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Robin Cloutier
AUTEUR DE LA THÈSE / AUTHOR OF THESIS

M.A. (Human Kinetics)
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FACULTÉ, ÉCOLE, DÉPARTEMENT / FACULTY, SCHOOL, DEPARTMENT

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TITRE DE LA THÈSE / TITLE OF THESIS

Penny Werthner
DIRECTEUR (DIRECTRICE) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS SUPERVISOR

CO-DIRECTEUR (CO-DIRECTRICE) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS CO-SUPERVISOR

EXAMINATEURS (EXAMINATRICES) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS EXAMINERS

Pierre Trudel

Terry Orlick

Gary W. Slater
Le Doyen de la Faculté des études supérieures et postdoctorales / Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

MENTORING AS PART OF A COACH CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

Robin A. Cloutier, B.Sc.

University of Ottawa

M.A. THESIS

School of Human Kinetics

University of Ottawa

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Abstract

Canada's National Coaching Certification Program has been undergoing a re-structuring, resulting in a coaching education program that will be based more on enabling coaches to develop various coaching competencies, rather than on simply the teaching or provision of information that the coaches may or may not actually be able to implement with their athletes. In the sport of alpine skiing, for a coach to become certified within this new program, he or she must also participate in a mentoring process, where the focus is on the on-going learning of coaches. The mentoring process involves being mentored by a more experienced coach and having this mentor sign off on particular tasks over the course of the season.

The purpose of the present study was to explore the learning process of two pairs of coaches in a formalized mentoring relationship within the context of a competitive alpine ski club, and to gain a better understanding of the interpersonal relationship between a coach and his or her mentor. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field notes, and a series of on-hill observations.

Findings from this study have indicated that (a) through the process of mentoring, coaches can become more reflective thinkers, (b) a clear separation of the mentoring process from the certification process is necessary, (c) the training session for the mentor evaluator coaches was a valuable learning opportunity, and (d) not only is mentoring a complex process with many facets but it also appears to be a personal dynamic and one mentoring relationship can be very different from another.

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Chapter I: Introduction

In the world of sport, coaches, as well as athletes, have often turned to those with more experience to seek advice, develop strategies and skills, and to engage in meaningful discussions about training and performance. It is becoming widely accepted that coaches learn not only from formal workshops, seminars, and classes but also from observing, listening, and talking with other coaches (Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinke & Salmela, 1998; Cushion, Armour & Jones, 2003; Lemyre, Trudel & Durand-Bush, 2007; Sage, 1989; Werthner & Trudel, 2006). Also, recent literature has indicated that mentoring plays a key role in learning to coach well (Bloom et al., 1998, Cassidy & Rossi, 2006; Werthner & Trudel, 2006) and that structured mentoring programs are sought after by developing coaches (Bloom et al., 1998).

Mentoring has been discussed extensively in the areas of education (Ayers & Griffin, 2005; Bowers & Eberhart, 1988; Griffin & Ayers, 2005; Hofmann & Feldlaufer, 1992; Pitney & Ehlers, 2004), management (Allen, Eby & Lentz, 2006; Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz & Lima, 2004; Allen & Eby, 2003; Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Ragins, Cotton & Miller, 2000) and, to a degree, sport (Bloom et al., 1998; Cassidy & Rossi, 2006; Nelson & Cushion, 2006; Werthner & Trudel, 2006), highlighting the benefits and potential advantages of formalized mentoring programs for developing teachers, career incumbents and coaches.

Literature in education has demonstrated that teachers who have been mentored have shown greater motivation, a more positive attitude toward their careers (Odell, 1990, as cited in Wright and Smith, 2000) and to experience a smoother transition into a teaching position (McCaughtry, Cothran, Kulinna, Martin, & Faust, 2005). Benefits of mentoring for new teachers also include helping them to develop an identity within their profession, receiving moral and social support, learning the values and standards of the field, and improving relevant

technical skills (Schweitzer, 1993). Also, those who act as mentors for new teachers have been shown to benefit by developing new relationships and new insights into their own teaching, and by experiencing a sense of renewal of enthusiasm and commitment toward the profession (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000).

In the corporate world, mentoring has been used as a way of providing career guidance to beginning professionals in large firms. For example, MTV, American Airlines, Bank of America, and Proctor and Gamble all have formal mentoring programs in order to attract and retain employees (Eby & Lockwood, 2005). Benefits for new professionals involved in mentoring programs include career planning (Eby & Lockwood, 2005), learning (Allen & Eby, 2003; Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Lankau & Scandura, 2002), skill development (Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Lankau & Scandura, 2002), and promotions and career satisfaction (Allen et al., 2004; Chao, Walz & Gardner, 1992). Clearly, mentoring programs for developing professionals warrant further investigation.

National Coaching Certification Program and Alpine Skiing

Canada's National Coaching Certification Program has been in place since 1974 and, at the time of this study, had been undergoing a re-structuring that would result in a program based more on enabling coaches to develop various coaching competencies, rather than on simply the teaching or provision of information that the coaches may or may not be able to apply. The new competency-based program will train and certify coaches based on their ability to do the things that are important to meet the needs of their particular participants (Coaching Association of Canada [CAC], 2006). To achieve this, the new coach education system will attempt to provide training that is relevant for participants within a particular context, whether it be recreation or high performance (CAC, 2006).

The Canadian Ski Coaches Federation (CSCF) has recently phased in this new competency-based approach to the education and professional development of its coaches. Within this system, there are four different pathways: entry level (EL), development level (DL), performance level (PL) and elite, and in each of the certification pathways, "there are three stages or statuses of progress recognition: trained, certified and certified advanced" (CSCF, 2006a, p. 2). Coaches are considered "trained" when they complete the training camps hosted by the CSCF. For example, at the entry level, there is a 3-day coach development course and, at the development level, there is a 5-day course. Coaches then become "certified" when they have completed all required evaluation activities to become a particular type of coach (CAC, 2006), and for ski coaches, this involves the successful completion of a mentoring program. A coach may then become "certified advanced" by completing various training modules such as the terrain park course and the course setting session (CSCF, 2006).

In the mentoring process, each coach is assigned a mentor for the season. For EL and DL coaches, this mentor is assigned internally within the ski club and can be someone who is certified as either a PL coach or an elite coach. For PL and elite coaches, the mentor is chosen by the individual coach and becomes the coach's Master Coach. The Master Coach may or may not be from the same ski club. At all levels, the mentor is then responsible for the development of the coach, and must sign off when particular tasks are completed. When the coach is ready to become certified (which is at the discretion of the mentor), an accredited mentor evaluator will formally assess the coach. The mentor evaluator can either be the coach's mentor, or any other accredited mentor evaluator certified at a higher level. The evaluation consists of observing and assessing the coach while he or she is coaching his or her athletes in a normal training environment and both the coach and the mentor receive feedback on the progress of the coach.

Within this new coaching education system, the focus is on the on-going learning of coaches and mentors rather than on the outcome of certifying the coach. In other words, this new competency based certification system is designed to help coaches not only learn specific skills but also to practice these skills. A major benefit of this new program within the CSCF system is that knowledge, skills and habits can now be shared with coaches at many levels. Importantly, this process has the potential to open up communication between coaches. In addition, while the coach being mentored is the specific individual learning and being evaluated, the mentor may also have an opportunity to learn. The evaluation process is designed to foster open communication between the coach, the mentor and the evaluator, with the main objective being for the coach to learn and be able to use that knowledge in his or her day to day coaching. The crucial issue for the CSCF is that they do an effective job of clearly separating out the mentoring process from the evaluation process. The process is in the early stages of development and it remains to be seen how it will work. One of the objectives of the present study was to observe and give feedback on this process.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to explore the learning process for two pairs of coaches in a formalized mentoring relationship within the context of a competitive alpine ski club, and to gain a better understanding of the interpersonal relationship between a coach and his or her mentor. Results from this research will contribute to the existing literature on ways that coaches learn as well as on the mentorship process for developing coaches.

Significance of the study

Some literature has shown that mentoring programs can be a valuable resource for developing professionals in education (McCaughtry et al., 2005; Pitney & Ehlers, 2004; Smith

& Ingersoll, 2004) as well as in the corporate world (Allen et al., 2006; Chao et al., 1992; Eby & Lockwood, 2005), but little attention has been paid to mentoring programs for coaches. This is not surprising since although many coaches often participate in informal mentoring relationships, formalized mentorships are only recently being considered and implemented. Recently, Trudel and Gilbert (2006) have questioned whether or not a "formalized and structured mentoring program, where mentors are selected, accredited and to a certain extent imposed on coaches, can be effective" (p. 532). By observing the process of mentor selection, accreditation and application, the present study is hopefully a first step in discovering an answer to this question. Furthermore, this study is significant to both mentoring and coaching research in that it will begin to fill some gaps in the existing literature in coaching and mentoring, as well as addressing various issues in current coaching education.

Allen and Eby (2003) have suggested that the next step for mentoring research would be to explore the advantages of mentoring for the mentor and to assess whether or not the time and effort that is required to act as a mentor is worth the rewards. More specifically, the authors have asked "what effects, if any, mentoring has on the mentor's own career" (p. 483) and what outcomes the mentor can expect from the relationship. This study has provided an opportunity to explore the outcomes and possible benefits of the mentoring process by collecting data through in-depth interviews with experienced coaches who act as mentors.

Trudel and Gilbert (2006) have recently initiated another relevant discussion topic pertaining to competency-based coach education models. With the new certification system for coaches in Canada, the evaluation of coaches is shifting from formal exams that measure 'what coaches know' to more real-life practical assessments that measure 'what coaches do'. In order for these practical evaluations to actually occur and be valid, the new structure must include a

group of evaluators, who are experts on the specific competencies that coaches need to demonstrate while working with their athletes. By observing and discussing the training process for these mentor evaluators and obtaining feedback from the participants, the present study will hopefully generate more discussion around this issue.

In an analysis of the literature on coaching science research from 1970 to 2001, Gilbert and Trudel (2004) found that coaching studies were typically conducted by quantitative means (79.7%), relying mostly on questionnaires (69.0%). Furthermore, only 4.4% of coaching studies in this time frame included qualitative observation as a method for data collection, and over half (50.7%) of all of the studies focused mainly on coaching behaviours, while only 33.4% focused on the career development of these coaches. Despite the rise of coaching literature within the last 5 years, there is clearly a need for the dissemination of studies which focus on the development and education of coaches and for which qualitative methods, including interviews and direct observation, are the primary means of data collection. Using qualitative methods to explore the development and learning process for four different coaches will allow this study to expand the boundaries of existing coaching literature.

The final issue that has been addressed in the current coaching literature is the research-training gap (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006). Not only is coaching research limited, but the literature that does exist seems to have little influence on the way that coaches are educated and certified (Lyle, 2002), perhaps because of the way the research is disseminated (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006). Coaching research is generally published in scientific journals and many coaches may not have access to these journals. By providing findings that pertain to a practical and current coaching context and by disseminating these findings directly to the National Coaching Certification

Program and to the governing body for Alpine Ski, this study will hopefully provide some guidance for future program development.

This study was among the first to explore mentoring within the context of coaching, and specifically, mentoring as part of a certification program for coaches. This study is also significant since it was guided by existing mentoring literature in teacher education and corporate management and will therefore expand on current coaching literature by incorporating what is already known about working mentorships in other fields. Finally, although only a starting point, it is hoped that the findings of this study will help to bridge the gap between mentoring research and coaching research by considering and including elements of both.

Chapter II: Review of Literature

The word *mentoring* comes from Homer's famous Greek tale of Odysseus (Dimock, 1989; Merriam, 1983), who left his young son to be raised by an old wise man named Mentor. Odysseus asked the old man to educate and nurture his son into adulthood while he left to fight in the Trojan War. Although the concept has evolved, mentoring fundamentally suggests that knowledge and wisdom are passed from a more experienced mentor to a lesser experienced protégé or, mentee.

Schweitzer (1993) defined *mentors* as "individuals who go out of their way to successfully help their protégés meet life goals" (p. 50); *protégés* as "individuals who have received special assistance from other persons (mentors) in reaching their life goals" (p. 50) and *mentoring* as the assistance given to a protégé by a mentor. Smith and Ingersoll (2004) describe mentorship as a positive relationship that enhances the lives of protégés. A review of the mentoring literature concludes that there exists no agreement for a universal definition of

mentoring (Wright & Smith, 2000) yet the terminology used in various definitions has many similarities. Healy and Welchert (1990) agree that no universal definition exists but define mentoring as "a dynamic, reciprocal relationship in a work environment between an advanced career incumbent (mentor) and a beginner (protégé) aimed at promoting the career development of both" (p. 17). Definitions for the term *mentor* seem to vary according to the research domain and by the context in which it is applied, but the literature agrees that mentoring occurs when there exists a trusting, mutually respectful relationship between mentor and protégé (Little, 1990). Within the domains of teaching and coaching, mentoring occurs when a coach or teacher invests an interest in the personal development of an individual such as a student, athlete or another coach; when the coach/teacher works toward fulfilling the needs of the individual and when the individual begins to imitate the behaviours of his or her coach/teacher (Bloom et al., 1998; Kochan & Trimble, 2000; Wright & Smith, 2000).

As previously mentioned, there exists a vast range of literature on mentoring from various fields including education, management and sport. Relevant mentoring literature from these fields will be discussed in the following sections in terms of mentorship antecedents, type and outcomes. Finally, some mentoring literature in the field of coaching will be reviewed followed by literature exploring the learning process for coaches.

Antecedents for Effective Mentorships

Recent studies from different fields have indicated important considerations when implementing a mentoring program. When creating mentoring relationships, it is important to consider both the factors that may contribute to the effectiveness of a mentorship, as well as potential problems that may arise. First, in considering potential issues, problems may arise in mentoring relationships when expectations are either unclear or incompatible (Eby &

McManus, 2004; Young & Perrewe, 2000). Problems may also arise due to differing work styles or personalities (Allen & Eby, 2003; Eby & Allen, 2002; Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Schweitzer, 1993), dependency (Ragins & Scandura, 1997), personal inadequacy as a mentor (Eby & Lockwood, 2005), scheduling difficulties (Eby & Lockwood, 2005), geographic distance (Allen et al., 2006; Eby & Lockwood, 2005) or performance below expectations, which could include inadequate progress on tasks (Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Eby & McManus, 2004).

In the area of teacher education, McCaughtry et al. (2005) argue that one of the keys to successful mentoring programs lies in the effectiveness of the mentor. The authors argue that effective mentors must possess adequate knowledge of curriculum as well as teaching strategies, have strong communication skills, and possess the ability to support, motivate and actively engage a protégé. Mentors who lack content or pedagogical knowledge may perceive themselves as less competent, which could affect their willingness and confidence to work with someone less experienced (Ayers & Griffin, 2005; Bloom et al., 1998; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000; Ragins et al., 2000). So it may be important to consider the aims of a mentoring program and the recruitment of mentors who possess "exactly the knowledge, skills, and competencies to assist the newer teacher with the specifics of the situation" (McCaughtry et al., 2005, p. 339).

In a study involving 13 athletic training students and 3 mentors, Pitney and Ehlers (2004) identified three major prerequisites for an effective mentoring relationship: accessibility, approachability, and protégé initiative. These prerequisites were identified as crucial aspects in initiating and ensuring the continuation of an effective mentoring relationship between two people. First, accessibility refers to the availability of a mentor, which is necessary in order for an effective mentoring relationship to form. In their study, students indicated through in-depth

interviews, that a potential mentor needs to be accessible in order for a relationship to form. For example, in a more recent study, Allen et al. (2006) hypothesized that protégés and mentors in a formal mentorship who are close geographically would report greater career and psychosocial mentoring as well as mentorship quality. Although there were no significant findings to directly support this hypothesis, it was found that proximity was correlated with the frequency of interaction between the individuals, which could suggest greater development of the interpersonal relationship, resulting in more psychosocial support. These results therefore suggest that while a potentially effective mentor may not necessarily be one who is geographically close, accessibility and opportunity for frequent interaction may be an important antecedent for an effective mentoring relationship.

The second prerequisite for effective mentoring, described in the study by Pitney and Ehlers (2004), is approachability. Approachability refers to the degree to which the student is comfortable in the mentorship, and depends on how respected the student feels by his or her mentor. Approachability can depend on factors such as the attitude and personality of the mentor. For example, if a mentor acts in a way that belittles the student or makes him or her feel intimidated or uncomfortable then the mentoring relationship may be negatively affected. Approachability can be enhanced by the type of interactions between the individuals and the type of feedback given by the mentor.

The final prerequisite for an effective mentorship from the study by Pitney and Ehlers (2004) is protégé initiative, which highlights the importance of recognizing that mentoring is not a one-way process. Protégé initiative refers to the amount of responsibility and accountability the student takes in order for the mentorship to work. Therefore the impetus for sharing knowledge falls on both individuals in the mentoring relationship, who must recognize

that in a complex profession such as teaching, everyone may need guidance, not just the new teacher (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000). Within the context of coaching, young coaches often convey new ideas and present different challenges, so being a part of a mentoring relationship allows both parties to reflect on their skills (Bloom et al., 1998) and may provide the mentor with new ideas and different ways of doing things. Results from Pitney and Ehlers' (2004) study suggest that in order for a mentoring relationship to develop, those being mentored must take some initiative by asking questions and communicating with their mentors.

Type of Mentorship

There is a wide range of research published on the outcomes and effects of formal and informal mentorships (Allen et al., 2006; Chao et al., 1992; Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Ragins & Cotton, 1999; Wright & Smith, 2000). Formal and informal mentorships differ primarily by the process by which they are formed (Chao et al., 1992; Eby & McManus, 2004; Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Ragins et al., 1999; Young & Perrewe, 2000). Informal mentorships often form spontaneously, develop based on common interests, goals and values, and strengthen due to compatible personalities and shared expectations. Alternatively, formal mentorships are formed and managed by an organization (Kram, 1985; Chao et al., 1992), result in a partnership where both parties are paired together by a third party (Younge & Perrewe, 2000), and where neither mentor nor the individual being mentored have necessarily met before the mentorship began (Ragins et al., 1999).

Another difference between formal and informal mentorships is the length and structure of the relationship. Informal mentorships are unstructured or loosely structured, in that the participants will meet "as often as desired or needed over the course of the relationship" (Ragins et al., 2000, p. 1179). Formal mentorships on the other hand, typically last from six

months to one year (Kram, 1985) and the frequency, length and location of contact or meetings may be decided upon beforehand either by one or both individuals or by a third party (Ragins et al., 2000). Also, formal mentoring programs often involve some level of orientation or training in order to prepare the mentor and/or the protégé (Eby & Lockwood, 2005).

Differences between formal and informal mentoring often include the purpose (Ragins et al., 2000), the degree of motivation (Chao et al., 1992), and goals of the program (Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Ragins et al., 2000). Informal mentorships form from the "desire on the part of the mentor to help the protégé and willingness on the part of the protégé to be open to advice and assistance from the mentor" (Chao et al., 1992, p. 621) and quite often the focus of these relationships is on helping the protégés achieve career goals (Ragins et al., 2000). In formal mentorships, however, the individuals may be obligated to participate as a function of their positions, and this could entail a great degree of pressure (Chao et al., 1992). Ragins et al. (2000) found that a strong relationship exists between the purpose of the mentoring program and attitudes toward the relationship. More specifically, and perhaps not surprisingly, it was found that when the purpose of the program was to promote the career of the protégé, the protégé reported a greater satisfaction and better perceptions than those in programs whose purpose it was to orient new employees. Formal mentorships may focus on short term career goals that apply only to the individual receiving the mentoring, which can affect the level of motivation and commitment on behalf of the mentor, since they may not see the potential benefits for themselves (Ragins et al., 2000). It is important also to note that "protégés may also have varied motives for participating in formal mentoring programs" (Eby & Lockwood, 2005, p. 444) and if a protégé is assigned to a mentor or participating in the mentorship because they

are recruited to, rather than choosing to participate on their own volition, they may not be interested in developing a strong and lasting mentoring relationship.

Recent empirical studies on outcomes of formal and informal mentoring have shown a wide range of results. In one of the first studies to examine the functions of informally, formally and non-mentored individuals, Chao et al., (1992) hypothesized that protégés in informal mentorships would report more psychosocial and career-related support than those in formal mentorships. They found that "protégés in informal mentorships reported significantly greater career-related support than did protégés in formal mentorships" (p. 627). Similarly, Fagenson-Eland, Marks, and Amendola (1997) found that informal protégés reported more psychosocial benefits than formal protégés and also reported more frequent communication, which suggests that when assigning mentors with protégés, organizations may want to consider setting guidelines on the amount and frequency of interaction.

In a study examining the effects of mentorship type on mentoring functions and outcomes, Ragins and Cotton (1999) surveyed 1162 participants involved in a mentoring relationship in journalism, engineering and social work. Findings from this study were consistent with previous studies on types of mentorships. First, protégés in informal mentoring relationships reported greater psychosocial support including friendship, social support, role modeling and acceptance than those in formal mentoring relationships. Also, protégés in informal relationships reported greater career development support including sponsoring, coaching, protection and exposure. Finally, protégés with informal mentors reported greater satisfaction with their mentors than those with formal mentors. This is perhaps not surprising, since in informal mentoring relationships, protégés chose their own mentors.

An interesting finding from a study by Ragins et al. (2000) was that the degree of satisfaction with the mentorship accounted for more of the variances in work attitudes than the type of relationship (formal or informal). In other words, the attitudes that participants had toward their work had more to do with their satisfaction with the mentoring relationship, than whether it was formal or informal. Also, individuals who felt they were in satisfying mentoring relationships reported more positive attitudes than those not involved in a mentorship at all. However, individuals in an unsatisfying relationship reported attitudes equivalent with those not in a mentoring relationship. Several of these studies seem to conclude that despite many benefits to informal mentoring, participating in a satisfying formal mentorship may be much better than participating in an unsatisfying informal relationship.

Rather than viewing mentorship as a process that is marked with positive and negative experiences over time, as suggested by Eby and McManus (2005), Ragins et al. (2000) suggest that mentorship instead falls on a continuum, where the relationships can be highly satisfying (functional), marginally satisfying, dissatisfying, or truly dysfunctional. Highly satisfying mentorships are rare, as are dysfunctional relationships, since they can be quickly terminated, which leaves a substantial proportion of mentoring relationships as "marginal" (Ragins et al., 2000). In their study, Ragins et al. (2000) found that positive work and career attitudes that were associated with the presence of a mentor "occurred primarily when the relationship was highly satisfying" (p.1187) and that positive attitudes did not occur when the mentoring was marginal. These findings indicate that the idea that informal mentoring will provide more benefits than formal mentoring is too simplistic. Instead, a key component to an effective mentorship seems to lie in the level of satisfaction.

Other recent studies have also shown that although there is exhaustive discussion on formal versus informal mentorship in the literature, an individual's level of satisfaction with the mentorship seems to be far more relevant in terms of outcomes and benefits than the type of mentorship (Allen & Eby, 2003; Ragins et al., 2000). In other words, it appears that mentorships that are of high quality "can emerge regardless of how the mentorship was initially formed" (Allen & Eby, 2003, p. 481)

Outcomes of Mentorship

Outcomes for individuals participating in mentorships are discussed extensively in the literature and fit into the two basic categories of mentoring functions. The first, which has been referred to as "interpersonal foundations" (Pitney & Ehlers, 2004), "psychosocial mentoring" (Allen et al., 2004; Fagenson-Eland et al., 1997; Ragins & Cotton, 1999) or "psychosocial support" (Kram, 1983, Young & Perrewe, 2000) deals with the personal relationship between an individual and his or her mentor, including factors such as trust, communication, respect, values, role modeling, friendship and counseling. The second category has been referred to as "educational dimensions" (Pitney & Ehlers, 2004), "career-related support" (Kram, 1983), "career-related mentoring" (Chao et al., 1992; Ragins & Cotton, 1999) or "career-mentoring" (Allen et al., 2004). This category deals with the initiation and progress of the individual being mentored within his or her profession. Career-related support involves aspects such as exposure, visibility, sponsorship, opportunity, networking, resources, and of course, learning.

In a recent study, Eby and Lockwood (2005) reported learning as the most common benefit of protégés and mentors participating in formal mentoring programs. In their study, in-depth interviews were conducted with 24 mentors and 39 protégés involved in a formal mentoring program in a community-based healthcare organization. Individuals who were

mentored reported benefits such as career planning, where protégés discussed long term and short term career goals with their mentors, coaching, psychosocial support, networking opportunities, work role clarification, enhanced job performance and feelings of pride. Individuals who were mentors reported benefits such as developing personal relationships with their protégés, personal gratification, enhanced managerial skills and self-reflection. Self–reflection refers to the fact that mentoring another person would allow the mentor to reflect on his or her own career and to consider his or her strengths and weaknesses. Interestingly, the most commonly reported benefit for both protégés as well as mentors was learning. Learning was described in terms of better understanding various aspects of the job and "obtaining different perspectives on work-related problems" (p.447).

In a similar study, Lankau and Scandura (2002) also reported learning as a benefit for participants of a mentoring program in a healthcare organization. In this study, 440 surveys were filled out by healthcare professionals and 232 (52.7%) indicated that they had mentors in the organization. Individuals who had mentors reported significantly greater relational job learning than those without mentors. Also, individuals whose mentors acted as role models experienced greater skill development than those without mentors, suggesting that it may be beneficial for individuals to have the opportunity to observe and imitate the behaviours of more experienced professionals.

In the area of teaching, studies have shown that individuals who take on a mentoring role also experience many benefits such as developing a sense of renewal in their teaching, becoming more reflective of their own actions and behaviours, and experiencing a sense of satisfaction both for themselves within their profession as well as because they were making a difference to a protégé (Wright & Smith, 2000). Similarly, Bloom et al. (1998) found that

expert coaches were honoured to serve as mentors, providing younger coaches with valuable information and helping them form a social support network. Expert coaches expressed the value of their role in assisting protégés in developing the effective skills and strategies necessary to improve their coaching styles, and the idea that acting as a mentor is "an ideal way to give something back to the profession from which they chose to make their living" (p. 277).

However, the importance of mentoring goes far beyond the impact on the personal development of the protégé and the mentor. Hargreaves and Fullan (2000) provide a big-picture view of mentoring within the education domain and argue that the key to successful programs lies in the realization that they must be integrated with other developments in policy and practice to transform the entire profession of teaching. For mentoring to be effective, it must be seen as a way of preparing professionals to be committed to making a difference in the lives of young people, by growing into knowledgeable and skilled educators. Most importantly, mentoring programs in education must be seen as tools for re-culturing the entire school system (Griffin & Ayers, 2005; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000; Wright & Smith, 2000). They must be seen not only as a means of supporting individual teachers but also a way to "help build strong professional cultures of teaching in our schools, dedicated to improving teaching, learning, and caring" (Hargreaves & Fullan, p. 54).

Similarly, Griffin and Ayers (2005) discuss the mentoring process in the educational system as a way of thinking about the overall long-term support of teachers within the "increasing demands and changing climate of education" (p. 267). This presents an important way of thinking about the overall impact of a successful mentorship program and how the success of one working relationship between two people has the potential to create something much more significant within its domain. When the focus of mentoring shifts from the

relationship between the individuals involved to a more holistic understanding of its impact on the larger system, we can begin to understand what makes mentoring programs successful and how to obtain the greatest benefits from them. Hargreaves and Fullan (2000) suggest that future views of mentoring will move from being an activity performed in pairs to becoming an integral part of the professional culture, and that future perspective of mentoring will move from "hierarchical dispensations of wisdom to shared inquiries into practice" (p. 55). So, in the context of sport, we might consider that mentoring programs be seen as a way to develop professional practice in the entire sport body and implement a system whereby coaches share new knowledge and refine old techniques, with the overall goal of improving both coaching skills and athletic performance.

Mentoring in Coaching

Through open ended interviews with expert coaches, Bloom et al. (1998) reported that mentoring was deliberately discussed by most of the coaches. The fact that these coaches openly brought up the topic of mentoring highlights the significant role that the mentoring experience played in their development as expert coaches. Results showed that those who had become expert coaches had been mentored in the early stages of their careers and that they felt this process had allowed them practical experiences that could not be acquired in a formal, mediated learning environment. Similarly, in a study with American expert coaches, Gould, Gianinni, Krane, and Hodge (1990) found that coaches sought formal learning sources other than classroom situations or manuals, and that formalized mentoring would be a beneficial addition to any coaching education program. More attention has been paid to mentoring in coaching education recently and it is recognized that coach education programs should facilitate conditions where coaches participate in a community of practice with the support of one or

more mentors (Cassidy & Rossi, 2006). Therefore it is recommended that mentoring programs for sport coaches become "formalized and made available to a greater number of developing coaches" (Bloom et al., 1998, p. 279).

Some mentoring programs that have been introduced within the Coaching Association of Canada include the Online Mentor Program, and the Women in Sport National Team Coaching Apprenticeship Program (CAC, 2001). The Women in Sport National Team Coaching Apprenticeship Program pairs inexperienced female coaches with mentor coaches to pursue a two year learning plan in collaboration with the CAC. This type of mentoring program allows a less-experienced female coach to work with the mentor coach to gain real-life experience in the work-environment (Culver, 2004).

Hockey Canada has also provided opportunities for coaches, which they describe as mentoring (Culver, 2004). The 'Learn from the Best', an on-line e-mentoring series (Hockey Canada, 2003) is a series of presentations and workbooks by expert coaches, although there is no face-to-face interaction between the expert coach and the new coaches. This program allows coaches to post questions to be answered by more experienced coaches, but it is suggested that this form of advice-giving does not qualify as mentoring (Culver, 2004). As the literature suggests, effective mentoring programs must be a part of existing coach development programs and include building a relationship between the mentor and the individual being mentored.

The competency-based approach of the National Coaching Certification Program will place new demands on sport organizations to provide different learning opportunities that allow coaches to develop and refine new skills in the field. Mentoring in coaching has traditionally been seen as simply a way to pass knowledge from one coach to another but the goal of a mentorship program for coaches should be to foster exploration and inquiry for all coaches in

the program (Gilbert & Trudel, 2006). However, whether the National Coaching Certification Program will be able to achieve a new way of doing things, where coaches work together to practice skills and share knowledge remains to be seen. It takes time to implement changes in a program that has been established for over thirty years.

Learning Process for Coaches

In order to fully understand the mentoring process as an element of coach development, it is also helpful to establish an understanding of learning in general, and more specifically how coaches learn. Moon's (2004) generic view of learning will be used as a frame of reference to discuss how coaches learn within the mentor-coach relationship.

Reflection plays an important role in the learning process, as it has much to do with the approach that the learner takes. In other words, when "there is reflection, there is a deep approach to learning and vice versa" (Moon, 2004, p. 100). So, if a learner simply observes a mentor and imitates the behaviours, little reflection is perhaps involved. On the other hand, when a learner begins to create meaning from what he or she has observed, then reflective thinking is part of that process. Moon (2004) defines reflection as a "process of re-organizing knowledge and emotional orientations in order to achieve further insights" (p. 82). Within the process of mentoring, the individual being mentored may, in the beginning of the process, observe and simply replicate some of the actions and behaviours of the mentor. Within an effective mentoring process, which would include time spent together, as well as reflection, the protégé might grow and act in ways different from the mentor. Indeed, it might also mean that with dialogue and reflection by both the individual being mentored and the mentor, there is learning and changed behaviour for both individuals.

The mentoring process, especially in coaching, may involve the transfer of knowledge and understanding from one sport context to another and the more different the context of the learning situation to the context of use, the more additional learning is required for transfer (Moon, 2004). Moon (1999) makes several recommendations to improve the integration from learning into practice, including awareness of current practice in the workplace, clarification of new learning and how it relates to current practice, imagining how the new learning will improve the current practice, and most importantly, establishing a supportive climate in the new practice context.

Similarly, Cushion (2006) recommends that the mentor provide guidance in acquiring new and relevant resources, assist the protégé in the development and delivery of coaching strategies, and guide the protégé's coaching while providing feedback within a supportive environment. Learning can certainly be enhanced by a supportive climate (Moon, 2004), where a new coach can transfer knowledge gained through the mentoring experience to improve his or her own coaching.

Reflection and experience are the basis for and the stimuli of all learning (Moon, 2004). Information can be absorbed and regurgitated, but how much actual learning occurs would be debatable. Learning requires thought and thought involves reshaping existing ideas while creating new meanings. An effective mentoring process is not meant to be one where information is simply passed from one to another, rather, it is considered effective and successful when both parties invest time and thought with the intention of learning. The mentoring process is intended to be different from formal learning situations such as a classroom setting, in that both mentor and protégé will hopefully be learning in a number of differing situations, such as engaging in a dialogue about an earlier coaching incident, or

observing a training session or a competitive situation and having a dialogue about what is going on. Bloom et al. (1998) have suggested that future research in coaching should explore successful mentoring relationships in detail by collecting qualitative data from both mentors and protégés to find a way to create an environment conducive to reflection, sharing, and learning, without leaving the experienced coach vulnerable to exposing his or her secrets or perfected techniques.

Chapter III: Methods

The purpose of this study was to obtain an in-depth understanding of the mentoring process of coaches within a competitive alpine ski club. According to Thomas and Nelson (2001), qualitative research involves observation in a natural setting, keeping a detailed record of events within that setting and the interpretation and analysis of data. The most important feature of qualitative research is that the emphasis is on interpretation rather than on procedure and it is the interpretation of the data by the researcher which develops the hypotheses and the theory (Thomas & Nelson, 2001). Furthermore, qualitative methods are important in social research, as such methods ensure flexibility throughout the research process to allow for the discovery and interpretation of unexpected and unpredictable data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

The two methods that were used for this study were responsive interviewing (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) and direct observation. Rubin and Rubin (2005) describe responsive interviewing as relying heavily "on the interpretive constructionist philosophy, mixed with a bit of critical theory and then shaped by the practical needs of doing interviews" (p. 30). The goal of responsive interviewing is to "generate depth of understanding, rather than breadth" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 30). The purpose of the interviews in this study was to gain a deep understanding of the working relationship between the coaches and their mentors, and of the

complex dynamics of the mentoring process, including elements that worked well and elements that did not.

Research Design

Guba and Lincoln (1994) describe research paradigms as a set of basic beliefs, representing a view that defines for the reader or consumer the nature of the world that is studied. Four paradigms are described by Guba and Lincoln (1994) including positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, and constructivism, which are identified based on their beliefs and positions in terms of ontology, epistemology and methodology. Most pertinent to this study is the constructivist paradigm, which will be discussed in relation to social research with a qualitative methodology.

The purpose of inquiry with a constructivist paradigm is to understand and to reconstruct meanings that already exist, "aiming toward consensus but still open to new interpretations as information and sophistication improve" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.113). According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), the ontology of constructivism is relativist and the epistemology is subjective, where realities are intelligible, socially and experientially based, as well as contextual in nature. When qualitative research is carried out within this paradigm, reality is literally created through the data collection and analysis processes and evolves as the research proceeds. More specifically, reality is constructed through the interaction of the investigator with the respondents, through a social process of research. This research paradigm often requires a great deal of content analysis in order to extract meaning from the process itself. In terms of the present study, there were no preconceived ideas at the beginning of the research process and no hypotheses to test. Instead, specific concepts began to emerge over the course of

the season, and the realities of the mentoring relationships began to form through the data collection process.

In a constructivist paradigm, the methodology of the study is rational and logical, where findings are developed and refined through personal interactions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) such as informal discussions, formal interviews and observations. Methods in this type of research may include direct observation by the researcher, with some level of participation in the context which is being observed. Although the researcher in the present study was not directly involved as a participant in either ski coaching or mentoring, there was inevitably some level of participation within the context of the study. In other words, the researcher participated to a level that allowed for detailed and accurate data but at the same time remained outside of the actual mentoring relationships. This type of participant observation would classify the research design of the present study as ethnography. Ethnography is a method used to investigate and illustrate particular cultures or communities, and the practices, beliefs and behaviours that occur within them (Creswell, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). An ethnographic approach allows for an understanding of a culture from an insider and/or outsider perspective (Creswell, 1994), often using detailed field notes and relying on 'participant observation' (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994).

Atkinson and Hammersley (1994) outline certain features that classify a study as ethnographical. First, the emphasis of the study is on the exploration of a social phenomenon, rather than testing a hypothesis. Second, the study works with data that are unstructured and that involve significant interpretation of the meanings of human interactions and behaviours. Finally, the study involves a detailed investigation of either just one, or a very small number of cases. An ethnographical method can take one of four perspectives: complete observer,

observer as participant, participant as observer, and complete participant (Junker, 1960). Variations of these perspectives depend on variables such as how much is known about the research and by whom, whether or not the researcher is known by those being studied, which activities and to what extent does the researcher participate in, and whether the researcher's orientation is that of insider or outsider (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994). For the present study, the researcher took an 'observer as participant' perspective, observing actions, behaviours and dialogue during training sessions, without being fully involved as a participant.

Participants

Participants for the study were 4 coaches, selected through purposive sampling, who worked within a competitive alpine ski club during the 2006-2007 season. In qualitative research, purposive sampling, rather than random sampling, is often used in order to select groups or individuals relevant to the processes being studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The purpose of the selection process in the present study was to find coaches at various levels who would be participating in a mentorship. These 4 participants were selected since they represented the four different certification streams for coaches in a competitive alpine ski club and a wide range of backgrounds and levels of experience.

Although gender differences have received attention in both coaching literature (Abney, 1991) and mentoring literature (Allen & Eby, 2003; Noe, 1988; Ragins & Cotton, 1999), for the purpose of this study and for participant confidentiality, all participants in this study are referred to as male. Also for the purpose of anonymity, no names are used and instead the 4 coaches are referred to according to their level: Elite, PL, DL and EL. The following table represents an overview of the 4 different participants.

Table 1
Brief overview of participant demographics

Participant	Title	Certification	Years coaching prior to study	Mentoring relationship
Elite level coach (elite)	Program director	NCI level 4 candidate	18	Mentor for DL
Performance level coach (PL)	Head coach, K2	NCI level 4 candidate	10	Mentor for EL
Development level coach (DL)	Head coach, I2	DL trained	9	Mentored by Elite
Entry level coach (EL)	Assistant coach, K2	EL trained	0	Mentored by PL

Elite Level Coach (Elite)

The first participant was an elite level coach. He began coaching at 20 years of age and had been coaching for about 18 years. He has worked with American, Canadian and European athletes, from entry level to elite level. This participant has a kinesiology degree and is currently a level 4 National Coaching Institute (NCI) candidate. At the time of the study, he was the program director for an alpine ski club with a staff of about 45 coaches. This was his first season at this particular ski club and he was a mentor for 14 coaches at the entry and development levels. This participant is accredited as a "mentor evaluator" and attended both training sessions in the fall of 2006.

Performance Level Coach (PL)

The second participant in this study was a performance level coach. He began coaching at 15 years of age and had been coaching for about 10 years. He has coached various teams including the Canadian national team, the world cup team and junior national team. This participant has a bachelor of science as well as an M.A. in human kinetics and is also currently an NCI level 4 candidate. He has coached athletes at all levels, from entry level to elite and

during this study was the head coach for the K2 group. The K2 group is a competitive group of athletes aged 13 to 15, with a staff of three assistant coaches and one head coach. This participant is also a certified "mentor evaluator" and attended the first mentor evaluator training session in the fall of 2006.

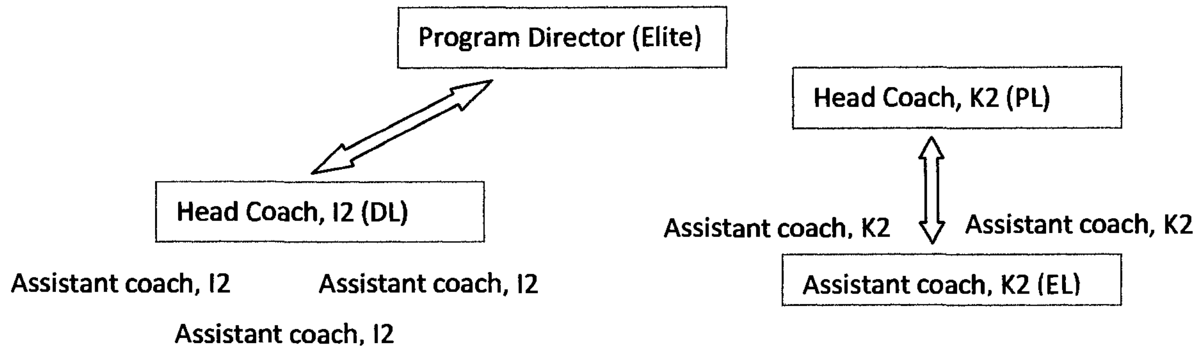
Development Level Coach (DL)

This participant started coaching at 17 years of age and had been coaching for nine years, with athletes of various levels and age groups, from 6 year olds to 19 year olds. He has a degree in mathematics and has a professional career in the high tech sector. This participant completed his level 1 coaching certification when he was 17, became DL trained a year prior to this study by attending the 5-day development level training course and during the study was working to become certified as a DL coach. For the duration of this study, he was being mentored by the Elite level coach in order to work toward certification status. Also, he was the head coach of the I2 group at the ski club, which is a group of 9 to 10 year olds and worked with three other coaches in this group. This participant is also a certified "mentor evaluator" and attended the second training session in the fall of 2006.

Entry Level Coach (EL)

The final participant was an entry level coach, with no coaching experience prior to this study. He competed in racing at a high level until he was 17 years old and then quit racing to begin coaching. He became EL trained at the beginning of the 2006-2007 season and during this study, was working toward EL certified status. He was an assistant coach with the K2 group, and was being mentored by the PL coach. The following figure provides a picture of the structure of the mentoring relationships in this study.

Figure 1
Coaching structure of the participants: The arrows represent the relevant mentoring relationships



Data collection

The research was conducted in four phases. The first phase occurred in the fall, when the researcher attended the training session for 'mentor evaluators', hosted by the Canadian Ski Coaches Federation (CSCF). The second phase was an initial interview with each of the 4 coaches. The third phase consisted of six on-hill observations, and the fourth phase was another series of interviews with each of the coaches. These phases will be described in detail in the following section.

The first phase of data collection was the mentor evaluator training. The objectives of this training were (a) to help create effective mentor-coach relationships for learning and (b) to accredit evaluators for CSCF Entry and Development Level in- field coaching evaluation for certification purposes (CSCF, 2007). Three of the participants in this study as well as the researcher attended the mentor evaluator training before the beginning of the season. One of the participants attended the first session and the other two, with the researcher, attended the second one. The one participant in this study who did not attend the mentor evaluator training was the entry level coach. As an EL coach with no prior coaching experience or credentials, he was not eligible to be a mentor evaluator.

The course that the researcher attended was held at the ski club, was facilitated by a 'Master Mentor Evaluator Trainer', and provided an opportunity to explain the new coaching development model to a group of ski coaches. The new competency-based model of coaching development was laid out and clarified for these coaches. It was explained that this new approach would reward and recognize coaching experience rather than academic or theoretical knowledge. During this course, the facilitator went over the Husky Snow Stars program, which acts as a guide for teaching technical skills to young skiers and then discussed the evaluation process for EL and DL coaches.

The mentors were instructed to conduct two formal observation sessions over the course of the season. The first observation session was intended as an assessment or a practice evaluation and could be done part way through the season. The final evaluation would then be done at the end of the season when the coach felt ready to become certified. This evaluation could be done by another mentor evaluator. At the training course, mentor evaluators were given a specific list of expectations that the developing coach must meet and during both the assessment and evaluation, they were to use this as a guide to evaluate the coach and to provide him or her with feedback.

The second phase of data collection consisted of an in-depth interview with each of the participants, which provided a rich source of qualitative data. These interviews helped to understand each coach's background and skills, as well as their current understanding of the mentoring process. These initial interviews took place approximately 1 month into the season. Two of the interviews were done in a quiet office at the University, where the participants were comfortable and where background noise and distractions were minimized. The other two interviews were conducted at the ski hill, in a private office inside the instructors' and coaches'

lodge. These initial interviews provided the coaches with an opportunity to discuss their coaching experiences and to comment on their current relationship with their mentorship partner.

Phase three consisted of a series of observations of the mentoring process in practice, both on the hill and off. For 6 days, spread out over the course of 2 months, the researcher went to the ski hill and observed the coaches in the field. This involved following them around on the hill as they conducted their normal training sessions, and making note of the types and quantities of interactions between the coach being mentored and his mentor. These observation periods also involved riding the chairlift with the coaches and making note of any relevant dialogue, as well as listening to any discussions that occurred in the lodge between the coaches. During these observation days, the researcher did not write many notes while on the hill next to the participants, partly because of practicality and partly to avoid creating any discomfort for the coaches, their colleagues, or their athletes. Immediately after getting inside either the car or the lodge, the researcher would then write notes about what was seen and heard while on the hill, as well as any key points from that day. The observations and the field notes helped to add meaning and depth to the data, by allowing for the researcher to gain a better understanding of the type of working relationship that existed between the coaches and their mentors. Also, these observation sessions helped the researcher to build a rapport with the participants, which helped guide the second interview.

The final phase of the study involved conducting a second interview with each of the coaches to ask about their experiences of either mentoring or being mentored over the course of the season, as well as their reflections on specific aspects of the mentoring process. Similar to the first phase of interviews, two of these interviews were conducted in a quiet, private office at

the University and the other two were conducted in a private home, where the coaches were comfortable and free to disclose any information about their mentoring experiences and mentoring relationships.

Data analysis

Interviews were recorded with a mini disc recorder and transcribed verbatim, except for the second interview with the EL coach, which did not record. In this case, information was collected through notes taken during the interview as well as follow up questions for clarification. Interviews were then analyzed by two researchers in order to extract relevant themes about the nature of the mentoring process. The field notes collected by the researcher contributed to the various themes that emerged from the interview data and provided additional insight.

Trustworthiness

Data that is obtained through in-depth interviews must be routinely checked for credibility and internal reliability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility can be assured through a process of transparency (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). This means that the reader of the research can know the process through which the qualitative data was collected and analyzed and can assess the design of the research as well as the "conscientiousness, sensitivity, and biases of the researcher" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 76). Credibility of qualitative research is ensured when the researcher keeps current, detailed and accurate records throughout the entire process (Thomas & Nelson, 2001). In qualitative research, it is the honesty, believability, expertise, and integrity of the researcher that assures that the data is trustworthy (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Credibility in the present study was ensured through verbatim transcriptions of the interviews,

detailed field notes, as well as checking with each of the coaches for accuracy of the interview transcriptions and following up on any points of clarification.

Limitations

The first limitation of this study, which had an effect on the data collection process, was the length of the season. The season really began around the end of December, with not much snow through the first part of January. The logistics of getting the research study started resulted in the data collection not beginning until near the end of January. In the middle of March, the snow was gone and the season was over. This left about 2 months to complete data collection. For the most part, the coaches were only working together on weekends, and with the EL and PL coaches travelling to competitions for most of February, the main limitation was the actual number of days when data could be collected.

A second limitation was related to the on-hill observations. The researcher was looking for times when the coaches would be interacting with their mentors, and because of the nature of the sport of alpine skiing, this did not happen very often in any one training session. Even when two coaches were working together with the same age group, they could be on opposite ends of the run, one could be on the chairlift, or they could be on different runs altogether. The chance of catching and observing the two mentorship partners actually communicating on the hill was difficult. With the elite and DL coaches, there were several occasions when they did meet on the hill, but this was mainly because it was scheduled, pre-arranged time with the researcher. It happened only once with the EL and PL coaches, because they had scheduled to do the first formal observation session for certification purposes (an assessment of the EL coach). As a result, a number of the observations of the mentoring process were off the hill, when the two coaches met before or after practice to discuss the day.

Chapter IV: Results

The purpose of this study was to explore the learning process for two pairs of coaches in a formalized mentoring relationship, and to gain a better understanding of the interpersonal relationship between a coach and his or her mentor. By conducting in-depth interviews, and observing the coaches on the hill, a detailed picture of the working relationships between two coaches and their mentors was created. After analyzing all of the data collected, several major themes began to emerge and these themes will be discussed in the following sections. The first section will focus on the learning that was experienced by all four participants. In the second section, the topic of matching a mentor with a coach will be discussed, followed by the interpersonal dynamics of a mentoring relationship. In the third section, the participants' comments on the mentor evaluator training course will be discussed in terms of the level of preparation and training that it provided. The fourth section will discuss the various approaches taken by the mentors in terms of the overall success of the mentorships and corresponding outcomes from the mentoring process. The fifth and final section will discuss various other themes that emerged from the findings in terms of these particular mentoring relationships.

Learning within the Mentoring Experience

One important finding from this study was that all four of the coaches felt that they had learned something while participating in the mentoring process. The DL coach, who was mentored by the elite coach, commented on his learning experiences and credited his mentor:

> He would observe the training and see things and comment on stuff....It would force me to think about what I have done that day and kind of reflect a little bit more on what I was doing.

When asked about having a mentor while coaching this year, he continued:

> In previous years I didn't really have anybody to discuss that kind of thing with....There was no outside observer to get additional ideas from, or even

> somebody with more experience to talk to about it, so the mentorship made a huge difference.

The EL coach commented on the fact that his mentor really helped in the area of learning about the logistics of running a practice and on how to work effectively with the athletes: "His experience with the specific athletes, because he had previously worked with them, really helped foresee problems I would have otherwise overlooked". When asked about the progression of the EL coach, his mentor responded "Well I think he's become a coach, whereas at the beginning of the year he was an athlete". Similarly, when asked about the development of the DL coach, the other mentor responded:

> From what I saw of him as a coach at the beginning to how I see him as a coach now, I see changes in the way he works and they're positive changes...did it work? Yeah. Was it positive? Very. One hundred percent.

Both coaches who were mentored made comments on the fact that the process was valuable and that they benefited from having a mentor who had more experience and who could offer them insights and tips on ways of doing things on the hill. Another example of the learning that took place during the two mentorships was related to an assessment process. Half way through the season, the EL coach was assessed by his mentor, which meant that the EL coach was given the responsibility of planning an afternoon training session and directing the drills. During the assessment, the mentor stood back, observed the coach, and provided him with feedback at the end of the day. This enabled the mentor to see the coach work with the athletes and to assess areas where he was strong and areas where he needed improvement. Because of this assessment, the EL coach had the opportunity to experience what it was like to be responsible for running a whole session and really learned the value of planning, preparation and drill progression. He indicated that he felt he really improved his ability to communicate with the athletes, partly because his mentor had a great deal of experience working with

different athletes, and partly because, in this assessment period, he was able to use that information to work on his own with the group. For example, he commented:

> At the beginning of the season when we were starting to break the kids up into groups, my mentor told me not to put certain kids together. Rather he suggested grouping kids together who would collectively ski better. For example, there were some girls who, if they were separated from their friends would complain and ski poorly. Or there was a group of strong skiers, and if I grouped them together they would push each other to ski each run better.

At the end of this assessment day, the EL coach met with his mentor, during which time the researcher was also present. The mentor said that he felt that his own on-hill observations during this assessment period enabled him to learn more about the coach he was mentoring::

> Because he had been a very good skiier I took for granted that he knew more things about coaching than he did and that became apparent to me when I did his assessment. Maybe if I had done the assessment earlier in the season I would have seen that earlier and we would have more time to work on that. Nevertheless, it made me aware of the fact that he is very young, he is a beginner and has no experience as a coach.

Both coaches in this mentorship pair also reported learning the importance of planning and of committing to the mentoring relationship. The structure of a formal mentoring program ensured that an observation and assessment were done, which, in turn, allowed the EL coach to experience running an entire practice session, and the mentor to re-consider the current skill level of the EL coach. This created an opportunity for both coaches to reflect and learn.

In the other mentoring relationship, although the DL coach came into the mentoring relationship with a great deal of coaching experience, he still felt he learned a great deal. Specifically, he said he learned "to look for different things in terms of course setting, different things regarding training environments, and how to set specific goals during a training session". He also felt he became better at reflecting on what he was doing and regularly questioning why he was doing certain things:

> By the end of the season I was thinking more about what I was doing in setting the course instead of necessarily what was happening in the course. I'd look at the course and look at the hill and spend a bit more time looking at the environment and trying to make the course work more with the environment to achieve a specific goal

While the DL coach reported that his relationship with his mentor might have been similar without the presence of the mentoring program, he felt the interactions would certainly not have been as frequent. The structure of the mentorship created planned periods of time where the mentor would work directly with the DL coach. These were times where they would both be together on the hill discussing various aspects of training, including drills, course design, and skill of the athletes. During these times, both coaches were clearly engaged and focused on what was going on.

Interestingly, both mentoring relationships demonstrated that it was not only the individuals being mentored who learned within this process, but the mentors as well. One of the mentors discussed how he improved on his managerial skills and interpersonal skills within his professional practice, and he credits the coach that he was mentoring for encouraging him to approach situations differently. The other mentor also noted that he learned things about his own coaching, and became more aware of his coaching skills:

> I think I learned how much I've grown as a coach because I know that I was once in his situation. It really made me aware of how differently I coach now and how much I've grown through the time that I've been coaching.

As well, the PL mentor coach said that he learned the importance of being thorough, of testing his assumptions, the importance of frequent and clear communication in terms of goals and commitment, and of the importance of the coach being mentored also taking some initiative. He also said that he reflected on his own strengths as a coach:

> I don't just show up and randomly decide what we're going to work on, or just choose drills in random orders. There's a progression and I, as a coach, have control over how it's all being planned out and how it's all being worked

> out. Because of that control, and my confidence as a coach, I also have a way of talking to the athletes so that they really listen and they really start to understand what they're doing

So each of the four coaches in this study learned and developed professionally throughout the season, whether it was developing particular coaching skills or developing self-awareness and a deeper level of self-reflection. Overall, it is clear that in terms of learning, the mentorships for the 4 coaches were beneficial and positive.

Interpersonal Mentoring Relationships

Various components of the mentoring relationships emerged from the data including the concepts of trust, communication, friendship, values and goals. Four specific elements will be discussed in terms of the interpersonal mentoring relationships between the coaches in this study: (a) the relevance of similarities in backgrounds between the coaches and their mentors, (b) the importance of career support for an effective relationship, (c) the communication and teaching style of the individuals, and (d) the process of matching a coach with a mentor.

In looking first at the aspect of similarities of backgrounds, one of the mentoring relationships consisted of two coaches with very similar goals and coaching philosophies. The two coaches seemed to agree on what it took to be a good coach and how to coach to get the best performance out of their athletes. These two coaches appeared to have very similar perspectives on athletes and competition. For example, when asked about the qualities of a good ski coach, one of these two coaches discussed the importance of working with athletes from the perspective of individual learning, to develop "an understanding of what makes athletes truly tick", and being able to coach according to what the individual athlete needs. Similarly, the coach that he was working with in this mentorship also spoke of the importance

of recognizing that "every athlete is different", of understanding "each athlete as an individual", and the "differences between the athletes, and how to relate to each athlete as an individual".

Both of these coaches also spoke of the importance of having a passion or a love for the sport and how that passion can be reflected in good coaching. So, before the mentorship even began, these two coaches shared many similar perspectives and views about what was important in coaching. These similarities certainly contributed to them getting along well, and as a result, may have been a factor in ensuring the effectiveness of this mentoring process.

In the other mentoring relationship, both coaches came from similar athletic backgrounds. The foundation of this mentoring relationship was built on the fact that they understood each other and respected each other as former athletes. One of the coaches began racing at 8 years old, qualifying for the regional team at age 13, and then spent 4 years racing at the regional level. The other coach in this mentoring partnership began racing at age 4, qualified for the regional team at age 12, and then also continued to race at a regional level for 3 or 4 years. Both of these coaches excelled at their sport at a very young age and both began coaching as teenagers, feeling that it was a natural progression, moving from high level competition into a career in coaching. Both of these coaches were driven by the pursuit for success and were very goal-oriented. Although they may not have completely recognized this, their similarity as former athletes appeared to help in ensuring the effectiveness of this mentoring relationship.

A second finding in terms of the interpersonal aspects of mentoring was the aspect of career support. According to the participants in this study, a characteristic that is common among all good mentors is the desire for success of the person being mentored. All four coaches in this study discussed mentors that they had in the past and a common thread that emerged was that they felt that their mentor expressed a strong desire for them to succeed in coaching. For

example, in the present study, when asked about someone who acted as a mentor to him, one coach commented:

> He was somebody who wanted me to succeed. He helped me and tried to set me up in situations where I could learn. He went out of his way to help me train as a coach. But giving me the support that I needed was probably the major thing.

One of the other coaches, when asked about people that had acted as a mentor for him in the past, replied:

> Bottom line is I knew they wanted me to succeed. Part of the mentor's job is to protect the best interests of the sport, and of the person being mentored....The strongest coaches have mentors. I have mentors that helped me get me to where I am. And the mentor relationship has to be built on respect.

Similarly, when asked the same question, a third coach replied: "I learn a new thing every day with him...he's always helping out...if you need anything you just go to him and he's got it for you". The fourth coach also commented on coaches in his past that had "supported" and "guided" him through his development as a coach. All of these comments illustrate that a significant component of an effective mentorship may indeed be a sense of support from the mentor, both emotionally and in terms of technical knowledge. In terms of the mentoring relationships observed in this study, this concept of career support and guidance seemed to be an important part of the mentorship. The coaches in this study had only known their mentors for a few months, but the element of trust became clear toward the end of the season. For example, when asked about the future of their relationship, one mentor said of his coach:

> What we really had was a professional relationship; we can always keep in touch. If he ever needs anything or if he ever wants anything I'll do whatever I can to help him out.

Data from the final interviews with these participants highlighted the idea that part of what made these two mentorships meaningful was that the mentors developed a genuine desire for the success of the coaches. Each of the mentors sincerely wanted to help the coaches

continue to develop in the future. Clearly, in good mentorships, there is an underlying factor of career support and guidance, which, based on these findings is likely an important part of building a solid and effective mentoring relationship.

The third aspect that emerged from the findings in terms of interpersonal mentoring relationships, had to do with communication. Specifically, in the mentorship between the DL coach and his mentor, open communication was a crucial component. The mentor explained:

> At the beginning of the year he came to me and laid out what he wanted to do and how he would do it, and then would check in with me every two weeks…it was like constant interaction.

It was noticeable, from the on-hill observations, that this relationship was very open, with both of the coaches being very receptive to comments and questions from the other. In this mentoring relationship, the DL coach was experienced and ran his own sessions, without the mentor really being involved. The mentor would often ski by on the hill and stop and ask a few questions, make a suggestion here or there, perhaps have a quick discussion about something, and then he would move on. The coach who was mentored described this process:

> He'll kind of give me some ideas without really trying to take over, so it's more a suggestion and idea saying 'what's your goal, okay how are you going to get there and have you thought of this'…so an open discussion and an exchange of thought…and he moves on…so I know he is always watching and he is observing what I'm doing and if there's something that I'm doing he'll step in and talk and then ski away.

The mentor also discussed this coach's ability to take advice and how the type of personal relationship that they had built allowed them to communicate so openly with each other. It was obvious during every observation period on the hill, in the ski lodge, or in the pub after training, how friendly and comfortable this mentorship had become by the way they spoke with each other and the way they would joke with one another. What developed through this relationship was a high degree of respect that also allowed for both fun and serious coaching work.

In the other mentoring relationship, between the PL coach and the EL coach, there was a more formal dynamic. There was still an obvious amount of respect between them, and they worked well together, but they did not have the same type of laid-back friendship that the other two coaches seemed to have. There could be many reasons for this different dynamic. A large part of it was probably due to the lack of time spent together. For example, the elite coach and the DL coach would go out after Wednesday night practices and talk about coaching over drinks. This was not possible with the other partnership, since the EL coach was only coaching on weekends. The age gap of almost 10 years between the two coaches might have been another aspect that affected the development of the relationship, as well as the EL coach's lack of experience as a coach

A small but significant aspect in reference to communicating effectively, particularly in the elite coach and DL coach mentoring relationship, was that the mentor coach, when he was on the hill working with the coach being mentored, would turn his radio off. He explained: "the next hour belongs to him" and that if somebody really needed him, they could find him. For that time period, the mentor was dedicated and focused on what the coach was doing, and ready and focused to provide feedback. The mentor credits the structure of the formal mentoring program for allowing him the opportunity to spend those periods of time with the coach, where they could have that focused interaction. He also credits the mentorship for "keeping coach education forefront in his mind".

In the mentoring relationship between the EL coach and his mentor, communication was also open in the sense that the coach indicated that he felt comfortable approaching the mentor with questions or concerns, but an issue that arose in this relationship was time availability. The mentor coach was away at several competitions during the season, and this resulted in less

interaction between the PL and EL coaches. The mentor in this relationship gave the coach a great deal of freedom in terms of running drills and setting courses, however, the coach being mentored indicated that he would have liked more feedback on his coaching and more structured and planned debriefs, or "reflective sessions". When asked about his relationship with the EL coach, the mentor discussed how he "took for granted the fact that he could ski well and that he knew more things about coaching than he did". The mentor commented further that one thing he realized through the process was that "it takes a lot more than just nice skiing to coach". Perhaps this coach in particular, because of his lack of coaching experience, required a bit more direction and guidance than this particular mentor could provide.

Another finding in terms of communication within the mentoring relationships pertains to mentoring style. The interaction between one mentor and coach was such that the mentor was regularly questioning the coach about what he had done, why he did it, whether or not he had tried something a different way and if so, what the result was. When asked about this type of communication, the coach who was mentored described the questioning nature of the mentor:

> There was not a lot of direct feedback or kind of like 'hey you're doing this wrong or you're doing it right'...it was more questioning, just kind of 'well, why are you doing what you're doing' and it would guide me in a certain direction.

The mentor explained that the reason for asking so many questions, rather than telling the coach what to do, was to have him think about what he was doing and why, so that he (the mentor coach) would have confidence in what and how the coach was thinking. When asked further about this, the mentor explained:

> The bottom line is tomorrow afternoon I'm not going to be there so I need to know that they're thinking. So when I'm over on skyline and they are working in the valley, I know that my coach thinks properly, that he follows the proper thought process, and that is something that the mentor needs to teach.

Another example of this questioning style of mentoring adopted by this particular mentor was when, as he describes:

> I stood on the side of the hill and literally nailed him with - like all 24 kids went by him and I asked 'okay what do you see, what do you see, what do you see, what do you see' and it was like 'I want you to have one thing to work on with every one of the kids'.

In this mentoring relationship, there were times when this mentor would take on more of a coaching role and be right there, involved in the practice, and other times when he would observe and then ask the coach about the training when it was completed. The best description of the position of the mentor in this relationship is represented by his comment: "I know what they need to learn, let's see if they can figure out what they need to learn". His approach was that he would help lead them to the right answer, without telling them the right answer. This, according to almost any definition, is really what mentoring is about.

The fourth element of the mentor-coach relationship observed in this study pertains to the process of matching mentors with coaches. In terms of interpersonal relationships, the four participants in this study expressed satisfaction with their mentorship partner. Nevertheless, this is an important element to discuss, since both of the mentors commented on the process of pairing individuals in terms of personality and commitment. The two mentors discussed the importance of being able to connect with the person they are mentoring or being mentored by. This is important to note, since it was something that they each brought up without being asked. For example, when discussing the matching of coaches with mentors, one coach commented:

> It just seems really strange to have people who do not necessarily connect be mentoring, like having a mentor who does not necessarily connect with you or the other way around. But it wasn't bad between him and me, we got along and I think that he's a nice guy, we liked each other.

So although this coach got along with the coach that he was in a mentoring partnership with, it had clearly crossed his mind to reflect on the matching process. The other coach who discussed this also got along well with his mentoring partner, but commented:

> In thinking about selection of mentors, there has to be some consideration of personality.... I would acknowledge that there are places and there are people that I could not mentor, because of personality differences.

This is clearly an important topic that warrants further discussion. During the first interview, when asked about his thoughts on the new mentoring program for coaches, one coach commented:

> I'm a strong believer in the coach being able to choose his or her mentor because you're going to learn from people who you want to learn from and so therefore if you are told 'well this is your mentor', well you have to have a very open mind to accept that and to learn from that and I think that is probably the biggest challenge, because if they don't want you as a mentor, it just creates issues and problems within the coaches if they're not properly matched.

Timing and availability of the coaches was an issue in the mentoring relationship between the PL coach and EL coach. The mentor in this relationship was involved in two other skiing competitions that took him away from the club for several weeks at a time, twice within the season. Then, as soon as he came back, the coach being mentored was absent for a week. Also, these two coaches only worked together on weekends and, over the course of the 3 or 4 month season, did not have many weekends together where there was a normal training day. When asked about any issues that might have surfaced during the mentoring relationship, one coach replied:

> It's been so hard with three weeks away, and he's really only there on weekends - he doesn't do any of the extra training, so that cuts down on quite a bit of time that I see him. I definitely see the other athletes more often than I see him.

Mentor Evaluator Training

The two objectives of the mentor evaluator training were to help create effective mentor-coach relationships for learning, and to accredit coaches to do in-field evaluations for Entry and Development level coaches (CSCF, 2007). Overall, the mentor evaluator training appeared to be a useful experience for the three coaches who attended. For example, when asked about the value of the training, one coach responded:

> It was kind of more seeing what the expectations are, what an entry level coach is expected to do, or what is a development level coach is expected to do, so it's kind of given me insight into the evaluation of other coaches and what kind of skills I should be looking for in myself and in others.

Similarly, when asked if he learned anything from the training, another coach replied "It became clearer about the way that they are breaking down the new entry level and development level and performance level". The mentor evaluator training seemed to tell the mentors exactly what to look for in terms of skills and technique and the biggest benefit of the training course seemed to be the clarification of the new coaching certification system and what was expected and required for each level. When asked if the course prepared him for the season, one of the mentors replied:

> The course told me what I needed to know and...I didn't know one hundred percent what the new coaching levels were, so it helped me to really understand the coaching levels as well so, yeah I would say it was a good course.

Likewise, when asked if the training helped him through the season, another coach replied that "it did help, just to manage the other coaches and make sure that the athletes were getting the best of the coaching team that we had". However, the coach continued: "It was more kind of helping with the leadership side of it rather than the actual mentor thing". This statement highlights one important finding from this study, which was supported by comments from all three coaches who attended the training. That is, although the mentor training proved

to be a good experience for the coaches, it did not prepare them, nor did it train them to be mentors. When asked if he would really call it 'mentor training', one mentor replied "no". He then explained further that it is possible to train someone to be able to detect and correct specific skills, but there are many other elements that make up a mentorship that, in his opinion, are not trainable such as interpersonal, communication, and leadership skills. The focus of the mentor evaluator training was on the detection of specific coaching skills, but not as much on skills relevant to mentoring. When asked if there was anything that he learned at the course that helped him be a mentor to the coach, the other mentor replied "no, not with him". The course was a valuable experience, and trained the coaches to be evaluators, which was the main objective of the course content, but did not train them to be mentors.

In this study, it was clear that the elite level coach was effective at using a number of mentoring skills when working with the DL coach. For example, he was an active listener and used questioning in order to facilitate reflective thinking for the DL coach. This type of interaction appeared to create a very comfortable mentoring relationship that was based on open communication, built on a foundation of respect, trust and mutual accountability, and resulted in a good learning opportunity for the individual being mentored:

> It was very informal, we would just sit and have a chat at the end of the day, middle of the day, or see each other on the chairlift....If somebody was coming in and telling me 'you're doing this wrong, you're doing that wrong, change this, do it this way', I don't think I could have worked in that type of environment. It's not the way I work and it's not the way he works either.

He continued to explain that the type of relationship that had developed between himself and his mentor provided him feedback in a way that forced him to reflect on his own coaching:

> It would force me to think about what have I done that day and kind of reflect a little bit more on what I was doing. At the end of the day he'd be asking questions like 'what were you doing today? What was your goal for this? When you set the course what was your plan?'

By observing the type of mentoring relationship that formed between the DL coach and Elite coach, it is evident that there are useful skills that would be valuable for all mentors to learn and to use.

Mentoring Approaches and Outcomes

The two mentors in this study approached the task of mentoring very differently. One seemed to approach it as a learning opportunity for both himself as well as the coach he was mentoring, where they would discuss and share ideas and then perhaps at the end, the coach may become certified. The other mentor seemed to approach it as a method for certification, or a road that they would take over the course of the season, where certification for the coach was the ultimate goal. It is crucial to note here that both approaches are legitimate and one approach is not necessarily better than another. Instead, these approaches will be discussed in terms of the two, very different mentoring relationships. One of the coaches explained:

> I think that anybody that takes on the job of mentoring with a mindset towards facilitation will be successful from the perspective that it's creating the appropriate number of people that have their certification. But it won't be successful in accomplishing all the things that mentor relationships can accomplish.

For one of the mentors, the objective of the mentorship was that the coach attained certified status at the end of the season. In the end, this coach did not receive certified status, which left the mentor feeling disappointed and unsuccessful. He commented: "I was really upset that I hadn't managed to get him to pass his level". Furthermore, when asked about the overall success of the mentorship, the mentor continues "I don't know if I would call it successful, no probably not successful, he didn't pass". Interestingly, when asked specifically about the mentoring relationship between these two coaches, both indicated that there were no issues, that they got along fine and that the mentorship was good. The mentor indicated that he grew as a coach over the course of the season and the coach being mentored indicated that he

learned a lot from working with his mentor coach. So, based on those findings, it seems that although the certification or evaluation process was unsuccessful, which led to some frustration, the mentoring relationship itself appeared to be effective.

In the case of the other two coaches, the emphasis was not on certification, and it was never in the forefront of either of their minds. The coach being mentored in this partnership did not complete his certification and yet his mentor did not view the mentorship as unsuccessful. Instead, his mentor commented on the success of the mentorship, saying that it worked and that it was a positive experience. When asked if the mentorship was successful overall, the coach who received the mentoring replied "yes" and when probed further about whether or not he progressed as planned this season, he replied "I think so, yeah, I'm where I wanted to be this year". Clearly, from these findings, the success of the mentor should not solely be measured based on whether or not certification for the coach was obtained. The findings from this study clearly indicate that a separation needs to exist between the mentoring process and the certification process.

Another finding that emerged from this study in terms of mentoring approaches has to do with clearly defined objectives. From this study, it appears that, in order for both mentorship participants to be satisfied with the outcome, the objectives must be clearly defined and agreed upon from the beginning. It may be important that both coaches (the mentor as well as the coach being mentored) agree to commit to a common goal. The best illustration of this point is a comment that came from one of the coaches, while reflecting on the possibility of acting as a mentor coach in future years:

> If I was mentoring somebody that's something that I would try to do - to find out what their expectations are of me as a mentor and then you can use that going through your evaluations and judge how it is going based on what

> you've been told initially about the plan for the season and make sure that that plan is being executed well.

It is clear from both the interviews with the coaches and from the field notes that the objectives for both mentoring partnerships were not laid out clearly at the beginning of the season. None of the four coaches indicated that they had sat down one-on-one at the beginning of the season to discuss roles and expectations and define their goals and objectives specific to the mentoring process. One coach commented:

> The relationship wasn't really well defined. I didn't really know what was going on at the beginning of the season ... the role of the mentor isn't really clearly defined, the person being evaluated isn't really sure what to expect or what's expected of them ... there wasn't really that initial meeting at the beginning of the season with the mentor which I think would have been the first thing to kind of kick it off and get it going ... if I'd sat down with him at the beginning of the season and if we maybe talked a bit more about what I planned to do as a coach, what my idea was and then he could use that in his mentoring.

Similarly, one of the coaches in the other mentorship commented "in terms of sitting down with him and formally making out all the different aspects of this mentoring, we haven't done that". Interestingly, all four coaches indicated that the responsibility for having this dialogue lies with both the mentor as well as the individual being mentored, and that they each had to make an effort to contribute to the mentoring process in order to gain from it.

Another finding that emerged was that all four coaches entered into this mentoring process with enthusiasm. They each were very open to trying something different for this season. General comments from the coaches on this new mentoring process included: "it's really going to reflect a new way of doing things", "it's going to change the way coaching is done in Canada", "the introduction of the mentor relationship I think is a tremendous step forward for coaching in Canada", and "it's a step in the right direction". One of the participants commented:

> It seems to be a good move in the right direction...because that's really the kind of environment that's fuelled my coaching and improved my skiing and my abilities in working with other people....It'll bring some cohesion, some consistency across Canada for ski coaching, which I think was kind of lacking before...having that direct mentor-mentee relationship will kind of formalize the process and really enforce the learning.

Another important element that emerged and needs consideration was the coaching knowledge each of the coaches brought to the mentoring relationship. For example, the EL coach in this study came into the mentoring relationship from an intensive racing background at a young age and brought a good understanding of racing from a technical standpoint. Although he certainly lacked experience as a coach, he nevertheless already had several ideas of some coaching skills and requirements. For example, he discussed things that he had learned as an athlete, regarding coaching:

> Coaches that are good are coaches that find ways to motivate the athlete without getting overly technical. It's kind of a balance between keeping it simplistic and the right amount of technical theory. It's a comfortable balance between the two...because I've had some coaches that just jam you with information and it's so much going through your head which could be good for some people and it could be terrible for some others.

When discussing working with his mentor, the same coach commented: "He has a lot of experience, not only with the mountain or the region, but also with the same kids". So, in the mentoring process, it is clear that both coaches will have knowledge and skills although obviously the level and experience will vary. The variance in knowledge and skill is, of course, why mentorships are created in the first place, so that one coach can learn from another. The findings in this study simply indicate that it is important to understand that even a young coach with little, if any actual coaching experience, may still have a good understanding of coaching fundamentals. For that reason, it is important to have an awareness of each coach's experience and knowledge before beginning the working mentoring relationship.

Mentoring and Coach Certification

It was beyond the scope of this particular study to explore and discuss the evaluation and certification process for alpine ski coaches. However, what was found through the process of data collection was that the process of certification was very closely intertwined with the mentoring process. This is not surprising given that one objective of the mentoring process within Alpine Ski is to create certified coaches. The mentors in this study reported feelings of pressure in terms of getting the coaches evaluated and certified. One of the mentors discussed how he was "fighting the battle" because he had coaches that deserved to be certified, but had not been evaluated. The second mentor was upset that he had not managed to get the coach being mentored to pass his appropriate level. In the present study, the short term goal was certification, which could account for the pressure felt by the mentors to achieve this goal. It is important to note that the reason that neither coach in this study attained certified status was largely due to lack of evaluators and lack of time, not because of lack of competency on the part of the coaches.

Certainly the findings of this study indicate that in order for the coach and the mentor to get the best out of the mentorship itself, the mentorship must be clearly separate from the evaluation process. The CSCF acknowledges this in the Entry Level Mentor Evaluator Guide, where it states that although in some situations (often at the EL and DL levels) the mentor and evaluator may be the same person, it is important to "understand the different roles and be able to perform the different roles when and where appropriate" (CSCF, 2006, p. 4). The mentor is a learning resource for the coach, providing guidance and the benefit of his or her experience, whereas the evaluator determines if the coach meets specific performance standards while working with his or her athletes (CSCF, 2006).

For the coaches in this study, it was clear that the roles became tangled and confused at times. For example, during the day when the EL coach was being assessed by his mentor it was clear that the pressure of doing a good job and the pressure of passing or failing was affecting the way he was working. The mentor also felt that the task of having to observe the coach at work and decide whether or not he met a certain standard definitely prevented him from doing his job, which was to coach his athletes and to provide direction and guidance to the EL coach. As well, during the first formal observation session for the EL coach, where the mentor had him plan and execute an on-hill session while assessing his abilities, the mentor commented on having to take on the role of 'evaluator' rather than 'mentor'. This mentor clearly stepped into the role of the evaluator and out of the role of the mentor, but noted that it went "against his nature as a coach" to simply step back and observe, rather than being involved in the practice. After some observation time, the mentor stepped back into the role as coach, providing direction to the athletes as well as providing some needed guidance to the EL coach. Clearly, the task of mentoring became much more complex when mixed with the responsibilities of not only assessment but also evaluation.

Alternatively, having one person who acts as both the mentor as well as the evaluator clearly has its advantages. If the process for certification is such that the coach should be observed, at his own club, working with his own athletes during normal training time, it would make sense for the mentor to informally observe the coach over the entire course of the season and then decide at the end if he meets the criteria to become certified or not. One of the coaches in this study commented:

> Bringing someone else in to evaluate, he's going to see him for two hours and in all honesty, he's more likely going to turn to me and ask me 'hey does he do this, does he do that what do you think?'

One of the other coach's comment about the formal evaluation process was that "watching someone 15 times in the field and then going to see if they do it correctly on day 16 is not smart". It might be worthwhile to consider that the evaluation process take into account the coach's performance over the entire season, which is something that only the coach's mentor can do. So although it may be necessary for the roles to be clearly separate, the mentor might inevitably be involved in the process of evaluation.

The mentorship program for entry level coaches is "designed to help coaches reinforce key skills and competencies necessary when working with entry level participants in club and ski school race programs" (CSCF, 2006, p. 4). The EL coach in this study completed the 3-day training course to attain 'trained' status, where he learned basic coaching skills according to the Husky Snow Stars program. This EL coach was hired at the beginning of the season to coach the K2 group because of his abilities as a technical skier. So, the training that the EL coach received did not end up being relevant to the coaching that he was doing and his mentor was then working with an assistant coach who not only had no coaching experience, but had also received no relevant training. The EL coach's comment was:

> It's hard to apply an entry level status to the kind of level I'm coaching because it's more for the very low level racing which is like Nancy Greene, maybe I2, so I didn't really find that my entry level really helped my coaching, at least in terms of coaching K2.

When asked about the situation, his mentor, who was the head coach for the K2 group commented:

> We worked together in order to improve the athletes' performances and that worked out well although it was somewhat frustrating for me because of the fact that he was in over his head being an entry level coach with K2s

So, the Canadian Ski Coaches Federation as well as ski clubs may want to ensure that, when developing and implementing coaching certification programs, coaches not only obtain

adequate training for their level of participants but that they are placed in situations where they will be able to use the skills and training that they have received. Conversely, it is important that the coaches not be placed in situations where they do not have the necessary skills.
In terms of coaching development, another issue that emerged from the findings was a coach's progression through the levels of certification. This is best explained by the example of the DL coach.

The DL coach in this study had been coaching for 9 years. He coached as a level 1 certified coach for 8 years and then a year prior to the present study attained his DL trained status and hoped to be DL certified in the following year. This coach was the lead coach for the I2 age group, which is a development level age group. When asked if he was planning on moving on to his performance level, his comment was:

> I really like the age group I'm coaching right now. The intent of a performance level coach is to be training a higher level athlete so I may need to change age groups...realistically you could just sit at the trained level forever, I don't know if there's really a professionally motivating factor to move on. I don't need to move on, because to complete even the DL I'm supposed to be coaching at the next level up...possibly for next year to get the evaluation done I may have to coach the K1s...but then to get to performance level you have to go up to K2 or higher just to be coaching at the level that they expect.

So, for coaches who enjoy coaching a particular age group, not only might there not be a motivating factor to move up in the coaching levels, but they may want to stay where they are in terms of certification simply because they enjoy working with that age group. If the purpose of the program is to increase the number of coaches who have their certifications, this may be something that coaching development programs need to take into consideration. However, one benefit of this particular system is that it clearly rewards coaching experience, rather than coaching credits. A comment made by one of the coaches referred to the fact that a program

director is more likely to want to hire a coach who has a number of years of experience coaching a particular age group, than a coach who is a level 3 or PL certified coach but has only coached each age group once. Therefore, if the purpose of the coaching certification is to develop and recognize coaches who accumulate valuable coaching experiences, then this may not be an issue and may be an advantage after all.

One of the mentor's comments was that this mentoring process for certification is going to slow down the coaches' progression, so "instead of somebody being fast tracked to being an expert because they did this, they will actually take that time to question, because questioning to me is coaching". Thus an advantage of the mentoring program is that it emphasizes taking time to question what is going on, and this may change the way we think of coaching knowledge and coaching education.

Chapter V: Discussion

The goals of the mentoring program for alpine ski coaches are to "create an effective mentor-coach working relationship for learning", and "help the coach complete certified status requirements" (CSCF, 2006, p. 4). This certification process allows coaches to be evaluated while working on the hill with their own athletes. This is a relatively new method for coach certification and so it has not received much attention in terms of an exploration of the outcomes and benefits of the process. The main purpose of this study was to explore the learning process for two pairs of coaches in a formalized mentoring relationship, and to gain a better understanding of the interpersonal relationship between a coach and his or her mentor. As noted in the results section, many interesting findings have emerged from the data.

One of the major findings from this study was that the process of mentoring was a great learning experience for all four of the coaches, not just the two coaches who were being

mentored. More specifically, the coaches who were mentored felt they had become more reflective thinkers, and began to examine how and why they were doing what they were doing. At the same time, the mentor coaches indicated that they had become more self-aware of their own actions and of their own coaching behaviours. All four coaches felt they had developed valuable skills through the process of mentoring. In terms of learning, it became very clear throughout the course of this study that the mentoring relationships were not unidirectional. In other words, not only were the coaches learning from their mentors, but the mentors also discussed that they felt that they had improved upon particular skills.

One of the coaches being mentored also commented on the fact that he did not realize "what a two-way street it is" and that perhaps the responsibility is on both participants in the relationship to plan and approach the relationship with the same level of initiative. One of the mentors noted that "the mentor can only do as much as the coach wants to do", so it is evident that in a mentorship process, both individuals are responsible for putting in the effort, which is something that the participants in this study learned through this experience. The idea that the mentors gained valuable learning experiences and developed further as coaches indicates that mentoring is not, and should not be viewed as a process where knowledge is passed from one person to another. Instead, what was observed in this study was a process where both partners contribute to a mentoring relationship and both gain something from it.

These findings are not surprising given that previous studies have discussed commitment and mutual accountability in mentoring relationships (Cassidy & Rossi, 2006; Eby & McManus, 2004; Pitney & Ehlers, 2004; Wright & Smith, 2000; Young & Perrewe, 2000). In her work on mentoring, Kram (1985) first emphasized the role of both mentors as well as protégés in developing and maintaining a high or low quality relationship and yet in many

mentoring relationships, the mentors are seen as being more accountable for the success or failure of a mentorship (Eby & McManus, 2004). Comments from the participants in this study highlight the importance of looking at the mentorship as a shared responsibility. Wright and Smith (2000) also noted that the mentor and mentee must be encouraged to nurture a "positive, committed relationship between them" (p. 210) and that if this is not established from the beginning, "then the mentoring interaction will likely fail" (p. 210).

In their study on the mentoring relationships between athletic training students and their mentors, Pitney and Ehlers (2004) found that, from the students' perspective, aside from the mentors being accessible, in order for a mentoring relationship to develop, the students must also take imitative. They must "ask questions and communicate with their mentor for a relationship to develop" (p. 349). Similarly, Young & Perrewe (2000) found that when protégés were open to mentoring and when they put forth the effort needed to get tasks done, the mentors' perceptions of the quality of the mentoring relationship were increased. So, results from the present study reflect existing mentoring literature in that, in order for a mentorship to be effective, both individuals must be open to sharing a commitment to learning.

In terms of skill development, the findings of this study indicated an improvement in the coaches who received mentoring. The two coaches became better coaches through the course of the season and although they likely would have improved without the existence of the mentorship, there are particular aspects of their improvement that can be attributed to the presence of the mentor, and to the structure of the mentoring program. For example, the entry level coach developed communication skills, course setting skills and planning skills, while the development level coach became a more reflective thinker.

These findings are also consistent with previous studies that have indicated that people who act as mentors become more reflective of their own behaviours (Ackley & Gall, 1992, as cited in Wright & Smith, 2000; Brzoska, 1987, Napper-Owen & Phillips, 1995). Eby and Lockwood (2005) also reported that mentoring another person allowed a participant to "reflect back on his or her own career, as well as contemplate his or her own strengths and weaknesses" (p.449).

In their recent article on coach education, Cassidy and Rossi (2006) remind us of Tinning's (1996) story of a young girl who questions her mother's method for cooking a turkey. Her mother then replies that she has always done it this way because her mother always did it this way. The point of the story was that "what stands for knowledge or accepted conventional practice is often passed on unhindered and without critique" (Cassidy & Rossi, 2006, p. 237). For a profession like coaching, where the situations are complex and the consequences can be great, it can be quite dangerous to do things without really questioning why they are done. Both of the mentors in this study discussed this as an important philosophy of coaching. In a one-on-one meeting, one mentor said to his coach "I hope to get you to think about things a certain way so you are not doing things the same way year after year". Similarly, the other mentor seemed very adamant about this issue in his interviews:

> The most disgusting thing you ever hear in sport is the comment 'well we've always done it that way'. Well that means you're not examining what you're doing, and you're not looking for new ways to do things, you know that's status quo. I can create 25 coaches that coach exactly the way I do and that's really nice but if I'm an idiot then that's bad

The coaches who received mentoring in this study became more reflective in thinking about what they were doing and why. The formal structure of the mentoring program provided the mentors with the opportunity to create regular dialogue about what the coach was doing. Through dialogue, the coaches began to question their own behaviours. For example, during an

informal conversation between one of the coaches and his mentor, the mentor would question the coach on particular aspects of coaching and training, such as "why did you set the course this way" and the coach being mentored would clearly be forced to think about what he was doing. Without this reflective thought process in coaching, there is a risk of producing practitioners who do the same thing over and over again without questioning it, which may get them through a practice session without any major issues and solve the problem at hand, but will not contribute to the advancement of coaching science and to the evolution of coaching skills (Cassidy & Rossi, 2006).

It has been suggested that coaches use reflection to transform experience into knowledge (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, 2005) and results from this study clearly indicate that these four coaches used reflection in order to learn from their experiences. Reflective learning for coaches is also something that has received an increasing amount of attention in recent literature (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, 2005, 2006; Werthner & Trudel, 2006) and it was observed in this study that the coaches who were mentored as well as the coaches who acted as mentors learned by reflecting on their experiences, both during the season as well as afterward.

It has also become widely accepted that the process of reflection has the potential to enhance a coach's knowledge and it is quite possible that one of the reasons that expert coaches become experts is by using reflection as a means for learning (Cushion et al., 2003; Gilbert & Trudel, 2001; Werthner & Trudel, 2006). Coaches' behaviours are often the result of ingrained habits and may be so programmed that they cannot be recognized or verbalized by the coaches themselves (Cushion et al., 2003). Therefore, programs need to "provide coaches with a mirror in which they can see their own programs and practices" (Cushion et al., 2003, p. 223). One of

the reasons mentoring may be so effective for coaches is because it might serve this very purpose.

It is important to note that the recent trend for researchers to look at learning to coach as a reflective learning process forces both practitioners and researchers to adopt a much more artistic approach, rather than a scientific one. Instead of seeing coaches as technical practitioners who possess a particular amount of skill, coaches must begin to be considered as artists (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006) who are able to adapt to various contexts and who have a deep understanding of what it is they do. It is suggested that professionals learn through experience by participating in reflective conversations (Schoën, 1983, 1987), which was supported by one of the participants' comments about scheduling more "reflective" sessions with his mentor. Clearly he was seeking more opportunities to reflect on what he was doing with the guidance of his mentor.

Gilbert and Trudel (2001) found that coaches were participating in reflective conversations triggered by coaching issues such as athlete behaviour, performance, attitudes, personal challenges and parental influences. Once these issues were identified, the coaches would proceed through the components of the reflective conversation including strategy generation, experimentation, and evaluation. Aspects of these reflective conversations were observed in this study particularly during one-on-one conversations between the elite mentor and the DL coach. In a pub, after an evening practice, these two coaches would sit and discuss various issues such as parental involvement and athlete performance. During these conversations, the mentor would again ask the coach many questions about why he was doing certain things, for example, why did he run a certain drill, or why did he set the course a certain way. These conversations clearly generated a reflective thought process for the DL coach who

was forced to think about the session that just ended. These conversations may have happened in the absence of the formalized mentorship program, however, when asked about it, the mentor made note of the fact that because of the presence of the mentoring structure and partly because of the presence of the researcher, he spent the entire evening session with the DL coach and his athletes, which he might not have done otherwise. So although the reflective learning process for this coach cannot be credited completely to the mentoring program, the mentorship clearly had a role in providing opportunities for reflective thought.

Gilbert and Trudel (2005) suggest various ways to foster reflection for sport coaches including creating coaching environments that value reflection, providing peer or coaching consultant programs, and taking an issue-based approach to coach education. Also, Cushion et al. (2003) suggest that a way to promote reflection for coaches is to make them clarify and better understand their coaching philosophies, and the development and execution of their own behaviours. In this study, when one of the coaches explained that he did not have a coaching philosophy, it became evident that not only is this something that develops with coaching experience, but also may be quite important in terms of helping a coach develop the skills to reflect on their own practice. Since coaching behaviours are often grounded in coaching philosophies (Martens, 1997), it is important for coaches to reexamine and reflect on them (Cushion et al., 2003).

The elite level coach in this study, when asked, was very clear about his coaching philosophy and seemed to be a very reflective thinker in that he always had an answer for why he did something, and expected the same of his coaches. Encouraging the process of reflection can help a coach to recognize why they coach as they do, and can also be a catalyst for change (Cushion et al., 2003). Furthermore, without this process of reflection, coaches may simply

accumulate years of coaching experience without actually becoming better coaches (Douge & Hastie, 1993).

Recently, Nelson and Cushion (2006) demonstrated that reflection offers a "conceptual framework to connect and understand coach education, theory and practice" (p. 181) and that mentors can facilitate the reflective process for coaches through supervised experience in the field. In this study, the mentoring relationship between the DL coach and his mentor truly exemplified the benefits of this experience. Mentors can help coaches become more aware of the "dynamics specific to their coaching context, current level of coaching knowledge and individual coaching philosophy, plus how these directly relate to coaching practice" (Nelson & Cushion, 2006, p. 182). In sum, the style of mentoring that was employed by both of the mentors in this study was very effective in that it enabled the two coaches being mentored to become reflective, self-aware, and to become coaches who question things, who will want to continue to learn new skills and find newer and better ways of doing things, rather than simply copying what their mentor showed them.

Based on the results of this study, there are many things to consider when beginning a mentoring program, such as how the mentoring relationship will be formed, the availability and time commitments of the mentor as well as the individual being mentored, and the level of commitment and initiative demonstrated by both individuals.

The mentorships in this study were structured formally, due primarily to the stated requirement for certification with the CSCF. With that requirement in place, the actual mentorships were created based, to some degree, on the existing structure of the program and the positions of the coaches within the program.

In the case of the Elite coach-DL coach mentoring relationship, the elite coach was the only mentor evaluator at the club who was able to be a mentor. He was one of three possible DL evaluators in the region and one of two at the club – the other was the PL coach also in this study. In the case of the PL coach-EL coach mentoring relationship, the EL coach was hired as an assistant coach for the PL coach, so the mentorship formed naturally because they would be working together anyway. Because these mentoring relationships were not created by the individuals, they can be described as having a formal mentoring structure (Chao et al., 1992, Eby & McManus, 2004; Eby & Lockwood, 2005). Past studies that have compared formal and informal mentoring relationships and the outcomes of those relationships have found that developing professionals who receive informal mentoring have reported more career-related support (Chao et al., 1992; Ragins & Cotton, 1999), higher mentorship satisfaction (Chao et al., 1992; Ragins & Cotton, 1999), more psychosocial benefits (Fagenson-Eland et al., 1997; Ragins & Cotton, 1999), and more frequent communication (Fagenson-Eland et al., 1997). However, it is important to note that more recent studies have noted that a good mentorship can develop regardless of how it is initially formed (Allen & Eby, 2003), and the present study would support this finding.

In terms of mentorship issues, results from this study are consistent with a previous study that also used interviews with participants in a formal mentoring relationship. Noe (1988) reported that time limitations, incompatible schedules and physical distance were frequently mentioned as reasons for lack of interaction. In the present study, one of the mentoring relationships experienced difficulties due to the lack of time on the part of the PL coach, who had other coaching commitments that required travel and time away from the EL coach. This supports previous studies that have found availability to be a very important prerequisite for an

effective mentoring relationship (Pitney & Ehlers, 2004; Wright & Smith, 2000). It has been recognized for quite some time that availability and frequent interaction are necessary for an effective mentoring relationship.

Since scheduling difficulties can put a strain on mentoring relationships, it has been suggested that organizations with mentoring programs should "take steps to ensure that mentors are accessible to protégés" and "consider requiring weekly meetings between protégés and mentors" (Noe, 1988, p.474). More recently, Allen et al. (2006) suggested that in order for mentoring to occur, constant interaction is necessary and Eby and Lockwood (2005) suggest that this interaction occur at least once a week.

Although the days that they had together throughout the season were few, perhaps in the PL-EL case both the coach and his mentor needed to commit to making the most of the time they did have and for this mentoring relationship, a more structured and planned out meeting schedule might have been beneficial. Scheduling difficulties have been reported in previous studies (Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Noe, 1988) as common problems in mentoring relationships and as was suggested by both of these participants, more planning from the beginning may have helped to minimize the problems associated with the lack of time spent together. Perhaps the solution on the part of the sport organization is to consider this issue when matching coaches with their mentors and try to assign mentors in a way that will allow for frequent interaction.

Mentoring is "based on a strong one-on-one relationship that rests on trust, mutual respect and honesty" (CSCF, 2007) and mentors must be paired with coaches so that a solid relationship can form. Mismatches between individuals and their mentors have also been discussed as being a common problem in mentoring relationships (Eby et al., 2000: Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Eby & McManus, 2004). Although the two coaches in this study did not

necessarily hand-pick their mentors based on friendship or an existing relationship, the mentor-coach matches in this study turned out to be fairly successful. In one of the mentoring relationships, both participants came from very similar athletic backgrounds and in the other relationship, the participants had very similar philosophies about coaching and approaches to working with their athletes.

The DL coach and his mentor also discussed the importance of loving what you do and having a passion for your sport, which was truly evident through observations and conversations with them. Their personalities were similar in that they had similar views on coaching and sport and a very similar sense of humour. Previous studies on mentoring relationships have also found that similarity is an important aspect of a high quality mentoring experience (Allen & Eby, 2003; Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Wright & Smith, 2000). In this mentoring relationship, it was also obvious that there was a great deal of respect and this allowed both coaches to communicate very openly and very effectively. Results from this study support previous research that suggests that trust and respect are critical components of an effective mentoring relationship (Bloom et al., 1998) and that mentoring relationships that are "open and trusting can enhance the development of personal and professional collaborative work skills" (Kochan & Trimble, 2000, p. 27).

In one of the mentoring relationships, the mentor clearly viewed the mentorship as unsuccessful (because the certification process was not completed) and felt that the coach being mentored did not share the same sense of commitment to the ultimate goal that he did. Part of the reason for this may be attributed to the lack of time spent together and lack of commitment to a common goal for both individuals but it has been noted in previous literature that these

perceptions may in fact represent unclear or unrealistic performance expectations or role issues, rather than actual abilities or motivation (Eby & McManus, 2004).

Eby and Lockwood (2005) found that in terms of suggestions for mentoring program improvements, the most frequently reported response from both mentors and protégés was "clearer communication of program objectives" (p.453). Some participants in their study discussed how they felt unprepared for the mentorship, and that roles needed to be clarified. Also, some participants indicated that "the mentor or the mentoring relationship as a whole did not live up to their expectations" (p. 451). Also, in a study by Viator (1999), results indicated that when goals and objectives were set, protégés were more satisfied with their mentor. Similarly, Young & Perrewe (2000) examined mentoring behaviours while considering levels of met expectations, and found that the met expectations mediated the relationship between mentoring behaviours (functions) and perceptions of relationship quality. In other words, they found that when a mentor exhibited supportive behaviours that met the expectations of the individual being mentored, this individual then perceived the mentoring relationship to be effective and would have more trust in his or her mentor. Alternatively, they also found that when a protégé exhibited mentoring behaviours in amounts that met a mentor's expectations, then the mentor had more trust in the protégé and would perceive the relationship as being more effective.

It became clear in the present study, particularly in the mentoring relationship between the EL coach and his mentor that they would have benefited from having clear expectations of each other laid out at the beginning. For example, the mentor "took for granted the fact that he could ski well" and realized later on that he should have tested his assumptions and perhaps set his expectations of this coach based not only on how well the coach could ski, but the quality of

coaching knowledge that he had. It is also important to recognize, especially from this example that although a coach may not have any coaching experience, he may already have developed philosophies, strategies and skills from watching his coaches when he was an athlete (Cushion et al., 2003; Sage, 1989). This process where coaches actually form meanings and understandings about the nature of coaching before they actually become a coach has been referred to as an "informal apprenticeship of prolonged observation" (Sage, 1989, p. 87). Although it has not received much attention in the literature, this idea of a novice coach's level of knowledge and understanding might be something for a coach and mentor to consider when setting goals and expectations for each other.

Results from the present study are consistent with previous research, demonstrated by some of the coaches' comments about not having expectations set and clarified at the beginning. Both coaches who received mentoring indicated that this was something they would be sure to do differently next year. This is an important consideration for mentoring relationships, since whether or not expectations are being met can be a predictor of mentorship effectiveness (Young & Perrewe, 2000) and could have implications for future mentoring relationships.

The importance of building a strong relationship between mentor and mentee has been a topic for discussion in the mentoring literature for quite some time (Zimpher and Rieger, 1988). In their study, Zimpher and Rieger (1988) found that programs were more likely to succeed when both individuals were given an appropriate amount of time on a daily basis to cultivate the relationship, outside of all other duties, and when the relationship was given adequate time to grow and strengthen. So, it is well known that in order to have an effective relationship, where both parties can contribute and benefit, there must be regular interaction and

communication. Discussing the status of the relationship on a regular basis can be beneficial in "maintaining, transforming, or dissolving the relationship as appropriate" (Kochan & Trimble, 2000, p. 27). In the mentoring relationship between the EL coach and his mentor, the coaches got along well and enjoyed working with each other but had they had more time together to really be engaged in the relationship, the learning for the EL coach may have been greater.

Despite the abundance of mentoring literature in other domains, there is not a great deal of research on mentorships within the coaching domain (Cassidy & Rossi, 2006). The lack of discussion about mentorships at any level of coaching, might suggest that these programs are "less formal at best and non-existent at worst" (Cassidy & Rossi, 2006, p. 238). Yet at the same time, it is widely accepted that coaches develop their philosophies and their practice by observing other coaches (Bloom et al., 1998; Cote, Salmela, & Russell, 1995; Cushion et al., 2003; Gilbert & Trudel, 2001; Sage, 1989) and therefore it has been suggested that mentoring can improve coach education (Bloom et al., 1998; Cushion et al., 2003).

In a review of coaching education and continued professional development, Cushion et al., (2003) suggest that many existing coaching education programs simply present tasks as they should be done by the coach, separating theory and practice. As discussed earlier, this process results in coaches who learn the skills necessary to get them through a training session, but do not develop independent and creative thinking skills or problem solving skills. In this way, learning becomes "decontextualized, resulting in two-dimensional coaches" (Cushion et al., 2003, p. 220) who are able to do the tasks that need to be done to help their athletes perform, but who are unable to reflect and to adapt to different contexts. The other problem with this approach is that it assumes that skills can simply be passed on through coaching education courses and does not "teach coaches to adapt or apply value judgments" (Cushion et al., 2003,

p. 221). Despite the trend for coaching education programs to "move from a 'what a coach should know' to a 'what a coach should do' approach" (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006, p. 526), there is a clear need for these programs to implement and provide specific resources for developing coaches, in order for them to adopt reflective thinking practices thereby expanding the 'art of coaching'.

Coach education programs may never be as exhaustive or comprehensive as teacher education programs (Gilbert & Trudel, 2005) but education programs for coaches should be designed so that coaches are able to participate in a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), where learning can be fostered in an environment supported by a mentor (Cassidy & Rossi, 2006). It is recommended that coach education programs should "include supervised field experiences throughout, possibly in a variety of contexts, to enable coaches to consider differences, make mistakes, reflect and learn from them and try again" (Cushion et al., 2003, p. 225). Findings from this study highlight the potential for mentoring relationships to encourage and foster this type of reflective thinking in developing coaches and should be considered, implemented and monitored in a variety of contexts.

In terms of mentor training, recent mentoring literature suggests that training for individuals involved in mentorships may be beneficial by helping mentors to foster reflective thinking, to identify problems and goals, to clarifying role responsibilities, and to help them establish mutually agreed-upon expectations. Mentor training, by providing these advantages to forming relationships, may make "formal mentorships more rewarding" (Allen et al., 2006, p. 568). In the area of education, McCaughtry et al., (2005) first examined how teachers learn to mentor. Through a mentor-based professional development project, they found that through training, mentor teachers experienced an increase in perceived mentoring abilities. In another

study of mentorship behaviours and mentorship quality, Allen et al. (2006) found that greater training quality was associated with greater psychosocial mentoring. Finally, in a study by Eby and Lockwood (2005), participants discussed the potential importance of training for mentors and protégés as a way of clarifying roles, responsibilities and expectations.

The mentoring literature also recommends that structured training be provided to mentors and individuals who are mentored (Allen et al., 2006; Ayers & Griffin, 2005; Eby & Lockwood, 2005; McCaughtry et al., 2005) and that mentor training should have a strong emphasis on specific mentoring skills (Ganser, 1996, as cited in Wright & Smith, 2000) such as active listening, scheduling and planning, communication skills and the use of questioning to promote reflective thinking

Chapter VI: Conclusions

Findings from the present study, as well as other related research, show that in order for a mentoring relationship to be effective, certain things need to be in place before the relationship even begins. First, both mentor and coach need to be available to each other over the course of the season in order to cultivate a strong relationship (Allen et al., 2006; Pitney & Ehlers, 2004). In the case of the EL and PL mentoring relationship this important prerequisite was not in place, and as a result, the relationship did not have as great an opportunity to grow to the same extent as the other mentorship.

Second, in any mentoring relationship, the mentor and the coach need a shared sense of commitment toward a common goal. However, in order for this commitment to develop sufficiently, goals and objectives must be laid out and communicated at the beginning of the mentorship. Also, in order for a mentorship to be successful, goals and objectives must be agreed upon by both individuals and communicated and evaluated consistently. Finally, when

matching coaches with their mentors, personality is something that perhaps should be considered, along with background, values and coaching philosophies.

In terms of the mentor evaluator training, the training course was a very important and useful experience for the coaches. The material that was provided to the coaches contained relevant information about mentoring and building mentoring relationships but the course itself did not provide the mentors with specific mentoring skills or tools to prepare them for the responsibility. Unfortunately, in many cases, mentors do not receive much formal training where they can acquire skills necessary to guide a developing professional (Little, 1990). This can certainly affect the success of the mentoring relationship (McCaughtry et al., 2005). Providing some specific mentor training would benefit those who are acting as mentors for the first time.

One important conclusion from this study is that all four of the participants gained something from this mentoring process. The mentors regained a new perspective on their own coaching, re-learned the importance of management, communication and planning skills and self-reflection, and also developed a greater self-awareness as coaches. The two coaches who were mentored learned and refined specific coaching skills, by working with their mentors on the hill. They became more reflective when thinking about why and how they were doing certain things, rather than simply doing them because they were instructed to or because it was what they had observed from other coaches. The four coaches agreed that the mentoring process was a tremendous step forward for coaching in Canada in terms of creating coaches who learn from questioning and reflecting on what they are doing.

Future research

Implementing a formalized and structured mentoring program for developing coaches in Alpine Ski is a fairly new concept and the present study created a unique opportunity to observe the mentoring process in action. Results from this study highlight the value of mentoring for coaches and future research in this area is certainly needed in order to solidify conclusions and to be able to provide further recommendations for coaching education

Findings from this study have shown how two different mentoring relationships can vary in approach, dynamic and outcomes. Each mentoring relationship will potentially be different and future research should aim to explore mentoring relationships between coaches at different levels and in varying contexts. For example, within Alpine Ski, it would be interesting to explore the type of mentorship that takes place for a PL coach and for an elite coach seeking certification in the context of the National Coaching Institute.

In terms of mentoring research, suggestions for areas of future research have included: time lag for mentoring effects (Allen et al., 2004; McCaughtry et al., 2005), mentoring and career success (Allen et al., 2004), mentorship from the mentor's perspective (Allen & Eby, 2003; Ayers & Griffin, 2005), mentoring across gender and ethnicity (Ayers & Griffin, 2005; Eby & McManus, 2004), the transition from being mentored to becoming a mentor (Ayers & Griffin, 2005), whether or not mentoring has negative effects for a mentor's performance or career (Allen & Eby, 2003), and the relationship between negative mentoring experiences and how the relationship was formed (Eby & McManus, 2004). This study has taken a slightly different approach than other studies to exploring mentoring; using a qualitative method that has allowed for a deeper understanding of the dynamics between two different coaches and their mentor. By exploring some of the above issues within two specific mentoring

relationships, the present study has served as a solid stepping stone for future mentoring research.

In terms of coaching, it has been suggested that future research investigate the learning process (Werthner & Trudel, 2006), as well as the reflective process (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, 2006) for coaches. It is important to address the gap between coaching research and coaching practice (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006), which approach coaching from two different perspectives, since it is the "interplay between the two perspectives that can lead to progress" (Bales, 2006). This study contributed to existing coaching research by providing a detailed picture of what the appointment and accreditation of coach mentors looks like within a very specific context. The present study has also provided some insight in to the value and effectiveness of this particular aspect of a competency-based certification system, although more research is needed in order to formulate conclusions about the system as a whole.

In order to create and develop coaching education programs that improve the quality of coaching, continued research is absolutely essential (Bales, 2006). The nature and the methodology of this particular study challenged the coaches to step back from their day-to-day coaching activities and look at what they were doing from a different perspective. Aside from Cushion et al. (2003), Trudel and Gilbert (2006) report only one published study (Gilbert and Trudel, 1999) that looked at evaluating coach education programs, and so clearly there is a critical need for further research to assess the effectiveness of coach education. Furthermore, in light of all the changes that the current National Coach Certification Program has been undergoing, it is essential that researchers stay involved and play an important role in the development and communication of current understandings of the nature of coaching in various contexts.

Recommendations

The following section provides recommendations, based on the findings of this study, which may help the CSCF and other sport governing bodies in further development of coach education models. Recommendations will be discussed in terms of mentor training, forming mentoring relationships, and mentoring as part of a certification process for coaches.

Mentor Evaluator Training

First, although the mentor evaluator training proved to be a beneficial experience for the participants in this study, it may prove even more beneficial if specific mentor training were provided to those coaches who act as mentors. This training could provide information about the new development pathways for coaches, specific competency checklists for EL and DL coaches, and specific interpersonal skills. This part of the training could focus on communication skills, scheduling and planning skills, the importance of getting to know the other individual in your mentoring relationship and how to build a relationship based on trust and respect.

Forming Mentoring Relationships

Findings from this study highlight four particular aspects that may be important to consider when matching coaches with mentors. First, one issue that became evident in this study was the time availability of the coaches. In order to have an effective mentorship, both parties must be present and committed. Based on findings from this study, it could prove beneficial to consider a mentor's plans for the season (including the amount of time spent away from the hill) before matching him or her with a coach. Second, the coaches' goals and philosophies may be important to consider. In this study, the coaches shared similar philosophies and backgrounds which appeared to help in developing effective mentoring

relationships. A third aspect, which is more difficult to measure, is personality. Based on comments from the participants in this study, personality similarity may be an important determinant of mentoring outcomes. Since respect and trust are often based upon a person's character, matching coaches with mentors whose personalities are compatible may help to foster a solid relationship, thereby creating an environment conducive to learning for both individuals.

Finally, an important consideration when forming mentorships for coaches is the establishment of goals and expectations for each individual and for the mentoring relationship. The findings from this study suggest that a structure needs to be provided to the mentor and the coach being mentored in order to establish clear goals and expectations. When discussing things that they might do differently next time, all four of the coaches suggested that there must be an initial understanding of expectations for both individuals and that there must be a scheduled meeting at the beginning of the season when both partners actually sit down and have a dialogue about these expectations.

In terms of the mentoring relationship, findings from the study indicated that it might be important to monitor the progress over the course of the season. In the case of one of the mentoring relationships, objectives were not met at the end of the season, which resulted in disappointment for both the coach and the mentor. By establishing goals and expectations at the beginning of the season and then monitoring their progress together, there should be no surprises for the coach or the mentor if at the end of the season any objectives are not met.

The final recommendation for coach mentoring programs involves the process of mentoring within a coach certification program. The strategy for the certification of ski coaches is to evaluate "coaches for certification on the hill, with athletes, in a real coaching context"

(CSCF, 2006a, p. 2) rather than during a theoretical course, and this is an enormous step for coaching in Canada. However, findings from this study indicate that while the mentorships were effective and successful from a learning perspective, issues arose when the process of certification, and particularly evaluation, became intertwined with the mentoring process. Considering the potential for issues when the role of mentor becomes confused with the role of evaluator and understanding the limited resources at this stage in the development model, it may be important to consider various alternatives.

One solution is to have a separate evaluator come in, observe the coach for a few hours and then decide, based on that session, if he or she meets the criteria for certification status. Another option to consider would be to take out the formal evaluation period and rely on the mentor, who will have worked with the coach through the entire season, to decide if the coach meets the certification criteria. In this case, the evaluation would be based on the coach's performance as a whole through the entire course of the season, including competition days as well as the coach's development and improvement, rather than just the skills that he or she exhibits on one day. More in-field research may be needed to clearly identify various methods of integrating mentoring into a coach certification system.

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Appendix A

Interview Guide

Pre-season, Mentor

Coaching

1. Can you tell me a bit about your educational background?

2. Can you tell me a bit about your background in sport?
   -Experience as an athlete?
   -Experience as a coach?
   -What levels or age groups have you coached?
   -Is there anything that stands out from your experience with the NCCP or the NCI that has helped you to get to where you are in coaching?
   -What do you think has had the biggest influence on the way that you coach?

3. Can you share with me some of your goals as a coach?

4. How would you describe your coaching philosophy?

5. What do you believe are the kinds of things that make a good ski coach?

Mentoring

1. So let's talk about the mentor evaluator training that you attended. Any general thoughts about it?

2. What were your impressions of the mentor evaluator training?
   -Did the workshop make sense of what's going on with the new certification process?
   -Did you learn anything that may be helpful? Was there anything that stood out?

3. How do you feel about mentorship being a part of the program for ski coaches?

4. So has there been anybody in your coaching career who has been a mentor to you?
   -What is it about this person / these people that makes you call them a 'mentor'?
   -Was there something about your relationship with them that makes it a good mentoring relationship?

5. How is mentoring progressing for you so far this season?

6. How is your relationship with the coach who you're mentoring?
   -What kind of interactions do you have? Formal meetings? Informal discussions?

7. Do you think that mentoring will have an effect on your coaching? Has it already?

8. What do you think this mentoring program is going to mean for coaches?

Appendix A

Interview Guide

Pre-season, Coach being mentored

Coaching

1. Can you tell me a bit about your educational background?

2. Can you tell me a bit about your background in sport?
   - -Experience as an athlete?
   - -Experience as a coach?
   - -What levels or age groups have you coached?
   - -Is there anything that stands out from your experience with the NCCP or the NCI that has helped you to get to where you are in coaching?
   - -What do you think has had the biggest influence on the way that you coach?

3. Can you tell me about the certification process that you've been through so far?
   - -Was there anything specific that you learned from the EL / DL training course?
   - -Anything that has really influenced the way that you coach?

4. Can you share some of your goals as a coach? For this season? Long term goals?

6. What do you believe are the kinds of things that make a good ski coach?

Mentoring

1. How do you feel about mentoring being a part of your certification process?

2. Can you tell me a bit about the relationship between you and your mentor so far?

3. What is the dynamic like with other coaches in your club? Is there a lot of communication between coaches? Feedback? Sharing ideas?

4. Has there been anyone in your past, either in sport or not, who has been a mentor to you?
   -What is it about them that makes them a mentor?

Appendix A2

Interview Guide

Post-season, mentor

1. So tell me about the mentoring process this season
   -What worked well, what didn't work so well?
   -Tell me about the relationship between you and the coach you mentored
   -Were there any issues? Anything that stood out as being really good or not so good?
   -How did being a mentor fit into your daily routine? Into your schedule for the season?
   -Was it successful overall?

2. If you are a mentor again next year, is there anything that you might do differently?

3. Do you think that your relationship with the coach would have been any different without the mentoring program?

4. Do you think that the two of you will continue a relationship now that the season's done?

5. How would you describe your mentoring style? Approach to mentoring?

6. Have you learned anything by being a mentor?
   -Have you progressed as a coach over the season? How? What?
   -Has the coach that you mentored progressed? How? In what way?
   -Did the two of you get much time together to discuss his/her progress?
   -Is there anything specific that you improved on this year?

7. Did the mentor evaluator training course prepare you for the season?
   -Is there anything that you learned in the course that helped you be a mentor?

8. What are your thoughts on the evaluation process?

9. Any thoughts about how mentoring fits into the certification system for ski coaches, now that you've experienced it?

Appendix A2
Interview Guide
Post-season, coach being mentored

1. So tell me about the mentoring process this season
   -What worked well, what didn't work so well?
   -Tell me about the relationship between you and your mentor
   -Were there any issues? Anything that stood out as being really good or not so good?
   -How did being mentored fit into your daily routine?
   -Was it successful overall?
   -Do you think that you will continue a relationship with your mentor now that the season's done? In what way?

2. Tell me about any time that you spent with your mentor talking about coaching

3. Do you think that your relationship with your mentor would have been any different without the mentoring program?

4. Is there anything that you learned this season from having a mentor?

6. Did your mentor conduct any formal assessment or evaluation with you?

7. Did your mentor provide you with much feedback over the course of the season? What type of feedback? When? How?

8. Did the mentor evaluator training course prepare you for the season?*

9. Is there anything specific that you learned in the course that helped you be a mentor?*

10. If you were to participate in a mentorship again in the future is there anything that you would do differently? If you were to act as a mentor to somebody, is there anything specific that you would do, having been mentored yourself?

11. What are your thoughts on the evaluation process?

12. Do you feel that you've progressed as a coach over the season?
    -Is there something specific that you improved on this year?
    -Something that you learned from your mentor?

13. So did you progress as planned this season, with your own development as a coach?

*Questions 8 and 9 pertain to the DL coach only.

Appendix C

Field Notes (EXAMPLE)

Saturday February 17, afternoon

Before on-hill:

Coaches sitting in lodge, getting ready for the day, talking with other coaches. PL coach and EL coach sat down together to discuss what they were going to do, PL asked EL what he wanted to work on during the afternoon, EL described a few drills that he thought would be good, they discussed what run they would be on and then headed out

On-hill:

Group gathered, PL (head coach for group) split up the group and explained who was going to be on which run, with which coach. Also, he briefed each individual athlete a bit about what to work on. Then the group headed up the lift.

On the chairlift, talked with EL about his coaching experience, he discussed some drills that he has done, also a bit about his experience as a racer. He explained how he had learned a lot about coaching from competing at a high level, and that he has a really good understanding of the technical aspects of skiing and because of his racing experience, the athletes look to him for skill improvement.

During the drills, followed the group around (they were doing free skiing, which made it more difficult), there was not much interaction between PL and EL, and when there was it was a couple comments here and there and it was difficult to catch them (really had to follow one of them closely all the time) - mostly comments here and there about what athletes need to work on (eg. "Sarah needs to work on shifting her weight better onto her inside leg, don't you think?")

Off-hill:

When the group came inside, PL and EL spent a few minutes together discussing the drills that they did, PL asked EL what he might have done differently if he did the afternoon over again. EL discussed one drill that he might have done differently, and that he would like to be able to explain the drills and communicate to the athletes better. PL agreed that they could work on that together, since he knows the athletes quite well. After this quick debrief, they went their separate ways.