

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis was to undertake an evaluation of the United Kingdom Coaching Certification (UKCC) and discuss the implications for current and future designs of the programme. This study extends and expands the research that has previously evaluated coach education programmes by examining the participants' perceptions of the programme and its impact on their competency. The study draws on Lyle's (2010) monitoring and evaluation model and examines the relevance, fidelity and effectiveness of the UKCC.

The broad research approach was a pre-post methodology utilising multiple methods of data collection and analysis. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed in the form of focus groups, reflective journals and surveys. Four UKCC sports in Scotland were involved in the study and these were rugby, squash, swimming and triathlon. Data was collected at 10 UKCC courses (levels 1-3) and a total of 136 participants were sampled.

The study's main conclusions regarding the relevance, fidelity and effectiveness of the UKCC were as follows. *Relevance*: At level one the UKCC appeared to play a big part in the participants' initial development as a coach whereas at level two and three the UKCC played a smaller role in the participants' development and instead these participants placed importance on their informal learning. The UKCC fulfilled the participants' expectations however they believed it needed to provide more technical and sport science knowledge, practical coaching experience, and opportunities to learn from others. *Fidelity*: The importance of informal learning was emphasised by the participants. The participants believed that informal methods, such as learning from others and learning from practical experience, were effective ways to learn. A negative of the UKCC was that it was a rushed learning environment. *Effectiveness*: The UKCC had a positive impact on the participants' perceptions of competency as post course competency was significantly higher than pre-course competency. Despite this significant impact, participants still only rated themselves as moderately competent at the end of the course and indicated they needed more technical knowledge and practical experience.

Based on these findings, a number of implications were provided for the UKCC. Implications were provided in three areas: the structure of the UKCC, the delivery of the UKCC, and the role of the UKCC within overall coach development.

## DECLARATION

I declare that I alone composed this thesis and that it embodies the results of my own research. Where appropriate, I have acknowledged the nature and extent of work carried out by others included in this thesis.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

There are a range of people who have helped me through the doctoral process and deserve acknowledgement in this section.

Grateful acknowledgement goes to the coaches who participated in the study and shared their experience. Thanks also goes to the course organisers and tutors in each sport who accommodated my data collection. A special thanks also goes to the coach education managers of each sport who provided background information on their programmes and were always happy to help out with my research.

A great deal of thanks goes to my supervisors Alan Lynn and Justine Allen. They have provided expert advice and contributed to my overall understanding of the research process, as well as the subject area. Alan is not just a tutor but also a friend and he has provided much support over the last three years. Although Justine did not get involved in my study until the final year, she has been a tremendous help in the last twelve months and I would not be in the position I am now without that help.

I would like to thank the School of Sport at the University of Stirling, not only for their financial assistance but for their academic support. The range of experienced and knowledgeable staff in the department were always willing to help if I needed it.

Lastly, to my friends and family who have provided support and distraction. They have listened, encouraged and most importantly made me laugh during some challenging PhD times.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>DECLARATION</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>LIST OF APPENDICES</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 DEFINITIONS OF COACHING	2
1.2 LEARNING AND APPROACHES TO LEARNING	9
1.3 COACH LEARNING	10
1.4 COACH EDUCATION	11
1.4.1 Coach education in the United Kingdom	12
1.5 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	13
1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS	14

<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>15</b>
2.1 INTRODUCTION	15
2.2 UK COACHING POLICY	15
2.3 LEARNING AND APPROACHES TO LEARNING	20
2.3.1 Behaviourist theories of learning	20
2.3.2 Cognitivist theories of learning	22
2.3.3 Constructivist theories of learning	23
2.3.4 Conceptualising learning	24
2.3.5 Summary	26
2.4 COACH LEARNING	27
2.5 INFORMAL LEARNING	29
2.5.1 Informal learning through practical experience	29
2.5.2 Informal learning through engagement with other coaches	31
2.5.3 Informal learning through reflection	35
2.5.4 Summary	38
2.6 FORMAL LEARNING	38
2.6.1 Evaluating the programme	39
2.6.2 Evaluating the impact of the programme on coaches' behaviour	49
2.6.3 Evaluating the impact of the programme on coaches' self perceptions	56
2.7 SUMMARY	62
<b>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>66</b>
3.1 RESEARCH APPROACH	66
3.2 PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION	69
3.2.1 UKCC in Scotland	72
3.3 PILOT STUDY	75
3.4 PARTICIPANTS	77
3.4.1 Demographic profile	78
3.4.2 Summary of the demographic data	82
3.4.3 Response rate	83

3.5 PROCEDURES	83
3.6 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION	85
3.6.1 Reflective journal	85
3.6.2 Focus groups	88
3.6.3 Coach competency survey	90
3.7 METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS	93
3.7.1 Qualitative data analysis	93
3.7.2 Trustworthiness of the qualitative data	94
3.7.3 Quantitative data analysis	96
3.7.4 Integrating the qualitative and quantitative data	98
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</b>	<b>100</b>
4.1 INTRODUCTION	100
4.2 RELEVANCE	100
4.2.1 Opportunities for learning within coach education	102
4.2.2 Contribution that coach education has in overall development	107
4.2.3 Discussion	110
4.3 FIDELITY	112
4.3.1 Participants' views on coach education	114
4.3.2 Discussion	119
4.4 EFFECTIVENESS	122
4.4.1 Level one	122
4.4.2 Level two	125
4.4.3 Level three	131
4.4.4 Discussion	132
4.5 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS 1-4	136
4.6 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE DESIGN OF THE UKCC	139
4.6.1 Structure of the UKCC	139
4.6.2 Delivery of the UKCC	143
4.6.3 Role of the UKCC in the development of a coach	149
4.7 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH QUESTION 5	154

<b>CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION</b>	<b>156</b>
5.1 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH	156
5.2 FUTURE RESEARCH	159
5.3 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS	161
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>185</b>



## LIST OF APPENDICES

	Page
Appendix 1: Lyle's (2010a) proposed model for evaluating coach education programmes	185
Appendix 2: Demographic data by sport and level	186
Appendix 3: Subject information sheet	191
Appendix 4: Informed consent form	193
Appendix 5: Dates and timing of data collection	194
Appendix 6: Reflective Journal	196
Appendix 7: Pre-course focus group questions	198
Appendix 8: Post course focus group questions	199
Appendix 9: Survey for level one, two and three	200
Appendix 10: Qualitative analysis: themes and example quotes	206
Appendix 11: The NCCP structure	210

## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Studies that have evaluated coach education programmes by gathering the participants' perceptions and/or examining the programmes' design, content and delivery	40
Table 2: Studies that have evaluated the impact of coach education programmes on the coaches' behaviour	50
Table 3: Studies that have evaluated the impact of coach education programmes on the coaches' self perceptions	57
Table 4: The five stages of Lyle's (2010a) monitoring and evaluation model	64
Table 5: Research design	66
Table 6: Sports originally involved in the UKCC	71
Table 7: <b>sportscotland's</b> financial investment into the UKCC in Scotland since 2009	72
Table 8: UKCC completions in Scotland for each sport from 2007 to 2010 (Dec 31 <sup>st</sup> )	73
Table 9: Number of courses run and number of coaches attended and passed for the four sports sampled in this study	74
Table 10: Demographic data for all the participants involved in the study	78
Table 11: Demographic data for the level one participants	79
Table 12: Demographic data for the level two participants	8
Table 13: Demographic data for the level three participants	81
Table 14: A comparison of the mean pre and post course competency scores across the four sports at level two	129
Table 15: Coaching qualification structure in Scottish Football	142
Table 16: Rugby level one demographic data	186
Table 17: Squash level one demographic data	186
Table 18: Swimming level one demographic data	187

Table 19: Triathlon level one demographic data	187
Table 20: Rugby level two demographic data	188
Table 21: Squash level two demographic data	188
Table 22: Swimming level two demographic data	189
Table 23: Triathlon level two demographic data	189
Table 24: Rugby level three demographic data	190
Table 25: Swimming level three demographic data	190

## LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1: Model of the concurrent triangulation strategy	98
Figure 2: Relevance themes	101
Figure 3: Fidelity themes	113
Figure 4: The pre and post course competency scores across the four sports at level two	128
Figure 5: Classification of coaching roles by the European Coaching Council	140
Figure 6: 6 x 5 hockey coach development model	141
Figure 7: View of current coach education through the acquisition metaphor	149
Figure 8: Interaction of learning sources	150
Figure 9: Coach development and the role of formal, non formal and informal learning	151
Figure 10: Coach development and the support for informal/nonformal learning	154