly in all identified definitions of reflection.

The outcome of this review is based on reflection being a personal and insular process. However, practitioners may not use RP in isolated ways and may not engage in RP using written expression and re-evaluation. Instead, they may engage in social processes of reflection with others e.g., dialogic modes of RP through RCs that may at times be challenging and dialectical. Thus, it is important to understand how socially mediated forms of representation influence the Internal processes of making sense of ideas, problems and experiences.

Theoretical implications

To the best of the current author's knowledge this study was the first to systematically locate and thematically synthesise literature, across multiple professional domains, focussed on conceptually understanding reflection. Figure 3 illustrated the centrality of cognition underpinning the integrative, active and iterative characteristics. Reflection was conceptualised as a deliberate cognitive process; a process of inquiry, bringing ideas together often from different schemas to generate contextually relevant insights. This is an ongoing process that cycles back and forth between experience and reflection, with each cycle drawing on new knowledge integrated within one's cognitive structure; it is thus iterative and emergent.

This chapter provided deeper insight into how cognition interacted with modes of representation e.g., written, verbal utterances, or artistic/performative ways of symbolising ideas. Sport coaches may choose a mode that they feel comfortable with and that meets their needs given their working context. For example, sport coaches that have limited time or competing demands (e.g., parents who coach their children's team for 1-2 hours per week while holding a full-time job elsewhere) may decide to use verbal representation through focussed conversations with a peer or senior coach to make sense of training sessions and problems they may have encountered. This could support learning and development encouraging participants to enjoy evolving and varied activities that help them develop and engage in sport long-term.

This study was published in an internationally recognised journal, and was scrutinised during peer review (Marshall, 2019b). At the time of retrospectively writing this subsection, the study associated with this chapter was cited 128 times, demonstrating theoretical reach. By thematically synthesising the text of literature this study took a unique approach to an ongoing problem, thus analysing reflection from a different lens to what already existed in literature. This helped to trigger critical debate and discussion, whereby authors have engaged with and extended these findings. For example, Schaepkens et al. (2021) extended this study considering how context, individual use and purpose for using reflective styles of thinking influence personal definitions. They agreed on the

theoretical correctness of the working definition and characteristics, implicitly acknowledging consistencies in the characteristics of reflection.

Conclusion

This work highlighted characteristics of reflection and explained how these interact through reflective writing. This provided a platform for further research considering alternative modes of RP e.g., RCs, that have the potential to support relationships and cohesion. Having established a deeper understanding of the concept of reflection, it seems important to explore the process of reflection including what may trigger reflective inquiry and the factors that might support or hinder reflective thinking. These are explored in the following chapter.

Chapter Five: On Being Open-Minded, Wholehearted, and Responsible²

Introduction

The previous chapter explored the concept of reflection, developing understanding of core characteristics that were used to develop a working definition. A model was also created explaining how these characteristics interacted through the medium of reflective writing. This chapter will build on the previous chapter, conducting qualitative syntheses to develop an understanding of the process of reflection, operationalising the concept.

Common themes in literature as seen in the previous chapter seem to indicate reflection seems to be a deliberate act of inquiry, requiring openness and willingness to engage. Others have conceptualised reflection as a process of making meaning from experience over time (Palacios et al., 2021) implying reflection is a longitudinal process requiring persistence and continuous engagement. This converges on the iterative characteristic developed in the previous chapter, explaining the cyclic process that develops deeper understanding over time.

However, if reflection is to be critical and transformative, necessitating a degree of discomfort (Robinson, 2021), it may require openness and willingness to persist in continuous, deliberate inquiry when faced with uncertainty (Sadlon, 2018). To explicate this from a theoretical perspective the current chapter aimed to draw out concepts from existing literature to understand the process of reflection and factors enabling it.

Results and Discussion

Each subsection included quotations from the original text. Analysis synthesised literature across the following professional domains: counselling (n=1), education (n=16), sport (n=5), military (n=1), medical (n=4). Quotations included citations, page numbers and, where present, citations to any secondary authors' work. Findings were combined with the discussion to ensure transparency of

² As this chapter was published as a co-authored journal article in *Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, it will demonstrate similarities to this publication. Through ongoing inquiry, modifications to this chapter were made to frame it more effectively in the context of the overall thesis.

how theory informed the resulting explication of the process of reflection. The themes are presented in Table 13 and [Appendix A](#) outlines the textual data used to construct each theme.

Three main themes were developed: triggers of reflection, conducive contextual and attitudinal factors, and epistemology.

Table 13:

Themes developed from a review of the literature.

<i>Higher order themes</i>	<i>Themes</i>
Triggers for reflection	Lack of knowledge Pro-active inquiry – formalised routines Reactive inquiry – experience as a trigger Emotive responses and unease
Conducive contextual and attitudinal factors	A conducive learning environment: self-directed, autonomous, and confidential A conducive attitude: open-minded, wholehearted and responsible
Epistemology	Epistemology – mediating engagement and the quality of reflection Dualistic assumptions and relative views Tolerating uncertainty

Triggers of reflection

Terms describing triggers of reflection were collated from the literature and summarised in Table 14; these were italicised in the following narrative and commence with the following sub-theme.

Lack of knowledge

Although the triggers of reflection are complex and overlapping, reasons for engaging were often associated with an overarching trigger: lack of knowledge. This overarching trigger is identified in the following excerpt representing practitioner doubts or *concern of not knowing* a correct procedure: “For others, it [the trigger of reflection] was the continuing threat of what could have happened or the concern of not knowing the correct procedure” (Asselin et al., 2013, p. 910). Dewey (1933, pp. 58-59) noted that reflective inference assumes a “lack of understanding”, or “a partial absence of meaning”. Other reported triggers included situations involving *difficulty in understanding* (Mezirow, 1991; Rogers, 2001) which often constituted “a situation beyond the individual’s typical experience” (Rogers, 2001, p. 42), again implicating a sense of not knowing underpinning the triggers to reflection: “It was initiated by a sense of unease in the learner when

they realised that their knowledge was incomplete or inaccurate” (Grant et al., 2007, p. 2). Thus, an intrinsic conflict or disjuncture between professional expectations around answers to problems that *should* be known, and an honest appraisal, seemed to motivate reflection to proactively remediate any perceived gaps in knowledge and competency.

Proactive inquiry – formalised routines

For the purposes of this paper, pro-active reflection is defined as a deliberate and pro-active attempt to direct inquiry in the absence of any externally triggering event. This is distinct from reflection in and on action (Schön, 1987) as the focus of inquiry is identified proactively by the individual rather than being associated directly with lived experience. Proactively triggered reflection often begins with *formalised routines*. For example, nurse’s reflection on their practice was triggered by routines for reflecting on a day’s clinical work: “For a number of nurses, the trigger event was simply the nurses’ own formalised routines for reflecting back on the day’s clinical situations, e.g. writing in a daily journal or routinely reflecting back while driving home” (Asselin et al., 2013, p. 910). As proactive inquiry, *self-assessment* can aid the process: “Techniques such as peer and self-assessment help to facilitate reflective abilities” (Roberts, 2008, p. 6). Writing about experience through *autobiographies and personal narratives* provided a source of personal data to evaluate the impact of experiences: “Autobiographies and other personal narratives are rich sources of data through which to examine the impact certain experiences play in people’s lives” (McDonald & Kahn, 2014, p. 6).

Practitioners proactively used planned activities to help them reflect on their work. They may also use informal opportunities to engage in implicit modes of proactive reflection. Such approaches seemed to support the notion that practitioners might be “encouraged to develop their own approaches to reflection that suit both their own learning needs and the context of their practice” (Cropley et al., 2012, p. 26; Knowles et al., 2006). Some triggers were more reactive to individuals’ professional experiences.

Reactive inquiry - experience as a trigger

Reactive reflection is defined as reflection in response to an externally triggering event.

Reactive triggers of reflection arise from *experience* (Van Seggelen–Damen et al., 2017); these derive from events in a person's environment within which they are immersed. Triggering events may be perplexing (Dewey, 1933; Moon, 1999), unexpected, or novel (i.e., *new information*); and conflict with existing knowledge and expectations, thus requiring closer examination (Hong & Choi, 2011; Schön, 1983).

Other reactive triggers for reflection involve *changes in routine* (Asselin et al., 2013); *difficult or critical tasks* (Kinchin et al., 2008); *professional dilemmas* (Cropley et al., 2012; Dewey, 1933); *issues of concern* (Crathern, 2001; Gilbert & Trudel, 2001; Nelson & Cushion, 2006); or *problems* for which there were no simple solutions (Chiu, 2006; de Cossart et al., 2012; Dewey, 1933; Neufeldt et al., 1996). Triggers seemed to be inter-related with a sense of not knowing, potentially explaining their overlapping nature.

Emotive responses and unease

Aligned with a sense of not knowing, were tangible and abstract experiences which were emotive or represented a sense of unease. For example, *confusion* (Neufeldt et al., 1996; Schön, 1983), or dissonance associated with a *puzzling* phenomenon (Jay & Johnson, 2002) evoked a sense of being *stuck*. Often, a reactive experience of *surprise* (Hong & Choi, 2011), particularly when experiencing *unexpected results* (Bar-On, 2007; Hong & Choi, 2011) or witnessing *unusual actions* (Hong & Choi, 2011), triggered reflection. Such reactive experiences appeared *complex, uncertain, unstable, unique, or involved value conflict* (Rogers, 2001; Schön, 1983) resulting in "*a state of doubt, hesitation or mental difficulty*" (Dewey, 1933; Rogers, 2001, p. 42). An awareness of not knowing could trigger an emotive response, and then a reflective process: "Awareness initiates the process of reflection when an individual acknowledges a discomfort or lack of information in explaining something" (Thorpe, 2004, p. 329).

Perhaps it was unsurprising that a sense of disconcertedness was evident when individuals acknowledged that personal solutions to a problem might be inadequate, thus, triggering reflection to pursue more effective solutions: “It is often only where teachers perceive that their personal solutions to classroom ‘problems’ are inadequate that they will be moved to search for means by which they can change” (Muir & Beswick, 2007, p. 78). Such direct *emotions* seemed to indicate that an experience was discordant with expectations, triggering a break in one’s ongoing routine (Johnston & Fells, 2017).

In the cognitive evolutionary model of surprise, unexpected events precede the affective experience of surprise; with such events being inconsistent with one’s framework of understanding, or disconfirming expectations (Reisenzein et al., 2019). An emotional experience or feeling of surprise indicates an opportunity to re-examine one’s understanding. As Boud stated: “*emotion tells you where the learning is to be had*” (Crathern, 2001, p. 164). Thus, emotions can act as catalysts for reflection and signal gaps in understanding (Cropley et al., 2012). if every experience went as planned, conforming to expectations, then there may be no perceived need to reflect (Schön, 1983). Consequently, reactive reflection tended to be triggered by experiences presenting new or unexpected information (Neufeldt et al., 1996) often accompanied by an emotional response; whereas proactive forms of reflection were autonomous, requiring self-direction and delimitation of the object of inquiry. Such deliberateness in reflection seemed to stem from conducive contextual and individual factors around reflection.

Table 14:

Terms used in the literature to describe the triggers of reflection.

<i>Terms used to describe the triggers of reflection</i>	<i>Source</i>
Problems	(Chiu, 2006; Dewey, 1933; Neufeldt et al., 1996)
Professional dilemmas	(Cropley et al., 2012; Dewey, 1933)
Issues of concern	(Crathern, 2001; Gilbert & Trudel, 2001; Nelson & Cushion, 2006)
Perplexing experience	(Dewey, 1933; Rogers, 2001)
"Surprise such as an unpleasant or pleasant moment"	(Hong & Choi, 2011, p. 689)
Unexpected results	(Bar-On, 2007; Hong & Choi, 2011)
Unusual actions	(Hong & Choi, 2011)
"A puzzling, troubling or interesting phenomenon"	(Jay & Johnson, 2002, p. 75)
"A situation beyond the individuals typical experience"	(Rogers, 2001, p. 42)
Experiences that are complex, uncertain, unstable, unique or involve value conflict	(Rogers, 2001; Schön, 1983)
Difficulty in understanding	(Mezirow, 1991; Rogers, 2001)
"A state of doubt, hesitation, or mental difficulty"	(Dewey, 1933; Rogers, 2001, p. 42)
Poor practice	(Asselin et al., 2013)
Changes in routine	(Asselin et al., 2013)
Formalised routines for reflecting	(Asselin et al., 2013)
Concern of not knowing	(Asselin et al., 2013)
Questions	(de Cossart et al., 2012)
Emotions and feelings	(Asselin et al., 2013; Cropley et al., 2012)
New information	(Neufeldt et al., 1996)
Confusion	(Neufeldt et al., 1996; Schön, 1983)
Being stuck	(Neufeldt et al., 1996)
A sense of unease	(Grant et al., 2007)
Experience	(Van Seggelen–Damen et al., 2017)
Feedback	(Van Seggelen–Damen et al., 2017)
Peer and self-assessment	(Roberts, 2008; Van Seggelen–Damen et al., 2017)
Autobiographies and personal narratives	(McDonald & Kahn, 2014)
"Discomfort or lack of information"	(Thorpe, 2004, p. 329)
Curiosity	(Thorpe, 2004)

Conducive contextual and attitudinal factors

Conditions, both in the way learners approach reflection and within their environment, seemed important in the reflective process. The following sections will explain how these factors influence reflective inquiry.

A conducive learning environment: self-directed, autonomous, and confidential

RP seemed to benefit from conditions within the learning environment: "If the environment is right then it becomes a matter of time, allowing the learner sufficient opportunities to practice reflection both in and on-action and practice again" (Burt & Morgan, 2014, p. 477). Proactively developing an environment conducive to reflection can arise by supporting teachers: "Other conditions are more closely related to the organisational setting: for example, the opportunity, time, and support teachers are given" (Goulet et al., 2016, p. 145). There is need for an environment which includes an appropriate balance of challenge and support (Rogers, 2001) and encourages

open group discussions (Stanley et al., 2018). In formal learning it could be helpful to develop topics and problems that appropriately challenge learners (Moallem et al., 2019), aiding autonomy: “One way for faculty to accomplish this is to establish an environment rich with factors that support reflection. Such factors may include autonomy, effective feedback, connection to peers, access to faculty, and appropriate challenges” (Rogers, 2001, p. 51; Seibert & Daudelin, 1999)

Reflection seemed to benefit from an environment supporting autonomy with learners as active agents in learning rather than consumers of information (Mezirow, 1991; Rogers, 2001). This can be attained through choice: “Participants valued the voluntary nature of the group. This is a variation on programs that require participation” (Harrison, 2016, p. 681). Benefits can also be attained indirectly, emphasising the nuances of what participation means in reflective groups: “Some described attending the group multiple times without talking or presenting a case, but finding value in listening to colleagues process their challenges” (Harrison, 2016, p. 681). Additionally, practitioners often engaged autonomously in less formal, less structured modes of reflection: “The participants suggested that their methods of ‘evaluation’ were always less formal, less structured, and often not recorded” (Cropley et al., 2012, p. 17).

It seems that offering a variety of opportunities (Schön, 1983) and allowing individual choice may enable engagement. However, written and recorded reflection can have the benefit of being open to evaluation. This can enable practitioners to build on ideas, facilitating a level of detail that can be difficult to attain or access using less formal modes.

To encourage honest and open dialogue reflection requires a protected confidential environment: “The exploration of the self that reflection involves requires a relatively protected environment in which one is not continually preoccupied by defending oneself from the scrutiny of others” (Boud, 2001, p. 15). This is likely because honest reflection can place participants in vulnerable positions: “To be effective in promoting learning, journal writing necessitates that students be honest and open in their entries. This type of disclosure places students in a vulnerable position” (Thorpe, 2004, p. 340). Confidentiality and a sense of freedom to think openly can better

ensure a positive learning experience (Gallagher et al., 2017). Journal writing benefits from being private, as scrutiny by others can constrain free expression: “Keeping journals private, away from the eyes of others, can be a useful principle to adopt in courses. It means that writing may not be as constrained as it would be if it were revealed to others” (Boud, 2001, p. 16). Therefore, encouraging private written reflection as a canvas for creative and overt expression means personal autonomy remains respected and RP remains free and open.

A conducive attitude: open-minded, wholehearted, and responsible

Alongside contextual factors creating opportunities to reflect, acting on a sense of perplexity may also relate to one’s attitude towards reflection, such as being open-minded, wholehearted, and responsible (Dewey, 1933). These perhaps represent a core state from which reflection is triggered and facilitated. The reflective practitioner weighs up the relative value of evidence whilst remaining open to other perspectives and supporting evidence (Fook et al., 2006). This has been linked to open-mindedness (Gordon, 2017; Hong & Choi, 2011; Ostorga, 2006); as has being responsive and inquisitive: “Open mindedness, according to Dewey, entails the ability to entertain new ideas, consider problems that may arise, examine alternatives solutions, and be inquisitive” (Gordon, 2017, p. 22). This is relevant to professional practice where practitioners need to possess an open stance to interpret the contextually bound nature of their work (Ostorga, 2006). Consequently, practitioners can benefit from cultivating an open and questioning attitude: “In order to engage in the reflective process fully practitioners must be open with themselves and questioning” (Cropley et al., 2012, p. 24)

Reflective journal writing requires personal honesty and openness: “To be effective in promoting learning, journal writing necessitates that students be honest and open in their entries” (Thorpe, 2004, p. 340). Openness to sharing inner thoughts is important for effective collaborative reflection (Goulet et al., 2016), which can be cultivated from insight into a concept or experience i.e., reflecting carefully prior to sharing ideas. Additionally, open-mindedness encourages the surfacing and questioning of assumptions: “This openness to critically view the problem from different angles

and to examine assumptions required at least the open-mindedness of the independent knower” (Ostorga, 2006, p. 17).

Reflective thinking also requires an attitude of wholeheartedness (Dewey, 1933; Jay & Johnson, 2002; Ostorga, 2006), that is, being genuinely enthusiastic about discovering a solution to a problem (Gordon, 2017). Practitioners who are responsible and wholehearted are likely to persist even when barriers are present: “With their responsibility and whole-heartedness, designers are more likely to overcome barriers during a design process, to be engrossed in a design task” (Hong & Choi, 2011, p. 696).

Responsibility is also viewed as a requirement for reflective thinking (Jay & Johnson, 2002; Ostorga, 2006). Being responsible refers to engaging in careful consideration of the consequences of one’s actions (Farrell, 2012). This may be pertinent when reflecting with others; openness between individuals is important for RCs to be effective (Goudreau et al., 2015), and this requires practitioners to be responsible through respectfully understanding the impact of personal barriers and differences: “No one can be forced to be open, and there are personal differences that limit how open one chooses to be” (Moldjord & Hybertsen, 2015, p. 296).

Thinking dispositions, such as active open-mindedness, directly affect reflective analytic cognitive style and rational thinking ability (Viator et al., 2020). Active open-mindedness considers the importance of questioning favoured intuitions (Browne et al., 2014), and openness to experience is associated with the capacity to enlarge and examine experiences (McCrae, 1993). Collectively, cited literature indicate a connection between open-mindedness and the tendency to engage in reflective thinking, almost like a central value-based construct from which the reflective process may stem from. This aligns with the theoretical notion that reflection is a state of mind and an active process of inquiry (Ben-Ari & Enosh, 2011).

Attitudes aligning with the demands of reflection, may encourage a deeper, more persistent examination of knowledge (Duffy, 2007; Nguyen et al., 2014). Deeper engagement, coupled with awareness of the process, might facilitate analysis of how experiences are understood, and what this

means in terms of the self (Nguyen et al., 2014), potentially encouraging a more critical stance towards experiences. Thus, it is likely that core dispositions, such as being actively open-minded, wholehearted, and responsible, provide a psychological context in which deliberate reflection on one's experiences, assumptions and cognitive frame is perceived as valuable, thus, encouraging deliberate engagement.

Epistemology

Epistemology– mediating engagement and the quality of reflection

Epistemological views have been associated with the capacity to engage in reflective thought (Ostorga, 2006; Schraw & Olafson, 2003). Together with conducive attitudes, these beliefs may affect one's orientation to learning and explain the likelihood to reflect (Entwistle & Peterson, 2004; McDonald & Kahn, 2014; Ostorga, 2006; Piggott, 2012; Stodter & Cushion, 2017). Contextual knowing is posited as the most complex epistemic stance, whereby the individual perceives truth as being context-bound and socially mediated (Baxter Magolda, 1992); the often-complex reality of practice becomes a matter for inquiry, rather than the reproduction of facts. Thus, epistemology can affect engagement with reflection; for example, if an individual perceives knowledge to be provisional and relative, they may use evidence to reason between alternatives, encouraging openness to different perspectives (Entwistle & Peterson, 2004; Stodter & Cushion, 2017). Openness coupled with curiosity can catalyse a reflective process: "There are multiple solutions to problems therefore deep analysis and reflective thought are the ways to find the possible solutions" (Ostorga, 2006, p. 8). From an epistemological perspective, this shifts the drive for knowledge from dualistic assumptions, where individuals perceive knowledge as right versus wrong, towards a more relative view.

Dualistic assumptions and relative views

It is possible that individuals with absolute, dualistic beliefs about knowledge may be less likely to reflect: "the absolute knower is less likely to reflect deeply because the act of thinking is a process of finding and accepting the right course of action (Ostorga, 2006, p. 8). From absolute

positions, the quest for knowledge seems driven by a belief in a singular truth that the correct answer exists, which one can reach directly. Such individuals might prefer to engage in replicative or strategic learning rather than inquiry-based approaches (Entwistle & Peterson, 2004; Piggott, 2012; Stodter & Cushion, 2017); thus, in the sport context, coaches with dualistic views of knowledge may approach learning as a simple reproduction of facts and accepted norms (Entwistle & Peterson, 2004; Piggott, 2012; Stodter & Cushion, 2017). This aligns with the concept of an absolute knower: “The person who is an absolute knower, the first category in the taxonomy, seeks to learn by receiving knowledge of what is right from authorities (teachers or experts)” (Ostorga, 2006, p. 7).

Learning involves personal development, wherein the learner evolves as their understanding and knowledge improves. As with developmental processes, earlier learning can involve a narrowed focus, akin to a dichotomous thinking style (Beck, 1963; Oshio, 2009), and then learning expands and integrates creating a more fluid, reflective style. The quality of reflection changes with maturity and developing epistemic stances, indicating these are intertwined (Ostorga, 2006); perhaps driven by an evolving attitude becoming more conducive to reflective thinking. However, education designed around the delivery of facts and knowledge to learners may inadvertently reinforce a simple view of knowledge:

The model of technical rationality (i.e., the theories and facts) that serves as the foundation for most fields of study can be nicely packaged and delivered and as a result, inappropriately feed students’ assumptions that technical rationality is enough or all there is (Rogers, 2001, p. 50)

Contrastingly, relativist or pragmatic beliefs assume knowledge is context-bound, with multiple opposing views being equally valid depending on the situation (Ostorga, 2006).

Tolerating uncertainty

Relative positions can prompt individuals to perceive the right answer as a moving target: “The implication is that the expert holds the right answer. However, as experts often fail to agree, the right answer is a moving target for the student to identify” (Kinchin et al., 2008, p. 101). This

dynamic framework can enable disagreements to coexist and learners to seek their own answer, perhaps implicating value in the meandering, uncertain, ill-defined route that reflection can take. It is likely that a practitioner with relative views can adapt and experiment with ideas, enacting them according to current environmental constraints, tolerating ambiguity, perhaps facilitated by a conducive attitude. Additionally, from an epistemological perspective, an individual who meaningfully engages with reflection might acknowledge experience as a valid source of knowledge: “You must however have an awareness to the potential for learning, acknowledging personal experiences as valid learning” (Crathern, 2001, p. 165). Perhaps it can be assumed reflectiveness is “grounded on specific epistemic stances” with personal qualities predisposing engagement; as an individual’s epistemic views refine over time, increasingly embracing relative assumptions through open-mindedness, there seems to be an improvement in the quality of reflection (Ostorga, 2006, p. 19).

Strengths and Limitations

These findings consider a broad range of theoretical perspectives from varied literature enabling a rich consideration of triggers for reflection. Nevertheless, data were limited to text extracted from articles sourced from four databases included in the searches. This may not be exhaustive of all existing literature explicating the process of reflection and, there is scope for additional ideas to inform, enlarge, challenge, or refine this analysis. However, this chapter seemed to synthesise an adequate range of articles to make a meaningful contribution by elucidating understanding around the factors that enable the process of reflection. Future empirical and experimental research could extend findings, confirming or negating the results of this synthesis.

Theoretical implications

This chapter was the first study to my knowledge to systematically synthesise literature across multiple professional domains to understand the process of reflection and the factors enabling it. The report was published in an internationally recognised journal (Marshall et al., 2021). The core themes generated included the idea that lack of knowledge or understanding underpins

triggers of reflection i.e., we reflect to understand better, implying a gap in knowledge and an attitude of needing/wanting to know and a humility to accept that one does not have all the answers.

Three of the themes were included in a model to illustrate the findings (see Figure 4). This depicts epistemic views being a core construct from which conducive attitudes are constructed influencing willingness to engage in reflective inquiry. These are then nested in a social context and reciprocate with this context to co-construct the likelihood of engaging in reflective modes of inquiry. For example, internalising a complex way of knowing often drives attitudes that are conducive to reflective inquiry (e.g., open-mindedness). When a social context is conducive and supportive of reflective inquiry (promoting autonomy, preserving confidentiality, having adequate time and resources) then the interaction between these conditions, beliefs and attitudes may encourage deliberate use of, and value of, reflective inquiry.

Another model (Figure 5) represents the interaction between key constructs explored: triggers, epistemic views, conducive attitudes and context. It illustrates how these factors seem to converge and support decisions to engage in reflective thinking and may together help to predict the quality of the reflective process. Triggers in the context of this model could be external events (i.e., reactive reflection) or intrinsic curiosity and motivation to engage reflectively (i.e., proactive reflection). If personal attitudes (e.g., open-mindedness) and context (e.g., available time, minimal distractions) are associated with complex ways of knowing (epistemology) then it may be more likely that an individual engages meaningfully, deliberately and consciously with reflective thinking and improves the quality of the process.

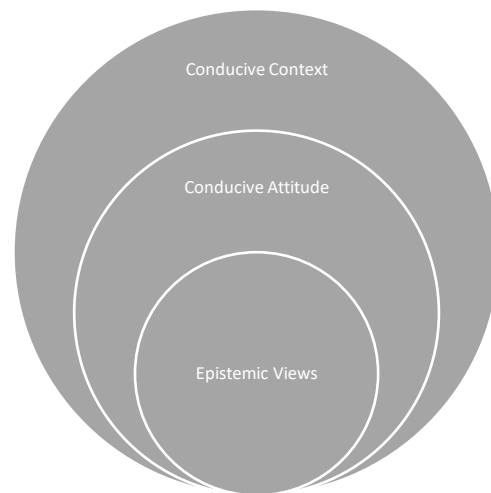


Figure 4:

A visual model illustrating the theoretical relationship between epistemic views, attitudes and context

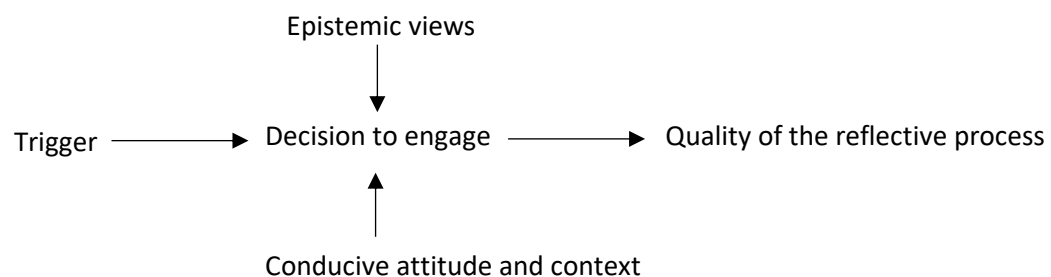


Figure 5:

Theoretical relationship between triggers, epistemic views, context and the decision to engage in reflection

Practical implications

Several applications could be supported in the training of practitioners in RP and their ongoing professional development. For example, practitioners should be encouraged to identify and reflect on critical moments, especially as reactive modes of reflection will involve an event, an initial interpretation, and potentially, an emotional response. Emotions and unease can help identify meaningful opportunities for learning aligned to direct lived experiences. These can be useful signposts to meaningful learning. Insights derived through reflection on emotions are likely to align with real-world problems, enhancing practitioner competency.

In a collaborative learning context, consideration should be given to participants' ways of knowing, and whether these are conducive to perceiving reflection as a valid way of developing

knowledge. Some practitioners may not value the reflective process as it is presented to them and may require adjustments to align with their epistemic views. For example, those with dualistic views about knowledge may require objective data-driven content to support them in engaging with a reflective process. Those with complex ways of knowing may be open to consideration of practitioner subjectivity and using personal stories as valid sources of insight. Some practitioners may not be open to RP dialogues despite being able to reflect. As such, facilitators should reflect carefully on their practice and the needs of their participants. Support should also be given to help learners and facilitators understand how they, and others, approach requests to participate in RP. To increase the likelihood of openness and willingness to participate or not, educators should critically and openly consider voluntary or involuntary approaches to RP tasks.

When aiming to facilitate reflective thinking, a puzzling or problematic scenario can be constructed by the facilitator or be elicited by the participants lived experience. This could include case studies, scenarios, open questions for discussion and could be aligned with real-world issues experienced by practitioners. When engaging in reflective thinking, facilitators should offer a variety of methods to help align the needs/wants of the group with the needs of the task. This could include written, verbal, visual/artistic, role play, individual or group work. Post-session verbal and/or written reflection can further develop learning and understanding, as can assessed or non-assessed reflective assignments.

Individuals should be encouraged to engage in private methods. For example, personal journaling as a canvas for creative, honest and personal expression. Privacy can facilitate an arena free from scrutiny and judgement. Where safe and confidential spaces are possible, facilitators can support the development of a conducive attitude by encouraging the sharing of insights generated through journaling and invite other perspectives to support the triggering of new ways of thinking and alternative perspectives.

Conclusion

Reflection seems to be an active and deliberate process of inquiry (see chapter four) and can be proactive or reactive with the former being driven by curiosity to understand a concept, and the latter being triggered by perplexing or puzzling experiences. Both types seem driven by a lack of knowledge. Emotional responses to events can identify potentially meaningful lines of inquiry enabling insight to remediate a lack of understanding. This extends the cognitive assumptions of chapter four by showing how emotions can be useful foci in the process of reflection.

The likelihood of an individual reflecting depends on an attitude that is conducive to reflection. This requires three intrapersonal conditions: open-mindedness, wholeheartedness, and responsibility. One's epistemological view may determine tolerance of uncertainty and engagement with reflection, providing an opportunity for conceptual re-alignment and more effective, critical, and balanced decision making in professional practice.

Understanding the above is likely to help frame efforts to facilitate the process of reflection between others. However, guidance and support may be needed to begin this process. The following chapter explores facilitation of RP theoretically, integrating literature to suggest ways that RP can be facilitated.

Chapter Six: Facilitating Reflection³

Introduction

The previous chapter considered the factors that enabled reflective thinking. This chapter builds on this work by exploring the factors that can support the facilitation of reflection when working with others. This may help to support RP and justify the use of informal approaches that may help build connections while supporting learning and development and therefore having social impact through facilitation of dialogic RP.

The chapter begins by diverging from dominant narratives about RP and assumes it can be engaged with using a broad range of methods. This implies that people engage in reflective thinking to varying degrees (Black & Plowright, 2010; Dewey, 1933; Sellheim & Weddle, 2015); although they may be ineffective or unaware of using it (Black & Plowright, 2010), or lack comprehensiveness and accountability (Sellheim & Weddle, 2015). Practitioners are reported to engage with less structured modes of reflection, such as reflection-in-action (Schön, 1983) and RCs (Haigh, 2005; Simpson & Trezise, 2011; Stodter et al., 2021; Thomson & Trigwell, 2016; Timperley, 2001). It is within most people's capacity to reflect (Dewey, 1933) and demonstrate knowledge through the "intuitive performance of the actions of everyday life" (Schön, 1983, p. 49). However, explicit methods of representing ideas, such as writing, conversation, and art, might help to expedite and focus the process (Marshall, 2019a, 2019b). Such modes help to steady and focus the flux of thinking, expediting the development of understanding (Dewey, 1933). By representing ideas explicitly, opportunities to re-evaluate and re-structure understanding can be created, enabling contemplation to occur privately within people, and publicly, between people (Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998), making it an inherently personal and relational process.

RP has become a requirement incorporated within the policies of professional bodies accrediting practitioners (Health and Care Professions Council, 2018; The British Association of Sport

³ As this chapter was published as a co-authored journal article in *Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, it will demonstrate similarities to this publication. Through ongoing inquiry, modifications to this chapter were made to frame it more effectively in the context of the overall thesis.

and Exercise Sciences, 2018; The British Psychological Society, 2017). Those embarking on careers or training may need guidance and support to engage with RP (Cropley et al., 2012; Dahl & Eriksen, 2016; Gallagher et al., 2017). However, with diverse approaches and techniques promoted in the literature, it is important to review the facilitators of reflection. This is important for professions that operationalise reflection as a requisite skill (Marshall, 2017, 2019a). Care needs to be taken though to ensure a comprehensive understanding and to minimise bias towards existing practices and constraints of any one profession, thereby enhancing accessibility and engagement for those at different stages of their training and career regardless of their professional context. Therefore, the central aim of this study was to review literature from a range of practitioner contexts using these questions:

- In existing literature, what are the common themes in relation to facilitation of reflection across a range of domains?
- How can these themes be understood as supporting facilitators of reflection for practitioners in differing contexts and of varying experience?

Results and discussion

Two higher order themes were generated: Factors facilitating reflection; and Facilitator tasks (Table 15).

Table 15:

Summary of higher-order and lower-order themes

<i>Higher order themes</i>	<i>Lower order themes</i>
Factors facilitating reflection	Building relationships through a relational reflective process Reflecting with more experienced people and facilitators A safe, supportive, and blame-free environment Facilitator qualities
Facilitator Tasks	Clarifying roles and expectations Helping learners understand reflection and encouraging dialogue Mirroring and being student-centred Embracing differing perspectives to help practitioners see beyond themselves

There is acknowledgement that all practitioners can be learners regardless of level of experience, and all those who partake in RP, including novice learners can facilitate this process in

others. However, when discussing the role of a facilitator this will relate to a person directly tasked with facilitating RP.

Factors facilitating reflection.

This theme explores the factors enabling the movement from private reflection to sharing the reflective process with others. These centre around environmental and relational factors, including building relationships, derived from a shared reflective process and the qualities of facilitators tasked with facilitating others' RP.

Building relationships through a relational reflective process

Whilst reflection can be a private or public process (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2010; Ghaye & Lillyman, 2014) it is a relational one too, occurring within individuals and between people: "Making meaning from our experience is a relational process - internally between different elements of our consciousness, internally between our personal and social aspects, externally between ourselves and individual others, and within a shared collective" (Jordi, 2011, p. 14). This is where relationships may be built to facilitate RP. The relationship between practitioner and facilitator is posited as a critical factor: "Reflective supervision, a relationship for learning, posits that the relationship itself, between the supervisor and the practitioner, is the mechanism of change" (Harrison, 2016, p. 671). In this scenario, the supervisor becomes the facilitator of RP, whether the learner is a novice or an experienced practitioner. For effective learning, it seems important to nurture this relationship and to develop trust and understanding prior to and while engaging in technical approaches to facilitate reflection (Stains Jr, 2012).

Starting instrumental acts of reflection too soon may result in ineffectiveness (Calvert et al., 2016), especially if practitioners are reluctant or uncomfortable. For example, mental health nurses are reported as not proactively utilising reflection for development; nevertheless, dedicating time to establish rapport and develop relationships were their initial motivators to engage in reflective groups (Thomas & Isobel, 2019). When reflective groups are established, the relational experiences

from these interactions are often carried into practitioner relationships with clients, positively impacting upon the quality of practice (Harrison, 2016).

Reflecting with more experienced people and facilitators

Relationships can be a vehicle for engagement in reflection, offering opportunities to connect with other people's knowledge and varying experiences: "The view shared amongst the participants of this study was that coaches could "feed" off the knowledge of others, which may help them make sense of their own coaching and promote further learning" (Cropley et al., 2012, p. 28). This is important for novices whose body of knowledge of the day-to-day professional working environment may be minimal (Cropley et al., 2012), and so may benefit from reflection with more experienced people: "managers asserted that the reflection space created within the continuing education intervention constituted a space for support between [newly graduated nurses] and more experienced nurses, and that it was an opportunity to strengthen the bonds within the teams" (Goudreau et al., 2015, p. 576).

Providing space for reflection between team members with a range of experience becomes an environmental and relational catalyst for reflective learning; it can also help bring teams together, strengthening working relationships. Further, it can be helpful for different cohorts to support each other: "Facilitators expressed merit in the benefits of having students from different years of the pre-registration (years 1, 2, 3 and 4) and post-registration (part 1 and 2) education programmes together and viewed this as enhancing the learning that occurred" (Gallagher et al., 2017, p. 11). Building networks of peer support also facilitates RP. Such networks and relationships can be informal and formal; even online communities may successfully encourage group reflection (Stoszkowski & Collins, 2017); and practitioners may informally reflect together on difficulties experienced in their practice: "occasionally a coach would contact another respected coach and ask for strategies to help resolve a challenging issue" (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, p. 27).

Solitary reflection can be difficult for novice learners, who may need support to achieve depth (Dahl & Eriksen, 2016). In this context, the coach is a facilitator of reflection, making

relationships a fundamental enabler of RP. People can also be encouraged to reflect with support: “From the outset, it was felt that the process of reflective learning would require careful facilitation. A system of mentoring was therefore initiated in conjunction with the portfolio” (Bush & Bissell, 2008, p. 104). Within the relationship a facilitator can provide a practical and conceptual support system assisting practitioners to develop skills integrating these with theoretical understanding (Kinchin et al., 2008). Reflection can be a developmental process, with individuals also having the potential to facilitate the learning of others, given appropriate circumstances.

A safe, supportive, and blame-free environment

As reflection thrives on relational experiences, a prerequisite is a sense of safety and support within an environment where ideas can be shared openly without fear of negative judgement: “Given that a central purpose of reflective consultation is to support practitioners in the field, the model validates that in this case, the reflective consultation group provided a supportive, safe, relational experience that practitioners valued” (Harrison, 2016, p. 680). This sense of safety encourages openness and disclosure (Calvert et al., 2016): “Facilitation skills include ability to challenge, but also ability to create a safe environment. Open reflection becomes easier in a climate of safety that cultivates honesty” (Dahl & Eriksen, 2016, p. 405). If opportunities are provided for RP, perhaps one of the most optimal conditions is ensuring organisations provide supportive and blame-free environments: “the role of facilitator was integral to promoting an enabling and supportive environment for the reflective process, and the very personal nature of reflective activity” (Gallagher et al., 2017, p. 12).

Creating an environment where learners and practitioners can speak freely can be challenging, given dialogues can trigger difficult, emotive responses. The literature notes ways these environments can be attained, for example, through peer support (Harrison, 2016; Weatherston et al., 2010), mentoring with experienced colleagues (Bulman et al., 2014), or adopting a learning circle approach where the physical positioning of individuals creates an environment that physically signifies equality (Walker et al., 2013). Nevertheless, it seems critical to the facilitation of RP that the

environment and dynamics within this are blame-free and safe. In formal RP, this also requires the embodiment of qualities within the facilitator that will be explored next.

Facilitator qualities

Creating a safe, supportive, and blame-free environment for practitioners requires relational factors for reflection:

Carl Rogers describes the facilitator as a catalyst, allowing clients or students to draw their own conclusions, creating their own prescription for change. He described core conditions for the facilitative process, both counselling and educational. These are congruence (realness), acceptance, and empathy (Fanning & Gaba, 2007, p. 119)

By embodying the core conditions of congruence, acceptance, and empathy (Rogers, 2001), a skilled facilitator can ensure learning occurs through RP; these conditions presuppose self-awareness and self-regulation of one's cognitive and emotional experience. It is difficult to imagine a facilitator genuinely empathising with a variety of differing perspectives and viewpoints (some of which may conflict with their own) in a dialectical process unless they engage in purposeful and open-minded reflection (Cropley et al., 2012), and can compartmentalise their own beliefs and experiences (Gearing, 2004). Attuning to another person's experience involves a conscious effort, interacting with a disposition of open-mindedness (Marshall et al., 2021). Such attentive listening and empathic attunement to experiences allows the expression of difficulties, differences, and vulnerability. Any scenario which fosters openness should also enable expression of difficult experiences where vulnerabilities are acknowledged and people feel valued and safe to talk (Harrison, 2016; Weatherston et al., 2010). A facilitator needs to ensure practitioners' integrity and sense of self are maintained. Thus, any challenging of ideas should be conducted in an honest, nurturing, empathic and emotionally supportive manner (Bulman et al., 2014). This would necessitate the facilitator utilising skills and tools ensuring those they are facilitating also maintain this stance towards each other (Hendricks et al., 1996).

Facilitator tasks

This theme explores tasks to facilitate reflection. Facilitators enable roles and expectations to be clarified, and they model the necessary qualities allowing different views to be voiced and alternative perspectives to be considered.

Clarifying roles and expectations

One way to promote safe reflection, without fear of criticism or judgment, is for facilitators to ensure participants have clear understanding of roles and expectations: “having safety in which roles and expectations were clearly defined so that the learner teacher could reflect without fear of criticism and judgement” (Platzer et al., 2000, p. 690). It is important to clarify group members’ expectations and find an agreement where responsibility for learning remains with the individual: “The staff here believe that reflection is not a process that the facilitator can do for the group, and this view needs to be explored and agreed with group members” (Hendricks et al., 1996, p. 99). At the outset, the traditional teacher-student didactic relationship can be reshaped towards students finding their own understanding (Hendricks et al., 1996). “It [the relationship between the tutor and the candidate] should not be one-way traffic, a good tutor facilitates” (Nelson & Cushion, 2006, p. 181).

Helping learners to understand and encouraging dialogue.

Before engaging in the process of reflection it is also important that learners understand what reflection is and what it is not: “Our results also suggest the possible benefit of engaging students in introductory sessions on the theoretical basis of the reflective learning methodology before beginning its definitive implementation in the curriculum” (Fernández-Peña et al., 2016, p. 64). Particularly for novice learners, this introduction should include the definitions, purpose, and process of reflection and its alignment with professional practice (Cropley et al., 2012). Within the dialogical aspects of reflection, providing guidelines and sharing examples seems prudent: “One recommendation is to increase the structure with examples of what to reflect on and provide guidelines regarding when to complete the RP” (Cooper & Wieckowski, 2017, p. 257). Whilst guidelines may help structure the reflective process, structures can also constrain the process; this

prescribed focus may inhibit a flexible and authentic inquiry. Therefore, an important facilitator task is to help learners understand that structures can be adapted to individual and group needs.

Through gaining hands-on experience with RP, facilitators can encourage learners to deconstruct their own individualised experiences of reflection: “This is not to define the process and outputs of thinking for students and measure their performance, but rather help the student’s own deconstruction and personal evaluation of the phenomenology of individual reflection” (Ixer, 2016, p. 819). This task may result in exploration of personal conceptions that can be reflected on reciprocally: “when using advocacy-inquiry, educators seek to uncover learners’ rationale for action or mental models by stating a concrete observation and sharing their point of view or judgment about it before inquiring about the learners’ perspective (Eppich & Cheng, 2015, p. 107). This two-way process aims to understand the reasons for actions whilst allowing the facilitator the space to make informed judgements, conceptualising their perspective for the learner rather than pushing for quick solutions (Hall, 2020).

Facilitator tasks may be integral to the reflective process for novice learners and experienced practitioners, enabling supportive dialogues promoting reflective learning. Reflection seems to be active, requiring engagement and can be enacted through questioning: “How does one implement reflection in coaching or teaching if one has not done so before? It is recommended to simply start by asking open-ended questions and allow for conversation to occur” (Gordon, 2017, p. 27). Facilitators may design questions and protocols that prompt detailed recall and reflective thinking:

People may need to go over the event several times as they are encouraged to recall the event in as much detail as possible. Other people who played a part are described, along with their actions. Feelings associated with the event are expressed (Hendricks et al., 1996, p. 100)

The task of the facilitator during these conversations is to encourage dialogue and signpost ideas to elaborate on (Hendricks et al., 1996); the facilitator or group members may need to go

further: “Intervention by other individuals may be necessary to steer the direction of thought, or to ensure that misconceptions do not occur” (Roberts, 2008, p. 5). Learners are helped to talk openly, with the facilitator summarising discussion and drawing together threads of meaning and plans for change (Hendricks et al., 1996). Focussed conversations have been shown to facilitate pre-service teachers’ professional learning and development (Jao et al., 2020), enabling teachers to make sense of experiences and their practice (Jarvis & Clark, 2020).

Mirroring and being student-centred.

In facilitating dialogue, it may be important for facilitators to model their RP: “Teachers also need to mirror themselves and be ready to stand in front of the mirror with students and fellow teachers” (Dahl & Eriksen, 2016, p. 405). A facilitator is, therefore, a role model engaging in RP and helps other people examine their experience from a different perspectives, questioning their self in the context of practice (Koh et al., 2017). Facilitators may encourage learners to be active inquirers within an autonomous, supportive, environment: “Bolton claims that a reflective facilitator does not so much lead students, as create an environment where they lead themselves; the through-the-mirror facilitators stay in uncertainty with their participants achieving active dynamic engagement” (Bolton, 2010; Dahl & Eriksen, 2016, p. 404). Consequently: “The teachers play a key role in facilitating students' opportunities to lead themselves, which means that students need to be involved as active agents” (Dahl & Eriksen, 2016, p. 405). Therefore, facilitators should encourage student-led activities and begin with the thoughts of the learner: “The facilitator began the session but from there on it was mainly student led and I thought that this was great, everyone had their say and opinions were really valued” (Gallagher et al., 2017, p. 10). This may result in changing the dynamic of learner and facilitator, potentially blurring hierarchies in ways that could be challenging. It might therefore be prudent to balance student-led and facilitator-led dialogue, encouraging facilitator involvement as a co-constructor and co-learner. The facilitator then has an opportunity to model the process and focus dialogue should it become unproductive: “They should be role models

for reflective practitioners and act as co-learners rather than teachers” (Hendricks et al., 1996, p. 99).

Modelling RP with examples can assist learners to develop a clear image of what it looks like. This may be uncomfortable sometimes as people move into new ways of engaging with one another. Specifically, facilitators could engage in reflection in a manner that is visible to learners. For example, in teacher education, learners were allowed some access to an experienced teacher’s personal reflective diary entries (Loughran, 1996). Also, Brookfield (2017) collected regular feedback using a classroom critical incident questionnaire (Brookfield, 1998) to help to identify and challenge assumptions. Feedback was discussed with the group in their next lesson, and this was reported to build trust and openness with students understanding that feedback was taken seriously and used to align teaching practice with student needs and preferences. This modelled a critically reflective process to students. Such student-centred activities help learners remember that facilitators are not all-knowing but may be co-learners, on a reflective learning journey themselves.

As individuals come with differing experiences and personal preferences, it may be prudent to explore with learners the reasoning for an approach and offer differentiated activities to ensure everyone can make effective use of the learning environment, thus aiming to be student-centred respecting individual agency. It is important to collaborate with learners to develop individual approaches to reflection that suit them and the context (Cropley et al., 2012; Knowles et al., 2006). Further, being student-centred necessitates the ability to embrace opportunities which support the exploration and understanding of insights originating from differing perspectives.

Embracing differing perspectives and helping practitioners to see beyond themselves.

Solitary reflection integrates individual understanding helping to make sense of complex or perplexing experiences. When others are invited to confirm, challenge, or enlarge interpretations, collective understanding can develop. Group reflection can facilitate trading ideas, fostering an environment of inquiry and change (Cropley et al., 2012; Gustafsson & Fagerberg, 2004).

Additionally, practitioners may be offered previously unconsidered views: “Practitioners necessitate

guidance and support to see beyond themselves and to assert their personal practice” (Duffy, 2007, p. 1404). Reflecting with others offers new ways of looking at ideas and perspectives, shifting understanding (Kaunisto et al., 2013). Positive relational qualities, coupled with individual dispositions towards being open-minded, seemed to facilitate a willingness to listen to others’ perspectives. This may be pertinent when reflecting on dilemmas, interpersonal difficulties, or difficult emotive responses (Harrison, 2016; Ostorga, 2006).

Given misunderstandings can influence our understanding of ourselves and our practice (Dahl & Eriksen, 2016), different perspectives offer opportunity to challenge assumptions (Platzer et al., 2000). Thus, input from peers may address misconceptions (Chin & Brown, 2002); it may also challenge an idea and enrich a person’s private RP (Cropley et al., 2012). Therefore, disparate points of view should be welcomed: “Differences in points of view and thoughts are essential for learning and development – the differences (i.e., the differential potential of the supervision) between supervisee and supervisor providing perspective and thus the basis for reflection” (Frølund & Nielsen, 2009, p. 100).

Managing disagreements sensitively can encourage participants to view these moments as opportunities for learning rather than threats. As practitioners offer perspectives grounded in varying experiences, the idea that shared reflection offers improved understanding seems logical: “if the sharing of experiences provides a greater understanding of context, then it could be suggested that initially there is a need to self-reflect and record one’s thoughts and feelings” (Hughes et al., 2009, p. 370). This may enrich conversations. For example, people who self-reflect and prepare themselves tend to shift the course of shared thinking more effectively (Stains Jr, 2012). It also points to the need for practitioners to examine their own experience and context prior to sharing them. Facilitators may model good preparation for group reflection via preliminary solitary reflection: “In support of this, Ghaye and Ghaye (1998) propose that RCs may initially take the form of a private conversation with self, but then it should be articulated in public” (Hughes et al., 2009, p. 370). By thinking through ideas or experiences it becomes easier to articulate these publicly. The

resultant cross-fertilisation of ideas can result in a better collective understanding of the topic of inquiry: “It is in the midst of this vigorous cross fertilisation that group members are most active, as understandings are confirmed, challenged, enlarged, or even changed. We learn from our own experience and from each other” (Hendricks et al., 1996, p. 100).

As groups of people do not always agree, there may be situations where disparate perspectives conflict. A facilitator could sensitively negotiate and rationalise discrepancies, using this as a learning opportunity to encourage understanding despite differences. Guiding divergent discussion is not easy and it is reasonable to assume some who facilitate the reflective learning process of others may be uncomfortable or ineffective and it is important to remember that facilitators are on a learning journey themselves. Regardless of experience, all practitioners should engage in mentoring/supervisory relationships exploring and evaluating facilitatory practice. The supervisory context can be an opportunity for experiential and transformational learning to occur (Calvert et al., 2016) through focussed conversations (Jarvis & Clark, 2020).

Strengths and Limitations

Whilst these findings provide a synthesis from a broad range of theoretical and professional perspectives, they are limited to text extracted from the three databases searched. This study may not be exhaustive of literature exploring the facilitators and facilitation of reflection. Nevertheless, this study synthesises an adequate range of articles, making a meaningful contribution to understanding.

This study used novel methods to generate knowledge about reflection. Grounded theory uses data-driven methods (usually with primary data) to create explanatory theories about social processes. This study used these analytical methods on secondary data i.e., textual extracts from articles, which were conceptually dense, yet rigorously processed after being written, proof-read and peer reviewed. Although grounded theory methods were not originally designed for qualitative syntheses, they have been reported to be effective (Ronkainen et al., 2021; Wolfswinkel et al., 2013).

Theoretical Implications

This chapter was published in a peer reviewed internationally recognised journal (Marshall et al., 2022) and synthesised a body of systematically acquired articles generating insight about factors that facilitate reflection and the tasks that facilitators can use to support reflection. This chapter included the first study, to my awareness at the time of writing, that formally synthesised a systematically acquired body of literature to understand the factors that support reflection. This helped to create practical recommendations to support RP facilitators; particularly those working in education sectors who are engaged in ongoing teaching and learning practices (see Figure 6 explained in practical implications below). Theoretically this chapter integrated literature representing different strands of research and inquiry focussing on different aspects of the process of reflection. This chapter can be considered a guide signposting the reader to evidence-supported ways of facilitating reflection.

A core theme representing a theoretical contribution of this thesis is the importance of relationships and conversations that can enhance RP. Conversations can present differences of opinion helping to deepen understanding through dialectical inquiry. These relational qualities seem to be a core factor supporting detailed reflective processes. Relational RP has the benefit of being accessible and adaptable for use with varying degrees of formality. For example, conversations can be focussed and formalised, or casual and informal. Representing thoughts verbally can also expedite a more efficient reflective process, translating thoughts into utterances quickly and interactionally while being open to challenge, support and development.

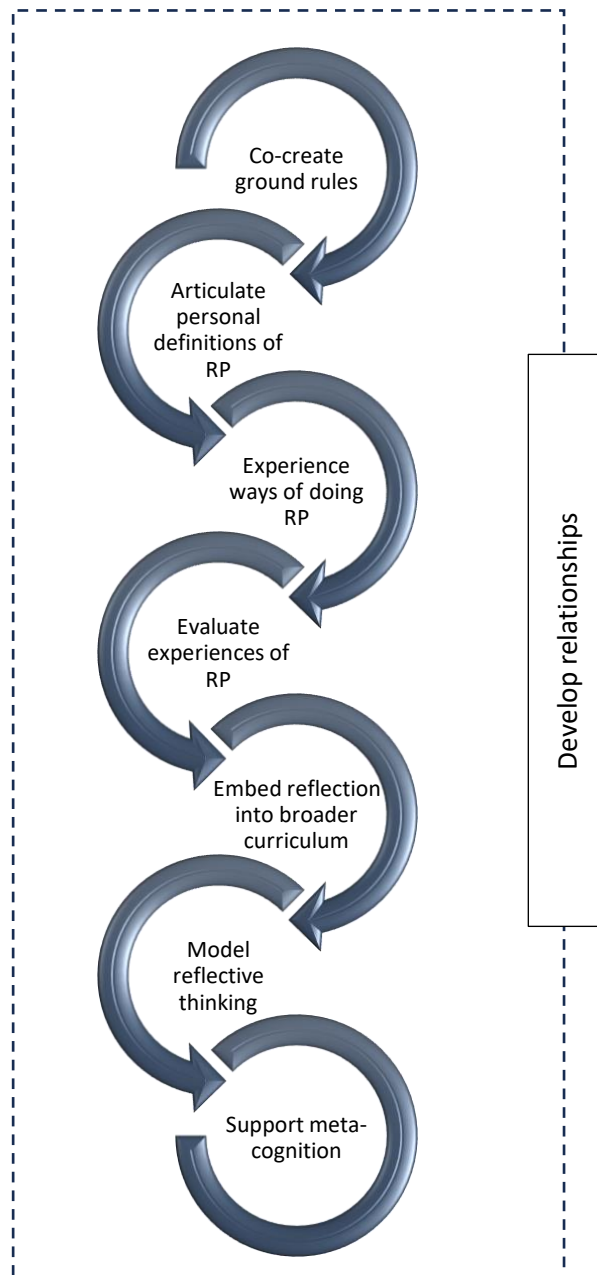


Figure 6:

A potential approach for implementing reflection within formal learning curricula, drawing on the findings of this chapter.

Practical Implications

Figure 6 above outlines practical recommendations for incorporating RP in formal learning. A core theme aligning with this chapter and thesis is the need to continually nurture facilitator-participant and participant-participant relationships. These relationships help to build safety, trust, openness and honesty. This in turn should help to encourage engagement and productivity.

Interactions embodying mutual respect and curiosity also support positive relationships-for-learning and engagement with RP.

Important considerations for building relationships-for-learning include nurturing trust through demonstration of compassion, consistency, integrity and competence. Central to this is having conversations and ongoing interactions that embody these qualities (Cranston, 2011; Jarvis & Clark, 2020). Learning conversations are recommended to include asking open questions, actively listening, paraphrasing and reflecting-back ideas to support deeper reflective thinking (Jarvis & Clark, 2020). Showing vulnerability while problem-solving collaboratively (for example being open about the limits of one's knowledge) may help normalise a sense of not knowing. Sharing personal stories of challenging or difficult experiences may also help to give a sense of not having all the answers, thus building a sense of psychological safety and a willingness for others to share their challenging experiences.

Seeking feedback from service-users (e.g., athletes/participants) and peers can also demonstrate open-mindedness and respect for others. When this feedback is used to make changes it may support trust and a sense of integrity (Brookfield, 2017). Feedback to others could be framed as inquiry through the initial use of questions (prior to advice giving if necessary) to maintain curiosity and facilitation of deeper modes of thinking. This supports guided discovery/inquiry and flattens power hierarchies, nurturing rather than shutting down inquiry (Jarvis & Clark, 2020). Essentially trust may be developed when practitioners interact and develop caring and cooperative relationships (Cranston, 2011).

Conclusion

Reflection is a relational process which draws connections between private ideas, and public interactions between individuals and groups. As a public process, reflection can be facilitated through focussed formal dialogues between peers, more experienced colleagues, and facilitators, enriching and diversifying knowledge, perspectives, insights, and relationships. Trust can be encouraged when facilitators build caring and cooperative relationships and connect through

conversations. By asking questions, actively listening and cooperatively problem solving real-world situated problems, facilitators embody open-mindedness, respect, compassion and curiosity. Thus, personal qualities of a facilitator are important, and they should value inquiry into experiences, differences of opinion, and emotive responses. This requires safe, supportive, and blame-free environments where facilitators mirror qualities such as congruence, acceptance, and empathy. Given the inter- and intra-personal complexities involved in the facilitation of RP, facilitators should also engage in reflective supervision to maintain a learner-centred, open, empathic, tolerant, and accepting stance whatever the differences and challenges that arise.

Now I have explored a theoretical perspective on the concept and process of reflection, I will turn towards a more situated inquiry in the following chapter. This will involve an exploration of sport coaching practitioners' perceptions and experiences of RP. It is important to open points of tension between the theory of RP and experiential challenges of using it as suggested in literature, as this will help to generate more robust theories accounting for such difficulties. For example, rather than problematising practitioners' motivation, taking an open and inquiry-based orientation may help to reframe theories and perhaps question assumptions being made about RP.

Chapter Seven: Sport Coaches' Perceptions and Experiences of Using RP In Their Professional Development.

Introduction

The previous chapter explored the process of reflection from a theoretical perspective, generating theory-led, practical suggestions to facilitate RP. This chapter will continue to explore the concept and process of reflection adopting a practitioner perspective, seeking to understand sport coaches' understanding of RP including their perceptions and experiences of using RP. Sport coaches are in direct contact with athletes in a position of authority which can be used for the good of the participant but often misused causing harm to participants (Adams et al., 2024). This often includes young and vulnerable people. Thus, it seems important to nurture a thoughtful reflective orientation towards practice, including towards relationships that can positively influence participant wellbeing. Thus, RP becomes not only a *tool* to develop practice or solve problems but a mode of inquiry, sensitising oneself to interactions and potential signs of abuse. RP may then develop an ethical compass with coaches taking responsibility for errors of judgement and accountability for their continuous learning and development.

It is important to understand how practitioners use RP and how they may adapt their methods given their working constraints. Listening to practical concerns and understanding how RP is being used in accordance with working constraints might help to develop theoretical understanding of RP. By engaging dialectically with theoretical and practical knowledge, a more pragmatically balanced theory of reflection that meets the needs of practitioners might be created. For example, in the sport coaching context, Burt and Morgan (2014) state that RP is not often conceptualised in an overtly practical way and that whilst a lot of articles exploring RP are interesting, they do little to bridge the theory-practice divide and are often not accessible by coaches. It thus seems important to explore sport coaches' perceptions and experiences of engaging in RP. This information will help to develop an understanding of reflection that is grounded in practitioners' perspectives aiming to raise awareness of challenges and practical constraints,

enabling researchers and coach educators to judge what can be done to operationalise the concept of RP in line with the needs of practitioners, thus supporting the sport coaching community.

Methods

The following subsections will explain the data collection process including participant characteristics and recruitment. For further detail about methods including analysis, quality assurance and ethics (including procedural ethics approval number), please refer to chapter three.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews explored participants' perceptions and experiences of using RP in their professional development. Interviews were conducted by asking open questions and engaging in active listening. The interview schedule in Appendix E was used, outlining core questions in all interviews. The intention was to keep questions broad and open to gather rich data. A practitioner voice was explored because sport coaches have been reported to withdraw from systematic RP in favour of informal and unstructured RP (Burt & Morgan, 2014). It seemed important to understand how practitioners think about and experience RP. This might help to engage dialectically with theoretical perspectives of RP assuming systematic approaches are more effective. This may also help to identify the limitations of such approaches and inform new ways of thinking about RP.

Initial questions focussed on participant background e.g., could you tell me a little bit about your current role? How would you describe the role of a coach? This was to ensure contextual information was collected that could assist transferability of findings. This helped participants to think about their practice, while nurturing openness. Questions about RP were then introduced, considering what RP means to them, aiming to understand personal definitions. This was followed by questions focussing on first impressions of RP, how their perceptions have changed over time and applied use of RP when experiencing a problem of practice. Finally, questions focussed on how participants facilitated reflection in others and how coaches can be supported to engage in RP. These questions were developed with the support and feedback of my principal supervisor. This was

an iterative process, involving verbal and written feedback and questions, resulting in an agreed list of questions.

Although questions were asked in order of presentation participants sometimes discussed the content of a question prior to it being asked. In these cases, they were asked probing questions. However, they were asked the question again in a standardised order to ensure any additional information was mentioned. Participants were encouraged to talk freely, and they often shared information that diverged from the questions but remained relevant to the topic. Statements were probed to elicit further detail by firstly paraphrasing the words of the participant and often following up with a question. Paraphrasing and summarising encouraged my own interpretation and reflection, supporting follow-up questions (Kluger & Nir, 2010; Lavee & Itzchakov, 2023; Rollnick & Miller, 1995). By restating ideas, the meaning was subsequently confirmed, extended, or clarified (Kluger & Nir, 2010; Lavee & Itzchakov, 2023; Rollnick & Miller, 1995). This meant the interviewer and participants co-constituted the interview process, with the researcher being an active co-constructor. All interviews were conducted virtually, via Zoom. This software created an audio file that was saved on the secure and UK-GDPR compliant University OneDrive. These audio files were transcribed verbatim and deleted once all transcripts were completely written, checked and depersonalised. Names of people were deleted and replaced with bracketed generic statements e.g., (name of person), (name of organisation).

Participants

Ten sport coaches (nine male and one female), who were either lead coaches and/or held the highest qualification from their governing body were recruited through direct emails to clubs and social media advertising (using [Appendix H](#)). Personal contacts who also met the above inclusion criteria were recruited through social media advertising. Participants were purposively sampled by contacting sport clubs (for example, by phone or email) within a 30-mile radius of the University of Hertfordshire inquiring if the lead coach would be willing to participate in a research interview. This was later amended to include sport coaches with any level of qualification, and due to interviews

being conducted virtually during the COVID pandemic, coaches could participate from any location. Participants coached for an average of 19.8 years (range: 8-43 years) across separate disciplines including: weightlifting (n=1), triathlon (n=2), athletics (n=1), baseball (n=1), judo (n=1), football (n=1), strength and conditioning (n=1), squash (n=1) and basketball (n=1).

Findings

Analysis resulted in the development of three main themes: An analytical and reflexive experiential inquiry deepened by a formalised process; Engaging coaches in a challenging process; and shifting the focus of reflection to achieve personal and professional change. Each main theme included two to four sub themes (see table 16). For a detailed theme table please refer to [Appendix B](#). The following narrative explicated the properties of themes and where relevant used direct quotations from participant transcripts.

Table 16:

Themes developed through data analysis and a summary of theme representativeness across interviews.

Main themes	Sub themes	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10
An analytical and reflexive experiential inquiry deepened by a formalised process	An analytical thought process	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	A reflexive experiential inquiry			✓	✓	✓		✓			
	Deepening and habituating reflection and reflexivity through informal and formal processes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Engaging coaches in a challenging process	Barriers and challenges to RP	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
	Overcoming barriers: Openness to the value of RP	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Learning through reflective conversations	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
	Questioning to prompt, trigger and focus reflective inquiry			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Shifting the focus of reflection to achieve personal and professional change	Openly and wholeheartedly re-focusing reflection to facilitate learning		✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	
	Widening the focus and embedding RPs into training		✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

Table note: C = coach

An analytical and reflexive experiential inquiry deepened by a formalised process.

This section will explore reflection as conceptualised by practitioners as a thought process used to analytically engage with experiences while considering themselves working in context with another person or group of people. It will also consider RP occurring along a continuum of formality. Specifically informal RP is framed as an accessible way of engaging in reflective thinking alone or with others. Formalised RP may help practitioners to stop and think more carefully, thus deepening the process. Limitations of these ideas are also presented.

An analytical thought process.

Participants seemed to describe RP as a process of analysis and evaluation, considering themselves and the athletes they support e.g., “I think RP is an examination of my coaching performance, really” (C3, Lines 88-89). This was further developed as they explained that RP involved self-evaluation but also consideration of the way athletes that they worked with responded within a session: “OK, so for me, it's constant self-evaluation and observation of my athletes and how they are reacting and dealing with the sessions that are set” (C3, Lines 61-62). RP seemed to involve evaluating their performance in meeting athlete needs, observing how the athletes responded to training and integrating this information into a reflective thinking process, encompassing an evaluation of the self. For C8, reflection was described as involving an assessment of coaching performance, framed as a process working towards the development of athlete performance as well as their own:

It's assessing my performance, like, within sessions and over time, so if we're actually hitting the outcomes we're trying to hit and looking at what obstacles might come up as well and how we've tried to overcome them. And then it's also seeing how the athlete is reacting to it from a personal level and from a physiological, like how their body's reacting to what we're doing (C8, Lines 42-45)

C6 explicitly referred to RP being “an evaluative process to enhance your coaching practice going forward” (C6, Line 39). For C6, RP seemed to involve looking back on one’s experiences to

deconstruct and understand the positive and negative factors, making changes to improve future practice. C7 referred to RP as involving “breaking things down” (C7, Line 275) when discussing a situation that did not occur as intended, thus suggesting that RP was understood as a deconstructive and analytical process. Complementing this, C3 described RP as allowing them to deliberately think about their efficacy within their day-to-day coaching practice:

So, again, you know, it allows you to think about did it work? And if it didn't, why didn't it? And what can I do better next time? So that definitely happens. So generally, it's a review of all the positive and the negative aspects of my coaching (C3, Lines 101-104)

For C1 RP involved an evaluation of action: “So, for the players RP should be a sense of doing something and then reviewing that process, whether it went well or whether it went badly” (C1, Lines 74-76). RP seemed to be understood as an analytical process, with some coaches engaging in explicit, externalised, and formalised methods at one extreme, or introspective, internalised, and informal methods at the other:

[I] understand that self-reflection is more of an internalised thing. And whether it's like, I don't write, I don't ever write anything down. For me. It's just like, it's like a feedback loop going on. So, I'll ask a question. And I'm just critiquing myself within it (C9, Lines 59-61)

C9 also stated that reflection has “been an internal conversation in my own head. And it's always started with a question” (C9, Lines 202-203). They explained that they used self-talk, an internal conversation, as a method to reflect on and inquire into questions they had. This notion of reflection being an internalised process was also implicitly present in the interview with C5:

So, when I was a beginner coach you know I was always kind of reflecting on the session on the way home or the following night or whatever, thinking about how I could deliver the session next week and whether I could build on what I did last

time, or whether that was any good, or maybe I should bin that approach and try something else (C5, Lines 68-72)

This suggested that this group of experienced coaches considered reflection to be a cognitive and analytical process that was engaged with or facilitated through a variety of different approaches, ranging from introspection to more formalised and structured methods. RP seemed to be focussed on trying to understand experiences in the coaches' working context.

A reflexive experiential inquiry

Reflection seemed to be conceptualised as an analytical thought process facilitating the development of knowledge. However, it was also used in the moment to reframe decision making, enabling adaptations:

I think it often occurs reflexively during training sessions. I mean, I have to respond to things that happened such as for instance, if an athlete is really struggling with a session, then I have to, you know, interrupt, and actually alter the session for that particular person. So, that's happening all the time (C3, Lines 62-65)

It was discussed as a reflexive mode of inquiry into experiences in-the-moment, supporting coaches in being adaptive by changing planned training methods that were perceivably not as effective as anticipated:

I think it's to think about it a bit and let them continue that drill instead of saying stop. And then you have to think of something on the go. I prefer to let them go for a couple of minutes and say, right OK I need to change the plan and how is this going to affect the rest of the plan and kind of a bit on the fly but also give myself two, three minutes to reassess and redirect. That way when you make the change, it doesn't look rushed, it doesn't look improvised. It looks like I have a new plan so to speak. And so, I think that has helped me. Just take a step back and think about it rather than acting instinct, instinctively (C4, Lines 219-225).

Reflection and action were often intertwined, with insights generated in-the-moment, enabling adjustments to be made to a session according to how athletes perceivably responded:

Or you might break it up, you might think the athletes just not there. Okay we're going to switch this we can do something completely different and then we're going to come back to this or we're going to give him a water break or we're going to you know whatever. It depends really, it depends on what you're trying to do and how they're responding to it (C5, Lines 158-161).

A curious and inquisitive orientation seemed to characterise these coaches as they observed the athletes they coached, noticing how they were responding to training, adjusting the session based on these observations. With an ongoing problem that was unable to be immediately resolved in the moment, C3 alluded to the need to take time to think more deeply about the nature of the problem, resulting in a bespoke solution:

I had an athlete who was not using her arms correctly when she was running so I'm a [sport] coach. So, a lot of the work is actually on sprinting technique, and her arms were going across her body rather than forward and back. So, I kept thinking about it. You know, you keep saying to them, right try and get your arms down by your sides forward and back, don't let them go across your body. And they don't, they don't get it. You know, you can say it and you try and say it in a number of different ways, and they still don't get it. And it was preying on my mind. And I came up with the idea, right. Okay. I've got to do something to physically make her realise. So, I put relay batons in both their hands. So, she had the batons in her hands so that as she ran, she went across the body she actually hits herself with the batons. Not that I'm into brutality. But it actually worked. So, she started using these relay batons and it kept her arms at her sides not going across and so I've used it again with somebody else. And, you know, that's how you learn really sort of trying to

approach a problem. Think about it and then try something and hopefully it works

(C3, Lines 77-88)

Experience coupled with reflection, both in-the-moment and retrospectively, facilitated learning and development. This assumed openness to learning and developing new insight and knowledge through reflection:

And I think as long as you're open to learning, and open to improving the way that

you're delivering, and reflecting on okay, well, that worked. Well, that didn't work.

So, I think that's the key thing is try it. Don't be scared of trying things (C7, Lines 467-

469)

These reflections seemed to occur at a superficial level, where the flow of experience continued, and the coach engaged in reflective thinking with enough distancing and cognitive effort to generate useful insight to improve practice while events still occurred (C4 and C5 above), and changes could be made that directly and immediately affected the experience. Instances where improvements did not occur in-the-moment required coaches to step-back and think more deeply about the problem (C3 above).

Deepening and habituating reflection and reflexivity through informal and formal processes

The methods and approaches participants used to engage with RP were discussed in varying ways across the sample. These ranged from introspective and reflexive engagement in-the-moment, to more cognitively and time-demanding formal written reflection performed retrospectively. Some participants used a combination of these approaches, depending on the specific context:

But I think it's just having a whole different load of approaches to it and a whole

load of different ways of doing RP whether it be formal, informal, quick, and easy, or

much more structured, then we can hopefully make it fit the context (C2, Lines 80-

83).

Some participants discussed the need to include more detail in their reflections, using questions to deepen inquiry:

I think there's a lot more detail to be had with a lot of these reflections of you know how did it make me feel? What did I do? What did the opposition do? What did they feel? You know what were the reactions from me doing x or y? (C1, Lines 77-79)

When probed on how they achieved rigour in RP, C1 discussed the need to formalise the process:

I think you have to sit down and formally go through it so I don't typically go through this with a person, for me I have a diary so I wouldn't go through every session.

Probably, I guess it would be good practice to do that (C1, Lines 90-92).

There seemed to be an implication that rigour might be achieved by formalising and systematically engaging in RP. Also, there appeared to be a trade-off between establishing rigour and potentially making the process difficult and time-consuming. Alternatively, rigour could be reduced with participation in less formalised RP, using accessible modes that might be more engaging. C2 explained that "I think there's a number of ways of doing it without necessarily formalising it as RP" (C2, Lines 284-285). It appeared the perceived need for structure and formality depended on the nature of the role and context that the coach was working in, which would largely determine the purpose and focus:

So, within the performance environment with it being a much more collaborative piece of work I think it's something that's done on a much more structured basis from the point of view that you sit down as a collective coaching team with athlete support personnel. You know what the end goal is, you know, to prepare athletes for the [name of event] and the [name of event] and I think from that aspect your planning sessions invariably encompass an element of RP because it's what did we do well? What can we do better? So, you look at it from both a collective and an

individual experience. So, I think for me it's probably become a much more structured piece and a much more relevant piece as I've progressed with my coaching into the performance side of things than it was when I was working in a club environment if that makes sense? (C2, Lines 102-111).

Collaborative RP was not always described as a structured or formalised process as it was in C2's experience in the high-performance environment. C8 seemed to describe reflective moments in meetings with their line manager:

Other times as well, will be like meetings with a line manager once a week to set goals, and then reflect on the previous week, like how it's gone. And, yeah, I mean, a lot of the time you're doing it without realising you're actually doing it as well (C8, Lines 97-99).

In this example, conversation appeared to be an engaging mode through which reflective thinking might have occurred without realising. Conversational RP might also facilitate collaboration and relationships, influencing practitioner development and engagement beyond the self.

Engaging coaches in a challenging process

The following section first explores the barriers and challenges to RP, before trying to understand factors that might lead to practitioners overcoming these barriers. The idea of conversational RP is then revisited, framing this as an accessible dialogical mode of RP.

Barriers and challenges to RP

Participants mentioned several factors acting as barriers or inhibitors to engagement with RP. One of these included concerns about accuracy of models:

I'm not I'm not seeing self-reflection as this little model; this Gibbs model, and I never refer to it. I never go back and go, oh, have I done this? Have I done that bit of reflection, but I know I'm doing it, I know I'm doing something that is allowing me to self-reflect in the moment (C9, Lines 57-59).

Concern was also raised about the variety of available models, with some of them being easier to utilise than others, potentially affecting the level of detail. Specifically, if a problem or an ambiguous situation required deeper consideration, using a model with easier or broader questions might not have enabled coaches to reach the required level of detail:

So, I guess the only thing I would add is that I think there needs to be caution in the models people take on because some of them are easier to complete and much broader in the questions which means you don't really reflect to the level you might need to (C1, Lines 281-283).

Models and pre-established questions were suggested to constrain some coaches, such that they reflected at a more superficial level. Additionally, the time and skillset required to reflect with rigour might create a barrier to deeper modes of reflection:

But I think I don't think every coach goes home every night and thinks right now, let me really evaluate what I've just experienced, in part because of the skill set, and then perhaps, although not wanting to depreciate, you know, anybody's ability here, but also partly time, it's a very time-consuming process (C6, Lines 50-52).

C6 seemed to highlight the challenge of assessing how able people were to reflect critically or deeply when they stated they did not want to depreciate anybody's ability. There was an acknowledgment of challenges in terms of fatigue or time constraints, although C1 implied some coaches would nevertheless want to apply themselves:

Yeah, because I think for them to understand why a session works and why it didn't, I think they would sit back and say well I know why it didn't work, because I did this and that didn't happen, but they won't think beyond that, and I think some coaches will probably be quite good and they'll want to apply themselves to learn more (C1, Lines 265-268).

This seemed to highlight the challenges of navigating differences in people's willingness to engage in RP:

Some people just don't want to engage in that. And there have been some conversations I've had with coaches, they just want to go on a daily basis and go these are the decisions I make and when I go home, I switch off, don't think about it. But there are others that are very open with it. And for those, I just, I explore questions that are beneficial. I maybe explore times with them, where they've done it, how it's been beneficial to them (C10, Lines 403-407).

C10 expanded on how tough facilitating reflective thinking of others was unless they were curious and open-minded, realising that there is more to learn from their experiences and valuing the situated knowledge gained from this process:

This is a really tough one, because I think unless they're open enough to either learn something about themselves, learning something about their players, from a coaching point of view, it's gonna be really tough to get them to see the benefits of RP (C10, Lines 401-403).

Due to the challenges, engagement in RP might not be performed regularly or with rigour across the profession, although it was recognised as important. C6 highlighted that whilst it was important, it might be tokenistic:

I don't think perhaps RP is as well practiced as we might like to think. I think it's recognised as being important, but I think it's become a bit of a platitude. So, a bit of a 'oh yes, I reflect on my practice' (C6, Lines 46-47).

Compounding this, formalised RP using models did not seem to be perceived as necessary or useful, and were sometimes seen as a hindrance:

I think coaches do it. I think to be fair to some extent labelling it RP for some coaches can be almost an inhibitor because they feel as if it's something that they have to do and they have to get good at and almost the fact that they have to prove that they're good at it and as I say it doesn't have to be or necessarily follow a formal model (C2, Lines 260-263).

Implied in the above is an idea that less formalised RP may support engagement with RP. For example, RCs seem to be an engaging mode of RP helping practitioners to influence learning of others and build relationships-for-learning. Because RP can be a challenging process with barriers preventing deep levels of engagement and critical intent, a change in application (towards embedding informal RP into working practices) might shift attitudes to RP and help overcome the noted barriers.

Overcoming barriers: Openness to the value of RP

Participants in the current study were generally supportive of RP, highlighting that they valued the process. For example, C7 noted that they "think RP is really important, because you don't always get it right" (C7, Lines 71-72). RP seemed to be understood by C7 as a process enabling learning from mistakes and perceived difficulties. Although C1 also seemed to value RP, they seemed to believe that their internalised value and interest interacted with the manner in which they understood RP, with their understanding acting as a constraint to the way they perceived the process and thus attributed value to it: "I'm quite I'm a big fan of RP but I guess that's from the constraints of what I understand of what is RP" (C1, Lines 72-73). C8 valued the process as it supported their ability to make positive changes to their practice, learning from issues and mistakes which was central to working relationally with people in RP. They seemed to value RP from a developmental perspective:

I think it's; it's probably the biggest thing developmental wise, because it leads me to work out what my perceived weaknesses may be, or from others and how I can work on that, or within the session. So, something's not quite working out, or having

some issue, it will just help me work out what to look at next, or how to fix that. But I think if I didn't reflect or look back on it, and get to that point, to just keep on, it gets stuck in like a cycle of making the same mistakes. And then nothing's changing (C8, Lines 82-87).

Without RP it seemed C9 might stagnate in repetitive cycles of mistakes. Perhaps it might have been for this reason that some coaches shifted from an almost dismissive approach, to considering it their most valuable tool:

Well, yeah, going from that that initial RP when I first saw it, and just, it was just a tick-box exercise and now, it's probably the most valuable thing I've ever done. And yet again. I don't even know if it was like, a thought about process. It just happened. I guess the feeder of that is I wanted to get better (C9, Lines 187-190).

This risk of RP being a tick-box exercise was also alluded to by C6. Because seeing its value seemed important, they wanted to reinforce this message within their teaching practices: "Well, I recognise its importance. Which is why, as a coach educator in particular, I kind of reinforce the message. But also try and reform the message that if it becomes performative, there's no point in doing it" (C6, Lines 142-143). This highlighted the perceived importance and value towards RP seemed central to a coach's engagement with the process for continued learning: "Yeah, so if you're not reflecting on your session, then you don't learn from it. Learning is the process of reflection you could argue" (C5, Lines 95-96). This importance was reinforced by C6, who perhaps conceptualised RP differently. Specifically, they seemed to consider it, in some of the examples given, as a more structured evaluative process that they set aside time for and perhaps tended to be more formalised, rather than being an internalised process synonymous with, and inseparable from, learning:

And because it's so important, you know, it is as important as the delivery, perhaps, it is as important as the planning. But it seems a sideshow. If we elevated it into a

same level of importance, you know, perhaps we see coaching as an hour's worth of prep, and an hour's worth of delivery and 10 minutes' worth of evaluation, perhaps it ought to be an hour's worth of prep, an hour's worth of delivering an hour's worth of evaluation and reflection. And that might do it justice. That hour doesn't need to be straight after, it can be in 10-minute chunks to me, you know, enough for now. And then, you know, and then a further analysis at the end of the week, but with your mentor (C6, Lines 387-393).

It appeared that the way a coach understood RP might influence the way they engaged in the process, which changed over time:

I have changed my opinion completely because I don't now have to actually write in so much detail an evaluation of every session. However, I do write down anything that I want to change, but I now realise that if I don't write things down pretty much straightaway that has not worked then, as in teaching you, if you didn't write it down the next week when you came to that class, you could actually make the same mistake again. So, and that's exactly the same in coaching, you know, I need to write it down because when I do that session again and it might not be for a whole year in athletics coaching. I need to have changed it rather than get to it and go, oh my God, I remember now this went wrong last year. So yeah, I now see that it is extremely valuable. A lot of it does go on in your head. But I also do write things down that need to be changed (C3, Lines 123-131).

As C3's RP evolved, they attributed a higher importance to it as a process of continuous learning and development. This coincided with a changed understanding of RP, from an in-depth written evaluation of practice that changed to a more introspective process while writing down important actionable points. This less formalised mode of RP used later in their career was associated with a high degree of motivation to continue in their role:

I would say it, RP, keeps me motivated and motivated to improve. I'm not happy and I never was as a teacher to just do the same thing time and time again. It's got to be improved. It's got to be updated. So, I am motivated through RP to get better. I'm always looking to add to my delivery. So, if anybody, if I spot anybody with a really good idea, I will definitely think about it and use it if I can. So yeah, I think it does keep you motivated (C3, Lines 138-143).

Also:

And I'd go a step further, really. I know in myself that when I stop self-evaluating, it'll be time for me to give up coaching because then I'm just not, I'm not moving forward. I know you've got to keep looking at things and thinking about them and altering them if need be (C3, Lines 133-143).

As with all the coaches in this study, RP was a core process through which C3 developed as a practitioner and this supported their motivation to continue. This heightened motivation coincided with a changed way of doing RP, highlighting the benefits of less formalised RP on engagement and motivation. This extended into openness towards learning through RCs.

Learning through reflective conversations

Coaches stated the importance of RCs as offering a different perspective and check and challenging one's work:

And so, I think it's important to speak to other people, because sometimes they can help you realise maybe you're looking at something that's not going to have as big an impact, as you expect. So maybe you're better spent putting your energy elsewhere. Or not so much time on that (C8, Lines 121-123).

RCs were also suggested to have a clarifying effect:

Yeah, I think it gives you clarity as well. And sometimes just having someone listen to you, I think when you hear yourself out loud, it sometimes sounds different, or it can

allow you to make connections you don't realise, or sometimes reinforce what you're doing or make you realise you're going down the wrong rabbit hole (C8, Lines 127-131).

This underlies the importance of supportive and active listening when attempting to facilitate reflection in others:

I think, first of all it's, be a human first to realise that actually, as much as we might like to be a coach, as a person, a teacher, or whatever it is, first of all, actually, you're talking to a human being, so meet them as a human being, try and develop that connection first. Because then whatever you try and get them to do will take RP, or reflective conversations. If that person realises, you're not trying to catch them out, you're not trying to make them feel bad about themselves. So, I think actually the moment we do that we also appreciate the vulnerability that someone might show. So, I think we develop trust, we develop honesty, we show genuineness (C10, Lines 469-475).

Active and empathic listening aiming to support an individual in making sense of their experience might have also helped to build an authentic connection, particularly when the person perceives the genuine interest and curiosity of the listener. This requires a facilitator to be approachable and compassionate towards the person they are supporting in RP. An authentically compassionate and supportive attitude will likely encourage openness and trust enabling them to engage with the facilitator willingly and purposefully. RCs may thus be an effective mode through which RP can be used and help develop connections and positively influence others' learning and development:

But it comes back to that, one of the big ways my reflection is, I like to talk to people that mean a lot to me. Now, if that's sometimes that's a selfish point of view. And it's, they have to hear me talk a lot those people that's why I, that's why I call people

because they know it's really important for me, I don't just call anyone. But for me, I think that daily connection to people that are going forward that these people often have a similar mindset to me, they know they're able to challenge my thoughts, my thinking and stuff like that (C10, Lines 376-381).

A shared connection of trust and openness may build a relationship where genuinely challenging conversations can be had in a safe and non-threatening way. However, it may be important to consider the perspective of people who may not hold positivity in the same way as described above. Their perspective that may directly challenge our own may be valuable for learning through dialectical inquiry.

These positive (and sometimes negative) interactions may expedite learning through reflection and dialectical inquiry. However, RCs were not always collaborative and may sometimes include practitioners using self-talk to engage in introspection i.e., conversations with the oneself:

So, I'm aware that I talk to myself a lot. And sometimes it's like self, sometimes it's self-talk. Sometimes it's chatter. But I'm still reflecting now and then I'm reflecting about conversations I've had previously. And I'm thinking about how I might answer these conversations if they come up? (C9, Lines 205-209).

The next subsection builds on the idea of conversation supporting learning by considering how questioning may help facilitate, prompt and focus reflective thinking.

Questioning to prompt, trigger and focus reflective inquiry.

Coaches highlighted engagement in a reflective process using questions which intentionally prompted and focussed the direction of reflective thinking, encouraging inquiry, for example:

Like, for example, you just asked me a question. Now I'm thinking about it. If you didn't ask me a question, I wouldn't be thinking about it. And I think that's kicked off the reflective process. I'm now reflecting about what you just asked me (C9, Lines 252-254).

Questioning was used by some of the coaches for their own learning, but it was also used to encourage athletes to think by creating answers to questions:

So, in same way that I said that reflection was essential for learning, so if you're trying to help the athlete to learn then you have to get the athlete to reflect, because if the athlete doesn't reflect then the athlete's not learning. So, you know you have to, well I use techniques such as saying to the athlete: you know, what do you think? What do you think you should do, how is that working? So quite a questioning style in order to get the athlete to create an answer and therefore have to think about it and that almost by definition is reflecting. So, I probably use, probably the answer to that question is I use a questioning style (C5, Lines 206-212).

This questioning approach was used by C5 to focus reflective thinking on specific areas of athletes' practice; to create ideas about what was working and what was not working:

You say to the athlete, you know, 'why didn't that work? Well, you know, I mean, have you thought about moving your wrist, you know, should we try that with more hips or whatever'. So yeah, you just try to get the athlete to think about what's working and what's not working (C5, Lines 223-225)

Although this was considered beneficial to learning, it was not without its disadvantages. For example, it was considered more time consuming:

Yeah, and I know I do it a lot in coach education. You know it's much more; it's sometimes a lot slower but it's much, much more effective if you don't provide the answer and you let them work out the answer (C5, Lines 215-217).

This approach also required favourable relational conditions. This included an enquiring and curious attitude demonstrated through active listening. As C9 explained, it was difficult to reflect with someone who was perceivably not interested or not engaging reflectively following a question:

And they've asked a question, but they're not interested in the reply. And they're not really reflecting on what was being asked. And there the reflection stops. All the curiosity stops. And because I know if they were genuinely interested, they would either make a listening statement, or they'll probably ask another question (C9, Lines 280-284).

This highlighted the importance of active listening following a question:

Like, I can imagine the two different, our brains are working very differently right now. Because you've just asked me a question and you're waiting. You're listening to hear a reply. Therefore, you're curious about what I'm about to say. Whereas I'm in my own mind, I'm curious about what I'm saying. I'm gonna ask. You've asked this question. I'm internalising the question. I'm curious to understand where I'm going with this. And what aspects it has. And yet again, I'm, I'm reflecting on the question straight away. Well, I'm curious about what you've mentioned. I'm curious about the question I just put out. And yeah, I feel that they do go hand in hand. Because if I didn't ask myself the question, I wouldn't be thinking this now. And I'm also looking at myself on the screen going [name] you're really thinking hard about this (C9, Lines 256-267).

Questions could trigger a RC, assuming the person engaged in this process does so with a curious attitude and is supported with active listening. However, a key practical concern may be how to foster curiosity and how to make questions interesting and purposeful so that the other person engages with them. Solutions to these concerns may require a facilitator understanding the people they are supporting in their RP and taking a reflective approach to developing the relationship-for-learning. This consideration of the other person within their RP may help to create insight that could support the development of a trusting relationship-for-learning. It also justifies the recognition that

facilitators are on a continuous learning journey themselves and may benefit from RCs e.g., with a supervisor or mentor.

Shifting the focus of reflection to achieve personal and professional change.

This section considers the need to shift the focus of reflection from purely negative experiences to incorporate positive experiences. The benefits of reflecting forwards are discussed, as is the tendency for the focus of reflection to broaden over time when a practitioner becomes more experienced.

Openly and wholeheartedly re-focussing reflection to facilitate learning.

It was considered important by most coaches to deliberately shift the focus of reflection to understand positive experiences: “as coaches we often go to the even better ifs, as opposed to celebrating the success (C2, Lines 79-80). However, there seemed to be a tendency for coaches to acknowledge the need to reframe this focus on negative experiences: I do think you have to be careful not to dwell on the negatives all the time (C3, Lines 113-14). This was supported by C3 who explained the need to reframe focus towards what is good in their practice:

I do think it's important. But it's not all negative. I think. I think maybe I'm guilty of this that I don't pat myself on the back enough sometimes. You know, you tend to sort of pull apart everything that goes wrong. And it's important that we do remember the good things, I think, as well. And I don't think I do enough (C3, Lines 108-111).

Coaches often alluded to the tendency to reflect on problematic experiences to understand how these issues could be remediated to improve practice, while neglecting positive experiences:

I think you get it from experience, I think you get it from if you're not quite, the sessions aren't quite going the way you thought they would, or the results aren't going the way you thought it would. I think sometimes you forget to reflect when you win (C7, Lines 416-418).

Also:

But I think as a reflective coach, I normally focus on the negatives rather than the positives, so I think maybe there's 10 really good things that have happened. And I'll ignore those to focus on the one that perhaps didn't happen so well (C7, Lines 275-277).

C1 explained the need to balance focussing on negatives and positives rather than shifting RP to a purely positive focus:

But I tend to go through sessions that went either really, really well, and I think right that was great so I need to try and work out why it was great, because then I can implant whatever that information is into future sessions to make them continually great. Or something where something has just gone wrong, it doesn't have to be a bad session but maybe something mid-way through just unexpectedly happened, that could be you know like I wouldn't quite say a player getting injured but maybe just something that broke down or got slower or it didn't boost the motivation and I would start to reflect on that (C1, Lines 91-98).

It seemed important to reframe the focus of inquiry to incorporate positive and negative experiences. However, what constituted a positive or negative experience seemed vague. What is perceived as a positive experience may be influenced by biases and assumptions that do not necessarily capture athlete perceptions. What may be required rather than a dichotomous approach to considering positive and negative foci is a critical dialogue facilitated by consideration of a variety of perspectives. For example, by using feedback from peers and athletes.

Coaches should also consider personal constraints that might make negatively or critical RP difficult to engage with. For example, C6 mentioned that they had experienced imposter syndrome and struggled when focussing on negative experiences:

I: So how has RP affected your coaching do you think? C6: Oh, well, initially not well, because I had or have a level of imposter syndrome. The reflections were not positive for me because I always doubted whether I'd done as well as perhaps I might have done, always doubting whether it was taken and accepted. You know, I'm a bit doubtful was that good enough? Did it really work?... So initially my reflections were not a positive experience (C6, Lines 161-170).

Individuals with a habit of dwelling on self-doubts, may find benefit from shifting the focus towards positive experiences rather than focussing primarily on negatives. They might also find it helpful to deconstruct the reasons for their experience of stress in the face of doubts and engage reflexively with their assumptions about the self. This highlights the often-challenging nature of RP and a need for openness to engage with and deal with this to access the beneficial effects of RP: “But I think just to underline the point, because genuinely, it's a positive practice, I think it's this understanding that you've got to find something that didn't go well, in your practice otherwise you didn't reflect properly” (C6, Lines 263-270). Alongside thinking positively, C6 also discussed the benefits of thinking forwards to create solutions and strategies to improve practice:

But also, thinking forwards, I think, only recently have I fully appreciated the importance of thinking forwards, in conjunction with thinking backwards. You know, we do think backwards, which is evaluative, but thinking forwards, which is suggestive, helps you to come up with the solutions that you're trying to create to improve your coaching (C6, Lines 65-70).

Emphasis on thinking forward focussed on how new insights could be used to improve effectiveness in the future: “And, then when I learnt to think forwards, I would start to plan out how I can use what I've just learned in a more effective manner” (C6, Lines 298-299). Deliberately reframing the focus seemed to be important to access benefits from RP, particularly when thinking forward and considering how to act on insights gained from looking back at past experiences.

Widening the focus and embedding RPs into training

Some coaches discussed gradually broadening the focus of reflection: “In terms of reflection, you know you reflect on the session, or you reflect on your impact, or you reflect on your contribution to society. So, it's fundamental. It is coaching” (C5, Lines 91-92). This seemed to highlight the importance of reflection for any level of coach, considering their impact on athlete(s) and wider societal contributions, indicating their value. This also demonstrated the tendency for the focus to shift when operating at different levels:

So, if you were operating at the first level you might reflect on the session that you just delivered and you might think that was a good session or oh no that player got injured, if I hadn't had him running into walls that might not have happened, that kind of thing. So, you know you can just reflect on the session or reflect on the technique that you delivered or reflect on the way the athlete responded to that or whether they learn anything or something like that. If you're operating at the second level where actually you realise that it's about building people rather than technique or skills or winning matches then you might reflect on how you interacted with the athlete, you might reflect on whether your engagement is actually building a better person, is there a conflict between building a champion or building a better person, are they the same thing or are they in conflict, those kinds of issues. If you're operating at the third level, then you might reflect on your contribution to society and you know whether what you're doing is making a difference (C5, Lines 52-62).

As coaches develop confidence in their performance, they were reported to shift their focus to broader social and societal factors including facilitating the development of people they were coaching. This signalled an important role for coaches and the centrality of relationships and conversation as a medium through which these relationships are nurtured. C10 was involved in coach education, and this framed the focus of their reflective inquiry around the value of helping others to reflect:

So, I think for myself, personally, I think I'm very self-aware about how RP can help me, but I guess I think it's changed over time, I think it's more about actually now how I can use reflection to help others you know (C10, Lines 188-192)

Also:

But as a coach educator, I feel it's incumbent upon me to teach the, or to teach, to educate, to inform the coaches that I'm working with, some of the short-circuits that I've learned, you know, we have a very kind of structured level of coach education now, in terms of what we deliver and the levels that we do, but why wait till they've done a Masters to learn bandwidth, you know, why not learn that at level one for heaven's sake, and, okay, some people might stumble upon that, and well done for them, but on the whole, I guess they weren't. So, I teach everything I can to the level of the group that's in front of me and then try and encourage them about the benefits of it. And also, the, perhaps the short circuitry, that's available (C6, Lines 144-150).

The term bandwidth was further explained as helping to focus RP, delimiting what is reflected on, offering practical methods to support others' RP:

The two later lessons I've learned is a) bandwidth reflection, which has helped immensely to limit what I'm trying to reflect on and be more focused on things. And I didn't learn that and properly until I was doing my masters. So, there were many years of just reflecting about everything in a chaotic manner (C6, Lines 63-65).

Coaches tended to widen the focus of their reflections as they became more experienced, with some considering how they can impact others and support them to engage in RP through coach education.

Discussion

This study explored sport coaches' perceptions and experiences of RP with three main themes being generated: 1) An analytical and reflexive experiential inquiry deepened by a formalised process; 2) Engaging coaches in a challenging process; 3) Shifting the focus of reflection to achieve personal and professional change. This was the first empirical study of this thesis and followed initial reviews of literature. It was intended that this chapter would situate the developing lines of inquiry within the sport context, narrowing the conceptual lens to the working context of sport coaching. From initial reviews (chapters four, five and six) the following themes seemed to align with this chapter's findings: Reflection as an active, iterative, and integrative cognitive process (see chapter four); The concepts of proactive and reactive inquiry (chapter five); reflecting with more experienced people and facilitators (chapter six); Helping learners understand reflection and encouraging dialogue (chapter six); Embracing differing perspectives to help practitioners see beyond themselves (chapter six).

The following narrative will reflect on the themes developed in previous chapters and aim to connect them with the findings of the current chapter and wider literature where relevant. The subsequent general discussion will explore the themes developed in the current chapter, connecting them with literature.

Thematic Connections

Reflection as an active, iterative, and integrative cognitive process.

Chapter four generated four characteristics of reflection: active, integrative, iterative, and cognitive (Marshall, 2019b). A finding from the current study aligning with these characteristics included reflection being an analytical and reflexive experiential inquiry that may be deepened through engagement in a formalised process. Considering experiences analytically presupposes active and deliberate cognitive engagement that persists in progressive cycles of action and reflection [iterative] upon the content of one's memory of events (Kolb, 2014). This would often mean drawing upon known concepts and theories and using these to attempt to make sense of remembered experiences that were considered problematic or perplexing (Dewey, 1933). Therefore,

during reflection practitioners are likely to use known concepts and theories to generate insight, or else accommodate new concepts (e.g., through reading or conversations) helping them to explain experiences. This presupposes a synthesis of memory representations between experiences and known concepts/theory, making reflection an integrative process.

The findings of the current chapter develop this idea further by considering how depth and rigour can be facilitated through the formalisation of reflective thinking, using modes of representation to expedite the process. Specifically, formalisation of reflective thinking might encourage practitioners to slow down and steady their flux of thinking (Dewey, 1933) so they explicitly represent their thoughts, for example using written, verbal, or artistic modes of expression (Marshall et al., 2021; Moon, 1999, 2004). This could be facilitated with structured, semi-structured or unstructured prompts or through standardised or self-generated questions. It might also take the form of conversations (Jarvis & Clark, 2020; Peterson et al., 2009; Simpson & Trezise, 2011; Stodter et al., 2021) where emergent lines of reasoning guide the generation of subsequent questions, expediting the depth of reflective thinking. This point highlights relational qualities that can support RP. Conversations and relationships may be central to improving depth in RP by offering different perspectives, reinforcing or challenging ones personally held views enabling dialectical inquiry to navigate differences of perspective. This shifts the personal/private reflective process towards a collaborative, relational process that can expedite productivity and insight development in RP.

Proactive and reactive inquiry.

Proactive inquiry, developed in chapter five, seemed to align with the idea of reflecting forwards to the future, either following reactive modes of inquiry (e.g., reflection on experienced problems), or as a purely proactively triggered consideration of the future e.g., generating an explicit vision of idealised professional practice (Marshall et al., 2021). Participants described shifting the focus from negative to positive and from past events to future considerations, and this facilitated changes to practice. These processes of inquiry were engaged with proactively.

Reflecting with more experienced people and facilitators.

In chapter six it was reported that reflecting with more experienced people and facilitators could support learning and development of sport coaches. This was likely due to more experienced coaches likely having a greater level of situated, procedural and tacit knowledge i.e., knowledge of the day-to-day professional working environment, compared to novice coaches (Marshall et al., 2022). People with skill to facilitate reflective thinking can expedite the development of insight (Marshall et al., 2022). Ideally, facilitators would be familiar with the day-to-day practice of coaching as this would help them to develop questions that can prompt deeper modes of thinking about the nuances of sport coaching. They may also be able to offer direct guidance and support around problem solving and take a position of co-creator and co-reflector vs a more facilitatory role. Leeder and Sawiuk (2021, p. 129) state that mentoring is a social process involving “a dynamic and reciprocal relationship” with the more knowledgeable, and usually more experienced, practitioner facilitating the development of the mentee. Mentors would likely take an active role in reflecting in the discussion, contributing ideas as well as reiterating what the mentee has contributed. A facilitator of RP should be skilled in listening and asking questions that can prompt deeper thinking (Paul & Elder, 2019). As an example, one participant discussed a mentor who would give little direct input and would continually ask why-related questions that encouraged them to think more deeply and carefully about the reasons for a problem. This helped them to develop a detailed understanding and create solutions that could be applied in the future. Another participant discussed using a questioning style to facilitate athlete thinking and problem-solving, thus encouraging athletes to self-regulate and internalise findings from the training session.

Sport coaches may have multiple mentors, both inside and outside of their working context, who would likely each have strengths and weaknesses in particular domains of knowledge and practice (Leeder & Sawiuk, 2021; Sawiuk et al., 2017). This could involve anybody who offers support, thus conceptualising mentorship relationships more broadly than the traditional dyadic perspective (Higgins & Kram, 2001; Leeder & Sawiuk, 2021). Because of this, coaches will likely

experience a rich tapestry of ideas and solutions to practical issues. This may also mean that coaches might receive support from people outside of the sport context. For example, a sport coach struggling with behaviour management might seek advice from a practitioner adept at this skill in a different professional context (e.g., teachers). Ideas may be adopted directly into the context of the coach, or else be adapted for the working context or rejected (Stodter & Cushion, 2017).

Overall, the above seems to suggest that coaches might benefit from guidance and support from more experienced coaches to facilitate the development of situated and procedural knowledge. They may benefit from developing a multitude of supportive mentoring relationships both inside and outside of their working context. Mentors should ideally be able to facilitate reflective thinking to help generate insight into coaching practice and help develop sport coaching competency that could have broader positive effects on participant engagement and welfare. To achieve this, mentors should develop thoughtful questions and listen attentively while actively reflecting with the mentee. To encourage RCs, mentors might find it beneficial to engage in ethically sensitive and appropriate self-disclosure. This might encourage openness, trust and a sense that they are on a joint learning journey where power hierarchies are flattened encouraging trust (Jarvis & Clark, 2020).

Helping learners understand reflection and encouraging dialogue.

Another finding from Chapter six included the need to help learners understand reflection by exploring both personal and established definitions. This is supported by chapter four where a multitude of varying definitions were collated from the literature to inform a thematic synthesis aiming to understand the concept of reflection. The current study's findings indicate that coaches internalised varying perspectives about what constitutes reflection. Personal definitions seemed to determine the way in which they engaged with reflection. This supports the need to critically explore this concept. This may not necessarily resolve the perceived problem i.e., lack of standardisation of definitions; However, it may lead to a pragmatic reframing of the problem e.g., encouraging practitioners to explore their personal conceptions and consider how these ways of understanding

might support or hinder the development of RP. For example, my own conceptualisation of reflection has broadened since before beginning my PhD journey, from an initial unidimensional practice e.g., journal writing, to incorporate everything that I do as a practitioner. This includes lesson planning as a mode of reflecting on the future [reflecting-for-practice], introspection, self-talk, reflection-in-action, conversations, reading as a method of assimilating new concepts to support continued reflective thinking. It seems important to explore the association between personal conceptions of RP and methods of engagement.

Embracing differing perspectives to help practitioners see beyond themselves.

Engaging with different perspectives seems to help generate a reframed understanding, thus seeing beyond the limits of one's own knowledge. Seeking advice and guidance from others was described as a way of preventing practitioners from going down the wrong rabbit hole, thus helping to check and challenge one's inquiry. Seeking advice and guidance mobilises other people's perspectives to make judgements about what might be salient areas for development. Mentors and peers are likely to have greater psychological distance (Liberman et al., 2007) from an individual's experience. They are therefore less likely to be emotionally attached to personally favoured practices and are likely to be able to be objective, suggesting different approaches and solutions, helping to reframe actions. A practitioner's temporal distance from an experience may also be associated with the degree of objectivity they are able to achieve (Liberman et al., 2007). This may suggest that practitioners make higher-level interpretations of experiences with the passing of time. However, they may also forget salient characteristics of these experiences. Thus, it seems important that practitioners record information about these experiences (e.g., by identifying critical moments) capturing this prior to forgetting, and engage in layered reflection i.e., reflect on one's reflections in stages over time (Knowles et al., 2007).

A potential issue with embracing differing perspectives might include being influenced by misleading information. Although it is sometimes useful to assimilate a broad range of concepts, it is important practitioners engage with these concepts critically, reflecting deeply on a broad range of

ideas. This would include considering if these concepts/ideas would work in one's own context (Stodter & Cushion, 2017) and examining logical coherence and whether they are compatible with one's own coaching philosophy and personal qualities.

General Discussion

Findings from this chapter seemed to indicate that the formality of RP might be conceptualised as a continuum ranging from informal and internalised (e.g., introspection, conversations, self-talk) to more formal and structured processes (e.g., using a model or series of questions) aided by external modes of representation (writing and focussed conversations). Degree of formality can be adjusted to the working context and task. For example, coaches may encounter critical moments in their practice that can be understood with a low or moderate degree of time and effort. They might engage in less formalised reflection (e.g., introspection or conversations with a peer or line manager) rather than engaging in rigorous modes of critical reflection, facilitated using different lenses and inquiry into assumptions (Brookfield, 2017). Practitioners might be able to develop understanding of critical moments, suggesting changes to practice, through conversations with a trusted peer or mentor (Stodter et al., 2021).

Framing RP as a problem-solving activity could cultivate an instrumental attitude perhaps causing people to reflect for the technical purpose of developing solutions, rather than considering RP a holistic concept used for developing deeper understanding. Perhaps encouraging practitioners to engage in emergent, responsive modes of accessible RP, for example through RCs in relationships with others, could reframe this instrumental attitude to embody values of inquiry rather than being used as a tool to solve problems.

If reflection is a mode of thinking, expedited through conversations, then the default interventionist model seems to theoretically inform this in relation to two types of cognitive process i.e., type two cognition (i.e. a deliberate, conscious, explicit, controlled, slow, analytic and abstract mode of thinking) activated when intuitive type one cognition (i.e., implicit, non-verbal, automatic, rapid and associative modes of thinking) is deliberately attended to (Evans, 2008). When type two

cognitive processes are activated, the *degree of critical effort* applied depends on motivational factors (thinking disposition, feelings of rightness, importance of decision) and situational factors (time available, competing tasks and context). If motivational and situational factors are conducive to slow reflective thinking the person might consider the intuitive decision/interpretation and evaluate if it is justified. If it is considered incorrect or ineffective, the person tends to use a process of re-thinking, drawing upon cognitive resources (working memory capacity and known concepts).

If a task is complex and there is sufficient time and minimal distracting tasks, the situation should be conducive to slow and controlled thinking (Evans, 2019). A coach might choose to apply a higher *degree of critical effort* towards trying to understand the experience. However, if a critical moment demonstrates a low-moderate level of complexity, time is restricted, or perhaps a decision needs to be made quickly, less formalised modes of reflective thinking may suffice. This aligns with the notion of reflection as a deliberate and analytical mode of thinking that can be formalised to varying degrees, depending on the complexity of the concept, experience, or problem. A useful metaphor might be to imagine the *degree of critical effort* being a dial that can be turned up or down according to the complexity of the task.

Some coaches seem to find models of reflection to be too reductionist and prescriptive, while not being representative of the way they engage in RP. This was evident where a participant preferred to engage in introspective modes of reflection using self-talk. They struggled to see parallels between their preferred mode and typical models. Other coaches critiqued the variety of models available with some including easier questions, meaning that they were often not challenged to think deeply and could conclude the reflective process quickly. They mentioned sometimes adapting questions, tailoring them to their individual needs and highlighting a need for models to be seen as provisional if they are used, and adapted to the needs of the task, individual and context. Alternatively, conversations in relationship with others where emergent questioning can deepen a person's thinking might make RP more effective, dynamic, and efficient.

Other coaches discussed the time-consuming nature of RP, noting that coaches often have competing priorities and coach at varying levels. For example, those volunteering in the evenings at their children's club might not have the time or the inclination to engage in rigorous RP once they have finished, get home, and have many distracting and competing tasks. This is noted by Burt and Morgan (2014) where rugby coaches discussed the time constraints that impinge on their tendency to reflect in a systematic manner. This was considered in parallel with coaching being a hobby that they do alongside their full-time job outside of sport. After the few hours they spent coaching on a weekend, they did not feel incentivised to reflect in a structured and rigorous manner as they were "not looking for a career in coaching" (Burt & Morgan, 2014, p. 476). This seems to be a reality for a lot of volunteer coaches. As such, conversational modes of RP might be beneficial as these can encourage engagement while maintaining (or even enhancing) the benefits of RP.

There seems to be a risk that enforced RP may become performative. Participants discussed RP as being time consuming with appreciation that some coaches would engage and would want to learn more, whereas others would not be motivated or open enough to reflect at a level deep enough to instigate changes to practice. One participant mentioned that they did not think RP was as well practiced in sport coaching as we would like to think. There appeared to be barriers to engaging with RP at a level that was beneficial. Barriers to RP have been explored in sport coaching (Burt & Morgan, 2014; Hamblin & Crisp, 2022), higher education (Gilheaney & Quigley, 2021; Lim et al., 2022), medical education (Gathu, 2022), outdoor leadership (Hickman & Collins, 2014) and education (Bakioglu & Dalgiç, 2013). In sport coaching, Burt and Morgan (2014) reported two categories of barrier (external and internal). External barriers included: organisation, pedagogical, socio-cultural, education and politics. Internal barriers included: motivation, time, cognitive, and economic. 75% of all barriers were related to organisation, motivation, and time. Coaches believed that because there was no incentive from clubs or professional bodies to engage in systematic RP, they avoided it. They believed that if there was an incentive or requirement to reflect systematically, they would be more inclined to engage. In higher education Lim et al. (2022) conducted a review of

literature determining barriers and facilitators of RP, suggesting a key facilitator to be the need for advocacy on the importance of RP alongside the need for guidance and education in relation to how to reflect before starting RP. In sport, perhaps advocacy and education should be a key responsibility of national governing bodies. Counsellor education students mentioned that an incentive to engagement was being required to complete RP as a part of their course and assessment. This was like sport coaches in Burt and Morgan (2014) where RP required by a professional body was suggested to be an incentive. However, a decision to enforce reflection to maintain accreditation or certification should be considered critically before implementation due to the need for clear expectations and education about RP from governing bodies.

One participant was required to engage with RP during their teaching career. In this case systematic RP was not always a valued process or one that they felt motivated to engage with, although at the time of interviewing all participants valued reflection. Some coaches discussed the time-consuming nature of RP and this was also evident in the wider literature (Bakioglu & Dalgıç, 2013; Burt & Morgan, 2014; Gathu, 2022; Gilheaney & Quigley, 2021; Hamblin & Crisp, 2022; Hickman & Collins, 2014; Lim et al., 2022; Miller, 2020). Some coaches' perceptions about RP changed throughout their career, where they believed their motivation for coaching depended on it, as it helped them improve their coaching and their motivation was contingent on self-improvement through RP. In parallel to this change in perception, there were signs that RP also became less structured (and less written down), as they reported that they do not now write in as much detail, but they do record actionable points such as what they want to change. This highlights an interesting point that some practitioners' relationship with RP started out with tension but eventually became a motivating factor because it enabled them to improve their coaching. This was coupled with a streamlined and collaborative process through conversations with peers. Perhaps, coaches need to be supported in learning how to engage productively through RCs to improve engagement with accessible and collaborative methods.

RCs could be problematic if the coach does not have access to critical friends who are open to have detailed dialogue about experiences. There seems to be a need to reframe RP as a flexible and dynamic process that can be adapted to individual needs depending on the situation and personal preferences. Perhaps it would be useful to frame RP as an inquiry into one's practice that can be engaged with at varying degrees of formality and systematisation (Figure 7). The idea of engaging in varied modes (Marshall et al., 2021) or levels of reflection depending on the specific problem or context seem to be useful approaches to make RP more practical, meaningful and sustained, while preserving long-term motivation to inquire into one's practice.

There was an idea of broadening focus from the individual session to the wider impact a coach has on people and society, and also from negative to positive experiences. The need to reframe the focus of reflection to embrace and consider positive experiences has also been identified in literature (Dixon et al., 2013, 2016), alongside the concept of thinking forward i.e., anticipatory reflection (Glaister & Gold, 2022; Wilson, 2008). Coaches discussed a tendency to focus on negative experiences at the expense of positive experiences and often noted this as an issue. Although, coaches in this study identified an issue with reflecting on problems, this does not mean we should uncritically move in the opposing direction and attempt to reflect purely on strengths and positive experiences. Addressing performance-related issues is an important consideration for professional development. Positive learning outcomes can be associated with reflection on problems of practice and can be challenging and stressful but rewarding. However, negatively oriented RP poses a barrier to engagement (alongside numerous other barriers: time, effort, other priorities, minimal coaching time, excessive coaching time, attitude, epistemology, perceived risk and vulnerability) and coaches may de-prioritise or neglect to engage in RP altogether. However, if we encourage a balance of negatively and positively oriented RP and situate this in a relational framework through conversations with trusted others, this might negate the barriers, and these coaches may be more likely to engage with RP. Being supported by a trusted person in the context of

negative emotional experiences through RCs may facilitate long-term engagement and development.

Dixon et al. (2016), building on their prior work (Dixon et al., 2013), discuss the benefits of positively framed reflection: feeling positive, greater open-mindedness, receptivity to new ideas, being more adaptive and flexible. In situations where drastic organisational change was needed (e.g., a football club at risk of relegation in a high-performance environment), it might be deemed important to take a positive approach to RP to encourage productive outcomes such as those mentioned above. The cited authors draw on the work of Seligman (2011) and his conceptions of positive psychology and Cooperrider and Whitney (2007) for the conception of appreciative inquiry to generate a framework through which questions are asked to guide positively oriented reflection. The assumption was that we grow in the direction in which we ask questions (Adams, 2016) and that by asking questions that are positively inclined (i.e., seeking insights about strengths and what was good about an experience) we might generate positive outcomes. “deficit-based questions lead to deficit based conversations, which in turn lead to deficit-based patterns of action” (Dixon et al., 2016, p. 7). Contrastingly, positively phrased questions may lead to positively/constructively oriented conversations and positive actions/attitudes (e.g., reinforcing good practice, being open-minded, receptive adaptive, flexible) and reduce the negative impact of deficit-based RP on wellbeing.

A pragmatic method that might sensitise practitioners to which option to choose (reflection on positive or negative experiences) is to consider critical moments i.e., moments of practice that stood out from the working day, involving an emotional experience (positive or negative). As discussed in [chapter five](#), these emotions might signal salient opportunities for learning (Marshall et al., 2021).

Discussion has so far considered how reflection on experiences (i.e., past events) can support learning and the development of practice. What has not yet been considered is how focussing on the future, termed anticipatory reflection in the literature (Conway, 2001; Glaister &

Gold, 2022; Wilson, 2008), can change and improve practice by feeding-forward insights into well thought-through and planned considerations for future practice. This may enable solution-focussed thinking that improves practice. Rather than being evaluative, thinking forward may be a suggestive and creative process. Wilson (2008, p. 180) provided a definition for future-focussed reflection: “the act or process of reflecting on desirable and possible futures with the purpose of evaluating them as well as considering strategies intended to achieve the objective(s)”. Anticipatory reflection was judged to be one of the most powerful processes for change, as without considering the future there would be no plans, aspirations, dreams and hopes (Wilson, 2008). Reflecting forwards on future practice requires imagination to generate ideas about what could be, thus encouraging the individual to proactively create a vision of what could constitute future practice (Glaister & Gold, 2022). Anticipatory RP may have a positive impact on innovation, developing practice to be competent, effective and adapted to the practitioner’s specific working environment and the situated problems of practice. Developing effectiveness in sport coaching may then have a positive impact on participants’ engagement, wellbeing and nurture positive experiences in sport. This may have a long-term effect on participant engagement in sport and positively affect health and wellbeing due to increased levels of physical activity associated with participation across their lifetime. By reflecting on the quality of relationships and the impact we are having at the individual level, we can nurture and improve these relationships and have long-lasting impacts on individuals who may extend the interpersonal qualities with others, thus creating a complex and perpetuating influence on society.

Anticipatory reflection encourages change by envisioning and imagining what might be possible. We could argue that although changes to practice are necessary for improvement, these changes might not always lead to improved performance. There might be instances where changing practice might be viewed as a signal of incompetence i.e., young athletes and their parents may perceive constant changes to process as an indicator that the coach does not have clear procedural knowledge and lose confidence in the coach. Alternatively, changes might be perceived by service-

users (athletes or students) as frustrating or cause negative behavioural effects i.e., a primary/secondary school physical education teacher who regularly changes process, while the students might need routines to feel safe and certain and thus engage and be productive. Thus, coaches should be cautious and reflect carefully on any drastic or frequent changes they implement, considering the potential impact of these changes and if they are indeed necessary at all i.e., just because you could [make changes to practice], it does not always mean that you should. This highlights the centrality of relationships i.e., developing rapport and confidence with others to build trust.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This chapter provided evidence that participants understood RP as an analytical mode of inquiry towards practice. This process can be deepened by formalising and sometimes structuring how it is performed. Some practitioners had their own bespoke ways of doing RP, supporting engagement. RP can be performed in a variety of ways, and the chosen method can be tailored to the preferences of the individual the context and the task/problem needs (Figure 7). Figure 8 outlines a theoretical model representing these factors. Within the working context, there may be opportunities to engage in RP. For example, team meetings where groups of colleagues can discuss problems of practice, reflect on successes and share ideas for professional development. There may also be time allocated for continuing professional development and RP. Effective collaborative reflection requires that colleagues/peers are willing and able to engage in a curious and open-minded manner. In some organisations, results may be valued above learning and development, in which case RP may be deprioritised in favour of working towards targets.

This chapter identified barriers to RP (see figure 9) including: problems with models, time consuming, type of RP and competing priorities. Figure 9 outlines each of these barriers with identified problems caused by each barrier, possible consequences of each problem and potential solutions.

Most participants agreed that RP done effectively was time consuming and this aligns with findings in the wider literature across multiple professional domains (Bakioglu & Dalgiç, 2013; Burt & Morgan, 2014; Gathu, 2022; Gilheaney & Quigley, 2021; Hamblin & Crisp, 2022; Hickman & Collins, 2014; Lim et al., 2022; Miller, 2020). A solution may be narrowing the focus of RP to make it meaningful and productive. Focussing on critical moments (e.g., subjective experiences that have emotional resonance) may help to narrow the focus on meaningful experiences where there may be gaps in knowledge (Marshall et al., 2021). Embedding RP in relational processes e.g., conversations might also enable them to engage in a meaningful process that is not as time consuming and may enhance effectiveness through dialectical inquiry while integrating into daily activities rather than adding to existing workload. RCs may be engaged with more frequently and therefore practitioners may have more opportunities to generate meaningful situated knowledge. This may also overcome the issue of competing priorities e.g., being a volunteer coach, coaching as a hobby, or having a full-time job in another profession but coaching casually in a local club may result in RP not being a high priority. Practitioners in this situation might not be looking for a career in coaching and therefore may de-prioritise time-consuming RP. RCs may offer a way to engage in RP in a rigorous, multi-perspective manner, improving competency.

Policy-level changes and guidance from professional bodies may also support time given for CPD and RP. For example, if time was allocated for RP during working hours, practitioners might engage more rigorously. Also, leaders within an organisation may organise RP groups where RCs are encouraged and supported to enhance learning. Allocating and organising time for regular connection to peers and colleagues could support continuous learning.

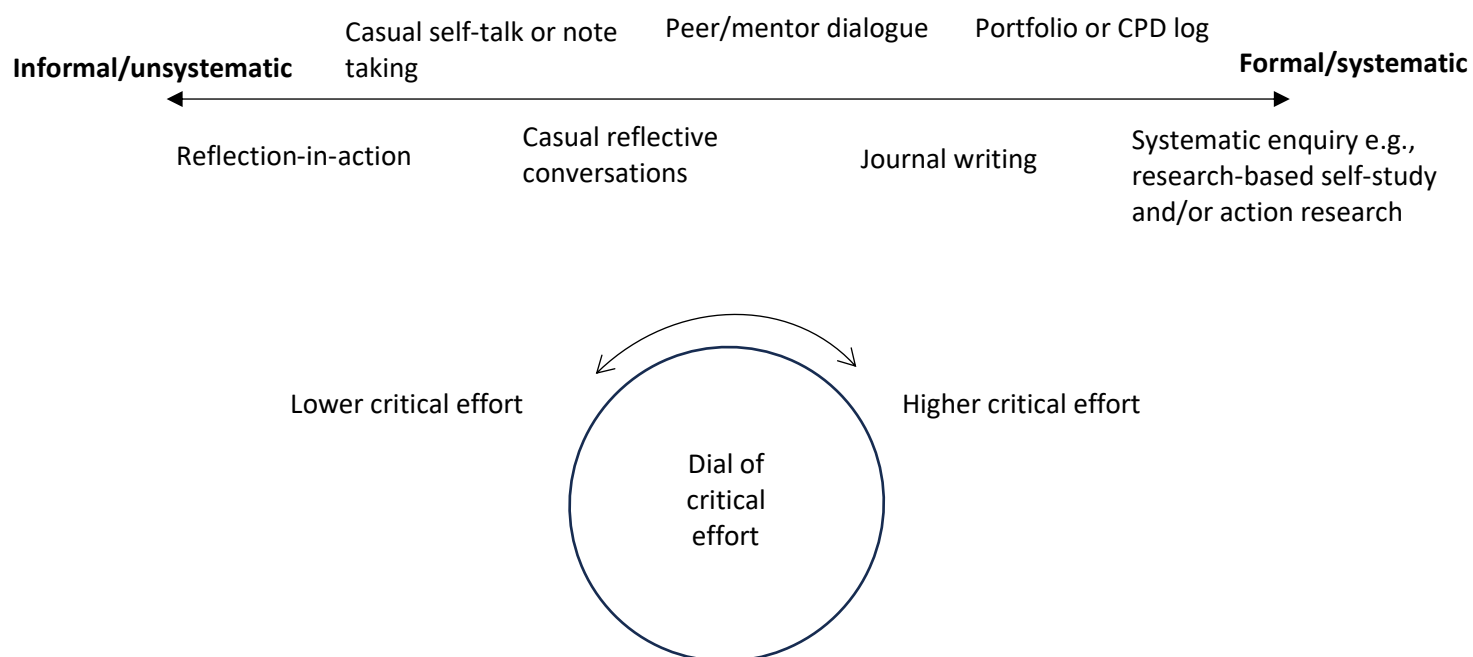


Figure 7:

A visual representation of a RP continuum with example activities based on the degree of formality/systematisation integrated with the concept of critical effort

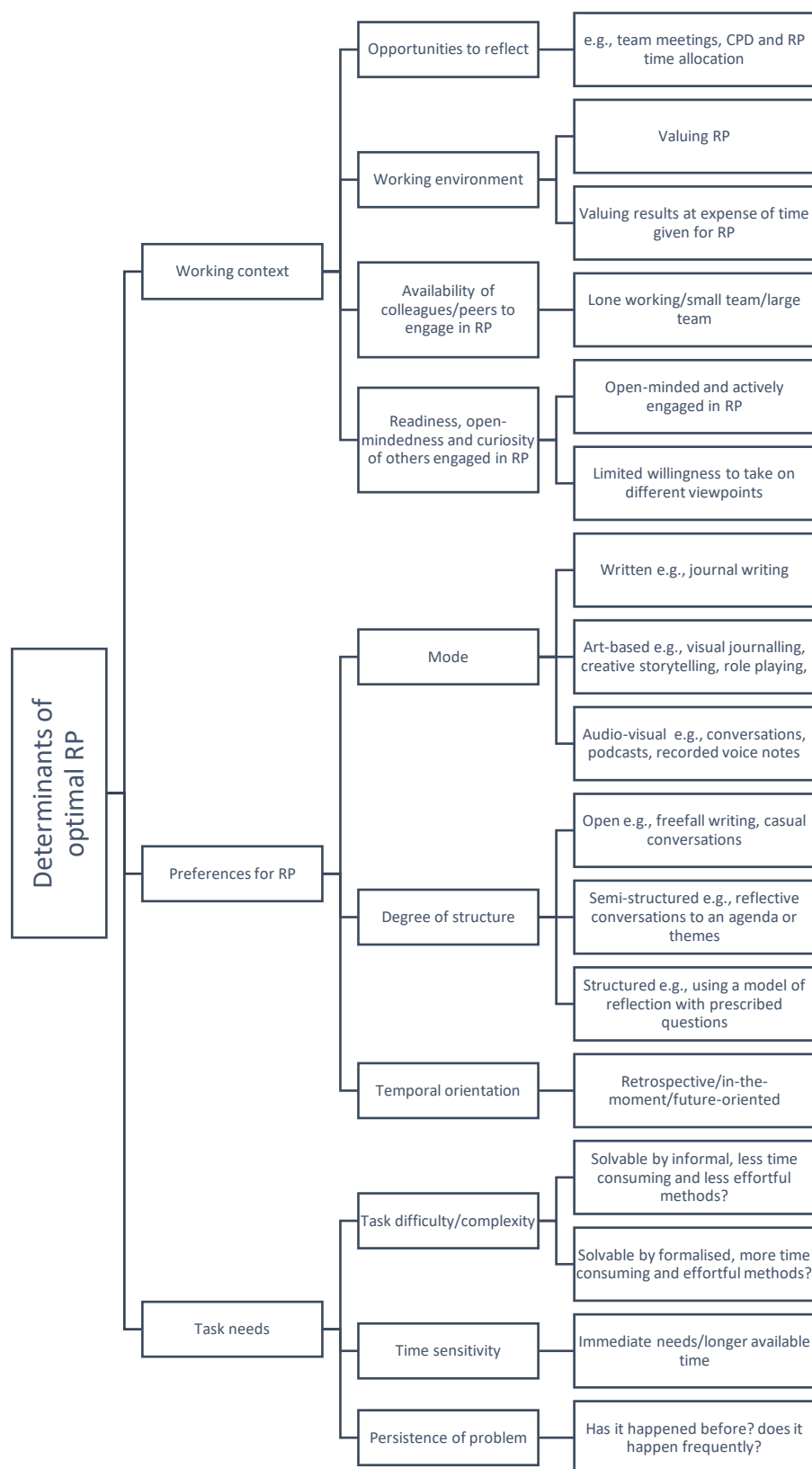


Figure 8:

Theoretical determinants of optimal RP considering working context, task requirements and preferences for reflective practice.



Figure 9:

A hierarchical representation of the barriers to RP with problems (third level), possible consequences (fourth level) and potential solutions (fifth level).

Conclusion

Through engagement with participant discussions, and integration with the literature, reflection was conceptualised as an analytical and reflexive inquiry that can be deepened by formalising the practice. Formalisation of the process was not always convenient due to several challenges or barriers. Perceptions of formalised RP typically evolved in such a way that coaches grew to value the process if they were previously closed to the idea of reflecting on their practice. This sometimes resulted in coaches believing that reflection was one of the most important things they do as practitioners. This shift in value was often accompanied by a shift in how coaches conceptualised reflection that also affected the process that they used to engage with RP. For example, some coaches initially perceived RP to be a tick-box exercise following a model, but their understanding evolved to understand it as an internalised process supporting decision making and session planning and affecting everything they do as coaches. To get the most out of RP there was a perceived need to shift between a negative and positive focus. This sometimes circumvented a noted barrier to RP e.g., negativity that enhanced negative emotions and deficit-based thinking. Alongside shifting between reflection on positive and negative experiences, practitioners were also recommended to reflect on the future, to anticipate what could be possible, thus engaging creatively and imaginatively in the process of constructing conceptions of what effective coaching practice could look like in their working contexts. For a discussion of the strengths and limitations of this study please refer to [chapter 10](#). The next chapter will develop these ideas further, adding detail about individual processes and experiences of RP.

Chapter Eight: Case Study Analysis

Introduction

The previous chapter explored sport coaches' perceptions and experiences of using RP in their professional development. This clarified how practitioners understood and perceived RP, including the challenges to its implementation and practices they use to employ RP in their working contexts. However, detailed individual processes of RP were lacking. This might be due to the aims of the study being broad i.e., understanding practitioners' perceptions and experiences. This chapter included a follow-up study focusing analysis on the processes practitioners used to engage with RP using a sub-sample of original participants. This provided a focussed interpretation of personal conceptions of RP and processes used.

The aim of this chapter was to explore three case studies from the perspective of practitioner experiences of RP. The objectives were: 1) to understand practitioners' personal ways of conceptualising RP; and 2) to understand ways that practitioners engage with RP. The following sections describe participants' background from available data. These summaries contextualise each case study, supporting transferability (Donmoyer, 2000; Gomm et al., 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

Participant summaries – pen portraits

Participant one (C1)

Participant one was the lead strength and conditioning coach at the academy of a professional football club working with players, ranging from under nines up to under 16s. At the time of interviewing, they had 13 years of experience as a coach, having previously been a weightlifting coach. They were an accredited strength and conditioning coach. In their strength and conditioning coach role, they coached players in the gym and on the pitch, aiming to develop their skill, movement, and performance. Gym-based work would include resistance training and plyometrics, whereas pitch-based work would include speed and agility training.

Participant two (C3)

Participant two was the head coach of an athletics club and at the time of interviewing had been coaching for over 20-years. They previously taught physical education and once retiring from this role took on more coaching at an athletics club. While they were teaching physical education, they also coached athletics, but they were not the head coach at that point. Since retiring from teaching, they took on a more active role in the athletics club and became the head coach. At the time of interviewing, they led a team of 19 coaches, and the head coach role involved admin tasks e.g., coordinating the movement of athletes from the younger groups into the older event groups, chairing meetings, organising workshops with guest speakers, and disseminating information to the coaching team.

Participant three (C6)

Participant three held the highest triathlon qualification available. At the time of interviewing, they had over 20 years' experience coaching athletics. They also had experience teaching and was employed as a coach educator by a governing body of sport. Coaching triathlon was their primary job at the time of interviewing. Prior to becoming an athletics and triathlon coach, they also held roles as a personal trainer and accumulated a wealth of experience as a coach/trainer working with people in the sport industry.

Case studies

The following sections were presented according to each participant and outlined their role-frame prior to considering their understanding of and their process of engaging in RP. Subheadings were developed aligning with these foci, organising the text. The concept of role-frame was described by Gilbert and Trudel (2001, p. 25) as a "personal approach to coaching" influencing decisions about what practitioners set as issues and what strategies they develop. Presenting each participant's role-frames further contextualises the case studies. Each section then explores practitioners' understanding of RP alongside their process of engaging in RP. Excerpts from interview transcripts were integrated with relevant concepts from literature and interpreted by myself, adapting the recommendations of Dibley et al. (2020).

Participant one (C1)

Role frame

C1 framed their role according to the people (i.e., athletes) they were working with, and they worked across a variety of age groups: “So, I will work with the 16s to under 9s delivering a sort of variety of strength and conditioning provisions” (Lines 7-8). Aspects of their role changed depending on the age group of the athletes they were coaching, as each age group had different overarching goals and needs:

A lot of it is like games I guess for the younger ones. It’s more like games which I guess is disguised learning for the middle-ages which would be 11 to 13s, which will then be more like understanding why we move in certain ways if you consider like agility. I guess then the older ones which is more of can we make those movements performance movements (Lines 9-13).

There were some consistencies across age groups specifically associated with C1’s overarching aim. One such consistency related to their intention to facilitate an environment that encouraged athletes to be self-regulated. For example, C1 mentioned that they did not intervene when things were going well but allowed athletes to continue independently:

When I’m in the gym, I don’t try to intervene erm that much because I feel like there’s no need for me to coach them things if it looks it’s going well then there’s no need for me to intervene, so just facilitate an environment that makes them sort of, in the gym environment makes them lift more or push themselves harder (Lines 35-39)

Also, specifically with younger athletes:

On the pitch, especially with the younger ones I’m a bit more of a teacher, I guess. Again, I don’t try to intervene when not needed but a lot of the time I try and observe what they are doing and then pick out where I might need to teach a bit

more because it seems obvious on occasions that if I just left them to do something then they probably won't do it well because they're not of the I guess the maturity but also the understanding of how to do things sometimes (Lines 39-43).

The aim seemed to be facilitating an environment that was conducive to athlete engagement and work ethic. This implied that observation of athletes was a key skill in making decisions of when to intervene or not. This tendency for less coach-centred control when athletes were working competently seemed to represent a form of earned autonomy. This involved observing the athletes and deciding when and where they might need to intervene. They tended to be more directive with younger athletes, but if they demonstrated maturity and understanding then C1 would continue to observe vs intervening with direct instruction. However, due to the younger groups' lower training and chronological ages, they may have been more likely to require feedback, intervention, and guidance. This appeared to signal that there was variance within the younger groups (individual differences) as to how mature they were, how much they understood what was required and how self-regulated they were in training, requiring C1 to adapt their coaching style.

Research has explored the effect of coach behaviour on athlete self-regulation (Goffena & Horn, 2021). An important factor for athlete self-regulation was reported to be autonomy-supportive coaching behaviour (Goffena & Horn, 2021). This was reported by Mageau and Vallerand (2003) as meaning providing choice within limits and rules; giving a rationale for task limits and rules; showing empathy towards others' feelings and enquiring into these feelings; allowing opportunities to do independent work; giving non-controlling feedback; avoiding controlling behaviour, criticisms, controlling statements or tangible rewards; preventing ego involvement. C1 seemed committed to the goal of nurturing self-regulated learning, as they would only intervene when needed, thus providing opportunities for self-management and independent work:

I mean if I look at it as still productive then why bother stopping it? Then, if there's a point when they do something and they just clearly look like it's wrong or people are doing one thing and other people are doing another thing and there's not like

there's no consistency then obviously I will interject with a bit more, clearer concise detailed information about what I'm asking in the event (Lines 53-57)

Also:

I don't want to interject when they probably know they've done it wrong and I'd rather see them do it maybe a couple of times to see if they have recognised that, or if they haven't recognised it then I would step in and be like right what should we be doing here? And, you know go from there (Lines 62-65).

By asking questions when the athletes did not perceivably recognise mistakes, C1 seemed to be facilitating the athletes to think and self-identify these mistakes, rather than providing direct instruction for how the activity or exercise should be performed. This signalled an intuitive and highly relational element to C1 and the people they were working with. They seemed to make in-the-moment shifts in their behaviour based on interpretations they would make of participants' performance. They also seemed to have the athletes' long-term development as independent learners in mind i.e., they would facilitate athletes' personal analyses of errors by asking questions, prompting thinking (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003) and interject with direct feedback if it was perceived that they had not identified these mistakes.

When C1 sensed a discrepancy between athlete performance and their mental model of how something should be performed, they seemed to step-back and think about whether instructing them would impair the productive flow of action. This demonstrated open-mindedness and reflection-in-action, as C1 inhibited their immediate response (to instruct) to let the athlete continue to work and be productive. This was unless technical performance was perceivably dangerous, or group performance was disjointed. For example, C1 stated they would likely intervene if "people are doing one thing and other people are doing another thing" (Lines 55-56). This implies perceived degrees of error (or perhaps degrees of 'disjuncture' between expectations and events) and a threshold beyond which C1 would intervene. They seemed to have made subjective evaluations in

the moment, supporting the benefits of reflection-in-action. C1 considered their perceptions, events, and actions within a working context and was able to make informed decisions about whether to intervene or allow continued engagement in the flow of action. This aligns with the *dial of critical effort* metaphor (see [chapter seven](#)), inspired by the default interventionist dual process theory model (Evans, 2019). C1 was able to turn this dial up enough to enable reflective decision making to take place in the moment. This contrasted with being completely immersed in the moment or alternatively removing oneself completely from the flow of action to reflect deeply.

What also seemed to be present in the data was an idea that less is more within coaching feedback: “I have always gone off the term minimal dose, and can I say the least and get them to do what I kind of have in my head of them doing?” (Lines 49-50). This way of working during coach-athlete interactions may have originated from an experience C1 had on a RP workshop aligned with the work of Carson (2008) and later Partington et al. (2015), where they were videoed coaching and asked questions about their behaviour during playback e.g., “what are you doing? And it was quite obvious I would overcoach and I would lead questions” (Lines 185-186). This resulted in C1 experimenting with giving no feedback to observe how they worked, judging that they “were fine” (Line 191). This led C1 to explore a guided-discovery approach. This change to their coaching style was transformative but not straightforward, following a trial-and-error experiential learning approach (Kolb, 2014):

I went on two extremes. I kind of went on points where I’d expect them to find the answer without knowing what the options of answers were. So maybe something new, they’re learning something new, and they have absolutely no idea what it’s supposed to look like or feel like or move like, and I sort of just said: ‘well you know give it a go and see what happens’, and that was probably not a great move.

Whereas providing them with answers so they are familiar with what it should look like or feel like and then making them work out how to be consistent in doing that,

you know that's what I've evolved to become, and I feel like that's really critical that they are involved in that process (Lines 193-200)

The formalised RP experience, with the support of a coach educator, facilitated the development of C1's practice, transforming it from autocratic to a more democratic style with athlete self-regulation at its core. They sometimes used games as a form of "disguised learning" (Line 10) encouraging athletes to engage with self-regulation. This was the result of collective discussions with the coaching team as they decided they needed a more "joined-up approach" (Line 30), so strength and conditioning coaching became more integrated into football training, rather than being "too siloed" (Line 28) from football. This helped to achieve buy-in from players and resulted in C1's role being adjusted to being more like a "second [football] coach" (Line 31). Through open and honest conversations about the limitations of current practices e.g., "being too siloed" (Line 28), the team were able to negotiate practices more closely aligned to the needs of the players, improving the efficiency and representativeness of training sessions. This echoes suggestions in previous chapters that support the benefits of RCs and dialectical exchanges on learning and development.

Understanding of and process of engaging with RP

When asked what RP meant from their perspective, C1 indicated:

RP is a multileveled thing where it encompasses the players but also the coaches. So, for the players RP should be a sense of doing something and then reviewing that process, whether it went well or whether it went badly (Lines 73-76).

C1 explained that a coach should review actions nested within a positive or negative experience and then consider the reasons "why" (Line 76) they went well or badly, thus prompting them to think deeper about the causative factors driving the process. By understanding these factors, a coach could develop interventions to either replicate things that went well or change the factors leading to poor performance.

C1 discussed that they value RP based on their existing understanding of RP: “I’m a big fan of RP but I guess that’s from the constraints of what I understand of what is RP” (Lines 72-73). This implied that C1 acknowledged that there were multiple ways of understanding RP. This understanding would likely have been influenced by their interaction with coach educators e.g., during formalised coach education. This assumption of there being multiple ways of understanding RP aligned with previous research noting varying definitions of reflection in the literature with a lack of consensus (Marshall, 2019b). Thus, RP appears to be a fuzzy concept, with researchers studying the concept often conceptualising RP in different ways. Perhaps differences inherent in these definitions could be due to the purpose for using reflection in varying contexts (Schaepekens et al., 2021). Due to the fuzziness of this concept, it is important to encourage continued critical discussion and support practitioners to deconstruct their own personal definitions of reflection (Marshall et al., 2022).

As well as recognising pluralism in the concept of reflection, C1 also understood RP to have different foci according to their role e.g., “for the players RP should be a sense of doing something and then reviewing that process, whether it went well or whether it went badly” (Lines 74-76) but “from a coach perspective it’s exactly the same but you’re now looking at: was my session successful? Or did I handle that situation well? Or could I have handled that better? And how did it make me feel?” (Lines 79-81). The mention of “exactly the same” (Line 80) suggested that elements of the process might have been perceivably the same, but the focus differed according to the role and the way they framed their role. Gilbert and Trudel (2001) reported that reflection was bounded by an individual’s role frame, meaning that role frame influenced “why certain coaching situations were set as issues worthy of reflection, and what types of coaching strategies were developed” (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, p. 25). As well as helping to identify coaching issues, role frames would presumably have influenced why other coaching situations were not set as coaching issues, helping to decide what to pay attention to and what to ignore. Role frames help to filter information, much like the concept of schemas and meaning perspectives in the work of Mezirow (1991), projecting

symbolic models onto perceived information, helping practitioners construe and make sense of these events. Role frames seemed to be an important factor influencing decisions regarding the focus of reflection. It also seemed that characteristics of the process of reflection might remain consistent, with the focus changing depending on purpose and role, as C1 mentioned: “it’s exactly the same but you’re now looking at” (Lines 79-80). However, the precise mode of representation used for expediting the reflective thinking process might depend on individual dispositions and preferences. This aligns with ideas presented in chapter seven including a continuum of formality/systematisation, whereby different modes of RP can be used according to specific needs.

Even though role frames would influence decisions regarding the focus, questions may also help to focus and (if used effectively), increase the rigour in reflective thinking (Paul & Elder, 2007, 2019). For example, C1 implied that questioning increased detail in RP: “I think there’s a lot more detail to be had with a lot of these reflections of, you know, how did it make me feel? what did I do? what did the opposition do? what did they feel? you know what were the reactions from me doing x or y?” (Lines 77-79). It seemed questioning guided and focussed RP. C1 typically engaged with RP using a standardised list of questions, inspired by Gibbs’ framework, in a diary format and they mentioned that this enhanced the rigour in their RP by going through challenging questions to “unpick what really happened” (Line 83-84). This list of questions seemed to encourage them to reflect on dimensions of their experience that might be left unexamined if left to chance using a more open and flexible individual process e.g., questions they develop themselves would be guided by their inherent biases, whereas standardised questions may have forced them to think about a different aspect of an experience. This may direct focus towards insights that would not be spontaneously generated.

C1 seemed to engage in RP using diary-based written modes of representation and may have conflated RP with this mode, perhaps constraining their engagement with RP. This seems to relate to a previous comment about C1 being a fan of RP but from the constraints of how they understand it. This may acknowledge a limited grasp of the potential types of RP. For example, when

this diary was not accessible, they discussed that they had trouble engaging in RP i.e., they seemed to overlook introspective and conversational modes of RP:

I guess the downside is that where the activities take place versus where my office is and where my book is that I've done my reflections in, there is quite a big distance between them and I'm not talking like you know across the road and down the hall. Like it takes you a good 10 minutes just to walk from the pitch to get to the building, so it's not that I don't want to reflect more often it's just not necessarily the easiest thing to do immediately or I have to do it at the very end of the session which could take you know a bit of time and you kind of just want to go home (Lines 176-181).

This seemed to suggest that RP was not perceived by C1 as a mode of inquiry that they could engage with in the moment i.e., reflection-in-action (Schön, 1983). However, as previously noted reflection-in-action was used by C1, but perhaps not acknowledged as being RP. Rather, RP seemed to be perceived as a tool that is metaphorically picked up and put down, and required a diary to go through a list of challenging questions:

So, I look at it as a tool that I definitely use in situations that I feel like I really can't work out why things happened or I'm striving to learn more about what happened and why (Lines 163-164).

The list of questions was inspired by the Gibbs framework and seemed to be associated with rigour compared to conversational or informal modes that might be perceived as more "surface level" (Line 153) and "more like reviewing than reflecting" (Lines 152-153). As such, they may not have valued surface level RP as much as deeper RP, and this might be driving the need to use the diary to achieve more meaningful insights and learning.

It could be argued that some individuals might use formulaic sets of questions more superficially, much like a tick-box review rather than to expedite a reflective thinking process. Depth of reflection achieved through any mode of representation may depend on the qualities and

attitudes practitioners bring to the process (Marshall et al., 2021). For example, being open-minded and having conducive epistemological beliefs seem to set a psychological context for reflective thinking (Dewey, 1933; Marshall et al., 2021; Muis, 2007; Ostorga, 2006). C1 seemed to perceive their use of a diary and challenging questions as a rigorous mode of reflection-on-action:

So, it takes a bit more time to actually go through, but it also means that I have to really think about what's happened across a session as opposed to broadly assuming stuff that's happened across a session (Lines 160-162).

Conversely, C1 mentioned that less structured, and informal modes of RP (e.g., conversations) were used, but perhaps not acknowledged to be RP:

I probably subconsciously do that quite a lot because I was thinking now when I've done some behavioural management stuff and its gone wrong, I have gone to people that I perceive as good experts in that field. Like I went to a guy that does the teaching at the academy and said to him: 'look I have a problem here, what would you suggest for next time, and this is what happened, this is how it panned out'. So, I probably do that more often than I think I do but yeah, I'm reflecting as we speak (Lines 140-145).

This interview could have created a lightbulb moment, with C1 connecting with these more intrinsic modes of RP. It could also have been that the interview process may have been perceived as more demanding than everyday conversation, thus triggering deeper modes of introspection, involving a higher degree of critical effort (Evans, 2019). Thus, it is important to further discuss the concept of reflection and consider how personal understanding influences the way practitioners engage with RP.

C1 did appear to use RCs as a way of connecting with others and learning from each other. However, these were not initially perceived as being aligned with RP. Conversations seemed to be a valuable way of understanding other perspectives to help make sense of an issue or experience.

There appears to be a value of embedding RP in a relational framework through RCs and dialectical inquiry.

Participant two (C3)

Role frame

When asked about the role of a coach, C3 discussed the need to “develop the talents of all the young athletes who come to us” (C3, Lines 39-40). They were previously a teacher of a similar age group and so was able to transfer their understanding of pedagogy to sport coaching. What seemed to be present in the subsequent discussion was a vision to retain participation in sport: “not having the big problem of they leave school, and they leave, they stop doing any sport outside school as well” (Lines 43-44). This statement seemed to indicate a wider societal vision and the importance of ensuring people maintain activity through further participation in sport, implying that they had a desire to maintain participant motivation to engage in sport.

As the lead coach, C3 aimed to create an environment where the club coaches had a shared mental model, working together in a collaborative manner supporting athletes: “My aim is to get the coaches just to work on us singing from the same hymn sheet, really to work together” (Lines 23-24). It was not discussed further how this vision was translated into practice. However, this seemed to signal that C3 perceived their role as facilitating positive communication with and between coaches. It seems plausible that the reason for wanting coaches aligned with each other was to create a cohesive and efficient team who provided consistent information to all athletes through a shared mental model. This might have included consistent technical models i.e., developing a shared understanding of what effective technique looked like. It seemed C3 had a clear alignment to lifelong learning and development. For example, they discussed the continuing professional development opportunities that they organised for their coaching team: “I organise workshops for those coaches, probably one or two a year where we concentrate on a specific thing. We often have a guest speaker come in to talk about something, lead a workshop for professional development. So that's pretty much what I do outside off the track when I'm not coaching” (Lines 11-13). Workshops intended to

facilitate their coaching team's learning and development which would be likely to have influenced the athletes through the development of coaching practices. There seemed to be a desire to create closeness with and between the team (i.e., a joined-up approach), with everyone feeling personally valued, and that might have transferred positively to athletes, resulting in more consistent messages/coaching and more effective development of athlete talent.

C3 discussed their responsibilities regarding planning and "delivering sessions on the track three times a week" (Lines 44-45). This involved a structured process of planning for the short and long-term (periodisation) and helping to plan athletes' competition diaries. As a lead coach, C3 alluded to the overarching role they held and their responsibility for organising specific services e.g., nutrition and sport psychology support, by employing practitioners to support the athletes. This aligned with C3's overarching vision of developing talent as they provided support services to improve their athletes nutritional programming and provided psychological support for those who might "find competition very anxious or anxiety invoking" (Line 53). This signalled that C3 embodied an individualised person-centred approach that may be symptomatic of coaching athletics (a predominantly individual endeavour) as opposed to a team sport. There were also signs that C3 was thinking beyond immediate concrete experiences, considering broader concepts (psychological support and the impact this could have on the individual) that aligned with their coaching vision. This demonstrated that C3 embodied a reflective orientation to practice, critically considering the wider societal effects of their practice. They had a dynamic RP.

Understanding of and process of engaging with RP

C3 framed the process of reflection as evaluation of self and others e.g., evaluating coaching performance and evaluating how athletes react and deal with a session with an intention to respond to this constructively to improve athlete performance: "OK, so for me, it's constant self-evaluation and observation of my athletes and how they are reacting and dealing with the sessions that are set" (Lines 61-62). There seemed to be reciprocity between observations of the athletes and C3's response to the observed e.g., they would see something happening and based on this reflection-in-

action decide whether to intervene. Intervention would then inform another reflection-in-action and potentially an adapted intervention. They mentioned this mode of inquiry occurring “reflexively during training sessions” (Line 62). This conceptualisation of reflexivity seemed to have parallel characteristics to Schön’s reflection-in-action (Schön, 1983), indicating a potential conflation of reflection-in-action with reflexivity. Upon deeper inspection, C3 seemed to use the word reflexive to indicate their immediate responses to an emergent situation rather than considering how the self (including one’s beliefs, values and assumptions) reciprocates with actions and interactions (D’cruz et al., 2007; Riach, 2009). They reported that this mode of reflection is “happening all the time” (Line 65), indicating that their engagement was embedded into action, emergent, introspective and highly accessible enabling them to adjust their actions according to events that they continuously reflected on. It is possible that beliefs, values and assumptions were considered in the moment but not expressed in the interview. If this is the case, then the above might be considered reflexive.

C3 mentioned that they engaged in reflection-on-action post-session. This was more often engaged with informally and in an unstructured, internalised manner: “And I think usually sort of driving home from the track from the session, I’m nearly always thinking through the session and how it’s gone, positively or negatively” (Lines 66-67). Also: “So, again, you know, it allows you to **think about**⁴ did it work? And if it didn’t, why didn’t it? And what can I do better next time? So that definitely happens” (Lines 101-103) and finally: “**It’s a thought process** which helps me to decide what to repeat and what to change and it leads to new ideas being developed and implemented and therefore hopefully into making me a better coach” (Lines 104-105). They mentioned that “a lot of it does go on in your head. But I also do write things down that need to be changed” (Lines 130-131).

Reflection seemed to be engaged with as an internalised process, but where actionable points were written down to aid memory recall: “So, I decided something, and I write it down there and then as to what to alter in the session. So, I definitely write things down” (Lines 68-69). This act

⁴ Emboldened text is used to add emphasis to these words to explicitly identify how C3 seems to conceptualise reflection as an introspective thought process.

of writing down ideas to be changed or acted upon would crystallise these ideas in manner that they were remembered and could be actioned in the next similar training session:

If you didn't write it down the next week when you came to that class, you could actually make the same mistake again. So, and that's exactly the same in coaching, you know, I need to write it down because when I do that session again and it might not be for a whole year in athletics coaching. I need to have changed it rather than get to it and go, oh my God, I remember now this went wrong last year (lines 126-130).

C3 mentioned that they were self-critical, and this seemed to be associated with a desire to improve practice. They mentioned "I think maybe I'm guilty of this that I don't pat myself on the back enough sometimes. You know, you tend to sort of pull apart everything that goes wrong. And it's important that we do remember the good things I think as well. And I don't think I do enough" (Lines 108-111). This suggested that C3 acknowledged the importance of reflecting on positive experiences, yet they had the awareness to identify that this was an area for improvement for their RP. Literature has discussed the importance of reflecting on positive experiences and personal strengths (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2007; Dixon et al., 2013, 2016; Seligman, 2011). By asking positively oriented questions, of both ourselves and one another, we invite reflection on strengths and things that went well (Dixon et al., 2016). This may enhance confidence, flexibility, hope, and the possibility of positive action (Dixon et al., 2016). In turn this may encourage practitioners to broaden practices that had a positive impact, consider the wider implications of these practices and extend them to other scenarios.

RP seemed to primarily be engaged within the self, however there were indications of C3 problem-solving with others by voicing a problem and receiving a potential solution:

I said out loud to my coaching assistant. I said, oh, you know what I need? I need something like a window above the hurdle. So, she has to go through the window

and dip under it to make sure that she gets low. And it was it was just a; it was something that was going through my mind. And I wasn't sure. And I'm not practical in any way so making something like that was not in my capacity. Anyway, about a week later, my coaching assistant turned up at the track. And her husband had made said window for me. He chopped up an old football goal and he made the stands that stood above the hurdle with a bamboo cane on it so that a hurdler has to go, I don't know if you can envisage this, over the hurdle, but under the bamboo cane, and if they were too high, they would knock the bamboo cane off (Lines 156-163)

Although this led to changes to practice, C3 seemed surprised by the coaching assistant's partner creating the implement and thus it does not seem to represent deliberate collaborative RP but could be framed as a form of reactive shared problem-solving, involving conversation. From the available data, C3's RP appeared to mainly be an individual process within the self rather than deliberately seeking third-party input. However, this does highlight the importance of conversations and relationships with others for problem-solving and generating changes to practice.

RP facilitated changes to practice, either through remediating negative experiences and poor practice, or by replicating and extending successful experiences. RP thus enabled change to occur through inquiry about performance: "I think RP allows me to **alter** how I can organise a group as well, and particularly at the moment with COVID" (Lines 99-100). Also: "it leads to new ideas being developed and implemented and therefore hopefully into making me a better coach" (Lines 104-105). RP seemed to involve developing knowledge by reframing or developing a cognitive schema (Mezirow, 1991), enabling them to interpret a problem differently and use different strategies and tools to intervene with problematic scenarios.

Over time, C3's perspective of RP shifted. This seemed to be related to ways that RP was taught and expected to be engaged with during teaching practice i.e., as a technical written process added onto the end of lesson planning and delivery. Previously, C3 did not seem to see the value in the process and perceived it to be time-consuming:

When I was first a student teacher and we're talking 40 odd years ago, it was called evaluation. And we had we had a column on our on our lesson plan where we had to evaluate our lesson. And I hated it because it took so long to do. You know, you're working all evening planning your lessons for the next day as it is. But you've also got to evaluate all the lessons you've done that day. So, when I first did RP or evaluated a lesson, you know, positive and negatively, it was time consuming. And at the time I thought it was pretty much unnecessary (Lines 117-122).

This is an example of formalised reflection-on-action, with no indication of reflection-in-action or reflexivity being taught or encouraged. They seemed to have been taught RP in a very instrumental way, as a column was added onto lesson planning and delivery where they wrote their reflections, rather than RP being inherent within each of these processes (i.e., planning, delivery and evaluation) or embedded into conversations in a relational framework. C3's perspective seemed to change over time, accompanying a more streamlined and internalised RP: "I have changed my opinion completely because I don't now have to actually write in so much detail an evaluation of every session. However, I do write down anything that I want to change" (Lines 123-125). This change was characterised by autonomous and habitual engagement becoming the norm, almost a habit:

So, my opinion of RP has really changed. I think I used to think of it as a necessary evil. I had to do it, whereas now I think it is necessary, and it has actually become totally automatic. And I'd go a step further, really. I know in myself that when I stop self-evaluating, it'll be time for me to give up coaching because then I'm just not I'm not moving forward. I know you've got to keep looking at things and thinking about them and altering them if need be (Lines 131-136).

This statement highlights that RP became a motivating force to C3's continued involvement in coaching. Initially, (as RP was taught) it was an onerous task as they were expected to write

everything down. This has policy implications where governing bodies of sport should consider how they expect practitioners to engage in RP. C3 had the experience and confidence to modify how they engaged with RP and now viewed this more personalised process as being useful and meaningful, showing how RP can be modified to suit the individual and their working constraints. RP now seemed to be a motivating force for C3's continued involvement in coaching through the need to continuously improve their performance, and this was expedited by RP:

I would say it [RP] keeps me motivated and motivated to improve. I'm not happy and I never was as a teacher to just do the same thing time and time again. It's got to be improved. It's got to be updated. So, I am motivated through RP to get better. I'm always looking to add to my delivery. So, if anybody if I spot anybody with a really good idea, I will definitely think about it and use it if I can. So yeah, I think it does keep you motivated (Lines 138-143).

Sport governing bodies should critically consider expectations around practitioner RP and how they teach it to their coaches so it can be perceived as a valued and personally meaningful process. Perhaps facilitators of RP should help practitioners to deconstruct personal definitions of RP and explore a variety of ways of representing thoughts to broaden understanding of RP. This may encourage practitioners to understand that RP is inherent in every stage of the coaching process rather than being an add-on activity. They might also work with facilitators to create a personalised approach to RP, ensuring the process is effective, efficient and bespoke to individual needs. Seeing the value of RCs and using them as a mode of RP may make it a less onerous process for those who like connecting with others. Embedding RP in a relational framework may facilitate engagement and help build connections and perhaps mentoring relationships supporting the development of competency. This might positively affect participant enjoyment and long-term engagement.

Participant three(C6)

Role frame

C6 framed the role of a coach as a facilitator who supports athlete development through guidance or interventions aligned to their needs:

Somebody who is able to identify and agree a need within an individual or group of individuals who are then able to interpret that need into a set of guidance and or interventions, and then he's able to play that out to a hopefully successful end, or group or development opportunity for that individual or group (Lines 19-22).

The words “agree a need” (Line 20) implied a collaboration, where the coach and athlete are involved in a cooperative process. Whether this shared process is at the design level or through simply receiving agreement for interventions the coach develops was not clear. However, there is a clear indication of respect for the athletes’ views and evidence of relational processes e.g., conversations to achieve agreement.

They also framed coaching as a complex process transcending concrete plans of action, with the coach-athlete relationship acting as a vehicle for effectiveness:

Recognising that coaching is chaos, if I'm allowed to kind of suggest that is the case, because it might not be for everybody. And recognising that coaching is chaos actually takes some of the pressure off the coaches and realise that, again, still an army term now that no plan survives contact with the enemy, you know, the reality that they did, the interactions, it's not about what you planned, or what's on paper, it's that interaction and that relationship between you and the athlete (Lines 107-111).

Training session plans, although beneficial for organisation when striving to achieve specific objectives, may be adapted depending on the emergent needs of an athlete. By nurturing an effective working relationship a coach will likely have developed an understanding of the needs of athletes they work with (Jowett, 2005, 2017) and adapt to their emergent needs:

It's about developing that relationship so that you have an understanding, and they understand what you're trying to gain, what you're trying to achieve with them and your understanding of what they're actually doing and being able to reflect-in-action on whether your processes or whether your demonstrations or instructions are working (Lines 111-115).

There seemed to be a need to reflect in the moment regarding the needs of the athlete(s) and how our behaviour and plans may shift to better support them. Coaching was therefore a “dynamic social interaction” (Line 119), characterising it as a complex process requiring reflection-in-action to effectively adjust behaviours and goals in response to emergent needs.

Understanding of and process of engaging with RP

When asked what RP meant to them, C6 answered: “Well, there's the traditional meaning, which is to consider and evaluate backwards [reflection-on-action] the activity that you have completed, and to ascertain how you might understand it and potentially improve it” (Lines 29-30). This seems to suggest RP was perceived as a cognitive process of inquiry i.e., evaluating experiences and making judgements about how to improve practice moving forward. They elaborated on varying foci e.g., the need to understand why events were experienced as they were, how they happened and how to improve practice:

Yes, why those things happened. And you know, how they happen, why they happened, and arguably, traditionally, how to improve upon the things that didn't go so well. Although I, you know, now see another stream of that, which is to understand what went well, and how then to replicate that in other areas (Lines 34-35).

They discussed the need to reflect on successes, generating insight about the potential factors leading to success. This might have enabled practitioners to take control of these factors, attempting to replicate them (Dixon et al., 2013, 2016). Reflecting on experiences (retrospectively)

was coupled with a suggestion to think forwards to the future to make plans that might lead to improvements to practice:

But also, thinking forwards, I think, only recently have I fully appreciated the importance of thinking forwards, in conjunction with thinking backwards. You know, we do think backwards, which is evaluative, but thinking forwards, which is suggestive, helps you to come up with the solutions that you're trying to create to improve your coaching (Lines 65-68).

Thinking forwards⁵, sometimes called anticipatory or prospective reflection (Conway, 2001; Wilson, 2008), enables practitioners to “give deep consideration to trends and future scenarios” (Wilson, 2008, p. 179). This might help to inspire different ways of thinking and acting, as practitioners might change their goals, resulting in changed intentions and actions (Wilson, 2008). Carefully considering the future (following a reflection of past events) might help to reframe goals, intentions, and might ultimately lead to changed ways of acting. Forward-thinking seemed to constructively frame reflective inquiry, helping to create solutions to improve professional practice:

Yes, so that I think the breakthrough for me was to not just think of what went wrong, and why but to what went right and why so that I can replicate that, as I mentioned earlier. But also, to then interpret that in a forward thinking and suggestive way, which would then allow me to, you know, not only thinking about what did I do, and let's fix that, but let's see what I can do that, see you know, let's create some opportunity here, rather than always thinking backwards (Lines 73-78)

Thinking about what went well, alongside problems seemed to be important for C6: “when I learnt to think forwards, I would start to plan out how I can use what I've just learned in a more effective manner” (Lines 297-298). Retrospective thinking, about experiences seemed to be used

⁵ Differing terminology has been used to describe reflection oriented towards the future. For the purposes of this thesis, the term ‘thinking forward’ will be used to refer to the process of directing reflective inquiry toward an anticipated future, thus constituting a mode through which planning for future action can take place.

before using a forward-thinking process to generate suggestions and solutions, considering new ways of working to improve their practice. Forward thinking thus enabled insights from retrospective reflection to be considered in relation to an anticipated future.

C6 engaged with a variety of methods of RP including writing, conversations, recorded monologues (e.g., using a Dictaphone), and mentoring. As an overarching strategy they would also engage in what they described as bandwidth reflection meaning to focus and limit what they were reflecting on to make the process meaningful and productive:

The two later lessons I've learned is a) bandwidth reflection, which has helped immensely to limit what I'm trying to reflect on and be more focused on things. And I didn't learn that and properly until I was doing my masters. So, there were many years of just reflecting about everything in a chaotic manner. And I learned to really focus on bandwidth (Lines 62-65).

This aligns with reflecting on critical moments whereby practitioners would identify a moment that stood out and had some emotional effect. Emotive experiences such as surprise, frustration or feeling confused may signal a gap in knowledge or understanding, implying an opportunity for learning (Marshall et al., 2021). These events are likely inconsistent with one's expectations and framework of understanding, leading to an emotive experience e.g., surprise (Reisenzein et al., 2019). Focussing reflective inquiry on critical moments (i.e., narrowing bandwidth) might prevent practitioners from "reflecting about everything in a chaotic manner" (Line 64).

Although C6 mentioned anticipatory and bandwidth reflection, enhancing the efficiency of their RP, it appeared that these practical strategies were not taught in coach education: "they're two shortcuts [bandwidth reflection and thinking forward] that that I didn't get directly from coach education and might have saved me immense, not mistakes but you know" (Lines 68-69). C6's RP seemed to develop in effectiveness, but not because of coach education. They seemed to indicate early challenges with RP when they discussed that using a focussed [bandwidth RP] and forward-thinking process might have saved them "not mistakes but you know" (Line 69) signalling potential

inefficiencies within their earlier RP process and the benefits of teaching effective and efficient ways of engaging in RP from an earlier stage in their career. It seemed important that coach educators were engaged in RP and were knowledgeable about a variety of different ways of doing RP, including the nuances that make it effective and efficient. This might increase the likelihood of them teaching practically meaningful and pragmatically useful ways of doing RP.

To ensure what was reflected on was captured and remembered, C6 recorded ideas: “I just recorded things constantly. And then at an appropriate time, what I've discovered is I'm quite, if I noted something straight after an immediate reflection, I then do a subsequent reflection maybe a day later or when I had a convenient time” (Lines 294-296). Recording ideas enabled C6 to revisit these thoughts and develop them further, thus supporting a layered RP (Knowles et al., 2007).

Reflection was sometimes discussed as an individual process. However, there were notable benefits from sharing the process, particularly if others had knowledge or expertise in relation to the experienced problem: “and quite powerful in my development was working with a mentor” (Lines 335-336). This mentor was described as a “very good facilitator, really, really supportive, very encouraging” (Lines 341-342). They would facilitate reflective thinking through skilful questioning:

He was just very good at questioning. Now, it's that eternal question, why? You know, why? Why do you think that happened? Why do you think that might be the case? He did it just constantly, you know, and so you end up I mean, it's reductionist really, because then you just end up taking another slice out of it and another slice out of it, but you slice one thing, and you get kind of two, and you slice one of those bits of two, and you might get four, and you know, so you end up with this, you know, this map and almost a mind map of experiences and knowledge areas or lack of, you know, lack of knowledge areas or, you know, gaps that need to be filled or opportunities and, and the whole thing used to tumble out of a 20-minute conversation (Lines 371-377).

Appropriately skilled mentors or critical friends, who are effective listeners and questioners, might offer a safe space to facilitate reflective thinking, providing support, encouragement and appropriately challenging one's thinking (i.e., facilitating dialecticism). This highlights the benefits of RCs within a relational framework (e.g., mentoring relationships) for enhancing learning, deepening understanding and improving coaching competency.

Discussion

The aim of this chapter was to explore three case studies from the perspective of practitioner experiences of RP. A reframed analysis of three participants' interviews focussed on their understanding of RP and ways of engaging in RP. Participants seemed to conceptualise RP as an evaluative process used to review and deconstruct actions and performances. This aligns with literature characterising reflection as an active, and thus deliberate, cognitive process (Dewey, 1933; Duffy, 2007; Marshall, 2019b; Mezirow, 1991) that in the context of RP focusses on deconstructing and enquiring into practice-related experiences or ideas. The aim of RP seemed to be generating understanding of how and why experiences occurred and to consider ways that future practice might be improved. This latter point was related to forward-thinking anticipatory modes of RP, suggested to enable practitioners to evaluate a range of potential future courses of action and select one that can help to achieve their goals and objectives (Wilson, 2008). As actions are associated with intentions, anticipatory reflection enables practitioners to rigorously evaluate the possibilities of the future and reframe intentions and associated actions. Anticipatory reflection seems to align with change as it is likely to involve imaginative processes (Moon, 1999), helping practitioners to consider what could be possible thus stimulating different ways of thinking and working.

In the case of strengths-based RP, the aim seemed to be understanding how and why a particular instance of practice was successful and to consider ways of replicating and expanding this good practice to other situations (Dixon et al., 2013, 2016). This also implies a consideration of the future (i.e., anticipatory reflection) in accordance with an understanding of successful past experiences and how these can be replicated or expanded. As coaching is emergent and dynamic, a

simple replication of events may not always be possible. However, practitioners should be encouraged to consider tangible aspects of practice that are under their control e.g., behaviours such as providing positive reinforcement to nurture positive relationships. Practitioners should reflect continuously and critically on their unique context and the individuals they are working with. In the examples above, individuals might differ in their preferences for feedback. This justifies the importance of RCs with participants to support the coach-athlete relationship and navigate the complexity of coaching. Practitioners should reflect dialogically through RCs on what works on a case-by-case basis, highlighting the cyclical and iterative characteristics of RP (Marshall, 2019b).

RP was framed as a constructive and transformative process, aligning with ideas suggested by Duffy (2007). There seemed to be varying foci depending on individual roles. For example, a coach and athlete would have differing needs, would be engaging in different tasks and have different purposes motivating RP. This aligns with ideas of Schaepkens et al. (2021) who note the key to conceptualising reflection is in its use and purpose. Specifically, the intended need for reflection (i.e., its purpose) will shape how individuals define and understand it. This idea might be related to practitioner role-frames. Specifically, the things in one's practice that one perceives as important (or the experiences one frames as problematic) motivating reflective inquiry, would likely be influenced by the way one conceptualises their role (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001). Practitioner role-frames might therefore influence the purpose for using RP, potentially influencing the foci of inquiry and driving a particular way of defining and engaging with RP (Schaepkens et al., 2021).

To support critical consideration of RP and potentially shift personal definitions practitioners could be supported to explore the concept, prior to beginning more technical approaches to RP (Marshall et al., 2022). This might help facilitate appreciation of more varied ways of engaging in RP and support practitioners valuing modes of RP they are exposed to. This may also help to encourage long-term engagement. For example, one participant mentioned that they could not engage in RP immediately due to their reflective journal being in their office which was a considerable distance away. However, throughout the interview, they seemed to connect with the way the interview

dialogue was a mode of reflective thinking, and this might have supported a shift in the way they conceptualised RP. There was evidence they engaged with reflection-in-action, but they did not seem to define this as RP at the time of interviewing. If this practitioner was further supported to critically deconstruct their personal definition of RP, considering a variety of modes of engagement, then they may acknowledge a broader and more holistic way of doing RP and participate in informal RP with greater intent and deliberation. This reframed perception of RP may also reinforce their identity as being a reflective practitioner, supporting engagement.

Another participant discussed the importance of reflection-in-action and only writing down actionable points as a memory aid. This coach had a dynamic and persistent RP meaning they engaged continuously through reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. They seemed to identify strongly with being a reflective practitioner. Their motivation for remaining in coaching seemed contingent on them being a reflective practitioner as RP helped them develop situated knowledge, enabling them to improve as a coach which was their motivating goal. Their perspective evolved from their first introduction to RP, where it was taught technically and instrumentally i.e., it was added onto their lesson plan as an additional column to complete in writing. Over time they evolved to embody a more holistic and dynamic RP that included in-the-moment and retrospective RP, where only actionable points were written down. This accompanied an increased motivation for RP due to perceived success in developing situated knowledge, helping to improve their coaching.

Conversations were discussed as a mode of interactive verbal representation through which practitioners could engage in RP. Conversations can involve reflective thinking and be an effective mode through which to engage. However, conversations might not always involve reflective thinking and might simply involve the transfer and retention of tried and tested practical strategies. Dewey (1933, p. 9) characterised reflective thinking as being an “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends”. On this basis, conversations such as the above might be labelled more accurately joint problem-solving rather than collective reflection or a RC. The

latter implies participants engaged in reflective thinking. However, unless each individual approaches the conversation with an attitude of open-minded inquiry into knowledge claims and beliefs in light of logic and evidence, according to Dewey (1933) they are unlikely to be engaged in reflective thinking. Nevertheless, joint problem-solving could be a pathway to greater awareness and could prompt them to reflect on new ideas and more strongly assimilate information into their cognitive structure. However, without carefully considering these ideas they may simply accommodate new information or strategies and thus *learn*, but it is doubtful that these modes of collaborative problem solving could be accurately labelled reflective.

It is important to consider that during collaborative reasoning and problem solving in groups, hierarchies of authority and imbalances of perceived power may prevent cooperative, honest, and open dialogue. This may make it difficult for all parties to engage in genuine and wholehearted inquiry. A person with lower perceived (or hierarchical) status might find it difficult to question, challenge or offer alternative ideas, or indeed may be perceivably silenced by an assertive person with higher status. In these cases, smaller groups or one-to-one RCs may provide a safe space encouraging more open dialogue. Alternatively, paired dialogues following individual reflection and subsequent sharing insights to the larger group (e.g., think-pair-share) may support openness, particularly for socially anxious participants.

Conversations use knowledge and perspectives of two or more people, and if facilitated well may encourage a reframed consideration of the topic of inquiry. RP may thus be expedited through RCs within relationships with RP thus being a social process rather than a purely personal introspective one. If RCs are to be effective it is important to consider attitudes and intentions individuals bring to the process, as these may influence engagement. However, there are other more teachable factors that can also be considered, namely questioning and listening skills. To facilitate deeper thinking, facilitators can ask questions that help to navigate detailed consideration and evaluation of ideas or experiences (Paul & Elder, 2019). Questions often depend on the previous statement, thus creating an emergent quality. Reflecting on an answer and verbalising this to the

other person, a facilitator can demonstrate they are listening and empathising with their experience. This could help the individual by enabling them to hear their experience reflected back to them and prompt further consideration, while using the developing relationship as the mechanism of learning and change (Harrison, 2016). These skills could be formalised through ongoing mentoring or supervisory relationships supporting formalised modes of RC. However, any person with relevant skills can facilitate RCs thus helping practitioners to think more deeply about their professional practice.

When facilitating RCs, it seems important to embody the values of RP and model a process for others to see and learn from (Marshall et al., 2022). This may build trust and encourage social learning. Loughran (1996) discusses the need to show participants how to reflect by modelling and demonstrating a process e.g., thinking aloud or sharing excerpts from their journal. Also demonstrating positive effects of RP may have a positive effect on encouraging participation in RP by others. For example, if others perceive the reflective practitioner to be calm and grounded, and openly owning their mistakes and biases, this might enhance authenticity and credibility. These qualities may encourage practitioners to engage similarly and have a positive impact on the professional working environment. For example, this could encourage a more open and developmental environment, normalising learning from errors and positively affect long-term innovation while minimising the possibility of a blame culture.

The risks of modelling RP could include overexposure and the reduction of professional boundaries. This could involve sensitive information being shared about the self or others. Openly discussing mistakes and biases could result in practitioners being perceived as incompetent and this might limit career development, damaging trust and credibility. Practitioners should be mindful of maintaining professional boundaries and discuss mistakes within an appropriate context, educating others about the need and benefits of acknowledging limitations. Thus, instead of cultivating an impression of expertise that may lead to cynicism and scepticism from others, practitioners might be

perceived as authentic and credible if they own their mistakes within an appropriately framed context.

Limitations

Self-selection bias may have led to a favourable impression of RP being captured by interviews. Specifically, when planning this follow-up study, emails were sent to all participants from the study in chapter seven. Three people responded and were willing to have their data used in a reframed analysis. Due to their willingness to participate, they likely had an interest in RP. However, since this study was specifically analysing the way that participants conceptualise and engage with RP, it made sense to include individuals who have experience with and thus have an interest in RP. For further discussion of limitations please refer to [chapter ten](#).

Practical applications

It is important to consider how these insights might affect education about RP and how this education might influence (dis)engagement with the process. Practitioners considered RP to be an evaluative process focusing on the self, others (athletes) and one's practice. However, there was some indication that RP was considered a fuzzy concept with differing personal definitions influencing ways practitioners engage with RP. It seemed important for facilitators of RP to help practitioners explore and refine these personal definitions as suggested by Marshall et al. (2022) and in [chapter six](#), as this will support the rationalisation of assumptions underpinning these ways of conceptualising RP.

Governing bodies and specifically coach educators should ensure that courses, workshops and CPD events aim to facilitate understanding of RP and integrate reflective thinking into their pedagogy. This would ensure RP is taught and hopefully internalised holistically and not simply thought of as an add-on activity. RP may then be perceived as something inherent in coach education. They could achieve this by exposing coaches to different ways of doing RP and exploring personal definitions and experiences of RP. These personal definitions could be used as discussion points to enhance, expand and challenge personal ways of understanding RP. Reflective thinking

activities could be embedded into all aspects of coach education aiming to deepen and connect what is learnt in the classroom to coaches' experiences. Facilitators could then reinforce the initial critical deconstruction of RP by supporting practitioner discussion about how and why RP might be beneficial. This could be formalised through retrieval practice activities with broader discussion e.g., through RCs. Reflective thinking could also be pedagogically facilitated via problem or inquiry-based learning (Moallem et al., 2019), with an emphasis on explicit facilitation of meta-cognition (Quigley et al., 2021). This latter point could include explicit reflection, triggered by careful facilitator questioning, about how coaches will plan, monitor and evaluate their attempts to deconstruct a problematic case study, or plan an activity to inquire into a given concept or issue. This could support explicit teaching of meta-cognitive reflection while also scaffolding the process of deconstructing a problem or line of inquiry. A final reflection of how the resulting insights from the lesson/workshop can be applied to their own coaching practice might ensure that learning is meaningfully connected to the real-world of practice.

It is important for practitioners to understand and experience a variety of ways that RP can be engaged with, as this will provide options that coaches can choose from in different circumstances. For example, if coaches are aware of how video footage can be used for RP, they could make more informed decisions as to whether an objective viewing of their body language and verbal interactions with athletes meets their individual and situationally determined developmental needs. However, without knowing about and experiencing this mode of inquiry it would be difficult to consider this as a possibility. Thus, education about RP should help practitioners experience a variety of possible modes through which they can engage with RP.

Practitioners could also be supported through mentoring, supervision, or peer-to-peer RCs. Whether conversations are considered reflective or not may depend on the orientation of participants to this conversation (e.g., curiosity and an open-minded intention to engage in honest and open inquiry). Effective RCs are adaptive to the needs of the individual through an emergent line of inquiry. Effective questioning and listening seem to be key skills of a facilitator and those

undergoing facilitatory roles such as mentoring and supervision should be supported in developing these skills. Facilitators would benefit from engaging in ongoing reflective supervisory support to navigate the complexities of working with people in dynamic working environments such as coaching. Thus, as discussed by Marshall et al. (2022) in chapter six, it is important to realise that facilitators and coaches are on a continual learning journey.

Supporting RP through pedagogical and relational approaches that encourage RCs focussed on real-world (through actual or simulated experiences) and hands-on experience with a variety of modes of RP could help to reframe the issue (discussed in chapter one) of coach education being de-contextualised and the suggestion of a need for more authentic and relevant education (Mesquita et al., 2014). Aligning learning activities with authentic problems and simulated coaching with RCs being a vehicle for inquiry could help develop applied knowledge situated in real problems experienced by coaches. This might develop coaches' competency and improve confidence in formal learning. It may also help coaches understand the importance of RCs for their continued learning and development. Supporting coaches to extend these formalised learning conversations into their everyday practice (at every level of coach education) by highlighting the importance of RCs could have lasting impact on engagement in RP and lifelong learning. This could also have a positive impact on participant enjoyment, development and wellbeing.

Theoretical Implications

Participants seemed to agree with notions inherent in the literature of RP being a mode of inquiry used to deconstruct actions and performances i.e., a cognitive process. Ideas of reflecting backwards were mentioned as being a traditional way of thinking about RP. However, participants mentioned that RP can also focus on the future, aligning with literature-based notions of anticipatory reflection. This was noted as being suggestive and constructive, aiming to improve practice by considering possibilities for change. Anticipatory reflection (sometimes referred to as reflection-for-action) might be proactive or be inspired by reflection on past experiences. These concepts are illustrated in Figure 10.

The importance of RP in a relational framework was emphasised, whereby RCs facilitated shared problem-solving and collaborative inquiry. This required trusting relationships to be created and nurtured, as emphasised in [chapter six](#). RCs may put practitioners in vulnerable positions. Thus, a sense of psychological safety would be central to RP through RCs, particularly in more formalised relationships e.g., mentoring/supervision. Psychological safety would likely encourage knowledge sharing and with sensitivity ideas can be challenged through dialectical exchanges, supporting depth of understanding.

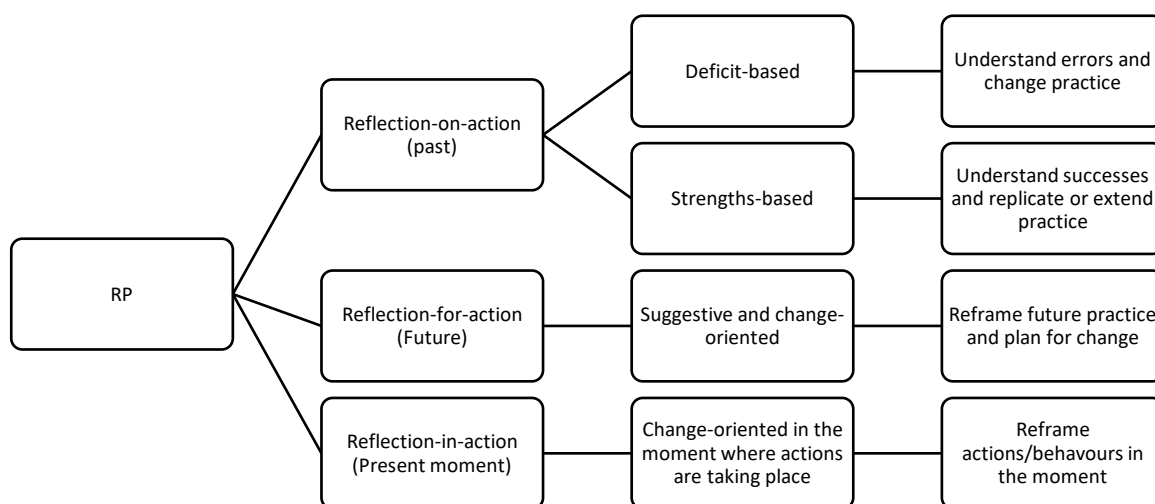


Figure 10:

Dimensions and types of RP [second-level nodes] with suggested characteristics [third-level nodes] and outcomes [fourth-level nodes].

Conclusion

Participants all seemed to value RP and seemed to align RP with a process of evaluating the self, others, and their practice. RP had differing foci depending on the role of the individual, with one's role frame likely influencing what practitioners frame as problems, and what they excluded from the reflective process. There was some consistency in how practitioners engaged with preferred modes of RP. It appears important for coach educators and governing bodies to consider

how they can support a multi-modal RP education. This would require facilitators to navigate the varying preferences and skill sets of learners. Coach educators may also require support through supervisory relationships to encourage reflection about their own facilitatory practices.

A core consideration in developing RP skills is the importance of relationships (between coach and athlete and between coach and mentors, peers or supervisors). Good quality relationships enabled learners and facilitators to develop a sense of safety, creating an environment of trust. This in turn enabled open and honest dialogue that expedited RP. Coach educators and governing bodies should critically consider how to encourage these learning environments to support learner engagement and build confidence and competence. This should enhance the quality of coach education, improving learning outcomes and coaching competencies beyond the classroom.

Chapter Nine: A First-Person Reflexive Inquiry

Introduction

Previous chapters explored coaches' experiences of RP highlighting practitioners' perspectives. Analysis suggested that participants had preferred ways of engaging in RP. Some participants used layered RP, whereby modes of representation were integrated. Some preferred unstructured and less formalised modes of RP, whereas others prefer to use formalised RP. The chapter developed a more situated understanding of RP that contextualised theoretically grounded ideas from chapters four to six and revealed greater nuance in personal approaches to RP e.g., how practitioners defined and experienced RP in practical situations and why they valued and engaged with RP. However, this did not reveal much detail about the limitations and difficulties inherent in the process. Understanding this, from a first-person lived experience point of view, could help reframe assumptions in theoretical discourse on RP and inform the development of guidelines for educators and awarding organisations e.g., governing bodies of sport that might support the development of practitioners.

A narrower contextual focus with long-term engagement in formalised RP could help to understand experiences of RP in everyday practical situations. Situated knowledge about how factors positively or negatively impacted engagement might help to develop strategies to support practitioners facing similar experiences or challenges. A longitudinal study would also help understand what factors or adaptations led to long-term practitioner engagement. This is salient as practitioners have been reported as preferring informal RP over formalised RP (Burt & Morgan, 2014); understanding why, and what can be done to support RP or reframe expectations about how RP is done seems important. Due to changes in practice being a desired outcome of RP, an action research design was aligned to this purpose. A first-person derivative of action research (Marshall, 2016) could also help to understand the personal and situated process of RP. Therefore, a first-person action research study was conducted exploring my own experiences of engaging in formalised RP in my practice as a further education sport lecturer based in a football academy. This

helped create insight into my own reflections as a practitioner, exploring the difficulties when using formalised RP, and using these challenges to generate practical mitigating strategies. This, alongside a reflection on the facilitators of reflection helped to understand what worked and what did not while working with real-world practical constraints. Knowledge was generated about approaches to RP that worked for me and for the benefit of those I worked with. A broader conceptualisation is discussed, demonstrating my evolving understanding of RP.

Given the situated nature of the study, it also helped to critique current policies through a practical lens. The aim of this study was therefore to understand the process of RP from a first-person perspective by reflecting on the facilitators, and barriers of RP, using my journal as a source of data.

Reflection and discussion

For clarity, the following narrative was organised into the following two sections aligned with the aims: Barriers to RP and factors facilitating RP. Barriers were factors that inhibited or prevented engagement with RP. The factors facilitating RP included intrinsic (e.g., valuing RP) and extrinsic factors (e.g., modes of representation) helping to (re)engage with RP. Throughout this chapter where relevant, excerpts from a written reflective journal were used to illustrate ideas. Within each section I presented reflections alongside discussions of related literature and practical implications that tie into the wider thesis.

Barriers to RP

What were the main barriers to formalised RP?

One of the most challenging barriers that prevented or limited engagement in formalised RP was the time commitment required to engage in deep and meaningful reflective writing. This was compounded by workload and competing demands, meaning that I sometimes struggled to sit and engage with in-depth writing. For example, on 4th December 2022 I retrospectively wrote the following:

Due to being so overwhelmed with the sheer amount of work that I have been doing, time has been a constraining factor. I have been spending any free-time I have planning and preparing resources or marking projects and catching up on other admin-related tasks (emails, organising, printing resources, meetings, disciplinarys and chasing students who might be falling behind on deadlines and targets etc). (Lines 368-373).

Workload constrained the time I had to sit and focus on creating detailed reflective accounts. This was also evident on the 14th of November 2022:

I feel like I have been falling behind regarding the use of this journal. This might be signalling a barrier to written RP e.g., the time commitment, alternative tasks that I have currently on the go, including a never-ending to-do list that is constantly being added to and a need to have down-time in the evenings. It is currently 19:49 and I have only just stopped working, yet I feel guilty because I have a massive marking workload that I have not managed to get through yet, and this is growing everyday (Lines 94-99).

My workload was demanding, and I was taking work home to ensure that I could complete my job effectively. However, this workload often distracted me from devoting time to engage in formalised written RP. The above excerpt signalled a latent feeling of stress and the explicit mention of the need for down-time in the evenings suggested that I was feeling overwhelmed and needed time to decompress. The volume of tasks that I needed to complete alongside a full teaching timetable meant that a lot of my workload was completed at home in the evenings, rather than in my office during working hours.

This workload was not the only competing demand. Interacting with these professional demands were a range of personal factors. This was demonstrated in a transcribed audio recorded reflection on the 15th of December 2022:

I'm getting married in literally less than two weeks now, so obviously I've got a lot going on with the planning of the wedding. So, you know, that's been a huge one in terms of you know, when I'm not working, I'm planning for the wedding. So, it's very difficult to find time, especially when I've been marking all day as well. It's almost like, you know, it's difficult to find the time to sit down and write. Another one is that me and my wife-to-be are selling the flat that we're currently living in, and we've managed to get a sale on it. It's been, you know, the offer has been accepted and then we've also put an offer on a house, so it's been a very challenging time in terms of organising, workload etc and it's very difficult to find time to really hone-in and do a good job of those written reflections (Lines 439-449)

These personal factors (organising our wedding, selling our flat and buying a house) added another layer of stress on top of an already demanding professional workload. Planning our wedding, the sale of our flat and the purchase of a house required a lot of hours of meticulous planning and management that distracted me from in-depth formalised written reflection. The following excerpt at the end of the academic year, thinking back over the year, captured an overarching perspective on this barrier to formalised RP:

One of the most restricting and salient barriers to engaging with formalised RP has been the restricted time available in my working day to sit and write in my journal. Coupled with this was the immense workload that I have had this year, particularly at the end of the academic year when I was given the opportunity to lead the development of A-Level PE and Psychology...Me and my wife have also been preparing for our baby, we got married, tried to sell our flat to move into a house (but this unfortunately fell through). As such, time has been limited and effort focussed towards getting other work done (Lines 2235-2244)

The intersection between professional and personal factors posed significant barriers to meaningful and persistent engagement in formalised written RP. Notably, a high level of motivation and the value I attributed to RP enabled me to overcome these barriers:

Time and workload have been key barriers to engaging with formalised RP. I am currently spending Sunday afternoon writing this (it is 17:00) to catch up, as I wholeheartedly value RP and want to explore and understand these barriers through my own experience and potentially develop solutions i.e., ways of streamlining or making the process more accessible (Lines 373-377).

There were a lot of days where I could not seem to engage in meaningful and in-depth writing due to a range of personal and professional demands. As I valued RP, I would sometimes write in my diary late at night, as I had other responsibilities to fulfil beforehand and needed time to decompress after getting home in the evening: “when I get home at gone 6/7pm after a busy day I feel like I need time away from the screen and away from writing as a formalised mode of RP”. This was further explained in the following journal entry on the 23rd of May 2023:

It is currently 9.45pm so I am squeezing it [RP] into the last moments before I go to bed due to time and other commitments e.g., cooking dinner, washing up, getting our lunches and breakfasts ready for the following day, taking care of the dog e.g., taking her for a walk, and making sure I had a few moments to switch off from the day to gain some mental distance from events before showering and then settling into my journal writing (Lines 1943-1948).

This suggested competing demands and workload constrained available time to engage in formalised RP. This intersected with fatigue and a range of personal factors to negatively influence the likelihood of engaging with RP. Considering I was highly motivated, and I deeply valued RP and often struggled to engage in formalised modes of reflective writing, practitioners who do not internalise and value RP to the same degree might choose to disengage altogether: “In a sense this

experience of finding time is my critical moment for today as I can fully understand the reasons why some practitioners who perhaps don't value formalised RP would potentially avoid spending time engaging in reflective journaling" (Lines 1948-1950).

Practical Implications

Disengagement is likely to be reinforced if practitioners are unsuccessful in generating meaningful and actionable knowledge, as they may perceive formalised RP as a lot of work for little return. Coupled with the time-consuming nature of effective and meaningful RP, it is unsurprising that many practitioners e.g., sport coaches do not maintain a systematic process (Burt & Morgan, 2014). This effect may be heightened when professional bodies do not require documented evidence of RP, as accountability is absent and practitioners who are not motivated or do not value RP may choose alternative activities. Also, in sport, most coaches are volunteers with full or part-time jobs elsewhere, meaning they may not feel incentivised to engage in formalised RP (Burt & Morgan, 2014). This may be evident when coaches are parents supporting their child's club, having full-time jobs outside of sport. In this case there may be limited incentive to engage in RP once home from training and then have a range of competing demands e.g., making sure children are showered, dinner is made, and they are all ready for the next day of work/school before settling their children to bed. In these cases, much like my reflective journal above, the only opportunity to engage in RP may be close to 9/10pm at night. However, a volunteer coach with minimal hours of coaching per week may not feel obliged to engage in formalised RP when experiencing such personal and professional constraints, as noted by Burt and Morgan (2014).

Practitioners across professions, including education, have described formalised RP as time consuming and have reported that they do not have available time to engage in formalised and meaningful RP (Bakioglu & Dalgiç, 2013; Burt & Morgan, 2014; Gathu, 2022; Gilheaney & Quigley, 2021; Hamblin & Crisp, 2022; Hickman & Collins, 2014; Lim et al., 2022; Miller, 2020). Therefore, it seems pertinent to consider, at a practical and policy level, accessible modes of engaging with RP

which would necessitate a holistic understanding of reflection. This will be the focus of the following subsection.

How can we develop strategies to improve engagement with RP?

RP encourages practitioners to inquire into their professional practice and performance, supporting self-regulated learning from experience. If done effectively, this helps to develop insight into how they can be more effective in their role. Thus, RP helps improve practice by generating situated knowledge, innovating ideas and ways of working that might benefit the people the practitioner is working with (i.e., in this case my students). As such it is important to consider ways that practitioners can engage with RP that alleviates struggles with excessive workload and lack of time and enables them to engage in ways that are effective and efficient. Time and competing workload were major barriers to RP in the context of my practice and this also seems to be evident across professions (Bakioglu & Dalgıç, 2013; Burt & Morgan, 2014; Gathu, 2022; Gilheaney & Quigley, 2021; Hamblin & Crisp, 2022; Hickman & Collins, 2014; Lim et al., 2022; Miller, 2020). Accrediting organisations, educators and facilitators could encourage and put greater emphasis on accessible modes of RP. For example, RCs (Haigh, 2005; Jarvis & Clark, 2020; Simpson & Trezise, 2011; Stodter et al., 2021), mentoring and supervisory relationships (Leeder & Sawiuk, 2021; Sawiuk et al., 2017; Timperley, 2001), introspection and self-talk ([chapter seven](#)), recording verbal reflections ([chapter seven](#)). This would require a conceptualisation of RP integrating both informal and formalised modes.

Accrediting organisations often require written documented evidence of RP, which implies that RP should be written and completed after an experience. Without education on RP, it is likely that practitioners will internalise the idea that RP is written and focussed on prior experiences, which is not always the case. Writing has a place in RP but is not the only mode of representation through which practitioners can engage, particularly if they struggle to articulate themselves in writing (e.g., if they experience dyslexia). Some practitioners may express ideas effectively using verbal or artistic modes of representation and in these cases, they should be encouraged to embrace

these talents. For example, when creating drills for a sport coaching session a practitioner may find it helpful to draw the process of the drill, with associated coaching cues. As a reflective classroom activity, creating an artistic illustration or role play to represent an idea or a word might trigger deeper modes of thinking about how to create a meaningful image or act that translates relevant concepts into art and vice-versa. Images and artistic expressions may provide an anchor to reflective thinking through multiple perspectives due to their polysemic qualities, whereas language tends to crystallise meaning.

Although some practitioners seem to have preferred modes of RP, others might use multiple modes of representation and integrate them in ways that deepen RP. For example, my own RP included introspection, conversations and written modes of representation, with insights from introspection often being explicated in conversations with my wife or peers before feeding into my formalised written RP. Ideas were sometimes considered again in cycles of introspection, conversations and writing and often used in future lessons before being evaluated through further layers of inquiry. Thus, RP was incorporated into every aspect of my teaching (planning, teaching and reviewing), while also being embedded in life more generally as a way of navigating personal experiences that sometimes fed into or resulted from my professional work (e.g., anxiety). Thus, RP was an inherently human process that was a part of my everyday life, rather than being a tool that I picked up or put down as and when appropriate. This might not be typical of other practitioners who may not perceive introspection or conversation as rigorous enough to constitute RP. Others may perceive RP metaphorically as a tool that can be put away, rather than it being inherent in how we think about practice more generally. Schön (1983) wrote extensively about the process of reflection-in-action with case studies and examples of how practitioners integrate thinking and action in the moment, framing RP as a way of navigating indeterminacies of practice. This conceptualisation seems to be in tension with the metaphor of RP being a tool that is picked up and put down. It seems more closely aligned with RP as a mode of inquiry embedded into practice.

A broader and more holistic conceptualisation of RP has the risk of blurring lines between personal and professional life. However, in teaching (like coaching) we give a lot of our personal selves to the people we help and build connections that help us to positively influence them. For example, to build trust and to contextualise knowledge we may use stories from our personal or professional experiences to help students understand how abstract ideas operate in the real-world. Thus, the person(al) could be argued to be inherent in the professional.

As I conceptualise RP as a way of thinking carefully, actively and purposefully about practice, a range of factors might influence how much effort I apply to RP. For example, situational factors might include competing tasks or available time (Evans, 2019). Motivational factors might include the relative importance (e.g., the level of importance attributed to reflecting on an idea or experience), current knowledge and the perception of how accurate this knowledge is (feeling of rightness), and thinking dispositions (Evans, 2019). My experience and intuition could be drawn upon as material for deeper modes of thinking when appropriate (Evans, 2019). Thus, intuitive modes of thinking might feed into reflective thinking and the degree of effort in this inquiry process would determine the level of processing taking place.

Critical modes of reflection with higher degrees of cognitive effort, aiming to identify and deconstruct assumptions may produce relevant knowledge that is useful and is important. However, practitioners might not have the time required to consider experiences critically. In line with my approach to RP, perhaps differentiating between less formalised (core modes of reflection) and formalised modes of reflection would support a more holistic and layered RP. Practically, this might mean engaging primarily in highly accessible core modes of RP, and depending on available time, practitioners could engage in a more formalised, and critical RP. As an example of how this might work, practitioners could collate ideas or experiences they will reflect on critically during a dedicated time for formalised RP and assess their emotional salience. Emotions seem to signal valuable learning opportunities (Crathern, 2001; Marshall et al., 2021) and assessing emotional salience of

lived experiences can help practitioners decide on what to reflect on. Patterns across critical moments may also be revealed and reflected on, further enriching RP.

RCs may also be used in varied ways to enable RP. For example, in the teaching profession there are frequent opportunities to engage with peer assessment, observations and professional development activities. Conversations nested within these activities and the working day have been shown to enable learning and development in the context of teaching (Jarvis & Clark, 2020). This offers a solution to engage in RP through RCs in relationships with trusted others. This may enhance learning through dialectical exchanges, deepening understanding of real-world problems of practice. RCs might be structured and formalised, or casual and informal depending on the emergent opportunities throughout a working day.

Considering policies requiring practitioners to log evidence of their RP and submit these to a panel to be assessed, these requirements might cultivate performative RP. For example in education, students have alluded to forced reflection negatively affecting the authenticity of the process, leading some to “just write something down that may or may not be true” (López-Cuello et al., 2024, p. 8). Thus, it is important for governing bodies to educate practitioners about the concept and process of reflection and openly discuss the value of RP and RCs (López-Cuello et al., 2024). They should acknowledge that reflective journals are a small part of a much deeper and broader RP and seek to cultivate a holistic view about what constitutes RP. Internalising a holistic understanding of RP might encourage practitioners to identify with being a reflective practitioner, even when they are not able to maintain a consistent formalised process. The identity of being a reflective practitioner may help to maintain an internalised value of RP and encourage deliberate and persistent engagement.

It is often a professional requirement that written reflective logs are submitted for re-qualification and reaccreditation (Education and Training Foundation., 2022; Health and Care Professions Council, 2021; The British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences, 2018; The British Psychological Society, 2017; United Kingdom Strength and Conditioning Association, 2017) and this is

likely to remain the case in the near future. Consequently, practitioners should be supported to focus their reflective writing to ensure it is effective and productive e.g., using critical moments, and emotive experiences as a basis to access and reflect on gaps in knowledge aligning with real-world problems (Marshall et al., 2021, 2022). This may enable the generation of meaningful situated knowledge helping to develop a more integrated and differentiated mental framework, supporting a more comprehensive understanding of the experience and associated emotions. This may also enable the collation of evidence that practitioners have engaged in meaningful and productive RP. Practitioners should be supported to understand that RP is more than what is written in their journal; RCs can offer a powerful vehicle for dialectical inquiry that can feed-into written RP.

Facilitators of reflection

What were the factors that helped to facilitate my continued engagement in RP?

One factor that helped me to engage in RP over the course of the academic year was the persistent motivation and determination I had to improve my practice through RP. This seemed to be supported by the value I internalised for RP: “I wholeheartedly value RP” (Lines 374-375). Additionally, I believed that formalised RP would help me to learn from my experiences in the workplace and improve my practice and I therefore perceived it as a valid and meaningful way of developing knowledge. RP seemed to help maintain curiosity and prevented me becoming complacent in my typical ways of working. It therefore helped me remain innovative relative to my existing practice and working context. For example, on the 15th of November 2022:

If I want to develop independent learners, I have to create opportunities for some degree of autonomy and self-regulation to happen, perhaps under the overarching supervision of myself. How else can I achieve these goals of self-regulation in the classroom? Perhaps I might introduce some form of structured problem-based learning (PBL) in my classroom. This might create opportunities for my students to develop the key skills and attributes that I am intending them to develop (Lines 147-156)

By reflecting on classroom experiences and identifying a problem I was able to make a connection with a pedagogical method that helped deepen and contextualise student learning while providing conditions for them to develop the skills and attributes I envisaged. This highlights the integrative characteristic of reflection (developed in [chapter four](#)), helping to bring together ideas from disparate schemas to generate insights and/or potential solutions to problems (Marshall, 2019b). Articulating characteristics of the problem, I associated it with a pedagogical method that I was aware of, drawing upon and synthesising the known to propose a way of negotiating the issues and my goals for the students (i.e., to be more self-regulated). This helped to reorganise how I perceived the problem of practice, as I then saw the potentialities of a pedagogical approach that I had not previously considered in this working context. This aligns with the metaphor of reflection being a form of “cognitive housekeeping” (Moon, 1999, p. 139) where meaning is made from the reorganisation and integration of knowledge (Marshall, 2019b).

The integrative role of reflection highlighted the importance of having a broad foundation of knowledge to synthesise and generate situated insights and solutions to problems. This implied that information-seeking through engagement with literature supports RP i.e., by internalising concepts and ideas that can be integrated during reflection. This also signalled how RCs may operate providing an opportunity to collectively generate concepts and ideas not previously considered by an individual in the context of the problem. By reflecting with others (e.g., critical friends), who are likely to have different backgrounds, experiences and knowledge, cognitive diversity is increased as are the chances of ideas being synthesised to generate novel solutions to problems. In the case of strengths-based reflection, working with others might help to enhance each other’s practice by increasing the range of practically successful approaches that may be reflected on and adopted by others. Critical friends may also be able to support consideration of how to enhance or refine these approaches to be operationalisable in different contexts. Therefore, to facilitate effective and meaningful RP, it appears important to read widely and engage critically with others (e.g., through RCs) who have diverse knowledge, skills, and experiences.

By synthesising these ideas, I created an insight that PBL might help to achieve meaningful learning outcomes. This highlighted the capacity for RP to encourage innovation and creativity (Nash & Collins, 2024) enabling risk taking when developing my practice and navigating indeterminate experiences (Schön, 1986). Reflective writing provided a safe platform through which I could engage in thought experiments, exploring ideas autonomously and experiencing ownership over my professional development. This was accompanied by a sense of competence, as I was driving the process, and perceived its implementation as successful. Specifically, when I used PBL it seemed to connect well with the needs of the students. I was excited about this and attributed this perceived success to RP. This may have reinforced the perceived benefits and value of engaging in RP. This seemed to lead to a feeling of motivation to continue engaging in formalised RP regardless of how time-consuming and effortful it was. I experienced a sense that formalised RP helped me to become a more effective teacher, and this experiential evidence inspired me to persist. Feeling a sense of competence and autonomy aligned with the psychological needs described by self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2010; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Satisfying the psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness increased the probability that people will be motivated intrinsically (Deci & Ryan, 2010; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Furthermore Vedder-Weiss et al. (2024) suggested that RP may enhance teacher motivation, supporting autonomous motivation and sense of accomplishment in the classroom. RP may offer a sense of renewal where taken-for-granted practices can be defamiliarised and considered critically, thus re-igniting interest (Vedder-Weiss et al., 2024). RP seemed to create a sense of agency and teachers may experience RP as an autonomous professional act (Vedder-Weiss et al., 2024).

I should note that motivation to reflect was also tied to the development of this thesis, the need to complete this first-person action research study and write the chapter. This is not to say that in the absence of this study I would not have engaged in RP. However, I would likely have engaged in it differently in the absence of this accountability towards journal writing, much like the sport coaches in Burt and Morgan (2014). For example, I would have likely engaged in introspective and

conversational modes of RP. This is because RCs could be easily embedded into daily practice rather than being added onto my daily workload (Jarvis & Clark, 2020) e.g., I would often have conversations with my wife about problems I had experienced in my practice, while taking our evening walk:

Considering informal modes of reflection more deeply, my wife-to-be is a teacher, head of department and head of year and I often talk to her about difficulties I am facing in the classroom, with individuals or groups. These conversations can often be transformative as when she has an opinion grounded in her years of experience, which differs to my own this can create an opportunity for my own assumptions to be de-stabilised, revealed, probed, reinforced and/or challenged. For example, I was quite proud of my implementation of problem-based learning (PBL) into my pedagogical repertoire. Yet she challenged this by asking me 'do you think they are ready for it?'. This triggered me to explicitly consider the appropriateness of PBL as a method with my particular group of learners and the need to engage with trial-and-error session-by-session to examine the effectiveness of it and how well they cope with it as a method (Lines 402-411)

RCs with my wife in a relational framework helped me to inquire into how I would present PBL to learners. Conversations during informal moments and in different environments e.g., outdoors, have been demonstrated to support learning in higher education teachers (Jarvis & Clark, 2020). RCs have the benefit of being highly accessible and take an emergent quality with questions being tailored to the natural divergence of the topic. My wife provided challenge to the idea of PBL, using a probing question to prompt dialectical inquiry into the appropriateness of using this method with the learners I was working with.

Introspection and conversations were the core of my RP, while written journaling would be completed when situational factors (ample time, minimal distractions and absence of competing demands) were agreeable. Different modes of RP would often feed into each other, deepening my

RP. My assumption seemed to be that RP is a mode of thinking and reasoning about lived experience, rather than being a tool that is picked up and put down. This mode of thinking might be expedited through external representation but was not perceived as equivalent to the mode i.e., journal writing, conversations, audio/visual diaries etc could support the process of RP but could in some instances be non-reflective. For example, it has been demonstrated that practitioners write at varying levels of depth when reflecting on experiences (Machost et al., 2024). It therefore seemed important to distinguish between reflection and modes of representation. Writing can make internally generated ideas explicit and open to review and might support sense-making (Marshall, 2019b). Writing can also force us to slow down and think carefully, create narratives that are meaningful and coherent and generate insight into a topic e.g., writing-to-learn. However, this may depend on the deliberateness and depth of thinking brought into the writing process.

Writing might be understood as a formalised and reciprocating extension of thinking, forcing us to slow down and explicitly focus on ideas and meaning and how meaning can be weaved into narratives representing emergent lines of thinking and inquiry. However, it may also be non-reflective, and some people may struggle with written modes of RP. It therefore seems important for practitioners to have exposure to multiple ways of engaging with RP so they can find an approach that suits them. Professional bodies should think critically about how standardised regulations for RP should be reported e.g., written evidence might disadvantage some practitioners and sometimes result in performative, tick-box approaches to RP.

Practical applications

Time and workload can often constrain a person's ability to engage with formalised RP. Personal factors may also intersect making formalised RP challenging for some practitioners. Thus, it might be helpful to support practitioners in reframing ways of conceptualising RP. This could include considering how accessible and less formalised modes of engaging with RP might support continual engagement and reinforce a person's identity with being a reflective practitioner. This might maintain or improve the perceived value of RP as a valid way of generating knowledge. For example,

practitioners should be encouraged to find a mode of representation that they find meaningful and productive.

It seems important for professional bodies and specifically educators teaching RP to consider ways that they can encourage ownership, autonomy, competence and relatedness throughout the RP process. For example, to satisfy the need for relatedness when facilitating RP, unlike the requirement to submit logbooks of individualised reflective journalling, emphasis could be on building relationships (both facilitator-student and between students) within a safe, supportive and blame-free environment (Marshall et al., 2022), much like the collaborative reflective space created by Vedder-Weiss et al. (2024) promoting psychological need satisfaction (competence, autonomy and relatedness). Within this reflective space, a discussion about the value of RP could be facilitated.

Roles and expectations should be clarified before students are introduced to specific ways of engaging in RP (Marshall et al., 2022). Students should be encouraged to reflect on their experiences of using different modes and deconstruct their own understanding of what reflection means to them based on these experiences (Ixer, 2016). RP should be focussed and productive so that students firstly understand how to engage in ways that are effective (and thus develop perceived competence and confidence in the RP process) and secondly, they are encouraged to perceive RP as a meaningful practice associated with positive learning and professional development outcomes. RCs could be a useful vehicle to support reflective thinking and build a trusting and supportive working relationship. Connections made through RCs could support practitioners in navigating indeterminacies of practice, satisfy their relational need for self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2010) while framing RP as a dialectical process that may extend into their broader engagement with RP. By satisfying psychological needs, practitioners might be more likely to experience intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2010). This may encourage more frequent engagement, and if they perceive benefits, they are likely to internalise a sense of value in RP.

Theoretical implications

This chapter articulated my personal evolving understanding of RP. My conception of RP has developed from an initially instrumental view pre-PhD, of RP as primarily a mode of written journaling about practical concerns, to a much more holistic process. Specifically, I previously engaged with RP through documented written processes exploring experiential concerns. However, with a more holistic view of RP I now purposefully engage with introspection, conversations and art-based modes of RP (e.g., mind-mapping, visual mapping of an activity) and integrate this with written RP. The benefit of this includes continuous long-term engagement and the development of insights into my practice and experiences that benefits my practice as a teacher and a coach. For example, understanding the constraints of my working environment (lack of resources in relation to teaching time per week) as a teacher inspired the use of PBL to deepen students' understanding. Long term engagement is supported by continuous use of highly accessible modes of RP that feed into and out of formalised modes of RP. Taking a more holistic view of RP encourages intentional engagement in a variety of modes that I had not previously considered RP and thus did not deliberately and persistently use in a reflective manner.

The development of a more holistic conception of RP was supported by reflection on literature, interviews with sport coaches and long-term engagement in RP. This work helped to clarify the plurality in the way different people (including practitioners and researchers) understand RP, and how this was associated with ways of engaging with it. Also, previous chapters have discussed epistemic views (personal ways of understanding knowledge) alongside personal qualities (open-mindedness, curiosity, thinking dispositions) generating a psychological context that influences the likelihood of perceiving value in reflective modes of inquiry (e.g., [chapter five](#)). Thus, in Figure 11 below, epistemic views and personal qualities form a core construct that seems to influence whether people value RP and this may also affect engagement with RP. Personal ways of describing engagement with RP formed an additional construct because some practitioners engaged

in reflective thinking without defining it as RP (chapter eight). Thus, it seemed important to differentiate between ways of engaging with RP and ways of describing this engagement.

Figure 12 illustrates the relationship between core modes of reflection (e.g., introspection, conversations and self-talk) and formalised modes of RP (e.g., written journalling, structured reflection using a model or framework). Core reflection includes highly accessible ways of engaging in reflective thinking and can be used frequently. For example, spontaneous self-talk or conversations with a colleague. Formalised reflection usually requires a person to take a step-back to analyse an idea or experience. For example, writing a detailed journal entry using a model or framework. These modes cannot be spontaneously used and may be negatively impacted by personal and professional constraints (e.g., lack of time, fatigue). Core reflection sits within formalised reflection because engagement in formalised RP would usually involve introspective processes. For example, writing can involve moments of introspection and conversation helping to remember events and deepen RP. The two-way arrow indicates that core and formalised reflection reciprocate, highlighting the iterative characteristic of RP developed in chapter four (Marshall, 2019b) e.g., insights from core reflection can inform formalised reflections and vice versa, creating a continuous cycle of learning and improvement.

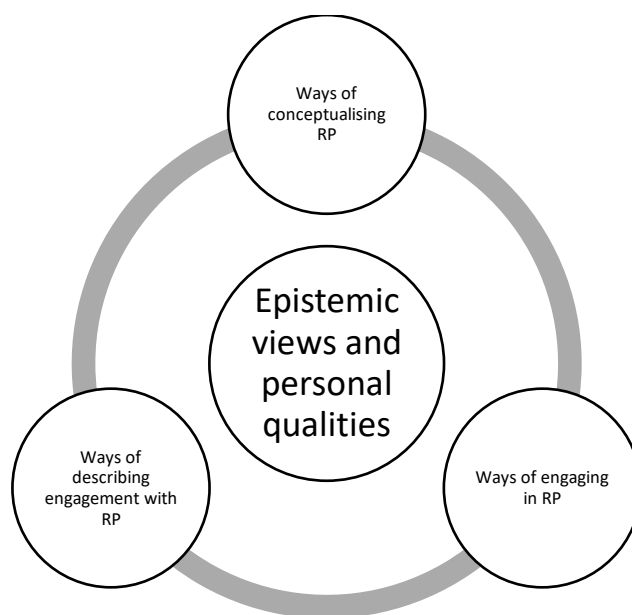


Figure 11:

Theoretical model of the relationship between personal conceptions of RP and ways of engaging in RP

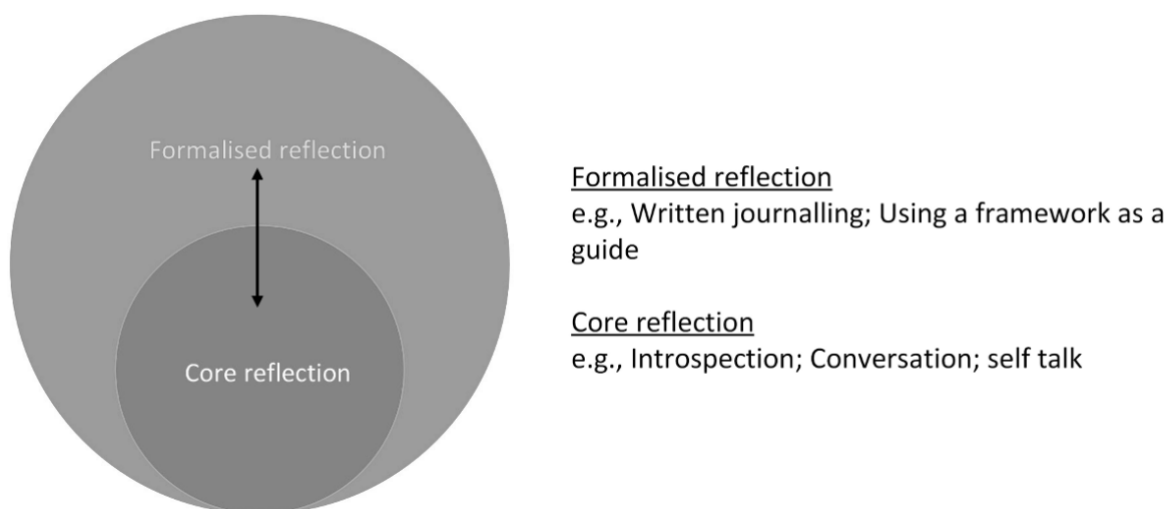


Figure 12:

Theoretical model of the relationship between core modes of reflection and formalised reflection

Conclusion

Barriers to RP included professional workload and personal constraints limiting the available time to engage in meaningful formalised RP. Therefore, accessible modes of representation were considered to support engagement with RP and maintain an identity of being a reflective practitioner. The factors that facilitated long-term engagement with RP included deeply valuing RP

and believing that it can develop valid, situated knowledge that is pragmatically meaningful. Using varied modes of representation and integrating them (i.e., layered RP) deepened the process.

Intrinsic motivation was enhanced through experiencing success e.g., developing practically useful insights that led to changed teaching practice, and attributing this to RP. This satisfied the three psychological needs explained by self-determination theory (competence, autonomy and relatedness). Practical suggestions were made using these insights to encourage meaningful, productive and intrinsically motivated RP that is tailored to personal strengths.

Further work should consider how these findings could inform policy and recommendations for practice. A barrier to effective RP might be the differing interpretations that might in some cases lead to ineffective ways of doing RP or lead to erroneous expectations. If engagement is desirable and personal conceptions, epistemic views and personal qualities influence practitioner engagement with RP, then educators might need to consider how to support practitioners to think critically about their personal definitions and assumptions about RP. This implies a relational process of facilitating inquiry into personal definitions of RP and a need for RCs to be valued prominently as a core mode of RP that can positively influence a sense of connection and learning. Recommendations or guidelines illustrating how teachers and coach educators might create and use RP interventions in formalised curricula could support implementation and have a positive influence on students, coaches and athletes being coached.

Chapter Ten: General Discussion

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss the limitations and contributions of the body of research in this thesis. An assessment of the limitations of each study was performed before reflecting on the theoretical contributions of this work. This was followed by recommendations for future research and practice. To encourage policy-level changes, and encourage practitioner engagement in meaningful and productive RP, recommendations for professional bodies were provided.

Limitations

Limitations of each study were presented in separate subsections to help provide focus and clarity. Due to the results of studies two and three originally being part of one broader analysis, these were written as separate chapters. However, for the purpose of this critique, these studies were included under one subheading.

Study One – chapter four (concept of reflection)

This study aimed to discover what reflection is due to varying definitions and a lack of conceptual standardisation in the literature. This signalled a naïve epistemological view at the beginning of my PhD journey, aligning with positivism and analytical reductionism to ascertain truth. Automated word frequency counts were used as a starting point to search for commonalities in available definitions, implying truth was discoverable within data (singular truth waiting to be discovered). Throughout this PhD journey, my epistemological beliefs have evolved alongside the work completed towards a current position of pragmatism.

This review used a small number of databases and restricted articles to those written in English, thus excluding non-English articles. This may have led to publication-bias and language bias. Future reviews should include grey literature and where possible non-English articles to ensure diverse perspectives are acknowledged.

Analytically, I was searching for themes but in some instances may have developed topic summaries i.e., an overview of everything mentioned about an idea (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Comparatively, a theme might be considered shared meaning united by a central organising concept (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Nevertheless, this chapter was useful in the development of understanding, contributing to discussion in the literature.

Articles included in the synthesis were not assessed for quality or trustworthiness. Although pre-generated checklists would not have been appropriate to assess quality and trustworthiness, a reflective orientation toward these quality criteria may have facilitated a more nuanced discussion, encouraging alignment with standards of rigour and enhancing transparency around methodological and analytical decision-making. This may have also avoided reductionism and oversimplification of the quality assurance process.

Study Two – chapter five and chapter six (process of reflection)

As above, included studies were not assessed for quality or trustworthiness. A reflective process focussed on established qualitative research quality criteria may have helped readers to understand more transparently how the study was conducted in line with such criteria, thus providing transparency. Also, including articles written in non-English and grey literature should be explored as a further consideration, bringing additional perspectives into critical discussion.

This study used grounded theory methods to fragment and thematise text of published literature. Although not fully coherent with grounded theory for generating data-driven explanations of social processes (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 2017), these analytical methods were reported to be effective when rigorously reviewing literature and performing qualitative syntheses (Ronkainen et al., 2021; Wolfswinkel et al., 2013). These methods helped to develop knowledge about processes of reflection and were published in an internationally recognised journal (Marshall et al., 2021, 2022), satisfying peer review evaluating this work in relation to this journal's methodological standards. It represented a novel way of exploring the process of reflection. Pragmatically, the methods helped to create a meaningful contribution to literature and has informed experimental investigations. For example, a recent study provided

empirical support for the theorised association (in [chapter five](#)) of open-mindedness with reflective thinking (Nurhayati et al., 2025).

Study three – chapter seven (Sport coach practitioner interview study)

A limitation of this study was that although it included clear participant entry and exclusion criteria, there was a limited female sample (i.e., only one participant was female). This limits gender diversity and a female perspective. I reached out to many clubs and coaches to seek volunteers for the study, and I did broaden the inclusion criteria. However, I could have broadened these criteria earlier to ensure greater diversity. Sport coaching is often described as male dominated, which is improving with more female coaches entering the profession. For example, recent data from the Paris Olympics highlights that 20% of Team GB's coaches were female which was an increase from 10% in the Tokyo Olympics (UK Sport., 2024). However, more work needs to encourage female prospective coaches to pursue careers in sport. Research should aim to include a female perspective. Due to the relative lack of female coaches, there may be issues with female representation at the lead coach level (UK Sport., 2024). My inclusion criteria may have inadvertently limited the recruitment of female participants and encouraged a male dominated sample. Broader inclusion criteria from the beginning to be inclusive of coaches at all levels may have enabled a female voice to be more fully represented and highlighted in the sample. Snowball sampling may have supported the inclusion of more female coaches known by participants.

Participant ethnicity was not captured during interviews, meaning that I could not be sure of the ethnic diversity within the group. In future, it is important to capture demographic information (e.g., via a standardised demographic questionnaire). I did capture dates of birth and coaching experience during interviews, enabling a context to be developed for the case studies in chapter eight. However, further demographic information was not captured in a standardised manner, thus limiting my ability to discuss issues of ethnic diversity. This information could help to more effectively discuss the limitations of data collected. However, this would not have been likely to impact my ability to recruit more ethnically diverse participants, as no more than 10 people

volunteered for the study. Also, due to the disproportionately higher number of white coaches (78%) in the UK compared to Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) coaches (22%), there seems to be underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in UK sport coaching (Thompson & Thompson, 2018). For example, in UK football, a 2017 survey reported that only 4.6% (22/482) BAME coaches had senior coaching positions (Bradbury, 2019). With a much smaller number of BAME sport coaches actively working (Thompson & Thompson, 2018) and a small proportion of these coaches being in lead coach or senior coaching positions, my inclusion criteria may have inadvertently excluded the potential of recruiting BAME coaches. With broader inclusion criteria from the outset there is a possibility that I may have been able to recruit more diverse participants. This might have helped in generating a broader understanding of the state of coach education regarding the teaching and facilitating of RP at different levels of coach education.

Another issue considers motivation for participation and how this may have influenced theme generation. Participants who participated in this study are likely to have an interest in RP (self-selection bias) and may have perceived RP favourably. This seems like an inevitable consequence of the voluntary nature of this study. Due to time commitments of an interview, it is unlikely that an unbiased or uninterested sample could have been recruited. Specifically, coaches who were not interested in RP or do not engage in RP would have been unlikely to volunteer. Self-selection bias may be an issue when generalising findings from a sample to the broader population (Elston, 2021). This can be an issue in survey-based research where generalisability is a meaningful quality criterion (Bethlehem, 2010). Statistical generalisability was not an aim of this qualitative study. However, the dissenting voice might have provided variance in findings, supporting a more critical interpretation of RP. Consequently, future research might potentially seek to explore the use of incentives for research participation from under-represented people, seeking to recruit participants who do not actively participate in formalised RP, or who internalise atypical or critical perceptions of RP. This might help to reveal the limitations of current practices and ways of teaching RP, thus challenging the status-quo and disrupting dominant narratives. As a practical alternative, a

critical lens was used (chapter 11). Readers are asked to engage critically with the ideas presented to extend, challenge, or refine them.

Data were transcribed verbatim and more complex methods of transcription were not used (e.g., Jefferson protocol). This decision might have limited the ability to read nuanced cues through textual data (timing, speed, emphasis, pitch, volume, intonations, pauses, gaze, movements, frowning, etc.). Jefferson transcription allows the understanding of conversational interaction by not only showing what is said but also how and when they say it (Park & Hepburn, 2022). This method is usually completed in conversational analysis (Park & Hepburn, 2022) which was not the chosen analytical method or focus of this study. Although understanding the way in which interactions occurred might have increased awareness of how the interview processes was conducted, it seemed unnecessary to achieve the study aims whereby a focus on semantic meaning rather than conversational mechanics was achieved successfully. Consequently, verbatim transcription was used to capture required information.

Study five – chapter eight (case studies)

Due to this study involving a reframed analysis of data collected in study 4, data collection included the same limitations as above. Participants self-selected for a second time highlighting the need to update procedural ethics and receive clearance from the University and participants to re-use data collected during initial interviews. The willingness of participants to be involved indicated an interest in RP (self-selection bias, as above with all associated limitations).

Case studies revealed detail about the professional background of each participant. This was a necessary component of case study research. Professional backgrounds and role frames were described to support transferability and contextualise each case study. This could mean backward identification of participants may have been possible. To navigate this, participants were informed of the risks involved in case study research and were asked for written permission to re-use their data for a reframed case study. Transcripts were depersonalised and participant names were replaced with C1, C3 and C6 aligning with the codes used in study 4 (chapter seven).

Study six – chapter nine (First-person reflexive inquiry)

This study involved an extended period of RP with my reflective journal being used as a source of data for a meta-reflection. Consequently, my students were indirectly involved in this study, due to the interactional nature of teaching practice. I would use critical moments to focus RP, and these critical moments were usually constructed through interactions with my students. Due to my students being between the ages of 16-19 years old I contacted parents and students with information about the study and gave them the option of opting their child out of the study, and for the child to opt out themselves.

First-person studies are useful for generating personal, context-bound insights but have limited ability to generalise findings in the statistical-probabilistic sense (Smith, 2018). They often require integration with broader inquiries to develop theories with wider applicability (Pomeroy et al., 2021). They can also be useful ways of generating pragmatically meaningful data to extend, contextualise, or challenge existing theory in a more natural setting, offering high external validity. First-person action research studies also help to produce situated knowledge and create changes to practice. This could be described as a mode of inquiry and an orientation towards practice, or more broadly an inquiry into parts of our life e.g., “living life as inquiry” (Marshall, 2016, p. 1). This inquiry aims to help navigate experiences and personal subjectivities, enabling people to make sense of themselves, and their interactions with others while acknowledging the systemic, situated and complex characteristics of professional practice.

This study explored a deeply personal process (i.e., RP) using first-person and experience-rich methods helping to understand the process of reflection which I have evolved to understand more broadly as a mode of inquiry towards lived experience. With RP being conceptualised as a mode of inquiry it made sense for me to engage in an extended period of RP, as prolonged first-hand experience would offer a privileged and personal understanding of the nuances involved. If I relied on other practitioners to self-report their experiences of RP, I may firstly receive favourable comments due to self-selection bias and/or demand characteristics and secondly, I may not have

been able to generate enough data to understand the whole experience. Therefore, personally experiencing prolonged engagement facilitated a more intimate, complex and nuanced understanding of RP i.e., I could speak about the typically unspoken.

Theoretical Implications

This thesis started with an aim to understand characteristics of reflective thinking, to clarify what seemed to be a fuzzy concept with multiple definitions. The first study in chapter four helped clarify reflection as a cognitive process applied to complex and ambiguous problems in a deliberate and active mode of inquiry. By bringing ideas (e.g., from theory) and practice together and generating situated understanding, new insights can be created that inform changes in the way we might act. Also, because experiences can be varied and complex, and perception of an issue is relative to the individual, new problems seem to trigger further cycles of inquiry. Four characteristics of reflection (active, cognitive, integrative and iterative) were important to help understand how reflective thinking may support knowledge development. This study provided the theoretical and conceptual foundation for subsequent chapters.

Chapter four was the first study to my knowledge to systematically synthesise literature relating to the concept of reflection, engaging in cross-disciplinary integration, and proposed a novel definition, establishing a theoretical framework for subsequent chapters. This chapter was published in an internationally recognised journal (Marshall, 2019b). It demonstrated theoretical impact, being cited by 123 authors, at the time of writing, informing interventions and further conceptual work. This study has contributed to critical discussion about the concept of reflection, informing both theory and practice. An example of the latter is the work of Johnson (2020) who used this work to justify reflection as a leadership behaviour in the United States military.

Chapter five contributed to understanding triggers of reflection and factors that supported reflective inquiry. Epistemology was demonstrated to have an influence on participant engagement. Critical moments were suggested to focus the RP process, making it meaningful and productive.

Furthermore, RCs in the context of trusting relationships in a relational framework were suggested to support participation in RP.

Chapter five included the first study to my knowledge to systematically synthesise existing knowledge considering the factors that influenced the process of reflection. This knowledge could help professional bodies and educators to develop learning environments that are conducive to RP. This study also addressed epistemological factors influencing RP, thus embedding philosophical and psychological dimensions to the conceptualisation and operationalisation of RP. This study was published in an internationally recognised journal (Marshall et al., 2021) and at the time of writing has 33 citations demonstrating theoretical influence.

Chapter six developed understanding of factors facilitating reflection and the tasks that facilitators can do to support RP. This expanded existing model-based views of RP, introducing relational and contextual factors showing how personal and interpersonal factors interplay within a dynamic conversational RP process. This highlighted the need to nurture relationships-for-learning; reflecting with knowing others; creating a safe, supportive and blame-free environments where people feel comfortable being open. This environment might be partially influenced by the qualities of the facilitator and the manner which they interact with participants. This study made recommendations for those facilitating RP, thus operationalising previously published conceptual work. The report was published in an internationally recognised journal (Marshall et al., 2022) and at the time of writing had 34 citations demonstrating theoretical impact.

Chapter seven was the first study in this thesis to collect primary data, interviewing 10 sport coaching practitioners, helping to understand how coaches perceived and experienced RP. This was important as it helped to critique theoretical understanding of RP within a specific context. This helped to review alignment of current practices and theory and understand barriers to RP implementation, including what helped practitioners to overcome these barriers. For example, the value that practitioners placed on RP was reported to have changed alongside ways of conceptualising and engaging with RP. Practitioners who previously considered RP a tick-box

exercise were taught RP instrumentally by following models/frameworks and primarily written modes of representation. Over the course of their careers, they evolved to understand reflection as an internalised or relational process that could, but did not always, accompany written representation. This challenges some theory and practices of RP whereby it is sometimes taught as a written process following a model. As this approach does not always align with the needs and preferences of participants, facilitators should vary and integrate modes of RP and the degree of structure/systematisation.

Chapter eight revisited data collected in chapter seven and conducted a series of case studies exploring how participants understood and engaged in RP. The study found that practitioners conceptualised RP an evaluative process used to review and deconstruct actions and performances, aligning with the cognitive characteristic of reflection in chapter four. Theoretically, this chapter also extended research exploring strengths-based and anticipatory or forward-thinking reflection.

A contribution of chapter eight included the finding that engagement with RP may be related to ways of understanding RP, highlighting a likely reciprocal relationship between the concept and process of reflection. Practitioner role frames influenced the focus and the perceived purpose of RP. Purpose has in turn been reported to influence personal definitions of RP (Schaepkens et al., 2021), highlighting how interrelated these factors seem to be.

Chapter nine involved a first-person exploration of RP, which is an often-neglected perspective in published literature. This study contributed situated knowledge about the barriers and factors supporting engagement with RP over a year-long period. This study was helpful in reconceptualising my personal understanding of RP given the number of barriers that were inherent in my personal and professional life. My understanding of RP now encompasses the self and subjectivity as inherently intertwined with my professional reflective focus i.e., I reflect about professional experiences through my holistic knowledge of myself and the world. Thus, the concept of living life as inquiry aligns well with my current understanding of RP (Marshall, 2016), as this broadens the concept of inquiry from a strict instrumental focus on professional problem-solving to

a more holistic inquiry into experiences nested in practice and the broader context of life. This reconceptualisation accompanied an epistemic shift whereby I experienced heightened value of situated and experiential knowledge, as these reveal insights that are concerned with holistic ways of being in the world. I also perceived knowledge as contextually relative and evaluated this knowledge according to pragmatic standards i.e., considering if it helped to explain experiences theoretically and/or if it informed action.

This study supported the way in which epistemology and ways of conceptualising RP seem to influence ways of engaging in RP. As my understanding of RP broadened, so did my practice of RP. Also, as my epistemological views became more aligned to pragmatism, my perspective on what constituted knowledge shifted, and I internalised much greater value in what could be learnt from experience and critically reflective dialogue. I also trusted my own reflective voice as an input into formal writing and used this to engage in critical judgments about the value and use of evidence in context. This broadened my RP from a purely written, and formalised process which was initially quite narrow and restricted (I would need evidence to prove what I am saying and doing) to a broader and more holistic process of inquiry (evidence is also emergent in the rationalisation of experience) embracing RCs and relationships as a context for RP. This latter view took experience as the experimental and logical grounding of knowledge (a form of praxis), and my prior view aligned with what Schön (1983) called technical rationality, whereby formal knowledge was applied to practice. This chapter thus illustrated how personal epistemology seemed to influence and delimit personal approaches to RP.

Recommendations for future research

One of the central themes threaded through this thesis is the benefit of RCs within a relational framework to generate knowledge through dialectical inquiry. Further research might seek to understand how conversational processes stimulate deeper reflective thinking. This could be completed by collecting audio/visual recordings of RCs, applying conversation analysis to code behavioural patterns. This could be complemented by stimulated recall interviews with participants

to encourage them to reflect on the reasoning for each exchange. This might help to pinpoint teachable interaction skills that could help facilitate the development of facilitator competency, rather than relying on chance i.e., generic instructions to *have a chat*.

Further research might explore the effect of psychological safety on willingness to self-disclose mistakes during RCs and the effect on depth of inquiry. This might be conducted by measuring psychological safety (e.g., using Edmondson's psychological safety scale) before, during, and after a series of recorded RC workshops and evaluating the number of mistakes disclosed and the level of depth of inquiry achieved.

Another finding was that epistemology seemed to influence ways of engaging with reflective thinking and the quality of reflective thinking. Building on this work, future research could explore how epistemological beliefs are formed and how they influence RP over time. Studies could be conducted by for example engaging in mixed-method research combining questionnaires with interviews providing both quantitative and qualitative insights into the relationship between epistemology and RP. Alternatively, phenomenology could be used to explore practitioners lived experiences of how epistemological beliefs influence their RP providing a rich and detailed understanding of participant experiences of how their understanding of knowledge influences their engagement in RP. Longitudinal case studies could follow novice coaches over several years observing how their epistemological beliefs evolve and how this affects their engagement in RP. Grounded theory could also be used to explain social and psychological processes involved in how epistemology mediates engagement with RP.

Case studies of highly reflective and successful coaching practitioners could aim to understand the variety of ways that they engage in RP to develop their practice. The purpose of these case studies could be to identify best practices in RP amongst successful coaching practitioners, providing actionable recommendations that could be adopted by others in the field. This could help to develop recommendations for how RP might be used, based on the established practices of successful reflective practitioners. A series of detailed case studies from coaches

working successfully and reflectively in varied contexts could be condensed into concise recommendations for practitioners based on practical knowledge of what has worked in different working environments. This accounts for challenges of implementation within working environments, typically ignored when discussing RP at a theoretical level, and may provide practical strategies for implementing RP successfully in such contexts.

Recommended changes to practice

When facilitating RP with individuals or groups it is important to encourage safe, supportive and blame free environments that nurture psychological safety where ideas are openly articulated and sensitively received and reflected on as a group. This is important because psychological safety encourages people to share ideas without fear of judgement and supports a more open, honest and deeper reflection. Wherever possible RP can benefit from being collaborative, requiring relational skills to facilitate effectively. This will mean that facilitators will likely be on a learning journey themselves, benefiting from RCs with a supervisor, mentor or experienced peer.

RP should be integrated into working practice where possible, rather than being an additional task to complete, particularly in challenging and time-sparse working environments. For example, coaches might integrate RP into working practices by debriefing through RCs following a training session, discussing the successes of the session and what could be changed to ensure future sessions are more effective, thus fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

Integrating RP into a working day may necessitate policy-level changes to ensure practitioners have allocated time. RCs are more accessible and can therefore be engaged with more frequently and easily within and between tasks. However, policy changes should consider formalising opportunities to engage in RCs, perhaps allocating working hours to professional learning through RCs. Knowledge generated from RCs can feed-into formalised RP, so the spectrum of informal-formal RP may interact, and documented evidence can be submitted for re-accreditation. Blending informal and formal RP into a comprehensive and integrated RP might help develop

meaningful and situated insights while engaging in highly accessible and potentially more effective and efficient RP e.g., through RCs in a relational framework.

Practitioners should be encouraged to rethink personal ways of engaging with RP and engage in critical discussions about RP. This may help to rationalise naïve beliefs about what is meant by the concept of reflection and RP. In doing so practitioners may develop more holistic understanding of RP, appreciating the variety of modes of representation that may help them think reflectively. This could mean that practitioners feel empowered to use creative and flexible approaches to RP aligning with personal strengths and preferences.

Recommendations for professional bodies

To promote engagement with RP, professional bodies are positioned to be able to positively influence practitioners through a combination of education, and policy changes that could encourage ongoing RP. The following subsections will discuss three broad recommendations: educational initiatives, the use of a variety of media, and the development of guidelines. Within each of these, a range of suggestions will be made to support professional bodies in developing interventions to support practitioner engagement in RP. Professional bodies are recommended to collaborate with educational organisations such as universities to develop courses and initiatives to promote RP and conduct further research into the efficacy of these interventions.

Educational initiatives

In relation to formal learning, professional bodies could provide courses, workshops and seminars aiming to help practitioners understand the concept of reflection and the variety of ways that it can be engaged with formally and informally. This should be supported by evidence that could be enhanced by commissioned research funded by professional bodies. This research could provide insights about RP in relation to discipline-specific conditions, considering what works, what does not work, how, and why. Barriers to RP could also be explored within the context of each professional role. The resulting insights should be engaged with critically to generate solutions to support individuals to engage in RP. For example, if coaches are volunteers with minimal coaching hours and

full-time jobs elsewhere, they may not feel incentivised to engage in systematic, in-depth and critical written RP. In these cases, RCs could be encouraged and, in some cases, formalised by working collaboratively with a mentor, supervisor or peer(s).

Research could also develop a professional framework or model, illustrating the responsibilities and competencies (including relational skills) of qualified and accredited practitioners, perhaps considering varying levels of competency and expertise. This model could help to structure RP, enabling practitioners to identify and reflect on strengths and weaknesses while making plans, with the support of experienced mentors, to improve areas of their practice. This could facilitate honest, forward-thinking, suggestive and productive RP. It might also enable practitioners to (re)create a vision of their practice, considering existing working constraints, and help them to change their behaviours to act in alignment with their values and professional vision. This could make RP focussed, relevant, meaningful, and change oriented while being embedded into a relational framework of conversations with knowledgeable others.

Experimental research exploring the efficacy of RP could help to confirm its benefits. This could enhance confidence in RP. For example, if practitioners have evidence that it works then they may be more likely to engage with the process willingly. However, there is a difference between knowing that RP works and doing effective RP. Efficacy studies can support the value of doing RP. However, it is also important to educate practitioners about how to perform RP in a productive manner. This is where workshops and case studies of successful reflective practitioners could be useful in highlighting how RP can be conducted in different ways, in different working contexts and at different levels of competency and qualification.

Use of media

Professional bodies could also engage members through different media. For example, members journals could be used to deliver pragmatic information, so that practitioners can keep up to date with the latest thinking from experts on RP. Less formal media such as blog posts, podcasts, coaching magazines, YouTube videos, and website articles could also be used by experts to provide

evidence-informed guidelines and strategies in practical and accessible ways. This could help to demystify RP, provide reminders about the benefits and variety of ways of engaging with RP. Given that many people consume information on these platforms, and they are easy to set up and produce content, there is a risk that practitioners might be misled and misinformed by less informed individuals. It seems sensible for experts to have a position on such media to provide a balanced and evidence-informed perspective.

It is important to continue promoting the benefits of RP to help achieve buy-in and engagement. This could be achieved by exploring case studies of successful use, in sport coaching journals, explaining how RP has affected practice. This could be helpful if the practitioners explored in these case studies were experts or well-known individuals within the field. However, exploring the experiences and practices of a range of different practitioners, of varying success levels could also have advantages. For example, it could illustrate the varied ways that RP can be engaged with and provide model examples of how this can be done successfully, while also providing a form of vicarious learning.

Development of guidelines

Professional bodies should also create recommendations for employers and clubs to encourage RP. This should include a discussion of what RP is, how to engage in a variety of different modes of RP with example case studies to model specific ways that it can be completed. Because RP can be engaged with in different ways, it is important to illustrate this to practitioners. It is also important for professional bodies to promote diverse ways of engaging in RP. If a professional body requires written evidence of RP, e.g. reflective logs submitted at the end of supervised experience or at the end of a CPD cycle, this may encourage a perception that RP is a purely retrospective and written process. This may be problematic if writing is not easy for an individual, or if there are barriers preventing them from engaging with written reflection. Some individuals may find they are more effective thinking verbally and are able to articulate and explore their thoughts more deeply through conversation. As such, policy-level changes in how RP is reported and promoted/taught may

be required from professional bodies. Some researchers encourage individuals to find a mode of RP that aligns with their personal strengths. Even more problematic is that some researchers encourage relational RP and argue that it is best conducted as a social process. However, if professional bodies only allow written logs to be reported then this contradicts recommendations and current ways of thinking about RP. Therefore, professional bodies could enable practitioners to submit evidence of their engagement in RP through a variety of creative modes. This could include (but should not be restricted to) voice recordings of meetings with supervisors or mentors, videos of their coaching practice, analysis of their think-aloud recordings (verbally recording in-the-moment thoughts while they are coaching), blogs (written or video). This would be more inclusive than restricting RP to written reports and would require policy-level changes in how RP is reported and submitted for continuing professional development and re-certification/re-accreditation purposes.

Because studies have highlighted that practitioners struggle to find the time to engage in systematic reflective practice, recommendations could also discuss the need for employers to provide allocated time to encourage practitioners to identify and reflect on problems of practice and generate solutions collaboratively through relational RP. This could be helpful for coaches in developing relational competencies when working with others. Working reflectively and reflexively through RCs with others with effective competencies may ensure mindful and supportive conversations that develop practice. Thus, RCs and associated relational competencies could support wider coaching development and should not be thought of purely as the remit of RP facilitators.

Recommendations should help foster a supportive culture that facilitates engagement with RP. However, in some cases, professional bodies might need to organise facilitation training for leaders, supervisors and mentors. This could help them facilitate RP effectively and encourage open and honest communication within RCs. These individuals should also be continually supported through supervisory dialogues, as facilitating RP can be a complex and dynamic task. This would also ensure facilitators are on a RP learning journey themselves and are able to model the process experientially.

Regular RCs may help to normalise open dialogue and increase the likelihood of coaches identifying and acting on early warning signs of mistakes and abuse. This may lead to improved trust in sport coaches and expedite repair processes where mistakes have occurred or poor practice has been identified. Coaches will likely model empathic listening and the disclosure of vulnerability, potentially improving mental health literacy, reducing stigma around a need for psychological support. If sport is seen as more trustworthy, people may participate for longer and parents may have more confidence in their children engaging with sport providers.

Chapter Eleven: Reflexive Synthesis – A Critical and Multi-Level Analysis of Findings

This section will firstly provide an overview of key findings of the studies conducted across this thesis before reflecting on a core cognitive assumption imbued within this work.

Counterarguments and alternative perspectives will be analysed in relation to literature while considering how these seemingly disparate ideas might support a deeper, and more holistic understanding of RP. A subsequent subsection will then critically interpret these findings in relation to ideology, power and social reproduction before reflecting on text production and language use, aligning with the recommendations of Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2017).

Overview of findings

Studies seemed to agree that reflection was a cognitive and evaluative process that considers ones understanding of and the meaning one attributes to experience. They also seemed to agree that the barriers and challenges to reflection included time constraints, workload and competing demands. The first-person study considered the intersection of personal and professional factors, signalling that reflection is influenced by individual and environmental conditions. Factors such as quality of relationships, facilitator characteristics, learning environments and motivation contribute to deeper engagement with reflection. Indeed, RCs might support more sustained engagement in RP while offering additional benefits of enhancing connections and encouraging dialecticism when ideas are challenged/contradicted.

Study findings, considered in relation to a broader understanding of the literature, seem to signal that reflection is not simply a review process but is a transformational one; it seems to be a mode of inquiry into lived experiences that are sometimes nested in professional practice. Personal perceptions and ways of defining reflection seemed to influence how people engaged in RP (formal vs informal; structured vs unstructured; proactive vs reactive). RP may be practiced differently according to role frame, purpose, individual preferences, understanding of reflection, prior experiences and epistemological beliefs. However, there seems to be justifiable reasons (e.g.,

improved efficiency, effectiveness, connection, support) for embedding RP in a relational framework whereby RCs constitute the mode through which inquiry occurs.

With some studies describing proactive triggers for reflection and others describing reactive triggers, this might create tension in how reflection is conceptualised. Specifically, is it something that happens naturally in response to events? or is it deliberately cultivated regardless of immediate challenges? It could be argued that these two views are not mutually exclusive and that differing modes of RP occur depending on the situation.

Some studies describe formal RP using structured frameworks (Gibbs, 1988; Johns, 2009; Kolb, 2014). Others suggest informal and experience-driven reflection is equally, if not more, valuable (Schön, 1983; Van Manen, 1995). This could be due to differences in working environments, individual preferences and/or disciplinary norms regarding how RP is used. For example, some professions seem to require RP to be logged formally in writing to maintain qualification or certification. This might encourage a one-dimensional view of RP being a written process, whereas studies have advocated reflecting with others through conversations, mentoring or supervision (Peterson et al., 2009; Simpson & Trezise, 2011; Stodter et al., 2021; Timperley, 2001). Policy changes and education may help to clarify practitioners' understanding about possible processes of reflection.

Some studies described the influence of epistemological beliefs on reflective thinking. This could explain tensions in how RP could be approached. For example, as an objective retrospective analysis of actions (e.g., if an individual embodies dualistic epistemic beliefs) or as a subjective, evolving, situated, and experiential process, acknowledging complexity and multiple perspectives (e.g., if an individual embodies a complex way of knowing). For a summary of the key findings of each study, please see Table 17 below.

Table 17:

Key findings of studies 1-5 outlining the generated themes and concepts

<i>Study 1</i>	<i>Study 2</i>	<i>Study 3</i>	<i>Study 4</i>	<i>Study 5</i>
Reflection is a cognitive process	Triggers of reflection Lack of knowledge Emotive responses Reactive vs proactive triggers	Analytical and reflexive experiential inquiry deepened by a formalised process	Reflection as an evaluative process used to review and deconstruct actions and performances	Barriers Time Competing demands Workload Personal commitments/factors Intersection of personal and professional factors Fatigue
Reflection involves active engagement	Conducive factors Conducive learning environments Conducive attitude	Engaging coaches in a challenging process	Reflection as a constructive and transformative process	Factors facilitating reflection Motivation Value of reflection Determination to improve practice Experiencing success through RP Personal conceptions of RP (informal – formal continuum)
Reflection is integrative	Epistemology Mediating engagement and quality of reflection Dualism vs relative views Tolerating uncertainty	Shifting the focus of reflection to achieve personal and professional change	Differing foci according to role	
Reflection is iterative	Factors facilitating reflection Relationships Experienced others Safe, supportive and blame-free environment Facilitator qualities Facilitator tasks Clarify roles and expectations Help learners understand reflection Mirroring and being student-centred Embracing differing perspectives and helping practitioners see beyond themselves		Personal conceptions influence ways of engaging with reflection Feeling motivated by RP and its effect on continuous professional learning and development Reflecting on successes Thinking forwards to the future Reflecting with others vs individually	

Cognitive bias

From the overview of studies above, there seemed to be indications of a cognitive assumption i.e., reflection as a cognitive process. This assumption is one that was internalised early

in the research process. However, it is important to be open-minded towards and consider counterarguments that may problematise this bias. Points of tension can be explored to understand if theories can be proposed (or existing theories used) enabling disparate perspectives to theoretically cohere. For example, the concept of adaptive unconsciousness (Wilson, 2004), and embodied perspectives of reflection (Jordi, 2011) could be considered in accordance with the cognitively biased findings of these studies.

The unconscious refers to “mental processes that are inaccessible to consciousness but that influence judgments, feelings, or behaviour” (Wilson, 2004, p. 23). Adaptive unconsciousness incorporates the concept of evolutionary adaptation into the notion of unconscious processes, offering survival advantages due to the rapid, automatic interpretation of our surroundings (Wilson, 2004). This includes making implicit connections and decisions without the need for explicit, slower and more effortful conscious processing (Wilson, 2003; Wilson, 2004). For example, walking, driving a car, and some social interactions can be classed as routine or habitual tasks that are said to be handled by the adaptive unconscious (Wilson, 2003). This differs from Freudian psychoanalytic unconsciousness, as instinctive desires and repression are not considered primary motivations for behaviours. The adaptive unconsciousness is thought to be more attuned and responsive to perceived events. However, these events are processed at a level below conscious awareness. Because of lack of explicit processing, decisions can be rapidly made based on immediate perception (Wilson, 2003).

Embodied perspectives of reflection have argued for the reintegration of body and mind, inviting us to remember that our bodies and emotions connect with our experience (Jordi, 2011). Through integration of conceptual and non-conceptual elements of subjective experience, reflection might be a richer and more holistic process (Jordi, 2011). Discussing self-dismemberment in relation to the splitting of body and mind in more rational cognitive processes of reflection, Jordi (2011) quotes Michelson (1998, p. 217) when they ask “what a theory of experiential learning might look like that re-members body and mind”. Jordi (2011) cautions against the possibility of reversing the

cognitive bias and situating reflection purely in the body. What seems to be intended is a reintegration of body **and**⁶ mind to consider both conceptual and non-conceptual sources of insight.

Both above theories seem to counter the traditional view of reflection being a purely deliberate, explicit, rational, and cognitive process. They seem to assume that thought processes emerge through lived experience, including our relationships. They seem to assume that reflection can be more than rational retrospective analysis of experience and can involve emotions, and non-conceptual information and sensations. Perhaps this is where the social and relational factors influence RP and can enhance it through RCs. It is likely that our connections and interactions with others influence our emotions and our sense of self. As RP seeks change to self and to practice, then it makes sense to embed it in a relational framework through RCs, as we change through our interactions with others and in relation to experience (Mead, 1934).

The above aligns with the work of Schön (1983) who situated reflection within action, analysing the way that professionals can adjust their behaviour and their approach to a problem during action. This implies the embodiment of knowing-in-action, whereby a person's knowledge of how to do something is integrated with sense impressions, emotions and non-conscious and non-conceptual understanding in the process of doing. This differs to Deweyan conceptions that align reflective thinking with deeper, rational, conceptual and more effortful mental processing, whereby an individual would likely need time to engage in a deep consideration of the grounds and assumptions of a belief. Dewey (1933) seemed to align his conception of reflection with rational cognition; whereas Schön (1983), Jordi (2011) and Wilson (2004) acknowledge the moment-by-moment, non-conceptual, and unconscious factors respectively that relate to emergent and situated thinking.

We should perhaps consider both intuitive and deliberate processes to create a more holistic understanding of reflection. One way these disparate elements might be reconciled is to consider reflection a multilevel process (non-conscious, tacit/intuitive, explicit) that is situated in experience

⁶ Emboldened text used to show emphasis

(cognitive, physical, emotional, and contextual). However, Dewey noted that reflection differed from automated forms of reasoning and represents a more rigorous form of thinking aiming to develop knowledge (Dewey, 1933). Non-conscious processes align with automated and implicit decision making, while reflective thinking constitutes a more explicit and deliberate mode of thinking (Evans, 2019; Evans & Stanovich, 2013). This does not mean that non-conscious processes are any less useful, indeed they allow us to adapt to our surroundings rapidly, minimising disruption (Wilson, 2004). They may also be the main mode of decision making in everyday life, enabling rapid decisions in response to a dynamic environment (Wilson, 2004). It seems to be the case that disparity between expectations and perceived events causes a person to stop and think more deliberately (Schön, 1983). Consequently, reflective modes of thinking may be initiated to more deeply consider the issue. This use of deliberate thinking enables a check-and-balance to the rapid autonomous adaptive unconsciousness that is error and bias prone (Wilson, 2004). Although most of our decisions may be made by implicit modes of cognition aligned to adaptive unconsciousness, reflective thinking may help to stop, think carefully, reframe and consciously analyse in a more temporally flexible manner i.e., considering the past, and future in relation to experience (Wilson, 2004).

To explain the distinction between automated and deliberate cognition, dual process theories (discussed in [chapter seven](#)) may help. Dual process theory was established in cognitive psychology to understand the mechanisms of automatic and controlled thought. Adaptive unconsciousness was established in social psychology considering how unconscious processes influence judgements and behaviours. Despite the different origins, these theories align in the consideration of automated, non-conscious processes with evolutionary benefits. Because they align on the key characteristics of thinking they will be considered synonymously in the subsequent discussion.

Reflection could be conceived of as an explicit, deliberate and conscious process, aligning with Dewey (1933). Adaptive unconsciousness and tacit/intuitive thinking may not be considered reflection but may contribute to reflective thinking by providing material (e.g., decisions, emotions,

behaviours and tendencies) upon which to reflect. Evans (2019, p. 384) stated: “While Type 1 processes do not require the resources of working memory or controlled attention for their operation (or they would be Type 2) they do post their products into working memory in a way that many autonomous processes of the brain do not”. However, it was also argued that non-conscious processes might not post their products into working memory due to being inaccessible to human attention (Wilson, 2004). These points seem to imply that a lot of thought occurs outside of explicit awareness. Perhaps practitioners should aim to reflect on their subjective, emotive, embodied and relational understanding of an experience to deepen the process and bring awareness to the implicit factors driving their decisions in-the-moment. As Wilson (2004) discussed, due to difficulties in accessing the adaptive unconsciousness, we should direct our attention towards [and reflect on] our observable actions, behaviours and tendencies. This may provide clues to our adaptive unconsciousness, our biases, and assumptions. One practical method that might support this process is reflecting on audio-visual footage of behaviour e.g., while coaching or teaching (Carson, 2008; Partington et al., 2015). This might help to notice discrepancies between intended and actual behaviour and potentially filter our reflections to consider the reasons why we may be acting in a particular way, perhaps representing biases being mobilised in-the-moment through our behaviour. Audio-visual feedback might offer a gateway to observe a behaviourally manifested adaptive unconscious. Reflective (type-2) thinking may then be mobilised to question, challenge, expand and explicate any inferred biases, assumptions and unconscious motives, and in some cases may help shift ones thinking, helping to instigate changes to practice through a modified mental model. This reframed mental model may then be used in future intuitive/tacit decisions.

A multilevel approach considering non-conscious, tacit, and explicit modes of thinking, may be framed as a model of thinking rather than a model of reflection. This might help to visualise the integration of deliberate, analytical, type-2 modes of thinking (i.e., reflection) with tacit, experience-driven modes of thinking and adaptive unconsciousness. Deep and reflexive learning may depend on the creative interplay of type-1 and type-2 thought processes. Perhaps we should remember the

proposal of Jordi (2011) who recommended the integration of implicit and cognitive elements of our experience, reflecting on the embodied nature of human consciousness. Bodily sensations, emotive responses, and behavioural tendencies may provide clues to our unconscious biases and motives, potentially leading to significant learning and reflexivity.

Reflection on ideology, power and social reproduction

The preceding discussion raised questions about the cognitive emphasis of RP discourse. This cognitive emphasis may have contributed to the development of an over-reliance on structured and formalised RP processes e.g., professional bodies requiring written reflective reports for re-certification. The dominant cognitive perspective may have reinforced power structures by privileging explicit and conscious ways of knowing over others (implicit, and procedural knowledge). It seems relevant to consider how cognitive assumptions could perpetuate existing inequities by privileging those with available time and resources to engage in deep, critical RP. The assumption that time is a main barrier to RP can be problematised. Specifically, there may be deeper motivational, conceptual and epistemological antecedents to engagement with RP. If practitioners had more available time, would they choose to use this time to engage in critical RP? Or would this depend on motivation to engage in RP? Would this motivation-to-reflect also depend on how individuals understand RP and the different ways they believe they can engage in the process? Thus, motivation to engage in RP should be explored further, and the commonly cited barrier (time) could be problematised and engaged with more critically.

Cognitive assumptions may inadvertently marginalise implicit and embodied ways of knowing. It is thus important to consider who gets to define what counts as valid knowledge and who decides what is valid RP. Specifically, organisations who institutionalise RP may shape policy regarding how RP should be conducted and what represents good RP. In these cases, the creative and emancipatory power of RP may be minimised, and existing power structures and hegemonic ideas and assumptions are reproduced rather than challenged. For example, organisations may develop qualifying processes in association with norms endorsed in similar professions. These

practices may be influenced by dominant discourses of RP, aligning with cognitive assumptions privileging explicit types of knowledge and processes e.g., written RP reports. Explicit modes of RP can be assessed by awarding bodies, and this may reinforce adherence to established norms and suppress alternative epistemologies valuing implicit and/or embodied ways of knowing or relational RP embedded in RCs. Because of institutionalisation, RP may be deterred from being a site of resistance challenging established practices, subduing criticality and in some cases serving to reinforce power imbalances. This may ensure compliance with professional norms, rather than enabling individual development and emancipation. In this case RP may act as a mode of surveillance, with professional bodies ensuring practitioners are thinking and acting in accordance with organisationally prescribed norms (Cushion, 2016). Perhaps RP can also be problematised as a mode of self-surveillance, where individuals internalise institutional norms rather than engaging in critical reflection. This may then contribute to the reproduction of professional norms rather than encouraging change, challenge and innovation.

Perhaps organisations and those in positions of power within organisations and professional bodies should intentionally provide a bigger platform for alternative voices, discussing varied ways of thinking about hegemonically established concepts or practices. This may help destabilise and challenge dominant discourses and provide a platform for discordant ideas to be presented. This may depend on the degree to which those in authority (individually, or collectively for organisations with multiple leaders) embrace diversity of thinking and how much they embody open-mindedness to ideas that may conflict with their own. Perhaps an important question for further research is how we may encourage open-mindedness and more complex ways of knowing while considering how these qualities impact inclusive attitudes e.g., one's tendency to embrace diversity of thinking.

Recognising the interrelatedness of embodied, tacit, and unconscious processes to reflective thinking is another important step to understanding how these processes might work together to support a more holistic RP. A multilevel model of thinking might help to encourage a more inclusive and dynamic understanding of RP. This may encourage the development of an alternative view of RP

challenging dominant discourse, encouraging free-thinking, resistance and innovation. Instead of reinforcing the systematic internalisation of institutional norms, this may encourage a more critical, reflexive and emancipatory process of RP.

Reflection on text production and language use

This section will involve a reflection on how I produced the text of this thesis, considering the language used and how this may imply claims to authority. A subsequent reflection on selectivity of voices included in the thesis will deconstruct dominant discourses in RP. A final subsection will situate the self within the research process, considering how the ideas evolved and developed in each phase of the research journey.

Considering claims to authority

Throughout this thesis my use of language seems to have shifted from a position where I presented ideas as objective, to presenting ideas more tentatively. This aligned with an epistemological shift, coinciding with supervisory support. An example of presenting ideas objectively can be found in chapter four where I summarised a body of literature supporting an interpretation of reflection being a cognitive process. I previously used terms such as ‘it **is** evident’ and ‘reflection **is** a cognitive process’ latently assuming certainty and overlooking counter arguments⁷. I caught myself naturally writing in this manner, making assumptions of certainty and authority, particularly considering this work was published in a prominent journal. This may have reinforced the firmness of my belief rather than helping me to question, doubt and inquire further. As Dewey (1933, p. 11) noted “To maintain the state of doubt and to carry on systematic and protracted inquiry - these are the essentials of thinking”. It is possible that this overly objective view, and a sense of certainty, may have blinded me to the limitations of my own thinking. The support of my supervisory team was pivotal in challenging and shifting my thinking. Feedback was often directed towards the certainty implied in my use of language. This helped me to think about my use of language and shift my writing [and thinking] to accommodate a more tentative view on ideas

⁷ Emboldened text used to emphasise words implying certainty

presented. This may have accompanied an epistemological shift from a form of positivism early on in my research journey (where I stated the importance of **validating**⁸ the concept of reflection, wanting to know what reflection is) towards pragmatism later in my research journey (appreciating pluralism within literature on RP). The process of writing and reflecting on the process of thinking and the concept of knowledge may have supported an epistemic shift. However, I still occasionally find myself using non-tentative language when writing openly, aiming to get my thoughts written down before editing and refining them. Does this signal a claim to authority? Perhaps. However, it might be reasonable to be more certain about some knowledge claims compared to others (an idea grounded in pragmatism i.e., warranted assertibility⁹). There is no need for the pendulum to swing too far in the opposite direction i.e., writing in tentative terms. The important thing may be to cultivate a healthy amount of scepticism about knowledge claims that appear certain when there are counterarguments that have not been considered.

I have noticed a personal change to acknowledge the limitations of my own perspective, and when I judge myself to be certain about a claim, I often seek counterarguments challenging my views. Some examples of this include (but are not limited to) reading about the adaptive unconsciousness (Wilson, 2004), embodied thinking (Jordi, 2011), critical realism (Bhaskar, 2013) and texts that broadly overview epistemology (Al-Ababneh, 2020; Killam, 2013). These texts were deliberately targeted as they either contradicted my beliefs or because they explored a broader perspective on concepts, helping me to extend, deepen, or challenge my views.

Another use of language that could be judged to be contradictory to the manner that I present reflective thinking is the word trigger. This word implied that for reflective thinking to occur there needs to be an antecedent factor, thus limiting agency and free choice for when and how a

⁸ The term validity is often associated with positivistic modes of inquiry e.g., the hypothetico-deductive method, used in scientific inquiry to test hypotheses and validate theories. This language use implied positivistic assumptions about how knowledge can be developed.

⁹ Warranted assertibility was described by John Dewey as using inquiry and a context to justify and verify a knowledge claim. This characterises knowledge as a dynamic and evolving process of inquiry within a social context rather than a static correspondence with an external reality.

person engages in reflective thinking. However, I present reflection as a mode of thinking and inquiry, implying free choice and agency. To reconcile this perspective, I could reframe the word triggers to catalysts or invitations to reflect, implying a less passive and more active mobilisation of agency in deciding when one engages in reflective thinking. External stimuli may well prompt reflection. However so might readiness, prior experiences and self-awareness to mediate the extent a person engages in reflective thinking. Thus, internal dispositions and external events may interact to shape reflection in dynamic and context-dependent ways.

Selectivity of voices

Throughout my thesis there has been a bias towards selecting studies for synthesis that included participants who valued RP. I also interviewed participants who had an interest in RP and regarded RP as an important process in their development. There seemed to be an underrepresentation of participants who struggled with RP or found it unhelpful, and difficult. Some individuals may experience cynicism with prescribed RP. It may be that in these cases RP lacks meaning and value. Interviewing such practitioners may have more clearly challenged hegemonic views about the benefits of RP and may have helped to problematise and challenge taken-for-granted assumptions. It may be challenging to recruit participants who do not value RP or who experience cynicism towards prescribed RP. Thus, careful consideration may need to be taken to develop incentives to support participation with in-depth interviews.

Due to inclusion criteria in chapter seven, highly experienced coaches (lead coaches or those holding the highest sport professional body qualification) were recruited. This was because these coaches were more likely to have more experience with RP and would have a larger amount of coaching experience to reflect on during interview, thus enabling richer data to be collected. However, this could have restricted the voice of inexperienced coaches who are learning RP and who may have been struggling with the process. These participants may have helped to problematise how RP is taught and the barriers to engaging in various modes of RP.

Studies included in this thesis seem to privilege experienced male sport coaching practitioners who valued RP. This might have resulted in a limited and often agreeable perspective about RP, rather than disrupting existing assumptions. Insights about RP in chapter seven and chapter eight are limited to a male sport coaching perspective with a limited female point of view and having limited diversity. By actively recruiting female, ethnically diverse and interdisciplinary practitioners, a more holistic understanding of RP could have been developed.

Situating the self: a reflexive account

Given the iterative nature of my thinking during the development of this thesis, each study developed my understanding of reflection. While reading literature, I quickly identified the work of Dewey (1933) being a key seminal text in discourse on reflection. As such, this influenced my early understanding of reflection, incorporating cognitive assumptions. This Deweyan conception considered reflection to be a cognitive process of inquiry (Dewey, 1933). This was later integrated with the work of Mezirow (1991) who also embodied cognitive assumptions. However, this cognitive bias could be seen to overlook the role of affective and embodied experiences in reflection. I noted other authors argue for the need to consider affective experiences in the reflective process (Boud et al., 1985). This was mainly to prevent emotions biasing cognitive rationalisation rather than being a source of insight. However, this helped to motivate deeper inquiry into the concept and process of reflection, using insights from data and later personal experience to inform a critical evaluation of reflection from three different perspectives. New data and insights supported my evolving perspective, for example the incorporation of emotional and attitudinal considerations. Specifically, I considered how emotions might signal discrepancies between expected and actual events inviting learning opportunities. This finding was constructed out of a review of the triggers reported in a body of synthesised literature. This provided an integrated understanding of how cognitive processes (perception of a discrepancy/disjuncture) interacted with emotional experiences (feelings of surprise or perplexity) potentially influencing meaningful and focussed RP. I also considered how open-mindedness and epistemic views might influence engagement in reflective thinking. Later

studies then clarified how practitioners' beliefs about reflection potentially influenced the way they engaged in RP and helped to understand the variety of ways that reflection is practiced amongst sport coaching practitioners. I then explored the barriers and factors that facilitated systematic RP in the context of my work as a further education lecturer. This helped to understand contextual factors that enabled (motivation, valuing RP, experiencing success, personal conceptions) or constrained engagement (time, competing demands, personal commitments) with formalised RP. These studies facilitated a conversation between my evolving conceptual/theoretical framework and practical/situational factors through which RP was applied, helping me to evaluate the practical utility of RP in a working environment. A critical review of these findings helped to identify possible biases in my evolving way of thinking. This led me to source literature that challenged these biases, enabling a more informed and holistic view. Data analysis was thus not a strictly neutral, theory-free process but an emergent, dynamic and reciprocal process. This all coincided with complex interactions between myself, my supervisory team, family, and my experiences in a dynamic interplay that influenced perceptions about RP and decisions about the direction this thesis took. Thus, the personal factors identified above did not occur in a vacuum but in a complex web of social interactions and relational processes.

Critical reflection on dominant assumptions

This section will involve a critical reflection on dominant assumptions that have been identified in the literature on RP. This includes reflection being an inherently positive and beneficial process; the prevalence of structured models to teach and facilitate RP, whereby reflection can become ritualistic and mechanised; a perception that good reflection is critical, thus marginalising less formalised modes of RP; and the institutionalisation of RP due to the unchallenged positive assumptions about its benefits.

Reflection is inherently positive and beneficial

One of the main assumptions in literature reviewed and primary data collected for this thesis seem to be that RP is inherently positive, constructive and good. This perspective might be

reinforced by studies using volunteers and self-selected participants who seem to value and perceive benefits in RP. However, there is a small body of literature questioning the value, practical utility, feasibility and authenticity of RP (Cushion, 2016; Finlay, 2008; Gilbert, 2001; Smith & Trede, 2013).

Finlay (2008) was critical of RP on a variety of conceptual and practical dimensions. Criticisms focused on a lack of consensus of the concept of RP, meaning that different models have been used to operationalise it without adequate clarity about the concept of RP (Finlay, 2008). Models were criticised as confining RP to a retrospective process and individual mental activity (Finlay, 2008), thus disregarding reflection-in-action and reflection-for-action, and negating the benefits of dialogic processes and different perspectives that might help reflection to become critical (Brookfield, 2017).

Structured checklists of questions such as those recommended by Johns (2009) were said to constrain RP and limit the contribution of intuition and interaction (Finlay, 2008). Models if used “unthinkingly” were also said to turn RP into a mechanical, recipe-following process (Finlay, 2008, p. 10) which dissociates from the original philosophical purpose (Dewey, 1933; Schön, 1983) limiting the ability to engage with the process critically (Brookfield, 2017). When used by overworked and overstretched practitioners, RP can become superficial, mechanical and ineffective (Finlay, 2008). Although Finlay (2008) used literature to support, illustrate, and focus their critique, they did not directly capture the dissenting voice of practitioners, offering a critique of secondary data and providing theoretical arguments about the limitations of RP.

Smith and Trede (2013) collected primary data from 12 Physiotherapy students over a period of two years. Before graduation, these students engaged with written RP, having time and incentive to write. As new graduates working in practical settings, participants reported having fewer opportunities to engage in the same level of extended writing (Smith & Trede, 2013). RP was embedded dialogically in social interactions with supervisors, peers, and mentors rather than being a written process, as they were taught (Smith & Trede, 2013). This highlights lack of alignment between methods of RP that are taught and how RP is used in practice which is further supported by

more recent research (Taddese et al., 2025). This also justifies the benefit of embedding RP in relationships through RCs, as practitioners naturally adopted these practices. Perhaps further work could explore how these RCs could be enhanced through relational competency training.

Gilbert (2001) provided a more political critique of RP, proposing that although RP is often perceived as a mode of learning from professional practice experience that is liberating, it has limitations. By making thoughts, feelings, and experiences explicit, this opens the possibility of those in authority e.g., leadership positions, to subtly monitor their conduct and shape them into *effective practitioners* who internalise the standards mandated by a governing organisation (Gilbert, 2001). This may act as a form of discipline aligning practitioners with goals set by external authorities, rather than enabling autonomous and self-regulating practitioners (Gilbert, 2001). Thus, instead of the focus being personal or professional growth, subtle modes of surveillance and managerial input may facilitate alignment of the practitioner's identity and goals with that required by an organisation (Gilbert, 2001). Cushion (2016) conducted a similar critique in sport coaching and proposed that RP can be a mode of control and surveillance, normalising practices against pre-established expectations about what effective coaching looks like, rather than challenging existing practices and systems (Cushion, 2016).

Thus, some RP may reinforce existing beliefs and practices rather than truly innovating or challenging unhelpful assumptions and hegemony. It may be important to consider disciplinary differences across the contexts of these studies e.g., physiotherapy (Smith & Trede, 2013), sport coaching (Cushion, 2016), and general practice (Finlay, 2008). Specifically, criticisms of RP may be more salient in different contexts. In more strictly regulated professions such as general practice and physiotherapy, RP may be more strictly required and prescribed through written logs and reports, whereas in sport coaching RP does not seem to be as tightly regulated. Issues of surveillance and control may be more relevant in tightly regulated professions.

What may be needed to support practitioners is a focus on critical RP, aiming to reveal and rationalise assumptions embedded in working contexts (Brookfield, 2017). This should involve

considering how hegemony and power influence and reinforce dominant ways of working, often when these ways of working are counterproductive for the practitioner (Brookfield, 2017). For example, dominant hegemonic narratives of successful coaches being the hardest workers in the room can often be destructive, particularly when coaches internalise that they need to make personal sacrifices to be successful. Brookfield (2017) calls these broad fundamental ways of seeing the world paradigmatic assumptions. A prescriptive assumption (i.e., what we think should happen in a specific situation) regarding the above might be: coaches should work longer and harder than anyone else to be successful. A causal assumption (i.e., predictive assumptions about how different parts of the world work) may then be: coaches who work long hours, at the expense of spending time with family and having work-life balance, show commitment to their role and they are more likely to be successful or be promoted. These assumptions, often acting implicitly, reinforce dominant ideology about coaching leading to a commitment to working long-hours to gain a competitive edge, serving the needs of an organisation e.g., a football club. However, they also lead to practitioners sacrificing parts of their life in the pursuit of an organisational goal. This is what Brookfield (2017) calls hegemony i.e., ideas that serve a small minority in positions of power and are viewed by most as normal and working for their own good.

Hegemony serves as a mode of control, keeping practitioners working selflessly in the pursuit of organisational goals. Critical RP may help to reveal and shift these ways of thinking. However, this requires practitioners to reveal assumptions about their practice, and this cannot according to Brookfield (2017) be achieved through individual introspection. Practitioners may need to use multiple lenses (including students/athletes, peers, theory and self), gathering information from multiple sources to reveal, challenge and rationalise unhelpful assumptions (Brookfield, 2017).

As can be seen from the above, dissenting voices are underrepresented in the literature, with a typically pro-reflection attitude being dominant in RP discourse. Dissenting voices are important as they may help to understand contextual barriers to implementing RP and provide alternative points of view that help to develop a more holistic understanding of RP. This may also

help to reveal assumptions of existing RP theories and models. From limited literature that questions and challenges RP, theoretical/conceptual arguments tend to be dominant, with limited studies using primary data. Thus, research should aim to capture the dissenting voice as this would help to understand the lived experience of the factors limiting engagement in RP. This could then inform practical suggestions to improve how RP is taught, facilitated and reported during accrediting/qualifying processes.

Limitations of Structured Models

Although structured RP has benefits and pedagogical value, particularly for novice practitioners learning how to engage in RP, there appears to be a dominant trend that overemphasises the use of models or frameworks to systematise the process of teaching RP (Gibbs, 1988; Johns, 2009; Kolb, 2014), while marginalising the use of in-the-moment (Schön, 1983), anticipatory (Conway, 2001; Glaister & Gold, 2022), and dialogical RP (Peterson et al., 2009; Simpson & Trezise, 2011; Stodter et al., 2021; Thomson & Trigwell, 2016). Dialogical methods such as RCs have the benefit of encouraging different perspectives, enabling probing questions to encourage deeper thinking and is an emergent process. However structured models may encourage practitioners to stop once they have answered the question in perceivably sufficient depth, without accessing another perspective, counterargument or any probing questions that may help to shift one's way of thinking.

Critics who argue that step-by-step processes commonly associated with structured models risk creating mechanistic and tokenistic ways of engaging with RP seems logically grounded (Finlay, 2008). This also implies that RP is a retrospective and written process. Reducing RP to a written, retrospective process may exclude practitioners who struggle with written reflection (e.g., those experiencing dyslexia, carpal tunnel syndrome etc) and it also requires ample time and dedication to commit to extensive written exploration of experiences. Teaching RP using models or frameworks has some pedagogic value by scaffolding practitioners through a RP process (Gibbs, 1988; Johns, 2009; Kolb, 2014), offering clarity and consistency. This could be useful for novice practitioners or

individuals with limited experience in RP to inquire into their professional practice experiences. Structured RP might also be beneficial in high-pressure environments such as elite sport, military and emergency medical care, where it can be used to focus a debrief or review of performance. However, it also risks reducing RP to checklist or tick-box levels of engagement, oversimplifying the process (Finlay, 2008). For example, in Chapter seven one of the participants (C6) discussed when they teach sport coaches they reinforce the importance of RP but also reiterate that there is a risk of RP becoming performative, much like a tick-box approach and when this happens there is little benefit that they will gain from the process. C9 typically used self-talk and introspective methods to engage in reflective inquiry and discussed the lack of alignment between experiences of RP and models of RP.

Models may reinforce a naïve understanding of RP and carry an assumption that formalised and systematic RP are correct ways of engaging in RP, implicitly devaluing and overshadowing spontaneous, introspective, and ongoing RP in everyday life e.g., RCs. These approaches may not follow the step-by-step process of a formal model, yet may offer in-the-moment changes to one's actions and behaviour that may be beneficial (Schön, 1983; Van Manen, 1995). Engaging in less formalised, more open and more emergent modes of RP (e.g., introspection/self-talk or RCs) seems to be accessible and can be integrated into day-to-day practice, rather than being an add-on to existing workload. This will likely help to overcome the reported time-constraints often noted as posing a barrier to RP (Bakioglu & Dalgiç, 2013; Burt & Morgan, 2014; Gathu, 2022; Gilheaney & Quigley, 2021; Hamblin & Crisp, 2022; Hickman & Collins, 2014; Lim et al., 2022; Miller, 2020). The results of less formalised RP may filter into formalised RP, creating a more holistic process accounting for the nuances and constraints of working contexts. Less formalised RP and more formalised RP may reinforce and support (rather than compete with) one another, creating a more comprehensive RP process.

Good reflection is critical

This sub-section aims to question the universally good status of critical reflection, thus problematising this taken-for-granted assumption. Literature focussing on the process of critical reflection seems to frame it as being more effective and desirable for practitioners than non-critical reflection. The word effective assumes an achievable state of completion in the RP process, where practitioners achieve tangible outputs. This idea experiences tension with Brookfield's conception of critical reflection characterised as an ongoing, continual process. Brookfield (2017, p. 19) states that critical reflection involves an "intentional and continual scrutiny of the assumptions that inform your teaching practice"¹⁰. This aligns with the concept of premise reflection in transformative learning theory that questions and challenges the underlying assumptions of a way of thinking (Mezirow, 1991). Both authors imply levels of reflection with the challenging of hidden assumptions and premises at the higher levels. Mezirow (1991, p. 6) notes that reflection in the context of transformation theory "involves the assessment or reassessment of assumptions". These assumptions underlie our meaning perspectives. These meaning perspectives help to interpret experiences from sense impressions from our environment and our actions. When meaning perspectives are challenged and reframed this can change the way we perceive a situation. Assumptions or premises that are identified as being perceivably distorting or invalid and are challenged and reframed can shift our meaning perspective. Where Mezirow (1991) explains critical or premise reflection as questioning and challenging assumptions, Brookfield (2017) broadens this understanding noting that practitioners should question assumptions about how the dynamics of power operate in their working context, considering dominant ideologies influencing practice. Both authors seem to agree that critical/premise reflection takes as its focus the hidden deeper ideas that underlie how we make sense of the world. Perhaps this aligns with theories of adaptive

¹⁰ Brookfield wrote about reflection from the perspective of being a teacher, aligning with the working context of the study in chapter nine. However, this may not transfer directly to coaching practice. Thus, further inquiry should explore the transferability of the methods Brookfield discusses as ways of engaging critically in RP.

unconsciousness where most of our cognitive work is stated to be below the level of explicit consciousness (Wilson, 2004). Specifically, we seem to act in accordance with our pre-linguistic construal of our surroundings, a form of presentational construal (Mezirow, 1991), and when intuitive action leads to a surprise or something unwanted or unexpected then we may take a step back and think about it more carefully (Schön, 1983) e.g., by turning up the dial of critical effort (Chapter seven). However, if we stop when a problem is solved, rather than engaging in critical reflection, we might not question and challenge the assumptions underpinning our actions, nor question hegemony and power structures that may be acting against our best interests. This problem-solving approach to RP may reproduce dominant ideas and practices, reinforcing existing power structures and hegemony (Brookfield, 2017).

Now I will consider potential negative impacts of critical reflection. Although critical reflection enables practitioners to identify and challenge assumptions that might counter the problems identified above, caution should be taken in accordance with the potential negative effects. For example, Brookfield (1994) explored the dark-side of critical reflection, analysing perspectives of 337 educators, thematically analysing the content of written journals, personal conversations, classroom discussions, and structured autobiographical analyses, recorded over a period of 11-years. These self-reports should be considered in relation to potential bias. Four themes were generated: impostorship, cultural suicide, lost innocence, and road running. Being an impostor was characterised by participants as not having the right or the talent to engage significantly in critical reflection and feeling a sense of inauthenticity. Cultural suicide indicated the threat of critically questioning conventional wisdom, taking critique too far and becoming excluded from a community. Lost innocence aligns with developing a complex way of knowing where they become immersed in ambiguity, uncertainty, and complexity losing a sense that if they study hard, they could find the truth. Road-running is like lost innocence as it characterises critical reflection as a lifelong process of inquiry with fluctuations in progress and regress, such that participants sometimes doubt whether they can be successful in the process.

Sport coaches may experience an epistemological shift when engaging in critically RP and as they develop as a practitioner a change in epistemic views may affect confidence (Collins et al., 2012). This might be due to the realisation of the complexity and uncertainty of coaching and the loss of a sense of usual certainty (Collins et al., 2012). This seems to align with the lost innocence outlined by Brookfield (1994), as practitioners lose a grounding in certainty and fact, and start to realise that coaching is complex, partial and it is difficult to know what to do in the swampiness of real-world problems (Schön, 1983). Some coaches may also struggle to articulate themselves in writing, and written reflection being a dominant mode of retrospective RP seems to be a common implication of theories and models of RP. These coaches may experience impostorship when encouraged to engage in critical reflection that they assume requires extensive writing. Education and support may be needed to facilitate dialogic modes of RP that can be integrated into existing practice rather than being an intimidating add-on to their workload.

Sport coaches may in some cases be fearful of metaphorically *rocking the boat* when in a role that may be insecure. This may be particularly relevant to those working in high-performance e.g., top-tier football clubs, institutes of sport etc, whereby results are key indicators of success, and challenging assumptions (while potentially leading to innovation) may also be seen as destabilising, creating a sense of uncertainty. If the coach is trying to innovate by destabilising the assumptions that have worked for a group of athletes previously and the coach does not achieve results or have a firm reputation in the sport, they may be looked at with suspicion. At the elite level of football in the UK, the jobs of coaches and managers can be unstable unless results are achieved. Thus, critical reflection in this context may be a risk that some may perceive as not worth taking and align their work with certainty as much as possible e.g., applying the findings of experimental science. Overemphasis on performance metrics and results may reinforce hegemonic assumptions (e.g., being the first person in during the morning and the last out in the evening showing commitment and passion to the sport club) and challenging these may be unhelpful for the coaches' career in

high-performance sport. These concerns challenge the universally good assumption of critically RP, with multiple concerns collectively complicating this notion of critically RP being good and effective.

Institutionalisation of RP

This subsection aims to challenge the institutionalisation of RP where it has become an accepted, and unquestioned formalised routine in some professions to maintain qualification and prove competency. Some say that RP has become an orthodoxy and dominant discourse within professional education (Saltiel, 2006). This holds at least three assumptions: RP leads to competent practitioners, all practitioners should engage in RP, and RP can be assessed and standardised.

If RP is simply accepted as a given, rather than understood and internalised by practitioners as meaningful and worthwhile, this may lead to tokenistic engagement and superficial levels of thinking. Some practitioners may find comfort in having structures or models to follow as this may reduce uncertainty. Thus, standardisation can be helpful for some and lead to deeper RP. However, if RP is mandated in the form of written reports, then some practitioners may simply write what they think the assessor wants to see, rather than engaging curiously, openly and honestly with an issue of concern or interest (López-Cuello et al., 2024). This can negatively affect the authenticity of RP (López-Cuello et al., 2024) making it ineffective. Not only can enforced RP lead to superficial or inauthentic engagement, but it can also have serious professional repercussions. For example, there was a case in the medical profession of written reflections being used in a legal dispute, with Dr Hadiza Bawa-Garba being erased from the medical register because of records of their RP (Nicholl, 2018). This raises ethical concerns over the assessment of written RP by external authorities and the way these reflective reports are processed and used.

Mandated RP dissociates from the original philosophical values of reflection aiming to openly and curiously engage with ideas to more deeply understand meaning and experience. Modern assumptions and cultural biases of dominant theorists seem to have led to instrumentalised RP, making it a mechanical step-by-step process (Finlay, 2008). When practitioners are overburdened, they may engage in tokenistic or routinised RP. This undermines the ability to

cultivate creativity and insight into one's experiences. Therefore, institutionalising RP and perpetuating the idea that RP should be documented and used to judge competency may have a negative impact on practitioners' level of engagement and purpose for using RP (Finlay, 2008). This complicates how we encourage practitioners to be genuinely reflective and curious about their work without imposing ideas and processes on them that may lead to more superficial engagement with RP.

Education about the concept and process of RP could help practitioners to internalise the value of RP and showing them a clear process, such as that outlined by Brookfield (1994) and discussed previously, and that outlined by Fook and Gardner (2007). Within the latter suggestion, practitioners prepare and verbally present a case of a critical moment in their working environment. Working dialogically, assumptions are identified and deconstructed, supporting a deepening and more critical reflection. This positions RP authentically as a mode of learning in a community of practitioners, overcoming the need for extensive written documentation that sometimes burdens practitioners who already have a high workload. They can seek confirmation, clarity and be supported to identify assumptions they may be using without awareness. Dialogic reflection combined with a consideration of multiple lenses can support practitioners to identify, reflect on and reframe assumptions. This may help them to realise unhelpful ideas and hegemony that may be impinging their development and wellbeing.

Reflecting on the importance of RP

This overarching reflection will consider the importance of RP in the sport coaching context including how RP might shape coaching practice. The following ideas will be discussed: making sense of complexity, the coach-athlete relationship as a core construct for navigating the complexity of coaching, developing psychosocial skills, driving continuous learning and creativity, and ethical practice and inclusivity.

Sport coaching is a fluid, dynamic process that can be messy, complex and challenging (Bowes & Jones, 2006). Situations are emergent and open, based on interactions between an often-

large number of people in the context of a series of activities aiming to improve performance as well as interactions before, during, and after these activities. A coach needs to be able to identify athletes' individual strengths and weaknesses alongside a consideration of team dynamics and needs, based on experience. This information is then used to design training activities aiming to improve performance. Consequently, coaches need to integrate several different forms of information and provide bespoke solutions to develop performance. Innovation of these bespoke solutions might be enhanced through creativity and RP (Nash & Collins, 2024). For example, through RP sport coaches can think about and critique current practices and create novel ways of working to improve practice (Nash & Collins, 2024). RP thus enables coaches to inquire into their experiences and evolve practices creatively. RP therefore encourages continual learning and development. RP should help coaches navigate the indeterminacies conferred by the complexity, fluidity and dynamical characteristics of sport coaching practice. One core construct that effective coaching centres on is the coach-athlete relationship. The following discussion will consider this relationship as an organising core through which coaches can navigate the complexity of coaching practice. By anchoring RP on the quality of relationships, coaches may be able to better manage the emergent dilemmas experienced.

The coach-athlete relationship that is nurtured over time develops trust and closeness supporting a mutual understanding. This helps coaches to interpret the needs of the individuals they are coaching. These needs may shift according to situations and contexts that are experienced. Thus, needs are fluid and changing depending on context and status (e.g., health, injury, personal issues etc). Athletes who trust in their coach's knowledge, skill and competency will likely engage more willingly with them and internalise the value of activities developed. Developing closeness is one step towards building an effective coach-athlete working relationship (Jowett, 2005, 2017). This refers to the emotional attachment and tone in a relationship e.g., liking, respecting, and appreciating the coach (Jowett, 2005, 2017). Alongside this a sense of commitment and complementarity are required. Commitment refers to the desire to maintain the working

relationship over time (Jowett, 2005, 2017). Complementarity refers to the cooperativeness, helpfulness and effectiveness of the relationship over time (Jowett, 2005, 2017). These qualities might be developed with trust and communication that aids understanding between athlete and coach. Over time, based on experiences together, athletes would ideally perceive that the coach is competent and has their best interests at heart, thus reinforcing the quality of their working relationship (Jowett, 2005, 2017).

The coach-athlete relationship has been proposed to be the heart of coaching practice, forming a system alongside the outcomes and knowledge shared that influences coaching effectiveness and success (Jowett, 2017). The importance of the coach-athlete relationship is also supported by others e.g., Landman et al. (2024, p. 11) who state the relationship is “fundamental to successful coaching”. Some authors highlight the complexity inherent within the coach-athlete relationship, reporting issues with prediction models due to the nuanced and emergent characteristics of relationship building (Corkery & Fletcher, 2023). The complexity of relationships may require an ongoing reflective, and reflexive approach to navigate how to approach their development. This positions RP as a core process through which sport coaches can better manage the complexity of coaching through navigation of the development of quality relationships.

To enact their role as a coach competently in a complex working environment, the tone of the working relationship is central (Jowett, 2005, 2017). A coach needs to acquire a range of psychosocial skills to support the development of this relationship (Szedlak et al., 2025). RP has been demonstrated to support the development of psychosocial skills and competencies, to help navigate the complexity of coaches’ experiences to meet the needs of the athletes they serve e.g., developing athlete-centred approaches to coaching by considering the athlete perspective during RP (Szedlak et al., 2025).

When conceptualising relationships as the heart of navigating the complexity of the coaching role, RP seems to be the guiding process whereby coaches navigate tensions, challenges and develop psychosocial skills to improve the way in which they develop and maintain these

relationships. Relationships seem to be an organising core through which coaches can better adapt their approach/methods, motivate athletes, maintain a sense of togetherness in the face of challenges or change, and to facilitate ethical awareness and inclusive practices. By understanding athletes' typical behaviour and the wider context of their lived experience, coaches may notice changes signalling anticipated issues (e.g., dips in motivation, misunderstanding) and thus modify their approach accordingly. By being able to *read* athletes and reflect-in-action a coach may provide support and encouragement to improve the quality of motivation experienced. Demonstrating behaviours that are need-supportive can improve motivation and self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2010; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Combined with quality relationships, satisfying psychological needs (competence, autonomy, relatedness) would likely have a strong impact on motivation and the ability to overcome challenges (Deci & Ryan, 2010; Ryan & Deci, 2000). This may require feedback loops to be embedded in the coaches practice to understand the athletes' point of view e.g., the use of different lenses (Brookfield, 2017), that can help to identify and reframe assumptions impinging the development of a genuinely athlete-centred coaching practice.

Relationships can go wrong, and coaches may demand or desire power and control and enact this through abusive behaviours towards athletes (Adams et al., 2024). This can manifest through power-imbalance and a misuse of authority that can stifle an athlete's ability to voice their concerns, thus feeling trapped in a system marginalising an athlete perspective. Coaches who are deliberately inquisitive about the quality of their relationships with athletes, integrating athlete perspectives and feedback into their critically reflective practice (Brookfield, 2017) are likely to develop an ethical compass helping to adjust actions to be more inclusive (Silva et al., 2020), athlete-centred (Silva et al., 2020) and compassionate (Backman et al., 2024). With better quality relationships, athletes may feel psychologically safe and comfortable being able to speak about prior abuse or wider experiences of current abuse, enabling ethically minded coaches to support and safeguard these individuals.

Critically RP seems to have a central role in the development of ethical behaviour and quality relationships and may therefore help sport coaches navigate the complexity of their role. Through the development of quality coach-athlete relationships, characterised by compassion and ethical sensitivity, RP might therefore help coaches to promote a positive, trusting, and growth-oriented psychological climate. Ultimately, participants are likely to enjoy taking part and continue engaging in an environment where they are valued and supported.

Chapter Twelve: Final thoughts

This thesis has explored RP conceptually drawing together sport coaches' insights and rigorous first-person experience. It has reframed RP from a purely individual cognitive activity to a relational process involving RCs as a core mode of engagement. By embedding RP in a relational framework, with skilled questioning and facilitation, coaches can improve professional judgement and decision making (Collins & Collins, 2021) and enhance learning and development (Stodter et al., 2021). RCs might help to check and balance decisions, check assumptions and reframe actions, leading to more effective coaching practices (Collins & Collins, 2021). This may ultimately lead to greater participant enjoyment and development, likely leading to longer participation in sport.

RCs may help normalise open, honest dialogue. When integrated into environments encouraging psychological safety, RCs may encourage teams to learn and improve together (Jarvis & Clark, 2020). RCs being a normal everyday occurrence might improve connections between players, and between coach and athlete (Jowett, 2005, 2017). With relationships being the heart of coaching, RCs have the potential to encourage stronger partnerships between coach and athlete (Jowett, 2005, 2017). This is likely to improve engagement, enjoyment, dedication and motivation (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). Guidelines from an International Olympic Committee consensus statement on interpersonal violence and safeguarding in sport recommended the prioritisation of relational health by facilitating healthy relationships in sport (Tuakli-Wosornu et al., 2024). RCs have the potential to help coaches nurture positive athlete-centred and person-centred relationships.

RCs may also help coaches identify and act on signs of abuse to support vulnerable participants and those that feel trapped in an imbalanced power hierarchy where the coach may be abusing their position of authority. Psychological abuse has been reported to be the core of all other forms of abuse (Mountjoy et al., 2016). Bullying behaviour from those in authoritative positions can have a detrimental effect on participation in sport (Adams et al., 2024; Mountjoy et al., 2016). For example, coaches can have an impact on an athletes career, and when they abuse their power by engaging in psychological abuse, some athletes might feel pressured to keep quiet and tolerate

abuse rather than speaking up and challenging such behaviour (Tuakli-Wosornu et al., 2024). RCs are therefore an important way to encourage openness, responsibility and ethical sensitivity towards one's use of power and to understand relational dynamics, thus identifying signs of mistakes or wrongdoing early.

RCs might act like a compass for developing effective working relationships and safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. For example, having developed relationships and understanding of participants through ongoing interactions and RCs, coaches are likely to be able to identify changes in attitude and behaviour signalling abuse or neglect and act to support these individuals. This may impact coaches perceived trustworthiness. For example, parents, guardians and/or carers are likely to feel more comfortable having their children work with coaches demonstrating positive ethical and relational competencies. Parental endorsement may encourage long-term engagement with sport and physical activity, improving long-term health and wellbeing.

Sport coaches should be encouraged to adopt dialogic RPs embedded in a relational process. This can support collective learning, invite perspectives that differ to one's own, thus challenging ones thinking. This may create conditions for a dialectical process and improve learning, decision making and safeguard participants from harmful practices. At the higher end of sport, this might help sustain emphasis on high performance in an ethically sensitive and humane way. In grassroots sport, this may encourage ethically sensitive practices, enhance long-term participation, enjoyment and protect children and vulnerable adults from harm.

While RCs are not a cure-all for problems of practice in sport, they align well with evidence on professional judgement and decision making, relationship building and when nurtured well might create trusting partnerships encouraging connection, openness, and honesty. This may support the development of coaching competency. There are potential caveats to this, and coaches are encouraged to reflect on ethical sensitivities around having RCs. For example, there may be a need to consider issues of confidentiality, being mindful of the spaces in which RCs take place and the need for boundaries. Coaches should consider who may overhear sensitive conversations in the

spaces they are taking place. They should also consider what should be said, what should not be said or censored to protect confidentiality and long-term trust in relationships with others. Within relationships, closeness is important (Jowett, 2017). However, boundaries should also be in place, ensuring this remains appropriate. Mentoring may support development of coaching competency through RCs, helping to navigate relationships in the complex and indeterminate realities of sport coaching practice (Leeder & Sawiuk, 2021). Used well, RCs have the potential to support the development of quality coach-athlete relationships, where coaching becomes more closely aligned to a human practice of judgment, care, and development.

Coda

Before closing this thesis, one final reflection is provided within this coda. It was suggested by the thesis examiners, and I am grateful for the opportunity to consider the implications of my research in this manner. I will start by considering the original question that I had before starting this journey: what is reflection? When answering this question, I will consider my personal understanding of reflection, reflexivity and what being critically reflective means. I will then revisit Dewey, considering what it means to take a pragmatic perspective, before considering an inherent positive-negative dualism in my thesis and in sport. Within this, I will reflect on the tension between encouraging critically RP in an inherently precarious working environment that does not welcome criticism and where many coaches are volunteers. Finally, I will reflect on identity and what it means for inclusion in or exclusion from groups. For this final consideration, I will use two poetic reflections that I recently created, to illustrate and contextualise my experience of narrating my own identity as a man and father.

I currently understand reflection as a process of inquiry; an active and deliberate application of higher order thinking to explore and understand an idea or experience retrospectively. Because reflection has a basis in language i.e., the manipulation of linguistic symbols to make sense of and reason about ideas and experiences, and it allows us to understand and act in the world in a more informed intelligible way, it is an inherently social process.

As reflecting helps to understand ideas and make sense of experience, it is implied that we experience a “partial absence of meaning” as we reflect to generate a fuller understanding of phenomena (Dewey, 1933, pp. 58-59). If we embody an attitude of knowing, a feeling of rightness or a sense of certainty, then it is unlikely that we will reflect. A degree of humility and open-mindedness seems necessary to set conditions enabling us to consider ideas that differ to our established ways of thinking. Thus, attitudes and qualities that we embody, seem to determine the quality of reflective inquiry.

Critical reflection includes considering our assumptions and those embedded in society or ideologies. By questioning these assumptions, we can work toward a more integrated and/or differentiated understanding. For example, a coach might reflect on the assumption that those who succeed have worked harder than those who have not. They might critically engage with the uneven distribution of opportunities in the sport coaching profession. In my own experience in strength and conditioning many years ago, I had an opportunity to engage with a season-long internship at a professional football club who agreed to pay my travel fees (I did not have a car or driving license at the time so used public transport and worked a part time job to make ends meet). Upon beginning the internship, the club had decided that they could no longer fund my travel expenses, meaning I would have to self-fund the cost of travelling to the club as well as volunteering full time hours. Living as a working-class person at the time, I could not afford this and felt a sense of injustice as another intern who could afford to work voluntarily took on this role. This highlights that financial privilege can affect success when this depends on completing voluntary internships to gain experience in professional sport (Adams, 2025). Thus, we may reframe the assumption that those who succeed have simply worked harder, to consider other barriers and enabling factors that lead to or impinge on a person's likelihood of succeeding. This may also extend to the intersection of personal and professional constraints discussed in chapter nine. Personal constraints (e.g., selling our flat and buying a house, becoming a father) would intersect with professional constraints (working long hours as a teacher, supporting students pastorally, engaging in CPD, marking student work, creating lesson plans/resources) to limit time available for many other activities. Indeed, working full time and being a father has resulted in reframing my goals and priorities within these constraints. Now, being a father is who I am, and my priorities are framed around my son's needs. My conception of success (defined previously in relation to my career in sport) has now shifted to that of providing love and compassion towards my son.

Reflexivity involves considering how we shape and how we are shaped by experience. We turn the lens onto the self, considering what we bring to an experience and reciprocally how

experience reinforces or shapes the self. This requires us to “think about how we are thinking”, implying in-the-moment noticing of patterns of thought and a consideration of assumptions and values (Mowles, 2024, p. 94). The self becomes both subject reflecting and object of reflection. An example of reflexivity in sport coaching might include the coach inquiring into the way their attempts at being supportive with athletes (checking in with them and building rapport) may mask subtle modes of control. The coach might value athlete-centredness and aim to create conditions for athletes to work in self-regulated ways. However, when engaging in reflexivity the coach may notice that they seem to check-in with athletes as a subtle form of surveillance, to make sure the athlete’s intention and behaviour are aligned with the coach’s expectations. This contradiction of a coaches’ values and their actual behaviour may then form the focus of reflexive inquiry. They may then reframe their approach and start with the needs, wants, and goals of the athletes. They might suggest ways to achieve their goals and when appropriate encourage self-regulation (e.g., suggesting options rather than prescribing, guiding and questioning rather than telling).

How does the above relate to pragmatism? This way of knowing implies that we develop knowledge through engagement with experience. By interacting with others and by acting in the world, “reality acts back” towards us (Mowles, 2024, p. 96). Experience could be framed as the analogous laboratory through which knowledge is verified through reflective inquiry. This may include abducting plausible warranted assertions about the likely causes of problems, suggesting workable solutions aligning with contextual constraints. In pragmatism “we create the world and are created by it” aligning with the reflexive turn to self (Mowles, 2024, p. 95). This positions reflection, critical reflection and reflexivity as processes through which we navigate experience by inquiring into its meaning, assumptions, and how we shape and are shaped by it respectively.

As is standard practice in the UK, having submitted this thesis I was invited to defend it at a viva voce examination. During the viva I was asked about the positive bias inherent within my thesis where reflection is framed as a positive act, generating positive solutions and positive change. The examiners asked me to consider this bias more critically and consider how it aligns with my model of

reflection. Consequently, I will engage diffractively with this idea (Wong, 2024) considering the privileged position being positive seems to have and how this compares to being negative.

Diffractive analysis means reading insights through one another, comparing them and reading into the “mapping of interference” and the “specificities of difference” (Wong, 2024, p. 74). I will use the positive-negative binary as a focus of inquiry in the following section, considering how these opposing constructs interact, and interfere with each other. I will also consider whether a positive-negative binary is helpful at all and what an alternative might involve.

The findings of this thesis seem to frame triggers (or invitations) to reflect as negative experiences to be remediated e.g., to be turned into positives. For example, feelings of uncertainty, perplexity, frustration, vulnerability, and self-doubt often feature as triggers to reflect. Conversely if reflection remained positive and focussed on how to replicate successes in the future, the tendency to ask critical questions and challenge assumptions and ethical tensions is likely to reduce. This may oversimplify a process of inquiry that should ideally engage with the complexities and entanglements inherent in experience. A binary categorisation (positive-negative) becomes limiting, constraining practitioners to inquire into highly delimited parts of the larger web of complex interactive elements of experience. An emphasis on fixing the negative might risk rushing (particularly when practitioners are overstretched with their workload) or obscuring the work that can create insights through discomfort and uncertainty. Once the feeling of discomfort dissipates, do we simply move on, or do we reflect further on the nature of the experience and find deeper meaning about the self?

Tension in this positive-negative binary becomes pronounced in sport coaching. This environment is shaped by emphasis on performance, control, winning, and job precarity. In high performance environments coaches are encouraged to be critically reflective, but practically this may be risky. For example, self-critique may be perceived as weakness, lack of confidence or incompetence. This may limit the possibility of contract renewal leading to high coaching staff turnover. This may lead to practitioners engaging in RP performatively, and/or framing reflection

positively, while engaging critically in private spaces or informal conversations. Negatively framed reflection may be hidden as a survival mechanism, and practitioners may even feel uncomfortable engaging in it. Thus, there may be a negotiation between being honest or being employable, being vulnerable or surviving. Survival may risk an increasing sense of vulnerability and higher cognitive dissonance.

A positive-negative binary seems to be constraining, particularly when practitioners may benefit from engaging with discomfort for extended periods of time. Reframing RP from fixing negative experiences/emotions, to engaging with them over time to understand the meaning of them might be useful. It may also be helpful to think of binaries reciprocating or intra-acting (Wong, 2024). This way of framing RP emphasises process and does not try to eliminate negative experiences or idealise positive ones but to inquire into and understand both modes of lived experience.

When I was asked if I would do anything differently if I was to start the thesis now, I discussed that I might aim to understand reflection by starting with a hermeneutic reading of Dewey's work. This opened deeper philosophical discussion with an agreement that if I started with Dewey's ideas then I would not start with Dewey in the way intended. Instead, I might start (rather than end) with an experiential dilemma before exploring reflection from a theoretical perspective. I would be 'flipping the pyramid' (figure 1 in chapter 1) as I discussed in the viva. Having completed a first-person study and embodying epistemological pragmatism, I would feel confident engaging with such a study now. However, if I started at the same point (several years ago) with the same assumptions that I had then, I may not have been comfortable or able to confidently navigate the complexities of first-person inquiry. This signals the personal growth that has occurred while writing this thesis as I will reflect on next.

This journey has been transformational on an intellectual as well as epistemic level. I have changed through each stage, with my sense of self evolving alongside changes occurring in my life and through writing this thesis. Pivotal in my development were my three supervisors, who

wholeheartedly offered support, guidance and helpful insight expanding my own framework of understanding. Their feedback facilitated the change in the quality of my work, and the shift in my sense of self as a writer, reflective practitioner, and researcher. By challenging my views, questioning me, and selflessly providing their knowledge, experience, expertise and insight, they provided the conditions for my personal and epistemic growth. They also supported me, guided me, and encouraged me, helping me to hold onto self-belief when I struggled to believe in myself. Engaging in a PhD was at times a very challenging and sometimes isolating endeavour (particularly during the COVID pandemic). However, I was extremely lucky to have such compassionate, dedicated, and supportive supervisors who gave so much of themselves to support me. As teachers do, they gave selflessly with the hope that they would influence positive change in me and my work. As a teacher myself this resonates, so I would like to take a moment to recognise the time, effort, patience, and compassion they gave for my development. I was only able to truly flourish and find my voice as a writer and researcher with their guidance and support. I will be eternally grateful for everything they have done to support my journey (our journey) over the last six years. They have truly been a guiding light showing me the way.

Another example of significant change was becoming a father. This has taught me more about myself than I ever expected. I have questioned who I am through becoming a father, providing experiences that I engaged with reflexively. Being an older father, I reflect that my son is growing and developing continuously while my body ages and, in some ways, is declining. During the viva I mentioned that I had written poetry as a form of reflection. I was asked if I would consider using poetry in my inquiries. I was inspired by this question to use two of my poetic reflections to capture how I reframed my biography of sometimes quite distressing memories through a compassionate lens, trying to be kinder to myself while rationalising my past. I engaged with concepts from symbolic interactionism to show how identity evolves through interaction with others. This poetic form integrates sociological and psychological concepts with an experiential dilemma (a shifting identity) and is expressed through figurative language, creating a polysemic quality.

Looking at the mirror, I see an imaged and aging body; longevous and fading. The temporal spacing of countless moments, converging into senescence. Looking into the mirrored body invites flashing memories, emotive...glaring. A biography of storied significance: Harrowing, painful, reminiscent, cherished. (Re)collecting tokens of being, confessions and reflections, deep, telling, meaningful. Frames of compassion shape these memoried feelings, and identity evolves around the reflective surface. A relational weave: threads formed through connection, in fatherhood and through love.

This poem started with an intention to reflect on my role as a father and used juxtaposed imagery such as the physical mirror that also symbolises the reflection; I was reflecting on myself and my identity. While my body ages, I reframe my age as an opportunity to support my son through my acquired ability to navigate the world (phronesis – practical wisdom). I use the words *looking into* the mirrored body to signal a turn to self (i.e., reflexivity). Not just looking at myself physically but looking into my past through recollecting memories. This was also partly influenced by concepts of contextual memory recall e.g., as I look at myself, I remember my past i.e., *flashing memories*. Reflecting on these memories with compassion, in connection with others (e.g., my wife who I speak openly with about my personal feelings and challenges) enables me to be kinder to myself and reframe challenges. Connection with others forms a relational weave in the threads of the frame, thus juxtaposing the physical and the metaphorical frame. Metaphorically the frame created from a relational weave characterises reflection as a relational process.

This evolved from another poetic reflection where I more explicitly reflected on identity and becoming a man. This acknowledged the co-construction of identity, and definitions of manhood, where interactions help us to shape and internalise a new sense of self. Thus, who we are is a constant process of becoming through connection and interaction with others.

Who I am is an emergent sense of being; dynamic and adaptive, shaped by connection. A constant state of becoming through interaction and change.

Fatherhood transformed me and my identity gains meaning through love. Each shared experience shapes who I am to my son and who I am to myself. In this bond we grow together, learning and changing continuously. The self evolves through interaction, and then we come back to self. Identity is never fixed, but a conversation between who we are now and what we bring into our interactions. When we show love, our sense of manhood connects with it and being a man becomes defined within an act of love.

I wrote this latter poetic reflection in response to a discussion with someone embodying firm views about biological determinism, while I was considering my role in supporting my son to feel comfortable in his sense of self as he grows up and becomes a man. I reflected on the idea that manhood is a fluid concept that is personal to the self. I want my son to be able to narrate his own identity and feel comfortable if he feels differently to traditional norms about what a man is. As a father, my role is to keep him safe and prepare him for independence in the world. Feeling safe extends beyond being physically safe and protected from physical harm. My wife and I want our son to feel comfortable talking with us about the challenges of life, including his feelings and sense of who he is becoming. We aim to be able to support him in navigating the complexity of life, including the challenges of dissonance and interpersonal dilemmas. Being comfortable in his sense of self and being able to feel safe narrating and expressing his own identity with us is a priority, particularly in a world with differing ways of thinking and where competition often replaces compassion.

While I was discussing my views about identity being constructed and being challenged with views of biological determinism, I reflected on some of the assumptions that seemed to be imbued within these ideas. This seemed to lead to tension and both of us defending our perspective. I felt strongly about my perspective, as did they. Biological determinism aligns with positivism and hard science. The constructed and emergent self/identity aligns with pragmatism, symbolic interactionism, and assumptions inherent in social science. This may have implications for inclusion and exclusion within groups and may impact a personal sense of belonging. Inclusion/exclusion and

belonging are said to be an active process of negotiation between members of a group (Mowles, 2024). Prior to my PhD I identified with hard sciences, having completed a master's degree dissertation exploring the association between psychological characteristics and biomechanical measures of bench press performance. Over time I reframed my identity as a researcher, challenging my epistemic perspective and which modes of inquiry can generate knowledge, culminating in this thesis. Although I do not consider myself a complete outsider of the hard sciences, being a current accredited member of the UKSCA that integrates modes of doing sport science, I do find my own voice resonated more amongst social scientists.

Being challenged with biological determinism conflicted with my beliefs, creating a sense of resistance. This reveals that ways of knowing are lived, negotiated, and defended in interaction rather than representing trueness or falsehood. The discomfort I experienced became a site of reflection, representing the core argument of this thesis that reflection and reflexivity are relational processes through which identities, assumptions and boundaries are in a constant state of becoming.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Theme table for an investigation of the process of reflection

<i>Higher order themes</i>	<i>Themes</i>	<i>Codes</i>	<i>Text</i>
Triggers for reflection	Lack of knowledge as a trigger of reflection	Gaps in knowledge – initiating a sense of unease	“It was initiated by a sense of unease in the learner when they realized that their knowledge was incomplete or inaccurate” (Grant, Vermunt, Kinnersley, & Houston, 2007, p. 2)
		New information	“Those events in supervision or therapy that represent new information to the practitioner and provide an opening for reflective process to begin” (Neufeldt, Karno, & Nelson, 1996, p. 6)
		Concern of not knowing	“For others, it [the trigger of reflection] was the continuing threat of what could have happened or the concern of not knowing the correct procedure” (Asselin, Schwartz-Barcott, & Osterman, 2013, p. 910)
	Proactive inquiry – formalised routines and analysing self	Sources of personal data	“Autobiographies and other personal narratives are rich sources of data through which to examine the impact certain experiences play in people’s lives” (McDonald & Kahn, 2014, p. 6)
		Formalised routines	“For a number of nurses, the trigger event was simply the nurses’ own formalised routines for reflecting back on the day’s clinical situations, e.g., writing in a daily journal or routinely reflecting back while driving home” (Asselin et al., 2013, p. 910)
		Self-evaluation	“She also suggests techniques such as peer and self-assessment help to facilitate reflective abilities” (Roberts, 2008, p. 6)
	Reactive inquiry - experience as a trigger	Changes in routine	“For one nurse, the trigger event was the change in shift routine used to ensure that all safety equipment is in place” (Asselin et al., 2013, p. 910)
		Difficult or critical tasks	“The expert will only move out of this mode [automatic, intuitive action] when the task in hand is particularly difficult or critical, or because they have critically reflected on their own intuition and are reconsidering the initial action” (Kinchin, Cabot, & Hay, 2008, p. 97)
		Experience triggers reflection	“Boyd and Fales (1983) identify the trigger of reflection as being ‘experience’” (Nguyen, Fernandez, Karsenti, & Charlin, 2014, p. 1184)
	Emotive responses and unease	Problems to which there is no simple solution	“It may be precipitated by questions/tasks/personal considerations/problematic issues, to which there is no simple solution” (de Cossart, Fish, & Hillman, 2012, p. 713)
		Awareness of a discomfort or lack of information	“Awareness initiates the process of reflection when an individual acknowledges a discomfort or lack of information in explaining something” (Thorpe, 2004, p. 329)
		Personal solutions are inadequate	“It is often only where teachers perceive that their personal solutions to classroom ‘problems’ are inadequate that they will be moved to search for means by which they can change” (Muir & Beswick, 2007, p. 78)

An attitude that is conducive to reflection - openness, wholeheartedness, and responsibility	Openness – within and between people	Emotions as catalysts	“Emotions and feelings can act as catalysts during reflection” (Cropley, Miles, & Peel, 2012, p. 24)
		Openness between colleagues	“The participants' and the facilitators' motivation, respect and openness between colleagues, and the participation of expert nurses contributed to the success of the continuing education intervention” (Goudreau et al., 2015, p. 576)
		Open mindedness - leading to more sophisticated types of reflection	“More sophisticated types of reflection can be exhibited by individuals in contextual knowing because the knower views the world with an open mind and an attitude that truth is context bound” (Ostorga, 2006, p. 8)
		Personal differences that limit openness	“no one can be forced to be open, and there are personal differences that limit how open one chooses to be” (Moldjord & Hybertsen, 2015, p. 296)
		Open mindedness involves a person being inquisitive	“Open mindedness, according to Dewey, entails the ability to entertain new ideas, consider problems that may arise, examine alternatives solutions, and be inquisitive” (Gordon, 2017, p. 22)
		Open mindedness - considering multiple perspectives	“An open-minded designer considers multiple perspectives” (Hong & Choi, 2011, p. 696)
		Open-mindedness - remaining open to multiple alternative possibilities	“It [open mindedness] refers to the ability to remain open to multiple, alternative possibilities” (Ostorga, 2006, p. 6)
		Openness - allowing the multiplicity of perspectives	“Therefore, teacher educators need to possess the necessary open stance in themselves to allow for a multiplicity of perspectives in professional practice” (Ostorga, 2006, p. 19)
		Openness to a variety of alternative interpretations	“Openness is the same search expressed in a less active way, a certain element of staying open, of openness to a variety of alternatives for interpreting what is being conveyed” (Neufeldt et al., 1996, p. 7)
		Openness - enabling the examination of assumptions	“This openness to critically view the problem from different angles and to examine assumptions required at least the open-mindedness of the independent knower” (Ostorga, 2006, p. 17)
		Engagement with reflection - a need to be open with themselves and questioning	“In order to engage in the reflective process fully practitioners must be open with themselves and questioning” (Cropley et al., 2012, p. 24)
		Openness to sharing one’s real thoughts	“A number of authors in education have looked into the necessary conditions for RP. Some are inherent in the skills expected of the student teacher, for example, openness to sharing one’s real thoughts” (Goulet, Larue, & Alderson, 2016, p. 145)
		Persisting with an attitude of open-mindedness	“Overall, several common processes seem to take place, including describing the situation, surfacing and questioning initial understandings and assumptions, and persisting, with an attitude of open-mindedness” (Jay & Johnson, 2002, p. 75)
		Openness - promoting learning through reflection	“To be effective in promoting learning, journal writing necessitates that students be honest and open in their entries” (Thorpe, 2004, p. 340)
		Being enthusiastic about discovering a solution to a problem	“Wholeheartedness is the ability to be genuinely enthusiastic about discovering the solution to a problem” (Gordon, 2017, p. 22)

Epistemology	Wholeheartedness – enthusiasm about discovering a solution	Persisting with an attitude of whole heartedness, open-mindedness, and responsibility	“Overall, several common processes seem to take place, including describing the situation, surfacing and questioning initial understandings and assumptions, and persisting, with an attitude of open-mindedness, responsibility, and wholeheartedness” (Jay & Johnson, 2002, p. 75) “An analysis of Dewey’s paradigm of reflective thought reveals that three attitudes are required in the process of reflective thinking: open-mindedness, responsibility, and wholeheartedness” (Ostorga, 2006, p. 6) “With their responsibility and whole-heartedness, designers are more likely to overcome barriers during a design process, to be engrossed in a design task” (Hong & Choi, 2011, p. 696) “Responsibility means careful consideration of the consequences to which an action leads” (Farrell, 2012, p. 15)
	Responsibility – considering the consequences of one’s actions	Three attitudes required for reflective thinking – whole heartedness, open-mindedness, and responsibility Whole-heartedness and responsibility - being engrossed in a task and overcoming barriers Responsibility - considering the consequences of their actions Responsibility - required for reflective thinking	“An analysis of Dewey’s paradigm of reflective thought reveals that three attitudes are required in the process of reflective thinking: open-mindedness, responsibility, and wholeheartedness” (Ostorga, 2006, p. 6) “Overall, several common processes seem to take place, including describing the situation, surfacing and questioning initial understandings and assumptions, and persisting, with an attitude of open-mindedness, responsibility, and wholeheartedness” (Jay & Johnson, 2002, p. 75)
		Persisting with an attitude of responsibility	“When coaches perceived that the new learning did not work in practice having tried it out, they progressed to either reject it or enter into a cycle of continuous adaptation and experimentation” (Stodter & Cushion, 2017, p. 11)
	Tolerating uncertainty - knowledge perceived as relative	Knowledge rejected or continuously adapted and experimented with depending on perceptions of whether it works in practice Negative capability - tolerating uncertainties, mysteries, and doubts	“This balance may best be achieved by seeking to work in what John Keats called negative capability—i.e., being in uncertainties, mysteries, and doubts without any irritable reaching after fact and reason” (Nyberg, 1971; Rogers, 2001, p. 50) “The implication is that the expert holds the ‘right answer’. However, as experts often fail to agree, the ‘right answer’ is a moving target for the student to identify” (Kinchin et al., 2008, p. 101)
		The right answer is often a moving target	“As learners begin to recognize knowledge as provisional and relative, evidence is used to reason among alternatives” (Entwistle & Peterson, 2004; Stodter & Cushion, 2017, p. 13)
	Epistemology – mediating engagement and the quality of reflection	Relative views – knowledge is provisional, and evidence used to reason among alternatives Epistemological worldviews – linked to logical reasoning and the capacity to engage in reflective thought Reflection – acknowledging personal experiences as a valid way of knowing Absolute knower less likely to reflect deeply – thinking is about finding and accepting the correct course of action	“Although the ability to reflect is linked to logical reasoning, epistemological world views (Schraw & Olafson, 2003) have also been linked to the capacity to engage in reflective thought” (Ostorga, 2006, p. 6) “You must however have an awareness to the potential for learning, acknowledging personal experiences as valid learning” (Crathern, 2001, p. 165) “The absolute knower is less likely to reflect deeply because the act of thinking is a process of finding and accepting the right course of action” (Ostorga, 2006, p. 8)

		Epistemology - determining the sophistication of reflection	"The assumption is that more sophisticated types of reflection can be exhibited by individuals in contextual knowing because the knower views the world with an open mind and an attitude that truth is context bound. There are multiple solutions to problems therefore deep analysis and reflective thought are the ways to find the possible solutions" (Ostorga, 2006, p. 8) "The quality of reflection changes as the student matures and new epistemic stances emerge" (Ostorga, 2006, p. 7) "In order to begin reflection, the individual must have certain values and beliefs about learning that will lead to reflection" (Ostorga, 2006, p. 6) "Reflectivity seems to be grounded on specific epistemic stances that are socially constructed" (Ostorga, 2006, p. 19) "Of the three attitudes, open-mindedness is the most significant in examining the relationship between reflectivity and epistemology" (Ostorga, 2006, p. 6)
		Quality of reflection changes with maturity and refinements of epistemic stance Epistemology - values and beliefs about learning that will lead to reflection Reflectivity is grounded upon specific epistemic stances Epistemology and reflectivity - open-mindedness is the most significant attitude for examining the relationship Epistemology and reflective thinking - interact leading to thinking about practice in ways congruent with knowing and reasoning pattern Essential conditions for the use of RP - Personal qualities	"The epistemology of this participant interacted with her reflective thinking process in that patterns of reasoning led her to think about her practice in specific ways that were congruent with her knowing and reasoning pattern" (Ostorga, 2006, p. 15) "Some of the conditions for the use of RP are indeed essential to its application. Several of the conditions mentioned by the authors concern mainly personal qualities and came to light in the initial sample of the analysis" (Goulet et al., 2016, p. 141)
	Dualistic assumptions – learning as reproduction of facts and accepted norms	Absolute closed ideas about knowledge - learning as a simple reproduction of an accepted norm Dualistic assumptions about knowledge - right and wrong ways of coaching provided by authority	"Individuals holding these more absolute, closed ideas about knowledge tend to also approach learning as simple reproduction of the accepted norm" (Entwistle & Peterson, 2004; Piggott, 2012; Stodter & Cushion, 2017, p. 13) "Individual subscription to 'right' and 'wrong' ways of coaching underpinned by legitimate knowledge provided by authority, such as club bosses, follows a dualistic assumption about knowledge" (Entwistle & Peterson, 2004; Stodter & Cushion, 2017, p. 13)
		Absolute knower – seeks to learn by receiving knowledge of what is right from authorities Technical rationalistic approaches – inappropriately feeding students' assumptions that technical rationality is enough	"The person who is an absolute knower, the first category in the taxonomy, seeks to learn by receiving knowledge of what is right from authorities (teachers or experts)" (Ostorga, 2006, p. 7) "The model of technical rationality (i.e., the theories and facts) that serves as the foundation for most fields of study can be nicely packaged and delivered and as a result, inappropriately feed students' assumptions that technical rationality is enough or all there is" (Rogers, 2001, p. 50)
Contextual factors	A conducive environment	The organizational setting - opportunity, time, and support	"Other conditions are more closely related to the organizational setting: for example, the opportunity, time, and support teachers are given" (Goulet et al., 2016, p. 145)
		There must be an environment conducive to reflection	"Seibert and Daudelin (1999) model explored the influence of specific contextual variables on reflection that occurs during a developmental experience. They

	Enablers – intellectually and emotionally supportive environment, group discussion, free expression of speech	stated that there must be an environment providing conditions conducive to reflection” (Rogers, 2001, p. 43) “Notable influencing factors leading to reflection include a supportive environment, both intellectually and emotionally, group discussion, and free expression of speech” (Stanley, Lindsay, Parker, Kawamura, & Zubairi, 2018, p. 184)
	Environmental factors supporting reflection - autonomy, effective feedback, connection to peers, access to faculty, and appropriate challenges	One way for faculty to accomplish this is to establish an environment rich with factors that support reflection. Such factors may include autonomy, effective feedback, connection to peers, access to faculty, and appropriate challenges (Rogers, 2001, p. 51; Seibert & Daudelin, 1999)
	Conditions of reflection - access to peers, stage of learning, issue characteristics and environment	“These findings could also be understood through Gilbert and Trudel (2005) earlier work which examined the settings that influence the use of reflection. Specifically, they identified four core conditions: (a) access to peers, (b) stage of learning (e.g., novice to expert), (c) issue characteristics (e.g., nature of the coaching issues experienced), and (d) environment (e.g., context of coaching practice)” (Cropley et al., 2012, p. 8)
	Conditions of reflection – an appropriate balance of challenge and support	“Conversely, institutions need to assure that they do not rationalize inappropriate challenges in the name of reflection. What is needed is an appropriate balance of challenge and support” (Rogers, 2001, p. 50)
	Enablers of reflection - motivation, respect, and openness between colleagues	“The participants' and the facilitators' motivation, respect and openness between colleagues, and the participation of expert nurses contributed to the success of the CEI [continuing education intervention]” (Goudreau et al., 2015, p. 576)
	If the environment is right, it is a matter of time – opportunities to practice reflection	“If the environment is right then it becomes a matter of time, allowing the learner sufficient opportunities to practice reflection both in and on-action and practice again” (Burt & Morgan, 2014, p. 477)
	The learning environment needs to be right	“Put positively, the environment for learning needs to be right” (Burt & Morgan, 2014, p. 477)
	Presenting conditions - affecting depth of engagement	“According to Gilbert and Trudel (2005) the nature, process, and impact of reflection are likely to change depending upon the combination of the conditions present at the time of reflecting. For example, if the issue experienced was relatively routine, coaches may tend to rely on coaching support materials in order to deal with the problem rather than in-depth reflection” (Cropley et al., 2012, p. 8)
Autonomy support	Encouraging practitioners to develop their own approaches to reflection	“Coaches should be encouraged to develop their own approaches to reflection that suit both their own learning needs and the context of their practice” (Cropley et al., 2012, p. 26; Knowles, Tyler, Gilbourne, & Eubank, 2006)
	Tutors as facilitator	“By conceiving the tutor as a facilitator (Lyle, 2002), who utilizes “why?” and “what if?” questions, the NGB could present the learner with the opportunity to critically reflect upon their practice” (Lyle, 2002; Nelson & Cushion, 2006, p. 181)

From private reflection to reflecting with others: Building relationships	Confidentiality – a protected space to think openly	Practitioners engage in less formal, less structured reflection	“All participants indicated that they had never really engaged in RP in the form it was focused on in this study. The participants suggested that their methods of ‘evaluation’ were always less formal, less structured, and often not recorded” (Cropley et al., 2012, p. 17)
		Silent learning - some people find value in listening to colleagues process their challenges	“Some described attending the group multiple times without talking or presenting a case, but finding value in listening to colleagues process their challenges” (Harrison, 2016, p. 681)
		Voluntary involvement is valued	“Participants valued the voluntary nature of the group. This is a variation on programs that require participation, such as Nurse-Family Partnership and Health Families America home-visiting programs as well as many other programs” (Harrison, 2016, p. 681)
		Self-directed learning - helping develop habits of reflection	Mezirow (1991) contended that using principles of andragogy in one’s teaching (i.e., assisting adults to learn in a manner that enables them to be self-directed) can help develop habits of reflection in students” (Rogers, 2001, p. 46)
		Ethical considerations – disclosure placing students in a vulnerable position when writing should be honest and open	“Remain cognizant and observant of ethical consideration. To be effective in promoting learning, journal writing necessitates that student be honest and open in their entries. This type of disclosure places students in a vulnerable position” (Thorpe, 2004, p. 340)
		Effective reflection requires a protected environment	“The exploration of the self that reflection involves requires a relatively protected environment in which one is not continually preoccupied by defending oneself from the scrutiny of others” (Boud, 2001, p. 15)
		Loosening constraints to learning - keeping journal writing private	“Keeping journals private, away from the eyes of others, can be a useful principle to adopt in courses. It means that writing may not be as constrained as it would be if it were revealed to others” (Boud, 2001, p. 16)
		Confidentiality and freedom to speak openly ensures positive experiences and student learning	“Confidentiality and the freedom to speak openly about issues contributed to positive experiences and enhanced student learning” (Gallagher et al., 2017, p. 11)
A relational process – the mechanism of change		Revealing written reflection – deciding to who and in what form can be liberating	“At the very least, the postponing of decisions about whether writing is to be revealed, to whom, and in what form can be liberating” (Boud, 2001, p. 16)
		Reflection is a relational process – internally between elements of consciousness and socially with others	“Making meaning from our experience is a relational process—internally between different elements of our consciousness, internally between our personal and social aspects, externally between ourselves and individual others, and within a shared collective” (Jordi, 2011, p. 14)
		Supporting practitioners in the field - reflective consultations provide a supportive relational experience that practitioners valued	“Given that a central purpose of reflective consultation is to support practitioners in the field, the model validates that in this case, the reflective consultation group provided a supportive, safe, relational experience that practitioners valued” (Harrison, 2016, p. 680)
		Relational experiences can get carried into the learner’s practice from a reflective consultation	“When describing changes to their practice, some practitioners said they responded by trying to purposefully provide a relational experience for a parent that paralleled what they had experienced with the consultant and in the reflective consultation group” (Harrison, 2016, p. 679)

Reflecting with experienced others	Relational skills - how you are is as important as what you do	"Inherent in this idea is Pawl and St John (1998) guidance that how you are is as important as what you do" (Harrison, 2016, p. 676)
	Relationships are the mechanism of change in reflective supervision between supervisor and practitioner	Reflective supervision, a "relationship for learning," posits that the relationship itself, between the supervisor and the practitioner, is the mechanism of change" (Fenichel, 1992; Harrison, 2016, p. 671)
	Learning from different year groups in education programs enhancing the learning that occurred	"Facilitators expressed merit in the benefits of having students from different years of the pre-registration (years one, two, three and 4) and post-registration (part one and two) education programmes together and viewed this as enhancing the learning that occurred during the session" (Gallagher et al., 2017, p. 11)
	People can 'feed off the knowledge of others' to help make sense of their own practice and promote further learning	"The view shared amongst the participants of this study was that coaches could "feed" off the knowledge of others, which may help them make sense of their own coaching and promote further learning" (Cropley et al., 2012, p. 28)
Differing perspectives – helping practitioners 'see beyond themselves'.	Reflection with more experienced others – providing support and strengthening bonds within a team	"Secondly, managers asserted that the reflection space created within the continuing education intervention constituted a space for support between NGN and more experienced nurses, and that it was an opportunity to strengthen the bonds within the teams" (Goudreau et al., 2015, p. 576)
	Seeking advice from peers to help resolve a challenging issue	"For example, occasionally a coach would contact another respected coach and ask for strategies to help resolve a challenging issue" (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, p. 27)
	Solitary reflection – students do not have a body of knowledge and experience in the day-to-day working environment of professionals that is the content of reflection	"The value of solitary RP for students, or neophyte practitioners, has been questioned on the basis that students do not have access to the body of knowledge and experience in the day-to-day of the professionals that is seen as the real content of professional reflection" (Cropley et al., 2012, p. 23)
	Sharing experiences – providing a greater understanding of context	"Therefore, if the sharing of experiences provides a greater understanding of context, then it could be suggested that initially there is a need to self-reflect and record one's thoughts and feelings" (Hughes, Lee, & Chesterfield, 2009, p. 370)
	Meaningful shared reflections - supporting novices to understand the working environment	"Additionally, participants in this study made the distinction that shared processes of reflection would be more beneficial for an inexperienced coach as "they are still learning about the environment that they operate in, so support is necessary to ensure that their reflections are meaningful" (Cropley et al., 2012, p. 27)
	A private conversation with self before articulating this in public	"In support of this, Ghaye and Ghaye (1998) propose that reflective conversations may initially take the form of a private 'conversation with self', but then it should be articulated in public" (Hughes et al., 2009, p. 370)
	Differences in points of view – providing perspective as a basis of reflection and essential for learning	"Differences in points of view and thoughts are essential for learning and development – the differences (i.e., the differential potential of the supervision) between supervisee and supervisor providing perspective and thus the basis for reflection" (Frølund & Nielsen, 2009, p. 100)

Helping others to reflect facilitating tasks within the reflective journey	Encouraging dialogue	Group reflection – helping to trade ideas and creating a supportive environment for learning and change Input from peers can correct misconceptions and fill gaps in understanding Learning from others' experiences – being exposed to other perspectives and opinions triggers a learning experience Other people can challenge ideas to get a better reflection out of them Peer support - offering alternative solutions and challenging the individual when reflecting Practitioners guide others to see beyond themselves and assert their personal practice Cross-fertilization of ideas within a group – understanding is confirmed, challenged, enlarged, or even changed Reflection can be private or public - shared reflection invites different perspectives which can lead to deeper more critical reflection Personal reflection can be limited by our own knowledge, ideas and understanding – sharing experiences allows a wider knowledge base to develop The need for access to alternative perspectives to critique our assumptions Understanding how others interpret and see us is helpful – we can understand ourselves based on misunderstandings Initiating reflection using open-ended questions – allowing conversations to occur	“The notion of group reflection supports the work of Gustafsson and Fagerberg (2004) who identified that group reflection can help to trade ideas and create a supportive environment for learning and change” (Cropley et al., 2012, p. 28) Input from peers can help to correct misconceptions and fill in gaps in understanding” (Chin & Brown, 2002, p. 541) “In addition to learning because of being exposed to a range of opinions or perspectives, students also identified the ways in which exposure to the experience of another group member could trigger a learning experience for them” (Platzer et al., 2000, p. 693) “This was further brought to light in the current findings as one participant stated, “Other coaches can challenge the person to get a better reflection out of them” (Cropley et al., 2012, p. 27) “This comment resonates with the suggestions of Anderson, Knowles, and Gilbourne (2004) who proposed that peers could help in offering alternative solutions and challenging the individual when reflecting” (Cropley et al., 2012, p. 27) “Practitioners necessitate guidance and support to see beyond themselves and to assert their personal practice” (Duffy, 2007, p. 1404; Johns, 1993) “It is in the midst of this vigorous cross fertilization that group members are most active, as understandings are confirmed, challenged, enlarged, or even changed. We learn from our own experience and from each other” (Hendricks et al., 1996, p. 100) “According to Ghaye and Lillyman (2014) reflection can be a private activity or a more public one. Sharing journal entries has the advantage of stimulating a different perspective (Jasper, 2003) which can lead to deeper, more critical reflection” (Bradbury-Jones, Coleman, Davies, Ellison, & Leigh, 2010, p. 571; Jensen & Christina, 2005; Johns, 2002) “It may be proposed that personal reflection in the form journal writing can be limited by our own knowledge, ideas and understanding, leading to the suggestion that the sharing of experiences with others allows a wider knowledge base to develop” (Hughes et al., 2009, pp. 369-370) “Mezirow goes on to say that learners need access to alternative meaning perspectives in order to critique their assumptions” (Platzer et al., 2000, p. 690) The way we understand ourselves can sometimes be based on a misunderstanding, and insight in how others interpret and see us, is helpful” (Dahl & Eriksen, 2016, p. 404) “How does one implement reflection in coaching or teaching if one has not done so before? It is recommended to simply start by asking open-ended questions and allow for conversation to occur” (Gordon, 2017, p. 27)

	Task of the facilitator - signposting important issues as they happen to be picked up later and drawn together Ending by helping members to draw the threads of meaning together and make plans Reflection questions - encouraging students to self-explain or elaborate as they read examples	“The task of the facilitator is to help to signpost important issues as they happen. Later these markers can be picked up as the threads are drawn together” (Hendricks, Mooney, & Berry, 1996, p. 100) “Toward the end of the session group members draw the threads together, and sometimes make plans to do things differently in future” (Hendricks et al., 1996, p. 101) “However, recent research indicates that examples with little information can be effective if students elaborate as they read examples. Thus, an intervention (such as providing reflection questions) that encourages a student to self-explain or elaborate on an example could ensure that students will at least attempt to elaborate when reading an example” (Lee & Hutchison, 1998, p. 188)
	The act of telling someone else - a useful tool for reflective learning	“Asking participants to explain to another student what he or she should do to balance a chemistry equation resulted in equal amounts of learning as asking participants to answer multiple-choice questions throughout. Thus, the act of telling someone else is an additional useful tool for asking participants to reflect” (Lee & Hutchison, 1998, p. 205)
	Recalling the event in detail - going over the event many times including people involved, their actions and their feelings	“People may need to go over the event several times as they are encouraged to recall the event in as much detail as possible. Other people who played a part are described, along with their actions. Feelings associated with the event are expressed” (Hendricks et al., 1996, p. 100)
	Encouraging members to let off steam constructively – the task of the facilitator	“However, many members recognize that there is a need to 'let off steam'. The task of the facilitator is to encourage the group to manage this constructively” (Hendricks et al., 1996, p. 100)
	Interventions by other individuals – steering the direction of thought ensuring misconceptions do not occur Emphasizing the process of RP rather than the outcome – adapting to other scenarios	“Intervention by other individuals may be necessary to steer the direction of thought, or to ensure that misconceptions do not occur” (Roberts, 2008, p. 5) “The emphasis on the process of RP rather than an outcome (Amundsen & Wilson, 2012) means that tutors are equipped with a process that they can use throughout their teaching career and can adapt to other scenarios such as solitary reflection after teaching, and reflection with colleagues on curriculum renewal” (Bell & Mladenovic, 2015, p. 31)
Helping learners to understand reflection.	Developing introductory sessions on the theoretical basis of reflective learning before implementing in the curriculum Modelling reflection – providing guidelines, sharing examples of RP, and helping the trainee identify difficulties to reflect on	“Our results also suggest the possible benefit of engaging students in introductory sessions on the theoretical basis of the reflective learning methodology before beginning its definitive implementation in the curriculum” (Fernández-Peña et al., 2016, p. 64) “One recommendation is to increase the structure with examples of what to reflect on and provide guidelines regarding when to complete the RP. This can be accomplished during either individual or group supervision by sharing examples of times when RP had been utilized in the past, and by helping the trainee identify a difficulty in session that could benefit from RP” (Cooper & Wieckowski, 2017, p. 257)

	Helping students to understand reflection - deconstructing and personally evaluating individual phenomenology of reflection Practitioners should be given an opportunity to develop understanding of RP - definitions, purpose, and process of RP – reducing them engaging in other processes that are not as effective There is a need for formal education in RP and its application Facilitators - integral to promoting and enabling a supportive environment for the reflective process that is very personal Practitioners can be supported and encouraged to reflect if support systems were in place Advocacy inquiry – uncovering reasons for action or mental models, stating a concrete observation and sharing judgements and perspectives Reflective learning - requires careful facilitation perhaps through mentoring in conjunction with a portfolio Learners often need help and support to reach a higher level of abstraction Reflecting without fear of criticism and judgement - the need for clarity about roles and expectations Exploring the process of reflection – clarifying what group members expect to gain and how to achieve this Coming to an understanding with the group about what reflection is and what they hope to gain from it - agreeing with group members that reflection is not a process that a facilitator can do for them Reshaping traditional teacher-student relationships – facilitating new associations	“This is not to define the process and outputs of thinking for students and measure their performance, but rather help the student’s own deconstruction and personal evaluation of the phenomenology of individual reflection” (Ixer, 2016, p. 819) “Coaches must be given the opportunity to develop their understanding of RP. This includes definitions of reflection, the purposes of reflection, and the process of RP. Helping coaches to develop this knowledge is likely to reduce the chances that coaches engage in other processes (e.g., simple evaluation) that will not allow them to learn from their experiences as effectively as RP” (Cropley et al., 2012, p. 40) “In line with this, the participants in this study commented on the need for more formal education regarding RP and its application” (Cropley et al., 2012, p. 28) “The results of this evaluation also suggest that the role of facilitator was integral to promoting an enabling and supportive environment for the reflective process, and the very personal nature of reflective activity” (Gallagher et al., 2017, p. 12) “In line with the findings of this study, therefore, coaches can be encouraged to reflect if support systems were in place” (Cropley et al., 2012, p. 29) “For example, when using advocacy-inquiry, educators seek to uncover learners’ rationale for action or mental models by stating a concrete observation and sharing their point of view or judgment about it before inquiring about the learners’ perspective” (Eppich & Cheng, 2015, p. 107) “From the outset, it was felt that the process of reflective learning would require careful facilitation. A system of mentoring was therefore initiated in conjunction with the portfolio” (Bush & Bissell, 2008, p. 104) “The teachers emphasized that the students needed help and support to reach a higher level of abstraction” (Dahl & Eriksen, 2016, p. 405) “Having safety in which roles and expectations were clearly defined so that the learner teacher could reflect without fear of criticism and judgement” (Platzer, Blake, & Ashford, 2000, p. 690) “The first session is used to explore the process of reflection and clarify what group members expect to gain, and how to achieve this” (Hendricks et al., 1996, p. 99) “Before group reflection can usefully begin it is necessary to come to an understanding with the group about what reflection is, and what they hope to gain from it. The staff here believe that reflection is not a process that the facilitator can do for the group, and this view needs to be explored and agreed with group members” (Hendricks et al., 1996, p. 99) “Traditional relationships between students, teachers and clinicians are reshaped to facilitate the development of new associations between theory, practice, personal experience and perception” (Hendricks et al., 1996, p. 97)
Supporting others to reflect		
Clarifying roles and expectations		

Conducive underlying conditions: Facilitator aims and characteristics	Creating a safe, supportive, and blame-free environment	between theory, practice, personal experience, and perception Learning circle approach - creating a democratic blame-free environment for dialogue helping members feel equal and their contributions respected The ability to challenge and create a safe environment – it is easier to reflect in a climate of safety cultivating honesty Facilitation - creating an environment where learners lead themselves, staying in uncertainty with participants being actively and dynamically engaged Ground rules - facilitating a supportive and safe environment for reflection where personal knowledge is explored Role of the facilitator - promote the right conditions for reflection to take place Creating a safe holding space for difficult emotions - ensuring safety in the face of vulnerability	“Entering the clinical environment is stressful for students and the learning circle approach was therefore instrumental in creating a democratic, blame-free environment for dialogue where participants felt equal and their contribution respected” (Walker, Cooke, Henderson, & Creedy, 2013, p. 510) “Facilitation skills include ability to challenge, but also ability to create a safe environment. Open reflection becomes easier in a climate of safety that cultivates honesty” (Dahl & Eriksen, 2016, p. 405) “Bolton claims that a reflective facilitator does not so much lead students, as create an environment where they lead themselves; the through-the-mirror facilitators stay in uncertainty with their participants achieving active dynamic engagement” (Bolton, 2010; Dahl & Eriksen, 2016, p. 404) “Therefore, time is allocated to this aspect of the learning, with agreed ground rules and as a result reflection and dialogue is facilitated in a supportive and safe environment where personal knowledge is explored” (Crathern, 2001, p. 165) “The role of the facilitator is to promote the right conditions under which reflection can take place” (Hendricks et al., 1996, p. 99) “Diana’s description echoes some of the essential elements of reflective consultation as a practice model in creating a holding place for difficult emotions and ensuring safety in the face of vulnerability” (Harrison, 2016, p. 680; Weatherston, Weigand, & Weigand, 2010) “In line with the findings of Knowles et al. (2006) coaches should be encouraged to develop their own approaches to reflection that suit both their own learning needs and the context of their practice” (Cropley, Miles, & Peel, 2012, p. 26) “To facilitate the process, students are encouraged to develop trusting partnerships with facilitators and peers who assist in recall and review processes” (Hendricks et al., 1996, p. 99) “To facilitate reflection teachers, require depth of knowledge and skills and ability to create a climate of trust. They should be role models for reflective practitioners and act as co-learners rather than teachers” (Hendricks et al., 1996, p. 99) “The facilitator began the session but from there on it was mainly student led, and I thought that this was great, everyone had their say and opinions were really valued” (Gallagher et al., 2017, p. 10) “The teachers play a key role in facilitating students' opportunities to lead themselves, which means that students need to be involved as active agents. Requesting feedback from students could promote a sense of cooperation and reciprocity between students and teachers” (Dahl & Eriksen, 2016, p. 405) “It (the relationship between the tutor and the candidate) should not be one-way traffic, a good tutor facilitates” (Nelson & Cushion, 2006, p. 181)
	Being student centred – facilitating the process of reflective learning.	Developing their own approach to reflection suiting their needs and context of practice Facilitating the process - students encouraged to develop trusting partnerships with facilitators and peers Being a role model and co-learner with a depth of knowledge and skills and an ability to create a climate of trust Being student led – everyone having a say and opinions being valued Students need to be involved as active agents – teachers facilitating students leading themselves, requesting feedback to promote cooperation and reciprocity A good tutor facilitates – the relationship should not be one-way traffic	

Qualities of a facilitator – skilled and empathic facilitator who engages in RP	Facilitator as a guide for the reflective process – asking them to reflect on existing ideas, challenging practices, proposing areas for improvement, and developing ideas for change in a non-threatening manner Practical experience of reflection-on-practice - helping students understand what reflection looks and feels like Effective facilitation to ensure learning – a skilled facilitator to guide participants through the process Slowing down, listening, observing, being flexible, and being responsive mirror the role and practice of a reflective consultant Teachers need to mirror themselves and be willing to stand in front of the mirror with students and fellow teachers Empathy - understanding and having sensitivity towards another person's viewpoint The facilitator is a catalyst to help learners draw their own conclusions - core conditions of facilitation include congruence (realness), acceptance, and empathy. Reflection should be taught by reflective practitioners who engage in the process themselves Facilitator - helps to facilitate the examination of experience by questioning the whole self and agency in practice contexts	“The learning facilitator is of great value because the facilitator can guide coaches or athletes in the reflective process by asking them to reflect on existing ideas in their cognitive structure, challenging their practices, proposing areas for improvement and formulating ideas for change in non-threatening manners” (Koh, Chew, Kokkonen, & Chew, 2017, p. 293) “For example, if RP is about learning from experience, then practical elements of reflection-on-practice should be included in order to give delegates a better understanding of what the process ‘looks’ and ‘feels’ like” (Cropley et al., 2012, p. 41) “In both of these studies, however, a skilled facilitator was present to guide participants through the process of reflection and learning” (Rogers, 2001, p. 54) “The practices of slowing down, listening, observing, being flexible, and being responsive to what is presented mirror the role and practice of a reflective consultant” (Harrison, 2016, p. 679) “Teachers also need to mirror themselves and be ready to stand in front of the mirror with students and fellow teachers” (Dahl & Eriksen, 2016, p. 405) “For the third, empathy, the teacher aims to understand the learner's viewpoint and have sensitivity for it” (Fanning & Gaba, 2007, p. 119) “Carl Rogers describes the facilitator as a catalyst, allowing clients or students to draw their own conclusions, creating their own prescription for change. He described “core conditions” for the facilitative process, both counselling and educational. These are congruence (realness), acceptance, and empathy” (Fanning & Gaba, 2007, p. 119) “It should be recognized, however, that any such endeavour should make best use of the expertise available as it has been recognized that in order to teach reflection educators need to be both expert reflective practitioners and engage in the process themselves” (Cropley et al., 2012, p. 41) “The inclusion of the Team Manager as the learning facilitator in the present study helps to facilitate the examination of learner's experience by questioning the whole self and agency within the context of practice” (Koh et al., 2017, p. 293)

Appendix B – Theme table from analysis of interviews with sport coaches

<i>Main themes</i>	<i>Sub themes</i>
An analytical and reflexive experiential inquiry deepened by a formalised process	An analytical thought process
	A reflexive experiential inquiry
	Deepening and habituating reflection and reflexivity through informal and formal processes
Engaging coaches in a challenging process	Barriers and challenges to RP
	Overcoming barriers: Openness to the value of RP
	Learning through reflective conversations
	Questioning to prompt, trigger and focus reflective inquiry
Shifting the focus of reflection to achieve personal and professional change	Openly and wholeheartedly re-focussing reflection to facilitate learning
	Widening the focus and embedding RPs into training

<i>Main themes</i>	<i>Sub-themes</i>	<i>Excerpts</i>
An analytical and reflexive experiential inquiry deepened by a formalised process	An analytical thought process	OK, so for me, it's constant self-evaluation and observation of my athletes and how they are reacting and dealing with the sessions that are set C3 (Lines 61-62) I think RP is an examination of my coaching performance, really C3 (Lines 88-89) So, this was my instantaneous answer to your question, basically, because when I was first a student teacher and we're talking 40 odd years ago, it was called evaluation. And we had we had a column on our on our lesson plan where we had to evaluate our lesson C3 (Lines 116-118). Well, there's the traditional meaning, which is to consider and evaluate backwards the activity that you have completed, and to ascertain how you might a understand it and potentially improve it C6 (Lines 29-30) So, it's an evaluative process to enhance your coaching practice going forward C6 (Line 39). And so, I think the whole process is limited by the skill of the coach in interpreting what they've seen and experienced and then being able to effectively unpick it and repack it in a in an improved way C6 (Lines 43-45). So, it's breaking things down. C7 (Line 275) It's assessing my performance, like, within sessions and over time, so if we're actually hitting the outcomes, we're trying to hit, and looking at what obstacles might come up as well and how we've tried to overcome them. And then it's also seeing how the athlete is reacting to it from a personal level and from a physiological, like how their body's reacting to what we're doing C8 (Lines 42-45) So, for the players RP should be a sense of doing something and then reviewing that process, whether it went well or whether it went badly C1 (Lines 74-76) So, again, you know, it allows you to think about did it work? And if it didn't, why didn't it? And what can I do better next time? So that definitely happens. So generally, it's a review of all the positive and the negative aspects of my coaching C3 (Lines 101-104). It's a thought process which helps me to decide what to repeat and what to change and it leads to new ideas being developed and implemented and therefore hopefully into making me a better coach. C3 (Lines 104-105) So, when I was a beginner coach you know I was always kind of reflecting on the session on the way home or the following night or whatever, thinking about how I could deliver the session next week and whether I could build on what I did last time, or whether that was any good, or maybe I should bin that approach and try something else C5 (Lines 68-72) Yeah, so you have to get the athlete to do something that nobody has ever done before, and you have to get the athlete to do something that you've never done before. So, it is essentially about athlete behaviours. So, you've got to constantly review your interaction with the athlete and see whether what you're doing is moving the athlete...is creating those athlete behaviours... not just behaviours but attitudes, and you know because most of what makes them win or not is not about what they do it's about how they think. So, people respond to all levels of communication non-verbal communication, what you say, how you build their confidence, whatever. And if you're not reflecting on that as a coach and modifying it, you're not nudging the athlete...you know this concept of nudging...you're not nudging the athlete towards being the Olympic champion. If you know you're just interacting with them and then you sit there afterwards and wonder, why you didn't win it. Well, no surprise there then. C5 (Lines 111-120). I looked at what happened throughout the day, what were the positives and the negatives. I tried to understand the positives and especially by delivering a message or I wanted a task to be done. How that message...How should I say...Basically, I analysed back to see the positives and say, OK. I tried to find recent possible reasons of why what came out good happened basically. Was it because of my message or was it just because they had, for example, a good day

A reflexive experiential inquiry

and everybody was in a good mood, and they were happy? And so, I go into that process and then I do the same on the negatives C4 (Lines 93-98)

So, I understand that self-reflection is more of an internalized thing C9 (Lines 56-57)

And whether it's like, I don't write, I don't ever write anything down. For me. It's just like, it's like a feedback loop going on. So, I'll ask a question. And I'm just critiquing myself within it C9 (Lines 59-61)

I don't really plan much more than that. But I might have done on paper anyway. So, like, for me, I live about half an hour, half an hour, 45 minutes, depending on which place I'm going to. So, I've got time to think about what I'm... what session I want to put in there and then. Yet again, that's just a thought process C9 (Lines 74-76).

And that's my experience of self-reflection. It's never been about ok then I've done this pattern of evolving and then I've evaluated it and then I've analysed it or whatever. I go, right I'll go back and take... and it's been that...It's just been like a... It's been an internal conversation in my own head. And it's always started with a question. Okay. Do I want to be better than this? Or do I, is that the best I could have done or why did that happen? Well, a kid throwing his racket on the floor. I just go okay, well, why did that happen in the first place? C9 (Lines 200-204).

Because if it's down on paper, I don't necessarily know how to deliver it myself. I'll try and read it, interpret it, and then deliver it and then go out and like that was wrong...read it again, interpret it, but actually I'd rather have, just have a conversation in my own head. And pre-empt things. So that's where the session plan goes. C9 (Lines 77-80)

OK, so for instance, I had an athlete who was not using her arms correctly when she was running so I'm a sprints and hurdles coach. So, a lot of the work is actually on sprinting technique and her arms were going across her body rather than forward and back. So, I kept thinking about it. You know, you keep saying to them, right try and get your arms down by your sides forward and back, don't let them go across your body. And they don't, they don't get it. You know, you can say it and you try and say it in a number of different ways, and they still don't get it. And it was preying on my mind. And I came up with the idea, right. Okay. I've got to do something to physically make her realize. So, I put relay batons in both the hands. So, she had the batons in her hands so that as she ran, she went across the body she actually hits herself with the batons. Not that I'm into brutality. But it actually worked. So, she started using these relay batons and it kept her arms at her sides not going across and so I've used it again with somebody else. And, you know, that's how you learn really sort of trying to approach a problem. Think about it and then try something and hopefully it works. So that was good. C3 (Lines 77-88)

...about a year ago, again, we tried to establish this development, as I was saying, of players and I wasn't getting into some of the players because they wanted to win and so, I needed to reflect. I've been giving a message about it, but they were not assimilating that message. So, it was to think of what are the ways...what other stuff I need to consider in order to produce that change that people engage in, people are in line or support this idea of developing young players rather than win at all costs, so to speak. So, then I came up with a few different ideas and tried to implement it throughout the next couple of months. Some with positive feedback, some with a bit negative C4 (Lines 99-105).

I would say because players and people have or even coaches in this case or in implementing some stuff at a coach level, they have certain biases, or this is how it's been done in the past. And so, trying to change it is more difficult an approach again, and that's why RP to me is again, OK, I deliver a message and they've not assimilated. And you consider, well, what are the different avenues? C4 (Lines 133-137)

Basically, reflecting on that and thinking how you can modify either your approach to explain what you're trying to say in a different way, but it's the same thing, or also potentially realizing, well, maybe they're right. I am approaching it the wrong way and I need to change the goals or the drills to improve the task on hand C4 (Lines 70-73)

And I think as long as you're open to learning, and open to improving the way that you're delivering, and reflecting on okay, well, that worked. Well, that didn't work. So, I think that's the key thing is try it. Don't be scared of trying things. C7 (Lines 467-469)

If I've done something or someone's questioned the way that I've approached something, and it makes me question myself and go, well, actually I should have done that. And sometimes you go you know what, hands up. I've got that one wrong there. Or you go you know what, I know it probably wasn't the best. And it wasn't kind of what I normally do. But did it have the impact that we wanted? Possibly, and then you go to reflect on that. C7 (Lines 272-276)

...or you might break it up, you might think the athletes just not there... okay we're going to switch this we can do something completely different and then we're going to come back to this or we're going to give him a water break or we're going to you know whatever. It depends really, it depends on what you're trying to do and how they're responding to it C5 (lines 158-161)

I think it often occurs reflexively during training sessions. I mean, I have to respond to things that happened such as for instance, if an athlete is really struggling with a session, then I have to, you know, interrupt, and actually alter the session for that particular person. So, that's happening all the time C3 (Lines 62-65)

So you might be doing some drills with the player where their partner is behaving in the same way as their potential opponent and you're asking your player to respond in a certain way and that may or may not be working, so you need to...each repetition of the drill you need to decide are we still going on with this drill, are we going to do another five, are we going to do another 300 of these or are we going to slightly change the wrist or are we going to get a variety of stimuli, are you going to switch it around so can you do it with this hand or can you do with this hand that so you're constantly monitoring the fatigue of the athlete the concentration of level of the athlete, the focus and whether its successful and you're constantly giving feedback you know, okay that was good but maybe think about that foot...yeah that's fine. Or maybe you're giving no feedback because you want the athlete to just get through the repetitions so those would-be examples of micro reflections within a session and you would do literally thousands of those in the middle of the session. C5 (Lines 143-154)

...for example, one specific example on this topic of development. I generally speak to the entire team, but I realized that I was not getting to some players. So, I had decided to have a smaller group or more one-on-one conversations, even though because of the way the sport is in amateur, where we only meet once a week for the games. I sacrifice then talking at length to the wider group. But I thought that potentially that way by talking to smaller groups or one-on-one I would drive that message across more strongly and it would assimilate better and yeah, and that I think worked. Not a hundred percent, but I think I could see by the end of the season an improvement of overall everyone understanding what I wanted the group to achieve or accomplish C4 (Lines 111-118)

So, it is on basically how they're performing the drill. You see, a lot of times it's a bit confusing or you can see that it was too hard. That I thought they would do it quite easily and they didn't. Or they are confused on what the drill is trying to accomplish. So, I need to sometimes stop and explain. Sometimes it's again, breaking it down and realizing...All right. I mean, it's in my head. But if I had to kind of mentally describe what I'm seeing and saying and doing, I would say, let's say I introduce a level three drill and I realize they're not at that level. So, I quickly try to think of a drill that is a level one or level two and see if they can perform it. So that's kind of the immediate feedback and a few times they rightly say, I don't like it, or this is stupid, it is dumb or whatever. So that's some of the feedback that I get. C4 (Lines 171-178)

So, yeah, I would say while that some of the drills...How I set up the drills and realizing that they were not at the level or the skill level that I thought they should be. And they were not doing it right. Therefore, the drill becomes ineffective in that way and so it was, how do I change in this case the drills and the coaching to make it effective and meaningful? And

then a note related to that, for example, was how we normally do some drills that we call for example BP in baseball where, you know, pre-game you hit. And to me I could see the feedback in the normal way wasn't working and becoming quite ineffective to be prepared for the game. So, I tried to change the way it was run. And actually, I got very, very positive feedback out of it in terms of how it was working much better. C4 (Lines 186-193)

...so, you are setting up situations and you're requiring them to come up with solutions and you frame the situation such that the solution that they invent is the thing that you would have taught them if they had been a lower level. C5 (Lines 171-173)

I think it's to think about it a bit and let them continue that drill instead of saying stop. And then you have to think of something on the go. I prefer to let them go for a couple of minutes and say, right OK I need to change the plan and how is this going to affect the rest of the plan and kind of a bit on the fly but also give myself two, three minutes to reassess and redirect that way when you make the change it doesn't look rushed. It doesn't look improvised. It looks like I have a new plan, so to speak. And so, I think that has helped me. Just take a step back and think about it rather than acting instinct, instinctively. C4 (Lines 219-225)

I think you've got to try things. I think you've got to try things out. I think you have to risk assess, and you have to make sure things are safe. I think you have to try things out. C7 (Lines 443-444)

But I think it's an interesting opportunity to try things out and find out what works best for your own particular set of players and who they're performing against. And I think you've got try things and if it doesn't quite go so well, all right, what could we do differently? What will be better if we did it in that way? C7 (Lines 453-456)

I think yeah, that's the key thing is, as long as it's safe, try things out. It doesn't always go to plan. Don't beat yourself up massively about it. Because actually, every sort of situation is a learning opportunity. And it's about learning from that.

And I think it's about okay, well, what would I have done differently? Alright, let's try it differently C7 (Lines 462-466)

Also learn that you have to be adaptive. And that is a big take away for me being adaptive and kind of improve yourself in many ways in the sense of you know, you have a set of drills, but you need to learn new drills because again, people assimilate it in different ways and the more that I've been coaching I realized that because every person is different, everybody's unique, that if to improve, let's say bat speed you have three drills: ABC. Well, you have more than three players and therefore there will be bets on that one of those players actually cannot assimilate to A, B or C. So, you need to learn kind of have a better repertoire, so to speak, of drills or to adapt yourself when a player is not assimilating. But also, that's drills, but also how you communicate something to players. Sometimes you have to be direct. Sometimes you have to be indirect. Sometimes you have to learn that you have to talk. You know how your day has been. Kind of a 10-minute conversation, some like a one-minute conversation. And so that's where I think the experience is to be. My key away takeaway is being adaptive. C4 (Lines 198-209)

I didn't always get it right. And I think that comes back to the reflective thing that you can't copy a [name] session. You could, but you might not get out of it, what he was trying to get out of it. And he might not be working with the players that he was playing we're working with. So, and in terms of levels of abilities, age group, that kind of stuff. So, you kind of copy content, but you adapt it to your own participants. And I think that comes back to RP that actually that didn't work so well, well I probably won't do that next time. C7 (Lines 348-353)

I think coaches do it; they might not call it RP. But maybe I've been fortunate with the coaches that I've worked with in the environments that I've worked in. But the aspect of looking at what you've just done and whether you dress it up as plan-do-review and it fits within that review bucket. Whether you look at it as [name of person] where you look at learner engagement, session objective, the structure of what, how. I think coaches do it C2 (Lines 256-260)

I: Could you explain that a little bit more about how you get that rigour into RP?

Deepening and habituating
reflection and reflexivity through
informal and formal processes

C1: I think you have to sit down and formally go through it so I don't typically go through this with a person, for me I have a diary so I wouldn't go through every session. Probably, I guess it would be good practice to do that C1 (Lines 90-92)
I think there's a difference between for me like driving home in the car and saying my session went badly because of this and next time I'm going to do that, versus going through some challenging questions to unpick what really happened, why it really happened, how it made you feel, what you want to do next time, how this whole process has made you feel now you've gone through the reflection and yeah C1 (Lines 81-85).

As we go along...and I think that's...I think you can look at stuff that [name of person] done at [name of organisation] with regards to RP and reflective pieces but as I say I think dependent on where the coach is and where the athlete is in their journey you don't have to get quite as specific as that, you can keep it quite a light touch C2 (Lines 236-240)

And I would do it subconsciously and not realize that I was changing the session around a little bit to make it harder or easier. By making obviously bigger if it's an attacking drill, or activity, I make the space bigger, so they'd have more space to exploit. But I didn't think about it systematically until I got sort of, to a higher level of coaching, where they sort of said, you might want to consider using these tools and techniques C7 (Lines 75-79).

I think when I first did my coach education stuff as a candidate coach, I think it was probably put down as like a session review as opposed to RP. So, I think it's probably something that through coach ed you looked at and you did within the coaching environment without necessarily having that label on it. So, I think it was deemed as being good coaching practice from the point of view that it was part of your planning and preparation as a coach. You looked at was your session plan fit for purpose? Did it actually achieve the session objective? So, I think it was very much linked into what your session objective was for the athletes that you were working with at that time without necessarily being called RP C2 (Lines 91-98)

I think it also, it occurs. It occurs after the session big time. I'm very I'm very self-critical, I must admit. And I think usually sort of driving home from the track from the session, I'm nearly always thinking through the session and how it's gone, positively or negatively. And I think my husband says I'm sad. I get home and I go straight to a note pad. So, I decided something, and I write it down there and then as to what to alter in the session. So, I definitely write things down. C3 (Lines 65-69)

And I think a lot of times it's kind of on my drive home when I think about, well, what happened on a given practice, on a given day on games. And that's when I kind of reflect and think about it. C4 (Lines 81-83)

Well, it's actually quite hard to engage with, as we're reflecting all the time... in this conversation, but it's, it's when you've had enough awareness that you're reflecting to recognize that you've done it, and to recognize actually that there was some value in doing that, or the reason I did it, and then just being able to quickly make a note so that that will prompt me to think about it later C6 (Lines 329-332).

Yeah, you know it's only through somebody saying to you this is called plan-do-review, or this is called reflective practise, and you think well I've been doing that for years so yeah C5 (Lines 79-80).

And so potentially. If you are more explicit and we're all more explicit in saying, hey, please reflect on this, please think of this, you are going to encourage more, and it will be something that then becomes natural C4 (Lines 267-269).

I think there's a number of ways of doing it without necessarily formalising it as RP C2 (Lines 284-285).

I think it's just creating the habit and in making it more of a conscious effort. Because sometimes I think you do go into a non-reflective way of doing things C4 (Lines 85-86).

Well, this is the way I'm doing stuff and sometimes you don't assess the situation in that sense of all these guys are not assimilating my drill. So, let's try and do it a different way. And so. RP again. It's getting into that habit, and I think I'm improving. And as I said now, I do it more like reflecting back on the day and then implementing it C4 (Lines 160-163).

I mean, you hear, you learn, you know, you go to a seminar, and somebody talks about it. But if it's not in the day to day, you sometimes might fall into your default C4 (Lines 249-251).

Well, I think I was doing RP before I was introduced to it. I was probably doing RP for 30 years before anybody told me what it was. So...perhaps not 30 years...so when I was a beginner coach you know I was always kind of reflecting on the session on the way home or the following night or whatever, thinking about how I could deliver the session next week and whether I could build on what I did last time, or whether that was any good, or maybe I should bin that approach and try something else. So that is RP right from the start. But yeah, I mean I was probably introduced to the concept, perhaps through the [name of organization], which is a pre-runner of [name of organization]. So, yeah you know through some of their educational materials or going on some of their courses and workshops and so on. You know they talked about the kind of plan-do-review kind of cycle and that provided a modicum of theory underpinning what I was already doing I suppose C5 (Lines 67-76)

I don't think I've ever coached without being reflective, so I can't imagine how I would coach differently C5 (Lines 90-91). ...and actually, someone who, even though they're experienced athletes and coaches, haven't really realized they've been reflecting and actually saying to them, okay, well, when you've been presented with a problem, presented with an issue, how have you overcome it, like this is reflection. C10 (Lines 429-431)

Other times as well, will be like meetings with a line manager once a week to set goals, and then reflect on the previous week, like how it's gone. And, yeah, I mean, a lot of the time you're doing it without realizing you're actually doing it as well C8 (Lines 97-99).

I guess I somewhat reflected before because I would always try and measure before I tried a new intervention and then after to see whether it worked and then I would sort of read through did this work? if it did well why did it work? or why didn't it work? and so I guess I was always in one way or another reflective but not...it's more like reviewing than reflecting because I didn't really go through the process. I just sort of did that sort of surface level like did this work? didn't it work? Why? as opposed to like more in detail C1 (Lines 149-154)

When I initially learned it, I was still set on things like what was your objective of the session, what was your session, what happened in the session and what would you change for next time. So that was sort of my initial reflections for like probably quite probably a few years and then that sort of evolved into this much more detailed level of questions that are specific. So, it takes a bit more time to actually go through, but it also means that I have to really think about what's happened across a session as opposed to broadly assuming stuff that's happened across a session C1 (Lines 156-161)

I think there's a lot more detail to be had with a lot of these reflections of you know how did it make me feel? what did I do? what did the opposition do? what did they feel? you know what were the reactions from me doing x or y? C1 (Lines 77-79)

I kind of went on points where I'd expect them to find the answer without knowing what the options of answers were. So maybe something new, they're learning something new, and they have absolutely no idea what it's supposed to look like or feel like or move like and I sort of just said well you know give it a go and see what happens, and that was probably not a great move. Whereas providing them with answers so they are familiar with what it should look like or feel like and then making them work out how to be consistent in doing that, you know that's what I've evolved to become, and I feel like that's really critical that they are involved in that process. Although it is a bit more superficial because they're not writing anything down and going through an in depth process I feel like that aspect of why am I not performing very well in this game? what can I do different? what's happening to make me be like this? am I normally like this? is something that I do apply now when I talk to players on the side-line, in a match or when I talk to them in training and get them to

think more of why is this happening as opposed to me telling them you need to do this or you need to do that C1 (Lines 193-205)

I think as I've moved through my coaching experiences it's become much more structured for me from the point of view that it's certainly something that I'll openly speak to athletes about from the point of view of coming back and letting me know how they felt the session went during and post session and that can be as brutally honest as the athletes want it to be, equally because from a performance perspective, I've worked in performance now since 2008, so within the performance environment with it being a much more collaborative piece of work I think it's something that's done on a much more structured basis from the point of view that you sit down as a collective coaching team with athlete support personnel. You know what the end goal is, you know, to prepare athletes for the [name of event] and the [name of event] and I think from that aspect your planning sessions invariably encompass an element of RP because it's what did we do well? What can we do better? so you look at it from both a collective and an individual experience. So, I think for me it's probably become a much more structured piece and a much more relevant piece as I've progressed with my coaching into performance side of things than it was when I was working in a club environment if that makes sense? C2 (Lines 98-111)

I had no idea that that was something that I should be doing. I kind of bumbled along. I think I think I kind of did it naturally. Well, that worked. Well, that didn't quite work so well. And yeah, I probably wouldn't deliver like that again with that group. But it wasn't a constructive, reflective. Okay, what have I done well, today? I didn't, until later on, sit down and actually make notes. I didn't...And that's something I've tried to do with the ladies' team, especially I made sort of notes about how players were performing, how I performed, how I did, and, and use that as a RP. I think because I was going for certain qualifications and that kind of stuff, it augmented my learning. But I don't think I really ever did it in a structured way until later on in coaching when I perhaps moved up the levels. C7 (Lines 153-160)

I think it's almost that aspect of tools in the tool bag and letting coaches know and experience different ways of conducting RP C2 (Lines 68-69).

So I think the context element to it is almost that aspect of if you've been exposed and experienced a number of different ways of conducting RP then dependent upon where you are as a coach emotionally, come the end of a session or during the session, if you've got those different elements and aspects and tools in your toolkit you can actually hopefully hook out the one that's most appropriate given where you are on that day during that session to actually put some thought into what you've done well C2 (Lines 74-79).

I have changed my opinion completely because I don't now have to actually write in so much detail an evaluation of every session. However, I do write down anything that I want to change, but I now realize that if I don't write things down pretty much straightaway that has not worked then, as in teaching you, if you didn't write it down the next week when you came to that class, you could actually make the same mistake again. So, and that's exactly the same in coaching, you know, I need to write it down because when I do that session again and it might not be for a whole year in athletics coaching. I need to have changed it rather than get to it and go, oh my God, I remember now this went wrong last year. So yeah, I now see that it is extremely valuable. It's. A lot of it does go on in your head. But I also do write things down that need to be changed C3 (Lines 123-131).

There's lots of different routes and tools to use. But it's just yeah, and then because no one way always works constantly, either. Because you develop and your situations change, different strategies might be effective at that time. Other times, they may not just be able to know they can dip in and out of it. So, it's not just you just stick with the same strategy the whole time. But knowing that you can just dip between them, or develop them or, or alter them as you go on C8 (Lines 241-245).

Engaging coaches in a
challenging process

Barriers and challenges to RP

Well, I think. I mean, it's hard to say. I think. More in a sense, resources where it's explicit of this approach. Because as I said, sometimes you forget about it. I mean, you hear, you learn, you know, you go to a seminar, and somebody talks about it. But if it's not in the day to day, you sometimes might fall into your default. So, it's having more discussions and also being explicit about it because again, through this conversation, I realized that I do more than I thought I did and that maybe that's good C4 (Lines 248-252).

But I think it's just having a whole different load of approaches to it and a whole load of different ways of doing RP whether it be formal, informal, quick, and easy, or much more structured, then we can hopefully make it fit the context C2 (Lines 80-83).

So, I think again it comes back to what we spoke about.... if the coaches have had experience and have been exposed to different ways of capturing their thoughts and feelings, observations, whether it be talking aloud, having a peer coach you'll stand alongside them to check and challenge whether it be their own self-analysis and a video review C2 (Lines 281-284).

It's a very general concept in a certain way. I mean, yeah, it makes sense, but how to implement it and successfully. That's the difficult bit. And so, it's maybe how I apply it in day-to-day examples. And I think it's easy to say, oh I'm trying to solve, I don't know, that they improve, that they work harder on practice. And so, you apply one way but then you cannot apply the same way in a completely different area. C4 (Lines 124-128).

I think it's just giving them strategies to use. And, yeah, well, you got to feedback on that yourself as well and see if then strategies actually have an impact on yourself. I think everyone's massively like individual within what works for them practice-wise and reflectively as well. So just giving them lots of strategies to try out initially. And then allowing them to base around that. Just to work out what works for them and what doesn't and just moulding it as they go on. I mean, just having the resources there and the people there to be able to go to with issues like that as well. And making sure it's clear C8 (Lines 233-238).

if you were operating at the first level you might reflect on the session that you just delivered and you might think that was a good session or oh no that player got injured, if I hadn't had him running into walls that might not have happened, that kind of thing. So, you know you can just reflect on the session or reflect on the technique that you delivered or reflect on the way the athlete responded to that or whether they learn anything or something like that.

I guess the only other thing I would say is the wide array of models that are available, and they sort of they can be misleading because some of them are too...they look simple, but I think its Kolb's that's like six questions but they're so open to interpretation that you don't really have that much guidance on them C1 (Lines 275-278)

So, I guess the only thing I would add is that I think there needs to be caution in the model's people take on because some of them are easier to complete and much broader in the questions which means you don't really reflect to the level you might need to C1 (Lines 281-283).

So, the first thing that pops into my head is [name] model of reflection, which I don't really like. Yes, I understand why. But I think, with my experience of self-reflection it's never as easy as it is on paper. I think, personally, I think there needs to be more practice practically done within it and yeah that's the first image that comes to my head and I must admit, whenever someone mentions RP that's the first thing that comes up, I'm just going 'that is not overly helpful' C9 (Lines 51-55).

I'm not I'm not seeing self-reflection as this little model; this Gibbs model and I never refer to it. And never, I never go back and go, oh, have I done this? Have I done that bit of reflection, but I know I'm doing it, I know I'm doing something that is allowing me to self-reflect in the moment C9 (Lines 57-59)

That's something I've definitely kind of developed and understood because RP is important, I know that, but actually, I don't think that model has allowed scope to bring in athlete feedback. But as I read it, it's more than, it's just purely for me. But actually, I'm not teaching myself I'm teaching somebody else. And they're more important than I am. Well, I guess it's an equilibrium. But their feedback is just as important as mine. So actually, the model, I don't think the model caters for that. And that's what I've got. That's why I've kind of gone I've just brushed it off most of the time C9 (Lines 137-142)

And so, I guess it's always fed by questions and myself Initially, rather than just being ok I've done this session, and then yeah, I reflect back to the Gibbs model. I still don't think it's there. Because you're saying... I can't remember if I'm wrong, but I do the session and reflect on your experience and analyse and it's never happened like that. I've just questioned myself and just gone well, is that what I wanted? And then the conversation just kicks on. C9 (Lines 196-200).

Okay, so I was introduced to it at university. And I think... I can't remember if I did it my level one or two or whatever. But the moment it stands out is the moment I went to Uni, and I was in my second year. We were talking about the [name] reflective model. Why? it was something that I never really was interested in. I don't think many other people were, it was something that we, it was a tick box exercise, basically. And so, I never really kind of took in the value of what it meant. Yet again it was still used as a tick box exercise in my dissertation and poster. Where you just go, I've just got to stick it in there because I'm told to stick it in there. I'm not actually using it. Or I feel like I'm not using it. C9 (Lines 148-154)

I think coaches do it. I think to be fair to some extent labelling it RP for some coaches can be almost an inhibitor because they feel as if it's something that they have to do and they have to get good at and almost the fact that they have to prove it that they're good at it and as I say it doesn't have to be or necessarily follow a formal model C2 (Lines 260-263). But also, I'm actually trying to pre-empt things that may happen. So yeah, in terms of what my opinion of it is, it's certainly changed a lot from when I first understood it. Rather than being a six-point cycle, which is this and this in order? It looks nothing. To me, it looks nothing like that. It might come across that way. But in my own head. It's just I started the question, and then it's going well, okay, well, I'm just chatting to myself from then on. Or I might go and gain some feedback from somebody else if I'm not sure C9 (Lines 209-214)

I think we do recognize when things... I'm generalizing here... when things have not gone well. And most coaches, I'd like to think are there to do good and therefore will want to improve upon that. So, there is some RP. But I think I don't think every coach goes home every night and thinks right now, let me really evaluate what I've just experienced, in part because of the skill set, and then perhaps, although not wanting to depreciate, you know, anybody's ability here, but also partly time, it's a very time-consuming process C6 (Lines 47-52).

I don't think. It doesn't. If you're a developing coach and you're looking for bang for buck and make your mark, you're going to go for something that's going to...you think will make them a better Iron Man coach, you know, where does RP sit there. It doesn't quite have the emotional buy-in, does it? C6 (Lines 250-254).

But I'm just thinking of the coaches that I work with and the majority of them would do parts of that but wouldn't want to apply the effort to go really in depth because I guess they don't always see the value in that because its more about them than it is about the players and that process and I guess it's like you're then challenging their professional abilities when if you're not a higher level football coach, you're probably less value to them to then challenge it C1 (Lines 268-272).

But you know, how often do you see somebody saying, you really must read this piece of RP, it's just, you know, I'd like to think I get hold of access to many, many good pieces of guidance, and I try and spread them far and wide. But sometimes things like reflection get lost in all the other things in psychology C6 (Lines 241-244).

And I hated it because it took so long to do. You know, you're working all evening planning your lessons for the next day as it is. But you've also got to evaluate all the lessons you've done that day. So, when I first did RP or evaluated a lesson, you know, positive and negatively, it was time consuming. And at the time I thought it was pretty much unnecessary C3 (Lines 119-122).

I think I used to think of it as a necessary evil. I had to do it. Whereas now, I think it is necessary, and it has actually become totally automatic C3 (Lines 132-133).

I would say it makes sense and so I was open for it, and I tried to apply it. Of course, it to me sometimes is difficult to apply and you have to kind of be conscious of it C4 (Lines 81-82).

It's kind of a bit of a chore perhaps, if you know, you've got a level three course I think, you've got to coach an individual for 12 weeks and, you know, there will, there'll be multiple sessions in triathlon. The downside to doing multiple discipline coaching is just the level of interaction you have to achieve across three disciplines. And so, you end up reflecting on, I don't know, in 12 weeks, I can't even do the math... 100 or so, 120 maybe sessions, and it's: 'oh god, what am I going to write that's slightly different from the last time', 'what am I going to write now that actually suggests I actually fixed what I was trying to do last time' and progressing forward and it becomes a bit performative as a result. Yeah, I'm not taking it away, because I'm sure not everybody's experience is the same as mine. But, if you make the assumption that I'm your average coach, and I'm sure the average experience is going to be somewhere similar. We feel obliged to do it because it's part of the professional practice. We certainly feel obliged to do it, that it's a necessity to do having been coach educators ourselves. But it is a bit performative, I think. And I'm not sure, and over time I'm not sure. If you coach for 20 years does anybody keep a reflective log for 20 years? It would be an interesting read. And nice to see some progress in them but you know it would be a lengthy read for sure C6 (Lines 129-140).

But so initially no, it just enhanced that negativity made me stressful. Okay, it challenged me, and I learned a lot through that process, but I'm dogged and determined, and I wanted to see it through and perhaps I wouldn't say lesser person, but perhaps a person...And I'm quite sensitive as well. So, it was a really hard challenge for me. But a different person might quit at that point, I think. That's always the danger of these things C6 (Lines 172-176)

I think I could do it more but sometimes it just escapes me to go through that process and sometimes emotions can get the better of me I guess, and I would think like ah whatever ill just leave it to cool down and then if that's a bad session then I would then think I'll do the reflections afterwards and then maybe not get around to it. I guess the downside is that where the activities take place versus where my office is and where my book is that I've done my reflections in, there's quite a big distance between them and I'm not talking like you know across the road and down the hall. Like it takes you a good 10 minutes just to walk from the pitch to get to the building, so it's not that I don't want to reflect more often it's just not necessarily the easiest thing to do immediately or I have to do it at the very end of the session which could take you know a bit of time and you kind of just want to go home C1 (Lines 173-181).

it's difficult to do that self-RP throughout a day, throughout the drills where you take the input or the feedback and the immediate feedback that you're receiving from the players and trying to consider it actually and reassess it and try to do different things C4 (Lines 164-166).

Sometimes I will turn to... sometimes I don't, you know depending on the pressures and sometimes I go back and think God, I wrote that down two months ago, and I've still not done it yet. But it's so I just recorded things constantly C6 (Lines 293-295).

Reflection by other coaches I think is extremely difficult. A lot of coaches don't want to be how do I say it, don't want someone telling them how to do it. So that's difficult C3 (Lines 197-198)

But I think some truly struggle to reflect. You know, it's like I think also understanding that reflection will happen at different success rates or different...they'll have different abilities to reflect depending on when we're asking for that reflection, you know. C10 (Lines 142-144)

As a generalization again, and I don't know the statistics here, but I'm guessing most coaches are volunteers, or, you know, not high paid coaches, most club coaches are volunteers and corner on a minimal kind of expense-based income. Yeah, they have to share their coaching experience with business, with social, with life, with family with all the other stresses and challenges. And you know, and I recognize that you come away from the pool, with all good intentions to evaluate, and then the phone rings, or the children need feeding, or something happens. So, you know, it's not through a lack of desire here C6 (Lines 57-62).

But actually, I think this. Yeah, while I was learning, it was never really like. It wasn't stressed as how important I deem it to be now C9 (Lines 55-56)

But when it's initially taught, I don't think the value of it is enough. I don't think the way people are learning it is internalized as it could, as I now experience it C9 (Lines 157-158)

Yeah, I think the way I was taught it was a very much a I am the lecturer, I will deliver this to you, you are the student, you need to put this into your dissertation as a tick box exercise rather than actually, let's really understand this. Let's really see the importance of it, and how it plays out. Because, yet again, how do I know what value it is if I don't see it being valued? C9 (Lines 170-174)

I don't think perhaps RP is as well practiced as we might like to think. I think it's recognized as being important, but I think it's become a bit of a platitude. So, a bit of a 'oh yes, I reflect on my practice'. C6 (lines 46-47)

I think you're writing it down, keep it a bit of a diary of it was done more for getting a qualification rather than me having the desire and passion to do it...Because once that qualification was done, I know I didn't write stuff down as much because there wasn't an onus to do it. C7 (Lines 298-301).

...but actually, RP has allowed me to manage my own expectations to realize that I might not always be able to do that, because it requires somebody else to meet me in a similar way of thinking, be open to that level of conversation, which, which some people just might not be for a number of reasons. So yeah, I think it's really opened me up to a like 'that's okay you know, today, they weren't ready for that', C10 (Lines 227-331)

This is a really tough one, because I think unless they're open enough to either learn something about themselves, learning something about their players, from a coaching point of view, it's gonna be really tough to get them to see the benefits of RP. C10 (Lines 401-403).

I'm just thinking of some of the coaches that I work with they would look at it as more work than necessary, because they currently get fair performances so why do they need to bother? because it's not going to, in their eyes, it's not going to change much by writing stuff down C1 (Lines 257-260).

Yeah, because I think for them to understand why a session works and why it didn't, I think they would sit back and say well I know why it didn't work, because I did this and that didn't happen, but they won't think beyond that, and I think some coaches will probably be quite good and they'll want to apply themselves to learn more C1 (Lines 265-268).

Some people just don't want to engage in that. And there have been some conversations I've had with coaches, they just want to go on a daily basis and go these are the decisions I make and when I go home, I switch off, don't think about it.

But there are others that are very open with it. And for those, I just, I explore questions that are beneficial. I maybe explore times with them, where they've done it, how it's been beneficial to them C10 (Lines 403-407).

I: So, in that respect, how do you think RPs affected your coaching?

Overcoming barriers: Openness
to the value of RP

C8: I think it's, it's probably the biggest thing developmental wise, because it leads me to work out what my perceived weaknesses may be, or from others and how I can work on that, or within the session. So, something's not quite working out, or having some issue, it will just help me work out what to look at next, or how to fix that. But I think if I didn't reflect or look back on it, and get to that point, to just keep on, it gets stuck in like a cycle of making the same mistakes. And then nothing's changing C8 (Lines 82-87).

I'm quite I'm a big fan of RP but I guess that's from the constraints of what I understand of what is RP C1 (lines 72-73)
When I very first came about it was quite a few years ago in a different sport. I was quite open to it if I'm honest. I've never really been...if it comes down to me being a better coach or getting better performance outputs, I'm always quite keen to try things C1 (Lines 147-149)

So, I see a high value in it, I could probably do it a bit more myself, but I have evolved to realize that it is quite a grey, well I would kind of say a critical learning tool if you want to become a better practitioner C1 (Lines 167-169)

And I'd go a step further, really. I know in myself that when I stop self-evaluating, it'll be time for me to give up coaching because then I'm just not I'm not moving forward. I know you've got to keep looking at things and thinking about them and altering them if need be C3 (Lines 133-136).

I would say it; RP keeps me motivated and motivated to improve. I'm not happy and I never was as a teacher to just do the same thing time and time again. It's got to be improved. It's got to be updated. So, I am motivated through RP to get better. I'm always looking to add to my delivery. So, if anybody, if I spot anybody with a really good idea, I will definitely think about it and use it if I can. So yeah, I think it does keep you motivated C3 (Lines 138-143).

I: OK. So, what was your first impressions of RP when you were first, for example, when you were first introduced to it?

C4: Good question. I would say it made sense and so I was open for it, and I tried to apply it C4 (Lines 78-80)

Well, I recognize its importance. Which is why, as a coach educator in particular, I kind of reinforce the message. But also try and reform the message that if it becomes performative, there's no point in doing it C6 (Lines 142-143).

But I think RP is really important, because you don't always get it right C7 (Lines 71-72).

I believe in it absolutely. But it's, I guess my journey as a coach is, if I believe in it can I get others to also believe in it? C10 (Lines 207-209)

I: And what was your impressions of RP at that time?

C8: Um, I think it helped a lot. Especially when you're first starting out, like to guide your coaching, actually get you thinking about what you're trying to achieve longer term as well, not just immediate C8 (Lines 70-72).

Yeah, so if you're not reflecting on your session, then you don't learn from it. Learning is the process of reflection you could argue C5 (lines 95-96).

And I think for me, I guess what I learned from that, and then we took it on to a journey of looking at ourselves was I think first of all, I was just really intrigued to find out the way I behave and the way I act will have an impact on somebody else C10 (Lines 151-153)

Well, yeah, going from that that initial RP when I first saw it, and just, it was just a tick box exercise. And now, it's probably the most valuable thing I've ever done. And yet again, that it was done through I don't even know if it was like, a thought about process. It just happened. I guess the feeder of that is I wanted to get better. C9 (Lines 187-190)

I have changed my opinion completely because I don't now have to actually write in so much detail an evaluation of every session. However, I do write down anything that I want to change, but I now realize that if I don't write things down pretty much straightaway that has not worked then, as in teaching you, if you didn't write it down the next week when you came to that class, you could actually make the same mistake again. So, and that's exactly the same in coaching, you know, I need to write it down because when I do that session again and it might not be for a whole year in

Learning through reflective conversations

athletics coaching. I need to have changed it rather than get to it and go, oh my God, I remember now this went wrong last year. So yeah, I now see that it is extremely valuable. It's. A lot of it does go on in your head. But I also do write things down that need to be changed C3 (Lines 123-131).

And I think it just needs to be given more kudos than just being this performative action that you feel obliged to do, because it's part of coach education C6 (Lines 406-407).

And so, they needed the...the way it's taught, I think is too this is what you should do, rather than actually well let's experience what this actually means and internalize RP, because as a coach is the most important thing I do. Yeah, hands down. If I'm not self-reflecting, then I can't develop from one session to the next. So, there's a huge importance for it. C9 (Lines 154-157).

And because it's so important, you know, it is as important as the delivery, perhaps, it is as important as the planning. But it seems a sideshow. If we elevated it into a same level of importance, you know, perhaps we see coaching as an hour's worth of prep, and an hour's worth of delivery and 10 minutes' worth of evaluation, perhaps it ought to be an hour's worth of prep, an hour's worth of delivering an hour's worth of evaluation and reflection. And that might do it justice. That hour doesn't need to be straight after, it can be in 10-minute chunks to me, you know, enough for now. And then, you know, and then a further analysis at the end of the week, but with your mentor C6 (Lines 387-393).

I think to be honest if you had said to them, you should do this so then you can understand your sessions better, they probably wouldn't be as interested. I think if you basically said to them, you're more likely to get a better outcome, your players are going to long term be better players, you're going to get a higher performance out of them you'll probably get a better buy in C1 (Lines 254-257).

They see it all on the field so I would say to get better buy-in you need to say this is going to impact them on the field C1 (Lines 260-261).

We've got n=1 here, and I can only obviously, although I've mentored many, many coaches over the years, and had not always similar feedback, but sometimes similar reflections from them. So, emotively the RP was a negative experience. And I should put this caveat in you know, overall, fundamentally it improved my coaching practice. So, you know, I don't want to dismiss it. Ultimately, I think I hope I'll let others be the judge. But I'd like to think I'm a better coach as a result, you know, so there are huge positives from RP. And don't get me wrong, and I wouldn't like to mislead you here C6 (Lines 225-230)

That has become a lot more common this season being that we're doing this sort of joined up coaching. But when I go through, I don't know actually, I probably subconsciously do that quite a lot because I was thinking now when I've done some behavioural management stuff and it's gone wrong, I have gone to people that I perceive as good experts in that field. Like I went to a guy that does the teaching at the academy and said to him look I have a problem here, what would you suggest for next time, and this is what happened, this is how it panned out. So, I probably do that more often than I think I do but yeah. I'm reflecting as we speak C1 (Lines 138-145)

The first time I really thought about it was probably with when I did like my first coaching internship. And that was what I was doing, I was working with one of the lecturers that was taking me on my [name of organization], and it was just reflecting after the sessions. So, after every session, we just sit down for 10 to 15 minutes and discuss how it went. And if we achieved what we wanted, and how we can progress it for next time, or alter it, and that was my first like conscious exposure to it C8 (Lines 65-69).

I think its these sorts of conversations with regards to its almost asking the coaches... for example in the academy obviously we've got swim, bike and run, tech-tac. So, what I'll do is I'll sit down with the coaches and say well what do you want to lead on? We've got another season coming up, want to lead on swim training? the bike training? the run

training? the conditioning? whatever it may be, and I'll invite the coaches to challenge themselves. So, if you come in, I'll say actually you'll say you know right [name] my backgrounds all in conditioning I'd love to lead on the conditioning side of things again. We might have a conversation it will be well actually I know you can do that [name] that's not a problem for you. You can do conditioning sessions in your sleep. What would challenge you, we can support you through it but what would actually challenge you? So, I think these sorts of conversations where you ask the coaches to challenge themselves and put them in an environment where they know they've got support so that again when it comes to the end of the day and they look back you can actually think well did I achieve anything there, you know how has that experience enriched what I do as a coach? C2 (Lines 211-222)

So, I learned from that. Actually, speaking out, and or talking about a problem and sort of voicing it can get someone else to solve it for you. I didn't know how to solve it. I didn't know how to actually make that. But by just saying that I didn't know her husband was creative or whatever, but literally said it out loud. Really worked. So, yeah, share a problem and someone else might come up with your solution. C3 (Lines 170-173)

Yeah, always stealing stuff. Yeah. I just ask people how things went and a lot of the chats at [name of organization] where I work is, we have conversations about certain participants in terms of the behaviour in terms of their abilities, in terms of how we delivered a particular session, in terms of transferable skills from one sport to another, we have quite a lot of communication about how we might plan a session and what we might change and adapt and, and do it in that session. So, I think, we communicate quite a lot C7 (Lines 308-312)

You try...well, for myself, I'll take as broad approach as possible. So be talking to the athlete, gathering as much information as possible from them, the coach, trying to see what the support networks, like what their previous experience is, like, what they've been exposed to coaching wise and training wise. C8 (Lines 22-27)

And so, I think it's important to speak to other people, because sometimes they can help you realize maybe you're looking at something that's not going to have as big an impact, as you expect. So maybe you're better spent putting your energy elsewhere. Or not so much time on that. C8 (Lines 121-123)

Yeah, I think it gives you clarity as well. And sometimes just having someone listen to you, I think when you hear yourself out loud, it sometimes sounds different, or it can allow you to make connections you don't realize...or sometimes reinforce what you're doing or make you realize you're going down the wrong rabbit hole. C8 (Lines 127-131)

I mean, apart from having scheduled meetings to actually go through it...I think a lot of the time is just with the players themselves, it's just talking to them getting their feedback as when they first come in, and they're warming up, you're seeing how they feel within themselves and like what they've been working on. And then same, we actually use the cooldown for that as well. When so if I'm doing any work like soft tissue work or stretching them, we'll use that time to actually reflect and go through what we've been doing. C8 (Lines 210-214)

And if the parents involved, it's just constant communication. So, we use like, WhatsApp groups and things like that, to add stuff in. And so, if we have like a set day where they're doing training by themselves, they've got feedback into it, how it went and what they did, and what the plan is for the next day. Or if they felt like they met their goals for that session. C8 (Lines 217-220)

Having built that relationship and trust that they know they can come to you with stuff, and they actually realize what potential issues maybe because sometimes people don't realize if there's an issue there as well. Or they don't think it's worth mentioning. But it's just that education piece with them as well and realizing what needs to be said and what doesn't necessarily wasn't necessary an issue as well. C8 (Lines 225-228)

I think, first of all it's, be a human first to realize that actually, as much as we might like to be a coach, as a person, a teacher, sorry, or whatever it is, first of all, actually, you're talking to a human being, so meet them as a human being, try

and develop that connection first. Because then whatever you try and get them to do will take RP, or fruitful conversations. If that person realizes you're not trying to catch them out, you're not trying to make them feel bad about themselves. So, I think actually, first of all, we have to be, the moment we do that we also appreciate the vulnerability that someone might show. So, I think we develop trust, we develop honesty, we show genuineness C10 (Lines 469-475). I keep session plans fairly open. So, I'll have a like a, I'll have a program of like, I'll chat with the kids to start with. So, we can, we design...we talk about what we want to achieve in 12-weeks and go okay, this is where we're going. And it's a model based on what they want, that I can guide with them and say, well, have you considered this? Have you considered that? So, then we go well ok this is what we want to try and achieve over the 12 weeks. I don't really plan much more than that. C9 (Lines 70-74)

But also, I think, just asking someone to verbalize what they're thinking is quite hard for the person to do it, because they don't know where to start. So, I think this is what I like about the motivational interviewing thing is the listening statements and the questions to try and encourage them to kind of talk about that and talk about what they're thinking. And yet again I get back to the psychological safe environment that they run...the environment I've got is not perfect. There's still mini ridiculing going on. And it's not like, oh, you're an ass. It's just like when someone makes a comment, someone might joke about it. That's where I have to step in and just go look, no, no, no, I'm valuing their opinion. I want to hear them. And so should you. There's a lot of things. It doesn't matter if you're 18 and they're 12 you can still learn from different people's experiences. And so yeah, it's encouraging them, and I guess it's quite hard for them, to really open up to somebody and feel comfortable enough to say what they really feel and say what they're really thinking. It's like I say it's taken a while to get out of them, but it has massively seen their benefits because if I know their self-talk, they're talking about what the experiences they've had. I know they're reflecting there and then. I don't need to; I don't need to say to them oh yeah, you're reflecting now well done. I just know it's happening. And whereas if I didn't ask the question, I wouldn't know. They might be, they probably are internalizing what's just going on, but actually if I get them to verbalize it, I know they're self, I know they're reflecting in that moment. C9 (Lines 292-306)

But anything that's written on the wall...It's not a human interaction. It's not someone asking a question. It's just whatever they read of it. So actually, what's the value? What's the value of it? I'd rather have the conversation with them and just find out what they're really thinking and also create an environment where their opinion matters. C9 (Lines 317-320)

But it comes back to that, one of the big ways my reflection is, I like to talk to people that mean a lot to me. Now, if that's sometimes that's a selfish point of view. And it's, they have to hear me talk a lot those people that's why I, that's why I call people because they know it's really important for me, I don't just call anyone. But for me, I think that daily connection to people that are going forward that these people often have a similar mindset to me, they know they're able to challenge my thoughts, my thinking and stuff like that. C10 (Lines 376-381)

And for those, I just, I explore questions that are beneficial. I maybe explore times with them, where they've done it, how it's been beneficial to them. And sometimes I think actually it's realizing that others are also in a similar situation. So, it's only last week I was having a conversation with a coach who's in the same division as I am, a good friend of mine, his team has a lot more money, a lot more players they're winning a lot more games. And a good reflection both him and I had was that player I spoke about earlier that's having those issues. We talked about metaphoric fires, that as coaches we're not creating, others are. And it was actually really good that both of us got something from that conversation upon reflection it does not matter the spectrum you're in wherever you've got all the money, and you're winning games or not the money losing games. C10 (Lines 405-413)

Questioning to prompt, trigger
and focus reflective inquiry

And so, I think, realizing that that whole, a problem shared is a problem halved kind of thing, we genuinely engage in those conversations. C10 (Lines 425-426)

I think it's about creating opportunities. You give the athlete the choice. So, if I can create opportunities and the athletes got the choice or the coach has got the choice to do AB or C I think that creates a great conversation piece, even from the point of view of ok so you decided to do X rather than Y, could you just talk us through that so that I've got a better understanding as to your thought processes, your rationale. We do a lot of stuff with regards to purpose. So, we ask the athletes, we ask the coaches to make sure that...you know what's the purpose of what we're doing. The tech-tac's easy, we know the what and the how, can we actually nail down the why a little bit more and again you don't have to talk about [name of person] and his golden circle although everyone does. But it's just that aspect of can we actually verbalize and quantify why we're doing what we're doing? C2 (Lines 243-251)

And so, I guess a lot of it's all about curiosity. I guess it's fed from there. So, I'm aware that I talk to myself a lot. And sometimes it's like self, sometimes it's self-talk. Sometimes it's chatter. But it's just like, at the moment during COVID, it tends to be more chatter, and I have to talk myself out of it. But I'm still reflecting now and then I'm reflecting about conversations I've had previously. And I'm thinking about how I might answer these conversations if they come up? So, it's almost like reflection is yeah, it's curious then go from there C9 (Lines 205-209).

I think some of them have to literally learn by thinking about it, whether they've worked hard enough. I think a lot of them when they first start running within their comfort zones. So, I start to encourage them to think about, well, actually, how tired are you? Have you actually worked hard enough this evening or are you going home and not feeling like you've actually pushed yourself? So, trying to encourage them to realize that they've got to work hard enough that actually has a beneficial effect on them. And also focus really. Some of them come along for a chat with all their mates, you know, have focused enough so that they learn that. C3 (Lines 190-197)

He was just very good at questioning. Now, it's that eternal question, why... you know, why? Why do you think that happened? Why do you think that might be the case? he did it just constantly, you know, and so you end up I mean, it's reductionist really, because then you just end up taking another slice out of it and another slice out of it, but you slice one thing, and you get kind of two, and you slice one of those bits of two, and you might get four, and you know, so you end up with this, you know, this map and almost a mind map of experiences and knowledge areas or lack of, you know, lack of knowledge areas or, you know, gaps that need to be filled or opportunities and, and the whole things used to tumble out of a 20 minute conversation with, with [name], it meant sort of six hours' worth of subsequent considerations and evaluations, but they were all really, really useful, but from that you can prioritize and from that you can determine what you wanted to do, you know, whether it was the most appropriate for you at that time and whether it was important for you or what the biggest gains from it depending on what you're trying to fix C6 (Lines 371-380).

So, in same way that I said that reflection was essential for learning... so if you're trying to help the athlete to learn then you have to get the athlete to reflect, because if the athlete doesn't reflect then the athlete's not learning. So, you know you have to... well I use techniques such as saying to the athlete: you know, what do you think? What do you think you should do, how is that working? So quite a questioning style in order to get the athlete to create an answer and therefore have to think about it and that almost by definition is reflecting. So, I probably use... probably the answer to that question is I use a questioning style C5 (Lines 206-212).

I worked with a coach a while ago I still work with him but about 15 years ago, he made a statement to me, and my response was: is that what you think or is that what you know? And he stopped in his tracks and he's a very confident individual and a not many people challenge him, and big guy and he was very surprised at my response. He was like, oh do I think that, or do I know that, and he started to think, and I said Well how do you know that then? And so, through

that way he became much more reflective and much more kind of evidence based. With a lot of the coaches, I work with I talk about evidence-based coaching, which I suppose in a way is a form of reflection. If you don't know... if you can't provide evidence behind decisions you are making, you know, what right you have got to tell the athlete to do X, Y or Z on that day if you haven't worked out exactly what they need to do and why and why they need to do it on that day and got some evidence to back it up. Otherwise, you're just guessing and that's an insult to that athlete because they're committing their life to this C5 (Lines 243-253).

Yeah, and I know I do it a lot in coach education. You know it's much more; it's sometimes a lot slower but it's much more effective if you don't provide the answer and you let them work out the answer. C5 (Lines 215-217)

...you say to the athlete you know why didn't that work? Well, you know I mean have you thought about moving your wrist you know, should we try that with more hips or whatever so yeah you just try to get the athlete to think about what's working and what's not working. C5 (Lines 223-225)

I do ask at times what are the three...you know, there are usually three positive things that you did today, or the team did and one thing to improve. And I think by them having to think about that, the positives mean you look kind of self-assurance. But then when you ask for improvement, I think, oh, OK. Yep. We need to improve that. And hopefully it triggers their mind to think about what needs to be done differently. I would say that is the best way. C4 (Lines 233-238)

I think I asked them questions. So, try not to be leading questions, but I'd kind of like challenge them... What are you doing there just out of interest? Talk me through it, tell me why you did it that way. Or what were you thinking when you were approaching the selection of the team? What sort of things were going through your head in terms of why you put players in certain places? and, and it's not digging them out. It's just sort of saying that I'm just challenging you in a friendly way so that you challenge yourself. And look, I think some of the best mentors, I've had have been people that have said, you might want to consider doing this but didn't tell me that I had to do it. C7 (Lines 371-377)

...I think players are like that a lot of people are like that. Don't tell me what to do. I kind of want to discover it myself. I want to sort of understand it, but you kind of lead them. So, it's that Guided Discovery, I suppose is the best way of describing I think that's very much my coaching style. Now I'm much more about Guided Discovery, asking certain questions C7 (Lines 381-384)

And that, that I think, is the most rewarding thing for me as a coach, is I've worked with someone and just ask them what why they're doing that. Why? Why did you shoot when you did? Could, what would you what would what was going through your mind? What was your thought process? I wanted to score. Okay, you want to score. Okay, is it easy to score from 30 yards out or 20 yards out? Oh 20 yards out is easy. Okay, so, you might want to consider going closer. Or what would you do different? Probably ask, what would you do differently next time? I'll go closer. Okay, so what you shooting from 20 yards? Yeah. Why does that make it easier? Well, it doesn't have to go so far. I can see what the keepers doing...Ok Yeah. Maybe use it next time. And then when they go and do it next time, and they go closer, and they score or get very close to scoring. And you go, yeah, okay, fair enough. And I've not had to shout get closer tell them when to shoot. Because I think we get into a habit that especially in football that you're screaming from the touchline shoot when the kid knows that they gotta shoot to score, right? even if they're nippers, they, they know that they want to try and score a goal by shooting at the goal. Yes, so they kind of know that it's gonna happen. But when it happens, I suppose you got to let them decide on that. Because at eight or nine, yes, you might be able to influence them shooting at the right time in terms of shouting out from the touch line, but you're not there when they're 17, 18, 19 and needing to see the picture to decide when to do it. C7 (Lines 399-414)

And whether it's like, I don't write I don't ever write anything down. For me. It's just like, it's like a feedback loop going on. So, I'll ask a question. And I'm just critiquing myself within it. And it's getting familiar with critiquing myself. The whole self-talk thing. I think that that's where I kind of see self-reflection going on. C9 (Lines 59-62)

I have to keep questioning it and go, is that enough? Or is that right? Or is that wrong? is what I'm doing making a difference? And so, I guess it's always fed by questions and myself initially, rather than just being ok I've done this session, and then yeah, I reflect back to the [name] model. I still don't think it's there. Because you're saying... I can't remember if I'm wrong, but I do the session and reflect on your experience and analyse and it's never happened like that. I've just questioned myself and just gone well, is that what I wanted? And then the conversation just kicks on. C9 (Lines 195-200)

I would say I've met a lot of coaches that don't, that I will see that don't reflect because they're doing the same thing over and over and over and over again. I'm seeing the environment, watching them and go well have you really questioned that, have you really questioned that's the best way of doing it? And if they're still doing it, which there are then they obviously haven't questioned and haven't asked themselves that question. C9 (Lines 219-222)

Rather than being a six-point cycle, which is this and this in order. It looks nothing. To me, it looks nothing like that. It might come across that way. But in my own head. It's just, I started the question, and then it's going well, okay, well, I'm just chatting to myself from then on. Or I might go and gain some feedback from somebody else if I'm not sure. C9 (Lines 211-214)

Like, for example, you just asked me a question. Now I'm thinking about it. If you didn't ask me a question. I wouldn't be thinking about it. And I think that's kicked off the reflective process. I'm now reflecting about what you just asked me. C9 (Lines 252-254)

...if I'm not asking questions of my environment, or the people I'm working with or social interactions, then am I realistically being curious? I might not verbalize it, but I'm still questioning what I'm seeing in front of me or I'm questioning my view of the world. And then it's going to provoke a response. Whether it's a reciprocal question or a question I'm asking somebody else. Like, I can imagine the two different...our brains are working very differently right now. Because you've just asked me a question and you're waiting. You're listening to hear a reply. Therefore, you're curious about what I'm about to say. Whereas I'm in my own mind, I'm curious about what I'm saying. I'm gonna ask... you've asked this question. I'm internalizing the question. I'm curious to understand where I'm going with this. And what aspects it has. And yet again, I'm, I'm reflecting on the question straight away. Well, I'm curious about what you've mentioned. I'm curious about the question I just put out. And yeah, I feel that they do go hand in hand. Because if I didn't ask myself the question, I wouldn't be thinking this now. And I'm also looking at myself on the screen going [name] you're really thinking hard about this. C9 (Lines 256-267)

I'll ask the right questions to understand what they want, like, what's their individual why? Why are they doing this? C10 (Lines 136-142)

I'm constantly thinking, like, could I have done something differently? Did I help them the best I could? Did I impact them the way I thought I did? Could I have asked different questions? So, I think for myself, personally, I think I'm very self-aware about how RP can help me, but I guess I think it's changed over time, I think it's more about actually now how I can use reflection to help others you know C10 (Lines 188-192)

It's a never-ending cycle. And I guess the only time it becomes, that cycle ends is when one of those things stops. If I stop asking questions of what I'm doing, then I seem to be happy in the knowledge of what I know. And the key bit for me is to make sure I'm always curious, you know, what's next? And same again, if I ask the question and don't listen, or don't take note of that question, then the reflection stops, yeah. Yet again, I can reflect back to onto like, my family, especially

		some key members. Like, they'll ask me a question, and then they don't listen. They just they just, they ask the question to be nice. But they're not curious. C9 (Lines 272-277) And they've asked a question, but they're not interested in the reply. And they're not really reflecting on what was being asked. And they were the reflection stops. All the curiosity stops. And because I know if they were genuinely interested, they would either make a listening statement, or they'll probably ask another question. So, I guess, seeing it happen in the moment there and then or not happening in the moment there and then as it seems. C9 (Lines 280-284)
Shifting the focus of reflection to achieve personal and professional change	Openly and wholeheartedly re-focussing reflection to facilitate learning	So yeah, curiosity has made me want to be better C9 (Line 194) It can be both, you know, you deliver a session, and it goes horribly wrong. You know, or part of it doesn't work, then yes, of course, you unpack that and try and evaluate and improve. But not always be looking for the negatives, because then you might miss out on those positives and being able to work on those. If we then educated our coaches a little bit better, perhaps, then they would understand that C6 (Lines 274-277) I think you get it from experience, I think you get it from if you're not quite, the sessions aren't quite going the way you thought they would, or the results aren't going the way you thought it would. I think sometimes you forget to reflect when you win C7 (Lines 416-418) But I tend to go through sessions that went either really, really well, and I think right that was great so I need to try and work out why it was great, because then I can implant whatever that information is into future sessions to make them continually great. Or something where something has just gone wrong, it doesn't have to be a bad session but maybe something mid-way through just unexpectedly happened, that could be you know like I wouldn't quite say a player getting injured but maybe just something that broke down or got slower or it didn't boost the motivation and I would start to reflect on that C1 (Lines 91-98) But I think as a reflective coach, I normally focus on the negatives rather than the positives, so I think maybe there's 10 really good things that have happened. And I'll ignore those to focus on the one that perhaps didn't happen so well C7 (Lines 275-277). Because we are, I think, our education as well as our coach education tends to focus on the things that we've got wrong. And that, that in itself is a backward thinking step. And I think perhaps that then over time, limits our ability to really think forwards. I know, we plan forwards a little bit, but we don't actually consider how that intervention might be enhanced by its interactions with people C6 (Lines 81-84) There are huge benefits, maybe I was just a poor practitioner. And maybe I kind of because of by nature, I kind of just dwell too heavily on the negatives and dwell too much on my negatives, rather than the actual interactions or the, you know, the actual development of the athlete C6 (Lines 257-59). I do think it's important. But it's not all negative. I think. I think. And I think maybe I'm guilty of this that I don't pat myself on the back enough sometimes. You know, you tend to sort of pull apart everything that goes wrong. And it's important that we do remember the good things, I think, as well. And I don't think I do enough C3 (Lines 108-111). Yeah, you probably, um, I beat myself up a lot. Especially if I've behaved in a way on matchday definitely. Because you're in it. And you get sort of enthused about it. And I can't think of any coach that can tell you that they've been behaved... If that's the right way of describing it, in terms of full check of their emotions the whole time, there'll be a number of decisions that go against you, there'll be whatever it, whatever might happen, or you keep hitting the crossbar or whatever C7 (Lines 263-267). I: So how has RP affected your coaching do you think? C6: Oh, well, initially not well, because I had or have a level of imposter syndrome, because I stressed over the preparation and the planning. I don't stress on delivery too much by the

way work you know, once I'm once I'm on stage and acting, and again, I can't remember whose great academic work was that we're all actors. But you know, playing our part. But that's what we are again as coaches. So, you know, during the delivery I don't think that comes through, but the reflections were not positive for me because I always doubted whether I'd done as well as perhaps I might have done, always doubting whether it was taken and accepted. And even you know, now I get a lot of positive feedback I'm delighted to say, and I've learned to accept that, and I don't have a big ego, but my ego does get satisfied from getting positive feedback. But even now, I just get a thank you for that. You know, I'm a bit doubtful was that good enough? Did it really work? A few years ago, I might have asked them I might have actually emailed them all back then: Are you sure that was alright. So initially my reflections were not a positive experience C6 (Lines 161-170)

But I think yeah, I probably take the negatives on board more than the positives in terms of my RP, but that might be my personality. I'm not sure whether that's across all coaches C7 (Lines 287-289).

I do think you have to be careful not to dwell on the negatives all the time C3 (Lines 113-14)

Because I think as coaches we often go to the even better ifs, as opposed to celebrating the success C2 (Lines 79-80).

Yeah, I think you can use it almost like a SWAT analysis from the point of view that, both at a micro and macro level, if you're looking at it within a planning environment, you know that aspect of well let's celebrate success, what did we do well in that session? What worked for the athletes? What engaged them? C2 (Lines 115-118).

But I think just to underline the point, because genuinely, it's a positive practice, I think it's this understanding that you've got to find something that didn't go well, in your practice otherwise you didn't reflect properly, you know, kind of, well, actually, why couldn't somebodies practice go well, why couldn't...you know, why don't we take somebodies great session and say, well done, that was good. And I can see the progression of your athletes, I can see their understanding, I can see the way in which you resolve the questions, I can see in a, in a positive manner, or you redirected them when it wasn't going the right way. And instead of trying to find something poor, because of the way we've taught it, you actually like okay, that actually, I didn't think of it that way, how did I do that? That's it, yeah right. Now, let's focus on that going forward C6 (Lines 263-270).

But also, thinking forwards, I think, only recently have I fully appreciated the importance of thinking forwards, in conjunction with thinking backwards. You know, we do think backwards, which is evaluative, but thinking forwards, which is suggestive, helps you to come up with the solutions that you're trying to create to improve your coaching and they're two shortcuts that that I didn't get directly from coach education and might have saved me immense, not mistakes but you know C6 (Lines 65-70).

And pre-empt things. So that's where the session plan goes. I think from each session it then it leads on to the next I'll take notes. I'll take mental notes and go ok well, this happened, that happened. Do we need to work on this again? is it. Can it be. Can we advance it? who needs working on it more than others? Do they get it? Do they not? What do they get out of it? What happened? What haven't they got out of it? I was maybe anticipating C9 Lines 79-83).

Then I would reflect then and try and record my thoughts. And, then when I learnt to think forwards, I would start to plan out how I can use what I've just learned in a more effective manner C6 (Lines 298-299).

And, you know, that suggestive thinking really, really enhanced the way in which I evaluated my work and what I was doing and how I kind of approach that particular, what I would call a skill, and develop that with the athletes that I work with, and then with the coaches that I work with C6 (Lines 218-220).

So that that's thinking forwards and being suggestive, far more powerful for the development of that concept C6 (Lines 213-214).

Widening the focus and
embedding RPs into training

Yes, so that I think the breakthrough for me was to not just think of what went wrong, and why but to what went right and why so that I can replicate that, as I mentioned earlier. But also, to then interpret that in a forward thinking and suggestive way, which would then allow me to, you know, not only thinking about what did I do, and let's fix that, but let's see what I can do that see, you know, let's create some opportunity here, rather than always thinking backwards C6 (Lines 74-78).

I've got what...12345678...I've got eight books on the table next to me. And there's more upstairs in my bedroom. I would have not been reading them had I not been curious. Had I not been self-reflective about why I do certain things, and one thing led me to another. So, I guess I've just been. I've just finished reading that: coaching athletes to be their best. But I think I got. So, [name] 'think again'. So, I've read that like two or three times. I got really curious about another two books he's mentioned. I bought those two. And I've gone from there. So, I'm just curious, constantly curious. C9 (Lines 225-231)

Now I'm reading and reading and reading. And I still suggest that's a self-reflective thing. Because I'm seeing value in it. But no one's told me anything. I'm reading I'm taking this information in and going ok I value this, I value that, I don't value this, I don't value that. And then I go, okay, maybe I'm being more curious about it...to be better. And I think the self-reflection part kind of kicks in with that because I'm constantly regurgitating information in my own head. And then going actually, am I asking a question about it? Well, I guess that's more of, I want to learn more, because I'm aware that I don't know that information. So, I guess that becomes part of self-reflection. C9 (Lines 231-236)

So maybe it's I don't know, maybe it's in terms of because we are learning coaches, we're just interested in the sport itself. And we kind of forget the humanistic point of view of it. We just kind of go what's this design? Yet again, if I go back to the self-determination, stuff, none of that has to do anything to do with squash. So, I've almost come full circle, actually, I'm realizing there's a humanistic nature. So, is that something that we could maybe bring forward within coaching earlier on, rather than just focusing purely on the practical side of coaching? Maybe it's worth I don't know delving into the theory a bit more and allowing people to explore that model, or the humanistic nature of coaching earlier on C9 (Lines 159-165).

I think there's some genuine learning to be done about how to reflect. And I think if we can, if we can get the coach educators to understand that we've got more chance of the coaches understanding that C6 (Lines 400-402).

And it's an extension of coach education. And so, getting coach educators to understand it better. Step number one, will get coaches to understand it better, getting mentors to be better at understanding reflection, and encouraging the mentees to reflect and enhancing their RP C6 (Lines 407-410).

The two later lessons I've learned is a) bandwidth reflection, which has helped immensely to limit what I'm trying to reflect on and be more focused on things. And I didn't learn that and properly until I was doing my masters. So, there were many years of just reflecting about everything in a chaotic manner C6 (Lines 63-65)

But as a coach educator, I feel it's incumbent upon me to teach the... or to teach, to educate, to inform the coaches that I'm working with, some of the short-circuits that I've learned, you know, we have a very kind of structured level of coach education now, in terms of what we deliver and the levels that we do, but why wait till they've done a Masters to learn bandwidth, you know, why not learn that at level one for heaven's sake, and, okay, some people might stumble upon that, and well done for them, but on the whole, I guess they weren't, so I teach everything I can to the level of the group that's in front of me and then try and encourage them about the benefits of it. And also, the, perhaps the short circuitry, that's available C6 (Lines 144-150).

In terms of reflection, you know you reflect on the session, or you reflect on your impact, or you reflect on your contribution to society. So, it's fundamental. It is coaching C5 (Lines 91-92).

So, if you were operating at the first level you might reflect on the session that you just delivered and you might think that was a good session or oh no that player got injured, if I hadn't had him running into walls that might not have happened, that kind of thing. So, you know you can just reflect on the session or reflect on the technique that you delivered or reflect on the way the athlete responded to that or whether they learn anything or something like that. If you're operating at the second level where actually you realise that it's about building people rather than technique or skills or winning matches then you might reflect on how you interacted with the athlete, you might reflect on whether your engagement is actually building a better person, is there a conflict between building a champion or building a better person, are they the same thing or are they in conflict, those kinds of issues. If you're operating at the third level, then you might reflect on your contribution to society and you know whether what you're doing is making a difference C5 (Lines 52-62).

Can I show them how through my professional practice as a coach, or as a teacher, how I can help them use reflection, to be self-aware and realize that actually, yes, I may have a predisposition, because for me, my reflection is quite active. It's quite dynamic. It is quite complex at times, but actually just getting to realize that there is something really simple and something basic we can get from reflection to the point of it can really get us improving our wellbeing, it can make us more mindful about who we are, it can make you search for meaning C10 (Lines 192-197).

And I've not had to shout get closer tell them when to shoot. Because I think we get into a habit that especially in football that you're screaming from the touchline shoot when the kid knows that they gotta shoot to score, right? even if they're nippers, they, they know that they want to try and score a goal by shooting at the goal. Yes, so they kind of know that it's gonna happen. But when it happens, I suppose you got to let them decide on that. Because at eight or nine, yes, you might be able to influence them shooting at the right time in terms of shouting out from the touch line, but you're not there when they're 17, 18, 19 and needing to see the picture to decide when to do it. C7 (Lines 399-414)

So actually, my reflections are going to be very different based on my goals and aspirations. So, I think, not to try and sit on the fence I think it just really depends on that person, you know in terms of their reflection, what their what they want from life, what they want from this opportunity, and I think that's fine. I'll ask the right questions to understand what they want, like, what's their individual why? Why are they doing this? and try and better service to get them to see how I can help them, or the team can help them but also how they can help us you know, and also some people are very able to reflect when out of the situation. C10 (Lines 136-142)

So, I think for myself, personally, I think I'm very self-aware about how RP can help me, but I guess I think it's changed over time, I think it's more about actually now how I can use reflection to help others you know C10 (Lines 188-192)

...if I'm not asking questions of my environment, or the people I'm working with or social interactions, then am I realistically being curious? I might not verbalize it, but I'm still questioning what I'm seeing in front of me or I'm questioning my view of the world. And then it's going to provoke a response. Whether it's a reciprocal question or a question I'm asking somebody else. C9 (Lines 256-267)

You know what the end goal is, you know, to prepare athletes for the Olympics and the Paralympics and I think from that aspect your planning sessions invariably encompass an element of RP because it's what did we do well? What can we do better, so you look at it from both a collective and an individual experience C2 (Lines 105-108).

<i>Main themes</i>	<i>Sub themes</i>	<i>C1</i>	<i>C2</i>	<i>C3</i>	<i>C4</i>	<i>C5</i>	<i>C6</i>	<i>C7</i>	<i>C8</i>	<i>C9</i>	<i>C10</i>
An analytical and reflexive experiential inquiry deepened by a formalised process	An analytical thought process	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	A reflexive experiential inquiry			✓	✓	✓		✓			
	Deepening and habituating reflection and reflexivity through informal and formal processes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Barriers and challenges to RP	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
	Overcoming barriers: Openness to the value of RP	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Engaging coaches in a challenging process	Learning through reflective conversations	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
	Questioning to prompt, trigger and focus reflective inquiry			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
	Openly and wholeheartedly re-focussing reflection to facilitate learning		✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	
Shifting the focus of reflection to achieve personal and professional change	Widening the focus and embedding RPs into training		✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

Appendix C - Participant information sheet for chapter seven

UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE

ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR STUDIES INVOLVING THE USE OF HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

('ETHICS COMMITTEE')

FORM EC6: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

1 Title of study

Exploring sport coaches' perceptions and experiences of using reflective practice in their professional development

2 Introduction

You are being invited to take part in a study. Before you decide whether to do so, it is important that you understand the study that is being undertaken and what your involvement will include. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Do not hesitate to ask us anything that is not clear or for any further information you would like to help you make your decision. Please do take your time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. The University's regulation, UPR RE01, 'Studies Involving the Use of Human Participants' can be accessed via this link:

<https://www.herts.ac.uk/about-us/governance/university-policies-and-regulations-uprs/uprs>

(after accessing this website, scroll down to Letter S where you will find the regulation)

Thank you for reading this.

3 What is the purpose of this study?

This study aims to understand sport coaches' perceptions and experiences of using reflective practice in their professional development. By understanding your perceptions and experiences of using reflective practice it is hoped that we will be able to develop approaches to learning that best meet the unique needs of sport coaches.

4 Do I have to take part?

It is completely up to you whether or not you decide to take part in this study. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. Agreeing to join the study does not mean that you have to complete it. You are free to withdraw at any stage without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw at any time, or a decision not to take part at all, will not affect any treatment/care that you may receive (should this be relevant).

5 Are there any age or other restrictions that may prevent me from participating?

To be eligible to participate in this study you must be at least 18 years old and be the lead coach at your sport club or hold the highest-level sport coaching qualification from a relevant governing body of sport.

6 How long will my part in the study take?

If you decide to take part in this study, you will be involved in it for a single interview of up to an hour in duration.

7 What will happen to me if I take part?

The first thing to happen will be that I will ask you a series of prepared questions that I encourage you to answer in as much detail as you can. I may ask follow-up questions to prompt you to talk in more detail about specific pieces of information that you may have briefly mentioned. This interview will be recorded and following this study I will transcribe the interview so that the information can be analyzed. You are only being asked to participate in a single interview for up to an hour in duration.

8 What are the possible disadvantages, risks or side effects of taking part?

There is a small risk that the textual information provided could be used to identify you. Consequently, direct identifiers will be anonymized by using pseudonyms in place of your name. Additionally, indirect identifiers (e.g. places, organizations) will be removed.

9 What are the possible benefits of taking part?

By participating in this study, you will be contributing to developing an understanding of sport coaches' perceptions and experiences of using reflective practice. This information is important when developing learning interventions to make sure these interventions best meet the needs of practitioners.

10 How will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Interviews will be transcribed and stored on a password protected USB that is only accessible by myself and my supervisory team. Once these interviews are transcribed, the recordings will be deleted, and any personal information contained on the transcript will be anonymized using pseudonyms in place of your real name. Indirect identifiers (for example locations, organization names) will be removed from the transcripts. If information is disclosed that constitutes an ethical concern relating to the welfare of a child or vulnerable person, this information may be passed to the appropriate authorities.

11 Audio-visual material

Interviews will be recorded, transcribed, and stored on a password protected USB that is only accessible by myself and my supervisory team. These interview recordings will be transcribed by myself in a private room. Immediately following the transcription of the interview, the recordings will be deleted.

12 What will happen to the data collected within this study?

- The data collected will be stored electronically, in a password-protected environment, for 10 years, after which time it will be destroyed under secure conditions. You are entitled to have your data removed within this time period.

- The data will be anonymized prior to storage.
- Parts of the anonymized data will be used within an article that will be submitted for publication

13 Will the data be required for use in further studies?

- The data will not be used in any further studies.

14 Who has reviewed this study?

This study has been reviewed by:

- The University of Hertfordshire Health, Science, Engineering and Technology Ethics Committee with Delegated Authority

The UH protocol number is LMS/PGR/UH/04150

15 Factors that might put others at risk

Please note that if, during the study, any medical conditions or non-medical circumstances such as unlawful activity become apparent that might or had put others at risk, the University may refer the matter to the appropriate authorities and, under such circumstances, you will be withdrawn from the study.

16 Who can I contact if I have any questions?

If you would like further information or would like to discuss any details personally, please get in touch with me, in writing, by phone or by email: *Tony Marshall, 07719664166, mt9al@herts.ac.uk*

Although we hope it is not the case, if you have any complaints or concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, please write to the University's Secretary and Registrar at the following address:

Secretary and Registrar
University of Hertfordshire
College Lane
Hatfield
Herts
AL10 9AB

Thank you very much for reading this information and giving consideration to taking part in this study.

Appendix D - Consent form chapter seven

UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE

ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR STUDIES INVOLVING THE USE OF HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

(‘ETHICS COMMITTEE’)

FORM EC3

CONSENT FORM FOR STUDIES INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

I, the undersigned [*please give your name here, in BLOCK CAPITALS*]

.....

of [*please give contact details here, sufficient to enable the investigator to get in touch with you, such as a postal or email address*]

.....

hereby freely agree to take part in the study entitled *Exploring sport coaches’ perceptions and experiences of using reflective practice in their professional development*

(UH Protocol number LMS/PGR/UH/04150)

1 I confirm that I have been given a Participant Information Sheet (a copy of which is attached to this form) giving particulars of the study, including its aim(s), methods and design, the names and contact details of key people and, as appropriate, the risks and potential benefits, how the information collected will be stored and for how long, and any plans for follow-up studies that might involve further approaches to participants. I have also been informed of how my personal

information on this form will be stored and for how long. I have been given details of my involvement in the study. I have been told that in the event of any significant change to the aim(s) or design of the study I will be informed, and asked to renew my consent to participate in it.

2 I have been assured that I may withdraw from the study at any time without disadvantage or having to give a reason.

3 In giving my consent to participate in this study, I understand that voice, video or photo-recording will take place and I have been informed of how/whether this recording will be transmitted/displayed.

4 I have been told how information relating to me (data obtained in the course of the study, and data provided by me about myself) will be handled: how it will be kept secure, who will have access to it, and how it will or may be used, including the possibility of anonymised data being deposited in a repository with open access (freely available).

5 I understand that if there is any revelation of unlawful activity or any indication of non-medical circumstances that would or has put others at risk, the University may refer the matter to the appropriate authorities.

6 I have been told that I may at some time in the future be contacted again in connection with this or another study.

Signature of participant.....Date.....

Signature of (principal) investigator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Marshall', written in a cursive style.

Date...20/01/2026

Name of (principal) investigator

TONY MARSHALL

Appendix E - Interview schedule chapter seven

Draft Interview guide, for example,

Background information

1. Could you tell me a little bit about your current role?
2. How would you describe your role as a coach?

Focussing on reflective practice

3. What does reflective practice mean from your perspective?
4. What were your first impressions of reflective practice? What do you think led you to perceive reflective practice in this way?
5. Has your opinion of reflective practice changed over time? If so, how has it changed?
6. How has reflective practice affected your coaching?
7. Could you tell me about a time you have had to think carefully about a problem in your coaching?
Could you describe this problem for me and how you solved it?
8. What did you learn from this experience?
9. What helped you to think through the problem?
10. How do you facilitate the reflection of others, for example athletes or fellow coaches?
11. What do you think might help to support coaches to engage with reflective practice?

Ending the interview

12. Is there anything further that you would like to add on the topic of reflective practice that you have not had a chance to talk about?
13. Is there anything you want to ask?

Appendix F - Debrief form chapter seven

Thank you for participating in this study that aims to understand sport coaches' perceptions and experiences of using reflective practice as a method of professional development. Your assistance is very much appreciated, and it is hoped that the insights you have provided will help to inform the development of interventions that can assist sport coaches in their continuing professional development. If you would like more information about the study or feel that you need some support following this interview, then please do not hesitate to contact any of the following people:

- Dr Saskia Keville (Clinical psychologist, PhD supervisor) – s.keville@herts.ac.uk
- Your local G.P.

If you would like to contact me regarding any aspect of this study then please email me at: mt9al@herts.ac.uk

Thank you

Appendix G - Ethics approval letter chapter seven



HEALTH, SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY ECDA

ETHICS APPROVAL NOTIFICATION

TO Tony Marshall
CC Dr Saskia Keville
FROM Dr Simon Trainis, Health, Science, Engineering & Technology ECDA Chair.
DATE 30/04/2020

Protocol number: **LMS/PGR/UH/04150**

Title of study: Exploring sport coaches' perceptions and experiences of using reflective practice in their professional development.

Your application for ethics approval has been accepted and approved with the following conditions by the ECDA for your School and includes work undertaken for this study by the named additional workers below:

no additional workers named

General conditions of approval:

Ethics approval has been granted subject to the standard conditions below:

Permissions: Any necessary permissions for the use of premises/location and accessing participants for your study must be obtained in writing prior to any data collection commencing. Failure to obtain adequate permissions may be considered a breach of this protocol.

External communications: Ensure you quote the UH protocol number and the name of the approving Committee on all paperwork, including recruitment advertisements/online requests, for this study.

Invasive procedures: If your research involves invasive procedures you are required to complete and submit an EC7 Protocol Monitoring Form, and copies of your completed consent paperwork to this ECDA once your study is complete.

Submission: Students must include this Approval Notification with their submission.

Validity:

This approval is valid:

From: 01/08/2020

To: 01/08/2021

Please note:

Failure to comply with the conditions of approval will be considered a breach of protocol and may result in disciplinary action which could include academic penalties.

Additional documentation requested as a condition of this approval protocol may be submitted via your supervisor to the Ethics Clerks as it becomes available. All documentation relating to this study, including the information/documents noted in the conditions above, must be available for your supervisor at the time of submitting your work so that they are able to confirm that you have complied with this protocol.

Should you amend any aspect of your research or wish to apply for an extension to your study you will need your supervisor's approval (if you are a student) and must complete and submit form EC2.

Approval applies specifically to the research study/methodology and timings as detailed in your Form EC1A. In cases where the amendments to the original study are deemed to be substantial, a new Form EC1A may need to be completed prior to the study being undertaken.

Failure to report adverse circumstance/s may be considered misconduct.

Should adverse circumstances arise during this study such as physical reaction/harm, mental/emotional harm, intrusion of privacy or breach of confidentiality this must be reported to the approving Committee immediately.

Appendix H - Recruitment leaflet

Exploring sport coaches' perceptions and experiences of using reflective practice in their professional development

Who would I like to interview?

Lead sport coaches OR sport coaches who hold the highest level of qualification in any sport.

What will be involved?

I would greatly appreciate up to an hour of your time to talk about your experiences of using reflective practice in your professional development.

If you are able to help me with my research, I will organise a time for us to connect online via skype, zoom or Microsoft teams. I will send you a link to the meeting room where we can talk and I will send you some paperwork to complete by email before this meeting. This will also include the interview questions so that you can begin thinking about your answers.

If you are able to help me in my research please contact me on: mt9al@herts.ac.uk.

This study is approved by the Health, Science, Engineering and technology ECDA ethics committee at the University of Hertfordshire.

Protocol number: LMS/PGR/UH/04150

Appendix I - Participant information sheet chapter eight

FORM EC6: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

1 Title of study

Exploring sport coaches' perceptions and experiences of using reflective practice in their professional development

2 Introduction

You previously participated in this study exploring your views on reflective practice, and we would like to explore the data within the interview you previously gave on an individual, case study level. Before you decide whether you are ok for this to happen, it is important that you understand the study that is being undertaken and what your involvement will include. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Do not hesitate to ask us anything that is not clear or for any further information you would like to help you make your decision. Please do take your time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. The University's regulation, UPR RE01, 'Studies Involving the Use of Human Participants' can be accessed via this link:

<https://www.herts.ac.uk/about-us/governance/university-policies-and-regulations-uprs/uprs>
(after accessing this website, scroll down to Letter S where you will find the regulation)

Thank you for reading this.

3 What is the purpose of this study?

This study aims to explore your previous interview further to explore coaches' role frames and experiences of reflective practice. By understanding your perceptions and experiences of using reflective practice it is hoped that we will be able to develop approaches to learning that best meet the unique needs of sport coaches.

4 Do I have to take part?

It is completely up to you whether you decide to consent for your interview to be used. If you do decide to consent, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. You are still free to withdraw at any stage without giving a reason and this will not affect any treatment/care that you may receive (should this be relevant).

5. How long will my part in the study take?

If you agree for your interview to be used, all you will need to do is sign the consent form.

10 How will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Your interview was transcribed and stored on a password protected USB that was only accessible by myself and my supervisory team; the recordings have since been deleted, and any personal information contained on the transcript was anonymized using pseudonyms in place of your real name. Indirect identifiers (for example locations, organization names) were also removed from the transcripts. No information disclosed constituted an ethical concern relating to the welfare of a child or vulnerable person, and so no information was passed onto other authorities.

12 What will happen to the data collected within this study?

- Previously we said that:

- the data collected would be anonymized and stored electronically, in a password-protected environment, for 10 years, after which time it would be destroyed under secure conditions. You are entitled to have your data removed within this time-period.
- Parts of the anonymized data would be used within an article that will be submitted for publication; we would like to add that more than one article may be published

13 Will the data be required for use in further studies?

We originally stated that the data would not be used in any further studies, however, now we would like to use more detailed data from a few individuals to help understand participants role frames and how this relates to reflective practice.

14 Who has reviewed this study?

This study has been reviewed by:

- The University of Hertfordshire Health, Science, Engineering and Technology Ethics Committee with Delegated Authority

The UH protocol number is **aLMS/PGR/UH/04150(2)**

15 Factors that might put others at risk

There are no known factors which might put others at risk.

16 Who can I contact if I have any questions?

If you would like further information or would like to discuss any details personally, please get in touch with me, in writing, by phone or by email: *Tony Marshall, 07719664166, t.marshall3@herts.ac.uk*

Although we hope it is not the case, if you have any complaints or concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, please write to the University's Secretary and Registrar at the following address:

Secretary and Registrar
University of Hertfordshire
College Lane
Hatfield
Herts
AL10 9AB

Thank you very much for reading this information and giving consideration to taking part in this study.

Appendix J - Consent form chapter eight

**UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE
ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR STUDIES INVOLVING THE USE OF HUMAN
PARTICIPANTS
(‘ETHICS COMMITTEE’)**

**FORM EC3
CONSENT FORM FOR STUDIES INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS**

I, the undersigned [*please give your name here, in BLOCK CAPITALS*]

.....
of [*please give contact details here, sufficient to enable the investigator to get in touch with you, such as a postal or email address*]

.....
hereby freely agree to take part in the study entitled *Exploring sport coaches' perceptions and experiences of using reflective practice in their professional development*

.....
(UH Protocol number: aLMS/PGR/UH/04150(2))

1 I confirm that I have been given a Participant Information Sheet (a copy of which is attached to this form) giving particulars of the study, including its aim(s), methods and design, the names and contact details of key people and, as appropriate, the risks and potential benefits, how the information collected will be stored and for how long, and any plans for follow-up studies that might involve further approaches to participants or utilising the data for further studies. I have also been informed of how my personal information on this form will be stored and for how long. Previously I was given details of my involvement in the study and was told that in the event of any significant change to the aim(s) or design of the study I will be informed, and asked to renew my consent to participate in it; I understand this is now being asked for.

2 I have been assured that I may withdraw from any additional study using my data at any time without disadvantage or having to give a reason.

3 In giving my consent to participate in my previous interview being used in further studies, I understand that my previous recording was deleted following transcription and anonymization.

4 I have been told how information relating to me (data obtained in the course of the study, and data provided by me about myself) will be handled: how it will be kept secure, who will have access to it, and how it will or may be used, including the possibility of anonymised data being deposited in a repository with open access (freely available) or used in further studies.

5 I understand that as there were no revelations of unlawful activity or any indication of non-medical circumstances that would or has put others at risk, that they University did not need to refer the matter to the appropriate authorities.

6 I was previously told that I may at some time in the future be contacted again in connection with this or another study and this approach seeks permission for my previous interview to be used in further studies.

Signature of participant.....Date.....

Signature of (principal) investigator



Date 04/09/2022

Name of (principal) investigator [*in BLOCK CAPITALS please*]

TONY MARSHALL

Appendix K - Email template seeking permission for use of data in a follow-up analysis

Dear

Thank you for previously participating in my research study exploring sport coaches' perceptions and experiences of using reflective practice for the purposes of learning and professional development. Although this has taken some time to analyse and write up, I have included a theme table below that represents the patterns of meaning I developed from the data collected from multiple interviews, one of which you kindly participated in.

I am emailing firstly to ask you to read through the themes that have been developed and email me if you have any comments you wish to make; any views are welcome as they can help me engage more reflexively with the data.

Secondly, I would like to request consent from you to potentially use your data in a follow-up case study analysis, whereby I will aim to explore a few selected transcripts for a deeper analysis, considering participant role frames and how these might influence ways of understanding reflective practice and methods of engaging with practice-related problems. If you are happy for me to use your data for further analysis and inclusion in further studies, I have attached a copy of a participant information sheet and consent form for you to sign and email back to me. Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best wishes

Tony Marshall

Main themes	Sub themes	Explanations
An analytical and reflexive experiential enquiry deepened by a formalised process	An analytical thought process	Most participants described reflection as an analytical process that can be performed with varying degrees of rigor and depth e.g., varying from introspective/self-talk to more structured conversational or written modes.
	A reflexive experiential enquiry	Reflection seemed to be engaged with considering the self and one's actions in the moment, in a given context, and it was usually focussed on coaching experiences.
	Deepening and habituating reflection and reflexivity through informal and formal processes	Reflection was performed to varying degrees of depth and sometimes habitually. Formalising the process might facilitate achieving depth and rigour. However, informal processes might make it easier to engage and persist with.
Engaging coaches in a challenging process	Barriers and challenges to reflective practice	Barriers and challenges referred to problems with models with some participants suggesting that reflection is not always like it is on paper; others suggested that formalising reflective practice could be an inhibitor/barrier; reflection is a time-consuming process that can be seen as a chore to perform particularly with competing demands; reflecting on negatives can enhance negative emotions; reflection can be a performative process or a tick box exercise.
	Overcoming barriers: Openness to the value of reflective practice	Most participants valued reflective practice, recognising the importance of it; some admitted they could do it more; others alluded to it being a motivating process to facilitate learning and development. Recognising the benefits and valuing reflective practice might be associated with the tendency to reflect when barriers are present.
	Learning through reflective conversations	Most participants recognised that we reflect through conversation and were reflecting during the interview; some reflected with teams or one-to-one with managers/peers; questions seemed to be a key process to trigger and focus these reflective conversations with the implicit assumption that listening carefully is a key skill to facilitate reflection in others
	Questioning to prompt, trigger and focus reflective enquiry	
Shifting the focus of reflection to achieve personal and professional change	Openly and wholeheartedly re-focussing reflection to facilitate learning	There was a tendency for coaches to think about negative things (problems) vs successes; Reflection was also nearly always past focussed, and it seemed important to some to be able to shift focus to think about successes and future oriented planning to improve practice.
	Widening the focus and embedding reflective practices into training	There were some considerations regarding what can be done on a pragmatic and socio-political level to bring reflective practice forward to the earlier stages of coach education and embed it into training.

Appendix L - Approval notification chapter eight



HEALTH, SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY ECDA ETHICS APPROVAL NOTIFICATION

TO Tony Marshall
CC Dr Saskia Keville
FROM Dr Simon Trainis, Health, Science, Engineering & Technology ECDA Chair
DATE 20/07/2022

Protocol number: aLMS/PGR/UH/04150(2)

Title of study: Exploring sport coaches' perceptions and experiences of using reflective practice in their professional development

Your application to modify and extend the existing protocol as detailed below has been accepted and approved by the ECDA for your School and includes work undertaken for this study by the named additional workers below:

No additional workers named

Modification: detailed in EC2

General conditions of approval:

Ethics approval has been granted subject to the standard conditions below:

Original protocol: Any conditions relating to the original protocol approval remain and must be complied with.

Permissions: Any necessary permissions for the use of premises/location and accessing participants for your study must be obtained in writing prior to any data collection commencing. Failure to obtain adequate permissions may be considered a breach of this protocol.

External communications: Ensure you quote the UH protocol number and the name of the approving Committee on all paperwork, including recruitment advertisements/online requests, for this study.

Invasive procedures: If your research involves invasive procedures you are required to complete and submit an EC7 Protocol Monitoring Form, and copies of your completed consent paperwork to this ECDA once your study is complete.

Submission: Students must include this Approval Notification with their submission.

Validity:

This approval is valid:

From: 20/07/2022

To: 01/08/2023

Please note:

Failure to comply with the conditions of approval will be considered a breach of protocol and may result in disciplinary action which could include academic penalties. Additional documentation requested as a condition of this approval protocol may be submitted via your supervisor to the Ethics Clerks as it becomes available. All documentation relating to this study, including the information/documents noted in the conditions above, must be available for your supervisor at the time of submitting your work so that they are able to confirm that you have complied with this protocol.

Should you amend any aspect of your research or wish to apply for an extension to your study you will need your supervisor's approval (if you are a student) and must complete and submit a further EC2 request.

Approval applies specifically to the research study/methodology and timings as detailed in your Form EC1A or as detailed in the EC2 request. In cases where the amendments to the original study are deemed to be substantial, a new Form EC1A may need to be completed prior to the study being undertaken.

Failure to report adverse circumstance/s may be considered misconduct.

Should adverse circumstances arise during this study such as physical reaction/harm, mental/emotional harm, intrusion of privacy or breach of confidentiality this must be reported to the approving Committee immediately.

Appendix M - Parental consent chapter nine

Appendix B1: EC6 Participant Information Sheet: parent/guardian

UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE

**ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR STUDIES INVOLVING THE USE OF HUMAN PARTICIPANTS
(‘ETHICS COMMITTEE’)**

FORM EC6: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

1 Title of study

A first-person reflexive enquiry into teaching/coaching practices in the further education context

2 Introduction

The person you care for is being invited to take part in a study. Before you decide whether to do so, it is important that you understand the study that is being undertaken and what their involvement will include. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Do not hesitate to ask us anything that is not clear or for any further information you would like to help you make your decision. Please do take your time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. The University's regulation, UPR RE01, 'Studies Involving the Use of Human Participants' can be accessed via this link:

<https://www.herts.ac.uk/about-us/governance/university-policies-and-regulations-uprs/uprs>

(after accessing this website, scroll down to Letter S where you will find the regulation)

Thank you for reading this.

3 What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to explore and understand the facilitators, barriers, and mechanisms of reflective practice from a first-person perspective.

4 Do I have to take part?

It is completely up to you whether or not you opt out for the person you care for to take part in this study. If you do decide for them to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep. Agreeing for them to join the study does not mean that they have to complete it. You are free to opt out at any stage without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw at any time, or a decision not to take part at all, will not affect any treatment/care that they may receive (should this be relevant).

5 Are there any age or other restrictions that may prevent me from participating?

This study is a reflexive first person enquiry into my practice as a sport lecturer/coach in the further education environment. Consequently, this study is

restricted to my current students enrolled on the NCFE course at SCL Education, Borehamwood Football Club.

6 How long will my part in the study take?

I will be writing a self-reflective diary of my practice of over this year, so within their normal educational experiences until the end of the 2022-2023 academic year in July 2023. This participant information sheet is in place to make you aware that I am engaging in a first-person study of my own teaching and coaching and reflective practices and offers you the opportunity to opt out of the person you care for being included in descriptions of my interactions for the purpose of my professional development, to write my doctoral thesis, and potentially publish this work.

7 What will happen to me if I take part?

The person you care for will be required to continue to participate in their normal educational experiences. This participant information sheet is in place to make you aware that I am engaging in a first-person study which will include anonymized descriptions of my teaching and coaching interactions in a written report within my thesis and in a potential publication.

8 What are the possible disadvantages, risks or side effects of taking part?

(Note: if appropriate for this particular study, you will be asked to agree to any required health screening questionnaire in advance of the study. Please also note that circumstances may arise that could result in the need for you to withdraw from the study; should such circumstances occur, the investigator will discuss the matter with you.)

The focus of the reflections will be my teaching and coaching practice, however, there is a small risk of personal identification from contextual information in the final report. However, this risk will be managed by depersonalizing any descriptions used in the final thesis/publication. For example, names of people, places, and organizations will be replaced by impersonal labels e.g. [name], [place name], [organization].

9 What are the possible benefits of taking part?

This study might lead to useful insight into the facilitators, barriers, and mechanisms of reflective practice for teacher and coaches that could support practitioners to engage with this professional learning process. This study will also contribute to my doctoral thesis and my own professional development, enabling me to better serve the needs and development of my students.

10 How will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Participation requires the person you care for to engage with their normal educational programme. This participant information sheet provides information about my self-reflections on my teaching and coaching practice which will include anonymized descriptions of my teaching and coaching interactions and present this within my thesis and a potential publication. All descriptions will be depersonalized by replacing names of people, places, and organizations with impersonal labels e.g. [name], [place name], [organization]. The reflective journal will be kept secure on the University of Hertfordshire's OneDrive, prohibiting access to anyone outside of the immediate research team.

11 Audio-visual material

The reflective journal will be written but may also be supported through audio recordings I make after the teaching/coaching sessions that will be transcribed and depersonalized. As this study will only use my reflections, it will not use participant interviews or video recordings and so there is minimal risk to participants.

12 What will happen to the data collected within this study?

Data will include a reflective journal created by the lead researcher. This will be securely stored in the University of Hertfordshire OneDrive and only be accessible to the immediate research team. Data will be depersonalized, using impersonal labels in place of names of people, places, and organizations

- The data collected will be stored electronically, in a password-protected environment, for 5 years, after which time it will be destroyed under secure conditions.
- The data will be anonymized prior to storage.

13 Will the data be required for use in further studies?

- The data collected may be re-used or subjected to further analysis as part of a future ethically approved study; the data to be re-used will be anonymized.
- The results of the study and/or the data collected (in anonymized form) may be published in a journal article.

14 Who has reviewed this study?

This study has been reviewed by:

- The University of Hertfordshire Health, Science, Engineering and Technology Ethics Committee with Delegated Authority

The UH protocol number is LMS/PGR/UH/05122

15 Factors that might put others at risk

Please note that if, during the study, any medical conditions, or non-medical circumstances such as unlawful activity become apparent that might or had put others at risk, the University may refer the matter to the appropriate authorities and, under such circumstances, you will be withdrawn from the study.

16 Who can I contact if I have any questions?

If you would like further information or would like to discuss any details personally, please get in touch with me, in writing, by phone or by email:
t.marshall3@herts.ac.uk

My research supervisor, Dr Saskia Keville can also be contacted:
s.keville@herts.ac.uk

Although we hope it is not the case, if you have any complaints or concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, please write to the University's Secretary and Registrar at the following address:

Secretary and Registrar
University of Hertfordshire
College Lane
Hatfield
Herts
AL10 9AB

Thank you very much for reading this information and giving consideration to taking part in this study.

Appendix N - Young person consent chapter nine

Appendix B2: EC6 Participant Information Sheet: young person

UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE

**ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR STUDIES INVOLVING THE USE OF HUMAN PARTICIPANTS
(‘ETHICS COMMITTEE’)**

FORM EC6: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

1 Title of study

A first-person reflexive enquiry into teaching/coaching practices in the further education context

2 Introduction

You are being invited to take part in a study exploring my teaching and coaching practice. Before you decide whether to do so, it is important that you understand the study that is being undertaken and what your involvement will include. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Do not hesitate to ask us anything that is not clear or for any further information you would like to help you make your decision. Please do take your time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. The University’s regulation, UPR RE01, ‘Studies Involving the Use of Human Participants’ can be accessed via this link:

<https://www.herts.ac.uk/about-us/governance/university-policies-and-regulations-uprs/uprs>

(after accessing this website, scroll down to Letter S where you will find the regulation)

Thank you for reading this.

3 What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to explore and understand the factors that make reflective practice easier or more difficult for teacher and sport coaches and how reflective practice works from a first-person perspective.

4 Do I have to take part?

It is completely up to you whether or not you decide to opt out of this study. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep. Agreeing to join the study does not mean that you have to complete it. You are free to withdraw at any stage without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw at any time, or a decision not to take part at all, will not affect any treatment/care that you may receive (should this be relevant).

5 Are there any age or other restrictions that may prevent me from participating?

This study is a first-person enquiry into my practice as a sport lecturer/coach in the further education environment. Consequently, this study is restricted to my current students enrolled on the NCFE course at SCL Education, Borehamwood Football Club.

6 How long will my part in the study take?

I will be writing a self-reflective diary of my teaching and coaching practice of over this year, so within your normal educational experiences until the end of the 2022-2023 academic year in July 2023. This participant information sheet is in place to make you are aware that I am engaging in a first-person study where I look at my teaching and coaching practice after the sessions, and offers you the opportunity to opt out of including descriptions of our interactions for the purpose of my professional development, to write my doctoral thesis and potentially publish this work.

7 What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be required to continue to participate in your normal educational experiences. This participant information sheet is in place to make you aware that I am engaging in a first-person study of my own practice and will include anonymized descriptions of our interactions in a written report within my thesis and in a potential publication.

8 What are the possible disadvantages, risks, or side effects of taking part?

(Note: if appropriate for this particular study, you will be asked to agree to any required health screening questionnaire in advance of the study. Please also note that circumstances may arise that could result in the need for you to withdraw from the study; should such circumstances occur, the investigator will discuss the matter with you.)

Although the focus will be on my own coaching practice, there is a small risk of personal identification from descriptive information in the final report. However, this risk will be managed by anonymizing any descriptions used in the final thesis/publication. For example, names of people, places, and organizations will be replaced by impersonal labels e.g. [name], [place name], [organization].

9 What are the possible benefits of taking part?

This study might lead to useful insight into how reflective practice works and what factors make it easier or more difficult for teachers and coaches, for the benefit of their students. This could support teachers/coaches to engage with reflective practice to enhance their practice. This study will also contribute to my doctoral thesis and my own professional development, enabling me to better serve the needs of my students and their development.

10 How will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Your participation requires you to engage with your normal educational programme; you are not being asked to do anything. This participant information sheet provides information about my self-reflections on my teaching/coaching practice for me to reflect after our sessions on my teaching/coaching practice and through this to include anonymized descriptions of our interactions within my thesis and a potential publication. All descriptions will be depersonalized by replacing names of people, places, and organizations with impersonal labels e.g. [name],

[place name], [organization]. The reflective journal will be kept in the University of Hertfordshire's secure OneDrive, prohibiting access to anyone outside of the immediate research team.

11 Audio-visual material

The reflective journal will be written after the teaching/coaching sessions but may also be supported through audio recordings that will be transcribed and anonymized. This study will not use participant interviews or video recordings and so there is minimal risk to participants, and no further involvement required.

12 What will happen to the data collected within this study?

Data will include a reflective journal created by the lead researcher. This will be securely stored in the University of Hertfordshire OneDrive and only be accessible to the immediate research team. Data will be anonymized by using impersonal labels in place of names of people, places, and organizations

- The data collected will be stored electronically, in a password-protected environment, for 5 years, after which time it will be destroyed under secure conditions.
- The data will be anonymized prior to storage.

13 Will the data be required for use in further studies?

- The data collected may be re-used or subjected to further analysis as part of a future ethically approved study; the data to be re-used will be anonymized.
- The results of the study and/or the data collected (in anonymized form) may be published in a journal.

14 Who has reviewed this study?

This study has been reviewed by:

- The University of Hertfordshire Health, Science, Engineering and Technology Ethics Committee with Delegated Authority

The UH protocol number is LMS/PGR/UH/05122

15 Factors that might put others at risk

Please note that if, during the study, any medical conditions, or non-medical circumstances such as unlawful activity become apparent that might or had put others at risk, the University may refer the matter to the appropriate authorities and, under such circumstances, you will be withdrawn from the study.

16 Who can I contact if I have any questions?

If you would like further information or would like to discuss any details personally, please get in touch with me, in writing, by phone or by email:
t.marshall3@herts.ac.uk

My research supervisor, Dr Saskia Keville, can also be contacted:
s.keville@herts.ac.uk

Although we hope it is not the case, if you have any complaints or concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, please write to the University's Secretary and Registrar at the following address:

Secretary and Registrar
University of Hertfordshire
College Lane
Hatfield
Herts
AL10 9AB

Thank you very much for reading this information and giving consideration to taking part in this study.

Appendix O - Permission from employer to conduct the study on work premises chapter nine



20th October 2022

This is to confirm that I agree to allow Tony Marshall to conduct his PhD experiment at Boreham Wood football club, using reflections within the classroom of students enrolled with SCL Education.

I have reviewed the ethical approval document and the EC6 parent and student forms, along with the full application of the study and I am happy for Tony to proceed.

Should you wish to have any further clarification on my acceptance then please do not hesitate to contact myself.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Arran McManus', written over a horizontal line.

Arran McManus
SCL Curriculum & Performance Manager
arran.mcmanus@wearescl.co.uk
07917203173

Unit 7, Lakeside Business Park, Sandhurst, Berks, GU47 9DN t: 0345 644 5747 e: enquiries@wearescl.co.uk w: wearescl.co.uk

SCL Education Through Sport is a trading title of both Soccer Coaching Limited and SCL Education & Training Limited. Both companies are registered in England and share their registered office at 7 Lakeside Business Park, Sandhurst, GU47 9DN. Soccer Coaching Limited's company number is 04131660. SCL Education & Training Limited's company number is 06543730.

Appendix P - Ethics approval notice chapter nine



HEALTH, SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY ECDA

ETHICS APPROVAL NOTIFICATION

TO Tony Marshall
CC Saskia Keville
FROM Dr Rosemary Godbold, Health, Science, Engineering & Technology ECDA Vice Chair
DATE 06/09/2022

Protocol number: **LMS/PGR/UH/05122**

Title of study: A first-person reflexive enquiry into teaching/coaching practices in the further education context

Your application for ethics approval has been accepted and approved with the following conditions by the ECDA for your School and includes work undertaken for this study by the named additional workers below:

no additional workers named

General conditions of approval:

Ethics approval has been granted subject to the standard conditions below:

Permissions: Any necessary permissions for the use of premises/location and accessing participants for your study must be obtained in writing prior to any data collection commencing. Failure to obtain adequate permissions may be considered a breach of this protocol.

External communications: Ensure you quote the UH protocol number and the name of the approving Committee on all paperwork, including recruitment advertisements/online requests, for this study.

Invasive procedures: If your research involves invasive procedures you are required to complete and submit an EC7 Protocol Monitoring Form, and copies of your completed consent paperwork to this ECDA once your study is complete.

Submission: Students must include this Approval Notification with their submission.

Validity:

This approval is valid:

From: 08/09/2022

To: 31/07/2023

Appendix Q - Extension of ethical clearance to extend analysis period chapter nine



HEALTH, SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY ECDA

ETHICS APPROVAL NOTIFICATION

TO	Tony Marshall
CC	Saskia Keville
FROM	Dr Rosemary Godbold, Health, Science, Engineering and Technology ECDA
DATE	16/04/2024

Protocol number: aLMS/PGR/UH/05122(1)

Title of study: A first-person reflexive enquiry into teaching/coaching practices in the further education context

Your application to modify and extend the existing protocol as detailed below has been accepted and approved by the ECDA for your School and includes work undertaken for this study by the named additional workers below:

No additional workers named

Modification:

Modification as described in the EC2 application

General conditions of approval:

Ethics approval has been granted subject to the standard conditions below:

Original protocol: Any conditions relating to the original protocol approval remain and must be complied with.

Permissions: Any necessary permissions for the use of premises/location and accessing participants for your study must be obtained in writing prior to any data collection commencing. Failure to obtain adequate permissions may be considered a breach of this protocol.

External communications: Ensure you quote the UH protocol number and the name of the approving Committee on all paperwork, including recruitment advertisements/online requests, for this study.

Invasive procedures: If your research involves invasive procedures you are required to complete and submit an EC7 Protocol Monitoring Form, and copies of your completed consent paperwork to this ECDA once your study is complete.

Submission: Students must include this Approval Notification with their submission.