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Following the Process of Triathlon Canada Implementing a New Coach Education Training Program in the Competition-Development Context

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FOLLOWING THE PROCESS OF TRIATHLON CANADA IMPLEMENTING A
NEW COACH EDUCATION TRAINING PROGRAM IN THE
COMPETITION-DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

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Though they are acknowledged last, they are certainly not least...THANK YOU to my family for always providing me with unconditional love and support.
The purpose of the study was to document the process of Triathlon Canada’s implementation of a new coach education program in the competition-development context. Two conceptual frameworks were used for the study, the first was the OECD (2007b) qualifications system framework and the second was Jarvis’ (2006a) conception of a biography. In part 1, the high performance director was interviewed four times throughout the year to get his perspective on the process of developing and implementing the new program. Through the use of purposeful sampling, all of the coaches’ (n=10) actively coaching triathletes in the competition-development context in Canada were interviewed in order to explore the different experiences and qualifications they had, prior to their entry into the program. In part 2, one interview was conducted with the first coach to be evaluated on the Design a Sport Program outcome, and one interview was conducted with each of the two evaluators. The results were divided into two parts; in part 1, it was evident based on the interviews with the high performance director that his unique academic and professional background influenced him to develop a program tailored to the experienced coaches participating in the new program. Furthermore, interviews with the participants’ revealed biographies that indicated they were: a) well educated, b) held multiple coaching certifications, c) had rich athletic and coaching experiences, and d) approached learning through diverse means, including formal, non-formal, and informal learning situations. These interviews revealed that the evaluation process was a learning experience for both the coach and the evaluators. Furthermore, there were elements within the new program that seemed to be conducive to lifelong learning. In conclusion, results from the study suggest that it is important to consider the biography of the participants because it will influence how they approach learning. As such, the development and delivery of coach education programs in the competition-development context will likely vary for each national sport federation.
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In recent years, there has been a steady increase of published research in coaching science around the world (Gilbert & Trudel, 2004a). Part of this research addresses the education and development of coaches (Gilbert, Côté, & Mallett, 2006; Lyle, 2007; Nash & Collins, 2006). For example, numerous stakeholders of coach education around the world (e.g., national representative bodies responsible for coach education, organizations who design and deliver coach education, researchers, and coaches) have formed the International Council for Coach Education (ICCE) that hosts bi-annual conferences (www.icce.ws), where part of it’s objectives are to promote and utilize new research in training and competition and publish current research on coaching science in a peer-reviewed journal. In Canada, Trudel (2006) suggests that the development of Canadian coaches is influenced by two major factors. First, there is the transition to the new National Coaches Certification Program (NCCP), which brings a novel approach to preparing coaches by focusing their training and certification within various contexts. The second factor is the introduction of the Long Term Athlete Development model (LTAD). This model provides “a general framework of athlete development with special reference to growth, maturation, and development, trainability, and sport system alignment and integration” (Canadian Sport Centres, p. 13).

There are some authors who suggest that the LTAD model can be used as a framework for developing coaches (Way & O’Leary, 2006; Van Neutegem, 2006). For example, Way and O’Leary suggest “the creation of Long-Term Coach Development (LTCD), which modelled after the LTAD framework, will provide a guide for optimal ‘coach career pathways’” (2006, p. 24). Trudel (2006) disagrees with this suggestion for two main reasons. First, LTAD is based on
children and adolescents physiological growth and development theories while coach education should be based on adult learning theories. Second, LTAD suggests ‘what’ skills (including sport specific skills) and movements to introduce, along with recommendations about ‘when’ to introduce them according to the developmental age of the athletes. However, coaches also need to be competent in the delivery component, or ‘how’ to teach/coach (Trudel, 2006). Therefore, coaches’ development cannot be limited to sport specific knowledge (e.g., the ‘what’).

Considering that coaching is very complex (Bowes & Jones, 2006; Jones & Wallace, 2005; Lyle, 2002) and that coaches learn to coach through a variety of learning situations (Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2006; Trudel, Gilbert, & Werthner, in press; Werthner & Trudel, 2006), there has been an attempt to identify the coaches’ developmental pathways through retrospective interviews (Erickson, Côté, & Fraser-Thomas, 2007; Gilbert et al., 2006; Irwin, Hanton, & Kerwin, 2004; Lemyre & Trudel, 2004). Yet, as far as we know, there is no longitudinal research on how coaches learn. To fill this gap, Dr. Pierre Trudel developed a three-year longitudinal project with Triathlon Canada, the Faculty of Health Science at the University of Ottawa, and the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC). This project, which was based on a lifelong learner perspective and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development’s (OECD) qualifications system, consisted of two phases. The purpose of phase one was twofold; first data was collected on the design of the new program to get a better idea about how it has been developed and to follow the process of implementing the program, and secondly was to investigate ‘who’ are the coaches (athletic and coaching experiences, expectations for the program, approaches to learning, etc.) just prior to their participation within the new program. In phase two, the researchers will work with Triathlon Canada and its coaches to identify and
structure the most appropriate learning situations that could be offered to coaches to nurture their
development. This master's thesis outlined below is situated in the first phase.
CHAPTER 2
Review of Literature

The review of literature is divided into four sections. The first section consists of an overview of relevant coach learning literature. Research evidence will be presented suggesting that coaches learn through a wide variety of situations, including formal, non-formal, and informal learning situations. The second section of this review looks at selected lifelong learning literature and highlights emerging themes from that body of work. In the third section, an introduction to qualification systems will be discussed, with specific reference to its implications on coach learning and how it may influence coach education training. The fourth and last section discusses the changes in the new NCCP and there is an introduction to Triathlon Canada's new coach education training program situated in the competition-development context.

Coach Learning

In a comprehensive review of coaching literature, Trudel and Gilbert (2006) used Sfard’s (1998) metaphors on learning (acquisition and participation) to provide a visual representation (see Figure 1) of how coaches learn. The left side of the model represents how coaches learn through large-scale (LS) coach education programs. Typically, the acquisition metaphor is associated with LS programs due to the fact that there is an emphasis on the presentation of predetermined content, followed by the acquisition and assessment of that content (Rynne, Mallett, & Tinning, 2006; Trudel & Gilbert, 2006). The acquisition metaphor views the human mind as a vessel to be filled with knowledge and can only be shared, transferred, or applied once the knowledge has been acquired (Sfard, 1998).

Participants within a LS coach education program can generally expect the delivery of the content to be based on a novice to expert continuum (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006), to be generic,
and given in a relatively short period of time (Abraham & Collins, 1998a). Lyle (2007) suggests that there has been a universal assumption that LS coach education actually produces positive outcomes for coaches but there is little evidence to support these assumptions. Furthermore, he points out that there is a lack of research on actual evaluations of LS coach education programs. The only study attempting to see if LS coach education programs have an impact on coaches’ knowledge and behaviors was conducted by Gilbert and Trudel (1999). However, these authors had only one participant and made it clear that the research purpose was to test the proposed strategy for evaluation, rather than an actual evaluation of a LS coach education program. While some authors are critical of LS coach education programs (Abraham & Collins, 1998a; Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2004; Jones & Wallace, 2005), there are others who suggest that, for many coaches, these programs are important (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006; Werthner & Trudel, 2006) and can increase coaching efficacy (Campbell & Sullivan, 2005; Malete & Feltz, 2000).

Considering that additional training has been suggested in many reports (Sport Canada, 2002) and research studies (McCallister, Blinde, & Weiss, 2000; Smith & Smoll, 2006; Trudel & Gilbert, 2006) for coaches, very few will disagree over the actual need for training and certification, rather it is the form and process of delivery that seems to be the point of contention (Abraham & Collins, 1998a; McCullick, Belcher, & Schempp, 2006; Rynne et al., 2006). In Canada, the CAC mandated a restructuring of the old NCCP and requested that all National Sport Federations begin the process of converting their coach education programs to a competency-based learning framework (Coaching Association of Canada [CAC], n.d.a). This competency-based approach for coach education seems to move away from a teaching and learning of theoretical principles, towards a more problem-solving approach within sport specific coaching contexts (Jones & Turner, 2006; Savard & Brunelle, 1998). For Trudel and Gilbert
(2006), the competency-based approach is an important and valuable change for the training of coaches, but any training approach has limits and cannot by itself be responsible for all coach learning because some coaches have indicated that they value learning through experience.

Trudel and Gilbert (2006) suggest that learning through experience (see Figure 1) can be divided into two bodies of literature. One body of literature is on experiential-reflective learning and the other is the process of becoming a coach. Experiential-reflective learning has been discussed in the coach education literature by several authors (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003; Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, 2004b, 2006; Irwin et al., 2004; Nelson & Cushion, 2006). Using Schon's model for reflective practitioners, Gilbert and Trudel (2001, 2004b) researched how six model youth sport coaches learn through experience by examining their use of reflection in their day-to-day activities. They found that the coaches used three forms of reflection: reflection-in-action (during the games or practice), reflection-on-action (after games and practices), and retrospective reflection-on-action (at the end of the season). Furthermore, the authors found that when coaches view a situation or issue as problematic, they will start a reflective conversation based on four components: issue setting, strategy generation, experimentation, and evaluation. By going through the process of a reflective conversation, a coach may select options to address the situation or solve the problem and is influenced by his access to peers, stage of learning, issue characteristics, and the environment (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, 2004b, 2006). Though these studies show evidence of coaches' learning through experience, only one context was studied (youth sport), therefore more studies are needed to show how reflection might be used in different coaching contexts (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006). Furthermore, while Lyle (2007) suggests there is an assumption that learning through reflection should be a fixture in coach education; it is still unclear how it should be incorporated into coach education (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006).
The other body of literature from the participation metaphor is the process of becoming a coach (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006). This process may begin when the coach was still an athlete in a particular sport and became familiar with the sports socio-cultural norms. Consistent with this line of thought, recent research by Gilbert and colleagues (2006) highlights the importance of coaches’ prior athletic experience in sport. These authors found from their sample of fifteen coaches (n=5 high school; n=4 community college; and n=6 Division 1 college) that on average, each coach had 13 years of prior athletic experience. Research often suggests that coaches find prior athletic experience to be important because it helps them gain respect from their players (Potrac, Jones, & Armour, 2002; Trudel & Gilbert, 2006). After an athlete retires, there may be a transition from athlete to coach or assistant coach and he/she could become part of a mentor-protégé relationship. Several authors suggest that mentoring is one way for coaches to develop and refine their practices and philosophies (Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinke, & Salmela, 1998; Cushion, 2006; Saury & Durand, 1998). While the aforementioned authors advocate the use of mentoring in coach education, there is a debate within the research community on whether mentoring for coaches should be imposed on coaches within coach education programs or whether the mentor and protégé should be allowed to mutually choose each other, thereby avoiding situations where mentors are imposed on a coach (Cassidy & Rossi, 2006; Trudel & Gilbert, 2006).
Learning How to Coach Through

Large-Scale Programs (acquisition metaphor)
- Novice-expert continuum
- Specific coaching contexts
  - What coaches should know
  - What coaches should do

Experience (participation metaphor)
- Reflective Process
- Process of Becoming
  - Athlete
  - Assistant Coach
  - Head Coach

Figure 1. Trudel and Gilbert's (2006) model of how coaches' learn.
Since coaching is a social activity, head coaches have to interact regularly with other coaches (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001; Jones, Armour, & Potrac, 2003). Recently, there has been considerable interest in the concept of coaches’ communities of practice (Culver & Trudel, 2006, 2008a, 2008b; Galipeau & Trudel, 2004; 2005; 2006; Rynne et al., 2006). A community of practice (CoP) is defined as “a group of people who share a common concern, set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis” (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 4). Yet, some authors suggest that one of the limits of a CoP is that learning is focused within a community and that individual differences may go unaccounted for (Rynne et al., 2006). However, Culver and Trudel (2008a, 2008b) disagree, and point out that Wenger devotes an entire section to the individual. They also reiterate that the CoP is only one of many conceptual frameworks in which to conduct coach education research. In addition to misinterpretations on CoP’s, other studies have demonstrated that maintaining a healthy coaches’ CoP is rare because coaches are often reluctant to share their knowledge and that the presence of a facilitator is almost a prerequisite (Culver & Trudel, 2006; Trudel & Gilbert, 2004). Nevertheless, the CoP framework is another important way for understanding how coaches learn through experience and more research is necessary, given that coaches regard discussions with other coaches as an important part of their professional development (Cassidy & Rossi, 2006).

So should there be an effort to combine LS coach education programs (acquisition) with learning through experience (participation)? Trudel and Gilbert (2006) suggest that even asking this question creates a potential debate regarding the feasibility of combining two learning situations that are based on drastically different learning frameworks. Yet some authors suggest there are other conceptualizations that may offer insight into how coaches learn. For instance,
Bowes and Jones (2006) use relational schema and complexity theory from social psychology to form an alternative framework for the activities of coaches. However, their suggestions are largely theoretical, though they highlight the complexity of how coaches learn and the problems coach educators face in trying to provide realistic learning situations. A second conceptualization is offered by Nelson et al. (2006), who suggest that coaches learn through a combination of formal, non-formal, and informal learning. Formal learning is characterized by pre-requisites, assessment, and curricula. Large-scale coach education programs fall within this category, often presenting the coaching process in a mechanistic and generalized manner (Nelson et al., 2006).

Non-formal learning occurs outside of formal settings. These activities could include professional development opportunities such as workshops, clinics, or conferences. Informal learning includes the daily activities coaches perform. This can include previous athletic experiences or interactions with other coaches or athletes. Through this conceptualization, these authors suggest that formal and non-formal learning have relatively little impact when compared to informal learning. While coaches may value informal learning, it may be because they are not able to devote time to formal training processes because they are so involved in their coaching practice (Gilbert et al., 2006). Recently, Trudel and colleagues (in press) suggested that while learning is expressed as either formal, non-formal, or informal, it is more appropriate to talk about learning situations that are either formal, non-formal, or informal. These authors suggest that this distinction is important because it is not the learning that is formal, non-formal, or informal, but the situations where learning occurs.

A third conceptualization of how coaches learn is suggested by Werthner and Trudel (2006), utilizing the generic view of learning developed by Moon (2004). However, in order to achieve a greater understanding of the perspectives of Werthner and Trudel, it is important to
first become familiar with Moon’s generic view of learning. Similar to Sfard (1998), Moon uses metaphors (brick wall and a network of ideas and feelings) to clarify the learning process. In the brick wall metaphor, the teaching material is contained within “bricks of knowledge” and is provided to the learner via an instructor to help in piecing together a “brick wall of knowledge” (Moon, 2004, p. 16). Learning within the brick wall metaphor is viewed as impossible without the instructor because it is assumed that the instructor knows how the bricks fit together. Additionally, within this metaphor, learning is difficult to separate from instruction and denies learners the ability to insert their own ‘bricks of knowledge’ in the form of past experiences or knowledge. Moon’s second metaphor is that of a network, and is described as a “vast but flexible network of ideas and feelings with groups of more tightly associated linked ideas/feelings” (2004, p. 16). Unlike the brick wall metaphor, learning can take place without an instructor and therefore, can occur in a variety of settings. Of significance is that the learner’s conceptions of knowledge, experiences, and emotions make up what Moon terms the ‘cognitive structure’. Recently, Trudel and colleagues (in press) describe Jarvis’ (2006a) concept of a biography in a similar manner. The biography “comprises [of] bodily and emotive, as well as cognitive dimensions” (Jarvis, 2006a, p. 73). A person’s biography will influence how they view current or new learning situations based on their previous experience. In sum, the cognitive structure/biography acts as a guide to help the learner choose how to approach different learning situations (Jarvis, 2006a; Moon, 2004; Trudel et al., in press).

Werthner and Trudel (2006) applied this generic view of learning to the coaching context and developed a visual representation of how coaches learn (see Figure 2). This model is represented by three components: a) mediated learning situations, b) unmediated learning situations, and c) internal learning situations. A mediated learning situation is one where the
learning is directed from an outside source such as an instructor or a well-designed on-line program. In an unmediated learning situation, there is no outside source of direction or 'guide' for learning. It is up to the coach to take responsibility for his learning by creating new learning situations such as searching the internet or networking with other coaches. In an internal learning situation, there is no new information coming from either the mediated or unmediated learning situations. Rather, the coach engages in 'cognitive housekeeping' to reassess the current ideas of his cognitive structure. This model provides a unique approach to conceptualize how coaches can learn as it recognizes the importance of different learning situations and the idiosyncratic nature of the coaches learning pathways. In fact, the model takes into consideration the warnings of Sfard (1998) and Gustavsson (2002) regarding being overly committed to one type of learning.
Figure 2. Werthner and Trudel’s (2006) theoretical perspective of how coaches’ learn.
The literature on coach learning suggests that there is a transition from being trained within LS coach education programs based on a novice-expert continuum, towards sport specific and contextualized training programs (CAC n.d.a; Trudel & Gilbert, 2006). Furthermore, there is a lack of evidence demonstrating that LS programs actually produce better coaches (Lyle, 2007; Trudel et al., in press). Additionally, the lack of clear coaching models (Abraham, Collins, & Martindale, 2006; Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2006) and conceptual frameworks (Bowes & Jones, 2006; Nelson et al., 2006; Werthner & Trudel, 2006) for coach education is highly problematic. Yet, research does suggest that coaches learn through a wide variety of activities and learning situations before and after formal training (Lemyre, Trudel, & Durand-Bush, 2007; Nelson et al. 2006; Werthner & Trudel, 2006; Wright, Trudel, & Culver, 2007). Therefore, a number of authors advocate the inclusion of the lifelong learner perspective in coach education (Côté, 2006; Nash & Collins, 2006; Trudel et al., in press).

**Lifelong Learning**

Though it can be argued that the notion of lifelong learning has existed since man’s beginning (Abukari, 2005), lifelong education and lifelong learning came into prominence as an important educational initiative when it was made a ‘master concept’ by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1970. The UNESCO commission report (Faure et al., 1972) advocated for the incorporation of lifelong education and learning into the education systems. In 1996, a second UNESCO commission on education (Delors et al., 1996) devoted much of its content to learning throughout the lifespan. During that same year, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 1996) also held a conference with the theme of making lifelong learning accessible for all. These international reports (Delors et al., 1996; Faure et al., 1972; OECD, 1996) have helped bring
lifelong learning into the political arena and have aided in shaping educational policy.

Furthermore, there is a general agreement among all three reports that learning opportunities should be available throughout one's life, be accessible to all, and be part of the foundation of modern economies and societies (Tuijnman & Bostrom, 2002). However, Tight (1998) suggests that the synthesis of lifelong learning and work are becoming indiscernible and that there is a danger of marginalizing the intrinsic, joyful nature of continued learning. Similarly, Gustavsson (2002) notes that once education links with economic development, there is a shift away from the universality of what lifelong learning can be, towards a trend of employability and human capital.

Due to the increasing link between lifelong learning and the workplace, there is ambiguity within the literature when it comes to a precise definition of lifelong learning (Gustavsson, 2002; Trudel et al., in press). Indeed, there are a variety of statements from a number of different authors on 'what' lifelong learning entails (Abukari, 2005; Bennets, 2001; Deakin-Crick & Wilson, 2005; Gustavsson, 2002; Tuijnman & Bostrom, 2002). For Jarvis (2007), lifelong learning can be conceptualized in two different ways, as either non-vocational lifelong learning or vocational lifelong learning. A non-vocational perspective on lifelong learning could be interpreted as a personal perspective towards learning, relevant to the private sphere of one's life. However, though learning can be something done for oneself, it does not mean it is a private activity; rather, it suggests a personal activity that involves social interactions (Deakin-Crick & Wilson, 2005; Jarvis, 2007). Deakin-Crick and Wilson (2005) suggest that lifelong learning is more than being ready to participate in on-going learning and professional development; rather, it is a form of being open to and aware of opportunities to learn during the natural process of living. Labeled another way, Lambeir (2005) uses the term 'self-managed
learning’. In a world that is constantly changing, he suggests that learners must be able to adapt and change alongside it and filter through vast amounts of incoming information, while managing to select only the most relevant and useful information. Bolhuis (2003) suggests that self-directed learning begins with process-oriented teaching, which involves guiding learners to gradually become responsible for their learning process, focusing on domain specific material, and being aware of the emotional and social process of learning. Therefore, although self-directed learning suggests learning only from an individual perspective, it does not negate the importance of the social process inherent within learning. Moon (2004) suggests that accommodating new learning material is an individual process, but the manner in which it is processed is usually within a social context. In fact, the learning material and the knowledge that is developed are established through social means (Moon, 2004). Learners interacting together can help facilitate and reinforce each other’s learning (Moon, 2001).

Jarvis’ (2007) second conceptualization of lifelong learning is from a vocational perspective. This type of lifelong learning, which is more relevant to the public sphere of life, also considers instances where employers are the providers of educational programs (recurrent education) to develop and/or maintain their workforce. For instance, Jarvis comments that, “it became easier to think of education as lifelong, since the social structures between different stages in life were lowered and education was no longer limited to certain stages in life” (2007, p. 99). Furthermore, processes had to be developed to recognize prior experiences; such as those within formal, non-formal, and informal learning situations. Therefore, Jarvis (2007) conceptualized a new way of understanding lifelong learning as:
Every opportunity made available by any social institution for, and every process by which, an individual can acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs, and senses within a global society. (p. 99)

Jarvis' two definitions of lifelong learning take into consideration an overlap in how an individual may approach learning and is represented in Figure 3. What this figure attempts to demonstrate is that each type of learning may have "functional utility" (p. 100) on the other. In other words, what someone learns in a non-vocational setting may be applied in a vocational setting and vice versa. Jarvis (2007) sums up his perspective on lifelong learning by stating:

As lifelong learning grows in popularity, it might be argued that vocational learning will occupy certain periods in the lifespan and learning in the humanity occupy others. For those knowledge workers, used to learning in the workplace, learning is but an extension of work, but on retirement they might feel the need to continue learning and begin to study non-vocational topics. (p.137)

Figure 3. Jarvis' (2007) Categories of lifelong learning.
Some authors propose that learners require a shift in ontological perspective (Barnett, 2004; Bolhuis, 2003; Deakin-Crick & Wilson, 2005; Lambeir, 2005). For instance, Lambeir (2005) calls for “a reorientation of our being” (p. 349). Similarly, Barnett (2004) suggests “learning for an unknown future calls, in short, for an ontological turn” (p. 247). For instance, individuals participating in a coach education training program can be considered as part of a “society that is changing so rapidly that many of the traditional educative organizations are not able to keep abreast with the new demands and so individuals are forced to learn outside the education system” (Jarvis, 2006b, p. 17). However, learners are not the only ones who have to consider a shift in ontological perspective, but also the designers of formal learning programs. This is consistent with Trudel and Gilbert (2006) who specified that those in charge of coach education should be mindful that learning inevitably occurs outside of their programs. In sum, a lifelong learner perspective for coach learning puts the focus on the individual, acknowledging that that learning can occur in a variety of situations, such as formal learning situations (e.g., coach education programs), but also non-formal and informal learning situations (Trudel et al., in press).

Qualifications Systems

Introducing the concept of lifelong learning impacts how we recognize individuals who are qualified from those who are not. The traditional way of certifying people has to be reconsidered because learners have to acquire new skills as efficiently as possible (OECD, 2007a). For instance, if learners cannot navigate and acquire new skills through the qualification process (e.g., if it is too long or too difficult), then “it may be enough to alienate them [learners] from lifelong learning once and for all” (OECD, 2007a). If we want to study different ways of accrediting people, then we need to explore the links between qualifications systems and lifelong
learning and define some key terms as we did earlier with learning (formal, non-formal, informal, mediated, unmediated, internal, lifelong learning, vocational, non-vocational, etc.). A qualification is achieved when “a competent body determines that an individual has learned knowledge, skills, and/or wider competences to specified standards. The standard of learning is confirmed by means of an assessment process or the successful completion of a course of study” (OECD, 2007b, p. 21). A qualification can be achieved through a qualifications system, which is defined as:

All aspects of a country’s activity that result in the recognition of learning. These systems include the means of developing and operationalizing national or regional policy on qualifications, institutional arrangements, quality assurance processes, assessment and awarding processes, skills recognition, and other mechanisms that link education and training to the labour market and civil society. Qualifications systems may be more or less integrated and coherent. (OECD, 2007b, p. 22)

For visual representations of an integrated qualifications system and a less integrated qualifications system, see Figure 4. In an integrated qualifications system, there are numerous links that exist between different qualification frameworks. These links allow people to move freely between different qualification frameworks. In a qualification system with less integration, these links do not exist.
A qualifications system will include components called qualifications frameworks, which are defined as:

An instrument for the development and classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for levels of learning achieved. This set of criteria may be implicit in the qualifications descriptors themselves or made explicit in the form of a set of level descriptors. (OECD, 2007b, p. 22)

For example, a university qualifications framework could begin with a high school diploma or certificate and move through various degrees (bachelor, master’s, and doctorate) that can be attained at a university. According to the OECD (2007b), a qualifications system can influence lifelong learning through four different components: a) quantity of learning opportunities, b)
quality of learning opportunities, c) equity of access to learning, and d) efficiency of the lifelong learning process.

Due to the lack of research exploring the gaps between qualifications systems and lifelong learning, the education committee of the OECD launched an ambitious research project to find any potential links between qualifications systems and lifelong learning. The main aim of the project was to find out how a national qualifications system may motivate and influence opportunities to learn. One of the first steps in the project was to analyze and classify the existing and planned policies from 15 OECD countries into nine general categories. Table 1 presents the definition of policy response and the nine general policy responses identified by the research project.

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**Table 1. Policy responses identified by the OECD (2007b)**

Policy Response:

Broad categories of policies which are currently being used by countries to address the pressures for change in the qualifications system.

1. Increase flexibility and responsiveness.
2. Motivate young people to learn.
3. Link education and work.
4. Facilitate open access to qualifications.
5. Diversify assessment process.
7. Make the qualifications system transparent.
8. Review funding and increase efficiency.
9. Better manage the qualifications system.
In addition, the theoretical links between qualifications systems and lifelong learning are termed 'mechanisms'. OECD (2007b) has identified 20 mechanisms and each have the ability to influence a qualifications system. In Table 2, a definition of a mechanism is provided along with the 20 mechanisms identified by the research project.

**Table 2. Mechanisms identified by the OECD (2007b)**

Mechanism:
A structural change in a qualifications system and/or a change in the conditions of a qualifications system that results in a change in the extent, quality, distribution, and efficiency of lifelong learning.

1. Communicating returns to learning for qualification.
2. Recognizing skills for employability.
3. Establishing qualifications frameworks.
4. Increasing learner choice in qualifications.
5. Clarifying learning pathways.
6. Providing credit transfer.
7. Increasing flexibility in learning programs.
8. Creating new routes to qualifications.
9. Lowering cost of qualifications.
10. Recognizing non-formal and informal learning.
11. Monitoring the qualifications system.
12. Optimizing stakeholder involvement in the qualifications system.
13. Improving the needs analysis methods to that qualifications system are up-to-date.
15. Ensuring qualifications are portable.
16. Investing in pedagogical innovation.
17. Expressing qualifications as learning outcomes.
18. Improving co-ordination in the qualifications system.
20. Improving information and guidance about qualifications systems.

It is important to note that the interactions between qualifications systems and the mechanisms influencing them are specific to the economic and socio-cultural contexts in which they exist and due to this fact, it is difficult for them to be generalisable across different contexts (Werquin, 2007). As an example, among the 15 countries participating in the OECD study, no
one country is working on all nine policy responses because each have identified policy
responses that are considered the most pertinent to their specific economic situation and socio-
cultural context (OECD, 2007b). Similarly, the mechanisms being used correspond to the policy
response(s) the country has prioritized as the most important for them to develop (OECD 2007b;
Werquin, 2007). However, while the OECD countries are dealing with linking policy responses,
qualifications systems, and lifelong learning, it is not unreasonable to suggest that large
associations such as the CAC and its program the NCCP operate in a similar manner.

Coaches’ Certification in Canada

The NCCP has been certifying coaches in Canada since 1974 by providing training
courses and coach development initiatives for coaches (CAC, n.d.a). In 2004, an important
change occurred when the NCCP shifted from knowledge based programming towards
competency-based programming (CAC, n.d.a). This programming change marked the
importance for coaches to be knowledgeable about their coaching situation while also being
competent in their ability to apply that knowledge in their coaching situation. The new version of
the NCCP is coach centered in that it provides coach education or coach training initiatives based
on the current coaching context that a coach is actively practicing in (CAC, n.d.b). This coach
centered approach allows individuals to participate in one of three coaching streams (community
sport stream, instruction stream, and competition stream). Within the three coaching streams,
there are a total eight coaching contexts (see Figure 5). For example, within the competition
stream, there are three possible coaching contexts that a new coach can learn about based on
their current coaching situation: competition-introduction, competition-development, and
competition-high performance (CAC, n.d.b). The NCCP’s shift towards competency-based
programming, combined with a coach centered approach, is the first step towards lifelong
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learning and is congruent with the outcomes that the CAC has for the NCCP in terms of a commitment to coach education becoming a lifelong endeavor for its participants (CAC, n.d.c).

The NCCP’s first competency-based programs were multi-sport modules, but each national sport federation, following guidelines by the CAC, developed sport specific programs, incorporating elements of the new NCCP. Recently, a pilot group of 12 sports have been in the process of developing the competition-development context for the NCCP.

**Triathlon Canada**

Triathlon is a relatively young sport introduced in the early 1970’s in San Diego, California (triathlon.org). There are several different distances that one can race, however the Olympic standard distance consists of a 1.5 km swim, 40 km road cycling race, and a 10 km run (triathlon.org). It achieved its Olympic program status in a very short period of time and debuted as an Olympic sport at the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney, Australia (triathlon.org). In Canada, triathlon is guided by its own national sport federation entitled ‘Triathlon Canada’ (triathloncanada.com). Part of Triathlon Canada’s responsibilities is to provide coach education and certification opportunities for Canada’s triathlon coaches, such as providing the certification for the new competition stream in triathlon. Triathlon Canada has developed and started to implement a new coach education training program that appears to respect key aspects of lifelong learning (see Figure 6).
Figure 5. The new NCCP diagram.
Figure 6. Triathlon Canada's coach education training program in the competition-development context.
The new program starts at Stage 1, when a potential competition-development coach submits a portfolio containing such things as relevant sport experiences, coaching philosophies, training and periodization principles, etc. A participant must be actively coaching athletes considered congruent with Triathlon Canada’s long-term athlete development model for the competition-development context. Stage 2 is entitled ‘Evaluation’ and is characterized by seven outcomes that have been mandated by the CAC. It is during the Evaluation stage that a participant begins to communicate with an evaluator(s), in a series of debriefs or ‘learning conversations’. The entire evaluation process may take anywhere from 6 to 12 months as the outcomes are organized in such a way that a participant becomes familiar with the nature of the program and the types of interactions they may have with an evaluator. Once the participant and evaluator(s) have collaboratively identified areas for further learning and development, they move to Stage 3 entitled ‘Education and Training’. A participant may engage in learning processes such as working with a mentor coach or enrolling in a specific course to address the areas in need of further learning. Once all of the outcomes have been completed, the participant moves on to Stage 4 entitled ‘Certification’, where he/she signs a code of conduct agreement and is certified in the competition-development context for Triathlon. In order to remain certified, a participant must demonstrate on-going learning and professional development and moves to Stage 5 entitled ‘Re-Certification’.

In brief, this progressive approach to coach education training may allow for the delivery of certification based on an individual knowledge, desire, and a need to be certified. With Jarvis’ (2007) perspective in mind, Triathlon Canada needs to be cautious about their approach to coach education in order to maintain the nuanced balance between organizational and personal learning. For example, considering their new approach to coach education, a participant may take
up to 6 to 12 months to be certified (personal learning). At the same time, the organization must remain patient about their need to have coach's certified (organizational learning).

Summary of the Review of Literature

The literature on coach learning suggests that there is a tendency to train coaches for a specific sport context. There is also a debate within the coach education research community regarding several different coach education models and conceptual frameworks. Research also suggests that coach's value learning through activities which may occur outside of formal learning situations and that these preferences will likely be informed by their personal biographies. Therefore, a 'cradle to grave' concept of lifelong learner perspective is recommended because it acknowledges a wide variety of learning situations, including formal, non-formal, and informal learning situations (OECD, 2007b). Two conceptualizations of lifelong learning are considered related to the learning that may occur within one's vocation (vocational lifelong education) or happen based on one's personal interests (non-vocational lifelong learning). Yet, the boundaries dividing non-vocational and vocational learning are no longer distinct and the traditional qualifications systems based only on formal learning need to be reconsidered in order to recognize learning that may occur within non-formal and informal learning situations. In Canada, the NCCP has recently transitioned its programming to a competency-based framework that focuses on grouping coaches within similar coaching streams and contexts. As such, there are several national sport federations that are developing their own coaching education programs for the competition stream in the development context. One of these sport federations is Triathlon Canada, who had started to implement a new coach education training program with several elements that seem to respect a lifelong learner perspective.

Therefore, conducting a study on the implementation by Triathlon Canada of its new program is
a unique opportunity to fill a gap in the coach education literature and helps organizational
bodies in charge of coach education. A visual representation of the links between the main
elements of the review of literature is presented in Figure 7. As we can see, Triathlon Canada’s
new competition-development program is one component of the coaching qualifications
framework (QF), along with other qualifications frameworks (e.g. school, university), which
combine to form the Canadian qualifications system. By adopting some specific mechanisms, it’s
possible to make a country’s qualification system more conducive to a lifelong learning
approach.

Figure 7. Canadian qualifications system.
Purpose

The purpose of this study was to document Triathlon Canada’s implementation of its new coach education training program in the competition-development context. The four main research questions will address:

1. How has Triathlon Canada’s competition-development program been developed and to what extent does it respect the key elements of lifelong learning?

2. What are the main characteristics of the biographies of the triathlon coaches’ participating in the new competition-development program?

3. How is Triathlon Canada’s competition-development program conducive to lifelong learning?

4. Which mechanisms should be implemented so that the coaches’ certification process promotes lifelong learning?
CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Participants and Data Collection

The following section is divided into two parts (see Table 3). Part 1 documents the entry of the participants into the coach education program with the submission of their portfolio and highlights how the high performance director and coach participants were recruited and interviewed. Part 2 describes the process of obtaining interviews with the three individuals who had participated in the evaluation of the first outcome. All of the participants in the study completed the consent form located in Appendix A, and were free to withdraw from the study at any point.

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<th>Part 2 Interview type</th>
<th>Part 2 Interview length (Min)</th>
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Note. Tim was contacted during part 2 as needed.

Part 1

Tim. The former High Performance Director of Triathlon Canada, identified by the pseudonym 'Tim', participated throughout the duration of the study. His role with Triathlon...
Competition-Development Program

Canada was to oversee and manage all aspects of the high performance programs including, but not limited to, World Cup, Development, and Junior National teams, and serve as a director for Triathlon Canada’s main training center. In addition to these responsibilities, he was the designer of the new program and was in charge of leading the coaching programs, specifically the development of a coach education training program in the competition-development context for the sport of triathlon. Four interviews (two conference calls and two in person) took place during the part of the study. Tim was questioned on various topics which included his a) academic background, b) guiding philosophies, theoretical frameworks, and vision for the coach education training program, and c) current and expected barriers with regards to implementation of the program (see Appendix B). It should be noted that there was a high level of rapport and candor established between Tim and the researcher, due to prior personal and professional relationships between each other. This allowed Tim to be quite forthcoming with information regarding the process of designing and implementing Triathlon Canada’s coach education training program and added a greater depth, richness, and trustworthiness to his interviews. All interviews were audio recorded with a digital recorder.

Coaches. A total of 10 coaches participating in the new coach education training program were interviewed. These ten coach participants represent all of the traithlon coaches actively coaching athletes considered congruent with Triathlon Canada’s competition-development context. A portfolio submitted to Triathlon Canada in Stage 1 helped put the coach participants past experiences into context and served as a guide for Triathlon Canada to decide whether they actually practice in the competition-development context. As such, participants were selected for the study by: a) being identified by Tim as coaching in the competition-development context, b) submitting a portfolio to Triathlon Canada. Data collection with the coaches began when we
accessed the portfolios. By reading the portfolios prior to the interviews, we were able to individualize the interview guide for each participant. Therefore, the interviews occurred after the coaches submitted their portfolios to Triathlon Canada, but before they moved onto any subsequent stages of the coach education training program. Semi-structured interviews with five participants took place while attending Triathlon Canada’s coaching development session in Vancouver, British Columbia and provided a unique opportunity to meet and interact with the participants. The five remaining participants who were not able to attend the coaching development sessions in Vancouver were interviewed over the phone.

All of the interviews with the participants followed an interview guide that began with opening questions on their a) demography, b) academic profile, c) previous experiences in sport, d) knowledge of the new NCCP, e) informal development, f) perspectives on lifelong learning (see Appendix C). The interviews were then personalized by asking probing questions developed by reading the portfolios prior to the interviews. All interviews were audio recorded with a digital recorder and all electronic correspondence (e.g., email, faxes) between the researchers and participants was printed and stored in a private location.

Part 2

During part 2, representatives from the CAC and Triathlon Canada’s high performance committee (including Tim) met to discuss conditional approval of the new coach education training program (L. McMahon, personal communication, January 17, 2008). During the meeting, Triathlon Canada decided that of the 10 coaches participating in the new program, only 1 (identified as Conrad) would begin the evaluation process due to practical reasons including his accessibility and familiarity with Triathlon Canada’s programs. An interview was set up with Conrad to get his perspective on his evaluation. Furthermore, interviews were conducted with the
two evaluators who had participated in the evaluation. Tim was involved as an evaluator for the
evaluation of Conrad. The second evaluator, identified as ‘Matthew’, was the first external
person to be involved with the program. All three interviews were conducted over the phone,
audio recorded on a digital recorder, and followed individualized interview guides (see
Appendixes D, E, and F). In addition to the interview content, other documents were analyzed
during this part of the study; Conrad’s portfolio, a curriculum vitae, an annual plan and its
description, his application of the LTAD framework, and the evaluation scheme used by Tim and
Matthew. Access to Triathlon Canada’s coach education website was granted in order to view
and download the content related to the evaluation of the Design a Sport Program outcome (see
Appendixes G and H).

Data Analysis

For part 1 of the study, analysis of the interviews began immediately after the interviews
were completed. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and printed into hardcopies and were
given a first read through to look for any areas of emerging interest. Once the interviews were
read a first time, they were uploaded and coded in the qualitative software Nvivo (Qualitative
Solutions and Research, 2002, version 7.0). Tim’s interviews were analyzed to look for
descriptions on the process of designing the program and how his background had influenced
him in designing the program. Coding of the coaches’ interviews was deductive in nature in that
it followed the interview guide with pre-determined themes and categories in order to make
tables. In order to add trustworthiness during the process of data collection and data analysis,
regular meetings were scheduled with the research group and peers with experience in qualitative
research in order to discuss themes, questions on analysis, and areas of interest. In part 2,
analysis of the interviews began immediately after the interviews were completed. The
interviews were transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts were printed. All three interviews were
then read through in an attempt to identify the most meaningful aspects of the participants’
experience during the evaluation process. Once emerging themes were identified, they were
compared to find out whether those experiences complimented or contradicted each other. As an
example, each participant discussed how the evaluation process helped them learn.
CHAPTER 4

Results

The results are divided into two parts. The first part begins with a section on Tim’s background and how he developed Triathlon Canada’s new coach education training program. Part 1 also illustrates ‘who the participants are”; highlighting their biographies and the learning situations they find important. The second part consists of an interview with Conrad, who was the first participant to begin the process of being evaluated on the outcome entitled Design a Sport Program. In addition, a fifth interview with Tim (now in the role of an evaluator) and Matthew (the external evaluator) will be presented. In all sections, relevant excerpts from interviews will be used to illustrate significant aspects of the participants’ biographies and Triathlon Canada’s process of implementing its new program.

Part 1

Background and Perspective of Tim

Tim’s professional background includes over 15 years as a practicing sport psychology consultant and lecturer in kinesiology, leadership, coaching, and program planning at the university level. In addition, he has been actively facilitating professional development workshops on sport psychology at Canada’s sport centers and National Coaching Institutes. His academic background includes a PhD in Education and applied research focusing on the practice and lived experiences of sport psychology consultants. This background has provided him with the perspective of “first and foremost [viewing] sport to be about coaching” and was an important influence for him to develop a program that is tailor made for the type of coaches practicing in the competition-development context for the sport of triathlon.
From these experiences, Tim developed his own perspective on coach education and found that while he was designing the program, his perspective was getting reinforced from individuals whom he considers expert coach educators. He stated:

So when I started constructing the coach education program for Triathlon Canada’s comp-dev stream, it was no question that I was bringing those perspectives to the process. Interestingly, as I did that and started to formulate my thoughts, I was getting reinforcement for my perspectives about coach education by those I regard as experts in the field of coach pedagogy, or coach education, or coach learning... So you can see it really... I don’t think I was influenced by [expert coach educators] at the start, but... I was actually influenced by how I see practice or practitioners being developed and clearly there is no difference whether you are a practitioner of sport psychology or whether you are a practitioner of athlete development, if you want to define a coach as that.

When asked about his thoughts on adult learning, he responded with personal reflections about the process of actually learning to practice sport psychology and of poor personal experiences within the old NCCP triathlon coach education program:

I reflected upon what it is to coach, but also what it is to help coaches learn. Personally, I never learned to practice sport psychology by sitting down for an hour and listening to a lecture. To me, it just could not relate to the opportunity I would have had the next day, to actually apply the learning... So when I look at it from my coaching experiences, I went through the old NCCP Triathlon coach education and I remember sitting down and it was a lecture based teaching style... and it was obviously not an exciting period of time, but it also had no relevance from a positive perspective, for me for my coaching. So that's when the whole notion of situated learning became important to me. It has to be
relevant and there needs to be an opportunity to implement the learning in some meaningful way, which means that the learning should be facilitated based on what I really need to learn about, so that I might really change the way I coach in the future and it is actually centered around my current [coaching] situation.

His personal, professional, and academic experiences gave him a strong emotional perspective in that he “felt a really high level of both personal and professional responsibility to actually deliver a coach education training program that [he] believed in and that [he] believed they [the coach participants] would feel positively about”.

Tim also remarked that he was influenced by the work of Henry Mintzberg (2004) and his book entitled *Managers Not MBAs: A Hard Look at the Soft Practice of Managing and Management Development*. Mintzberg did typologies of university MBA programs and argued that good programs have the learner leading their own development and could be a blend of different approaches or strategies to help the individual learn. Tim borrowed from this perspective and attempted to apply a ‘blending pedagogies’ approach by keeping in mind that “how we help coaches develop could in fact acknowledge individual learning styles and acknowledge different forms of learning”. By acknowledging individual learning styles and different approaches to learning, Tim was making it clear that his new program would place importance on the learner’s past experiences and could acknowledge previous learning in non-formal and informal situations. This general perspective has implications on several aspects of coach education. We will highlight some of these implications

*Asking for the portfolios*

Any coach wishing to enter Triathlon Canada’s new program must first submit a portfolio that could include such things as their past coaching experiences, planning and periodization
 principles, coaching philosophy, present coaching situation, etc. The portfolio is an important
first step because it helps "establish relevance or readiness that you coach in this stream...it's
really just making sure that we've got some information to put their experience in context"

(Tim). When asked about how the coaches’ felt about submitting portfolios, Tim commented:
The one question I got the most from the coaches was 'can I see someone else's portfolio
so I can have a template?' and I said 'No' because the choices you make on how you put
your portfolio together and what you include and how you deliver your portfolio is all
important in knowing who you are as a coach...the coach cannot ask 'what do I have to
do to pass?' It just is not a permissible question. The question should not ever be 'what
do I have to do to get evaluated correctly?' I don't want to know. It is not up for
discussion. The focus is on learning and not on the assessment.

Without having a specific template to follow, the coach – participants’ were able to
submit items that they felt were important for their portfolio, and due to this increased flexibility
and choice, variations occurred in both depth and content. Table 4 illustrates the content of the
portfolios.

### Table 4. Content of portfolio's upon entry into Triathlon Canada’s competition-development program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coach</th>
<th>Current situation</th>
<th>CV</th>
<th>Planning</th>
<th>Chart of annual plan</th>
<th>Description of annual plan</th>
<th>Coaching philosophy</th>
<th>Self-assessment</th>
<th>PET structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Coaching and Leadership philosophy were similar. In many cases, the annual plan included planning and periodization principles. PET = Performance enhancement team.

Each participant submitted portfolios that varied in length and content. When questioned about his thoughts on the variety of submissions, Tim exclaimed:

Well that is exactly what I’d hope to see. That actually gets me somewhat excited because what that means is that all of the coaches haven’t gone about having to satisfy a very specific way of representing themselves. I guess I use it this way, in the absence of something – something is being communicated. So if a coach chooses not to share something with you, you know, we’d have to discuss it, but what I’m saying is that maybe they feel that it is not important, or it’s not a priority, or they don’t believe in that…So when you see the wide variety of portfolios…it’s really neat because you can see that every coach has come to know and practice coaching in very unique and individual ways.

De-emphasizing evaluation and certification

Tim’s unique academic and professional perspective, combined with the specific nature and number of triathlon coaches practicing in the competition-development context, enabled him to develop a program that “is individualized, learner centered, and identifies competency”. One of the important elements of the new program was to de-emphasize evaluations in order to focus on learning and professional development. For instance Tim states, “we are trying to de-emphasize certification and emphasize on-going learning, professional development, and professional sharing…being certified as a comp-dev coach is something that is just going to happen along the way of all the other things that we’re doing”. In order to communicate this
element of the program, Tim had to be clear to the coaches and explain why they were being led through the evaluations:

So what I’ve been talking to the coaches about is ‘this is not about getting it done’. This is about us having the best Triathlon coaches in the world, because I believe if we do, we’ll have the best athletes in the world. So they need to get excited about the learning and sharing of information and I had to, at all opportunities, de-emphasize the evaluation aspect…So you had to be clear about why the coaches were led through evaluation. So we can identify the areas that require learning, so we can determine that there was no required learning right? The idea being that we’re expecting you are going to succeed. Because as you recall, I’m not trying to determine advanced experts, I’m just saying that they are competent. We really want competent coaches.

Although there was a marked effort to de-emphasize the evaluation of the participants by focusing on learning, Tim addressed the issue of maintaining standards in the new program and stated:

I think the program gets standardized through the expertise, I think it is standardized through the evidences that are being asked by the coaches, but I don’t think that we need to start writing a procedural manual of how to evaluate a coach because we are all going to debrief a coach differently and we might ask some different questions, but as long as they are related to the same sets of evidences and criteria, then I think we have standardized the process of trying to deem a coach competent.

Getting others to buy into the vision of the program

Before describing some of the on-going challenges with regards to getting others to buy into the vision of the program, it is helpful to provide some background on two significant
changes that occurred after the first two interviews with Tim. The first significant change was that the NCCP consultant who acts as a liaison between the CAC and Triathlon Canada resigned and a new consultant was provided. The second significant change was that Tim resigned his position as the high performance director and took a new position. However, he was still involved with Triathlon Canada as the chair of the high performance committee and team leader of their performance enhancement team (PET). Unfortunately, a majority of the work was now in a voluntary capacity and this restricted the amount of time he could devote to it.

During the time period between the final two interviews in part 1, Tim encountered some challenges which involved trying to get the various stakeholders “aware of and agreement of the philosophy” of the new program. Two stakeholders in particular, were mentioned during the interviews: the evaluators of the new program and the CAC – NCCP staff and consultants. The evaluators are an important component of the new program in that they help set the tone and nature of the program with the participants. When asked to give an example of how the evaluators would buy into the programs new approach, Tim commented:

Well it requires an acknowledgment of no absolute truth…The point I’m making is that you don’t need PhD’s to do this, but just an acknowledgment that in fact, there is no one right way…because I think there are a number of ways to get there.

Tim remarked that the danger of not having the evaluators or any other stakeholders acknowledging the philosophy of the new program was that “if we get that wrong, then I think we will probably never have achieved the type of program we set out to do” (Tim). As it turns out, getting other stakeholders to buy into the vision of the program was his biggest challenge, specifically with the CAC. He remarked that further negotiation would be required in order to implement a program that stays true to the philosophy he had envisioned.
It's really a funny thing because I have such strong beliefs about the direction we want to take this into, but I have no idea where it will all end at the end of the day, like how far along we'll get. But the challenge for me is to continue to broker or negotiate this type of program with the CAC. So that's the on-going challenge because at some point this has to go onto a formal review process and I know when I start talking the way I'm talking here with you...I know there are times that I feel that I actually lose them. Like in the middle of the conversation I feel that they are like...they just look like they are just not supportive of what just came out of my mouth.

However, Tim was cautious not to lay blame and was mindful that the CAC was dealing with a major transition in terms of leading the development and implementation of new programs for coach education training in Canada. He stated:

I don't know how I would go about doing this if I was the CAC. In other words, I'm not sitting down here criticizing them, but I almost think that it is bigger than them. I almost wonder if the time has come for a more de-centralized, sport-by-sport approach to coach education and training, than having a National body oversee it...I almost wonder if the CAC needs to let go of being formally involved and play more of a facilitative role for the sports.

The lack of support manifested itself as moving away from the core philosophies and approaches that provided the foundation of the new program. For example, Tim comments on the pressure from the CAC:

I almost feel like there is a level of hegemony on exerting influence on us right now. So at some point, and I haven't seen it play out yet, so I could be wrong, but when I get the odd email back from this new consultant that we have, is that we are continually having
to be brought back to the generic. Or we are continually being brought back to ‘but how will you train your coaches?’ and I keep saying ‘they are already trained’.

So who are these ‘trained’ coaches’ participating in Triathlon Canada’s new coach education training program? In the next section, biographies of the participants in the new program will be presented.

**Triathlon Coaches**

Tables 5 and 6 display the biographies of the full time coaches and part time coaches, respectively. The coaches are separated into two groups based on employment for two reasons:

a) Jarvis (2007) differentiates lifelong learning as either non-vocational or vocational and b) the OECD regards employability as an important link for bridging the gap between qualifications systems and lifelong learning.

**Gender, Age, and Number of Years Coaching Triathlon**

The coaches in the full time group were male with an average age of 36.2 years compared with the part time group which consisted of four males and one female with an average age of 38.2 years. In order to maintain confidentiality, all of the participants will be referred to as male.

The coaches in the full time group have been coaching triathlon for an average of 14.4 years. This is contrasted to the part time group who have been coaching triathlon for an average of 9.1 years.
Table 5. Biographies of full time coaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coach</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of years coaching triathlon</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Formal Education</th>
<th>Athlete</th>
<th>Coach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>B.Kin; M.Sc; Graduate NCI</td>
<td>Swimming; Triathlon; WUC</td>
<td>Triathlon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>B.A; B.Ed; Enrolled NCI</td>
<td>Swimming; Cycling; LDWC</td>
<td>Alpine skiing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>B.A; M.Sc; Graduate NCI</td>
<td>Triathlon; NT(A)</td>
<td>Swimming, Cycling, X-Country, Triathlon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>No commitment</td>
<td>Enrolled NCI</td>
<td>Triathlon; JND;</td>
<td>Triathlon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>No commitment</td>
<td>B.Sc</td>
<td>Swimming; Varsity</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

M=36.2  M=14.4

Note. FT: Full Time coach employed by a National Sport Federation or Provincial Sport Federation. LDWC = Long Distance World Championships. JND = Junior National Development team. WUC = World University Championships. NT(A) = National team – age group. NCI = National Coaching Institute.
Table 6. Biographies of the part time coaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coach</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of years coaching triathlon</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Formal Education</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Experiences as an Athlete</th>
<th>Coach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>B.Sc</td>
<td>School Administrator</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Diploma; Enrolled NCI</td>
<td>Coach</td>
<td>X-Country</td>
<td>Assistant CIS Coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>No commitment</td>
<td>B.Sc; Enrolled NCI</td>
<td>Microbiologist</td>
<td>Cycling; X-Country LDWC</td>
<td>X-Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>B.A; B.Ed</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Swimming; Cycling; JND</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>B.A, RMC</td>
<td>Triathlon USA administrator</td>
<td>Swimming; WC</td>
<td>Biathlon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**M=38.2**  **M=9.1**

Family Commitment

This category is defined as whether the coaches have any significant family commitments such as a wife, husband, common law relationship, children, etc. Three of the five full time coaches' have a family commitment as we have defined it above. In the part time coaches group, four of the five participants have family commitments. Coach 3 describes how a changing family dynamic will influence his coaching practice for the upcoming year.

It also depends on your stage of life so as I’ve said, my daughter is more of a priority and when I was younger I may have had a little more thirst for the knowledge, but I had to take my daughter full time and so that changed things. So I mean coaching is still a love of my life, but my biggest role now is to take care of my daughter, so I guess it’s kind of mellowed my priorities a bit more.

Formal Education

In general, the 10 participants of the study are well-educated. In the full time group, four of the participants have completed one or more university degrees, all related to human kinetics or physical education. Notably, two participants (C1 and C3) have completed Master’s of exercise physiology degrees along with diplomas at the National Coaching Institute (NCI). The one participant (C4) who does not have a university degree is enrolled with the NCI for a diploma in high performance coaching. Similarly, four of the five participants in the part time group have completed one or more university degrees however there is more variety in the subject areas. Undergraduate degrees in the part time group included disciplines such as math, microbiology, history, commerce, and education, though none specifically contain sport content. Two participants (C7 and C8)
are also enrolled with the NCI specifically for athletics (Cross Country) coaching because a triathlon option was not available at their respective NCI's. Coach 10 also completed military training while attending Canada’s Royal Military College.

*Occupation*

In terms of occupation, participants 1 through 5 are employed as full time coaches by national or provincial sport organizations. Participants 6 through 10 are part time triathlon coaches and their occupations range from being employed as full time administrators (C6 and C10), to contract coaching (C7) and part time teaching (C9), to a full time microbiologist (C8). Coach 7 provides an example of what it is to have coaching contracts: “I do a contract position with the city where I do drop in swimming and I have another contract with a track and field club and then I have individual contracts with athletes that I coach for running or triathlon”.

*Prior Athletic Experience*

All of the participants have experience in either triathlon or its sub-disciplines of swimming, cycling, and running. For the full time participants, three (C1, C2, and C5) had their primary athletic experiences in swimming and the other two (C3 and C4) identified themselves specifically as triathletes. For the part time coaches, three (C6, C9, and C10) identified their primary athletic experiences with swimming. The other two (C7 and C8), identified cross country as their primary sport experience. Many of the participants have also had experiences competing at an elite level. For example, all five full time coaches had athletic experiences attending a World Championship, World University Championship, or were members of Canada’s National Triathlon team. Similarly, three part time participants (C8, C9, and C10) also had elite athletic experience
and competed at elite events such as World Championships, raced Triathlon World Cup, or was a member of Canada’s National Triathlon team.

All of the participants commented on how their prior athletic experiences had influenced their decision to get involved in coaching. For some participants, becoming a coach was a logical next step from being an athlete. For example, coach 3 states “I think it kind of evolved because I was racing and coaching...so it was kind of a natural progression”. However, for some other participants, becoming a coach was a result of poor coaching experiences while they were athletes. One coach in particular speaks about how an overtraining incident as an athlete proved to be a powerful motivator to start coaching:

Probably one of the things that made me interested in coaching was getting quite overtrained as a junior. I was racing as a junior and then cross country started and I was starting school and I got really sick that year and I got really overtrained and that kind of motivated me to you know, ask ‘how do you piece it all together?’ It’s not as simple as doing as much as you can do, so that sort of idea. (C4)

Still other participants commented that their love of Triathlon became part of a lifestyle that they wanted to share with others. For example, coach 6 states “I basically got involved in coaching because I enjoyed the sport. I still do a little bit of training, you know, not nearly as much as an athlete, but it’s became part of a lifestyle. I guess part of the reason is that you want to pass that lifestyle on to others”.

...
Prior Coaching Experience

Generally, all of the participants had a wide range of previous coaching experiences, mostly through triathlon’s sub-disciplines of swimming, cycling, and running. Only two coaches (C1 and C4) stated that their first coaching experience was in the sport of triathlon.

Coaching Certifications

Table 5 displays all of the participants’ NCCP certifications prior to entering the new program. All of the participants, with the exception of C1, hold multiple NCCP certifications. Interestingly, four of the coaches are also learner facilitators for triathlon’s competition-introduction context. All of the participants have coaching certifications in triathlon, but they also have other certifications as well. For instance, eight out of the 10 participants have coaching certifications in swimming. In addition, eight participants reached level 3 in the old NCCP.
Table 7. NCCP certifications prior to entering Triathlon Canada’s competition-development context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coach</th>
<th>Swimming</th>
<th>Cycling</th>
<th>Athletics</th>
<th>Triathlon</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Learner Facilitator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comp-Intro</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comp-Intro</td>
<td>Level 1 alpine ski</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Level 3 theory; Ch.Pc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Level 3 theory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Level 1;</td>
<td>Level 1 alpine ski;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comp-Intro</td>
<td>Level 3 theory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Level 1**</td>
<td>Level 1 biathlon;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Level 3 theory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Ch.Pc = Chartered professional coach. *C6 is also a learner facilitator for Comp-Intro Athletics. **C10 Level 1 certification with USA Triathlon.
Competition-Development Program  52

Where They Have Learned to Coach Triathlon

Our data indicated that our participants have learned to coach triathlon through a variety of learning situations. We have re-grouped them into four formal learning situations, two non-formal learning situations, and three informal learning situations. These learning situations will be presented in the following section.

Formal Learning Situations

University. Those participants who attended university indicated that they enjoyed their experience and it has influenced their coaching practice. Generally, the participants suggested that their course content was basic, but provided good foundational knowledge. One coach in particular compared his university experience as building a house, where you “start off with the digging of the foundation and then you put up some bricks, you know, brick by brick… I learned some really simple principles in coaching… and you start to apply them and that was the exciting part of school” (C5). For other participants who did not take any sport specific or coach related content in university, they still found that they were able to take aspects of their university experience and apply it to their coaching practice. For example, one coach who holds a B.Sc in math spoke about how his academic experience informed his coaching practice.

University helped in terms of problem solving ability… it helped in terms of planning and laying out a logical sequence or progression. Basically, you analyze each athlete as a problem. It’s just taking the problem solving approach and applying it to coaching. (C6)

However, some coaches remarked that due to the generic nature of their university courses, the ‘real’ education started once they left university and began their
coaching practice and saw firsthand the gap between theory and practice. For example, coach 1, who holds an M.Sc in exercise physiology stated, “that was a real education, you know, coming from a quote – unquote science background versus what is really happening in the field”. Therefore, those participants who attended university generally enjoyed their experience, but found that it was only the beginning of developing their coaching practice.

NCCP. As stated previously, all of the participants have triathlon certifications and also hold certifications in other sports (see Table 5). For example, one coach stated, “I have coached Swimming for maybe 3 or 4 years because my Triathlon program is a big part of the swim program here” (C2). Another part time coach remarked about how triathletes cross over into track and field. He stated, “most of the athletes that I coach, I carry over into indoor track and field” (C8). When asked about their general impressions of the old NCCP courses that they had taken, a majority of the participants spoke about the ‘basic’ and ‘general’ nature of the courses. For instance, one of the participants summed the commonly expressed belief that the NCCP’s “intention is good every time. But whether they achieve their goal, I’m not too sure” (C9).

All of the participants were aware of the new NCCP’s shift towards competency-based programming and feel that it will help create better coaches by focusing on demonstrating competencies and not on programming for knowledge. For example, coach 8 suggested:

We are going to pick up on a lot of things that we wouldn’t have in the old way and that is going to lead to better coaches and I’m very happy with that. I think
that a lot of coaches are going to be surprised and they are going to have to do
more work, but in the end, they will be better off. So I think it is a good process.
Interestingly, while some of the coaches speak to how certification earned in the
new NCCP may become more important because it demonstrates competency, others
comment that it is not the certification that is important, but the process of learning.
I think that for me it’s not the certification, but the process of learning that you do
or don’t do in that. I’m not terribly motivated by the end result of it. It’s more ‘am
I able to find value in the processes so that it doesn’t feel like hoop jumping. It
feels like this is a meaningful exercise in an area where you can improve’. (C4)
Due to the fact that the participants took part in variety of certifications across
multiple sports, they found different sports’ NCCP courses more relevant than others. For
example, one coach speaks about how taking an NCCP swimming course had a positive
influence on his triathlon coaching.
The swimming one was quite beneficial. It provided me with a good background
in terms of skill development because prior to taking the course I tended to rely
upon my own experiences, so it was good to be in a group where you’re basically
learning skill development approaches from 20 other individuals. So I was
definitely able to take away a lot from that. (C6)
Another coach remarked on how taking some NCCP courses re-started a process
of reflection on his coaching practice and reminded him of things he may need to think
about while coaching.
Maybe you didn’t learn anything new, but it reactivated the thought process that
kind of just put on the shelf. So it kind of made you re-think ‘oh yeah, ok, this is
how you whatever'. So yeah, it was kind of nice to get a kick in the butt once in
awhile and revisit something. (C7)

However, while most participants had positive things to say about the NCCP, one
participant found that the NCCP courses were too formal, comparing it to sitting in a
classroom and speaks to how the material does not actually determine competency.

You sit in a classroom, do book stuff, anybody can do it, and it’s ‘ok’ for the first
one, I suppose...but once you get to [a higher level]...it’s sit in the classroom and
do your book stuff...but it doesn’t show that your are competent! (C10)

National coaching institute (NCI). Six participants have either graduated (C1 and
C3) or are enrolled (C2, C4, C7, and C8) in Canada’s National Coaching Institute’s
diploma program. All of them have expressed value in going through the process of
completing a diploma at an NCI. One of the main aspects that the coaches’ enjoyed about
their NCI experience was the opportunity to interact with coaches from other sports. As
one coach expressed, “we challenged each other and had a lot of fun” (C3). Another
coach summarized his experience in the NCI as being able to focus longer on one topic,
rather than switching to a new topic every two hours.

It was just nice to be able to devote a number of evenings to that particular topic
rather than a half hour here and a half hour there and focus on whatever came up.
So it was just nice to present it one at a time and go through that educational
process without having to worry about other things at the same time. (C8)

Learning in the workplace. One of the part time participants spoke about how his
employer has offered professional development courses and that he has been taking
advantage of these programs and applying it to his coaching practice.
We have a leadership development program and I’ve gone through some of the initial courses there. Although it’s geared mostly towards the workplace, I find that a lot of it can be transferred over. You know, they have programs for understanding personalities and getting along with different personality type, how to manage people, how to lead people. I find it is a great crossover to coaching. (C6)

Another participant who prepared for a career in the military attended Canada's Royal Military College (RMC) and remarked that his military training has been more beneficial towards his coaching practice than his university degree. He states, “the commerce degree is like any other degree in a university where there is teaching and you learn, but it is all the other military and extracurricular training that I’ve used [for my coaching practice]” (C10).

These two examples are interesting because they illustrate how learning in their occupations (careers) can been transferred and applied to their non-vocational coaching practice.

Non-formal Learning Situations

Performance enhancement teams (PET). A PET (now known as an Integrated Support Team or IST, but will be referred to as a PET for this thesis), is a group of sport science professionals who work with the coach in order to ensure the optimal preparation and performance of athletes (ownthepodium2010.com). Generally, those participants with access to a PET indicated that they valued and learned from these interactions. For example, one participant spoke about how members of his PET would send sport science articles, journals, or information considered relevant to him. He states, “he is a good
physiologist and he sends me research and my nutritionist sends me research...I have a lot of people who give me a lot of good information" (C2). Another participant, whose experience includes being an elite triathlete remarks that he is still developing his coaching practice and seeks out learning opportunities with his PET through his job as an administrator – coach for a National Sport Federation. The coach commented:

I would still consider myself in the learning phase. I’m self driven and I try to get information from everywhere. I’m here at the center and I’ve got the best sport scientists in North America and I’m just trying to suck it all in to be the best I can for the athletes. Whereas before, I picked and chose the best, but right now I don’t know...I consider myself as hardly knowing anything and so it’s a little bit of a different feeling. (C10)

For another participant with considerably more coaching experience than coach 10, working with two individuals within a PET had the single biggest impact on his coaching practice. He stated:

I learned more about coaching with [name] and [name] with the Canadian Sport Center and their help working with a PET because we were one of the first in the country...and I learned a lot from that and that took my coaching to another level from where it was at. (C3)

Conferences and workshops. Several of the participants’ commented on the value of attending different conferences, including National (CAC Sport Leadership Sportif), Regional (SPIN Summit), and Provincial (Swim BC, Swim Ontario) conferences. The inclusion of provincial swimming conferences is notable and could be possibly attributed to the fact that swimming is viewed by the participants as more technical, when
compared to cycling or cross country. For example, one participant mentions that “swimming is very technical and I’ll often try to go to that [conference] on an annual basis” (C5). Another participant spoke about how he looks forward to some of the keynote speakers at the conferences.

The opportunity to learn from very experienced coaches, particularly the one’s who have achieved gold medals and authentically brought athletes to the top of the podium and trying to understand how they did that and the challenges they faced and how they overcame the challenges and things like that. I find that stuff really valuable and motivating and so that’s why I still enjoy coming to conferences and hearing a bit about that. (C4)

However, it is interesting to note that it is the interactions between the coaches, often between sessions during the conferences, that participants value the most.

Therefore, the next learning situation that will be presented involves informal learning.

Informal Learning Situations

Interactions among coaches. The value of being able to interact with coaches, both inside and outside the sport of triathlon, is one of the common themes expressed among all of the participants. Often, coaches interact informally with each other at conferences or large races.

It is nice to attend at least one of those conferences once a year, but again, I get more out of just talking to coaches than I do out of some of those sessions. I’d sooner go to a large National race and just sit down and chat with coaches over a beer or two, than spending money going to a conference because I will learn more talking with other coaches than I will at a lot of the conferences. (C8)
The participants also spoke about a renewed sense of solidarity among the triathlon coaching community, focused on developing athletes for the world stage instead of fostering competition amongst each other. This sense of community was observable with the coaches who were present during Triathlon Canada’s coaches meetings where five interviews were conducted. When asked about the sense of community amongst the triathlon coaches, a participant remarked:

Everyone in the country is working together now, rather than worrying about who is winning Junior Nationals. You know, we still want to win Junior Nationals, but we’re more interested in knocking off the U.S. at World’s then beating other provinces. (C3)

Coach 1 became animated when asked about the sense of community among the triathlon coaches and noted that this was a recent development. He echoed coach 3’s comments and elaborated on the trust he feels with the coaches in Canada’s competition-development community.

We’ve got this really nice community of practice where I would absolutely trust any of those guys with any of my athletes and know that at the end of the day, the athlete will come back to my program and not have been recruited or worked or undermined in any way...we are just starting to see that happen over the last 1 or 2 years for the first time. (C1)

One of the participants commented on the importance of continued interactions and sharing knowledge within the triathlon coach community because of the benefits that can be gained through such interactions.
If I go to another coach and remark ‘that athlete is doing really well. What are you doing differently?’ then they share and they tell and I think that is a huge part of coaching and it is an informal part of coaching, but we make each other better. Knowledge is nothing if you don’t share it and you will always get back more than you give away. (C8)

In addition to sharing within the triathlon coach community, several of the participants also commented on maintaining positive relationships with coaches in triathlon’s constituent sports, due to the important roles that these other coaches can play in triathlon athlete development. For example, one participant spoke about his interactions with a swim coach and another triathlon coach and of the value he found in that.

For two years I walked a 50 meter swim deck for 5 days a week with a really excellent swim coach…and we used to question each other on ‘how’s the programming going? Or what research are you reading? Or are we critically analyzing what the athletes are doing?’ It was an incredible education. (C1)

However, though many of the coaches expressed value in maintaining positive relationships with coaches outside of triathlon, limited time and coordination made this a difficult situation to apply. One coach in particular suggested that Canada’s regional sport centers could play an important role in coordinating opportunities where coaches from different sports could interact. He goes on to describe a positive experience where a number of coaches were brought together in order to prepare for the Beijing Olympics. Regional sport organizations could do a little better at coordinating that kind of stuff. There are a lot of good coaches in the region, but there’s not a lot of
information sharing. I'd say that's a really common theme. There isn't a lot of that in Canada, information sharing. One thing the COC did was this Beijing Excellence conference and I found that valuable because there's a little more information sharing. Like let's share what you are doing for preparation...there's always something to be learned. (C4)

Mentor coaches. Several of the participants spoke highly of mentor relationships that they have had with more experienced coaches. Interestingly, the mentors were not limited to the sport of Triathlon, but often came from its constituent sports. For example, coach 8, who began coaching triathlon via cross country, spoke about how his mentor led by example and described how early in his coaching development, he was able to see “that way and style of coaching and how to implement the designs through the art and that was very valuable to me”. Other participants described working with mentor coaches as learning how to develop the ‘art’ of their coaching practice.

Mentorship prevents you from reinventing the wheel and develops the art of coaching. It helps to develop your eye and I think without mentorship, you just end up reinventing the wheel and making the same mistakes that those before you have. So it can really accelerate your practical education. (C7)

Another participant described how he sought out mentorship opportunities once he had completed his formal NCCP certifications and that the mentor – protégé relationship was the best for how he learned.

I would consider any coaching certification as the minimum standard of any coach. You’ve met the minimum. You are ‘ok’ at this level and so now you have
to go seek other experiences. For me, that’s usually mentorship. That is usually the best for me. (C1)

However, due to the fact that triathlon is a young sport, some coaches commented on the lack of mentorship opportunities within the sport of triathlon. For example, one participant described how he would attend conferences to interact with coaches in other sports, who had more experience in order to learn from them.

Well, I guess there are these conferences. I mean it’s a couple of times a year. In being a young sport, we don’t have a lot of mentorship opportunities in triathlon. I’m fairly young for a head coach... and there are only a couple of coaches with debatably more experience, so there’s not a lot of opportunities for in-sport mentorship, but I find it valuable when I get those opportunities to talk with coaches with more experience or listen to them at conferences or presentations where they give their experiences and the ups and downs of how they dealt with things. (C4)

Internet and online forums. Due to the fact that many of the participants are situated across Canada, one of the ways that they continue to maintain contact was through the Internet and online forums. For example, one participant speaks about how a fellow coach set up an online forum specifically for Triathlon coaches and that it has been good for networking.

Well, [coach 3] has set up a good online forum that a number of Triathlon coaches use and that’s great because we can discuss issues related to coaching with other coaches across the country, whereas previously, you were kind of on your own.
Now it’s a good community and we’ve got to help each other out. So I think that’s very valuable. (C5)

In addition to making networking opportunities easier, several of the participants also spoke about using the Internet as a tool for on-going learning. For instance, one of the participants, who did not have regular access to a PET, commented on his use of the Internet to search for sport science resources in order to help his athletes.

I use the Internet quite extensively. Just reading other articles written by coaches or even by exercise physiologists or sport psychologists…stuff like nutrition resources or mental training resources. There’s a lot of great work out there that a lot of other coaches have developed that I use with my own athletes. (C5)

Another resource available on the Internet that several of the participants spoke about was electronic sport science journals. However, not all of the participants have access to the electronic journals. Yet, those with access indicate that these journals are a rich tool for informing their coaching practice. One participant who has access through his part time job as a Cross Country coach for a Canadian Inter-University (CIS) team comments on the value of this online resource.

It is something that I am very aware of, having access through the university…as long as I have access to their web portal [then] I’ll still have access to those journals in their electronic format, so it is something that I’m very grateful the university has. It is a huge resource and I’m aware of it and I tend to take advantage of it. (C8)
Participants without access to electronic journals can be at a disadvantage. For example, one participant remarks how barriers such as access and cost can affect coaches who actively pursue research in electronic journals.

It's a real barrier for coaches who actually pursue research. You know, you have to pay for that. You know, paying for certifications, then they are paying for their own travel to races to support athletes...then to ask them to pay for access to PubMed or something like that, they are not going to do it. At the same time, a lot of those things, such as new papers or meta-analysis's have a lot of value for coaches. (C1)

Several participants commented on how their comfort level with the Internet varied with their age and influenced how often they would use the Internet and online forums. For instance, one of the 'younger' participants remarks how the Internet plays a role in his coaching development:

I'd probably say that is the kind of learner I am...sort of self-directed. So if I'm interested in a topic, I'll spend a bunch of time researching that topic in that way. I guess you could say that with my age, the Internet has played a big part in my own education because there's a vast library on the web available wherever you are and I spend a lot of time researching like that. (C4)

However, two of the more senior participants commented that they may not be as "technologically saavy" (C5), and sometimes found themselves outside of their comfort zones. Though they may not be at ease with using the Internet, for one participant, the reliability of the Internet content is an issue. He commented that he does not use the Internet for coach education, "because I want to make sure that the information I'm
1133 getting is actually reliable. I think the resources I have... I'm more comfortable with them as far as my perception of them as being a little bit more reliable". (C7)

1135 Expectations Regarding the New Program

1136 Generally, all of the participants were aware of the vision and direction of the new competition-development program. This is because throughout the development of the program, Tim had the chance to meet with the coaches on several occasions and would comment on different aspects of the new program, such as a focus on on-going learning and professional development. One participant commented, “I think it is starting up the way it has to, so overall, I am pleased with the way Triathlon Canada is approaching the new NCCP” (C8). However, there were some participants who voiced some concerns regarding some of the practical aspects of implementing such an innovative program. For example, one participant commented that he “understands the idea of comp-dev. The logistics...[but], how are we actually going to see this work? Is it really going to happen?” (C1). Similarly, another participant remarked that the relatively young nature of Triathlon coaching makes it difficult to get qualified individuals who can actually make meaningful assessments on coaching competencies.

1149 The problem that we have in Triathlon is that being such a young sport, who can evaluate the coaches that know the sport well enough to make meaningful evaluations to Triathlon? Like there is definitely a huge value from somebody who comes from a different sport to look at past experience or to look across the sports at planning practices because a lot of that stuff is generic, but you know, we’re are own sport and there are specific challenges that you need to know about in order to evaluate. (C4)
Apart from questions of a practical nature regarding the new program, all of the participants expressed a willingness to become involved and had high expectations for how the program could have a positive influence on their coaching practice. The participants' general expectation for the new program was that it would highlight areas in their coaching practice that could use more on-going learning and professional development. For example, one participant stated, “it may highlight things that I don’t necessarily do well. But I think that is good and it will make me go through the process” (C8). When coach 8 was asked to elaborate, he commented:

I think that some of it is in the performance planning, tracking, and adjusting...I have developed some programs and once you develop programs, you tweak as you go along and it is a lot easier to do that. However, with Triathlon, it is three times more complicated and so there is a lot more to learn and a lot more to adjust as you go along. So I think it is going to be an interesting process and I’m looking forward to it.

Several participants commented that submitting the portfolio upon entry into the new program was a valuable tool for them to begin reflecting about their coaching practice. For one coach it was a chance to, “formalize a lot of the things that I do informally now” (C4). Similarly, another participant commented that the process of drafting the portfolio was a good chance for him to reflect on his coaching practice.

It was a good time for reflection because so many times in coaching, you have so much information and you work a lot and you don’t take the time to reflect on your job and so this portfolio is a great time for reflection on my job. (C2)
However, some others found the process of drafting a portfolio stressful. For example, one participant commented on how the portfolio would take a lot of time to draft and because he wanted to send a quality document, he felt anxious. He states, "I was really...not afraid, but I think it was a big deal of time and I was really busy and I didn't want to give crap too, you know, I wanted to send something good" (C9). Another participant felt that the instructions were vague for submitting the portfolio, so he went with the strategy of, "I'm going to put in more detail rather than not enough" (C7).

In summary, the first section of the results presented the background and perspective of Tim and how he designed the new program. Furthermore, the biographies of the full time and part time participants were presented, highlighting their formal education, occupations, coaching certifications, and their previous athletic and coaching experiences. The second section of the results highlighted four formal learning situations, two non-formal learning situations, and three informal learning situations that were identified by participants. In part 2 of the study, the results of an interview with Conrad will be presented after he finished being evaluated for the Design a Sport Program outcome. In addition, the perspectives of the two evaluators will be presented. The following section begins with an update.
Due to the fact that there were several unanticipated changes with regards to the implementation of the new coach education program, it is necessary to provide an update. Tim indicated that he had been focusing on his new position, which required quite a bit of regional travel. Due to that fact, he has not been able to devote as much time to leading the coach education training program for Triathlon Canada. However, he indicated that he still communicated regularly with the volunteer board member who was now responsible for leading the program, especially when it came to actual design components that may have an impact on the coaches. Similarly, six months had passed between Conrad’s first interview, therefore, it is necessary to give an update as to what he has been doing during this time. Approximately one month prior to the interview in part 1, Conrad had been hired as a full time triathlon coach and program director and focused on starting a full time program. Furthermore, he immersed himself in coaching practice, which involved multiple roles including various administrative duties, program directing, and coaching. He remarked that there are not a lot of informal learning opportunities due to the fact that he was now the senior coach in the province and that he feels somewhat isolated. He commented:

Basically, it’s just been getting down to work. A lot of figuring things out and trying new things and conversations and stuff like that happened when I did my internship. This has been a lot more work, you know, some administrative support, getting training set up across the province, writing rules, some funding stuff, figuring out camp budgets, and so there is some time for reflection and
learning new tricks…but what I’m doing now is that I’m the senior coach in the province and I don’t work with anybody else here in the center, so it’s a little more isolated.

When he was asked about how much progress he had with regards to the new coach education training program, he remarked that he had submitted the portfolio, but that nothing else had really progressed. However, he commented that in January of 2008, he was asked by the volunteer director of coaching for Triathlon Canada to become involved with the competition-development pilot application with the CAC: “I was involved with putting together the pilot application to the CAC, but I mean…I just chimed in with a few ideas here and there”. He was asked to attend a meeting between Triathlon Canada and CAC representatives and it was during this time that he became aware of some of the conceptual disagreements between what the CAC wanted, versus what was being proposed by Triathlon Canada’s new program. For example, he stated:

That the key piece was going to be this triangulated debrief and we really opened up a description of a triangulated debrief, so that it didn’t have to be the two evaluators and a coach, it could be the evaluator, the coach, and literature, or athlete feedback, or any other third piece could be part of the evaluation.

Anyways, what the CAC wanted was very concrete, step-by-step, ‘here’s how we’re going to do it’, workbooks for every module, and so it started to look very much like the old system.

At the end of the meeting, the CAC and the Triathlon Canada committee agreed that the new program would go forward as a ‘pilot’ for three coaches going through the
Design a Sport Program outcome of the evaluation stage. For instance, Conrad commented:

What it boiled down to in the end was that we were going to pilot myself and two other coaches and go through an open-ended debrief, see where the deficits are and come up with an individual plan for each person as opposed to picking from a workbook afterwards...so we are going to go that route and it’ll probably be more work intensive, but be more valuable. So we got pilot approval for that.

Matthew the External Evaluator

At the time of the interview, Matthew was a 46 year old, self-employed professional with an extensive academic background including a PhD in Sport Sciences from a foreign sport university and dual Master’s degrees in Biology and Education. Matthew remarked that he had studied a wide variety of fields because, “I wanted to keep my background open...like I always wanted to see the point behind the point”. He commented that during his studies that he was heavily influenced by the philosophical writings of Immanuel Kant and the book Kant and the Platypus: Essays on Language and Cognition by Umberto Eco:

[The] platypus is an interesting phenomenon that challenges our understanding and our knowledge and for me Immanuel Kant challenged knowledge and the way we look at things and a major part of my studies was influenced by his work. He also remarked that the platypus became a personal symbol because “it represents the diverse background of what we do here, but it also represents the contradictions that we often see in people”. Apart from his strong academic background, he indicated that he is an active athlete and coach in a variety of different sports. For
instance, as an athlete, he has been involved with racing triathlon, cycling, swimming, and water polo, though recently he transitioned to just training triathlon and cycling recreationally. He has also been involved with coaching triathlon and has taken the competition-introduction context certification. It was during this certification process where he was exposed to the shift towards competency-based programming in the NCCP. His wide range of experiences in academia, high performance athletics, coaching, and therapy allow him to “cross the fields all the time”.

Matthew began his relationship with Triathlon Canada when he was approached by a group of high performance athletes to help them fill in an application form to start a regional Triathlon Canada training center. His role during the application process involved “[analyzing] qualification times for different age groups, for men and woman, like U23, 23 – 30, and so on, and calculated some times for biking, for swimming, and running”. During the application process, he came into contact with a Triathlon Canada board member who advised him to get in contact with Tim (then in the role of high performance director). Tim and Matthew had some back and forth discussions on a variety of topics and as he explained:

Tim saw that I was sitting here and [that] I’m pretty isolated...so to give me more legitimacy and to keep me involved with the sport...given my background he was of the opinion that it would probably be good to have me on board.

Evaluation Process

The evaluation process started when Conrad logged on to a special website managed by Triathlon Canada and performed a self-evaluation of his portfolio. Though he was the first participant to go through online self-evaluation, he explained that he did
not find it difficult, though he needed to re-read some of his portfolio material. For instance, he stated, “it was fine and easy to use, although it was some time since I read my stuff...but yeah, I think what I put on the self-evaluation was an accurate representation of what I think I did”. Conrad also indicated that he did not receive any instructions regarding how to fill in the self-evaluation other than answering honestly and if there were any questions, to contact Tim. Performing the actual self-evaluation consisted of “[going] on to the website and [moving] all the sliders as I went through my project again” (Conrad). When asked whether he found the self-evaluation helpful, he commented:

Yes and no. If I had never been involved with the comp-intro evaluations, then probably, like there’s not a comp-intro evaluation that I do where I don’t reflect on what I’m doing in my own coaching practice. So I feel like I’m doing self-evaluations all the time.

From the evaluators’ perspective, they began the evaluation process by reviewing the submitted portfolio material on their own first before engaging in a phone conversation to discuss the portfolio. When Matthew was asked about how he started the evaluation process, he commented:

I started by going through Conrad’s material...on my own. I then went through the different criteria’s and then Tim and I had a phone conference for about an hour and half and so I gave him my impressions and explained where there were strengths and areas where I would like to see, at least more awareness.
Similarly, Tim also remarked about beginning the evaluation process on his own and that the phone call was an opportunity for both evaluators to share their individual perspectives on the submitted portfolio material.

It was a really rich discussion...so we basically went through the different criteria and evidences that relates to the Design a Sport Program and...we basically restricted ourselves to whether Conrad fell below or met standards or whether he exceeded the standards...So yeah, I think we kept it simple which I think was useful...and so there was some really great discussion around Conrad, but not from an evaluation perspective, but by positioning Conrad as a coach in terms of identity, philosophies, and approaches etc., and so that to me was a really important component because what we wanted to do was ensure that we were helping to inform Conrad in terms of providing another source of critical information on his coaching.

Once both evaluators went through the evidences and criteria, they both agreed that debriefing with Conrad would be a good opportunity for follow up questions to determine competency, although Tim stated:

We wouldn’t make any final determination on the evaluation of the different evidences and criteria until I had an opportunity to follow up with Conrad and gain more information and understanding through asking some additional questions that both Matthew and I had constructed during our discussion together. So it kind of felt like that there should be no final evaluation until there was an opportunity to discuss our feelings and perceptions etc., and then once we had the
The Debrief

The debrief consisted of an in person meeting between Conrad and Tim. It was an opportunity to find out more information based on questions that Tim and Matthew had constructed together, specifically in areas where “Conrad sets himself pretty high and we didn’t feel it was as high as Conrad had assessed and that was the stuff we could really spend some energy in the follow up” (Tim). Conrad commented that the debrief was a good experience and that he and Tim had spent time discussing different parts of his portfolio material, such as writing to his strength in physiology. For instance he states “so the evaluation was good…the external evaluator’s comment was that this guy is a physiologist doing a coaching program…so I obviously clearly wrote my portfolio to what I knew and so my background bias is towards physiology” (Conrad). However, Conrad also notes that the content of what he submitted in his portfolio was written almost two years ago and that it was out of date and he had made changes to his coaching practice.

My portfolio was written mainly in 2006 and early 2007 and so looking at a year and a half ago, a lot of things have changed since then. I wouldn’t disagree with most of what I had written, but the way I coach is a little different than what I put down in my portfolio. (Conrad)

Many of the questions that Tim and Matthew constructed seemed to involve areas where Conrad did not write about in his portfolio. Tim notes that the debrief serves as an opportunity for Conrad to expand on what he had written:
We got into a discussion with Conrad and you could really see that it was really a lived experience component that was leading it and so that explained a little bit why he didn’t include that information in his written materials. So because of Conrad’s strong academic past, he felt that ‘well I can’t find any literary support for that or for my ideas’…so it wasn’t necessarily new information, it was information that Conrad didn’t write about. But in the discussion that happened around it kind of validated it and so it validates it for us and for Conrad. So both Conrad and I come out of there with a more clear position about it, saying ‘yeah, here’s a great rich discussion stemming from the evaluation’ and it makes the evaluation an actual learning conversation and not just an assessment.

Tim also remarked that aside from the follow up questions and following the evidences and criteria of the outcome, there was no set guidelines about how to perform the debrief. He stated that based on his past professional experience, it was easy to let the discussion happen. For example he states, “well we just let the conversation happen. You know, I’ve debriefed with people for years as a professional and so I didn’t feel there was any need for me not to bring my professional self to that moment” (Tim).

**Relationships**

The strength of prior relationships was an important factor during the evaluation and debrief. For example, Matthew did not want to be involved in the debrief because he remarked that he would feel uncomfortable being the only person providing feedback to Conrad because he did not have a prior relationship with him. He stated, “Conrad is not familiar with me as a person, whereas Tim knows a lot of the other coaches, so it would be better if he sort of provides or gives them feedback”. Furthermore, he adds that he can
provide better feedback only when he has had an opportunity to build rapport with the
participants in the new program.

Language is very important. Even if you are able to say the right thing at the right
time, but if you are not well known [to the coaches], then you have to be careful.
It’s better to first get in contact with the coaches and then come to a certain…well
build a connection first.

This seems to be the case with Tim and Conrad, where they both spoke about how
easy it was to speak to each other due to the strength of their prior history and
relationship together.

Well, I thought it was pretty easy because he [Tim] was my master coach when I
was at the NCI and now I am able to drop by to his office once every four weeks
and we’ve always had like a 30 minute chat up to two hours…so we can have a
very quick conversation and cover a ton of topics because we have fairly similar
philosophies…and in terms of concepts and stuff we can just hammer through
some stuff really quickly and so we communicate well…so talking to him is easy.
(Conrad)

However, both Tim and Conrad agreed on the importance of having an external
evaluator who did not have a long prior relationship with either of them.

We both agreed that it was good having an external evaluator that doesn’t know
me and that I have not met. I mean it is such a small community and I’m already
involved with the coaching education and so even though Tim keeps me honest,
there’s a relationship there and it can be easy to waffle around and not really do
an evaluation. (Conrad)
Tim also spoke about how the evaluation and depth of the follow up debrief may differ between an individual coach he has a prior history with, versus a coach he does not know as well, but is participating in the new program.

With a couple of the other coaches there isn’t really much of a history and so I wonder if I’ll be able to well I won’t be able to bring as much of that history to the kind of debriefing opportunity. It will really be more of it will be very much a discussion constructed in the present. In other words, if I had a coach that I really don’t know that well, I can only respond to what is shared in the moment of time that we are having that discussion. Whereas if I was talking to Conrad or Shane, I can actually bring forward a sense of history based on my prior learning and relationships I’ve had with those coaches over the years. So in fact, some of the evaluation may differ based on how well I may know the coach, if I have a history with the coach etc., but I’m not going to apologize or change the potential richness that can be had in the debriefing with those coaches, just because I have a prior relationship with them. I just have to make sure with the two or three coaches that I don’t have a prior relationship with, that I’m really, really listening carefully to what they are saying and I may have to ask more questions because it won’t be so simple for me to draw from experiences.

What is gained at the End of the First Evaluation?

Each participant seemed to have a different goal for the evaluation process, but they were not incompatible. For Conrad, his focus was on getting feedback for the purpose of informing his coaching practice to become a better coach. For example, he
stated "the debrief was good because I'm looking to get better". He goes on to explain his perspective:

From my perspective and the perspective of a lot of the other development coaches...the feeling is that we are competent enough and we are not bad coaches and so we are not worried about looking incompetent or not being selected for a team or stuff like that, but what we are all interested in is just getting better".

Furthermore, Conrad indicated that he does not mind taking his time during the evaluation process and that any feedback he can get from either Tim or Matthew is worth being patient for.

I mean it's worth the time and the effort. Like we could blow through this really fast on a much more superficial level, but what's the point? Ultimately, I want to run better programs and to be more competent in what I am doing.

For Tim, the first evaluation was a good opportunity to see if the philosophy and guiding principles of the new program were actually being followed. He remarked that he felt positive about adhering to the philosophy of the program, specifically during the debrief session with Conrad.

Well I think we did a good job. I was actually reflecting on that after and I felt positive about the emphasis that was placed on it [the debrief] being an opportunity for learning for both involved...I've learned a bit from reading Contrad's material and I learned a bit just having a good discussion with him as well...it could be said that they were developing through the process and that was always the intent. That it was really setting up a way of working that would go beyond the qualification component of the comp-dev stream.
Indeed, Matthew echoed the remarks of Tim when he remarked that he had learned through participating in the evaluation. For instance, when asked about what he had learned during the evaluation, he stated, “[Conrad] had a lot of literature and so what I learned was the names and date of publications for some key authors and some interesting work concerning testing modules and testing procedures and all that”. He also felt that he had provided what Tim was expecting from him during the evaluation process, which was “somebody who is independent and looking in from the outside or looking at it with my experience and background”.

Observations Following the Evaluation Process

There were five general observations that Tim indicated he would follow up on or try to change before the next coach goes through the evaluation of the Design a Sport Program outcome. The first observation was that some of the evidences and criteria for the Design a Sport Program were not working as intended.

We may change a couple of the evidences because I felt as we worked through them, well a couple of them were stinkers. You know, I read through them and I’m thinking ‘what the heck was I getting at here or what is this actually telling us?’ We will probably re-write a couple of the evidences and criteria.

The second observation had to do with the numeric ‘toggle’ scale that the coach controls while doing their self-evaluation (see Appendix H). Tim remarked that the original ‘slider’ approach was not working as well as he had hoped for and is now focusing on an evaluative approach of either: below expectations, meets expectations, or exceeds expectations. With regards to changing the visual sliders on the website, he stated:
So we really tried to organize our thinking around those three areas because there was no point in starting to... even though we’ve used that visual analog scale approach on the sliders on the web, I’m not so sure it’s serving us as well as I anticipated and I think I will move that towards kind of a three component approach.

Conrad also commented on the numeric toggle scale and suggested that having the numeric scale was not clear with regards to determining whether the material in his portfolio met the evidences and criteria for the outcome.

I think Tim is considering switching the scale from percentile to needs improvement, meets expectations, or above expectations. Like I said to him that I was sliding the scales across and I couldn’t tell the difference between 59% and 69%.

The third observation made by Tim was trying to do the debriefs in person, when possible. Even though he was aware that this will not always be the case, he stated that the rich environment created by a face-to-face debrief is always better:

We may not always be able to debrief in person, but when possible, I think it is a richer environment than trying to do it on the phone, but for sure it won’t always be possible. So that’s another observation... so that’s something to try to keep doing. (Tim)

A fourth observation made by Tim was that some of the portfolios submitted may not contain enough material and commented that he may have to ask for more material to be submitted in order to make a meaningful evaluation:
I think with a couple of coaches who are in this program, we may find that we don’t have enough information and so when we went through this kind of portfolio submission to say ‘are you ready for this context’ we have some coaches who we say ‘yeah, definitely, you are ready’, but we may go back to a couple of those coaches and say ‘I think we are going to need a bit more information then you have provided’. Whereas in the past, we might have said that was ok, now we might ask for a little bit more.

The last observation made by Tim was that triangulation during the evaluation may not occur across all outcomes because of the practical nature of having more than two evaluators performing the evaluation and that he does not want to be restricted by one form of doing evaluations. For instance, he stated:

I don’t know if the triangulation will be achieved in all circumstances, simply based on the practicality of what we would be facing...but to suggest that we would achieve triangulation across every single evidence, well then I would say for sure ‘not’ and I would argue that for some of the evidences that one person should be able to suffice...and so we are always going to try to attempt to achieve or secure as much information as possible, but I don’t think that we should restrict ourselves by using the word ‘triangulate’ because if we can’t in all cases, than I don’t think we should be restricted by it.

Next Steps

The next steps with the implementation of the new program involve moving through the next six outcomes of the evaluation stage. For Tim, this involves trying to get the rest of the participants through the Design a Sport Program outcome before moving
on to evaluating the next outcomes in the evaluation stage of the new program, because
they are situated within a practical – training camp environment.

I think we need to finish the Design a Sport outcome because what we envisioned
with the next set of outcomes is that it is really around a training environment and
we are likely going to invest a lot of time, energy, and money, in trying to situate
that in a training camp of some sort.

Matthew also comments on being involved with the next steps of the new
program where he indicates that there is an effort to arrange the next set of evaluations
around a training camp. He states, “we are trying to arrange a training camp and most
likely [Conrad] will be on my side and be evaluated by me...so evaluate them on the next
outcomes and observe how they work with their [athletes]”.

Conrad indicated that he was not clear about his next steps in the new program
and speaks that it is mainly because of the busy upcoming race season and lack of
personnel to do the evaluations for the next outcomes.

Most likely it will be, well here's the challenge, it will be junior nationals, which
is August 15, but Tim will be in Beijing. So the bonus with doing this [type of
program] with such a small group is that you actually get to share best practice
and develop this community and a really strong commitment to some shared
goals, but the downside is that if one person can't make it, then you are screwed.

In summary, part 2 of the study presented an interview with Conrad, who was the
first participant to begin the evaluation process. In addition, two additional interviews
were presented with Tim and Matthew, both evaluators who had participated in the
evaluation process. Based on the content of the interviews, it was found that both Conrad
and Tim found the debrief an important part of the evaluation process. Furthermore, Conrad and Tim spoke about how rapport and a previous relationship added to the depth of the debrief session. In addition, both Conrad and Tim spoke about the value of having Matthew brought in as the first external evaluator of the new program. Part 2 ended with observations about the evaluation process and the potential next steps with regards to the implementation of the new program.
Discussion

The purpose of this study was to document Triathlon Canada’s implementation of its new coach education training program in the competition-development context. In part 1, Tim, the former high performance director of Triathlon Canada was interviewed to get his perspective on developing and implementing the new program. In addition, using Jarvis’ (2006a) conception of a biography, the 10 participants in the new program were interviewed in order to get a better understanding of the experiences and qualifications they had prior to their entry into the new program. In part 2, interviews were conducted with Conrad, the first participant of the program to start the evaluation process, as well as the two evaluators, Tim and Matthew, to get their perspective on the evaluation process. The following discussion will be separated into four sections based on addressing the research questions of the study.

Research Question One

The first research question focused on how Triathlon Canada’s competition-development program has been developed and to what extent does it respect the key principles of lifelong learning? It is important to remember that Triathlon Canada’s new program was developed within the boundaries of the new NCCP. One of the main characteristics of the new NCCP is shifting from a novice-to-expert continuum toward sport specific contexts for coaches (CAC, n.d.a). Focusing on the needs of coaches within a similar sport context repeats a trend in coach education where the traditional, large-scale multi-sport approach is being abandoned (Werthner & Trudel, 2006, Trudel & Gilbert, 2006). Included in the new NCCP’s shift are five core competencies (valuing,
interacting, leading, problem-solving, and critical thinking) that coaches need to
demonstrate, regardless of which coaching stream or context they are participating in.

The core competencies are made concrete through the demonstration of eight specific
coaching outcomes (make ethical decisions, provide support to athletes in training, plan a
practice, support the competitive experience, analyze performance, design a sport
program, manage a program, and sport-specific outcomes). Since coaches in each
coaching stream and context need to demonstrate these competencies, a specific
curriculum needed to be developed and it was decided that a problem-based learning
approach would be used to deliver the curriculum content (CAC, n.d.b). The evaluation
process consists of coaches demonstrating their competency on a number of pre-
determined outcomes (Savard & Brunelle, 1998). As an example, within Triathlon
Canada’s new program, there are seven pre-determined outcomes that coaches have to
demonstrate their competency in, and ‘Design a Sport Program’ is one of them. Based on
the guideline of determining which competencies were most relevant to their respective
sports, the CAC asked each national sport federation to determine and develop a
curriculum that was specific to their sport context. The new NCCP appears to be an effort
to offer coaches programming that will better meet their needs (specific to their coaching
contexts and sport), creating a more coach-centered program. However, there is no
indication within the CAC’s documents or website about how the new NCCP will
contribute to the lifelong learning of coaches. This is not surprising considering there
have been very few studies that try to link qualifications systems and lifelong learning,
though the OECD (2007b) study is an exception.
What is particularly interesting about Triathlon Canada’s new program is that the former high performance director (Tim) wanted to develop a program that was more coach centered and went beyond what was expected by those in charge of the new NCCP. There were several ways that he did this. The first is the portfolio required from the participants upon entry into the new program. Tim’s comments during part 1 indicated that the portfolios would be a unique way for the participants to demonstrate readiness to participate in the competition-development context. However, while the portfolio may have accomplished this task, the same portfolio content was also used as part of the evaluation of the ‘Design a Sport Program’ outcome. Comments by Tim after his evaluation with Conrad in part 2, suggested that he will likely ask for more material from some of the participants in order to be able to complete a meaningful evaluation. Furthermore, he commented that Conrad’s portfolio set a reasonable standard in terms of portfolio content. Yet, if Conrad’s portfolio is used as a template for the rest of the participants, there is a risk that the portfolios may start to become similar and begin to move away from the uniqueness of what a portfolio can be. Similarly, if the portfolios are structured after the evidences and criteria for the Design a Sport Program outcome, then there is a risk of the portfolios beginning to look the same in terms of structure, format, and types of evidences included (Torrance, 2007). The results also demonstrated that Tim needed to be clear regarding the expectations for the portfolio material, first as demonstrating readiness to participate in the competition-development context and secondly, that the same portfolio material will be evaluated in the first outcome of the evaluation. As an example, if policy 7 (make qualifications systems transparent) and mechanism 20 (improving information and guidance about qualifications systems) are
used, then it becomes clearer how the portfolio’s can be conducive to lifelong learning.

Despite the risks of creating generic portfolios, they should be incorporated into coach education training programs, as they are one way of understanding the uniqueness of each coach.

Another aspect of the new program that addresses several elements of lifelong learning is the de-emphasis on evaluation. This is important because the evaluation process can affect a learner’s willingness to learn (OECD, 2007b). For instance, “some people are driven to learn and gain qualification(s) and the rewards associated with the qualification. Others are fearful of failing to meet the requirements of the qualification and are deterred from entering qualification-based learning programs” (OECD, 2007b, p. 51). By focusing on learning and de-emphasizing the evaluation, the participants may take initiative through self-direction and create their own learning situations, which may occur in a variety of settings, including non-formal and informal learning situations (Werthner & Trudel, 2006; Trudel et al., in press). Thus, the evaluation process does not consist of standardized criteria, but is one occasion to discuss through a debrief session, what the coach knows and can do, but also what the coach needs to improve on to develop the specific knowledge or competency that is being evaluated in the outcome. Accordingly, with this approach, there is not one special curriculum developed for all the coaches in a specific context (e.g., triathlon coaches in the competition-development context). Each coach will progress through different, individualized learning situations based on their previous experiences, which is in line with lifelong learning.

Humphrey, Wechsler, and Hough (2008) demonstrated that those who design a program influence its content. This is particularly true with regards to Tim. His academic
background includes a PhD in Education that focused on the practice of sport psychology consultants. Furthermore, he co-authored a book with another eminent sport psychology consultant on the key elements of developing and maintaining perspective in sport and life. His overall academic experience, combined with his own work as a sport psychology consultant, developed an existential-humanist orientation towards sport psychology delivery, which can be characterized as caring, authentic, and empathetic (Friesen, 2008). Accordingly, given his unique biography and humanist orientation towards sport, it is not surprising that he developed a program based on the needs of triathlon coaches. Furthermore, due to the fact that Tim has such a unique biography, it is unlikely that another high performance director from a different sport could create a program that is similar to Triathlon Canada’s program. However, this has the potential to create some difficulties for the CAC from an administrative perspective because they cannot manage the material being learned by the participants in the program.

Research Question Two

The second research question aimed to answer what were the main characteristics of the biographies of the triathlon coaches’ participating in the competition-development program? Jarvis (2006a) suggests that it is important to consider a person’s biography because this can influence how an individual may approach learning. Not surprisingly, the results demonstrate that the participants have all come to know and practice coaching triathlon through a variety of means, all of which was informed by their biographies. The average age in years for the participants in the full time group was 36.2 years compared to 38.4 for the part time group. This falls between the average age ranges of 36 years for developmental coaches and 40 years for elite coaches (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006). On
average, the participants have been coaching triathlon for approximately 11.75 years.

Though this closely aligns with the 13 average years elite coaches have been practicing (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006), it is quite small compared to the 23.4 average years of coaching experience stated in another study that attempted to chart the developmental paths of coaches (Gilbert et al., 2006). The discrepancy between average years of coaching experience could possibly be explained by the young age of triathlon as a sport.

Considering that the participants’ fall between the average age ranges of development and elite coaches and have been coaching for an average number of years that resemble elite coaches, it could be stated, based on this criteria, that the participants are ‘elite-development’ coaches. This characterization is not surprising considering that for Tim, the nature of triathlon coaching in the competition-development context required working with athletes who are crossing from the specializing years to the investment years of athletic development (Côté, 1999; Durand-Bush & Salmela, 2002). Typically, coaches working with athletes in the specializing years are individuals who work in the development context, whereas individuals who work in the investment years usually work in a high performance context (Côté, 1999).

Due to the large amount of time required to develop elite-development athletes, balancing a work – family relationship can be complex (Edy, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005). For instance, a work – family relationship within a sport context is challenging considering that most occupations in this context require long – non traditional work hours and extensive travel (Dixon & Bruening, 2005). This is particularly relevant for several participants in this study, where 7 of the 10 participants have family commitments. Those who have a family commitment may be limited in
terms of the amount of time they can devote to learning and professional development
and the type of learning situations they can participate in (Lacroix, Camiré, & Trudel, in
press).

The biographies of the participants also revealed a wide variety of rich athletic
and coaching experiences in triathlon and/or triathlon's sub-disciplines. Findings from
this study coincide with previous research that suggests previous athletic experience in
one's sport is important (Erickson et al., 2007; Gilbert et al., 2006). The participant's
biographies also reveal the prevalence of endurance based coaching experiences as well
as the variety that is characteristic of triathlon's multi-sport culture. With a wide variety
of coaching experiences comes a wide variety of old NCCP certifications. The
participants of this study hold numerous NCCP certifications and confirm that Canada
has an established formal coaching certification program (Erickson et al., 2007).

Interestingly, studies within the youth and high school contexts have demonstrated that
coaches have the minimum NCCP certifications required to coach in that context and
they usually have certification with one sport (Lacroix et al., in press; Lemyre et al.,
2007; Wright et al., 2007). However, the participants of this study have multiple
certifications in multiple sports and these certifications are at a fairly high level in the old
NCCP (e.g., level 3). This is quite interesting considering that in the old NCCP, higher
NCCP course levels usually corresponded with level of competition. It is noteworthy that
the value of having NCCP certifications is mixed; some of the participants found value
holding the certifications, whereas others did not value it as much. This nuance could be
explained by the unique biographies of the participants which demonstrates that while
some may value the training received in formal learning situations, others found that it
had a relatively low impact on their actual coaching practice when compared to non-
formal or informal learning situations. This perception of formal coach education
coincides with past research which suggests that coaches' value some learning situations
more than others (Gilbert et al., 2006; Nelson et al., 2006; Werthner & Trudel, 2006).

Another characteristic revealed by the biographies of the participants is that they
are well educated. All of the full time coaches have at least an undergraduate degree in
physical education, which coincides with past research that suggests a prevalence of
undergraduate degrees in physical education with elite-development coaches (Erickson et
al., 2007; Trudel & Gilbert, 2006). It is noteworthy that two of the full time participants
have Master's of Science degrees in exercise physiology, which is particularly suited to
coaching an endurance-based sport, such as triathlon. In addition, six of the participants
have either graduated or are currently attending the NCI. Suffice it to say, that these
coaches are very well educated, more than many coaches. Research indicates that those
who are well educated have an increased capacity to learn on their own (Canadian
Council for Learning [CCL] 2007a; OECD, 2007b), and are better equipped to have the
required knowledge to understand more information on the Internet or other sources
outside of formal situations. For these reasons, the participants of the program are likely
better prepared to succeed within a lifelong learner perspective.

Apart from formal learning situations, the participants also identified conferences
and workshops as valuable opportunities to learn from keynote speakers and other
coaches, both inside and outside the sport of triathlon. Conferences and workshops
provided opportunities to meet and interact with these coaches, often in between the
conference sessions. In addition, some of the participants spoke about their interactions
with a PET. For instance, the participants acknowledged and valued the learning that resulted from the discussions and interactions with their PET, however some participants may have a problem with accessibility, due to the fact that not every coach had access to a PET. Though some research has indicated that a multidisciplinary PET can have a positive influence on athletic performance (Reid, Stewart, & Thorne, 2004), it is still unclear how the PET facilitates the learning of a coach; therefore further research is required to determine the important roles the members of a PET can play in helping a coach learn to practice triathlon.

Mentorship was another informal learning situation that many of the participants spoke about. Interestingly, several of the participants had mentors who were not traditionally ‘triathlon’ coaches, but coaches of triathlon’s sub-disciplines. This is likely due to the young nature of the sport of triathlon and possibly contributed to the lack of mentorship opportunities specifically within the sport. Nevertheless, the participants valued learning from mentor coaches; both inside and outside of the sport of triathlon and this coincides with past research that addresses the important roles mentor coaches could play in coach education (Cassidy & Rossi, 2006; Cushion et al., 2003; Trudel & Gilbert, 2006).

Although this was a small group of coaches, there was a sense of being part of a CoP. However, it is unlikely that this community of triathlon coaches can be classified as a true coaches’ community of practice (Culver & Trudel, 2008a, 2008b). There are some characteristics of this group of coaches that could classify them as an informal knowledge network, such as sharing an aligned vision within the social learning structure that is Triathlon Canada (Culver & Trudel, 2006). Yet, many of the participants also interact
with coaches inside and outside the sport of triathlon (such as a swim coach or cycling coach), which could classify them as a network of practice since they may not know each other personally and may communicate primarily through the Internet, such as through online forums (Culver & Trudel, 2006). It is likely that this group of triathlon coaches are somewhere in between a community of practice and an informal knowledge network. For instance, the distance inherent with coaching in Canada makes it difficult to have sustained engagement between coaches, yet the participants of the study seemed to have developed a nice system of interacting via conference calls and sometimes even over online forums and websites. This is unique because other studies have shown that coaches rarely use the Internet to interact or share information (Lemyre et al., 2007; Wright et al., 2007).

Learning from the workplace was also indicated as a resource for some of the participants, particularly those in the part time group. This may be explained by the fact that the full time coaches in this study are usually working alone where they do not have the advantage of working with other coaches and have to rely on personal agency to seek out learning opportunities (Rynne et al., 2006). In fact, this study demonstrated that it is the part time coaches who have taken advantage of training programs offered by their employers and found ways of transferring their occupational knowledge into their part time coaching practice. For instance, three of the part time coaches indicated that they intentionally took workshops or had participated in professional development opportunities organized by their employer because it could directly translate into their coaching practice. This initiative suggests self-direction and a strong desire for continuous learning because of their positive post secondary learning experiences that
have served to strengthen their identity as learners (Bloom & Salmela, 2000; Brooks &
Everett, 2008; Jarvis, 2007). Employers can also play a role in helping coaches develop
their coaching practice by being flexible, thereby reducing barriers to learning, such as
work – family schedules, lack of time, or money (CCL, 2007b).

Considering the biographies of the participants, are these coaches sufficiently
trained or, in other words, do they already have the knowledge/competencies to be
certified as a competition-development coach? Since the new program is situated within a
competency-based model, coaches practicing in the same coaching context can be
grouped together because they may have similar needs (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006). Yet, the
biographies of the participants demonstrated that while there are trends in their
characteristics (such as university degrees, athletic experiences, etc) each coach is unique,
therefore it is necessary to conduct further research in order “to begin to understand the
similarities and differences between coaches in a similar coaching context” (Werthner &
Trudel, 2006, p. 208). In addition, since each biography is unique, the question becomes
‘how can these unique biographies be assessed or recognized?’ It will likely involve an
acknowledgement by those in charge of coach education that coaches learn from many
different learning situations (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006) and participation in a short coach
education program could be referred to as an ‘episodic learning experience’ (Jarvis, 2007;
Trudel et al., in press). Triathlon Canada’s new program could be described as a series of
episodic learning experiences that culminate with an individual certified as a
competition-development coach in triathlon.
Research Question Three

The third research question aimed to address how Triathlon Canada’s competition-development program is conducive to lifelong learning? Based on the interview content with the coaches and evaluators, there were several areas where Triathlon Canada’s new program seemed to be particularly conducive to lifelong learning. The first is that individuals entering Triathlon Canada’s new program are expected to be experienced coaches. Such is the case with our participants, where the majority of coaches had a lot of coaching experience upon entering the new program and were involved with coaching athletes who were considered at the development and elite level. By already being experienced coaches, it could be stated that our participants have a significant amount of tacit knowledge, yet research has demonstrated that tacit knowledge is difficult to measure because people have difficulty expressing their everyday experiences (Abraham & Collins, 1998a; Nash & Collins, 2006). However, depending on the format, a portfolio, such as the one that needs to be submitted prior to beginning the new program, can be a way to translate tacit knowledge into declarative knowledge. In the case of some of our participants, they found that preparing their portfolio was not an easy task and that it made them reflect significantly about their coaching practice. Despite the difficulties some of the participants had preparing their portfolio, the process is still an useful way of helping them to retrace their learning pathway. Furthermore, within an information society, it is easier to stay up to date using portfolios and debriefing sessions than working on the basis of a curriculum developed for many coaches because standards change so quickly, that any information will quickly become outdated (Jarvis, 2007).
Another way that the new program seems to be conducive to lifelong learning is the debriefing session that is supposed to happen with the coaches once they begin their evaluation. The purpose of the debriefing session is to help coaches appreciate what they may know or can do and provides an opportunity to discuss whether the content of the portfolio is an accurate representation of the coach. The debriefing session that occurred between Tim and Conrad turned out to be an opportunity to assess knowledge, while encouraging learning (Abraham & Collins, 1998a, 1998b). Thus, the debrief or ‘learning conversation’ attempted to provide a personal and meaningful opportunity for real feedback regarding coaching practice, where both the evaluator and coach learned. One issue related to the debrief session was the likelihood of doing them in-person may not always be possible. This is likely the reality of living in an information society, though some advanced communication technologies such as video conferencing may hold the answers to this problem.

Due to the importance that both Tim and Conrad place on the ‘learning conversation’, it is important to note that the debrief does not become focused on fulfilling all of the evidences and criteria for the outcome (Torrance, 2007). Furthermore, since the new program is situated within a competency-based framework, it is reasonable to suggest that not all competencies will be demonstrated or observed during the ‘appointed’ time. Therefore, it is important for the participants to know that they may not have an opportunity to demonstrate all of the evidences and criteria during an evaluation. Similarly, evaluators may not be able to observe the same evidences and criteria during the ‘appointed’ time. Therefore, the debriefing session needs to be conducted from a humanist orientation, where a facilitator acts as a guide or facilitator, rather than from a
behaviorist orientation, focusing only on observable behavior (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007). By having an individualized approach, such as starting with each coach’s biography, the evaluation is personalized and perhaps most importantly, the next learning opportunities are discussed and agreed upon in a collaborative manner between the coach and evaluator. Given the important role of the evaluators in the new program, specifically during the debrief, it is necessary to comment on the competency of the evaluators. Trudel and Gilbert (2006) identify that “evaluators will have to be knowledgeable about the specific competences expected of coaches in each coaching context and about how to assess competences” (p. 530). Considering the personal biographies of both Tim and Matthew, it is reasonable to suggest that they both possess the right competencies to evaluate the participants in the program. However, further studies on the roles and competencies of evaluators are needed (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006).

Another topic to be aware of is that small sport federations, characterized by small numbers of coaches and experts, often have the flexibility to try different approaches, such as incorporating portfolios and debrief sessions into their programs. In the case of Triathlon Canada’s coaching program, it relies on a small number of individuals to lead the program and evaluate the participants. More often than not, these individuals are volunteers or are paid small honorariums to perform their duties. A consistent source of funding is necessary to provide salaried positions to individuals who can help lead and evaluate the program. In contrast, large sport federations, which are characterized with a large number of coaches and large number of experts to call upon, are often too large to have the individualized, coach centered program that distinguishes Triathlon Canada’s approach. Therefore, the possibility of using the same format as Triathlon Canada’s new
program with a larger sport federation (e.g., one with many coaches) seems unlikely. As we have seen in this study, the actual implementation of the new program is very slow. The danger of this situation is that if the qualification process is too slow and takes too long, than the likelihood of participants dropping out of the program becomes higher (OECD, 2007a). Further research is necessary to see whether Triathlon Canada’s new program is truly conducive to lifelong learning.

Research Question Four

The fourth research question attempts to find out which mechanisms should be implemented so that the coaches’ certification process promotes lifelong learning. While Tim did not design Triathlon Canada’s new program with the OECD (2007b) qualifications systems framework in mind, there were several elements in the program that seemed to be similar to the mechanisms that link qualifications systems to lifelong learning. Therefore, we would like to remind the readers of the 20 mechanisms identified by the OECD (see Table 2). Comments regarding several of the mechanisms will be discussed using examples from the results. Readers should also be aware that some mechanisms have been grouped together (regardless of numeric sequence) in order to comment about them collectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanism:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A structural change in a qualifications system and/or a change in the conditions of a qualifications system that results in a change in the extent, quality, distribution, and efficiency of lifelong learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Communicating returns to learning for qualification.
2. Recognizing skills for employability.
3. Establishing qualifications frameworks.
4. Increasing learner choice in qualifications.
5. Clarifying learning pathways.
6. Providing credit transfer.
7. Increasing flexibility in learning programs.
8. Creating new routes to qualifications.
9. Lowering cost of qualifications.
10. Recognizing non-formal and informal learning.
11. Monitoring the qualifications system.
12. Optimizing stakeholder involvement in the qualifications system.
13. Improving the needs analysis methods to that qualifications system are up-to-date.
15. Ensuring qualifications are portable.
16. Investing in pedagogical innovation.
17. Expressing qualifications as learning outcomes.
18. Improving co-ordination in the qualifications system.
20. Improving information and guidance about qualifications systems.


Recruiting the best possible talent is always an issue for many professions. For instance, teaching programs devote significant resources to recruit, train, and help individuals obtain teaching positions (Humphrey et al., 2008). However, within the sport context, we do not recruit individuals to train in order to occupy a certain position. In fact, most coaches are actively coaching and are then encouraged to seek further training, such as NCCP certifications (Lemyre et al., 2006; Wright et al., 2006). Due to the fact that most coaches at the recreational level are almost all volunteers and at the development and elite level there are many part time coaches, the concept of employability is difficult to imagine for coaches to invest time in further training (Trudel et al., in press). Furthermore, other research has shown in the professional league context, that some consider previous athletic experience as an important factor for employability, rather than coaching certifications and degrees (Cushion et al., 2003; Jones et al., 2003).
Returns to learning through coach education programs seems to be more related to self-satisfaction, than an increase in salary or a promotion, both of which have been identified as important incentives for registering for further professional development and learning (OECD, 2007b). Therefore, these three mechanisms do not seem to be found within the scope of this study or the Canadian coaches qualification framework.

**Mechanism 6. Providing credit transfer**

At the moment, there seems to be some indication that there is a beginning of credit transfer within coaching. For instance, some studies have demonstrated that participants with a degree in physical education might also be credited with certifications in level 1 or level 2 in the old NCCP (Lacroix et al., in press). However, a thorough search on the CAC website (coach.ca) does not display concrete rules on credit transfer policy. Furthermore, one might question how a few weekends of coach training can be considered the equivalent to a 3 or 4 year degree program in physical education. Due to the fact that the new NCCP is competency-based, even a person who is educated may not be ‘competent’ in the outcomes specified by the CAC. In addition, it could be suggested that those in charge of the NCCP are protecting their programs, or as underlined by Gilbert and Trudel (2004), universities are tending to adopt a theoretical approach to coaching, focusing less and less on the applied aspects of the field. Even in Triathlon Canada’s new program, considering the number of participants who have either attended or are currently enrolled in the NCI, there is no credit transfer, despite the fact that the coaches hold multiple certifications and/or degrees.
Mechanisms 3. Establishing a qualifications framework, 5. Clarifying learning pathways,
17. Expressing qualifications as learning outcomes

The new NCCP (see Figure 5, p. 25) has a clear qualifications framework with different curriculum based on the coaching stream and context in which an individual is involved. A coach can go from ‘trained’ to ‘master’ in each of the contexts and in some cases, have a career in any of these contexts. Furthermore, in the general guidelines given by the NCCP, there are seven specific outcomes that coaches need to be competent on. Depending on the sport and the context, these outcomes may change. For instance, Triathlon Canada’s new program has tailored these outcomes for coaches who are practicing in the competition-development context. However, this new format is too new to judge if it really works.


Triathlon Canada’s new program has two ways of recognizing non-formal and informal learning. The first is through the use of the portfolio and the second is through the debriefing session that follows the evaluation, where the coach’s needs for further learning and education are identified. However, the individualized approach needed to recognize the non-formal and informal learning will undoubtedly be costly, both in time and money. In the case of Conrad’s evaluation, the cost was mostly in terms of the time required by the two evaluators to meet and go over the evaluation. However, the issue of both time and money will become prominent for sport federations with a large number of coaches. Therefore, it is likely that Triathlon Canada’s approach to coach education will not be viable for competition-introduction. For some sports, the format of Triathlon
Competition-Development Program

1946 Canada’s new coach education program will be feasible for competition-development.
1947 However, it will likely be essential for individuals coaching in the competition-high performance context.
1949 *Mechanisms 10. Monitoring the qualification system, 12. Optimizing stakeholder involvement in the qualification system, and 20. Improving information and guidance about the qualification system*

1952 The CAC is in charge of implementing Canada’s coach certification programs through the new NCCP. The new program needs to be ‘sold’ to new coach participants and on the CAC’s website, they provide an opportunity to ‘walk through the program’ in the form of their online tool entitled: *Amanda: Your Online Coach* (coach.ca). This online context tool helps to provide information and guidance for new coaches about the new NCCP’s programs. In terms of optimizing stakeholder involvement, due to the fact that the CAC is focusing only on its own qualification framework, there does not seem to be a concerted effort to link with other stakeholders, such as educational institutions to increase the possibility of bridging the gap between their respective qualifications frameworks. Any agreements between the CAC and universities seem to be on an informal basis or non-existent. This could partly be explained by the fact that “[there] is a balance to be struck between tailoring provision to a range of learners and maintaining a system that looks and works in a coherent fashion” (OECD, 2007b, p. 102). More research is needed to help bridge the gap between the CAC and the educational institutions where future coaches may learn about coaching.

1967 Since many of the mechanisms are closely associated with each other, they have the ability to work in strategic combination and influence each other significantly
In fact, the OECD has identified several of these mechanisms because they can “support almost all the policy responses and support [them] strongly” (2007b, p.156) and they are displayed in Table 8 as ‘powerful mechanisms’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five highly ranked strong mechanisms</th>
<th>Three change mechanisms</th>
<th>Five highly ranked supporting mechanisms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing credit transfer</td>
<td>Establishing a qualifications framework</td>
<td>Monitoring the qualifications system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimizing stakeholder involvement in the qualifications system</td>
<td>Communicating returns to learning for qualifications</td>
<td>Establishing a qualifications framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing non-formal and informal learning</td>
<td>Investing in pedagogical innovation</td>
<td>Investing in pedagogical innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing a qualifications framework</td>
<td></td>
<td>Expressing qualifications as learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating new routes to qualifications</td>
<td></td>
<td>Improving information and guidance about qualifications system</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we take a look at the ‘powerful mechanisms’ identified by the OECD, how many of them are present within the Canadian coaches qualification framework? Based on our study, there are none to be found within the Canadian coaches qualification framework, though are some instances where the mechanisms are beginning to be used. For instance, two of the highly ranked strong mechanisms (3. Establishing a qualifications framework and 8. Creating new routes to qualifications) have been introduced in the form of the new NCCP, however many of these ‘new routes’ (e.g., competition-high performance) have yet to be implemented, therefore it is too early to make any specific conclusions about whether the new NCCP is conducive to lifelong learning. In addition to the two aforementioned mechanisms, a third mechanism (10. Recognizing non-formal and
informal learning) should receive additional consideration by those in charge of coach education. One reason is because research has demonstrated that coaches learn from a wide variety of learning situations and the second reason is that the OECD has identified this specific mechanism for further study (Werthner & Trudel, 2006; OECD, 2007b; Trudel et al., in press). That being said, it could be acknowledged that at the moment, there are not many mechanisms being used to bridge the gap that can help facilitate the lifelong learning of coaches in Canada.

General Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to document Triathlon Canada’s implementation of its new coach education training program in the competition-development context. Since the new NCCP and Triathlon Canada are at the beginning of the process of implementing the new coach education program, it is normal to find some problems with implementation. Due to the fact that the coaching process has been described as ‘idiosyncratic’ and ‘chaotic’ (Bowes & Jones, 2006; Werthner & Trudel, 2006), it is reasonable to suggest that no matter how much education or renewal of skills a coach does, job security is not always guaranteed. Conversely, by adopting a lifelong learner perspective, where learners and their biographies are at the heart learning process, there is an acknowledgement that the learners are responsible for their own learning and that coach education training programs are only a small part of how they may come to know and practice coaching (Jarvis, 2007; Trudel et al., in press). Based on the results thus far, it is too early to say conclusively whether or not the new program influences the lifelong learning of its participants. Brine (2006) argues that the majority of lifelong learning policy is targeted towards individuals who require basic vocational skills training and
who may not have recognizable qualifications. But this characterization does not fit with
the participants in the study, all of whom exhibit unique biographies with a variety of
educational, athletic, and coaching experiences. Furthermore, considering the small
number of participants in the program, the fact that they can be considered ‘elite-
development’ coaches, and that only one sport federation participated in the study, we
have to be careful how we interpret the results. Any findings from this study should help
us reflect on how the new NCCP can nurture lifelong learning and how it is possible to
make changes using a few mechanisms. Nevertheless, the initial results of the evaluation
with Conrad look promising in providing opportunities for further learning and
development in becoming more knowledgeable and competent at coaching triathlon
within the competition-development context. Furthermore, this study demonstrates that
future designers of coach education training programs need to consider not only the
context (Gilbert et al., 2006), but also the biography of the coaches (Trudel et al., in
press) and provides insight into the uniqueness of the triathlon coaches within the
competition-development context (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006).
Competition-Development Program

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assessment criteria and feedback in post-secondary education and training can come


Canada, November, 2006.

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Appendix A

Consent Form

Name of researcher: Pierre Trudel Ph.D.
Institution: Ottawa University, Faculty of Health Sciences, School of Human Kinetics.
Telephone number: 562-5800 (extension 4268)
E-mail address: pierre.trudel@uottawa.ca

I, __________________________, agree to participate in the research conducted by Dr. Pierre Trudel, professor in the School of Human Kinetics at the University of Ottawa and his colleagues. The purpose of the research is to study coaches' development in a lifelong learner perspective.

My participation will consist essentially of participating in two (2) tape-recorded telephone interviews. The first interview (lasting 45 minutes) will take place before my participation to a course offered by the NCCP and the second interview (30 minutes), one or two months after the course. I understand that the contents of the documents related to my participation will be used only for Dr. Pierre Trudel's research and that my confidentiality will be respected through the use of a number and the alteration of minor context details where necessary.

I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, refuse to participate or refuse to answer questions. If I withdraw from the study, the data collected from me until the time of withdrawal will be destroyed and will not be used. I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. Anonymity will be assured where possible through the use of numbers on all documentation including original transcripts. Tape recordings of interviews and other data collected will be stored at the University of Ottawa, in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office and will be kept for five (5) years. Regarding using quotes from my interview:

- I wish to be cited but I want a number to be used ______
- I wish not to be cited at all ______

I am aware that at the end of the second interview I will be asked if I want to participate to another phase of this project. If I accept, I will sign another consent form.

If I have any questions with regards to the ethical conduct of this research, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 159, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5, tel.: 613-562-5841, email: ethics@uottawa.ca. There are two copies of the consent form, one of which I may keep.

Research Participant: __________________________ Date: ______
Researcher: __________________________ Date: ______
1. Could you start with telling me about your academic background?

2. Can you elaborate on how your past research on practice and sport psychology has influenced how you have designed the coach education training program?

3. Can you elaborate on your perspectives on adult learning, situated learning, and some of your experiences in the NCCP?

4. Can you describe the process of matching the outcomes of NCCP to meeting the principles of the comp-dev coach education training program? You had described in previous interviews as ‘blending pedagogies’. Can you elaborate on that?

5. You had indicated that you strategically placed the outcomes in a certain order on the coaching map. Can you describe that process a bit?

6. What are your thoughts with the variety of portfolio’s submitted?

7. Do you feel that the Competition-High Performance context and Competition-Development contexts are distinct?

8. Do you feel that the education and training at the Competition-High Performance context and Competition-Development context will be different?

9. Considering where we are at the moment, what have you found as the most challenging aspect of this process with implementing the program so far?
Appendix C

Participant Interview Guide

Section 1 (Demographic Questions)

1. What is your current age?
2. Where do you currently reside?
3. How long have you currently been employed in your present position?
4. How long have you been coaching Triathlon?

Section 2 (Academic Profile)

1. Can you tell me about your previous academic background or training?
   a. Have you attended College?
      i. Which College?
      ii. What was the name of the program you participated in?
      iii. Did you take any sport / coaching related courses in College.
      iv. What was it like?
   b. Have you attended University?
      i. Which University?
      ii. What was the name of the degree you completed?
      iii. Did you take any sport / coaching related courses in University?
      iv. What was University like?
   c. Have you attended a diploma program? (For example, a National Coaching Institute?).
      i. Which program?
      ii. Did you take any sport / coaching related courses in this program?
      iii. What was it like?

2. Do you believe your previous academic experience has significantly informed or prepared your coaching practice?
   a. If yes, in what ways?

Section 3 (Previous Experiences in Sport)

1. What sports did you play as an athlete?
   a. For how many years?
   b. Was it competitive or recreational?
2. Have you coached any sports other than Triathlon?
a. If yes, what sports?

3. Was there a specific aspect of your previous experience in sport that influenced your decision to become involved in coaching?

4. Do you believe your previous athletic experience has significantly influenced your coaching practice?
   a. If yes, in what ways?

Section 4 (new National Coaching Certification Program - NCCP)

1. Have you ever taken an NCCP coaching course before?
   a. If yes, in what sports?
   b. What level(s) or context(s) have you completed?

2. What was your impression of the course?
   a. Was there an instructor?
      i. If yes, do you feel the material was presented well?
   b. Did you find the course content relevant or meaningful?
   c. Did the course influence your coaching practice?

3. Are you familiar with the new NCCP’s shift towards competency-based programs?
   a. If yes, can you elaborate?

4. Are you familiar with Triathlon Canada’s Coach Education Program?
   a. If yes, can you elaborate?

5. What expectations do you have for the training you will receive?

6. How do you feel this training program will influence or inform your coaching practice?

Section 5 (Professional Development)

1. Are there any specific professional development opportunities that you attend on regular basis? (For example, annual conferences, symposiums, etc).

2. Are you in contact with other coaches to share, exchange, or learn new information related to Triathlon?

3. What other learning situations do you frequently use?
   a. Are there any courses you wish to take to inform your coaching practice?
   b. Do you use the Internet or online resources for coaching?
2430  c. Do you keep a journal or training log?
2431  d. How far in advance do you set your own plans for practice?
2432
2433  4. From your experience, what do you consider the most meaningful type of
2434  professional development?
2435
2436
2437  Section 6 (Closing Questions)
2438
2439  1. Are there any other questions you feel are missing?
2440
2441  2. Would you like to clarify or re-visit any questions?
2442
2443  3. Would you like to add any comments?
2444
2445  Thank-you for your participation!
2446
2447
Appendix D

Interview Guide with Conrad

1. Generally, what has happened since our last interview and now?
   a. Did you attend any formal courses, conferences (sport – non-sport)
          continue to use online forums, etc.?

2. Regarding the comp-dev program, what have you done since the last time you and I spoke?

3. What was your impressions regarding the self-evaluation?
   a. Did you have any initial reactions to the self-evaluation?
   b. Where there any guidelines on how you did the self-evaluation?
   c. Did you have to go through every set of criteria?
   d. Did you find it helpful?
   e. [Summative versus formative evaluation].

4. What were your impressions of the evaluation process with the evaluators? [Was this more of an assessment or learning conversation?]

5. How were discrepancies between your self-evaluation and what the LF-E’s brought up taken care of?
   a. Was it that there was not enough material sent? Misunderstanding, etc?

6. Do you think the evaluation process could be changed or improved?

7. What do you know regarding your next steps for evaluation in the comp-dev program?

8. Do you have any final thoughts or comments?
Appendix E

Interview Guide for Tim (Evaluator)

1. Can you take me through the process of evaluations beginning with when you and the other LF-E met to discuss the portfolio?

2. Did you follow any guidelines regarding evaluating the portfolios?

3. How did you deal with discrepancies between the self-evaluation and your own perspective?

4. On the website, you went through every set of criteria for the Design a Sport program. Do you feel that this will be the case for the other 6 outcomes?

5. Now that you’ve gone through one of the outcomes of the Evaluation, is there anything you would change?

6. How was doing the evaluation difficult over the phone?

7. Is the participant aware that he may be a future evaluators?
   a. If so, did it change the evaluation process or how you interacted with him at all?

8. Do you feel that this first evaluation will be typical for the rest of the coaches?

9. What are your thoughts on how the evaluations are lining up with the philosophy and guiding principles of the program?

10. Any final thoughts or comments?
Appendix F

Interview Guide for Matthew (Evaluator)

1. What is your current age?
2. Where do you currently reside?
3. How long have you been employed in your present position?
4. Do you currently have any family commitments, such as a wife, children, common-law relationship, etc?
5. Are you a coach? Are you still actively coaching?
   a. Current NCCP certifications?
   b. Athletic experiences?
   c. Familiar with the shift in NCCP programming?
6. Can you tell me about your academic background?
7. How did you get involved with becoming a evaluator for Triathlon Canada’s new program?
   a. Were there any instructions on how to be a evaluator?
   b. Were the philosophy and principles of the program clear?
8. Were evaluations over the phone easy to do?
9. How did you deal with discrepancies between the self-evaluation and your own perspective?
10. Can you comment on your perspective on Triathlon Canada’s coaching website?
11. Is there anything that you would change or improve?
12. What are your next steps with the program as a evaluator?
13. Generally, what is your overall perspective of the program so far?
14. Any final thoughts or comments?
Appendix G

Design a Sport Program Evidences and Criteria

The Design a Sport Program outcome represents the first outcome to be evaluated and will be used to determine the candidate’s suitability to continue on to the second stage of Triathlon Canada’s NCCP Competition – Development Coaching Stream Evaluation Process.

Coaches will be asked to submit a comprehensive written document and professional portfolio in order to demonstrate their competence as it pertains to the related criteria and evidence for the Design a Sport Program outcome. This includes the following:

1. A detailed and comprehensive periodized plan that represents the periods, macrocycles, mesocycles and microcycles that are used for the program as well as a thorough description of the coaches use of, and interpretation of the energy systems.
2. A written document that outlines the coach’s operational definitions of the phases of training and explains why they have periodized their season in the manner chosen.
3. A written document that outlines the Long-term Athlete Development performance domains with a discussion of how this influences the structure and content of their plan is to be provided. In particular, the coach must demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the needs of the athletes that they are currently responsible for.
4. Materials that demonstrate the use of the ongoing monitoring of athlete’s performance data and how it is used to prescribe training must also be included.
5. Some important commentary regarding their coaching environment is necessary to assist evaluators in achieving an enhanced understanding of the nature of their coaching situation.

All written documents and related materials will be assessed by three qualified evaluators who will then determine whether the coach will be granted NCCP Trained (requires further education and training but is admitted to the Competition-Development Stream) or NCCP Certified (meets the standards for the outcome and requires no immediate education and training). Certified NCCP Design a Sport Program coaches will be allowed to participate in the second stage of the competition development stream evaluation process that involves an evaluation of the coach’s competence as it pertains to the training environment.

The related criteria and supporting evidence can be found on the following pages.
### Outcome: Design a Sport Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Below - Meets - Exceeds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Outlines program structure based on training and competition opportunities** | - Identifies competition schedule and number of competitions during the program, as well as other key events.  
- Identifies length of each period of the program and the relevant macro, meso and microcycles.  
- Determines if yearly program should be based on a single or multiple periodized approach and identifies and explains how phases are constructed along with the energy system / physical training implications for each.  
- Identifies number, duration, and frequency of training sessions in each period of the program. |  |
| **Identifies appropriate measures to promote athlete development within the program** | - Using data obtained from performance analyses in key performance areas, validates actual stage athletes are at relative to their development and performance potential.  
- Compares the ratio of training to competition opportunities within own program to the norms pertaining to long-term athlete development (LTAD).  
- Makes judgment on developmental potential of the athletes in the program in accordance with LTAD norms as a reference.  
- Identifies short-term strategies or measures to account for current realities  
- Determines if trends observed in own program are in context to that of other provincial / national programs as well.  
- Identifies systemic strategies or measures to offset critical program elements that show major inconsistencies in regards to the athletes' long-term development. |  |
| **Integrates yearly training priorities into the program** | - Correctly identify athletic abilities and training objectives (development-maintenance - consolidation) to be emphasized at specific points of the yearly program for individual athletes.  
- Training time is allocated within appropriately constructed microcycles.  
- Adjusts program to account for situational realities while remaining consistent with LTAD principles, growth and development principles, and principles of training.  
- Develops a sport-specific template for LTAD that is consistent with LTAD principles, growth and development principles, principles for training athletic abilities, and stages of athletic development. |  |
| **Organizes and sequences training priorities and objectives through the use of microcycles in order to optimize adaptation to training** | - Positions training sessions strategically relative to each other within the week in a manner that reflects factors such as anticipated fatigue levels, time necessary to recover from specific activities, training priorities, overall performance goals, and competitions scheduled in the short term.  
- Design weekly outlines and practice plan(s) that are purposeful and relevant.  
- Takes into account fatigue indices from previous weeks' training and competition activities to organize and sequence weekly training priorities and objectives.  
- If appropriate, alters the objectives of, duration of, and methods used in certain sessions to optimize adaptations; provides rationale for such decisions based on specific evidences gathered from observation and athlete monitoring. |  |
### Outcome: Design a Sport Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Below</th>
<th>Meets</th>
<th>Exceeds</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develops a peaking and tapering program in preparation for important competitions</td>
<td>• Provides a description of the competition/training activities preceding an important competition, and identifies how tapering and peaking principles are appropriately reflected (nature of activities; intensity; duration; recovery time; etc.).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identifies specific measures and strategies that will contribute to maximizing the athletes' potential for performance in areas such as: nutrition and hydration; adjustments to equipment; mental preparation; team cohesiveness; logistics; etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Designs a peaking and tapering program that reflects the needs and characteristics of each athlete.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Customizes programming decisions in the area peaking and tapering on the basis of evidences and analyses from previously implemented procedures.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Overall:**
Appendix H

Coach 1’s Evaluation Schematic

Outcome: Design a Sport Program

The Design a Sport Program outcome represents the first outcome to be evaluated and will be used to determine the candidate’s suitability to continue on to the second stage of Triathlon Canada’s NCCP Competition – Development Coaching Stream Evaluation Process.


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