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**‘More than meets the audiences’ eyes’:  
Individual and collective impression  
management in the everyday doing of coach  
education work.**

**CTM Morgan**

**PHD**

**2022**

**‘More than meets the audiences’ eyes’:  
Individual and collective impression  
management in the everyday doing of coach  
education work.**

**A Thesis Submitted In Partial Fulfilment  
Of The Requirements Of Northumbria  
University For The Degree Of Doctor Of  
Philosophy**

**By**

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## Abstract

To date, research into formal coach education has tended to prioritise the perceptions and experiences of learners. Consequently, there is a paucity of research that addresses the everyday realities of interactively *doing* coach education work from the perspective(s) of coach educators. In building upon the initial insights provided by Allanson, Potrac, and Nelson (2019), this thesis breaks new ground by providing original, ethnographically grounded knowledge concerning the individual and collective social interactions that constitute coach educators' practice(s). Data were rigorously generated with eight coach educators via a methodological bricolage that consisted of cyclical semi-structured interviews and participant observations. In total, 151 hours of observational data and 55 hours of interview data were generated. A phronetic-iterative approach to data analysis was adopted. This required subjecting phases of data generation, interpretive sense-making, and the representation of findings to ongoing cycles of emic and etic interpretation. The analysis process was primarily informed by Goffman's (1959) and Hochschild's (1983) dramaturgical theorising. Their insights were further bolstered using Crossley's (2011) relational sociology. The analysis showed that the participants used various individual and collective impression management strategies in their everyday work. On one level they reflected their understanding(s) of the audience's (i.e., coach learners') expectations and the various contextual constraints that they encountered. However, these social performances also recognised a number of other factors and features. These included, informal and formal hierarchies between coach educators, unfamiliar collegial relationships, performance evaluation mechanisms, casualised contracts, and the desire of individual participants to obtain, protect and advance a particular reputation as a coach educator. Overall, the significance of the thesis lies in the ways in which it has illuminated the different challenges, ambiguities, tensions, and relational complexities that characterise coach educators' attempts to practically work with and influence others.

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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges the opinions, ideas, and contributions from the work of others.

Any ethical clearance for the research presented in this thesis has been approved. Approval has been sought and gained from the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences Ethics Committee for all work on 03.04.2019

Name: Callum Thomas Maclean Morgan

Signature:

Date: 28.09.2022

# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

### *1.0 Introduction*

This thesis explored the dramaturgical dimensions of everyday working life for coach educators within an intersecting relational network. The purpose of this chapter is to foreshadow the remainder of the thesis by showing the reader how I arrived at this particular topic and why it is worthy of academic inquiry. In the first section, I offer narrative reflections on a set of lived experiences and social interactions that have contributed to the practical and theoretical curiosities underpinning this research. In the second section, I describe the role of the coach educator within the sporting landscape, provide an introduction to the coach education literature, and make a case for the need to better understand coach educators' micro-level interactions in the workplace. In the third section, I present the aims of the thesis in three inter-related themes: a) individual impression management, b) team performances, and c) contextual awareness. In the final section, I outline the empirical, theoretical, and methodological significance of the thesis against existing scholarship.

### *1.1 Raising Questions on Coach Education*

The warmth of the seemingly obligatory pre-course coffee rejuvenates me as I sit in anticipation of the day's workshops. I notice that Nigel [the coach educator] is hurtling around the room attempting to engage in spirited conversation with us while peppering the walls with promotions, posters, and catchy slogans. As he returns to the laptop to load some learning materials, a learner makes a playful quip about Marty [Nigel's co-tutor], who is yet to arrive, leaving him to do all of the work. Nigel announces that Marty won't be able to attend due to his full-time job and that another colleague will be covering for him. A few moments later, Marty's replacement, -Dean-, breathes heavily as he dashes into the room, donning the expected happy-go-lucky persona, and decorated with an emblazoned tracksuit and holdalls full of equipment. To my surprise, once Dean had finished coercing his luggage to the floor, both tutors shook hands and introduced themselves to one another, before engaging in a period of cursory small-talk in the centre of the room. Dean makes a clear point

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the thesis, I will use the term *coach educator* and *tutor* interchangeably. I will also refer to course attendees as coach learners, learners, or candidates.

of playfully apologising for nearly being late, and the conversation goes off on a tangent, with both tutors empathetically reciprocating each other's grievances regarding the challenges of balancing family commitments, full-time jobs, coaching roles, and the unsociable working hours part-time coach education work entails. Dean mentioned that he was delighted about the extra hours and money because a course he was originally meant to be delivering was cancelled due to late dropouts. A short while after their public exchange of niceties, Nigel set the group an introductory reflection task. Amidst the interference that was provided by the background music, moving bodies, and voices of the other learners, I was intrigued by how the task helped to cloak their interactions at the front of the room. Dean sat down at the table, flicking through a bounded journal, quizzical, with Nigel standing over him, speaking, gesturing – what's going on there, I wondered, and why?

Such experiences became a commonplace theme in my encounters with formal coach education, and my observations of these sort of ad-hoc, fleeting exchanges between coach educators spurred me on to re-evaluate the individual and collective performances I'd previously enjoyed in a more passive, uncritical manner. I've always found that coach educators radiate a kind of collective warmth, humour, and familiarity that can only be engendered by people considered as 'friends'. More often than not, I've come away from courses admiring how smoothly workshops ran and how seamless, coordinated and natural their teamwork appeared to be. Personally, discovering the fluid, short-term, and estranged essence of their collegiality, in combination with the episodic, anti-social, and precarious nature of this type of work, pushed me to critically probe how their flawless ability to work as a team is achieved – how do they plan? Coordinate? Adjust? Adapt? Or reflect?

One of the reasons I'm drawn to formal coach education as a coach is because of how interactions with coach educators get me 'bought into' their championed approach(es) and encourage me to think, feel, and act. It's the ambience, believability of content, a sense of witnessing a wider show, that drove me to reconsider these relations and the resultant influence they have on me (or us). This interest emanates from a kind of mystery that coach educators create that leaves me wanting more. It's one that I've not been able to examine from the sort of intimacy afforded to me as a learner. I'm always enchanted by their trustworthy, composed, and finely tuned personas, and how they effortlessly orchestrate activities on the pitch and in the classroom. Often, my efforts as a learner during workshops have been found wanting as a result of being distracted by coach educators discreetly recoiling to 'their table' or to the touchline throughout practical sessions - exchanging hooded whispers and shroud glances.

I want to find out how they 'do it' – create and sustain these desirable impressions of themselves. What are the complexities of doing so? How authentic *are* these workplace personas and interactions? What strategies, disagreements, tensions, and uncertainties are

hidden from us? And what social or organisational forces beyond our comprehension are at play? Only by answering these questions, can I begin to understand the hidden layers of formal coach education – those which aren't immediately available to me on courses, but are, I believe, central to the realities that've shaped my own learning experiences.

### *1.2 Awakening to the Dynamics of Team Performances*

I joined the other Development Centre coaching staff for our usual pre-session 'coffee' and planning discussion. As head coach of the Under-12s, I arrived readily prepared with an already populated session plan. A few minutes into the meeting, Peter [the Under-14s coach] announced that he required another coach for his session. Kirsty [the Under-10s coach] quickly suggested that having previously worked with some of the players, I'd be a good fit, which was met with a shared consensus amongst my colleagues. I didn't want to do it – at all. As a matter of fact, I felt discredited, insulted, and extremely annoyed at their suggestion – *and* that I had put a lot of time and energy into my preparations. Although this was an opportunity for me to angrily question why I was considered to be so dispensable, I calmly voiced my concerns about continuity and that, while I'd prefer to stay with the Under-12s, I'd happily help Peter out for that evening.

He shared his session plan with me in front of the others; I was given an almost surplus supporting role. Peter was going to do all of the 'main' coaching points. I was only needed for logistical purposes. The extent of my involvement was setting challenges during the small-sided games. I felt enraged - 'any of the fuckin' level one assistants could've filled in here', I thought. I couldn't help but worry about how much of a spare part I'd look. I hoped that people wouldn't start to question my credibility. I knew that my observable reluctance to accept the 'part' would draw attention to how I performed throughout the session, so, to ensure it ran fluently, I adhered to the agreed plan, enthusiastically interacted with Peter, the coaches, players, and parents, and competently delivered our planned coaching points. Although I acted in these ways, it was at odds with my feelings and imagined response to the situation. In reality, I wanted to show how disgruntled I was, make it as awkward as possible for Peter and the other coaches, and deviate from planned interactions. In the end, I didn't do any of this because, ultimately, I would've been labelled an untrustworthy colleague and poor coach. I knew that negative evaluations would threaten my reputation and relationships with the coaching staff, managers, and consequently, result in me not being considered for future opportunities or promotions.

Looking back, this experience (and many like it) sensitised me to the collaborative *and* individualist dimensions of teamwork. Over time, I've come to understand that planning, coordinating, and presenting collective action is not entirely harmonious. Upon reflection, it dawned on me just how many times I've strategically managed interactions with colleagues

in private and public settings to ‘get things done’ and avoid relational consequences. The complex social relationships I had to navigate made me appreciate how cooperation and the projection of solidarity are, at times, performative. From this, I became interested in how tensions between individual interests and collective goals are privately and publicly managed to complete tasks. I’m also gripped by how the strategic performances that’re exchanged between team-members can be oriented towards those co-present, as well as interdependencies beyond the interaction itself.

### *1.3 Credible Performances Are in the Eyes of the Beholder*

“We didn’t get the PPA gig, Callum. The school emailed us some feedback, your session was pretty good, it just wasn’t what they were looking for” – I certainly didn’t expect *this* outcome. I thought the session went really well, all of the pupils were engaged and the staff seemed happy enough. I did *everything* possible to leave a positive lasting impression of myself and TopTouch FA [a pseudonym] in the minds of the head teacher and sports coordinator – how did they not ‘see’ my effort, commitment, care, or knowledge? My attire was clean, crisp, and freshly ironed. The equipment was in mint condition. I was unshakably keen, upbeat, and confident. I high-fived all of the pupils and learnt their names. The activity spaces were pristinely demarcated on the school field – the bibs, flat spots, pop-up goals, and footballs were all colour coordinated and neatly set-up. The games ran without issue and transitions between activities were almost impeccable. I even spent fifteen minutes in my car beforehand digesting the plan and mentally rehearsing the anticipated interactions I was likely to have. What more did they want?

Despite my best efforts to favourably influence key decision-makers in the school, I failed to do so – there was clearly ‘something else’ going on. This incident, albeit not in isolation, prompted me to consider how information about the ‘other’ should be used to strategically modify self-presentation. I began to think about how people’s expectations may be different across a range of coaching contexts and how this might determine the way(s) they scrutinise the versions of self I (or others) put forward – how do I look and sound? What do I say and do? How do I use equipment and interact with space? I’ve also realised that the way I present myself, (and justify) my practice, and ideas can be received in contrasting ways – a disparity obviously existed between what image I *believed* I was conveying in the taster session and how my credibility was *actually* interpreted by staff.

In retrospect, this was a ‘lightbulb moment’ which enlightened me to the importance of communicating in socially meaningful ways to generate buy-in. Subsequently, I was curious to know more about how workers in sport-related contexts purposefully and reflexively manage the impressions they ‘give off’ to stakeholders. What interactional strategies do they use to influence them towards desired outcomes? Are others’ roles and expectations

considered in the construction of identities? Whether authentic or cynical, what steps are taken to work up these selected personas? How do they choose what information to exhibit and conceal? If not readily available, how do workers encourage target audiences to reveal such information about themselves? And to what extent do both the espoused and insidious intentions and interests of others factor into these decisions?

#### *1.4 Identifying the Thesis: Sowing the Seeds with Prof. Potrac and Dr. Hall*

Several weeks after accepting the offer of a ‘studentship’ to study for a PhD at Northumbria University, Paul, Edward, and I agreed to meet in the campus coffee shop to lay some initial groundwork for the research project. The purpose of the meeting was to more richly refine the research questions that I’d outlined during the interview by delving deeper into the meanings I’d drawn from my lived experiences and social interactions.

Paul: Callum, congratulations again on the successful interview – we both really enjoyed your presentation. You did suggest quite a few research aims, though, and while all of them are worthy of academic inquiry, it’s probably a good idea to identify three or four questions that you can explore in real detail. What are some of the things that stand out for you as interesting?

Me: Well, I’ve always been fascinated by the allure of formal coach education – the complementary coffee and biscuits, the jovial interactions with and between coach educators, the cleanliness of their physical appearances, their individual and collective performances in the classroom and on the pitch – everything, really. I’d love to understand it in more forensic detail.

Edward: Nice. Can you tell us about how your own experiences in the sport coaching or coach education contexts have motivated you to better understand these interactions?

Me: As a coach, I’ve had to acknowledge the complexity of my social relationships with co-coaches, colleagues, superiors, players, and parents, and critically consider how my own or our collective team performances and those of others are not *always* what they seem. I’ve often performed the role of an effective co-coach to avoid consequences or threats to my reputation, despite covertly disagreeing with colleagues in private. I’ve also carried off performances as *natural* to avoid being discredited and conceal a number of different plans and strategies (or a lack of) that we’d devised in more private discussions. Individually, I’ve had to influence players, superiors, and colleagues towards certain outcomes, so I need to give off the right impression, irrespective of how I’m feeling – a high-five, handshake, fresh clothes, clean equipment, posture, facial expressions, tone - because my job, or at least, the guarantee of future hours was dependant on good feedback. It’d be interesting to explore how

these sort of social and organisational factors intersect with the type of coach education performances I've been influenced by in the past.

Paul: All very interesting ideas, Callum – where are you at with the theoretical reading side?

Me: I think Goffman's work on dramaturgy holds much promise for making significant contributions to understanding the everyday workplace realities for coach educators, particularly in terms of the interactions that constitute their individual and collective performances.

Edward: Agreed. We both think that Goffman's work is of great value to coach education.

### *1.5 Academic Introduction*

The coach education workforce is fast becoming a hot topic for academic inquiry and a prime concern for office holders in Sport Governing Bodies (SGBs) (Allanson, Potrac, and Nelson, 2019; McCarthy, Allanson, and Stoszowski, 2021). Indeed, recent developments in the funding of formal coach education have placed a specific emphasis on the importance of coach educators as significant driving forces in high-quality coach preparation (Lewis, Roberts, and Andrews, 2018; Watts, Cushion, and Cale, 2021a, 2021b). As of late, the role of the coach educator has been included within the umbrella term *coach developer*, which describes a cluster of roles (i.e., learning facilitators, mentors) that form a wider organisational system responsible for the training of sport coaches (McQuade and Nash, 2015). In this structure, coach educators are employed to deliver formal, module-based certification courses, and influence, support, and assess coaches' learning and practice (Lyle and Cushion, 2017).

From an organisational standpoint, coach educators are tasked with implementing programme designs (i.e., pedagogy, content) that correspond with initiatives and policies in relation to participation or performance outcomes outlined by SGBs (Allison, 2016; Cushion, Armour, and Jones, 2003; Dempsey, Cope, Richardson, Littlewood, and Cronin, 2021). More broadly, they are considered as essential vehicles for enhancing the experience of sport participants across a range of settings (Townsend and Cushion, 2017), encouraging effective and ethical approaches to practice (Callary and Gearity, 2020), contributing to the UK government's directives for sport (Piggott, 2012), and advancing the professionalisation agenda in sport coaching (Taylor and Garratt, 2010).

Critically, scholars have argued that the quality of coach educators' interactions with others are central to these ventures (e.g., Allanson *et al.*, 2019; Cushion, Griffiths, and Armour, 2019; Horgan and Daly, 2015).

Disconcertingly, however, much of the empirical work on the microrealities of coach education is overwhelmingly learner-centric (Cushion *et al.*, 2019; Downham and Cushion, 2020; Watts *et al.*, 2021b). That said, this body of work, in combination with behavioural and cognitive perspectives (see chapter two), has contributed valuable knowledge regarding the impact of formal coach education on coaches' learning and practice. In contrast to the anticipated benefits of having access to experts, packaged learning, and recognition of achievement (Mallett, Trudel, Lyle, and Rynne, 2009), scholars have frequently produced dour accounts of coaches' experiences of formal provision. Bar some exceptions which report benefits for novice learners (e.g., Nash and Sproule, 2012), courses have typically been portrayed ineffective because content is decontextualised and divorced from the realities of practice; thereby lacking transferability (e.g., Chesterfield, Potrac, and Jones, 2010; Jones and Allison, 2014; Jones, Armour, and Potrac, 2003; Lewis *et al.*, 2018; Piggott, 2012; Potrac, Jones, and Armour, 2002; Stodter and Cushion, 2017; Townsend and Cushion, 2017; Watts *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b). In this sense, coaching is coined as inherently 'unproblematic, thus assuming a clear set of achievable sequential goals' (Cassidy, Jones, and Potrac, 2004, p. 155).

As a consequence, coaches' engagements with formal coach education remain superficial (Townsend and Cushion, 2017; Kolic, Groom, Nelson, and Taylor, 2020). For instance, learners have reported adopting instrumental approaches to interactions with coach educators in order to pass courses, only to revert to tried and tested methods afterwards (e.g., Chesterfield *et al.*, 2010; Piggott, 2012). This has included the creation of *studentship* identities (e.g., Chesterfield *et al.*, 2010) and *docile acquiescence* (e.g., Piggott, 2012) in response to the formulaic, dogmatic, abstract, and authoritative positions coach educators are found to promote. Relatedly, several studies (e.g., Fielding-Lloyd and Mean, 2008, 2011, 2016; Sawiuk, Lewis, and Taylor, 2021) have highlighted how coach educators are instigators of discrimination and inappropriate conduct or practices, and



how learners' experiences are tainted by constraining *sacred texts*, *rites of passage*, and *time crunches* (e.g., Piggott, 2012).

In light of these insights, researchers have conducted a plethora of survey-based studies which have proposed a handful of prescriptive recommendations for improving the delivery, assessment, and impact of coach education (e.g., Callary, Werthner, and Trudel, 2011; Ciampolini, Milistedt, Rynne, Brasil, and Nascimento, 2019; Nelson, Cushion, and Potrac, 2013; Paquette and Trudel, 2018a; Sullivan, Paquette, Holt, and Bloom, 2012). In conjunction with this strand of work, a collection of theoretically informed solutions have been proposed, including socio-pedagogical approaches (e.g., Cassidy, Potrac, and McKenzie, 2006), competency-based programmes (e.g., Demers, Woodburn, and Savard, 2006), problem-based learning (e.g., Jones and Turner, 2006; Morgan, Jones, Gilbourne, and Llewellyn, 2013), mentoring (e.g., Cushion, 2006; Jones, Harris, and Miles, 2009), model-based instruction (e.g., Roberts, 2010), reflection (e.g., Knowles, Borrie, and Telfer, 2005), story-telling (e.g., Douglas and Careless, 2008), ethno-drama (e.g., Cassidy, Kidman, and Dudfield, 2015), and communities of practice (e.g., Culver and Trudel, 2006).

Most recently, scholars have begun to explore coaches' and coach educators' perceptions of the realities of implementing alternative methods, such as constructivist (e.g., Paquette, Hussain, Trudel, and Camire, 2014), heutagogical (e.g., McCarthy and Stoszowski, 2018; Stoszowski and Collins, 2018), humanistic (e.g., Cope, Cushion, Harvey, and Partington, 2021) and learner-centred approaches (e.g., Ciampolini, Camire, Neves Salles, Nascimento, and Milistedt, 2021; Culver, Werthner, and Trudel, 2019; Dempsey *et al.*, 2021; Edwards, Culver, Leadbetter, and Kloos, 2020).

Arguably, such criticisms and suggestions have been provided without a detailed consideration of where coach educators *fit* within organisational networks and the social realities of their work (Culver *et al.*, 2019; Watts *et al.*, 2021b). Worryingly, 'there has been little research that seeks to analyse the coach educator in depth, or position them within the broader relational system of coach education' (Cushion *et al.*, 2019, p. 544). Indeed, it is somewhat surprising that, up until recently, coach educators have remained largely invisible or taken-for-granted in academic depictions of formal coach education due to a lack of scholarship which explores, in theoretical and

empirical detail, the thoughts, feelings, and (inter)actions that characterise their everyday workplace relations with stakeholders (Allanson *et al.*, 2019; Cushion *et al.*, 2019; Cushion, Stodter, and Clarke, 2021; Downham and Cushion, 2020; Stodter and Cushion, 2019b; Watts *et al.*, 2021b).

Lately, however, a handful of exploratory studies have begun to attend to the relational, (micro)political, and performative dimensions of coach educators' work (e.g., Allanson *et al.*, 2019; Cushion *et al.*, 2019; Watts *et al.*, 2021b). These preliminary insights indicate that the achievement of personally and professionally valued outcomes are dependent on coach educators' capacities to play a strategic 'symbolic and relational game' to obtain, maintain, or advance the support, trust, and engagement of others (e.g., colleagues, co-tutors, learners, regional managers, national managers) (Cushion *et al.*, 2019, p. 544). This research has also made initial inroads into connecting coach educators' impression management to their respective working conditions (Kelchtermans, 2009b). That is, researchers have reported that the workplace performances produced by coach educators are intertwined with the economic value of their work (e.g., financial dependence), status (e.g., wearing the tracksuit), precarity and vulnerability (e.g., no guaranteed work, collegial competition, judgements of others), career prospects (e.g., allocation of hours and promotions), the maintenance of effective working relationships (e.g., dealing with unfamiliarity, power dynamics, conflicts, and tensions), and the development of a positive reputation amongst professional networks (e.g., Allanson *et al.*, 2019; Watts *et al.*, 2021b).

While these contributions are valuable, the use of retrospective interviews to uncover individual coach educators' interpretations of their relational dealings with others means that our critical understanding of how they 'accomplish human group life in practice' remains limited (Grills and Prus, 2019, p. 29). Therefore, there is a need for studies to adopt methodologies that deal more directly with both the solitary and collective *doing* of formal coach education (Callary and Gearity, 2020; Potrac, 2019). Furthermore, it seems remiss that there is a lack of detailed ethnographic work that examines the workplace performances and meaning-making of individual, as well as, teams of coach educators (Potrac, 2019). That is, to build a knowledge base that reflects the micro-level realities of coach education work, inclusive of coach educators' attempts to influence, cooperate,

coordinate, and communicate with others, research ought to be ‘descriptive of practices, and close to the action of indication, exchange, and reciprocity’ (Manning, 2014, p. 293). Simply, to study ‘meaning-making, face-to-face interaction, negotiations, impression management ... and all that is comprised in the complex world of achieving intersubjectivity ... we need to get where the action is’ (Grills and Prus, 2019, p. 216), where people are ‘collaborating in the here and now’ (Becker, 2014, p. 187).

### *1.6 Aims and Objectives*

This thesis explores how coach educators enact and experience the dramaturgical dimensions of work in relation to their (inter)connections with learners, co-tutors, colleagues, regional managers, national managers, external assessors and internal quality assurers. An ethnographic approach (e.g., semi-structured interviews, field observations) is used to address the following questions:

1. Individual Impression Management: What strategies do coach educators use in the workplace? How and why do these differ depending on where and with whom interactions take place?
2. Team Performances: How do coach educators collaborate with colleagues to collectively plan for, deliver, and reflect upon performances? What do they do? When, where, and why does this take place? What tensions, uncertainties, and challenges are experienced in these interactions?
3. Contextual Awareness: How are individual and collective interactions informed by coach educators’ understandings of their employment context and the wider social network in which they are embedded? When in the copresence of stakeholders, to what extent do coach educators consider the consequences of their performances beyond the immediate interaction?

### *1.7 Significance of the Study*

The significance of the thesis lies in its use of dramaturgical and relational theorising, and ethnographic methods to generate original and novel insights on the *doing* of coach education work; something that is sparse in the coach education literature base. This research seeks to build on Allanson et al’s (2019) conclusion that coach education work is a ‘dramaturgical, obligation driven activity that requires coach educators (individually and collectively) to consciously plan for and

critically reflect upon how they present themselves and their ideas, choices, and actions to others' (p. 12). As a result of developing Allanson et al's (2019) introductory use of dramaturgical concepts, this thesis responds to calls for coach education researchers to have more *intellectual courage* and to *look, think, and work harder* with dramaturgical and relational (i.e., social networks) theories to develop a greater appreciation of the problematic and intersubjective nature of group life (Grills and Prus, 2019; Potrac, 2019). For example, while Allanson and colleagues dealt only with limited matters of social interaction at the level of the individual coach educator, I break new ground by examining both individual and collective impression management through an expansive and in-depth application of Goffman's dramaturgical and post-dramaturgical theorising.

A related limitation of Allanson et al's (2019) work that this thesis addresses in detail, then, is the notion of teamwork. Even though Allanson et al (2019) briefly highlighted the tensions that may arise when coach educators work together in "real-time" (i.e., a co-tutor deviating from an agreed plan), no attention was given to how they dramaturgically collaborated or came together to plan, produce, and reflect on their collective workplace performances; an issue also reflected in the wider sport coaching literature. For me, the absence of empirical research on teamwork in coach education is surprising and unexpected because, typically, coach educators work in small-scale teams when delivering certification courses. In light of these shortcomings, this thesis is significant because it illuminates the following dimensions of teamwork and workplace collaboration:

- Planning: (a) constructing the scene, (b) monitoring the setting, (c) navigating copresence, (d) coping with ambiguity, (e) assigning roles, (f) curating service content, (g) supportive and strategic team-member interactions, and (h) reaching a collective agreement.
- Enactment: (a) coordinating individual presentations of the self, (b) controlling the flow of information, (c) managing the performance of team-members, (d) reparative strategies, (e) modes of communication, (f) prioritising outcomes, (g) dealing with emergent situations, and (h) overcoming the constraints of "official" service policies.
- Reflection: (a) evaluating team/member performances, (b) evaluating coach learner outcomes, (c) identifying problems and solutions, and (d) preliminary planning discussions.

To echo the thoughts of others (e.g., Aili and Nilsson, 2018; Halldorsson, Thordlindsson, and Katovich, 2017), understanding how cohesive group performances are developed, maintained, advanced, damaged, and repaired is paramount because teamwork is integral to the wider function of the business landscape, productivity, and quality of service. Furthermore, the approach adopted in this thesis contests the top-down, sanitised, and overly functional representations of coach education that populate existing research by addressing the ambiguities, dilemmas, and challenges that are a feature of coach educators' workplace relationships with others (Allanson *et al.*, 2019; Callary and Gearity, 2020; Jones and Wallace, 2005; Potrac, 2019). I believe that by harnessing a critical sociology that seeks to explore coach educators' interactions at the level of *what, who, when, where, and why*, this thesis begins to elucidate the complex, social, cultural, (micro)political, and psychological forces that influence their everyday practices (Callary and Gearity, 2020).

Clearly, beginning to unpack these complexities is important because, alongside supplementary qualifications and other forms of available learning (e.g., informal, non-formal), SGB-led coach education programmes still play a dominant role in coaches' professional development (McCarthy *et al.*, 2021). Moreover, given the crucial role of coach educators within this context and in facilitating the growth of a competent coaching workforce, knowledge pertaining to the above issues is vital (McCarthy *et al.*, 2021). On a practical level, generating a richer understanding of the microrealities of practice will help to support the recruitment and training of coach educators, as well as inform the future decision-making of policy-makers (Allanson *et al.*, 2019; Callary and Gearity, 2020; Potrac, Nichol, and Hall, 2020). Additionally, this project will have significant implications for stakeholders interested in other domains of sports work, such as coaching, professional sport, sport performance, competition, and sport science.

# CHAPTER 2

## Review of Literature

### *2.1 Introduction*

In this chapter, I provide a critical review of the extant literature relating to formal coach education. The purpose of the review, then, is twofold: 1) to critically map out existing research in the field, and 2) to show the reader that there is a paucity of sociological and ethnographic inquiry which addresses the various individual and collective *doing* of coach education. I begin the chapter by outlining the foundational philosophical principles that underpin research and introduce the spectrum of positions that are available to scholars. I then analyse the contributions made to coach education from each of these different perspectives to position this thesis against current work. Here, I shed light on the relative invisibility of the coach educator in existing scholarship. To finish, I provide a critical summary addressing the strengths and weaknesses of these contributions, and how this thesis represents new knowledge in the field of coach education (and beyond).

### *2.2 An Introduction to Research*

When conducting any form of inquiry, researchers must commit to a paradigm or philosophical position that informs the way they think about and do research (Mallett and Tinning, 2014). These frameworks provide a researcher with a particular set of belief systems, and a ‘worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the ‘world’, their place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts’ (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 107). Ultimately, a researcher’s standpoint will determine the type of questions they ask, the knowledge they produce, the methodologies they tend to prioritise, and their analytical distance from the research process and participants (Clarke, Caddick, and Frost, 2016). Relatedly, each paradigm contains a collection of guiding underpinning assumptions that answer, in their own terms, a set of questions grounded in three interdependent sense-making principles: ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Smith and Sparkes, 2016a). First, ontology inquires about ‘the form and nature of reality, and, therefore, what is there than can be known about it?’ (Smith and Sparkes, 2016a, p.

2). To date, the most discussed forms of ontology are realism and relativism (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). Realism originates from the belief that ‘a single, uniform, and objective reality exists externally ‘out there’ and independent from that person’, and alternatively, relativism ‘conceives of social reality as humanly constructed and shaped in ways that make it fluid and multi-faceted’ (Sparkes and Smith, 2014, p. 11). What this means, then, is that realist researchers believe reality is imposed on an individual’s consciousness by ‘immutable natural laws and mechanisms that are apprehendable’, whereas relativists contend that ‘subjective realities exist in the form of mental constructions’ or interpretations driven by categories of the mind (e.g., language, behaviour, and social and cultural symbols) (Sparkes and Smith, 2014, p. 11).

Epistemology describes the nature of knowledge or the logic a researcher uses when deciding what knowledge *is* and the privilege afforded to it throughout the research process (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Here, ontological positioning shapes the ‘relationship between the knower and would-be knower and what can be known’ (Smith and Sparkes, 2016a, p. 2). Depending on the version(s) of ontology that a researcher subscribes to, they will choose one of two epistemological positions: objectivism or subjectivism (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). Objectivism assumes that ‘the researcher and the researched ‘object’ are independent entities, and the researcher is capable of studying the object without influencing it or being influenced by it’ (Sparkes and Smith, 2014, p. 12). These researchers posit that a detached perspective or ‘looking at the world through a one-way mirror’ eliminates bias, achieves true objectivity, and produces theory-free knowledge (Sparkes and Smith, 2014, p. 13). A subjectivist epistemology contests the possibility of theory-free knowledge (i.e., objectivity), and advocates that ‘the knower and the known are inter-dependent and fused together in such a way that the findings are the creation of a process of interaction between the two’ (Sparkes and Smith, 2014, p. 13).

The ontology and epistemology that a researcher chooses shapes the methodology that they eventually construct (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). Even though methods do not exclusively belong to paradigms, certain approaches are favoured over others because they align more coherently with the goals of specific philosophical orientations (Matthews, 2021; Sparkes, 2015). Subsequently,

this warrants the adoption of different data collection techniques, analysis types, means of (re)presenting findings, and criteria for judging the *quality* of research (Merriam, 2009; Sparkes and Smith, 2014). For example, realist researchers often use experimental and manipulative approaches alongside quantitative methods (e.g., questionnaires, surveys, structured interviews) to control, measure, predict, explain, and statistically analyse phenomena (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). Here, ‘questions and/or hypotheses are stated in propositional form and subjected to empirical testing to verify or falsify these under carefully controlled and manipulated conditions’ (Sparkes and Smith, 2014, p. 13). Relativists, however, adopt hermeneutical (or interpretive) methodologies that prioritise qualitative methods (e.g., participant observations and semi-structured interviews) (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). For relativists, ‘the variable and personal (intramental) nature of social constructions’ means that accounts ‘can be elicited and refined only through interaction *between* and *among* investigator and respondents’ (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 111). That is, rather than utilising statistical techniques to analyse data, data are interpreted in an inclusive and dialectical fashion to generate increasingly sophisticated insights (Waring, 2021).

### *2.3 Paradigmatic Perspectives on Coach Education Research*

#### *2.3.1 Positivist Perspectives: Contributions from Positivism and Post-Positivism*

On account of the philosophical similarities and critiques that characterise (post)positivist inquiry, I will present my evaluation of both standpoints collectively at the conclusion of this subsection.

##### *2.3.1.1 Positivism*

Positivism follows a realist-external ontology, objectivist epistemology, and nomothetic methodology (Mallett and Tinning, 2014; Sparkes, 1992). With reference to the concepts that I introduced above, positivist researchers argue that ‘the social world external to individual cognition is a real world made up of hard, tangible, and relatively immutable facts that can be observed, measured, and known for what they really are’ (Sparkes, 1992, p. 20). Ideally, they try to apprehend objective and quantifiable knowledge concerning worldly phenomena from a ‘detached vantage point outside of it rather than from a place within it’ (Sparkes, 1992, p. 22). To do this,



manipulative, experimental, and mostly quantitative methodologies (e.g., randomised controlled trials and explicit, formulaic, step-by-step techniques) are used to establish cause-effect relationships, (dis)prove testable hypotheses, and control for researcher bias and external variables (Smith and Smoll, 2014). Moreover, these measures are taken in order to demonstrate the benchmark criteria (e.g., validity, verifiability, reliability, and universal generalisability) upon which positivist inquiry is scrutinised (Whaley and Krane, 2011).

In the field of coach education, positivist researchers have attempted to develop, test and chart the effectiveness of behavioural interventions for positively influencing coach and athlete outcome variables (Smith and Smoll, 2014). Mostly, this has involved multi-method approaches (e.g., observational and self-report measures) that provide different numerical indices of the predictive behaviours and outcomes that are relevant to specific theoretical models (Smith and Smoll, 2014). Arguably, the foundational work of Smith, Smoll and colleagues has made the greatest contribution to this body of research. Their thesis, which spanned over thirty years, focused on the interactions that tend to pass between coaches and young athletes (Smith and Smoll, 2014). They were primarily concerned with ‘identifying coaching behaviours that underlie athletes’ desirable psychosocial characteristics’ and designing a programme that trained coaches to create an athletic environment, which enhanced (a) coach-athlete and peer interactions, (b) the pleasure of participating, (c) self-esteem, (d) fostered adaptive achievement goals, (e) reduced performance anxiety, and (f) the percentage of children who drop out of sports (Smith and Smoll, 2014, p. 18).

Throughout their work, Smith, Smoll, and colleagues completed several linear and sequential research activities that followed traditional experimental guidelines. To begin with, they constructed a theoretical model based on previous literature and indicative scientific theories about the factors that influence coaches’ behaviours and their effects on young athletes (Smoll, Smith, Curtis, and Hunt, 1978). The core components of the model included coach behaviour, athlete perception and recall, and athletes’ evaluative reactions; the model proposed that ‘children’s evaluative reactions to what the coach does are mediated by their perceptions and recall of the coach’s actual behaviours’ (Smith and Smoll, 2014, p. 22). The model also depicted situational and

individual-specific variables that *may* influence athletes' reactions to their athletic experience(s) (e.g., attitude towards the sport, their own experience, the coach, and their team-mates), as well as hypothesised causal relationships amongst the components (Smoll *et al.*, 1978; Smoll and Smith, 1989).

Next, measures of the main constructs in the model were created. For example, Smith, Smoll, and Hunt (1977) developed the *Coaching Behaviour Assessment System* (or CBAS) to code and analyse observed coach behaviours in naturalistic settings. The CBAS was devised over several years based on observations and descriptions of the behaviours demonstrated by football, baseball, and basketball coaches in training and competition scenarios (Smith *et al.*, 1977). Once the data had been classified, a content analysis led to 12 main behavioural categories being defined within the coding system (Smith *et al.*, 1977). Across these categories, the CBAS deals with two types of behaviour; *reactive* (i.e., responses to immediately preceding player or team behaviours) and *spontaneous* (i.e., initiated by the coach and not a direct response) (Smith *et al.*, 1977).

The number of components within the model meant that a collection of self-report, other-report, and personality measures had to be created to rate coach and athlete perceptions of coach behaviour, and to assess athletes' reactions to their coach and team-mates, perceived enjoyment of their athletic experience, and self-esteem (e.g., Curtis, Smith, and Smoll, 1979; Smith, Zane, Smoll, and Coppel, 1983). To ensure that each measure corresponded with positivistic standards of scientific validity, Smith *et al.* (1977) designed CBAS training protocols for observers and conducted several studies to assess the reliability of the coding system, as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of the observer training (i.e., did it result in acceptable interrater reliability scores?). Following this, Smith, Smoll, and colleagues (e.g., Curtis *et al.*, 1979; Smith *et al.*, 1983; Smoll *et al.*, 1978) carried out an array of preliminary large-scale observational studies to analyse the actual behaviour of coaches and discover how they impacted young athletes (i.e., to define and measure the relationships between behaviours and athlete evaluative responses) (Smith and Smoll, 2014).

In one of the studies, Smoll *et al.* (1978) used the CBAS to code the behaviours of 51 male Little League baseball coaches over the course of 202 competitive games. Upon the conclusion of

the season, trained undergraduate students completed structured interviews with 542 players to assess their perceptions of how frequently coach behaviours occurred and the attitudes they held towards the coach (Smoll *et al.*, 1978). The former involved athletes indicating on a quantitative seven-point scale ranging from *never* to *almost always* how frequently a coach engaged in certain behaviours. The latter included responding to numerous seven-point scales in relation to *liking the coach* (i.e., dislike a lot to like a lot), *coach knowledge* (i.e., know nothing to know everything), and *team-mate* relations (i.e., very poor to very good). To evaluate predictive relationships between the behavioural and perceptual variables in the model, and the attitudes of athletes, a suite of statistical analyses were used (e.g., canonical correlational analysis). The analysis revealed that general technical instruction, encouragement, and reinforcement were the most observed behaviours, whereas punitive technical instruction, punishment, and keeping control were the least observed. In comparison, athletes perceived general encouragement, organisation, and keeping control to be the most frequently displayed behaviours (Smoll *et al.*, 1978).

Additionally, positive correlations were found between the tendency of coaches to adopt supportive and instructional approaches, and athletes' attitudes towards their coach, sport, and team(mates). In particular, spontaneity, reinforcement, and encouragement were positively related to attraction towards a coach, while high levels of punitive behaviours were negatively related (i.e., the coach was less liked) (Smoll *et al.*, 1978). In a follow-up study conducted by Curtis *et al.* (1979), similar trends in the data were reported when the situation-behaviour patterns of coaches (i.e., in winning or losing situations) were assessed against athletes' attitudes towards them. The statistical tests that followed CBAS coding and end-of-season questionnaires and interviews with athletes showed that the coaches of winning teams had higher rates of supportive behaviour (e.g., reinforcement), and the coaches of losing teams employed more punitive actions (e.g., punishment) in response to mistakes (Curtis *et al.*, 1979).

The empirical relationships found in these studies served as a scientific basis for deriving a series of 'behavioural guidelines for coaches that could be used in providing a better sports experience for youngsters' (Smith and Smoll, 2014, p. 27-28). Further, Smith and Smoll developed

a psychoeducational programme called *Coach Effectiveness Training* (CET), or as it is now known, the Mastery Approach to Coaching (MAC), to communicate said guidelines to practitioners (Smoll and Smith, 2014). The latter version remains grounded in CET principles but places a greater focus on outcomes associated with coaches establishing a *mastery* motivational climate (Smith and Smoll, 2014). The programme is implemented via a two-hour workshop (Smith and Smoll, 2014). It includes an oral presentation, a written manual that lists the *do's* and *don'ts* of coaching practice, a behavioural self-monitoring form, author-led modelling of (un)desirable methods, and opportunities to role-play (Smith and Smoll, 2014, p. 28). As Ives (2016) outlines, the interventions promote that: (i) the primary focus of youth sport is to have fun, learn sport skills, derive satisfaction from teamwork, increase self-esteem, and reduce fear of failure; (2) coaches employ a positive approach to coaching; (3) establish norms that emphasise athletes' mutual obligation and to help and support one another; (4) involve athletes in decisions concerning team rules, roles, and responsibilities; and (5) obtain behavioural feedback and engage in self-monitoring.

The final phase of Smith, Smoll, and colleagues' project involved examining the extent to which the CET (or MAC) was 'effective in producing its intended effects' (Smith and Smoll, 2014, p. 28). A handful of experimental studies were first carried out with CET trained and untrained (control group) coaches to compare the effects of the intervention on variables such as self-esteem (e.g., Smith, Smoll, and Curtis, 1979; Smoll, Smith, Barnett, and Everett, 1993), athlete attrition (e.g., Barnett, Smoll, and Smith, 1992), and performance anxiety (e.g., Smith, Smoll, and Barnett, 1995). In the latter stages of their thesis, the effects of the MAC were tested in much similar ways on variables relating to performance anxiety (e.g., Smith, Smoll, and Cumming, 2007) and goal orientation (e.g., Smoll, Smith, and Cumming, 2007) outcomes. The CET and MAC were consistently found to have positive effects on both the coaches and athletes who played for them in regard to all of the abovementioned measurement and outcome factors (Smith and Smoll, 2014).

For example, Smith et al (1979) examined the effects of the CET on 31 Little League baseball coaches involved with the major (10-to-12-year-olds) and senior (13-to -15-year-olds) strands of their respective programmes. Based on inferences from existing research (e.g., Bandura,

1977; Smith, Smoll, and Curtis, 1978), they hypothesised that: (1) the cognitive adaptations elicited by the intervention (i.e., the increased desire of a coach to generate certain consequences over others) would promote and mediate positive changes in overt coaching behaviours; and (2) differences in attitudes toward trained versus untrained coaches would be most pronounced for low self-esteem children. In the initial phase of the procedure, Smith et al (1979) randomly assigned the 31 coaches to either an experimental (CET trained;  $n = 31$ ) or control group ( $n = 13$ ).

To assess the effects of the CET on coaches and their players, the two groups were compared in terms of observed behaviours during games, players' perceptions of the behaviours, and player attitudes toward themselves, the coaches, team-mates, and the sport. Overt coaching behaviours were coded and assessed by means of the CBAS (Smith *et al.*, 1977); the observers were 16 undergraduate students who had undergone a 4-week period of extensive reliability training that included the protocols I described earlier. Akin to Smoll et al (1978), the player perception and attitude dimensions were examined through structured interviews upon the conclusion of the season. Like Smoll et al (1978), a plethora of seven-point scales were used to test the players' recall of behaviours and perceptions of their participation and ability-related experience. An adaptation of Coopersmith's (1967) Self-Esteem Inventory was also administered as a measure of general post-season self-esteem. The instrument, which consists of 14 descriptive statements, required the players to rate perceptions of self-esteem on a five-point scale.

Statistical tests comparing the rate scores of the experimental and control groups revealed that no significant differences existed on any of the 12 CBAS behavioural categories, nor did they vary on the total of the combined categories (Smith *et al.*, 1979). The only apparent difference between the two groups, as indicated by univariate F tests, was that trained coaches engaged in reinforcement more often. Moreover, univariate ANOVAs showed that CET trained coaches were perceived to demonstrate reinforcement, mistake-contingent encouragement, and general technical instruction more frequently, while also displaying non-reinforcement, punishment, and punitive technical instruction at a lesser rate. In terms of player attitudes, F tests indicated that children who played for CET trained coaches did not differ in their liking for baseball, but they did, however,

report greater enjoyment in playing for the coach, a stronger desire to play in the future, considered them a better teacher, and evaluated team-mates relationships more positively (Smith *et al.*, 1979).

Furthermore, a series of one-way ANOVAs comparing the post-season evaluations of players of experimental and control group coaches illustrated that even though perceptions of baseball ability did not differ, the players of CET trained coaches perceived that their coach and team-mates evaluated their skills more highly (Smith *et al.*, 1979). Changes in self-esteem scores for the two groups were assessed separately via t-tests for correlation means; the tests showed that significant pre-post self-esteem changes were evident for a portion of the experimental group players. The results of F tests of simple group effects that were carried out for self-esteem score (e.g., low, moderate, high) showed significant effects only for those players with a low self-esteem (Smith *et al.*, 1979).

Another example, taken from the later works of Smith and Smoll, is their examination of the effects of the MAC on performance anxiety (e.g., Smith *et al.*, 1995; Smith *et al.*, 2007). Smith et al (2007) examined the effects of the MAC on motivational climate and changes in male and female athletes' cognitive and somatic performance anxiety over the course of a basketball season. The study developed preliminary research that tested the efficacy of CET principles for reducing performance anxiety and fear of failure in young athletes (e.g., Conroy and Coatsworth, 2004; Smith *et al.*, 1995). One of these studies, produced by Smith et al (1995), assessed the effects of the CET on performance trait anxiety in 152 male 10- to 12-year-old baseball players who played for 8 experimental and 10 control group coaches. The results of statistical tests on responses to the *Sport Anxiety Scale* (SAS; Smith, Smoll, and Schutz, 1990) and *Children's Sport Competition Anxiety Test* (SCAT-C; Martens, 1977) outcome measures revealed that players of CET trained coaches had significant reductions on both trait anxiety scales.

Based on a set of theoretical and empirical predictions partly derived from those studies, Smith et al (2007) hypothesised that: (1) the MAC intervention would promote the development of a mastery-involving motivational climate; and (2) the reduced fear of negative social evaluation, lessened social comparison pressures, and enhanced social support associated with mastery-

involving climates would result in lower levels of cognitive and somatic performance anxiety over the course of the season in athletes whose coach was MAC trained. A total of 37 coaches and 216 athletes participated in the study. Coaches were placed into an experimental (n = 20) or control (n = 17) group; experimental group coaches received a 75-minute MAC workshop delivered by one of the authors.

Following the design of their previous work, Smith et al (2007) administered the Sport Performance Anxiety Scale-2 (SAS-2; Smith, Smoll, Cumming, and Grossbard, 2006) to players pre and post intervention, and the Motivational Climate Scale for Youth Sports (MCSYS; Smith, Cumming, and Smoll, 2008) at post intervention to measure aspects of motivational climate and changes in performance anxiety. On both instruments, players' responses were rated on 4 and 5-point Likert scales for several items. In an evaluation of the differences between athletes' perceptions of coach-initiated motivation climate between MAC and control condition subjects, hierarchical linear model analyses showed that athletes of MAC-trained coaches reported significantly higher levels of mastery-climate and lower levels of ego-related behaviours (Smith et al., 2007). As hypothesised, SAS-2 scores indicated that athletes of MAC-trained coaches perceived a decrease in anxiety from pre to late season, whereas athletes of control group coaches exhibited higher post season anxiety when compared to pre-season.

The work of Smith, Smoll, and colleagues also inspired other scholars to further test and develop applications of the CET (e.g., Coatsworth and Conroy, 2006; Conroy and Coatsworth, 2004) and MAC (e.g., Hassan and Morgan, 2015; McLaren, Eys, and Murray, 2015). For example, McLaren et al (2015) examined the effects of MAC training on athlete perceptions of group cohesion throughout a youth soccer season. On the basis of prior research (e.g., Smith and Smoll, 2007), they hypothesised that: (1) coaches with MAC training would demonstrate elevated task-related behaviours across the season; and (2) athletes competing for MAC coaches would have elevated perceptions of task and social cohesion at the end of the season compared with those whose coach was exposed to an attention-control intervention and wait-list control condition. A total of 20 coaches and 243 athletes participated in the study; coaches were assigned to an

experimental/MAC (n = 7), control/attention-control (n = 6), or wait-list (n = 7) group. The experimental group received an adapted version of the MAC, while the attention-control coaches took part in a non-MAC related psychology workshop.

Unlike the pre/post study designs that were used by Smith, Smoll, and colleagues, McLaren et al (2015) collected data at three time-points to measure and track the progression of MAC effects: at the beginning of the season (baseline scores pre-intervention), mid-season, and late season. At each stage, experimental group coaches completed a self-report measure based on the MAC protocol to record the percentage of time they engaged in a series of task-related coaching behaviours (control group coaches were asked to submit reports at the end of the season). McLaren et al (2015) administered the *Motivational Climate Scale for Youth Sport* (MCSYS; Smith *et al.*, 2008) and *Youth Sport Environment Questionnaire* (YSEQ; Eys, Loughhead, Bray, and Carron, 2009b) to the athletes at the same time. Both instruments involved athletes reporting their perceptions of coach-initiated motivational climate and group cohesion on Likert scales.

When compared with the control (i.e., attention-control) and condition (i.e., wait-list) groups, a series of ANOVAs revealed that a significant increase in perception of a task-related climate were reported by athletes of MAC trained coaches at the beginning-mid season and beginning-end of season measurement points (McLaren *et al.*, 2015). Relatedly, MAC trained coaches reported a greater use the various task-related behaviours, bar reinforcement, during the season. Further, a succession of 3x3 repeated-measures MANOVA tests examining differences in group cohesion (i.e., task and social cohesion) indicated that the athletes of MAC-trained coaches demonstrated significantly higher perceptions of task cohesion at the end of the season when compared to the control condition, but not the wait-list group. The same athletes also reported higher perceptions of social cohesion at the end of the season when compared to both the control and wait-list groups.

Leading on from the work that emanated from Smith and Smoll's research, scholars began to assess the impact of other courses on selected variables (e.g, coaching efficacy, injury rates, perceived competence). Some of these include *the Programme for Athletic Coaches Education*



(PACE; Malete and Feltz, 2000), *National Coach Certification Programme* (NCCP; Campbell and Sullivan, 2005), *Heads-Up Football* programme (HUF; Kerr, Yeargin, Valovich-McLeod, Nittoli, Mensch, Dodge, Hayden, and Dompier, 2015), and interventions grounded in transformational leadership (Vella, Oades, and Crowe, 2013), bandwidth feedback and questioning (Chambers and Vickers, 2006) and positive youth development (MacDonald, Camire, Erickson, and Santos, 2020).

For example, Malete and Feltz (2000) investigated the effects of the PACE programme on perceived coaching efficacy (i.e., coaches' beliefs in their capacity to affect the learning and performance of athletes). Malete and Feltz (2000) used the *Coaching Efficacy Scale* (CES; Feltz, Chase, Moritz, and Sullivan, 1999) to assess the relationships between the PACE and changes in constructs of coaches' efficacy based on a model previously conceptualised by Feltz and colleagues. The model, which is comprised of four dimensions of coaching efficacy (i.e., game strategy; motivation; technique; and character building), connects a coach's perceived efficacy levels to their past performances (e.g., win-loss record), experiences (e.g., years of coaching, coach preparation), perceived ability of the athletes, and perceived social support (Feltz *et al.*, 1999). It is expected that a coach's perceived efficacy has a positive influence on coaching behaviour(s) and player efficacy, performance, and satisfaction.

Feltz et al (1999) developed the CES to measure the four main dimensions of coaching efficacy outlined in the model. Once the CES met acceptable scientific standards, Feltz et al (1999) used it to test relationships between variables in the model with high school basketball coaches. Statistical tests supported their initial hypothesis, suggesting that past winning percentage, years in coaching, perceived team-ability, and community and parental support were predictive of coaching efficacy. Analysis also showed that coaches with higher efficacy had better win-loss records, greater player satisfaction, used more praise and encouragement, and less instructional behaviours than lower efficacy coaches. The lack of attention given to the effect of coach preparation, a core component of the model, framed the rationale for Malete and Feltz's (2000) study. From these findings, it was hypothesised that, 'an effective, well-designed coaching education programme

should enhance the level of coaching efficacy, especially at the novice level where previous experience has been minimal' (Malete and Feltz, 2000, p. 411).

A total of 60 coaches participated. From this sample, subjects were assigned into either an experimental (n = 36) or control (n = 24) group. Experimental group coaches were exposed to a 12-hour PACE programme, which covered topics relating to the four dimensions of efficacy; (i) role of the coach, (ii) effective instruction and game strategy, (iii) motivating athletes, (iv) personal social skills, (v) positive coaching, and (vi) maintaining discipline. Control group coaches were recruited from a physical education programme, which involved three hours of learning per week. As part of a pre-post design, the CES was administered to coaches prior to and after the completion of the intervention. The coaches were required to score their perceptions on a 10-point Likert scale for 24 different items concerning the four core components of the model (Malete and Feltz, 2000). The results of a 2x2 (group x pre-post) MANCOVA revealed that a significant difference existed between the two groups at post-test, and that the PACE group increased in efficacy from pre- to post-test. When compared to the control group, increases in both technique and game-strategy efficacy contributed most to the perceived improvements reported by PACE-trained coaches.

### *2.3.1.2 Post-Positivist Contributions to Coach Education Research*

Post-positivist researchers subscribe to a realist-social constructionist ontology, *modified* objectivist epistemology, and qualitative, quantitative, or mixed method research designs (Tracy, 2013, 2020). Ontologically, these researchers share the positivistic belief that entities in the social world exist independently of human perception and theories about them (Tracy, 2020). However, post-positivist ontology concedes that knowing about a reality is not limited to what can be *observed*, and that truth cannot be *fully* apprehended as a consequence of human interpretation (Miller, 2000). Post-positivists argue that although there are no claims to an absolute truth, the subsequent *partial* understandings that are produced (as a result of human values) enable predictive inferences to be drawn about the patterned and regulatory realities that constitute social life in specific contexts (Miller, 2000). Within this, though, researchers still pursue a single form of truth and 'believe with certainty that reality exists and that there is good reason to try to know it' (Gibson, 2016; Tracy,

2013, p. 39). From this perspective, cognitive attributes such as individual perception are taken as *proof* that a material reality does exist (Avner, Jones, and Denison, 2014).

Epistemologically, post-positivists hold the view that the ‘search for knowledge remains centred on causal explanations for regularities observed in the social world’ (Miller, 2000, p. 60). In contrast to the idea that scientific knowledge can only be developed from the separation of what is known (i.e, information), the knower (i.e., participants), and would-be knower (i.e., researcher), post-positivists reject the notion of *value-free* inquiry (Miller, 2000; Tracy, 2013). Similarly, rather than advocating a ‘blind obedience’ to the traditional scientific method, objectivity is instead considered as a ‘regulatory ideal’ (Miller, 2000, p. 61). What this means, then, is that post-positivists believe ‘humans are flawed, while science is considered objective and self-correcting’ (Tracy, 2013, p. 39). Thus, researcher biases are regarded as liabilities and, as such, ought to be corrected or minimised to avoid influencing the *truth* (Tracy, 2013). Like positivists, post-positivist researchers attempt to safeguard objectivity and advance scientific knowledge by using methods that strive to be unbiased and by taking measures that maximise neutrality (Miller, 2000). Further, they are likely to use triangulation (i.e., multiple methods, numerous theoretical frameworks, and large research teams) to verify, validate, or find a clear definitive answer to ‘what is happening here?’, as well as to meet realist criteria for judging the quality of research (Tracy, 2013, p. 40).

On the topic of formal coach education, post-positivist scholars have drawn upon a range of data types to identify *what works* in certification programmes delivered in SGB and higher education contexts (McCarthy *et al.*, 2021). The primary goal of this research has been, and continues to be, to contribute to coach development initiatives by providing generalisable *best practice* guidelines and solutions regarding programme structure, design, implementation, delivery, and content (McCarthy *et al.*, 2021). Mostly, this has involved moving beyond the behavioural conclusions offered by positivist scientists by unveiling the matrices of factors that underpin perceived course effectiveness or impact. Moreover, in contrast to the work(s) of Smith, Smoll, and colleagues, post-positivist researchers have tended to integrate different coach education

stakeholders (i.e., programme directors, managers, facilitators, administrators, and coach educators), other than just coaches or athletes, into their methodological designs.

The first strand of research situated within this agenda focuses on evaluating programme efficacy, fidelity, and effectiveness against existing frameworks, as well as testing the usability of theoretical approaches (e.g., Gilbert and Trudel, 1999; Hammond and Perry, 2005; McCullick, Schempp, and Clark, 2002; Milistetd, Trudel, Rynne, Mesquita, and Nascimento, 2018; Paquette and Trudel, 2018a; Reddan, McNally, and Chipperfield, 2016; Stoszkowski and Collins, 2021; Zakrajsek, Thompson, and Dieffenbach, 2015). For example, the formative work of Gilbert and Trudel (1999) sought to develop and test an evaluation strategy that assessed whether programmes, and by extension, coach educators, taught practically relevant content. They were concerned with (i) the consistency of how courses are delivered, (ii) the use of decontextualised and standardised evaluation tests used by positivist scholars, and (iii) identifying contextual factors that can be used to measure course and coach educator impact. Gilbert and Trudel (1999) further commented on the limitations of positivist work, noting that the complex nature of coaching contexts ‘eliminate the usefulness of only measuring a coach’s behaviours against a theoretical ‘effective coaching’ model’ and for subsequently judging the effectiveness of training programmes (p. 236).

Thus, they advocated for evaluations of large-scale coach education programmes that use an array of data collection and analysis techniques that attend to matters of course delivery, gains in knowledge, and knowledge use. In their study, Gilbert and Trudel (1999) drew upon Brinkerhoff’s (1987) model to inform their evaluation strategy. Specifically, Gilbert and Trudel utilised the following three stages of the model to evaluate an NCCP level two theory course: stage III (was the programme delivered as designed?); stage IV (did the coach acquire any new knowledge); and stage V (was there a change in instructional behaviours of reference to course concepts after the course?). The strategy was tested with a male coach of a boys’ Peeewe competitive ice hockey team in Canada. Data were collected in three phases: (a) baseline (three games and two practices); (b) intervention (during the NCCP course); and (c) post-intervention (three games and two practices). Gilbert and Trudel (1999) presented the data collection and analysis methods they used

against each of the evaluation stages. In stage III, the researcher(s) adopted a participant observer role to assess how the conduct of the course and coach educator aligned with the course design, and compared the data to guidelines in the *Course Conductor's Handbook* (CAC, 1989). In stage IV, background interviews, post-course knowledge tests, and a summary interview were conducted to determine if the coach gained any sport science knowledge from the course. Content analysis of the pre/post interviews were carried out to assess knowledge gains.

Finally, in stage V, videotaping/observation and interviews were used to confirm if the coaches' behaviours were influenced by course concepts, and if the coach more frequently referred to them. Prior to each game and practice, semi-structured interviews (SSI), which focused on planning concepts, were completed with the coach. Next, modified stimulated recall interviews (SRI) were utilised post-event to examine coach decision-making and thought processes in relation to course concepts. Gilbert and Trudel (1999) inductively coded the SRI transcripts then compared the data alongside the course concepts. Further, content analysis was performed on all interviews whereby pre-post meaning units were compared to analyse developments in knowledge. In accordance with post-positivist traditions, the authors took precautions to minimise their influence (and thereby enhancing the accuracy of the results), including (a) undergoing training procedures and coding reliability tests, (b) achieving acceptable levels of inter rate reliability and (c) member checking.

Even though Gilbert and Trudel (1999) made no claims regarding the efficacy of the programme, there were significant findings for each stage of the evaluation. Data regarding stage III, for example, demonstrated that the coach educator did not deliver the course as it was designed, as discrepancies existed between the recommended and *actual* time allocations of activities. That said, however, the instructor followed the remaining guidelines whilst conducting the programme (i.e., the use of CAC resources, teaching methods). Stage IV data indicated that no new knowledge was gained by the coach, and that the course actually served to predominantly reinforce his existing perspective and coaching methods. Stage V analysis revealed both the use and non-use of course concepts. On coach decision-making factors, the authors concluded that the 22% increase in the

coach's references to player characteristics in practices from pre-post course suggests that the programme had a positive impact. This claim was also supported by the coach citing concepts from categories (i.e., field information and coach knowledge) that related to content from within the programme. In contrast, coding revealed that the coaches' attitude was a stronger predictor of behaviour than the course guidelines, and that there was limited post-course change. Lastly, content analysis of the interviews showed that the coach referred to the same concepts both pre and post course, with the only change applying to references around *Analysis of Skills*. Interestingly, Gilbert and Trudel (1999) found that several intersecting contextual factors (i.e., competition, socio-economic conditions) restricted the coach's ability to implement course concepts. Nonetheless, Gilbert and Trudel asserted that the devised evaluation strategy successfully measured knowledge transfer, and remained sensitive to the behavioural and cognitive components of coaching.

Hammond and Perry (2005) later built on a small number of earlier studies that highlighted inconsistencies in how programmes were implemented by coach educators (e.g., Gilbert and Trudel, 1999; McCullick *et al.*, 2002). Hammond and Perry (2005) sought to: (i) determine the relationship between the aims of course providers and the *actual* events that occurred during two soccer coaching accreditation courses; and (ii) evaluate performance analysis methods for assessing the coach educators' performance (i.e., evaluate delivery and effectiveness). In course one, participants consisted of 30 university PE students, and in course two, 14 community-based coaches; both were delivered by the regional coaching director. Data were collected via document analysis, post-course questionnaires, structured interviews, and hand notation, computer logging, and video recording. First, Hammond and Perry (2005) drew upon Wellington's (2000) framework for analysing documents to examine two syllabus documents which served as resources for coach educators: (a) the *Soccer Australia Instructor's Manual*; and (b) a *NNSW Soccer Federation* instructor's manual. Second, the authors administered questionnaires to participants post-course to gain insight in their perceptions of programme effectiveness (i.e., to what extent were the aims of the coach educator and course syllabus directives achieved?). The questionnaire was split into two parts, whereby course attendees (a) ranked their responses about the course and tutor on a five-point Likert scale, and (b) responded to open-ended questions seeking feedback on best aspects of

the course, the coach educator, and suggestions for improvement. Third, follow-up structured interviews were conducted with the coach educator to explore the issues that arose during delivery, as well to gather his perceptions of the aims and focus of the course, what he believed were the most important aspects of delivery, and what the priority for reflection should to be in terms of effectiveness. The fourth method included different performance analysis methods that supported observations and interviews. In course one, hand notation and video-recordings were used to log six events identified as significant from the document analysis. In course two, a laptop, in combination with a customised version of the GameBreaker 4.0.4 Sports Analysis package, were used to log observed events (allowing a more frequent and detailed breakdown).

Hammond and Perry (2005) used qualitative and statistical techniques to analyse the data. Like previous research, data analysis indicated that there was a dissonance between the intent of the coach educator and the events that transpired in practice. For instance, while his perceptions and priorities for course direction and content aligned with the syllabus and instructor manuals, the performance analysis method identified several practical inconsistencies. Even though the course documents stated that greater focus should be given to *coaching practice* and *methodology* than *technique* and *skill*, the latter was afforded more attention (33%) than the former (28%). The authors also reported differences between hand notation logging and learner questionnaire responses. Despite the participants claiming that fun and engaging activities were the most enjoyable aspect of the course, hand notation showed that the coach educator spent 70% of the time talking, and that 75% of the programme was passive, which again contradicted the syllabi. Overall, learners rated the quality of the course favourably (i.e., organisation, workload, content relevance) and thought the tutor to be effective (i.e., communication, preparation). From this, Hammond and Perry (2005) concluded that the techniques employed to assess the performance of athletes were/are useful for evaluating coach educators' on-course performance(s) and quality of delivery.

More recently, Paquette and Trudel (2018a) used Blumberg's (2009) five-stage framework for developing and assessing learner-centred (LC) approaches (function of content; role of the instructor; responsibility for learning; the purposes and processes of assessment; and the balance of

power) to evaluate the LC status of Canada Golf's *Coach of Developing Competitors* module. They also explored the evolution of the programme relating to its educational principles and external drivers. Paquette and Trudel (2018a) recruited seven coach education administrators and adopted two data collection strategies. First, they analysed five Canada PGA documents which outlined the design, delivery, and evaluation processes of the programme (i.e., candidate workbook, facilitator and evaluator guide), as well as early versions of the curriculum. Second, they conducted two SSIs, informed by the constructivist coach education literature, with each participant, which focused on their biographies, coaching/education philosophies, and experience of programme design. Three months later, the authors examined the participants' perspectives of the new programme's (a) content, (b) delivery process and facilitator training, and (c) assessment and evaluation structure.

Paquette and Trudel (2018a) inductively and deductively analysed the interview data and historical documents to create themes that corresponded with the various dimensions of Blumberg's (2009) framework. Next, they deductively analysed the three existing Canada PGA documents against her framework as guided by reliability-tested recommendations for applying her assessment rubric. Analysis of the SSIs and documents revealed that the restructuring of the programme over time was influenced by internal and external drivers. Pedagogically, iterations of the course included *the way to teach* (1985), *Socratic learning* (1995), *finding a balance* (1999), and 'learner-centred approach' (2010). Programme evolution was also encouraged by tensions and factors associated with (a) reviews and learner dissatisfaction, (b) changes in governance, (c) trends in education, (d) governmental alignment requirements, and (e) continuity of key people. Paquette and Trudel (2018a) confirmed the LC status of the programme because it demonstrated high levels of fealty to each construct of Blumberg's (2009) framework, in that: (i) the facilitator and learner shared responsibility for learning; (ii) the programme promoted self-directed learning and a problem-based approach, and (iii) it prioritised reflective and authentic real-world self-assessments.

The second strand of research utilises coaches' and coach educators' perceptions of formal coach education to evaluate programmes and draw generalisable conclusions regarding effectiveness, impact and usability (e.g., Araya, Bennie, and O'Connor, 2015; Callary, Rathwell,



and Young, 2018; Carson, 2008; Dohme, Rankin-Wright, and Lara-Bercial, 2019; Falcao, Bloom, and Gilbert, 2012; Griffiths, Probert, and Cropley, 2018; Maclean and Lorimer, 2016; McCarthy and Stoszkowski, 2018; McCullick, Belcher, and Schempp, 2005; Misener and Danylchuk, 2009; Nash, 2003; Nash and Sproule, 2012; Rodrigues, Brasil, Milistetd, and Trudel, 2021; Stoszkowski and Collins, 2018; Stoszkowski, McCarthy, and Fonseca, 2017; Vella, Crowe, and Oades, 2013; *Inter Alia*).

For example, McCullick et al (2005) evaluated the strengths of the *Ladies Professional Golf Association's* (LPGA) *National Education Programme* (NEP) by examining the perceptions of 26 learners and five teacher (coach) educators. In particular, the authors wanted to know (a) what components of the NEP curriculum coaches perceived to be the most beneficial for their development, and (b) what components the coach educators perceived to be most beneficial for them. The NEP covered topics such as how to teach the golf swing, fit students with proper equipment, create and market their teaching programmes, and how to adjust teaching approaches for different student learning styles. Data were collected using three interrelated methods: (i) interviews; (ii) journals; and (iii) observations. First, McCullick et al (2005) carried out separate daily group interviews with coaches and coach educators. Second, both sets of participants received journals; coaches were asked to record their perceptions of the programme and interactions with coach educators, and instructors were tasked with commenting on the extent to which they perceived the candidates to have accepted the presented information. Finally, the authors observed the courses and took fieldnotes to either verify or contradict the interview and journal data.

From the strengths identified in the analysis, McCullick et al (2005) derived four overlapping principles which they believe should inform successful coach education programmes. The first finding emphasised the importance of learners experiencing a clear and structured progression of content (i.e., from basic to complex; time to practice), practically applied learning (i.e., a balance of theory and practice), and frequent interactions that occur within supportive and encouraging environments. The second finding indicated that pedagogical knowledge must play a dominant role in curriculums, and that coach educators ought to model it to learners. In this study,

all participants gave considerable store to providing guidance, often in the form of demonstration and peer mentoring, around *how* to teach. The third finding illustrated the value of learners being taught content knowledge by insightful coach educators. For coaches, some strengths of the NEP were the instructors' perceived shared consensus and alignment between the espoused expectations and course messages, strength of their subject specific knowledge (i.e., mechanics of the golf swing), and authenticity. Interestingly, coach educators noted that opposing philosophies created tensions when delivering content (i.e., hiding conflicts to avoid confusion), and that subject matter was the least important feature. Finally, McCullick et al (2005) claimed that the integration of research in courses must be a priority. Although some candidates reported that the research-practice connection was missing, others (including instructors) highly rated the use of research (i.e., guest lecturers) and explained that it increased the credibility of programme content.

In a later study, Nash and Sproule (2012) recruited 621 coaches from a range of sports, coaching and qualification level(s), and experiential backgrounds to explore similarities and differences in their perceptions of the impact of formal coach education on coaching practice. Fundamentally, Nash and Sproule were concerned with examining notions of learning, assessment, knowledge, and decision-making within, and as a consequence of, coach education. A questionnaire adapted from a study conducted by the Australian Sports Commission was administered to the 621 participants over a period of 10 months from attending NGB and tertiary governed courses. The survey, which had been developed and validated by focus group and pilot studies (e.g., ASC, 2001), included questions addressing coach background, issues with formal coach education (e.g., course organisation; course qualification; assessment; and learning), and coaches' perceptions of their previous experiences.

Nash and Sproule (2012) analysed coach background data by calculating means, frequencies, ranges, and standard deviations. The remaining questions (answered on a five-point Likert scale) were analysed using a Chi-Square test of association, meaning the authors compared two items within participants' submitted responses to determine whether a relationship existed between the variables (e.g., level of qualification and perceptions of learning). The questionnaire

also offered a qualitative component, whereby participants were given an opportunity to add richness to their answers. Broadly, the findings reported by Nash and Sproule (2012) reflect(ed) the existing criticisms of formal coach education outlined in the literature (e.g., Cushion *et al.*, 2003; Nelson, Cushion, and Potrac, 2006; Potrac, Brewer, Jones, Armour, and Hoff, 2000). That is, although the participants identified formal courses as key providers of sport-specific information (i.e., tactics), they were perceived to have little impact or effectiveness due to the neglect of pedagogical content.

In terms of the organisational issues that affect coach education, Nash and Sproule (2012) identified a statistical difference between participant responses; lower-level coaches reported that communication, a sense of belonging, and accessing mentors were all problematic. The participants also documented several issues concerning course qualifications and quality. Here, coaches commented on the complexity of sport-specific content (i.e., it was divorced from the complex realities of *doing* the job and failed to develop reflective skills), attendance requirements (i.e., issues with scheduling, timing, and perceived *time filler* activities), expenses (i.e., problems in applying for and accessing funding), and the difficulty gap between qualifications (i.e., coaches mentioned ambiguous and large jumps in expectations, as well as limited access to preparatory support). When describing issues with assessment, participants cited the quality of assessors (i.e., a lack of parity in approachability, knowledge, and communication), the clarity around criteria (i.e., limited transparency regarding expectations and rationale as to who passed or failed), practical assessments during the course (i.e., peer coaching did not represent their environment or assess relevant practical skills), and the necessity of developing a rapport with assessors to ensure success.

The final set of findings presented by Nash and Sproule (2012) attended to several learning issues highlighted by the participants. In the *development of knowledge* theme, many of the coaches believed that courses provided them with new skills, drills, and technical information. For higher level coaches, however, this was secondary to distance learning and individual learning analysis, and thus courses were generally considered as ineffective. The *application of new knowledge into coaching* theme revealed that while some of the lower- level coaches perceived

course content to be easily transferred, the majority reported that the translation of content into practice was problematic due to decontextualised learning. Interestingly, 72% of the coaches did not consider learner decision-making as an important feature of formal education, and suggested that it was consistently de-emphasised in favour of performing by rote (i.e., modelling assessor practice). A common theme that arose was the significance that the participants attached to collaborative and/or group learning. In total, 67% of the coaches identified working with others as extremely beneficial for their development, with the more experienced practitioners referencing mentors and networks as key sources of knowledge.

In the tertiary coach education setting Griffiths et al (2018) evaluated the impact of a *Flipped University approach* on student learning, development, and employability in a football-specific foundation degree programme. The authors also wanted to test the efficacy of, at the time, a new and innovative type of andragogy in higher education settings. The programme, which is delivered at the University of South Wales (USW), chiefly involves students undertaking intensive work-based placements while attending the university on a residential basis. Griffiths et al (2018) recruited 106 current and 41 graduate students to take part in the study. Each participant completed a quantitative course evaluation questionnaire, and from these, follow-up SSIs were conducted with 12 participants to further explore the impact of the programme. Numerical data were analysed by calculating the percentages of *agreement* as scored on Likert scales, and interview data were inductively then deductively analysed against pre-defined themes relating to the core items on the questionnaire.

Griffiths et al (2018) reported that students positively evaluated the programme, often citing professional competencies (e.g., coaching delivery, leadership), career development (e.g., gaining full-time, part-time, or casual employment; transferable theoretical knowledge and practical skills; ability to perform workplace tasks; awareness of learning opportunities), enhanced intra and inter-personal knowledge (e.g., critical thinking; reflection; communication), and industry knowledge (e.g., greater understanding of football and community coaching) as the main course outcomes. Other beneficial aspects of the course included the opportunity to complete vocational

qualifications, engagement in experiential learning and authentic assessment, and the perceived alignment of teaching with the current trends in coaching practice and employment. Finally, even though aspects of support (i.e., in-situ mentor, lack of face-to-face education) were considered unsatisfactory by some of the participants, academic support was perceived favourably.

Another recent example is a study by Dohme et al (2019). Using a critical realist research philosophy alongside a realist evaluation methodology, Dohme and colleagues evaluated the mechanisms that fostered the success or failure of a large-scale coach education programme. As part of a wider investigation conducted to design, implement, and evaluate the tailored programme for basketball coaches in two Philippine high schools, the authors set out to determine the characteristics of effective coach educators, as potential mediators of coach commitment and life-long learning, which contributed to (un)desirable outcomes. The programme entailed a six-day residential introductory course, a ten-month in-situ practicum project, and a five-day residential consolidation course. Dohme et al (2019) also note that the course was delivered by eight coach educators who subscribed to a constructivist view of education and learning (e.g., Jarvis, 2006; Moon, 2001, 2004).

keeping with the traditions of realist evaluation, Dohme et al (2019) produced a series of *context, mechanism, and outcome* (CMO) configurations showing *how* the particular course worked (or did not). To fully understand the influences that generated outcomes for the 28 coaches and two coach coordinators who took part in the study, the authors collected data at two time points through a mixed method approach consisting of SSIs, coach and athlete focus groups, and perceived competence self-rating questionnaires. Only data from the interviews and focus groups were included in this study. Two UK-based coach educators (also authors of the manuscript) involved in course delivery carried out the interviews and focus groups. The first set were conducted upon completion of the introductory course to assess *what worked*. The second round of data collection took place 12 months later at the conclusion of the consolidation course. Here, individual SSI were completed with 12 participants who had taken part in previous interviews or focus groups (i.e.,

after the introductory course). The focus group and interview data were analysed inductively drawing upon the principles of thematic analysis.

From Dohme et al's (2019) analysis, it was concluded that the programme was successful. Broadly, the findings reflected a CMO configuration in that: (i) coaches reported having little knowledge of coaching theories and sport science prior to the course due to perceived low quality and limited opportunities (*context*), and (ii) the coach educators demonstrated three distinct groups of behaviours that positively influenced course outcomes (e.g., **A**- being available, approachable, and supportive; **B** - creating a sense of belonging; and **C** - raising coach aspirations by increasing their sense of purpose and duty) (*mechanism*). Together, these generative mechanisms fostered coaches' motivations to commit to the programme and become active learners who implemented and shared learning content and insights to benefit others (*outcome*). With respect to the impact of the programme, the participants claimed that they developed an increasingly holistic perspective of athlete development, a marked capacity to plan research informed coaching sessions, establish and maintain positive relationships with stakeholders, provide game-based and differentiated training, and use democratic instead of authoritarian teaching methods.

There is also a growing body of post-positivist work that has attended to the training and practice of coach educators. First off, researchers have analysed the task demands, professional skill sets, and behaviours associated with coach educators' practice (e.g., (e.g., Abraham, Morgan, North, Muir, Duffy, Allison, Cale, and Hodgson, 2013). Some authors have compared and assessed coach educators' fidelity to course goals and content (e.g., Sovik, Larsen, Tjomsland, and Samdal, 2016; Van Hoye, Larsen, Sovik, Wold, Heuze, Samdal, Ommundsen, and Sarrazin, 2015), while others have shed light on how they evaluate the usability of certain initiatives (e.g., Belalcazar and Callary, 2022; Kloos and Edwards, 2021). The final strand of research has examined coach educators' perceptions of their own professional training courses (e.g., Campbell, Fallaize, and Schempp, 2020; Kraft, Culver, and Din, 2020; Redgate, Potrac, Boocock, and Dalkin, 2022).

Van Hoye et al (2015) used the RE-AIM framework to compare how the *Empowering Coaching* training programme was implemented in France and Norway. The authors evaluated the

implementation process (and effectiveness) of the tutor training and coach development modules by assessing the levels of *adoption* (i.e., the percentage of staff who agreed to deliver it), *implementation* (i.e., the skill and consistency with which various key elements of the programme were delivered), and '*maintenance*' (i.e., the degree to which it is sustained over time in the organisation) demonstrated by trained coach educators. In total, 12 coach educators participated in the main trial of the study. Each participant received extensive training (i.e., seminar, observed practice delivery) prior to delivering the workshop to coaches; the implementation of the tutor training was evaluated as a preliminary step in preventing type III errors. Van Hoyer et al (2015) wrote that they expected the RE-AIM framework to improve programme validity because it helps to identify what factors influence course outcomes (e.g., training; context; theoretical philosophy).

Van Hoyer et al (2015) recorded each participant's workshop involvement on an excel spreadsheet. Additionally, a workshop observation scale was used to rate the extent to which coach educators delivered content with fidelity and established a (dis)empowering motivational climate. Content fidelity was measured by recording the frequency with which each participant referred to the learning material. The quality of fidelity (i.e., accuracy and relevance) was assessed by coding the major topics taught by the participants against 44 key items. The fidelity of the participants' delivery style was judged in line with the 15 remaining items. The first main form of data collection included administering a post-workshop questionnaire to course attendees (i.e., grassroots football coaches) after the workshops. The coaches were asked to submit their responses to questions regarding *course evaluation* and *suggestions for improvement* on a five-point Likert scale. The second method entailed conducting interviews with coach educators before and after the main trial to evaluate the extent to which participants expected to use the programme in the future.

Van Hoyer et al (2015) subjected all qualitative data to a thematic analysis, while a suite of statistical tests were used to analyse the quantitative data (i.e., hierarchical modelling; MANOVA). Generally, the findings showed that the Norwegian coach educators delivered content with higher fidelity and a less ego-involving climate than their French counterparts. Importantly, the validity of the coach educators' training was confirmed for both countries, as adequate implementation fidelity

was reflected through the creation of empowering climates (94%) and the application and coverage of key PAPA principles (84%). The authors also found differences in implementation and staff adoption between the two countries, but none for maintenance. In terms of adoption, four French coach educators withdrew from the trial once they had been certified to deliver the two main workshops. Even though the statistical tests revealed differences in both the extent to which key ideas were delivered with fidelity and the influence of coaches' age on course evaluation, attendees perceived the programme favourably. Lastly, all of the participants considered aspects of the course (i.e., the emphasis on *process*; group work) salient features of their current and future practice.

More recently, Redgate et al (2022) adopted a critical realist research philosophy and a realist evaluation methodology informed by normalisation process theory to evaluate The FA's PGDip; a reality grounded learning initiative designed to develop coach educators' professional judgements and decision-making. Redgate et al (2022) assessed the success or failure of the PGDip by understanding how various networks of CMO configurations produced programme theories (i.e., causal pathways that lead to impact). The authors were interested in the generative mechanisms that made the PGDip work, who it worked for (what outcomes were produced for different individuals and The FA), in which circumstances, and why. A total of 28 coach educators were enrolled on the PGDip. Data were generated in an iterative three-step process spanning a period of 13 months. Stage one entailed developing initial programme theories via interviews with staff from The FA and university, as well as readings of the literature and findings from an analysis of PGDip documents. In stage two, Redgate et al (2022) tested and refined initial theories based on ethnographic observations of course delivery and theory refinement interviews with coach educators. In stage three, final programme theories were created from follow-up theory refinement and consolidation interviews with coach educators and staff from The FA and university.

Redgate and colleagues' analysis indicated that the PGDip was successful in (a) delivering relevant training which impacted and shaped professional practice(s), (b) bringing together coach educators to develop a more coherent workforce, and (c) enhancing the professionalisation of coach education by giving extra credibility to the role. The PGDip recognised that coach educators had a



wealth of previous knowledge and experience to draw upon within their structured learning (*context*), and utilised self-reflection (mechanism) to facilitate the application of new learning to existing localised expertise (*mechanism*), in turn supporting real-world in-situ decision-making (*outcome 1*), the creation of new ways of working (*outcome 2*) and improvements in the game (football) (*outcome 3*). Generally, the participants reported that the PGDip was essential for enhancing their credibility, job stability, and ability to work effectively in contexts characterised by academic backgrounds. Unsurprisingly, then, the coach educators explained that developments in their shared understanding, knowledge, and awareness of education theory and adult learning were the most valued outcomes. The generative mechanisms that underpinned this included national training events, peer sharing, critical discussion and reflection, and work-based assessments.

### *2.3.1.3 A Critique of Positivism and Post-Positivism in Coach Education Research*

Overall, positivistic research has made valuable contributions to understanding the effectiveness of formal programmes. However, a preoccupation with finding *what works* has resulted in depictions of coach education that are devoid of the contextually situated relationships, relational networks, social interactions, and meaning-making which reflect the everyday complexities that coaches and coach educators experience when working with others (Jones, 2019; Jones and Wallace, 2005; Callary and Gearity, 2020). While potentially rich data generation methods are used (i.e., diaries, interviews, observations), an emphasis on author evacuation and statistical or surface-level analysis has, at best, produced superficial descriptive accounts which coin coach educators' practice in abstract, passive, and simplistic ways and render them as non-influential bystanders (Stodter and Cushion, 2019a). For Grills and Prus (2019), this is problematic when seeking to understand social interchange, because:

‘Rather than study the humans participating in organisational life as thinking, acting, interacting, resisting, and adjusting agents, people are often treated as dependent variables (wherein they experience certain outcomes), as independent variables (by virtue of certain qualities or properties), or as intervening variables (wherein people serve as the mediums through which various structures exert influences or produce certain outcomes).’ (p. 5)

On the doubtful capacity of positivistic traditions to uncover social life, Goffman (1971)

adds:

‘Fields of naturalistic study have not been uncovered through these methods. Concepts have not emerged that re-ordered our view of social activity. Understanding of ordinary behaviour has not accumulated; distance has.’ (p. 20-21).

Over the past two decades, coach education scholars (e.g., Bowes and Jones, 2006; Cassidy, Jones, and Potrac, 2016; Cushion *et al.*, 2003; Jones, 2019; Potrac *et al.*, 2000) have condemned the *knowledge for action* research agenda that underpins this body of work. Criticisms have been directed towards the straightforward, foundationalist, and functionalistic methodological designs that have been used to produce ‘how-to handbooks’ and generalisable prescriptions for practice (Cassidy *et al.*, 2016, p. 09). Problematically, the rationalistic representations of coach education that have followed such cursory (a)theoretical interpretations are considered too unrealistic and decontextualised to be actionable, thus holding limited practical and conceptual relevance (Jones, 2019). Relatedly, the statistical modelling which has frequently been used to infer relationships between variables of interaction has resulted in a ‘paint by numbers’ and unproblematic perspective that reduces the functional, complex, non-linear and contested nature of reality (Jones and Wallace, 2005, p. 120). In turn, the *doing* of coach education has been conceptualised as an inherently sanitised, simplistic and knowable sequence of events (Jones, Bowes, and Kingston, 2010).

Consequently, a ‘rush to prescription, and the refusal to wade in and closely examine the ‘swamp of practice’, has resulted in a ‘misrepresentation of the activity’ (Jones, 2019, p. 75). In response to this, researchers (e.g., Bowes and Jones, 2006; Jones, 2019; Jones and Wallace, 2005) have advocated for a problematic epistemology of coach education that entails *knowledge for understanding*. That is, rather than presenting accounts that are uncontaminated by the ambiguous social, political, relational, and cultural features of day-to-day working life, this agenda seeks to develop a ‘quality of mind’ by generating insights concerning the social complexities of interactive phenomena to formulate critical understandings as a *precursor* for action (Cassidy *et al.*, 2016, p. 6; Potrac, Jones, and Nelson, 2014). For Jones (2019), it is in this approach to research where ‘the formulations and origins of coaching [read coach education] as a collective social practice lies’ (p. 40). Further, the advocated critical use of theories ‘bring new observations or insight to light’

(Cassidy *et al.*, 2016, p. 9) and provide ‘a sense-making framework inclusive of a grammar and vocabulary for what is observable’ (p. 177).

Crucially, to avoid the positivistic folly of identifying and prescribing ‘good practice’ and ‘how to attain it at the expense of a thorough grasp of the practice itself’ (Jones and Wallace, 2005, p. 123), researchers subscribing to the above agenda are advised to richly examine *who* coach educators are, how and why they individually and collectively think, feel, and act as they do, and the (un)intended consequences of their (inter)actions (Jones, 2019; Callary and Gearity, 2020). Therefore, instead of hiding social ‘complexity under a veil of homogeneity and generalisation’ (Jones, 2019, p. 3), the ambiguity and pathos endemic to coach education are embraced as ‘creative survival’ (Jones, 2019, p. 3) and explored via the planned and necessary interactions that it entails. Scholars suggest that research can better conceptualise the workplace realities of coach educators by investigating how they experience social arrangements (i.e. relations, collaboration, conflict) and by attending to the interactive ‘self-organising local work’ they engage in (Jones, 2019, p. 365). Post-structuralism and interpretivism hold much promise for informing this endeavour.

### *2.3.2 Post-structuralist Contributions to Coach Education Research*

Post-structuralist researchers refute the philosophical and methodological foundations of positivistic inquiry. Post-structuralist ontology contends that multiple realities exist as a consequence of contested and fragmented localised *truths* (Avner *et al.*, 2014). Epistemologically, scholars of this ilk subscribe to subjectivism, maintaining that knowledge is inherently contextual, power-ridden, and political (Avner *et al.*, 2014). Broadly, the post-structuralist paradigm examines how context-specific discourses (i.e., ways of knowing perpetuated through everyday practices) produce (and are produced by) fluid and unequal power-relations (Jones and Denison, 2017; Markula and Silk, 2011). These researchers tend to draw upon the oeuvre of Foucault (e.g., 1972, 1975, 1977, 1980) to explore how discourses are (re)produced through language and control dominant interpretations of the self, lived experience, contextual practices, and possibilities for (inter)action (Markula and Silk, 2011; Avner *et al.*, 2014). The goals of this approach are also to unpack the power-relations (re)produced by these dominant ways of understanding the social

world, critically consider how they impact upon legitimate *knowledge*, and the problematic effects associated with them (Avner *et al.*, 2014).

Methodologically, post-structuralists use various qualitative methods (e.g., interviews, textual analyses observations) to analyse the mechanisms which (re)produce certain discourses and how different sets of people experience these in their daily lives (Avner *et al.*, 2014). Here, researchers attempt to understand how people are constrained by such discourses and power-relations, how they play an active role in their (re)production, and how they seek to resist or reconfigure them (Markula and Silk, 2011; Avner *et al.*, 2014). Moreover, rather than remaining *neutral* throughout the research process, post-structuralist researchers are situated, with others, as ‘part of power relations and thus, part of the negotiation, circulation and alteration of discourses’ (Markula and Silk, 2011, p. 51). From this perspective, the researcher participates in the production of *reality*, and is therefore a key factor in the collection, analysis, and representation of data (Avner *et al.*, 2014).

The first strand of research in this paradigm contains a small collection of studies which critically explore the (re)production of gendered discourses in formal coach education (e.g., Fielding-Lloyd and Mean, 2008, 2011, 2016; Sawiuk *et al.*, 2021). These researchers have begun to reveal how the texts, languages, and practices which are peddled by SGBs, male coach educators, and male coach-learners (re)produce the androcentric (i.e., masculine) conditions, knowledge(s), unequal power relations, and marginalising discourses experienced by female learners during formal programmes (Sawiuk *et al.*, 2021). The research has focused on how those privileged by masculine discourses (i.e., male coaches) rationalise gender inequalities and interpret androcentricity, and how female coach-learners (i.e., those marginalised by masculine discourses) experience and negotiate this culture (e.g., Fielding-Lloyd and Mean, 2011, 2016; Sawiuk *et al.*, 2021). In keeping with the goals of post-structuralist inquiry, studies have revealed the consequences of, and problematised, the paradoxical policies concerning separatist courses (e.g., Fielding-Lloyd and Mean, 2008, 2011, 2016) and pedagogies (e.g., Sawiuk *et al.*, 2021).

To unpack the social construction of gender in coach education courses, researchers have engaged with the perspectives, attitudes, and actions of male and female candidates (e.g., Fielding-Lloyd and Mean, 2008; Fielding-Lloyd and Mean, 2016; Sawiuk *et al.*, 2021), coach educators (e.g., Fielding-Lloyd and Mean, 2008, 2011), and coach development officers (e.g., Fielding-Lloyd and Mean, 2008, 2011). For example, Fielding-Lloyd and Mean (e.g., 2008, 2011, 2016) conducted a longitudinal project that questioned the equitability of the Football Association's (i.e., The FA's) coach education policies and practices. Throughout their work, Fielding-Lloyd and Mean explored discursive practices and the enactment of power by observing the delivery of courses, taking fieldnotes on the interactions that occurred, and conducting unstructured interviews with abovementioned stakeholders. In each of their studies, the authors used variations of critical discourse analysis to analyse the data set(s).

Fielding-Lloyd and Mean (2008, 2011) found that male stakeholders justified and rationalised gender inequalities in coach education (e.g., separatism) by referring to a range of perceived physical (i.e., skills), psychological (e.g., confidence), experiential (i.e., lack of playing or coaching experience), and intellectual (i.e., limited football knowledge) deficiencies which rendered female coach learners as inferior or lesser. Although the male participants' language reflected the belief that women need separate education, the provision of female-only courses was paradoxically considered a threat to masculine norms and a discrimination of male identities. The data also suggested that men believed this was an act of tokenism, in the sense that the FA only offered these courses to satisfy publicly visible policy documents and negate accusations of sexism. Thus, separatist courses (and how they were rationalised via gendered discourses) appeared to serve masculine interests by conforming to the idea that deviations from male norms are inferior (Avner *et al.*, 2014). In Fielding-Lloyd and Mean (2016), female participants reported that the androcentric environment co-created by coach educators and learners incited feelings of *otherness*. Subsequently, this led to forms of self-subjectivation, by which women actively sought female-only courses to avoid masculine discourses (i.e., like being judged against male norms). However, the perceived benefits of separatist courses included (a) not being on the periphery, and (b) not having to perform in accordance with gendered football identities.

Similar issues were echoed in a more recent study by Sawiuk et al (2021). Sawiuk and colleagues conducted retrospective SSIs with nine female coach-learners who had previously attended the UEFA A Licence coach education programme (including residential weeks). The aims of the study were to (1) critically examine the power-knowledge dynamics, language, and conditions experienced by the female coach-learners, and (2) explore how they navigated and negotiated the complexities of an androcentric coaching (and coach education) culture. The purpose of the SSIs was to generate a greater understanding of how the participants experienced masculine discourses through (i) course design, content, and materials, (ii) the learning environment (i.e., pedagogy and activities), and (iii) their relationships with peers and coach educators. Sawiuk et al (2021) used Foucault's theorising (e.g., 1977, 1978) to construct an iterative data generation process (i.e., collection and analysis).

Sawiuk et al's (2021) analysis revealed that the participants' experiences were embedded within a *society of normalisation* (Foucault, 1989, p. 107), whereby coach educators (and male learners) regularly exerted *disciplinary power* (Foucault, 1977) to legitimise androcentric practices. The participants often cited biological determinism as one of the most prominent mechanisms that served to silence their voices, experiences, and knowledge; practical coaching assessments, acceptable coaching behaviours, practices, and tactical interventions (i.e., instructions) were unfairly judged against dominant male characteristics. This meant that rather than being assessed in relation to their own qualities and contexts, the participants experienced a consistent pressure to coach and perform in accordance with characteristics of the male game (i.e., physicality, strength, and aggression).

Sawiuk et al (2021) also shed light on how repetitive language and vocabulary (e.g., sexualised dialogue, swearing, condescension, dismissive comments, and naivety about women's football), programme curriculum and documents (e.g., all male staff, content, resources), and equipment (e.g., kit sizes) privileged, and in some instances justified, the priority afforded to male football and masculine perspectives. Despite attempting to resist the androcentric culture via several micro-acts (e.g., 'speaking up'), the participants eventually became co-conspirators of their

own disciplined as they were forced to perform accepted gender identities to avoid stigmatisation and alienation (Foucault, 1979). To close, Sawiuk et al (2021) note that these mechanisms created a marginalising discourse that defined women's football and female football coaches/coaching as *lesser* or simpler than the male iteration. Consequently, the participants perceived the implications of the course to be that women's football is not worthy of representation, discussion, or consideration.

The second strand of research has begun to problematise how the conduct and learning experiences of candidates are controlled by discursive practices (i.e., language, materials) and rationalisations which (re)produce discourses of *good coaching* (Avner, Markula, and Denison, 2017; Jacobs, Claringbould, and Knoppers, 2016; Piggott, 2012, reflection (e.g., Downham and Cushion, 2020), and *effective coach learning* (e.g., Cushion *et al.*, 2021). For example, Piggott (2012) explored coaches' experiences of indoctrination to draw conclusions about the impact of formal education programmes. Piggott (2012) combined a critical rationalist research design (Popper, 1972) with Foucault's (1978, 1980, 1991) concepts of *governmentality* and *power* to critically examine how *regimes of truth* and *technologies* were exercised by coach educators to secure compliance with prescribed ideas.

In line with critical rationalist philosophy, Piggott (2012) drew upon Munz's (1985) theory of *closed circles* to generate a testable (yet fallible) hypothesis for explaining why formal programmes are not considered useful by coaches. He hypothesised that 'the knowledge and methods formal courses propound are too rigid and insensitive to coaches' (often messy) experiences. Moreover, they become dogmatic and petrified because they are protected from criticism from within and without' (Piggott, 2012, p. 541-542). Piggott (2012) argued that the *truth* of his hypothesis could be determined by answering the following questions: (i) does it hold true across different sports and at different levels of experience; and (ii) if and where it does hold, what are the specific social mechanisms through which dogma is protected and practices perpetuated? To test these propositions, Piggott (2012) conducted SSIs with 12 coaches. The purpose of the interviews was to compare the coaches' experiences against the hypothesis and testable questions

to confirm their accuracy. Data were analysed via deductive content analysis, which included using the above postulates to criticise the *closed circle* hypothesis (Munz, 1985), as well as utilising the aforementioned neo-Foucauldian concepts to identify the *microphysics* of power relations, rationalities underpinning coach education, and the shaping influence of *expert knowledge* in obtaining conformity with institutional practices.

Piggott's (2012) analysis revealed that coaches perceived *closed style* courses as less useful than *open style* (i.e., encouraging experimentation and discussion) courses. However, even though *open style* courses were more useful, both types were considered prescriptive, tokenistic, and divorced from practice. In relation to the hypothesis, *closed-style* courses were considered to be excessively 'by the book', 'formulaic', 'dogmatic' and presenting a 'single style' or 'model' which had to be 'accepted without discussion' (Piggott, 2012, p. 546). Furthermore, participants strategically managed their engagement with the course and interactions with coach educators (i.e., paying lip service) in response to rationalistic practices and *technologies of discipline* (Foucault, 1980, 1991, 1995). For example, coaches felt limited by institutionalised *rites of passage* (i.e., occupation of space; access to learning), *sacred texts* (i.e., documents), *instructional course designs* (i.e., passive learning), and *time crunches* (i.e., tutors citing a lack of time to prevent non-dogmatic discussions).

Piggott (2012) also found that coach educators employed a range of technologies that (re)produced forms of knowledge and protected their position(s) of power. The participants added that tutors would often cite their own experience and status to credentialise dogma and marginalise alternative ideas; resulting in dominant-subordinate power relations whereby coaches would 'fall back into line' and 'sing from the same song sheet' (Piggott, 2012, p. 549). Problematically, this meant learners became *docile bodies*, in that they demonstrated acquiescence to (i.e., a reluctant acceptance of) the coach educator's authority and assumed correctness (Foucault, 1977, 1995). Importantly, though, such docility was only temporary, as coaches reverted to their own practice upon the conclusion of the course.



More recently, Downham and Cushion (2020) explored how power operated through the way(s) coach educators framed reflection on a high-performance coach education programme. Downham and Cushion (2020) used Foucault's (1972, 1977) concepts of *power*, *discourse*, *discipline*, and *(self) surveillance* to problematise how the presentation of humanistic reflection produced knowledge that shaped coaches' perceptions of self and others, how they engaged with reflective practice, and how it served to rationalise coach educator support. As part of a two-year ethnographic study examining how coach educators understand and support reflection and reflective practice, data were collected in three separate phases. Phase one involved participant observations of residential workshops and a half-day coach educator forum for evaluating one-to-one support sessions, as well as taking fieldnotes detailing the nature of social interactions and activities. Phase two entailed conducting SSIs with three on-course and six one-to-one coach educators in months 9-12. Phase three included interviewing seven one-to-one coach educators in month 21 to revisit prior phases and assess changes in understanding. Downham and Cushion (2020) subjected data to iterative rounds of inductive and deductive analysis.

Downham and Cushion (2020) found that the methods used to support reflection (i.e., questioning, observing, providing feedback) represented *technologies of control* through *gaze*, *surveillance*, and *self-surveillance* (Foucault, 1972, 1977, 1991). For example, the humanistic discourse that was consistently used to frame reflective practice fostered an 'obligation to confess' (i.e., the sharing of knowledge and experience with others on the course) in coaches (Foucault, 1991b, p. 60). The act of confession (i.e., sharing out loud) was problematic because it made individuals' reflective practice and coaching available to the gaze of others, which ensured compliance with the espoused ideal image(s) of practice. Further, this was exacerbated by the imparting of discourses relating to ideas of *good coaching*, *reflection*, and *troubleshooting* (i.e., searching for abnormalities). Downham and Cushion (2020) problematise how these ideas constructed, categorised, and rendered docile the learners in terms of assumptions about coach education for high-performance contexts and coaches (i.e., learners are highly practical; prefer to learn from others; and are self-regulated). The authors conclude that such practices authenticate and

promote ways of thinking about and *doing* high performance coaching and education, while dismissing other possibilities.

Cushion et al (2021) used a similar research design to problematise the discursive construction of coach learning on a high-performance coach education programme, the prevailing dominant pedagogical discourses, and associated subjugated knowledge(s). Cushion and colleagues drew upon a three-stage methodology where data were collected over a two-year period. Phase one included participant observations of five residential workshops, which also involved taking fieldnotes. In phase two, single individual SSIs were conducted with 15 coaches and 14 programme facilitators (i.e., course staff, tutors, coach support specialists, and residential content deliverers). In phase three, Cushion et al (2021) carried out a document analysis of course materials, planning documentation, review meeting minutes, programme and unit outlines and outcomes, and in-house course evaluations to understand how artefacts were discursively shaped and presented.

Cushion et al (2021) used Willig's (2008) 6-stage Foucauldian analysis to examine the discourses that shaped the course: (i) discursive construction; (ii) discourses; (iii) action orientation; (iv) positionings; (v) practice; and (vi) subjectivity. In this case, discourses 'were scaffolds of discursive frameworks that ordered reality on the programme in a certain way' for coaches and coach educations (Cushion *et al.*, 2021, p. 6). The analysis, then, was 'concerned with the discursive production of meaning, which constructed and was constructed by ideas of coach learning' (Cushion *et al.*, 2021, p. 6). An emphasis was also placed on identifying the implications of discourses on subjectivity and practice. Broadly, analysis revealed the discourses that framed coaching situated learning as consisting of a benevolent, linear, and progressive transmission of knowledge. For the participants, learning was understood as a neatly-packaged, additive, uncomplicated, transactional, and mechanistic process where legitimate knowledge could only be acquired from approved experts (i.e., course tutors) (Cushion *et al.*, 2021).

Like Piggott (2012), existing discourses served to reinforce coach educators' authority and status. This, in combination with the mechanistic and linear assumptions of learning, meant that learners adopted a passive position, whereby they uncritically accepted 'truths' and perceived

(what were largely abstract) ‘nuggets’ of knowledge as ‘another tool in the box’ that they could subsequently ‘bring out in practice’ (Cushion *et al*, 2021, p. 7). In other words, the discourse created docility by limiting learner resistance, refusal, and complaints; this contradicted the well-intentioned goals of the coach educators, who wanted to invoke critical-thinking and a learner-centred environment (Cushion *et al.*, 2021). Further, the unidirectional understanding(s) reported by the participants created conditions and practices (i.e., learners reflective journals, one-to-one support, discussions) that allowed coach educators to shape learner conduct through observations and feedback that limited their perceptions of effective coaching and learning (Cushion *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, as dominant discourses of *correctness* regulated and reproduced ideas of coach competence throughout the programme, innovative non-dogmatic ideas about learning and coaching were silenced, resulting in learners’ expertise being granted and judged based on conformity (Cushion *et al.*, 2021).

Cushion and colleagues found that these effects occurred because of three circulating discourses that served to construct ideas of *good* learning and coaching practice throughout the programme. First, experiential learning was prioritised as the most superior approach; the value attached to *learning by doing* served to marginalise other forms of experience and normalise *what* expert knowledge was and *who* could be considered an expert (i.e., those who complied with experiential practices). This rationalised the second discourse produced (and understood) by coach educators, which was that ‘coaches don’t need the theory’ (Cushion *et al.*, 2021, p. 11). The dominance of experiential learning marginalised the role of theoretical knowledge and located it separately from definitions of effective learning and coaching. For Cushion *et al* (2021), this rendered learners as *anti-intellectual*, limiting their opportunities to be critical and independent in workshops, including during assessments. The final discourse reported by participants was ‘experts learn from experts’ (Cushion *et al*, 2021, p. 12). In accordance with the values of experiential learning, it was assumed that coaches learn best from self and other(s) through discussion, reflection, and confession. Like Downham and Cushion (2020), this was considered problematic because the increased visibility of experience hierarchically positioned learners and acted as a vehicle for control and correction.

### 2.3.2.1 A Critique of Poststructuralism in Coach Education Research

Albeit limited, the poststructuralist literature in coach education has begun to map out how coach learners' experiences, formal programmes and the practices and understandings of coach educators are permeated by power relations and taken-for-granted discourses (Cushion *et al.*, 2021; Avner *et al.*, 2014). Together, these researchers have made unproblematic 'coach learning narratives stutter' by 'destabilising things about coach development that are currently and ordinarily' considered 'good' (Cushion *et al.*, 2021., p. 3). The emphasis placed on understanding policies and practices from different hierarchical perspectives has problematised the intentions of providers by examining their limiting *effects* on coaches' learning. In particular, how effects produce 'relations of power and put them back into the hands of those who exercise them' (Foucault, 1996, p. 144). By critiquing relations of power, patterns of language, received knowledge, and structural values, scholars have created a catalyst for enacting social change through (re)politicising accepted 'truths to the end of developing more effective and ethical' coach education practices (Avner *et al.*, 2014, p. 49).

In spite of these valuable contributions, poststructuralism has been criticised on the grounds of its preoccupation with social structure and macro-level interpretations (Trochim, Donnelly, and Arora, 2015). Relatedly, scholars (e.g., Grills and Prus, 2019; Markula and Silk, 2011) have cited criticisms of poststructuralism's rejection of a humanist self and the implications this has for the capacity for individual and collective agency in the social world. For instance, Markula and Silk (2011) refer to claims that poststructuralism promotes ontological and epistemological determinism, whereby people's capacity to think, feel, and (inter)act independently is eliminated (or, at best, severely constrained) by the disciplining and normalising power embedded within discourses. Alas, this is accompanied by an underlying pessimism and condition of social conflict surrounding the diminished ability of individuals and groups to create and derive meanings from negotiated interactions and relationships with others (Grills and Prus, 2019).

### 2.3.3 Interpretivist Contributions to Coach Education

Similar to poststructuralism, interpretivism (unpacked in greater detail in chapter 3) ‘rejects the belief that the social world (e.g., people, cultures, social practices, and social institutions) can be examined and understood through the assumptions and methodologies natural scientists use to examine the physical world’ (Potrac *et al.*, 2014., p. 32). In comparison to poststructuralist beliefs concerning the structuring role of discourses in shaping reality, interpretivist researchers are interested in how people ‘define their own meanings’ within, and as a consequence of, particular social, cultural, and political contexts (Markula and Silk, 2011, p. 31; Potrac *et al.*, 2014). Thus, instead of producing positivist-like accounts of studied phenomena, interpretivist inquiry is attentive to the way(s) individuals make sense of their experiences and actions, and how this also relates ‘to the interpretive understanding of social (i.e., collective) action’ (Bryman, 2012, p. 30; Coe, 2012; Potrac *et al.*, 2014). Philosophically, then, interpretivism subscribes to an internalist-idealist/relativist ontology: reality does not exist independently from (fluid) individual and collective interpretations of the social world (Sparkes, 1992). Researchers of this ilk adopt a subjectivist epistemology: knowledge is subjective and socially constructed by people via interaction in the course of their everyday lives within settings contoured by a combination of consensus, disorder, and contestation (Markula and Silk, 2011; Potrac *et al.*, 2014).

An adherence to this epistemology means that sense-making can only be explored via subjective interaction (Sparkes, 1992). Resultantly, this tethers researchers and participants together as part of a co-constructed and relational research process, whereby each shapes the understandings, analytical capacities, actions, and products (e.g., guiding theories, manuscripts, analysis) of the other (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Potrac *et al.*, 2014). Methodologically, interpretivists use idiographic/hermeneutic investigative designs to interactively explore and richly describe and interpret human experience (Grills and Prus, 2019; Howell, 2013). Often, this entails spending a prolonged period of time with people/groups of interest, alongside the use of qualitative methods such ethnography, interviews, narrative inquiry, and document analysis (Potrac *et al.*,

2014). Unlike positivists, who adopt a neutral ‘reporting process guided by a specific set of techniques’, the interpretivist researcher is the main tool of inquiry (Wolcott, 1990, p. 191-202).

Insofar, interpretivist scholars have tended to use retrospective SS individual and focus-group (FG) interviews alongside interpretive heuristic devices (i.e., theories) to explore how coach-learners make sense of their experiences of participating in formal programmes. Bar a couple of studies (e.g., Cope *et al.*, 2021; Stodter, Cope, and Townsend, 2021) which combine interviews with methods such as observations and document analysis to collect data over multiple phases (or time points), or provide supplementary insights from coach educators, coach-centricity is a common theme. To begin with, researchers have attempted to address criticisms of the ‘top down’ structure of formal courses (Nelson and Cushion, 2006, p. 204) that often render them ‘fine in theory but divorced from the gritty realities of practice’ (Jones, Morgan, and Harris, 2012, p. 313). Even though some learners benefit from the technical and tactical emphasis of formal provision (i.e., novices) and opportunities for peer interaction (i.e., experts) (Maclean and Lorimer, 2016; Mesquita, Ribeiro, Santos, and Morgan, 2014; Nash and Sproule, 2012) negative experiences associated with the absence of integrated critical knowledge (e.g., reflection, pedagogy), and didactic, abstract, and prescriptive conditions remain the prevalent outcomes (Mesquita, *et al.*, 2014; Maclean and Lorimer, 2016; Nash, 2003; Nash and Sproule, 2012).

To enhance the development, implementation, and perceived impact of formal provision on learning and practice, researchers have offered insights into learners’ experiences of taking part in alternative theoretically informed programmes. These have included social science-based (e.g., Cassidy *et al.*, 2006) and educationally informed courses (e.g., Galvan, Fyall, and Culpan, 2012), as well as problem-based learning (e.g., Jones and Turner 2006; Morgan, *et al.*, 2013), ethnodrama (e.g., Cassidy *et al.*, 2015), Socratic teaching (e.g., Roberts and Ryrie, 2014), reflective practice (e.g., Knowles *et al.*, 2005; Knowles, Gilbourne, Borrie, and Nevill, 2001; Stodter *et al.*, 2021), heutagogical learning (e.g., McCarthy and Stoszowski, 2018), communities of practice (e.g., Jones *et al.*, 2012; Stoszowski and Collins, 2014), and Freirean-informed pedagogy (Cope *et al.*, 2021).

For example, Cassidy et al (2006) conducted SSIs with eight Rugby Football Union (RFU) coaches to explore their perceptions of the CoDE programme; a social science-based course. CoDE was delivered over a six-month period and was designed to frame ideas of effective coaching, coaching methodology, ethics, interaction, roles, motivation, and athlete learning through theories of sociology, pedagogy, and psychology. As part of an interpretive process, Cassidy and colleagues drew upon Fullan's (1991a) theory of curriculum change to analyse the data. Echoing the findings of similar studies (e.g., Jones and Turner, 2006), coaches reported that the CoDE programme led to a marked increase in critical thinking and an awareness of the social complexities of practice. Cassidy et al (2006) explained that the emphasis placed on interaction, the social nature of coach learning, and a problematic epistemology of coaching encouraged learners to meaningfully contextualise content and critically reflect upon experience. Relatedly, coaches documented that the progressive connection of theories/concepts to the realities of everyday practice resulted in developments in knowledge and application, as well as confidence (Cassidy *et al.*, 2006). This, then, provides evidence that theoretical approaches can bridge 'the theory-practice divide' (Nelson *et al.*, 2013, p. 213).

Recently, Cope et al (2021) investigated the impact of a small-scale Freirean-informed coach education programme on coaches' ownership of, and feeling towards, being engaged in their learning, and how this influenced their practice. Following calls for more research on variants of humanistic learning, Cope and colleagues wanted to shed light on *what works* in course design and implementation, how, and why. Three coaches participated in the study. Cope et al (2021) used the educational theorising of Freire (e.g., 1970, 1998, 2004) and Collaborative Action Research (CAR) to construct and implement the programme in a series of key stages: (1) naturalistic observations (including fieldnotes) of coaches in their environments; (2) background conversations to address learner needs; (3) systematic observations to identify key learning situations and outcomes (i.e., changes in practices, evidence of understanding); (4) engagement with learning resources and reflective conversations with the tutor); and (5) post-observation interviews to reflect on impact.

Cope and colleagues also used Freire's theory to iteratively analyse the data. Generally, the participants reported desired changes in their coaching practice and conceptualisation of self-development as a result of the course (confirmed by observational data). Unlike the docility reported by coaches in poststructuralist research, Cope et al (2021) claim that participants were supported to become 'critical investigators' (p.72) due to a problem-setting and dialogical relationship with the coach educator that accompanied each stage. From a Freirean perspective, coaches described the freedom to learn, feeling cared for, and (un)becoming critically reflective as the most valuable aspects of the programme.

Further, interpretivist scholars have used educational theory to explore how coaches (supported by the perceptions of coach educators) make sense of learning interactions, the relevance of course content and pedagogy, and changes to coaching practice after course completion. Mainly, this theme is populated by contributions from North American, Canadian, and Brazilian researchers seeking to examine, and provide recommendations for, newly developed learner-centred courses and modules in tertiary and SGB contexts. The theorising of Jarvis (2006, 2007, 2009), Moon (2001, 2004), and Weimer (2002, 2013) have frequently been used to understand course delivery and interpret the role of cognitive structures, prior experience, and biographies in coaches' learning (e.g., Deek, Werthner, Paquette, and Culver, 2013; Leduc, Culver, and Werthner, 2012; Milistetd, Salles, Backes, Mesquita, and Nascimento, 2019; Paquette, Trudel, Duarte, and Cundari, 2019; Paquette *et al.*, 2014; Stodter and Cushion, 2017). Studies have also used the work of Perry (1981, 1999) (e.g., De Martin Silva, Fonseca, Jones, Morgan, and Mesquita, 2015), Rogers (1961, 1969), Vygotsky (1962, 1978), and Guskey (2002) (e.g., Nelson *et al.*, 2013; Turner and Nelson, 2009).

Leduc et al (2012) utilised Jarvis (2006, 2007, 2009) and Moon's (2001) theorising to analyse coaches' perceptions of the impact of two Coaching Association of Canada (CAC) National Coach Certification Program (NCCP) *competition-development* modules: (i) Developing Athletic Abilities; and (ii) Managing Conflict. The CAC had (at the time) recently rewritten the programme to reflect constructivist principles; to focus on deep, reflective learning that elicited



sustained impact(s) on in-situ practice. In total, 11 coaches participated in the study. To collect data, Leduc and colleagues carried out non-participant observations (they attended three modules and took fieldnotes on the various activities that took place) and conducted SSIs with each participant two weeks post-module and three-six months later. In their analysis, Leduc et al (2012) argued that the varying individual biographies and cognitive structures of participants led to three different consequences for learning: (1) a validated coaching practice, (2) a changing coaching practice, and (3) a not yet changed coaching practice.

According to Leduc and colleagues, the first set of coaches did not experience a knowledge disjuncture because the course content resembled previous episodes of learning (i.e., formal, non-formal, informal). The second set of participants anticipated making changes to their coaching practice(s) as a result of reflection and interactions with course tutors; these coaches experienced a knowledge disjuncture, and at the later interview, 70% of them confirmed that both modules contributed to deep learning and changes in practice. In the third group, several coaches reported feeling uncomfortable applying new knowledge from one or both modules to their practice (Leduc *et al.*, 2012). Some participants did demonstrate a disjuncture (i.e., acquired new knowledge of planning), but lacked the confidence to implement their learning. Others described an interest in life-long learning, but cited the inadequacy of the modules as a major barrier to change. This highlights the multitude of challenges that individuality presents to learner-centred formal provision. Leduc and colleagues conclude by suggesting that coach education providers should develop support structures that enable cognitive, emotional, and practical transformations to occur.

In a later study, Paquette et al (2019) used the works of Jarvis (2006), Moon (2001, 2004), Weimer (2002), and Blumberg (2009) to examine the perceptions of 10 coaches and six coach educators with respect to their participation in Canada Golf's coach education programme. To collect data, Paquette and colleagues used online surveys to gather information about the coaches' cognitive structures (e.g., education, qualifications, experience) and conducted SSIs with each participant. The interview guides explored perceptions of programme (a) design and structure, (b) content, (c) delivery, and (d) assessment and evaluation. The authors asked additional questions to

coaches regarding the practical utility of learned content and further probed coach educators on their workshop preparation. Based on the results of a thematic analysis, narratives were created of four composite characters that reflected the divergent profiles that were generated within the data: (1) learner-centred teaching (LCT) coach educator, (2) instructor-centred teaching (ICT) coach educator, (3) LCT coach, (4) ICT coach.

Paquette et al (2019) found that the cognitive structure of each coach and coach educator predisposed their alignment with either the LCT or ICT approach, and influenced their overall experience of the programme's content and delivery. Specifically, there was a stark difference in how cognitive structures shaped participants' preferences concerning delivery style, learning activities, and the usefulness of information; acting upon evaluations of course impact and learning. Paquette et al (2019) noted how opposing biographies created tensions amongst teams of coach educators and between coaches and coach educators situated in different pedagogical paradigms.

The implication of this work indicates that the perceived effectiveness of constructivist approaches entails a complex interplay between course design, delivery, and coach/educator engagement and alignment with LCT. Relatedly, studies have used the theories, models, and guidelines of Gilbert and Trudel (2001), Moon (2001, 2004), Jarvis (2007, 2009), and Trudel, Culver, and Werthner (2013) to investigate processes of development, implementation, and evaluation from the perspective(s) of administrative stakeholders. Mostly, SSI have been conducted with programme directors and master facilitators (e.g., Callary, Culver, Werthner, and Bales, 2014; Cassidy *et al.*, 2015; Hussain, Trudel, Patrick, and Rossi, 2012; Werthner, Culver, and Trudel, 2012), as well as managers and project coordinators (e.g., Nelson and Cushion, 2006). Others (e.g., Callary, Gearity, and Kuklick, 2021; Crocket, 2018) have provided reflexive accounts of their own experiences. Mainly, studies have revealed the complex and dynamic challenges associated with varied biographies (i.e, tutor and coach training), socio-political issues (i.e., provincial networks; policies; gatekeeper negotiation), and logistics that prevent the application of conceptual ideas.

In addition, researchers have carried out longitudinal studies to chart coaches' evolving perceptions and experiences throughout programmes (e.g., Jones and Allison, 2014), as well as

using pre, during, and post methodological designs to track meaningful changes in (and course impact on) knowledge and practice(s) (e.g., Banack, Bloom, and Falcao, 2012; Santos, Camire, and MacDonald, 2022; Stodter and Cushion, 2014, 2019a). One example of this is Jones and Allison (2014), who explored the knowledge development and experiences of 20 coaches enrolled onto an 18-month elite level FA professional preparation programme. Throughout the duration of the course, Jones and Allison (2014) completed 18 semi-structured FG interviews and collected 19 video diaries. The authors adopted inductive and deductive procedures to interpret and categorise the data.

Jones and Allison (2014) found that despite assigning value to taught content and group discussions, coaches believed the content lacked relevance to practice. Specifically, because it failed to cover the ‘nuts and bolts’ (p. 114) of their everyday workplace realities, it was perceived to be impractical. The participants also reported that learning was restricted to ‘minor practicalities as opposed to developing new ways of thinking’ (p. 115) as differences in contextual limitations (e.g., staff, budgets) were not considered. Moreover, the precarity, pathos, vulnerability, and insecurity that often characterised the coaches’ employment meant that instantly applicable ‘practical know how’ (p. 115) and safe, (re)affirming knowledge was favoured over conceptually troublesome content (Jones and Allison, 2014). Jones and Allison (2014) further reported that the participants questioned the usability and practicality of competency-based assessments due to the perceived decontextualised nature of the assessed competencies. Consequently, the coaches held instrumental views on assessment and only engaged on a superficial level (echoed by Santos *et al.*, 2022); resulting in minimal impact on working practices. Similar approaches were taken by the participants to their interactions and/or relationships with mentors. The mentoring process was perceived as problematic because of issues concerning time commitments, geographical location, and mentor organisation, as well as doubts over their experience and understanding. However, the participants positively perceived the collective social experience; the group was used as a ‘community of security’ (Jones and Allison, 2014, p. 19) that encouraged fruitful peer and collaborative learning (i.e., learning off/from one another’s similar workplace experiences).

Stodter and Cushion (2019a) investigated the impact of different learning experiences by comparing changes in practice behaviours and knowledge use of youth soccer coaches completing a formal coach education course (n=5) with those who were not (n=3). Over a period of 18 months, each participant took part in multiple rounds of pre-post quantitative and qualitative data collection activities. Baseline data were generated through systematic observations (using the CAIS) and semi-structured SRIs, which were repeated six-nine months after completion to allow deep or meaningful changes to happen. For the *formal education group*, changes occurred in the use of knowledge relating specifically to tactics, interaction with players (i.e., individual behaviours), practice structure, challenges and questioning, learning principles, and reflection; although practice behaviours remained unaltered. While a learning impact was evident, its minimal effect on observed practice revealed a disconnect between knowledge and situated action, suggesting a lack of deep learning (Moon, 2004). Stodter and Cushion (2019a) conclude by citing evidence within the data indicating that coaches' biographies and work contexts limited changes in deeply held beliefs. This echoes the pitfalls associated with formal provision in terms of its failure to elicit meaningful change in practice (e.g., Nash and Sproule, 2012; Piggott, 2012).

In the last decade, scholars have used an assortment of sociological theories to interpret how coaches allocate meaning to and engage with the social interactions, relationships, and learning activities that characterise the realities of course participation. First, a number of studies have used Bourdieu's (e.g., 1973, 1977, 1989, 1990) concepts of *habitus*, *capital*, *field*, *power*, and *symbolic violence* and *language* to explore how coach-learners make sense of the social (re)production and construction of cultural ideas regarding what constitutes legitimate knowledge, experience, and practice (e.g., Graham, Mckenna, and Fleming, 2013; Lewis *et al.*, 2018; Townsend and Cushion, 2017). Researchers have also aspired to produce similar insights by using social-relational models (e.g., Thomas, 1999, 2004a) to analyse the discourses of disability that are prevalent (and shape knowledge) in impairment specific coach education courses (e.g., Townsend, Cushion, and Smith, 2018). Others (e.g., Webb and Leeder, 2022) have utilised iterations of Bourdieu's work, such as Hodkinson, Biesta, and James's (2007, 2008) *learning cultures*, to

temporally examine the impact of sport-specific programmes on novice coaches' pre-existing dispositions and coaching theories.

For example, Townsend and Cushion (2017) used Bourdieu's (1973, 1977, 1990) theorising to (1) use *habitus* as a means to understand coaches' experiences of a level 4 cricket coach education course, (2) offer insights into the subsequent impact of the programme on knowledge construction, and (3) consider the extent to which *capital* served to (re)produce the *field of power* in coaching through coach education. To collect data, SSIs were conducted with 10 coaches and one performance director. Generally, Townsend and Cushion (2017) found that participants were 'not passive empty vessels but active social beings' (p. 543) in the (re)production of knowledge. For the most part, the cultural belief that playing experience was the *only* precursor to elite coaching limited the impact of the programme. As the legitimacy of experiential knowledge 'became embodied and active in social interaction' (p. 538), there was an overall acceptance of this as a means of understanding and ordering reality. Consequently, the coaches afforded status because of their elite backgrounds resisted and derided new knowledge (i.e. science, theory) and people (i.e., tutors) that did not correspond with deeply entrenched assumptions and ways of doing. Thus, an 'anti-intellectual agenda' (p. 536) arose that negatively influenced the thinking, feeling, and acting of those with othered biographies meaning the status-quo remained unchallenged.

What this demonstrates, then, is that coach education is a problematic, conflict-ridden, and contested endeavour; a point further developed in the final strand of sociological research. In this small cluster of studies, researchers have used the dramaturgical theorising of Goffman (e.g., 1959) and Hochschild (e.g., 1983) to examine the relational performances enacted by learners as a means to navigate the social realities they experience during courses (e.g., Chesterfield *et al.*, 2010; Gomes, Jones, Batista, and Mesquita, 2018). For instance, Chesterfield and colleagues utilised Goffman's (1959) writings on *Presentation of The Self* and Schempp and Graber's (1992) notion of *dialectic of socialisation* to explore how coaches perceived and responded to the content knowledge and assessment processes they were exposed to throughout a UEFA A licence course. Alongside revealing the 'subjective and interactive .... complex and messy realities' (p. 300) of

coach education, the authors placed an emphasis on illustrating how coaches presented idealistic images of themselves to coach educators (i.e., those tasked with assessing competence) to pass.

To generate data, reflective SSIs were conducted with six coaches who had successfully completed the programme. Chesterfield and colleagues' analysis echoed findings from the wider literature, in that coaches perceived content to have minimal transference to their everyday employment contexts on account of its shortcomings in acknowledging the situational variability of practice. Specifically, the participants explained that the abstract, decontextualised, prescriptive and 'off the shelf material' (p. 304) that was presented by coach educators in relation to *good practice* (i.e., session design, interventions) contrasted perceived workplace demands, expectations, and personally held experiences and beliefs; coaches reverted to their favoured methods post-course. Similar criticisms were also associated with the competencies that coaches were evaluated against in practical assessments and written submissions (i.e., coach logbooks, session plans). As a result, the participants adopted an instrumental approach to their engagement, demonstrating a 'certain bureaucratisation of the spirit' during their interactions with coach educators in order to be looked upon favourably (i.e., to pass) (Goffman, 1959, p. 56). This included impression management and protection strategies, such as adapting behaviours and session plans to meet expectations, as well as mimicking tutors' interactional styles and appearances (i.e., language, clothing, mannerisms).

In comparison to the scores of research addressing how coaches think, feel, and act in relation to coach education, the coach educator has, until recently, remained largely invisible in interpretivist accounts. Lately, a couple of core themes have begun to emerge. First, researchers have used the theorisings of Bourdieu (1977), Jarvis (2006), Argyris and Schon (1974), and Wenger-Traynor and Wenger-Traynor (2015) to understand the role of coach educators' identities, biographies, and beliefs in their learning and professional practice (e.g., Ciampolini, Tozetto, Milan, Camire, and Milistetd, 2020; Partington, O'Gorman, Greenough, and Cope, 2021; Vinson, Simpson, and Cale, 2022; Watts *et al.*, 2021a). Second, the writings of Moon (2001, 2004), Weimer (2013), and Bernstein (1975, 1981) have been used to explore how coach educators interpret, experience the challenges of, and enact pedagogical approaches and policies within

complex organisational structures (e.g., Ciampolini *et al.*, 2021; Culver *et al.*, 2019; Dempsey *et al.*, 2021; Griffiths, Armour, and Cushion, 2018). Researchers have also used inductive methods to analyse similar topics (e.g., Brasil, Ramos, Milistetd, Culver, and Nascimento, 2018; Stodter and Cushion, 2019b).

Partington *et al* (2021) drew upon Argyris and Schon's (1974) notions of *theories in practice*, *espoused theories*, and *theories-in-use* to chart the learning and development of 23 coach educators undertaking a CPD course (i.e., PG Cert in coach development). The purpose of the course was to critically examine theoretical ambiguities in participants' practice to generate new insights into ways of working and to refine their understandings of coach education in order to plan, intervene in, and support programme development and coach learning. Partington and colleagues were particularly interested in how the participants' (new) interpretations of learning theory shaped their perceptions of coach learning, and how it was applied in practice. To derive the meanings that the coach educators attached to their own and others' evaluations of the CPD course and working practice(s), data were iteratively collected (and analysed) in eight stages over a 16-month period through SS FG and individual interviews, observations, and document reviews.

Partington *et al* (2021) found that most of the participants, with tutor support, recognised how their personally-held implicit theories of learning (i.e., beliefs) did not align with actual practice. Through the use of tasks, reflective discussions, and challenging questions, coach educators became more able to clearly articulate, (re)construct, and identify their *theories-in-use* (i.e., constructivism, constructionism). Partington and colleagues reported that the resultant increase in awareness and a deeper understanding led to enhanced critical reflection, practical alignment, and the confidence to implement favoured pedagogies. The participants further highlighted a number of strategies used by the tutors that supported the identification of inconsistencies (and elicited change). These included (1) developing relationships of trust, collaboration, and risk-taking, (2) creating a collaborative, safe, and challenging learning environment, and (3) using appropriate support mechanisms and individualised methods to create opportunities for deep reflection and self-learning. Additionally, understanding the job demands of

the coach education delivery workforce, as well as their political realities, helped the tutors to construct academic content and assessments that reflected the participants' everyday work.

Another example is Dempsey et al (2021), who used Bernstein's (1975, 1981) concept of *framing* to explore how three coach educators employed by the English FA interpreted and (re)produced learner-centred policies in formal education programmes. Dempsey and colleagues placed a specific focus on the interplay between structure (i.e., FA policy) and agency (i.e., coach educator sense making and interactions) at the micro-level of pedagogical practice; in this case, who *controlled* how learner-centredness was presented, organised, and evaluated as part of a broader learning process. To collect data, the authors analysed documentation (e.g., learning strategy, PowerPoints, schemes of work), conducted individual SSIs, recorded sensory observational fieldnotes (i.e., of workshop delivery), and took photographs of key learning spaces/environments (i.e., the classroom, the pitch) and materials.

Dempsey et al's (2021) analysis showed that the coach educators experienced limited agency in delivering the course. The authors found that tensions existed between prescriptive policy, structure, and learning outcomes, and the underpinning philosophy of a constructivist approach. Although some freedom was evident in a social (i.e., ad-hoc conversations, gestures, greetings) and logistical sense, the interaction between macro and meso organisational structures (as well as complex stakeholder relationships) produced constraining conditions. Specifically, the participants cited challenges linked to content and time management, verification processes (i.e., external assessment), and the centrality of The Fa's core messages concerning *good* coaching in tasks, learning materials, and assessments.

While these contributions add significant value to the literature base, there is still a paucity of research which explores, in rich theoretical detail, how coach educators make sense of, plan for, enact, and reflect upon the matrices of social interactions and relationships that are an inherent feature of their everyday workplace realities. What this means, then, is that knowledge concerning the individual and collective *doing* of coach education is currently sparse. That said, though, there is a small corpus of exploratory work that has provided some valuable preliminary insights into the



inherently interactive, performative, relational, and (micro)political dimensions of their day-to-day practice (e.g., Allanson *et al.*, 2019; Cushion, *et al.*, 2019; Norman, 2020; Watts *et al.*, 2021b).

Cushion *et al.* (2019) provided initial insights into how four coach educators' in-situ social realities and practices were organised, constrained, and reproduced through interactions and relationships with academy directors and coaches within each of their assigned cluster clubs. Bourdieu's (1962, 1984a, 1984b, 1989, 1990a, 1998a) concepts of *field*, *capital*, and *habitus* were employed to understand how the dialogue between the social actors and social structure (re)produced constraining culture and doxic discourses of coaching and coach education. Cushion and colleagues collected data in three main phases over a period of 12 months. After one-month, SS FG interviews were conducted with the participants. Between months two-eleven, participant observations were carried out in each cluster club and SSI were completed with nine academy directors and 32 coaches. In the final month, the procedures from phase one were repeated.

The findings revealed that coach educators' practice reflected a 'field of [power] struggles' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 101). That is, the success or failure of the participants' efforts to contribute to coach learning in their respective clubs was linked to the enactment of a symbolic and relational game that defined, and was defined by, each context. This meant that, to enhance and strengthen their position in the field (i.e., gain acceptance), coach educators regularly presented their identities and espoused beliefs regarding coaching, learning, and coach education in keeping with the interests and cultural ideologies of each club (i.e., ways of being and talking about subjects). Also, the participants strategically managed iterations of the self and tensions associated with occupying a central position (as an SGB employee) in multiple intersecting networks (i.e., the club, SGB, league) in their (in)direct engagements with others (i.e., coaches, academy directors, officials). Thus, the participants 'were engaged in a process of practice improvisation structured by cultural orientations, personal goals, and the ability to play the game of social interaction' (Cushion *et al.*, 2019, p. 541). Problematically, this reproduced, rather than challenged, doxa and resulted in a reaffirmed anti-intellectual orthodoxy and uncritical orientation to practice. Simply put, the participants were situated within, and a part of, the broader relational system of coach education.

These findings were partially echoed by Watts et al (2021b). Watts and colleagues also drew upon Bourdieusian theorising. In this instance, Bourdieu's (1989, 1990b, 1998b) concepts of *field*, *capital*, and *illusio* were used to explore the workplace realities, motivations, challenges, and relationships of 16 UK-based coach educators. Similar to Cushion et al (2019), the participants were considered as 'skilled actors' in that they understood the rules of the game and knew how to play it' (Watts *et al.*, 2021b, p. 11) in subfields (i.e., employment contexts) that were characterised by 'struggle for access, for acknowledgement and of acceptance' (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 33). Generally, those employed by smaller SGBs enjoyed more agency and role satisfaction than their larger-SGB counterparts. However, there were a number of shared logistical (i.e., tutor-learner ratio) and relational (i.e., conflicts with co-tutors and managers) challenges. Others included job security (i.e., precarious work), compliance, pressures to pass learners and impose organisational agendas, qualification integrity, and the perceived abilities and attitudes of learners. Concerns were also cited around unsociable working hours, remuneration, and the questioning of methods.

Interestingly, coach educators in larger SGBs, although aware of their own subjugation, contributed to existing orthodoxy and logic by acting in ways reflective of the type of cultural and symbolic capital desired by superordinates (i.e., harbouring frustrations about employment conditions; compliance with expectations and methods; distancing themselves from marginalised colleagues). Relatedly, they tried to protect and enhance their status through a combination of legitimate social (i.e., via networks) and cultural (i.e., gaining more experience) *capital*. In describing the perceived consequences of challenging organisational doxa, the participants referred to undesirable outcomes for earning potential, guaranteed work opportunities, and reputation. In sum, the coach educators were considered as mediums for reproducing ideology and power relations.

The study that has the greatest significance for this thesis is Allanson et al's (2019) dramaturgical and micropolitical analysis of how four coach educators employed by the English FA interpreted their everyday workplace relationships with regional managers, colleagues, and coach learners. One of the principal aims of the research was to provide insights into the

‘ambiguities, dilemmas, and challenges that are a feature of their engagements with others’ (Allanson *et al.*, 2019, p. 2). Thus, Allanson and colleagues used the dramaturgical theorisings of Goffman (1959) and Hochschild (1983), alongside the works of Kelchtermans (e.g., 1996, 2009b) and Kelchtermans and Ballet (e.g., 2002a, 2005) on *micropolitical literacy*’ and *professional identity* to examine participants’ perspectives on: (1) the importance of building positive working relationships with key stakeholders, (2) the interactional strategies they used to develop relationships, and (3) the emotional dimensions that were a feature of their strategic interactions with others. As part of a phronetic-iterative approach, these theories informed cyclical SSIs and data analysis (Tracy, 2020).

Allanson and colleagues found that the achievements of the coach educators were linked to the quality of their social engagements and practices; such as their capacity for writing themselves into the social landscape and utilising appropriate impression management strategies. For the most part, maintaining a desirable workplace image was ‘an embodied and dynamic challenge that required them to critically consider what they did, when, how, and why in their efforts to influence the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others’ (Allanson *et al.*, 2019, p. 12). For example, the participants attached importance to purposefully and reflexively managing their direct (i.e., showing respect) and indirect (i.e., feedback from co-tutors and coaches) interactions with regional managers to establish a positive image and reputation as a means to creating personally and professionally fulfilling working conditions (i.e., to obtain work, increase earnings, and access career development opportunities). In other words, the participants’ efforts to present *personal fronts* that conformed to occupational *display rules* were grounded in their *professional interests* and understandings of how networks of scrutinising audiences simultaneously evaluated and treated them (Goffman, 1959; Hochschild, 1983; Kelchtermans and Ballet, 2002a).

The participants further described the necessity of developing a positive reputation through their interactions with co-tutors and learners. While these social engagements were largely positive, they cited pressures that had to be performatively managed to avoid negative evaluations: a lack of role clarity, ambiguous timings, potential conflicts with co-tutors, and the need to conceal anxiety

and nervousness to secure buy-in and trust. Allanson et al (2019) alluded to the problematic, disruptive, and tension-ridden interactions that the participants referenced in relation to working with co-tutors (i.e., deviating from plans, competing for space, exhibiting undesirable behaviours) and the management of challenging learners (i.e., disagreeing with ideas). In both cases, the coach educators concealed thoughts, feelings, and emotions (i.e., frustration, anger) whilst generating and showing others (i.e., happiness, enthusiasm, calmness) to avoid ruining working relationships. That is, participants interpreted the need to maintain an appropriate *front* and demonstrate *dramaturgical discipline* to prevent *scenes* (i.e., arguments), as well as deal with vulnerability and *inopportune intrusions* (i.e., unexpected disruptions) (Goffman, 1959; Kelchtermans, 2005). Thus, hiding and presenting emotion was a central feature of the coach educators' workplace performances, which included *surface* (i.e., fake laugh, calm exterior, pitch and pace, body language) and *deep acting* (i.e., psyching themselves up) that was informed by situational *display rules* (Hochschild, 1983).

Despite the welcomed insights that Allanson and colleagues offer, they recognised the theoretical, methodological and conceptual limitations of their exploratory analysis, concluding that they 'were unable to explore 'all' of the dramaturgical and micropolitical dimensions' (p. 2) of coach educators' work. Subsequently, they encourage scholars to advance the application of these theories to explore and understand, in more depth and detail, the interactive and emotionally-laden realities of coach education employment (Allanson *et al.*, 2019). Potrac (2019), as argued by others (e.g., Potrac, Ives, Gale, Nelson, and Morgan, 2022; Roderick, Smith, and Potrac, 2017), proposes that a more critical, rich, and expansive application of Goffman's and Hochschild's dramaturgical analysis of individual and collective face-to-face interaction holds much promise for 'helping us to understand the micro-level interactions and dynamics that comprise [coach education]' (p. 16). As such, this thesis develops Allanson et al's (2019) initial research through responding to calls from the literature by working, 'looking and thinking harder with theory' (Potrac, 2019, p. 16).

Crucially, even though Goffman's (1959) and Hochschild's (1983) dramaturgical theorising has been used to show how coach educators' individual impression management is grounded in understandings of the organisational and social forces that imbue their employment

contexts, the severely limited application of explanatory concepts has generated insights that have fallen short of what Goffman and Hochschild produced. Thus, this thesis advances current knowledge by introducing a breadth of unused concepts to critically understand with whom, ‘how, when, and why a [coach educator] may attempt to maintain his or her individual face’ (Potrac, 2019, p. 16).

The value of this thesis partly lies in empirically and conceptually extending existing literature through the use of ideas relating (but not limited) to *personal front* (i.e., setting, manner, appearance, and the use of props), *defensive and protective strategies*, *unmeant gestures*, *front and back regions*, *mystification*, *misrepresentation*, *idealisation*, *realisation*, *feeling* and *display rules*, and *deep* and *surface acting* to examine the various interactional strategies that coach educators (both individually and collectively) use during and at times, before and after, their social engagements with learners, managers, co-tutors, colleagues, and external assessors (Goffman, 1959; Hochschild, 1983; Potrac, 2019). The originality of this thesis will be enhanced further by drawing on other writings that comprise Goffman’s oeuvre (e.g., 1961a, 1961b, 1963, 1969, 1974) – including his texts on *asylums*, *encounters*, *stigma*, *strategic interaction*, and *frame analysis*.

Problematically, the premium that has been given to examining individual interaction has rendered knowledge concerning the complexities of *doing* collaborative team performances as merely speculative in nature (Grills and Prus, 2019; Potrac, 2019). Therefore, in response to the absence of research exploring issues of collaboration, coordination, and joint action in coach education work (and sports work more broadly), this thesis offers new insights into the ‘fundamentally problematic and intersubjectively achieved nature of group life’ (Grills and Prus, 2019, p 8) by applying Goffman’s (1959) concepts of *dramaturgical loyalty*, *dramaturgical discipline*, *dramaturgical circumspection*, *discrepant roles*, and *communication out of character*. This represents original knowledge as there is a paucity of research attempting to systematically apply these concepts to explore how *performance teams* function – especially in relation to planning, repairing, and reflecting upon collaborative acts (Goffman, 1959). Indeed, this thesis provides novel insights concerning the realities (i.e., challenges, ambiguities, opportunities) of

*doing* various collective performances that are (and are not) ‘planned, rehearsed ... enacted’ and reflected upon by coach educators’ (Potrac, 2019, p. 16).

Calls have also been issued to ‘question, problematise, and build upon [Goffman’s] writings in terms of how they are connected to the intricacies and dynamics of contemporary social life’ Potrac, 2019. P. 16; Roderick *et al.*, 2017; Shulman, 2017). Insofar, scholars of coach education (e.g., Allanson *et al.*, 2019; Watts *et al.*, 2021b) and sports work (e.g., Corsby, Jones, and Lane, 2022; Gale, Ives, Potrac, and Nelson, 2019; Ives, Gale, Potrac, and Nelson, 2021; Roderick *et al.*, 2017) have demonstrated how employees’ sense-making and interactions reflect the contamination of working conditions and relationships by neoliberal practices and policies (i.e., performativity, total availability, intensification, individualisation, precariousness, presenteeism, and burgeoning concerns about employment security and progression). Coach educators have also cited the constraining influence that (in)direct interconnections amongst stakeholders (i.e., learners, assessors, managers, colleagues) within relational networks have on their workplace decision-making and interactions (e.g., Allanson *et al.*, 2019; Cushion *et al.*, 2019; Watts *et al.*, 2021b).

To develop these preliminary studies, this thesis will be the first to explicitly use Crossley’s (2011) ideas of *relational networks, interdependency, strong and weak ties, network density, patterns of connection, conventions, network properties, collective reference groups, small world hypothesis, resources, power, and exchange* to analyse the ‘interweaving clusters’ of social forces that underlie coach educators’ impression management (Shulman, 2017, p. 67). Uniquely, I will critically unpack how their thoughts, feelings, and (inter)actions ‘are shaped on various levels by the situations in which they find themselves .... and the opportunities and constraints afforded [them] within [their] networks, networks comprising of other actors’ (Crossley, 2011, p. 3).

Finally, it is surprising that, given the focus of recent work on interaction – particularly Allanson et al (2019) – there has been an overreliance on semi-structured interviews and single-method research designs to draw relational and dramaturgical conclusions. It seems remiss that scholarship which is inspired by Goffmanian theorising fails to be congruent with his and Hochschild’s advised methodological approaches. Thus, in contrast to Goffman’s and Hochschild’s

self-acclaimed and ascribed identities as astute observers of social life (see chapter 3), there is a significant scarcity of observational work (Birrell and Donnelly, 2004). Critically, Goffman attached considerable value to iteratively (i.e., with progressively greater focus) listening to, observing, and speaking with those who inhabited as many different social spaces of and for social interaction as possible, and advocated ‘that the direct observation of events was indeed important to understanding [the]... microecological universe of everyday life’ (Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2015, p. 45).

Consequently, then, ‘if we are to engage a sociology of people doing things together, then at some level we need to be where the action is taking place. We need to hear and understand the account of the setting, [and] learn the viewpoints of the actors’ (Grills and Prus, 2019, p. 216). To this end, this thesis represents an original contribution by utilising an ethnographic methodology, consisting of cyclical interviews and field observations, to illuminate how coach education work is practically accomplished, as well as the (micro)political, social, cultural, and psychological features of their everyday work (Callary and Gearity, 2019). In sum, we are yet to realise the full breadth and depth of Goffman’s and Hochschild’s theorising and approaches to examining everyday social life.

#### *2.4 Summary*

In this section, I presented a critical review of the coach education literature base and discussed the strengths and weaknesses of existing contributions relative to their paradigmatic underpinnings. The fundamental purpose of the review was to illustrate how the learner-centric focus of current research has rendered the coach educator largely invisible in academic depictions of coach education. I argued that while positivistic research has provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of formal programmes, the reductionist and functionalistic philosophical and methodological ideals that drive its inquiry are incongruent with analysing the social complexity of *doing* coach education work. Next, I highlighted how post-structuralist researchers have problematised discourses of masculinity, ‘good’ coaching, and effective learning that shape learners’ and coach educators’ experiences in order to create more equitable practices and policies.

I went on to criticise this scholarship based on its overly deterministic perspective and failure to acknowledge the role of micro-level interactions in shaping how individuals and groups think, feel, and (inter)act. I then outlined how interpretivist research has used educational and sociological theories to primarily explore how course candidates make sense of their interactions with coach educators and engagements with learning material. Based on three preliminary studies addressing coach educators' workplace interactions and relationships, I stated that this thesis is novel because (a) there is a paucity of research critically examining the individual and collective thoughts, feelings, and (inter)actions of coach educators concerning the realities of their everyday work, (b) that the application, expansive or otherwise, of Goffman's (1959) and Hochschild's (1983) dramaturgical theorising is, at best, limited, and (c) scholars have favoured retrospective semi-structured interviews over ethnographic fieldwork (i.e., cyclical interviews and field observations).



# CHAPTER 3

## Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide a rich and detailed insight into the research process that I used to explore the everyday workplace interactions of coach educators. The structure of the chapter is as follows: i) arriving at interpretivism, ii) an introduction to dramaturgy, iii) qualitative fieldwork, iv) sampling, v) data collection, vi) iterative data analysis, vii) representation, viii) generalisability, and ix) judging the quality of the thesis. From the outset, I want to draw the reader's attention to my personal affinity with the interpretivist paradigm and how my methodology returns to the roots of Goffman (1959) and Hochschild (1983) through the combination of dramaturgical theorising and qualitative fieldwork. I would also like to emphasise the notion of *representation*; the way(s) that I (re)present the participants' workplace realities is intertwined with how I positioned myself within the research process. To describe this process, I refer to how I treated complex relational boundaries with the participants in the field and engaged in iterative sense-making.

### 3.2 Paradigmatic Positioning

As discussed in chapter two, researchers have an array of philosophical positions to choose from when conducting research (Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba, 2011; Mallett and Tinning, 2014). These positions are known as paradigms, and are described by Guba and Lincoln (1994) as, a 'worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the 'world', the individual's place within it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts' (p. 107). Put simply, paradigms differ in the ways that they attempt to make various dimensions of the social world visible to the beholder (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). This means that researchers are provided with different intellectual lenses through which to view phenomena (Lincoln, 1990). Each paradigm has a guiding *ontology* (i.e., the nature of reality and what can be known) and *epistemology* (i.e., the nature of knowledge

<sup>2</sup>and how we can come to know about it) (Mallett and Tinning, 2014). Resultantly, paradigms shape the role of the researcher in the field, what they look for, value, and how they generate and represent data (Lincoln and Guba, 1994; Sparkes and Smith, 2014). Although this appears unproblematic, an enduring debate exists between realists (i.e., a single objective reality exists independent of human interpretation) and relativists (i.e., social reality is humanly constructed) as to what constitutes legitimate knowledge and ways of knowing about the social world (e.g., Smith, 2018; Wiltshire, 2018). Indeed, while it is important to recognise the strengths and weaknesses of the paradigms that comprise these opposing perspectives, no one paradigm is superior to the others (Mallett and Tinning, 2014; Sparkes, 2012).

As I demonstrated in the preceding review of literature chapter, coach education-related research is becoming increasingly characterised by paradigmatic plurality and diversity (Smith and Sparkes, 2016a). Crucially, the acceptance of paradigmatic diversity (e.g., positivism, interpretivism, post-structuralism, and critical realism) has enhanced the legitimacy of certain methods and positions in scholarship, as well as simultaneously creating an element of methodological confusion and ambiguity amongst qualitatively-oriented scholars in the social sciences (Lincoln, 2010). Perhaps the reason for such confusion is sourced from the growing repertoire of available qualitative approaches and the taken-for-grantedness that often underpins a researcher's decision to adopt a personally meaningful paradigm (Sparkes, 2012). To directly deal with this issue, it is important that I critically reflect upon my own decision to adopt an interpretivist stance throughout this thesis and begin to unpack my epistemological and ontological beliefs (Sparkes and Smith, 2014).

### *3.2.1 Adopting an Interpretivist Perspective*

Traditionally, the most prevalent research paradigms are positivism, post-positivism, interpretivism, and post-structuralism. After critically engaging with these positions and my own lived experiences, my understandings of social life (e.g., my coaching practice and relations with others) closely

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<sup>2</sup> Instead of repeatedly writing [Sic] within gendered quotations, I would like to make it clear here that I acknowledge the issues associated with unnecessarily gendered language.

aligned with the philosophical principles of the interpretivist paradigm. In spite of my generally positive experiences of formal coach education, I elected to choose interpretivism because, on occasion, I was dissatisfied with the unproblematic, technical, and rationalistic depictions of practice promoted by coach educators (and academic research) (Potrac *et al.*, 2014). In contradiction to the homogeneous, uniform, predictable, and ‘cause-effect’ version of reality that was advocated, I actually had to contend with ‘multiple realities, problems, tensions, joys and interpretations held by various people’ (Potrac *et al.*, 2014, p. 37). In this regard, my everyday practice was imbued with ambiguity, relational complexity, emotion, and micropolitics (Potrac *et al.*, 2014), as illustrated in the following excerpts:

That counter-attacking session went horribly. Why didn’t the players respond like I was told they would on the coach education course? They just didn’t get it (well, a couple did). I used all of the same planning materials, activities, coaching points, and interventions that the tutor used to good effect on the course. Yet, my (inter)actions were met with constant errors, befuddled faces, disengagement, difficult questions, and uncontrollable chaos. I recall a similar response to my attempts to translate realist research on the self-determination theory into my coaching practice. What happened stood in stark contrast to the positive behavioural outcomes that reportedly correlated with the promotion of autonomy, relatedness, and competence.

Joe, evidently flustered, “I’m fuckin’ fuming about the message that he [the centre director] sent out” [Ste and I nod]. He continues, “him and those staff in the office don’t even have a clue. Hardly any of them actually coach. We’ll structure and implement this programme how we see fit. I’m a bloody experienced coach for god’s sake, I won’t be told by the likes of him what to do.” As recent additions to the coaching staff, Ste and I explain how much we respect and admire Joe, but that we agree with the director’s instructions, and that we’re worried about the consequences of defecting from the plan. I start to feel uncomfortable; I don’t want to be seen to be taking sides or run the risk of ruining my working relationships. Joe interrupts, “Lads, no-one will find out what we’re doing. If push comes to shove, I’ll deal with everyone in there.”

As an interpretivist, then, I reject the belief that the ‘social world (e.g., people, cultures, social practices, and social institutions) can be examined and understood through the assumptions and methodologies natural scientists use to examine the physical world’ (Potrac *et al.*, 2014, p. 32). Instead, I believe the social world is complex and that social actors, individually and collectively,

define their own meanings and make sense of (inter)actions within, and as a result of, particular social, political, and cultural contexts (Markula and Silk, 2011; Scott, 2015). Ontologically, I subscribe to a relativist position. Thus, I challenge the notion of the social world consisting entirely of ‘hard, tangible, and relatively immutable facts that can be observed, measured, and known for what they are’ (Sparkes, 1992, p. 29). Rather, I contend that the social world is constructed in accordance with the ‘subjectivities, interests, emotions, and values’ (Sparkes, 1992, p. 25) of individuals.

I do not propose that the social world (or meaning) exists ‘in people’s heads’ or that ‘anything goes’ (Potrac *et al.*, 2014, p. 33). Fundamentally, I argue that ‘the knower and the process of knowing cannot be separated from what is known’ (Sparkes, 1992, p. 27), in the sense that the mind influences how individuals interpret ‘meanings and utterances’ inclusive ‘of the meanings we assign to the intentions, motivations, and so on of ourselves and others’ (Smith, 1989, p. 27). I also argue that such understandings are founded in a patterned, routinised, and orderly social consensus, in the form of socially negotiated ‘structures, institutions, and normative frameworks’ (Scott, 2015, p. 1). As opposed to these collectively agreed social rules being independently imposed upon individuals or groups, I believe that they are open to contestation and disorder, and ‘created by individuals in the course of their everyday lives’ (Potrac *et al.*, 2014, p. 33). For me, then, social reality is grounded in how people make sense of the social worlds in which they inhabit (Markula and Silk, 2011).

I also reject claims that interpretation is a fixed and stable phenomenon, and alternatively offer a perspective that recognises interpretation can evolve based upon social (inter)actions and an individual’s sense-making capacities (Sparkes, 1992). This means that the meaning attached to ‘episodes in the social world is open to revision, as he or she may revisit and re-interpret their own and others’ behaviours in a variety of different, sometimes contradictory, ways’ (Biesta, Field, Hodgkinson, Macleod, and Goodson, 2011; Potrac *et al.*, 2014, p. 33). Epistemologically, then, because I believe that there ‘is no objective truth waiting for us to discover it’ (Crotty, 1998, p. 8), I

conceptualise knowledge as being socially constructed and inherently political, cultural, contextual, and biographical (Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey, 2011; Patton, 2015; Potrac *et al.*, 2014).

Methodologically, instead of producing the kind of nomothetic and law-like accounts of (inter)action associated with positivist inquiry, I champion an idiographic approach to explore the ‘interpretive understanding of social (i.e., collective) action’ as it is experienced by individuals and groups (Bryman, 2012, p. 30; Howell, 2013). To do this, I favour a hermeneutical and dialectical research design (Crotty, 1998). This entails seeking to achieve *thick description* (i.e., rich and highly detailed accounts of what is seen, heard, and felt) and *thick interpretation* (i.e., analysis of events within a research context) through a range of complimentary qualitative research methods (e.g., participant observations and semi-structured interviews) (Howell, 2013; Potrac *et al.*, 2014). Critically, this means that I view the research process as a subjective, transactional, and co-constructed set of activities that actively involves researchers and participants together (Howell, 2013; Potrac *et al.*, 2014).

Unlike positivist researchers, who use *neutral* and standardised instruments, I consider myself as the ‘primary research tool’, as my reflective capacities shape the extent to which I can ‘find, identify, and collect data’ (Ball, 1990, p. 157; Markula and Silk, 2011). Thus, I place considerable store on my ability to immerse myself in the research setting and iteratively interpret information (Thorpe, 2014). Moreover, to avoid becoming *dispassionate* or *faceless*, I write myself into the interwoven fabrics of the research process by presenting author-involved accounts (Sparkes, 1998, 2002). That is, I present the research findings and relational complexities of undertaking data generation activities inclusive of my social and physical engagements with space(s) and people (Orne and Bell, 2015). Importantly, as interpretivist scholars, we cannot ignore the *human* elements of research or ‘hope to see the world outside of our place in it’ (Sparkes, 1992, p; 27). As such, I recognise that this thesis is the product of my experiences, relationships and interactions with participants during the fieldwork process, as well as my theoretical and analytical choices (Grills and Prus, 2019; Tracy, 2020).

The interpretivist paradigm has been accused of providing ‘theoretical tinsel’ (Potrac, Smith, and Nelson, 2017, p. 131) and *evasive self-protection* (e.g., Wiltshire, 2018). Specifically, the critical, in-depth, and richly descriptive accounts of experience produced by interpretivist scholars have been adjudged as an intellectual barrier to addressing and providing solutions to ‘grand challenges’ in modern society (Wiltshire, 2018, p. 2). Broadly, the justification of these criticisms is grounded in preconceptions that the ‘highly subjective’ essence of relativist ontology and epistemology prevents interpretivist inquiry from being disproved, scrutinised, challenged, or homogenously generalised to elicit widespread change (Wiltshire, 2018, p. 5). Arguably, such claims emanate from positivistic perspectives on what constitutes *good* research (Potrac *et al.*, 2014). I begin to unpack these comments within the remainder of the chapter. Whilst I wish to avoid falling foul of ‘blinding arrogance’ (Smith and Sparkes, 2013, p. 238) by presenting interpretivism as a heroic paradigm, engaging with this form of scholarship has significantly developed my ‘quality of mind’ (Jones and Turner, 2006, p. 183) as a coach, researcher, and educator (Sparkes, 2015). In comparison with the other available paradigms, interpretivist research struck a chord with my own understandings of the everyday realities I have faced (and continue to face) in the social world.

With reference to the driving questions of this thesis, interpretivism holds much value for unveiling how, when, where, and why coach educators (a) employ impression management strategies in their interactions with learners, co-tutors, colleagues, managers, and external assessors, (b) collectively plan for, enact, and reflect upon team performances, and (c) consider their dealings with others in terms of the broader relational network(s) in which they inhabit. It also offers a scope for exploring how people ‘come to variously understand, and choose to respond to, the ambiguities and pathos within their respective settings’ (Potrac *et al.*, 2014, p. 35). As suggested by Allanson *et al* (2019), those interested in the workplace interactions of coach educators can benefit from the valuable insights provided by interpretivism into the way(s) ‘emotion, cognition, self and context, ethical judgements and purposeful action’ are ‘all intertwined’ in the everyday experience(s) of individuals and groups (Kelchtermans, 2009a, p. 996). In sum, this paradigm has much promise for extending current research in coach education. Importantly, the reader should not confuse the

chronological structure of this chapter, or the thesis itself, with a linear and fragmented set of research activities, but instead consider each component as inseparable features of an ongoing research process (Smith, 2013).

### *3.3 Dramaturgical Approaches to Understanding Social Life*

‘The issues dealt with by stage craft and stage-management are sometimes trivial but they are quite general; they seem to occur everywhere in social life, providing a clear-cut dimension for formal sociological analysis.’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 26).

Over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, dramaturgical approaches to understanding social life evolved by virtue of theoretical ideas relating to the *theatrical instinct* (Evreinov, 1927), *dramatistic pentad* (Burke, 1945), and eventually, a *sociology of dramaturgy* (Goffman, 1959). The most cited of these authors is Erving Goffman who, in his classic text, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, developed a comprehensive framework of concepts for systematically analysing dramaturgy and social interaction (Goffman, 1959). Principally, this text is concerned with ‘the structure of those entities in social life that come into being whenever persons enter one another’s immediate physical presence’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 246). Famously, his dramaturgical metaphor likens the organisation of social life to that of a theatre or a game, whereby people, individually and collectively, ‘stage performances in real life’ (Shulman, 2017, p. 5). The theatrical analogy, then, considers ‘the way in which the individual in ordinary work situations presents himself and his activity to others, the ways in which he guides or controls the impression they form of him, and the kinds of things he may and may not do while sustaining his performance before them’ (Goffman, 1959, preface).

Importantly, as performances occur in the presence of scrutinising audiences who ‘commonly seek to acquire information’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 13), individuals and teams ‘play roles, negotiate situations, and to a larger extent are forced to be actors’ (Marsh, Keating, Eyre, Campbell, and McKenzie, 1996, p. 73). Goffman (1959) demonstrates how individuals and groups adapt and stage their interactions before others to ‘influence the definition of the situation which they come to have’ (p. 17) as a means to control the responsive treatment their espoused actions, intentions, and competency receives (Shulman, 2017). The crux of this work, then, addresses the

common techniques that people use (and the possible contingencies that accompany them) to sustain a desirable impression that ‘makes an implicit or explicit claim to be a person of a particular kind’, thus exerting ‘a moral demand upon the others, obliging them to value and treat him in the manner that persons of his kind have a right to expect (Goffman, 1959, p. 24).

Researchers interested in dramaturgical theorising focus on examining the non-fictional performances offered by social actors in the course of their everyday lives (e.g., at work) (Shulman, 2017). Indeed, the starting point for any dramaturgical analysis begins with a social actors’ *appearance* (i.e., dress and other features that identify the actors role, status, or condition), *manner* (i.e., an actor’s attitude towards their role and how they are playing it), use of *props* (i.e., objects used to support a desired image in the eyes of others), and the *staging* of an activity (i.e., physical layout and background items) (Goffman, 1959; Scott, 2015). Additionally, the now classic work of Hochschild (e.g., 1983), which draws upon the dramaturgical metaphor to chart the interplay between impression management, social interaction, and emotion in the workplace, is cited as a theoretical companion of Goffman’s original theorising (e.g., Potrac, Gearity, Nichol, Morgan, and Hall, 2020; Potrac, Hall, McCutcheon, Morgan, Kelly, Horgan, Edwards, Corsby, and Nichol, 2022). I drew upon Hochschild’s (1983) work (see section 3.3.2) based on the limitations of Goffman’s oeuvre to explain what I was seeing, hearing, and feeling during fieldwork.

### 3.3.1 Erving Goffman: Key Contributions and Vocabulary

Throughout his oeuvre (i.e., 1959, 1961a, 1963, 1967, 1969, 1974), Goffman attempted to describe the grammar of social life through four main metaphors; the theatre, the ritual, the game, and the frame (Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2015). Together, these works are believed to have ‘contributed towards an understanding of the way we convey social information through images and symbols and how those images are incorporated into social expectations’ (Jones, Potrac, Cushion, Ronglan, and Davey, 2011, p. 15). Broadly, though, Goffman is most lauded for his work on the study of face-to-face interaction (Maseda, 2017). In his view, interactions reflect sets of *rituals* that support the maintenance of a moral social order in day-to-day life (Birrell and Donnelly, 2004; Goffman, 1983). He termed this the *interaction order* (Goffman, 1983); social encounters are governed by



generalised ‘socially situated’ ‘traffic rules’ which provide a pre-condition for ‘guiding’ what should happen in face-to-face interaction and the ‘sustained, intimate coordination of action’ (Goffman, 1983, p. 2-3).

Goffman believed that social actors enter into a mutually negotiated process where such ‘traffic rules’ are selectively established, enforced, challenged, or broken (Dennis and Martin, 2005; Goffman, 1983, p. 2). Indeed, Goffman did not mean that individuals are free to present an image of their choosing, however, but are rather obliged to ‘define themselves in congruence with the statuses, roles, and relationships that are accorded by the social order’ (Lemert and Brannaman, 2000, xvii). In his own words:

‘An individual goes about constrained to sustain a viable image of himself in the eyes of others. Some local circumstances always reflect upon him, and since these experiences will reflect upon him, and since these circumstances will vary unexpectedly and constantly, footwork or rather self-work, will be continuously necessary.’ (Goffman, 1971, p. 185)

On the other hand, Goffman did not view the thoughts, feelings, and actions of social actors as completely determined by society, either (Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2015). Instead, he proposed that individuals can, to achieve certain ends, strategically manipulate social *rules*, encounters, and situations ‘in a thoroughly calculating manner, expressing himself in a given way solely in order to give the kind of impression to others that is likely to evoke from them a specific response he is concerned to obtain.’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 17).

Goffman’s dramaturgical theory consists of six interconnected concepts (Shulman, 2017):

1. People are performers who use impression management to convey a persona or sense of who they are to others (e.g., authenticity, mannerisms, script, appearance, props).
2. People perform in different social spaces referred to as front (public) and back (private) regions of performance.
3. People work collectively and in teams to express the characteristics of social situations.
4. The delivery of a credible performance is the priority of any performer.
5. People avoid communicating out of character and taking any action that could contradict the requirements of a particular performance (i.e., *faux pas*).

6. When performances are spoiled, actors try to repair the performance through curative steps.

In his original text, Goffman (1959) introduces a plethora of key terminology that is integral to his dramaturgical framework. First of all, a *performance* is defined as ‘all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers (audience) and which has some influence on the observers’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 32). This subsumes calculated impressions (i.e., impressions of self that an individual seeks to convey) and secondary impressions (i.e., the impression that an actor leaves in the minds of others) (Goffman, 1959). A performance includes a *front*, which is ‘that part of an individual’s performance that regularly functions in a general and mixed fashion to define the social situation for those who observe the performance’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 32). As discussed earlier, an individual’s front comprises their appearance, manner, props, role, and the setting where the performance takes place.

Relatedly, Goffman (1959) introduces the concept of *regions* or *stages*. These distinctive social spaces include the *front-region*, which ‘refers to the place where the performance is given’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 110), and the *back-region*, where ‘the impression fostered by the participants is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 114). Here, the performers are provided with opportunities to relax, plan for, rehearse, adjust, and scrutinise their performances (Goffman, 1959). Opportunities to engage in these activities differ due to the presence of (or lack of) an audience (Goffman, 1959). Goffman (1959) argues that the management of regions by social actors is pivotal in controlling the flow of information, and helps to prevent audience members from witnessing an activity ‘that is quite incompatible with the impression that they are, for wider social reasons, under obligation to maintain’ (P. 204). The idea behind the notion of regions, then, is that the nature of an individual or team performance depends on where it takes place.

During performances, Goffman (1959) suggests that social actors work at *realising* their role, whereby an ‘individual typically infuses his activity with signs which dramatically highlight and portray confirmatory facts that might otherwise remain hidden or obscure’ (p. 40). He also presents the idea that people aspire to offer *idealised* versions of themselves to observers

(Goffman, 1959). *Idealisation*, then, relates to when an individual's performance will 'incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of society, more so, in fact, than does his behaviour as a whole' (Goffman, 1959, p. 45). Goffman (1959) further recognised that people tend to perform collectively in *performance teams*, which he defined as 'any set of individuals who cooperate in staging a single routine' (p. 85). Goffman (1959) explained that members of a performance team (or *team members*) hold various roles in the planning, enactment, and revision of performances.

Actors engaged in team performances try to avoid discrediting *performance disruptions* (Goffman, 1959). These are 'unexpected events that disrupt the version of reality fostered by the participants and make the performance grind to an embarrassing halt' (Scott, 2015, p. 77). The first disruption is the *unmeant gesture*, which is concerned with how 'many minor, inadvertent acts happen to be well designed to convey impressions inappropriate at the time' (Goffman, 1959, p. 203). Second, the *inopportune intrusion*, which describes situations where 'an outsider accidentally enters a region in which a performance is being given, or when a member of the audience inadvertently enters the backstage' and catches 'those present *flagrante delicto*' (Goffman, 1959, p. 204). Third, the *faux pas*, deals with projections that are 'introduced by intentional verbal statements or non-verbal acts whose full significance is not appreciated by the individual who contributes them to the interaction' (Goffman, 1959, p. 204). Lastly, *scenes* occur when 'an individual acts in such a way as to destroy or seriously threaten the polite appearance or consensus' (Goffman, 1959, p. 205).

According to Goffman (1959), when such contingencies arise, social actors use reparative strategies (e.g., humour, apologies, ignorance) to reinstate the *working consensus*. To prevent these, however, Goffman (1959) suggests a suite of *defensive practices* that individuals and teams could adopt; *dramaturgical loyalty*, *dramaturgical discipline*, and *dramaturgical circumspection*. *Dramaturgical loyalty* concerns team-members acting as if 'they have accepted certain moral obligations. They must not betray the secrets of the team when between performances – whether from self-interest, principle, or lack of discretion.' (Goffman, 1959, p. 207). *Dramaturgical discipline* includes the performer's ability to 'offer a show of intellectual and emotional

involvement in the activity he is presenting, but must keep himself from actually being carried away by his own show lest this destroy his involvement in the task of putting on a successful performance' (Goffman, 1959, p. 210). In other words, to positively execute a role, actors must carefully manage their personal front 'so as to appear nonchalant, while concealing the extensive work they are doing to create the impression' (Scott, 2015, p. 88). Finally, on *dramaturgical circumspection*, Goffman (1959) writes, 'In the interests of the team, performers will be required to exercise prudence and circumspection in staging a show, preparing in advance for likely contingencies and exploiting the opportunities that remain' (p. 212).

The most frequently cited criticisms of Goffman's theorising are directed at the limitations of his writings in directly addressing macro-level features of social life (e.g., power, social stratification, social change, culture, and systems) in his analysis of the *interaction order*, and how they imbue face-to-face interactions, relationships, and organisations (e.g., Goffman, 1983; Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2015; Jenkins, 2008; Smith and Jacobsen, 2019). His critics argue that such alleged misgivings are *naïve* and present an *incomplete* sociological awareness of everyday social life (Smith and Jacobsen, 2019). As claimed by Smith and Jacobsen (2019), however, 'Goffman may indeed deliberately have neglected some of these dimensions in his writings' and 'part of that neglect was justifiable in light of his ambitions to establish the sociology of the interaction order' (p. 12). Goffman himself wrote, 'I make no claim whatsoever to be talking about the core matters of sociology – social organisation and social structure' (Goffman, 1974, p. 14). Arguably, while I recognise the limitations of Goffman's focus on the *micro*, he does, to a degree, deal with such issues and provides a platform to rebut his critics (Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2019).

In terms of the apparent structural inadequacies in Goffman's thesis, Smith and Jorgensen (2019) refer to the 'loose coupling' metaphor (Goffman, 1983, p. 11) that he used to reference the interface(s) between social structures and practices in face-to-face interaction. They also describe how Goffman (1961b) drew tentative links between people and society regarding the norm-based institutionalised roles that social actors play in relation to others. Moreover, in his *Frame Analysis* text, Goffman (1974) reoriented his analysis from face-to-face interaction to the social *frames* they

take place within, whereby perceptions of a role are formed in the structured nature of situations and settings. Even in his opening dramaturgical text, he wrote that a social performance is ‘socialised, moulded, and modified to fit into the understanding and expectations of the society in which it is presented’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 35). He also states that people embody ‘values of society’ so that the performance appears as an ‘expressive rejuvenation and reaffirmation of the moral values of the community’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 35).

For Jenkins (2008), structural conclusions can be drawn from the place of power in the ‘interaction order’ (Goffman, 1983). Jenkins (2008) explains that certain parallels exist between broad patterns of behaviour in social situations and the effects of local social arrangements (or procedural forms) for the behaviour and outcomes of people assigned particular identities. For Goffman, Jenkins (2008) argues that, ‘power is a matter of a taken-for-granted, ‘normal’ everyday order of interaction, which enables efficacy and capacity’ (p. 164) for different groups. Thus, although Goffman does not explicitly recognise power, it arises through notions of *dramatic* and *directive* dominance, and an individual’s capacity to draw upon resources to strategically control their identity and spatial vulnerability to exert influence over alters during interaction (Goffman, 1959; Jenkins, 2008; Smith and Jacobsen, 2019). Power, then, is coined in Goffman’s conceptualisation of face-to-face interaction as the ‘reciprocal influence of individuals upon one another’s actions when in one another’s immediate presence’ (1959, p. 15). Therefore, given the varying degrees in which people can achieve the above, we can begin to understand why social actors, individually and collectively, exhibit ‘a marked capacity for covertly accepting miserable interactional arrangements’ (Goffman, 1983, p. 6).

Hochschild (1983) also believed Goffman’s work was limited because it solely focused on what can be directly observed. Although she was indebted to Goffman ‘for his keen sense of how we try to control our appearance even as we unconsciously observe rules about how we ought to appear to others’ (p. xviii), Hochschild (1983) wanted to build on his theorising through a specific focus on emotions in everyday life. In particular, Hochschild (1983) raised several questions about the use of Goffman’s theorising to address emotion management in sufficient detail, such as how a

person acts on feeling, stops acting on it, or stops feeling at all. On the display of feeling in everyday life, she writes, ‘the works of Erving Goffman introduce us to the many minor traffic rules of face-to-face interaction, as they emerge at a card game, in an elevator, on the street, or at the dining table of an insane asylum. He prevents us from dismissing the small as trivial by showing how small rules, transgressions, and punishments add up to form the longer strips of experience we call “work”. At the same time, it is hard to use Goffman’s focus to explain why companies train flight attendants in smiling, or how emotional tone is supervised, or what profit is ultimately tied to emotional labour’ (p. 10).

Crucially, ‘we can then conclude that although Goffman did not pay any particular or sustained attention to such topics ... he nevertheless provided the discipline of sociology with some insights into the themes of social structure, power and politics that subsequent interpreters and users of his work have been able to elaborate and expand on’ (Smith and Jacobsen, 2019, p. 26). Incidentally, researchers (e.g., Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2019; Schwalbe, 2019; Shulman, 2017; Smith and Jacobsen, 2019) are starting to develop his microsociological perspective in increasingly contemporary, *upscaled*, *critical*, and *consequential* ways. Generally, this growing research agenda is beginning to connect individual and collective face-to-face interactions (i.e., collaboration) in a range of settings (e.g., workplaces, digital spaces) to the *unseen* macro and meso social forces (e.g., relational or organisational networks, demographics, status, evaluative processes, and self-interests) that are loosely visible in Goffman’s original writings. On this, Shulman (2017) asserts that:

‘Dramaturgy is a victim of its own ease of application. People can apply the concepts of dramaturgy so easily and readily that once they describe a social performance using dramaturgical terms, they do not pursue the full analytic potential that this approach offers. That people perform during a date and that a worker acts nicer to a client than he or she really wants to are initial observations ... they represent an unfinished sociological assessment that could occur if gendered expectations are added to the mix of dating dramaturgy or if the impression management of workers is translated into a higher or lower dollar figure based on client feedback’ (p. 71).

Finally, questions have arisen about Goffman’s awareness of the different *levels* of social acting (i.e., emphasis on what can be observed) (e.g., Hochschild, 1983; Burkitt, 2014). Burkitt (2014), for example, suggested that Goffman (1959) largely assumed that people are *cynical*, *inauthentic*, and predominantly engage in surface acting. Critically, it can be argued that Goffman’s actors are not

merely amoral, self-interested role players, busy manipulating others to achieve personal ends (Jenkins, 2008). Whether authentic or not, Goffman emphasised the necessity of meaningfully expressed performances to the types of basic cooperation and coordination crucial to the sustenance of social life (Scott, 2015). On the importance of purposeful expression in society, Goffman (1959) wrote, ‘a status, a position, a social space is not a material thing, to be possessed then displayed; it is a pattern of appropriate conduct, coherent, embellished, and well-articulated’ (p. 36). Shulman (2017) adds, ‘whether deceptive or nondeceptive, people still confront similar situations where they must perform credibly. You can perform in different ways, truthfully or dishonestly, badly or well, but you will have to perform. In social life, as in the theatre, the show must go on’ (p. 98).

For Hochschild (1983), even though Goffman’s observations are valuable for understanding the purpose of action and body language; *the put-on sneer, the posed shrug, the controlled sigh*, she notes that little attention is given to the *deeper* work that underpins such displays. On this topic, she goes on to say, ‘ simply having a personality does not make you a diplomat any more than having muscles makes one an athlete’ (p. xvii). Thus, Hochschild (1983) took inspiration from Goffman’s theorising on how social actors *sell* an image or personality as part of their role in the workplace in order to develop a conceptual vocabulary which encapsulated the active *emotional labour* involved in the *selling* of fronts. These are the grounds on which her work was valuable to this project.

### 3.3.2 Arlie Russel Hochschild: Key Contributions and Vocabulary

Hochschild’s (1983) work was primarily concerned with workplaces where employees were required to achieve rigid organisational images characterised by scripts and ritualised modes of interaction. In organisational (and non-work) contexts, she was interested in exploring how emotion may function ‘as a messenger from the self, an agent that gives us an instant report on the connection between what we are seeing and what we expected to see, and tells us what we feel ready to do about it’(Hochschild, 1983, p. xviii). That is, her writing focused on the connections between emotions and interactions, how emotion shapes interpretation, and the relationship between emotions that are felt and those enacted for the benefit of others (Hochschild, 1983). In

*The Managed Heart*, Hochschild (1983) revealed how organisations shaped and controlled the emotional expression of employees by telling them what emotions to show and conceal in customer-facing interactions. The concepts she derived from the emotion work of flight attendants and debt collectors in their attempts to present themselves appropriately are most relevant for this thesis.

Hochschild (1983) summarised that the emotional labour involved in the everyday *doing* of work may be ‘one part of a distinctively patterned yet visible emotion system – a system composed of individual acts of emotion work, social feeling rules, and a great variety of exchanges between people in public and private life’ (p. xvii ). She also noted how the sort of labour valued in capitalist systems produces consequences (e.g., estrangement) for sense of self and authenticity in employees. Relatedly, Hochschild (1983) attended to how workers attempted to preserve a sense of self. To elaborate on this, she described how workers ‘engaged in acts of circumventing the feeling rules of work, how they limit their emotional offering to surface displays of the “right” feeling but suffer from a sense of being “false” or mechanical’ (p. xviii). Together, Hochschild’s research shows how employees are trained by organisations to learn what emotions are (in)appropriate in particular social settings and situations. The most prevalent concepts in her work (e.g., 1983) include *emotion management*, *emotion work*, *emotional labour*, *feeling and display rules*, *surface and deep acting*, and *inauthenticity of self*.

*Emotion management* is concerned with how social actors seek to manage feeling and create ‘a publicly observable facial and bodily display’ for the consumption of others (Hochschild, 1983, p. 7). This means that actors must convey recognisable ways of interacting by knowing what emotions to display (or conceal) and when (Theodosius, 2008). *Emotion management* can be divided into two different concepts; *emotion work* and *emotional labour*. *Emotion work* is the management of emotion in the private sphere (i.e., in the home) whereas the same work carried out in the public sphere (i.e., at work) is defined as emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983). *Emotional labour* is defined as ‘labour that requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others. This kind of labour calls for a coordination of mind and feeling, and it sometimes draws on a source of self that we honour as



deep and integral to our individuality. (Hochschild, 1983, p. 7). In this context, emotion work has an exchange value and is considered as a commodity sold for a wage (Hochschild, 1983).

The flight attendants in Hochschild's (1983) research, for example, were recruited and trained to *sell* Delta Airlines through heavily monitored and prescribed images of *sexuality*, *hospitality*, and *southern charm*. She also adds that continued employment was based on how well the workers performed their role and that employees are trained to take an instrumental view of their *purchased front* for the benefit of the customer (Burkitt, 2014). The nature of any emotional labour in the workplace is framed by socially (re)constructed *feeling* and *display rules* (Hochschild, 1983). Feeling rules are 'standards used in emotional conversation to determine what is rightly owed in the currency of feeling' (Hochschild, 1983, p. 18). This encapsulates what is *emotionally due* in each relation or face-to-face interaction in terms of what emotion(s) should be experienced and for how long in specific social situations (Hochschild, 1983). *Display rules*, on the other hand, refer to when and how particular overt expressions of emotion should occur (Hochschild, 2000). Both sets of rules should be understood as those which 'guide emotion work by establishing the sense of entitlement or obligation that governs emotional exchanges.' (Hochschild, 1983, p. 56).

Hochschild (1983) believed that social actors fulfil their role obligations through different levels of acting; *surface* and *deep*. *Surface acting* is 'where the body, not the soul, is the main tool of the trade ... the actor is only *acting* as if he had feeling' (p. 37). Here, people work to *seem* like they are outwardly producing an appropriate emotional condition without deceiving themselves about their true emotions (Hochschild, 1983). *Deep acting* describes displays that are 'a natural result of working on feeling; the actor does not try to *seem* happy or sad but rather expresses ... a real feeling that has been self-induced' (p. 35). For Hochschild (1983), this is induced by 'directly exhorting feeling' or 'by making indirect use of a trained imagination' (p. 38). The extent to which employees are constrained to *act* by rules is thought to indicate their status in that, 'the very ways in which we acknowledge feeling rules reflects where we stand in the social landscape' (Hochschild, 1983, p. 57).

Her final key concept is *inauthenticity of self* (Hochschild, 1983). This relates to the human costs of emotional labour and the subversive management of performances at work. As Hochschild (1983) explains, ‘estrangement from display, from feeling, and from what feelings can tell us is not simply the occupational hazard of a few’ (p. 189). Indeed, when employees are instructed to conceal their true feelings, they may experience a subversion of their *true* selves and become alienated, which in-turn leads to a spiral of inauthenticity prompting burnout (Hochschild, 1983). This also occurs when sub-par working conditions make it difficult for workers to do their jobs adequately or when emotions are only masked for the benefit of others (Hochschild, 1983). Similar consequences arise for those who ‘identify too wholeheartedly with the job’ and are ‘not so good at depersonalising inappropriately personal behaviour toward her’ (Hochschild, 1982, p. 187). Here, one’s self becomes intertwined with the company’s image, and leads to instances where a worker ‘stops caring and becomes remote and detached from the people she serves;’ (Hochschild, 1983, p. 187).

Given the supplementary nature of Hochschild’s (1983) theorising in this thesis, I will not provide an exhaustive discussion of the criticisms of her work. I will, though, draw the reader’s attention to critical comments made by others (e.g., Burkitt, 2014) that influenced my fieldwork. Burkitt (2014) criticised Hochschild (1983) for failing to look beyond dramaturgical *feeling* and *display rules* in service work for an explanation of emotional expression during workplace performances. He argues that people may develop a natural affinity to one another not bound by these rules, and that a number of social, historical, and biographical aspects (i.e., relationships, interactions, and experiences), not purely dramaturgical ones, enter into work interactions and relations. On a related point, Brook (2009) cited Hochschild’s neglect of agency as a significant limitation in her writings. As a rebuttal to the over-determinacy of *rules* on (inter)action, evidence *can* be found in her work that flight attendants are not *crippled actors* at the behest of governance (Ashworth and Humphreys, 1993). This is demonstrated in her description of *surface acting* and acts such as *accidentally* spilling a drink on an awkward customer (Hochschild, 1983).

Taking the limitations of Goffman (1959) and Hochschild (1983) into account, the dramaturgical approach holds much value for the study of everyday organisational life. For Goffman (1959), the dramaturgical perspective intersects with technical, (micro)political, structural, and cultural means of studying workplace interactions. He elaborates that this would not only ‘lead us to describe the techniques of impression management employed in a given establishment, the principal problems of impression management in the establishment, and the identity and inter-relationships of the several performance teams which operate in the establishment’, but also ‘the matters that are a concern to all the other perspectives’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 233). In combination with Goffman’s (1959) theorising, Hochschild’s concepts not only shed light on *what*, *how*, and *why* emotional displays matter, but also the ways in which ‘they are an essential, and rationally instrumental, part of the commodities produced and sold’ in the commercialised workplace (Dillon, 2010, p. 343).

More recently, Shulman (2017) outlined a number of ways that dramaturgical inquiry can enrich our understanding of everyday social life, which includes:

1. A conceptual vocabulary for examining taken-for-granted dimensions of social interaction.
2. Connecting everyday interactions to meso-level phenomena (i.e., organisational networks).
3. Revealing how *work* is produced through different individual and collective performances.
4. Understanding *how* and *why* people are judged based on appearances and conduct.
5. An appreciation of the many social influences on how people act and treat one another.
6. Critically considering how people use different impression management tactics, and how they attempt to exercise influence and power in and through others.
7. Understanding how people attempt to influence the thoughts, feelings, and actions of associates, and the consequences that result from these (inter)actions.

### *3.4 Qualitative Fieldwork*

My decision to adopt qualitative fieldwork as a methodological approach was informed by my reading of Goffman (1959) and Hochschild (1983). According to Smith (2006), Goffman can be described as an *observer of everyday life*, *urban ethnographer*, or *human ethologist*. He was

reported to be constantly working, observing, and taking fieldnotes in public spaces (Birrell and Donnelly, 2004). In a related point, Jacobsen and Kristiansen (2015) write that Goffman, ‘was neither an armchair/theoretical sociologist nor a naturalistic/empirical researcher. He was a hybrid, a man with the ability to mix traditions, techniques, and ideas into his own eclectic methodological position’ (p. 45). Relatedly, Goffman’s extensive and intensive observations of Scottish crofters on the Shetland Isles, the behaviour of staff and customers at the *Shetland Hotel*, and of ward activities in a psychiatric hospital, helped him to conceptually (re)describe the mundane and ordinary aspects of social interaction (Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2015).

In research settings, Goffman (1953b) aspired to be an immersive ‘observant participant, rather than a participating observer’ (p. 2) in order to examine individual and collective behaviour in community life (see section 3.1). Relatedly, while Goffman (1989) did not give much stock to what people said in isolation, he suggested that researchers ought to stay in the field for extended periods of time and use fieldnotes to compare what people ‘were saying with events’ (p. 131) (see section 3.2). Arguably, the emphasis he placed on the *impressionistic, pragmatic, tentative, and explorative* throughout his ethnographic fieldwork was pivotal in the development of his dramaturgical theorising (Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2015). Goffman was not a *methodological technician* and provided no ‘recipes’ or ‘analytical prophylaxes’ for *doing* fieldwork, meaning that scholars can only infer from his writings (Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2015, p. 45; Van Maanen, 2011). Clearly, it necessitates employing intimate methods to study ‘*the instances* in which people do things in the here-and-now of ongoing group life’ and ‘attending to all of the forms of association within which people engage with one another (e.g., cooperation, conflict, cooperation, loyalty, friendship, deception, playfulness’ (Grills and Prus, 2019, p. 53). I explicate the realities of attempting to stay loyal to Goffman’s methodology in the data generation and analysis subsections in section 3.6.

Hochschild (1983) reported a similar approach to her fieldwork, whereby she actively participated in the organisational setting and day-to-day activities at *Delta Airlines*. To begin, Hochschild (1983) notes, ‘first, I watched’ (p. 14), which progressively involved: attending training

classes, watching new recruits learn passenger handling and meal service, and wandering around spaces where employee performances were managed, constructed, and contradicted. Like Goffman, Hochschild (1983) explained how she engaged in spontaneous and emergent ‘stray conversations’ (p. 16) with trainers and students across an array of settings (i.e., at work, during training, at breakfast, lunch, dinner, and at home). Hochschild (1983) differed from Goffman in that she conducted in-depth interviews to ‘follow emotion work into the job market’ (p. 16) (see section 3.6.3). In the case of flight attendants, Hochschild (1983) ‘interviewed certain people with special angles of vision on flight attending’ (p. 15). These methods helped Hochschild (1983) to understand the various aesthetic aspects of role enactment, the multiple meanings attached to emotional displays at work, and the experience(s) of workplace performances.

Fieldwork of this ilk is defined as ‘a form of inquiry in which one is immersed personally in the ongoing social activities of some individual or group for the purposes of research’ (Wolcott, 2001, p. 66). The goal of fieldwork is to generate a level of theoretical explanation, through some form of sustained involvement, which reflects the local and contextual understandings of research participants (Wolcott, 2001). As a method, fieldwork is inherently relational, intimate, and novel (or fluid), embedded within an interpretive process whereby the researcher decides ‘what counts’ as data (Wolcott, 2001). On this topic, Van Maanen (1992) explains, ‘accident and happenstance shapes fieldworkers’ studies as much as planning or foresight; numbing routine as much as living theatre, impulse as much as rational choice, mistaken judgements as much as accurate ones’ (Van Maanen, 1992, p. 2). Fundamentally, then, fieldworkers stay in a social space long enough so that novel contributions can be made about how people, individually and collectively, think and act (Wolcott, 2001). Such longevity means that participants’ social settings, backgrounds, rituals, and languages can be described in personalised, rich, and contextual ways (Wolcott, 2001).

Qualitative fieldwork, in the manner I engaged with it, draws upon the principles of ethnography (Grills and Prus, 2019; Markula, 2016). For Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), ethnography involves ‘participating, overtly or covertly, in people’s daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through

informal and formal interviews, collective documents, and artefacts' (p. 3). This method was developed by anthropologists, who used ethnography as a means of exploring how the practices and languages of non-western *primitive* or *native* groups of people were shaped by social relations, cultural images, and historical forces (Markula, 2016). The premise of *immersion*, which is essential to ethnography, aids fieldworkers in richly examining and describing everyday routines, meaning-making, generic social processes (i.e., *doing* activity, emotionality), interaction, and the complex relational patterning of social life (Grills and Prus, 2019; MacPhail, 2004).

Researchers who use ethnography utilise multiple methods, including semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and diaries (see section 3.6) to critically explore the *strange* and *mundane* (Krane and Baird, 2005; Sparkes, 2016). As opposed to the rigid and fixed research designs associated with positivist inquiry, ethnographic fieldwork is unstructured in the sense that meaning is constructed through iterative processes of sense-making (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019 (see section 3.7)). Thus, as a fieldworkers' interpretation evolves over time, social interactions and relations can be understood in increasingly structured, conceptualised, and focused ways (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). The above 'dialectical' process is illustrated in the way(s) Goffman reflexively worked 'from below' to progressively refine his understanding of everyday interaction (Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2015, p. 50). Simply, his conceptual ideas were developed from 'extended, grounded instances of inquiry of human group life in the making' (Grills and Prus, 2019, p. 52).

Reflection is integral to ethnography, as Hodgson (2000) writes, 'reflexivity is one of the central elements of ethnographic activity and signifies the researcher's part in the social world being investigated in that 'subjects' responses to the presence of the researcher and the researcher's response to the context, are as valuable as any other aspect of the study' (p. 3). Fieldwork, then, is a multi-sensory activity that includes a physical, social, cognitive, and emotional immersion that arises out of social interaction with(in) the context (Sparkes, 2016a, 2016b). From this perspective, a fieldworker's sensory awareness (i.e., hear, see, smell, touch, taste), body, and mind are interwoven into the research process and form the main instrument for data generation (Atkinson,

2016). Thus, ethnographers make sense of the *field* by considering how they are affected by what happens, and how others individually and collectively act or interpret situations (Cushion, 2014).

Relatedly, I maintain that fieldwork and *data* are influenced by the *role* of a researcher, including their judgements, what they do and do not notice, and the interpretive *baggage* (i.e., theoretical and conceptual lens, identities, positionality, relationships, and pre-existing insights) they bring to the immersive research process (King, 2016; May, 1999; Patton, 2015). Alongside this, the presence of multiple competing and fluid ‘logics’ in a social setting means that ‘cultures do not hold still for their portraits’ (Clifford, 1988, p. 38; Orne and Bell, 2015). Therefore, as ‘there is always so much going on for every person involved in a social situation, including much they do not understand or know much about’ (Orne and Bell, 2015, p. 7), I believe that social life can only be partially represented (see section 3.8) (King, 2016; Matthews, 2021). Indeed, Goffman (1963) supports this claim in a critique of his own theorising, stating that, ‘obviously, many of these data are of doubtful worth, and my interpretations, especially some of them – may certainly be questionable’ (p. 4).

The nature of my own immersion and *baggage* within the research setting resembled that of an *insider* (Grills and Prus, 2019). Simply, *insiders* are those fieldworkers with a pre-established working familiarity of a particular social space (Cushion, 2014). Arguably, insider knowledge or experience is crucial if a researcher is to successfully negotiate the cultural practices (i.e., identity, language, and practices) that govern access to possible research site and participants (see section 3.5.2) (Markula, 2016). Moreover, when *in the field*, the insider perspective tends to afford fieldworkers greater awareness of where and when interactions take place, an understanding of why people think and act in the way(s) they do, the ability to build rapport, and a marked capacity to represent social reality and meaning in richer terms (Grills and Prus, 2019; Markula, 2016; Woods, 1986). Although this intimacy is beneficial, fieldwork, or rather, observations, ‘necessitates some distance for an ethnographer to assume an analytic point of view to the culture’ (Markula, 2016, p. 39-40). That is, to echo earlier points, the insider position requires continual reflection to explicitly challenge a researcher’s taken-for-granted assumptions (Markula, 2016) (see section 3.6).

Lastly, as opposed to *living with* the participants, I purposefully and selectively *hung out*, for a given period of time, in social spaces where interactions of interest unfolded (Atkinson, 2006; Dunn and Hughson, 2016). Crucially, due to the fact that I could not watch or speak to the participants about their workplace interactions twenty-four hours a day, I had to make strategic decisions regarding when and where observations and interviews took place (see sections 3.6.2 and 3.6.3) (Gobo, 2008). Thus, instead of attempting to record, anthropologically, every aspect of the participants' workplace activities and social realities, I used theory in more deliberate ways to look for and uncover aspects of their workplace relations that would allow me to directly answer the research questions. Importantly, all of the aforementioned factors influenced who I chose to investigate, why, where, for how long, and the methods I used to generate data (Markula, 2016).

### *3.5 Sampling and Participant Information*

Surprisingly, scholars often only associate sampling with the goals of positivist research (Braun and Clarke, 2021). However, a considerable amount of sociological theorising (e.g., Goffman, 1959; Hochschild, 1983) has been based on the selection of theoretically rich samples (Gobo, 2008). This is particularly beneficial because it enables a richer, more focused and detailed analysis befitting of the conceptual parameters of a research project (Tracy, 2013). Generally speaking, sampling involves identifying the individuals, groups, settings, contexts, events, and times that best address research questions (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). What this means is that a researcher can locate the *cases* a concept or social phenomenon may be explored within to generate enough rich, complex, and multi-faceted data (Holt, 2016; Sim, Saunders, Waterfield, and Kingstone, 2018). Critically, the method of sampling a researcher uses determines what kind of data they can generate, the extent to which findings can be generalised, and to whom (Gobo, 2008).

I chose to use non-probability sampling to select the *cases* for this research project (Patton, 2015). Ergo, I embraced a more purposive and criteria-led approach which included choosing participants with employment contexts that were likely to produce in-depth and rich dramaturgical insights into workplace interaction (Patton, 2015). As an interpretivist researcher (see section 3.2.1), I believe that it is important for sample populations to be theoretically accessible given the



key role(s) they play in the analysis and representation of data (see section 3.7 and 3.8) (Robinson, 2014). In terms of sample size, then, I assessed the practical and logistical constraints of my research, such as what could realistically be achieved in the available time scale, as well as access to willing participants (Braun and Clarke, 2021). I decided that a smaller sample size would allow me to pursue and develop a ‘comprehensive intersubjectivity’ with the participants and deeply engage with their work through observations and interviews over time (Grills and Prus, 2019, p. 54). Grills and Prus (2019) wrote the following on intimate examinations of workplace interaction:

‘There is no substitute for extended and open interchange wherein others share their thoughts, activities, ambiguities, hesitations, and experiences with researchers in great detail.’ (p. 54)

Throughout the fieldwork, I opted for three main sampling strategies; theoretical, opportunistic, and snowball (Patton, 2015). To begin with, I utilised the theoretical and opportunistic approaches. As I alluded to above, theory-based sampling involves selecting cases that *illuminate* certain aspects of social life for the purpose of developing conceptual knowledge in a chosen context with a particular group of people (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). To do this, I considered the social situations and interactions that unfold in the coach education workplace, my accessibility to these situations, and their theoretical significance for data generation and analysis (Gobo, 2008). Here, I drew upon: my readings of dramaturgical theory; coach education literature which has presented the social spaces that coach educators work within (e.g., classroom, field), what they do there, the opportunities and constraints they face, who they interact with, and the impression management strategies they use (e.g., Allanson et al., 2019; Cushion *et al.*, 2019; Piggott, 2012; Watts *et al.*, 2021b); and my personal experience of the coach education workplace as a learner and colleague (i.e., the interactions I have been a part of, told about, heard, or witnessed between stakeholders).

This type of sampling was important because I sought to establish, in a theoretical sense, a form of *presentedness* in the data (Orne and Bell, 2015). I aimed to explore the degree to which the participants reported or demonstrated, individually and collectively, shared understandings and experiences of their workplace interactions and relations, and to generalise these across cases to other coach educators who may inhabit similar organisational contexts (Smith, 2018) (see section

3.9). That is, I wanted to develop dramaturgy as a common social phenomenon within related settings to decipher an underpinning social order in the workplace (Grills and Prus, 2019). Goffman (1967) echoed this, arguing that the sequencing of face-to-face interaction reflects wider social organisation, and insists that fieldworkers analyse social encounters from the perspective of, ‘not then, men, and their moments, rather moments and their men’ (p. 3). Hochschild (1983) documented a similar contextually-grounded method; ‘Delta exaggerates the demands put on all flight attendants. It gives sharper point to the general case about emotion work in public life. The reason for exaggerating the case is to show just how far demands for emotional labor can go. Having done that, we may develop a benchmark for measuring other job demands’ (p. 14).

The second related strategy that I used was opportunistic sampling (Patton, 2015). Opportunistic (or convenience) sampling is defined as a process where ‘researchers select those cases which are the easiest to access under given conditions’ (Sparkes and Smith, 2014, p. 71). Like many ethnographic fieldworkers, this included drawing upon my professional and personal relational networks, which provided resources for exploring, in rich depth and detail, my theoretical ideas and research questions in a context of interest (Emmel, 2013). Moreover, given the difficulty of accessing the organisation (and spaces) in which the participants were employed, my decision to conduct fieldwork with friends, colleagues, and line managers was partly based on more pragmatic considerations, such my status as an employee, PhD student, and research deadlines (Braun and Clarke, 2021). Also, the relationships I shared with the participants meant that I had insight into the individual and collective performances they regularly coordinated with others, as well as their perspectives on the conditions of coach education employment. This, in turn, reaffirmed my decision regarding coach education as a real-world site for dramaturgical inquiry.

Once I had confirmed some local theoretical cogency across *cases* from the first two methods, I then opted to use *snowball* sampling (Patton, 2015). Here, participants direct researchers ‘toward others who meet the study’s criteria for inclusion’ and ‘identify others ‘like them’ who they feel would provide information rich cases’ (Sparkes and Smith, 2014, p. 71). For me, this meant asking each participant to recommend connections from our shared organisational network

that could be relevant for the project (Crossley, 2011; Ortiz, 2003). As well as benefiting from a broader access to potential participants, the movement between *known connections* and *strangers* helped me to construct a theoretically rich and nuanced narrative of everyday coach education employment (Warren, 2002). Thus, because I approached coach educators who inhabited a network characterised by shared social symbols, contextual experience, and relational conditions, I was able to develop *culturally consistent* and generalisable knowledge (Schreier, 2018).

In reality, my sampling strategies were linked to my unique relational access and largely contingent upon preliminary informal conversations with the participants; a feat rarely extended to researchers in “closed” sport organisations. Even though I benefitted from leveraging my relations to generate high-quality data and enter renowned “well-guarded” spaces, the sampling strategies I employed shaped my research activities and the type of knowledge I “produced” (Tracy, 2020). Furthermore, it is important to note that my decision-making was not unfettered or free from constraints; my reliance on opportunistic and snowball sampling was largely driven by necessity and practicality. For example, at the beginning of the project, I intended to recruit coach educators with various “member identities” and identity characteristics (e.g., gender, sexuality, ethnicity), but, this was challenging because the SGB offered little assistance and due to the composition of the workforce (Lofland, 1971). So, I was limited to those willing to give me immediate access.

I also had the option to expand recruitment to other County SGB subsidiary organisations beyond my trusted network, but, knowing the political landscape, I chose not to as a means to safeguard the feasibility of the research and avoid “causing alarm” or inviting unwanted attention from senior executives (Purdy, 2016). My inability to construct a *maximum variation* sample, then, meant that the data reflected the worldview of a single distinct demographic; white, heterosexual, working class men located in a specific geographical region and SGB in the United Kingdom (Tracy, 2020). As a consequence, the data, theoretical readings, explanations, and implications should be read as a representation of the understandings, behaviours, social conditions, workplace experiences, and practices of this particular demographic group. Although suboptimal, this reflects the male-dominated environment commonly reported within sport organisations.

### 3.5.1 Background Information: Organisation and Participants

The fieldwork took place in two organisations that comprise part of a network of county-based subsidiary strands of a sport-specific National Governing Body in England – *The Coach Support Group* or *TCSG* (a pseudonym). TCSG is one of the largest, most prestigious, and encompassing examples of governing body provided coach education in the world. It is also a notoriously *off limits* organisation to researchers. The subsidiary organisations are responsible for administrating, monitoring, promoting, and implementing TCSG’s business directives, policies, and strategic plans within their situated counties across the following departments: administration, affiliation, welfare and safeguarding, officiating, participation, facilities, competition, and coach education and development. Broadly, the coach education remit includes offering informal (e.g., online learning resources), non-formal (e.g., practice or theory-based workshops and mentoring), and formal (e.g., level 1, 2, and 3 qualifications) learning and certification opportunities to coaches.

Courses are sometimes delivered *off site* (e.g., in schools, hubs, or sport centres) because of location (e.g., shared sports complex), facilities (e.g., a single building; classroom and pitch availability), and scheduling (e.g., during the week or over the weekend). Depending on the number of attendees and the level of qualification being delivered, coach educators either work by themselves or in a team (usually between 2-4 tutors). The local coach education workforce was made up of full-time and part-time employees whose wider roles incorporate coach support (e.g., coach education managers, development officers, and mentors), and sessional tutors, who are external to the organisation and are employed on casual contracts. The coach educators that I observed and/or interviewed throughout the fieldwork are introduced below:

Full-time Staff:

- **Logan**, in his late thirties, had 10 years’ experience as a coach educator. He was a regional coach education manager for TCSG and was responsible for developing senior and novice tutors, allocating work, assembling teams, and acting as an intermediary between the county and national levels of TCSG. Logan Held a level four coaching qualification and had a license to deliver up to level three courses. He also coached semi-professionally .

- **Parker**, also in his late thirties, had 10-12 years' experience as a coach educator and mentor. He held a regional role responsible for female participation and was licensed to deliver up to level three courses. His role involved organising coach education or training opportunities in the region. Parker was level four qualified and coached at college level.
- **Trevor**, in his mid-thirties, had five-eight years' experience as a coach educator. He was employed by TCSG as a sport development officer responsible for growing and upskilling the local coaching workforce. This included promoting coaching opportunities and organising non-formal CPD (i.e., coaching clinics, workshops). Trevor held a level four coaching qualification and was licensed to deliver up to level three courses.

Sessional Staff:

- **William**, in his early sixties, had 15-20 years' experience as a coach educator. He was employed full-time in a civil servant position. William held a level four coaching qualification and was licensed to deliver up to level three courses. He also held a number of part-time coaching positions in local colleges and youth elite performance academies.
- **Mike**, in his mid-thirties, had five years' experience as a coach educator and mentor. He held a level four coaching qualification and was licensed to deliver up to level two courses. Mike was employed full-time in another sport organisation in a leadership role around learning-development. He also coached in a local grassroots sports club.
- **Stuart**, also in his mid-thirties, had five years' experience as a coach educator and mentor. He held a level three coaching qualification and was licensed to deliver up to level two courses. Stuart was employed full-time in a variety of leadership roles at a local college. He also mentored coaches within a local grassroots club.
- **Barry**, in his early fifties, had 10-15 years' experience as a coach educator. Barry held a plethora of part-time and sessional coaching roles in colleges and youth development programmes. He was level four qualified and licensed to deliver up to level two courses.

- **Patrick**, in his early forties and had two-four years' experience as a coach educator and mentor. He held a level three coaching qualification and was licensed to deliver up to level 2 courses. Patrick was employed full-time as a lecturer in a local college.
- **Dan**, in his late twenties, had two-four years' experience as a coach educator. He held a level three coaching qualification and was licensed to deliver up to level two courses. Dan was employed full-time in a managerial and leadership role at a local sport-related charity.

### 3.5.2 *Gaining and Maintaining Access*

In ethnographic fieldwork, access is considered as a relational, ethical, political, and temporal process that involves constant negotiations with various *gatekeepers* (Cunliffe and Alcadipani, 2016; Thomson and Gunter, 2011). For researchers who seek to achieve sustained immersion in an organisational setting, this usually entails issues of being able to 'go where you want, observe what you want, talk to whoever you want, obtain and read whatever documents you require, and do this for whatever period of time you need to satisfy your research purposes' (Cunliffe and Alcadipani, 2016; Glesne and Peshkin, 1992, p. 33). As I alluded to earlier, my pre-existing personal and professional relationships with key decision-makers and employees (i.e., co-coach, friend, colleague, employee, acquaintance, mentee, subordinate) meant that agreeing initial access was an entirely unproblematic and casual process (e.g., Taylor, 2011; Townsend and Cushion, 2021).

My perceived *insiderness* as an employee of TCSG (as a sessional coach), regular attendee at CPD events, local grassroots coach, and a friend and mentee of some members of the coach education workforce rendered the usual 'courtship rituals' of developing trust, respect, rapport, and interest unnecessary (Tracy, 2013, p. 12). In many ways, I gained *bottom-up* access because of my local knowledge of (in)formal authority structures in the employment context (Silverman, 2010). Specifically, before data generation *officially* began, I had frequent ad-hoc conversations with employees on social media platforms, in pubs, coffeeshops, offices, and car parks about the nature of the PhD. Over a period of months, said associates became increasingly inquisitive about the project and, in instances where I did not approach them to participate, asked to be involved. Indeed, similar to the straightforwardness of my primary access (i.e., initially entering the field), the extent

to which I was enmeshed in the relational, political, and ideological landscape of the setting (and the lives of its inhabitants) made navigating secondary access within the field (i.e., acceptance amongst the participants) relatively easy (Cunliffe and Alcadipani, 2016).

From the outset, my unique identity and position meant that the participants granted me continued and unrestricted access to the everyday events, (un)managed interactions, social spaces, and detailed perspectives that are typically off-limits to outsiders (Grant, 2017). Thus, I was able to observe and probe *front region* and *back region* dramas or ‘real work’ in-situ or during interviews and enjoyed a deep level of immersion that facilitated a conceptualisation of the realities, mundane interactions, collaborations, conflicts, tensions, frustrations and ambiguities that characterised the planning, revision, and enactment of workplace performances (Cunliffe and Alcadipani, 2016, p. 549; Goffman, 1959). Goffman (1961a) attached value to this level of access, because:

‘Any group of people ... develop a life of their own that becomes meaningful, reasonable and normal once you get close to it ... a good way to learn about these worlds is to submit oneself in the company of the members to the daily round of petty contingencies to which they are subject.’ (p. ix).

Moreover, my *sameness* in the setting meant that I could empathise with the ‘sensory and emotional pedagogy’ (Wacquant, 2004, p. 13) of the participants’ workplace experiences, and in turn I drew upon situational resources (i.e., knowledge of interconnections, people, politics, agendas, influence, and pressures) to avoid damaging relations or ‘rocking the boat’ (Purdy, 2016, p. 131; Stewart, 2016). Fundamentally, this informed the choices I made in terms of my conduct with certain stakeholders (who I considered to be gatekeepers), who I spoke to, what I said, and the social spaces I occupied (Cunliffe and Alcadipani, 2016). For example, following an incident where Trevor expressed his displeasure with my lingering over his shoulder when he and Stuart were attempting to plan the workshop after arriving late, I chose not to intrude in similar scenarios. As an (influential) full-time member of staff, Trevor was considered a senior tutor; he was also my manager at TCSG. From previous interactions with Trevor (and through gossip *about* him), I knew that he donned an individualist attitude and was protective and defensive, which was reinforced by the several moments I caught him scanning space to confirm my absence. There was every chance

that he would seek to disrupt my fieldwork and gossip to others, so I busied myself with other tasks and only approached him when it was *safe* or when he engaged with me directly (Crossley, 2011).

Relatedly, my capacity to think, feel, and act in ways befitting with relational histories, local norms, values, and practices helped me to examine, without resistance, how the participants, individually and collectively, perceived, participated in, and responded to social situations (Hall, Gray, Martindale, Sproule, Kelly, and Potrac, 2021). In this regard, I took on multiple roles that were managed, crafted, and shaped by my relationships with participants (Coffey, 1999). However, this had consequences for my positionality in the field. Crucially, though, the means by which I agreed initial access presented me with the challenge of creating analytical distance and achieving a ‘compromise between an ideal self-as-researcher and an acceptable and possible self in the field setting’ (Ball, 1990, p. 158) (see section 3.6.1 and 3.6.2). Here, the intertwining of the personal and professional lives of the participants with my own made it challenging to look beyond native interpretations, manage my *dual* (or multiple) roles in the field, and navigate tensions between my identities as a fieldworker, friend, colleague, coach, and employee (Champ, Ronkainen, Nesti, Tod, and Littlewood, 2020; Townsend and Cushion, 2021). Arguably, much like Purdy (2016), my ongoing access involved considering my own ‘vulnerabilities, sensitivities, and sensibilities’ and the ‘wider methodological issues relating to fieldwork’ (p. 138).

The realities I experienced was more complex and blurred than sanitised descriptions of the insider/outsider perspective or just *doing rapport* (see section 3.6.1), and my (inter)actions sometimes stood in stark contrast to the frequently cited guidelines for *good practice* in maintaining a balance between immersion and distance (Benkwitz, 2016; Stewart, 2016). Instead, my micro-access was, at times, enabled and constrained by exchange and recognition of my self-presentation and identity in line with pre-established relational boundaries (Townsend and Cushion, 2021). Moreover, to ensure that I maintained access to the ‘inside further inside the inside’, I had to be sensitive to the participants’ responses (i.e., comments, gestures, reactions, secrecy) to my (inter)actions to judge whether I had violated our (implicit) social contract (Coffey, 1999; Ortnor, 2010, p. 215). It was difficult to separate my other selves from my fieldworker identity, and



admittedly, notions of intersubjectivity (i.e., empathy), trust, obligation, reciprocity, loyalty, and behavioural norms extended from my existing relationships and memberships, and limited the extent to which I could adopt the role of a *distant researcher* (Champ *et al.*, 2020; Coffey, 1999).

Some participants tended to more positively identify with my non-fieldwork identities, which meant that, at times, demonstrating critique, difference, or marginality was a threat to my access to data generation opportunities, people, spaces, and the relationships I shared with them beyond the fieldwork (Champ *et al.*, 2020). To secure my ongoing access, I had to produce facial and bodily displays that confirmed my roles for others; including my *appearance* (e.g., I wore an emblazoned coaching tracksuit), *props* (e.g., a branded clipboard), *scripts* (e.g., I shared opinions conducive to our relationships), *manner* (e.g., gratefulness), and emotions (e.g., hiding anger) (Goffman, 1959; Hochschild, 1983; Purdy and Jones, 2013). Paradoxically, knowing when to adhere to social norms and my role(s) within the setting simultaneously placed boundaries around and facilitated my interests as a researcher, but I believed it was necessary to create the best conditions for conducting research and generating rich insights (Coffey, 1999, Purdy, 2016).

Ultimately, because I felt like I was ‘working in a fishbowl’, I had to partially relinquish my fieldworker identity to minimise otherness and maximise association (Kelchtermans and Ballet, 2002a, p. 111; Owton and Allen-Collinson, 2014; Townsend and Cushion, 2021). The most pertinent issue emanated from the *lamination* of the researcher-participant role(s) on top of the existing relationships; it resulted in situations where my interests as a fieldworker were at odds with my other selves (Goffman, 1974; Owton and Allen-Collinson, 2014). In these scenarios, I had more to lose than gain by refusing invitations to (inter)act and participate (examples of this are provided in paragraph below).

Although my choice not to resist meant that immersion was unproblematic, it was not always ideal, as I knew that I should be engaged in other activities (i.e., observing, taking fieldnotes, probing) (Stewart, 2016). There were moments where I should have been undertaking fieldwork, but felt obliged to perform *commitment acts* because social convention required me to and because I could not separate my emotions from what I was seeing or hearing, or from the array

of events I was experiencing *with* participants (Coffey, 1999; Cunliffe and Alcadipani, 2016). I either offered (or was asked for) my assistance upon noticing potentially discrediting or tough situations, or I was explicitly invited to become involved as a sort of *team-member* (Coffey, 1999; Goffman, 1959). My involvement encapsulated facilitating warm-up activities, setting up and packing away equipment, joining in with *front* and *back region* conversations, providing feedback, and occasionally delivering content during theory-based workshops (Goffman, 1959). I discuss the reflexive techniques that I employed to generate analytical distance throughout section 3.6.

### *3.6 Data Generation*

A rigorous *methodological bricolage* was used to generate rich, deep, and unique insights into the everyday individual and collective interactions of coach educators (Denzin and Lincoln, 1999). A *bricolage* is ‘a pieced together set of representations that is fitted to the specifics of a complex situation’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 4). In a methodological sense, a *bricolage* considers the layered, fragmented, contradictory, and complex nature of meaning-making and reality (Denzin and Lincoln, 1999). Researchers-as-bricoleurs employ multiple methods, theories, and participant perspectives to make different dimensions of the social world visible, which enables meaningful connections to be drawn between interpretations and observed interactions (Tracy, 2013). The (partial) data from each method is then synthesised into an ‘interesting whole’ (Tracy, 2013, p. 26). In this thesis, I used a *methodological bricolage* consisting of extended (a) participant observations, (b) fieldnotes, and (c) cyclical semi-structured interviews. Following my methodological critique of existing research, the robustness of my chosen methodology is significant, in the sense that when:

‘Undertaken jointly, these strategies have the unique benefit of allowing researchers to, over time, gain a sense of the wide range of activities and some of the various perspectives that people apply to their everyday lives.’ (Grills and Prus, 2019, p. 220).

I opted to combine observations and cyclical interviews because, as a social scientist, I am driven to explore, at depth, *what* people do and *why* they do it. On the one hand, observations helped me to closely examine actual behaviour(s), performances, events, and settings, but, on the other, they did not allow me to understand *why* the participants chose to engage in their various personal and collaborative interactions with coach learners, colleagues, and team-members in the ways they did.

I used cyclical interviews to make sense of my observations at a much deeper level. On the whole, the interviews led me to explore, understand, and critically analyse those aspects of individual and collective performances that are not readily available to the naked eye during observations (i.e., thoughts, feelings, rationales). For example, it was not possible for me to *see* emotional labour, social conditions (i.e., tensions, interests, pressures), or phases of a performance that I did not witness first-hand (i.e., the car journey to a workshop, phone-calls with team-members).

Interviews also allowed me to probe, in a more formal situation, events that transpired in my *snapshot* “in-situ” interactions with the participants. For example, in these conversations, the participants often disclosed information or behaved in ways indicative of wider social processes and patterns of behaviour. For me, interviews were crucial for addressing the research questions because the depth and detail of data I wanted could not be mined for in said discussions, and given that I was immersed in the setting, I did not have the time to make thoughtful connections between data and explanatory concepts. Nor did I not think it was systematically sound to explore areas of interest during these encounters. Instead, the space between the observations and interviews gave me a chance to iteratively refine, identify, and reflect on things I wanted to pursue further following analysis. Mainly, though, on top of the observations, the contemplative dialogue that accompanied phases of progressive interviewing helped me to develop an intersubjective understanding with the participants about *what* was happening in their world(s) and *why* (Grills and Prus, 2019).

Broadly, I wanted to avoid reducing the richness of the data and to capture, as much as philosophically possible, the *full-round* of (inter)actions and meanings that characterised everyday work for the participants. I placed an emphasis on generating data concerning how the participants constructed reality, knowledge, and made sense of their various workplace performances within and through their (shared) relationships with others. Collectively, these methods enabled a critical dramaturgical investigation into *what* interactions happened in coach education work, *where* they took place, *who* contributed or was present, *how* interactions or performances were (de)constructed or achieved, and *why* they were enacted in the way(s) they were (Burke, 1945; Scott, 2015).

In total, I completed 206 hours of fieldwork. Out of the eight participants, two participants did not fully participate: Parker only partook in interviews due to a lack of allocated work, and Trevor solely committed to observations because of his availability. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic meant that the fieldwork was forced to end prematurely.

### *3.6.1 Participant Observations*

Over a period of six months, I observed a total of 151 hours of formal coach education delivery. This involved observing level one and level two coaching qualifications, whereby tutors were employed to deliver a curriculum embedded within the organisation's coach education framework. The syllabus ranged from coaching and intervention styles, managing behaviour, practice design, working with individuals and groups, and the holistic integration of different coaching components. Workshops lasted between three and eight hours, and the duration of courses lasted between one and ten months. Tutors used the classroom for theory-based activities such as tutor-led workshops, reflection, planning, group tasks and discussion, and feedback. Practical activities were delivered in the outdoor facilities provided by venues. Here, activities involved tutor-led sessions and learner-led delivery. To decipher the *front* and *back region* (Goffman, 1959) interactions and performances that took place, I was present before each 'block' started, throughout workshops, after they had concluded, and during transitions between spaces (i.e., in corridors, stairwells, and concourses).

My decision to select participant observation, as indicated in the previous section, was because being a *passive observer* or merely *being there* was not a workable position due to the actions I needed to produce in order to access data and maintain relationships (Purdy and Jones, 2013). To build on my points in section 3.4, participant-observation combines the interviewing of participants with observation and introspection (Orne and Bell, 2015). Becker (1958) notes that participant-observation is key to the study of social interaction as it helps fieldworkers to closely examine the situations people 'ordinarily meet and how they behave in them' and discover 'their interpretations of the events he has observed' (p. 652). In this sense, the mundane and (un)remarkable details of social life can be conceptualised 'in real time' (Sparkes and Smith, 2014, p. 100).

When used in combination with interviews, participant observations (including in-situ exchanges) contribute additional layers of richness to the research process (Wolcott, 2001). For example, it enables a comparison to be made between what a participant says and what interactions actually happen, both individually and collectively, in social situations (Thorpe and Olive, 2016). For me, it enabled the ‘familiar to appear strange’ and highlighted aspects of everyday workplace interactions that might have escaped my attention if I only utilised interviews (O’Reilly, 2012, p. 112; Sparkes and Smith, 2014). Crucially, these methods, in tandem, can help to unveil sense-making processes, interpretations, contradictions, interests, and an awareness of (inter)actions that remain unnoticed by participants (Cushion, 2014). When used iteratively (like I did here), observations and interviews inform one another, meaning that data can be progressively understood in richer conceptual terms (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019; Tracy, 2020).

Participant observation requires researchers to assume a dual role: a participant in the rounds of interaction and rituals that constitute daily life within a research setting, as well as an analytical observer (Grills and Prus, 2019). Generally, the ebb and flow between these two roles is considered pivotal to providing opportunities for increasing *familiarity* with(in) a context and creating enough distance for *strangeness* (Orne and Bell, 2015). Equally, both roles are reliant upon skilled *immersed observation* (Atkinson, 2016). Broadly, there are an array of observational positions that researchers can choose from to do this: the *complete participant*, *participant as observer*, *observer as participant*, and *complete observer* (Gold, 1958). The *complete participant* is a member of the group (i.e., insider) whose priority is to participate in the daily lives of participants rather than observe them (Spradley, 1980). On the other hand, the complete observer or ‘fly on the wall’ stands apart from the setting and watches interactions unfold ‘as if they were watching a movie or a performance’ (Tracy, 2013, p. 113). Fundamentally, these observers seek to remain unobtrusive and avoid impacting the natural order of events (Tracy, 2013).

The complex and relational nature of fieldwork renders a sustained adoption of these options untenable (Purdy, 2016). The remaining two positions on the continuum offer a more dialectic and fluid approach to observation (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). The *participant as observer*

places more of an emphasis on participation than on observing (Gill, 2011). Although these researchers follow, shadow, and live with participants to some extent, they ‘keep one foot outside the scene by constantly taking field-notes and intermittently leaving’ (Tracy, 2013, p. 109). Despite immersing themselves in the day-to-day activities of participants, the participant as observer does not fully subscribe to their goals or values and engages in ongoing dialogue between the *insider* and *outsider* perspectives (Snow, Benford, and Anderson, 1986). In comparison, the *observer as participant* prioritises observation over participation (Gold, 1958). Here, the researcher still actively participates, albeit within a more peripheral social role (Krane and Baird, 2005).

As I noted earlier, Goffman employed the *observer-as-participant* position to capture the mundane aspects of face-to-face interaction (Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2015). He prioritised participating in as many social spaces as possible, especially those which contained information for establishing the behavioural forms, norms, and rules of social intercourse (Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2015). Even though there was some degree of immersion in his writings, Goffman has been described as a ‘cool, detached observer who navigates the social by practicing small interpersonal hustles’ (Pettit, 2011, p. 50). Goffman himself likened his positionality as a fieldworker to that of a *loiterer*, particularly as he had a proclivity for operating on the margins of social life in public spaces (i.e., in elevators, at parties) (Goffman, 1971; Manning, 1992).

Arguably, then, peripherality and analytical distance partially characterised his attempts to ‘observe people off their guard’ by playing ‘an unexceptional and acceptable role in community life’ (i.e., in coffee shops, crofters home, The Shetland Hotel, hospital wards) (Goffman, 1953b, p. 2-5; Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2015). Even though my field position prevented me from indefinitely *loitering*, my observations were conducted from a range of immersive standpoints that resembled Goffman’s (1989) own inclination, which necessitates:

‘Subjecting yourself, your own body and your own personality, and your own social situation, to the set of contingencies that play upon a set of individuals, so that you can physically and ecologically penetrate their circle of response to their social situation, or their work situation, or ethnic situation.’ (p. 125).

The observations I conducted were *unstructured* in nature given the naturalistic character of the fieldwork (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). This meant that I had to *organise* the complex and *messy* workplace interactions that I observed into distinguishable and manageable events (Cushion, 2014). To do this, my *looking* was initially informed by sensitising concepts based on Goffman's (1959) and Hochschild's (1983) theorising (Orne and Bell, 2015). For the purpose of fieldwork, sensitising concepts 'serve to guide initial observations as the inquirer watches for incidents, interactions, and conversations that illuminate these sensitising concepts in a particular setting' (Patton, 2015, p. 359). That is, rather than entering the field with a blank canvas, my fieldwork was given a sense of direction by the dramaturgical concepts that I was using to look out for spatially situated interactions that could inform the ongoing data generation process (Patton, 2015). Like Goffman, my conceptual framework evolved over time as I *worked from below* and iteratively modified theory and concepts against the critical questions I asked of the data, discussions with *critical friends*, the interactions I was witnessing (or not), and the meanings participants ascribed to their workplace relationships and conditions (Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2015; Tracy, 2020).

For example, after many rounds of observing and interviewing, I noticed some inconsistencies between Goffman's (1959) conceptualisation of *regions*, *team-performances*, *defensive and protective practices*, and team-member relations, as well as Hochschild's (1983) version of *emotional labour* and *feeling* and *display* rules. This led me to revise and revisit concepts, look for and probe interactions differently, and progressively *fill out* the analysis by consulting other works from Goffman's oeuvre (e.g., 1961a, 1963a, 1967, 1969) and more contemporary developments of his work (e.g., Scott, 2015; Shulman, 2017). I also referred to alternative perspectives on emotions (e.g., Bolton, 2005; Burkitt, 2014) and micropolitical frameworks (e.g., Kelchtermans and Ballet, 2002a; Hartley, 2017) to add additional layers of explanatory value to the participants' experiences.

The observational standpoints that I adopted throughout the fieldwork reflected Dwyer and Buckle's (2009) *space between* analogy. They argue that the options available to researchers are not fixed or isolated, but are instead interactive positions that exist along a fluid spectrum.

Relatedly, I regularly, shifted between the role(s) of *complete participant*, *participant-as-observer*, and *observer-as-participant*' (Tracy, 2013). Alongside the immersive activities that I highlighted in the previous section (e.g., joining in with *front* and *back region* conversations), I also located myself as a marginal native (Goffman, 1959; Wolcott, 1999). Specifically, this entailed a level of detachment from which to observe, partially integrate with, and overhear interactions (Orne and Bell, 2015). For example, I adopted various spatial positions (e.g., stood at the back, front, side, or outside of classrooms), wandering around the setting, sitting with learners, and hanging about on the edges of the participants' interactions (e.g., on 'their' table, the touchline, or on the concourse).

In essence, I took on various *setting roles* that helped me to become increasingly sensitised to the interactions that occurred in forever shifting social situations (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). For the most part, I used my knowledge of the 'local pragmatics' of the coach education context (as a learner and colleague) to enter into spaces where I could observe (or participate in) conceptually meaningful interactions (O'Brien, 2019, p. 959). To a degree, my position was determined by the *region* in which anticipated interactions were likely to unfold (Goffman, 1959). For example, apart from those instances where I was invited to participate, it was easier (and more practical) to observe *front region* performances (Goffman, 1959) from a more marginal position due to their public availability and accessibility. It also meant that I could notice the (un)coordinated details of individual and collective interaction (e.g., expression, team-member placement, turn-taking, gestures, glances, and fleeting exchanges). On the other hand, aside from distantly observing their quasi and performative character, the content of less-perceptible *back region* interactions could only be accessed through subsequent probing or participation in discussions (Goffman, 1959).

I maintained a dialectical process between my involvement and marginality so that I could consider how interactions appeared, sounded, and felt from different perspectives (Tracy, 2013). That is, while my participatory role(s) helped me to get a *feel* for social situations (or more importantly procure access), on the periphery I was able to see and hear interesting interactions that I could (and did) probe in-situ (e.g., during tasks or breaks, over lunch, and transitions between



spaces) or later on throughout the scheduled interviews (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). I found that my unique role(s) within the setting afforded me the opportunity to probe the participants (e.g., delivering and non-delivering team-members) *there and then* about what had happened, why, and potentially secretive or sensitive topics (e.g., mistakes, ambiguities, strategic plans, gossip, challenges) (Tracy, 2013). The risk of over-rapport associated with *feeling at home* in the setting meant it was vital that I created some analytical distance from the participants, especially in terms of looking at how interactions could serve as avenues for future exploration (Benkwitz, 2016).

As I pointed out earlier, this was occasionally challenging because of my relationships and memberships within the setting (Stewart, 2016). Fundamentally, then, my decisions to distantly observe, partially integrate, or fully-participate in social scenes were intertwined with my relational embeddedness and the precarity with which I viewed my ongoing access (Cunliffe and Alcadipani, 2016). The different roles I held in the field (e.g., PhD student, fieldworker, employee, friend, colleague, acquaintance) rendered my (inter)actions in a manner consistent with the attributes of a *liquid researcher* (Thomson and Gunter, 2011). This involved simultaneously trying to create space to conduct high quality observations *and* engage in hybrid work with the participants, where I was enmeshed within an ongoing process of becoming, being, and belonging as a person of ‘decency, rectitude, and responsibility’ through my involvement and detachment during interactions (Shaffir, 1998, p. 61; Thomson and Gunter, 2011). Further, the various relational statuses that connected me to the participants presented complex situations where I found myself to be simultaneously *inside* and *outside* of social scenes (McGinity, 2012; Thomson and Gunter, 2011).

The social constraints I experienced meant that I missed opportunities to participate in, observe and/or probe theoretically significant individual and collective *front* and *back region* interactions (Goffman, 1959; Purdy, 2016). For example, in those moments when I was able to separate myself from full participation and take up a marginal spatial position, I was sometimes distracted by participants wanting to catch-up and talk about my research, family, gossip, football, the news, and golf. Similarly, when I tried to participate in *back region* conversations, every so

often I would become embroiled in a (welcomed) interaction with a participant that prevented an ideal insight into what was being said and done (Goffman, 1959).

Equally, there were instances where my observational activity was strictly limited to *front region* performances (Cunliffe and Alcadipani, 2016; Goffman, 1959). For the participants who were less familiar with me (e.g., acquaintance) and thus attached greater store (and caution) to my fieldworker identity, select *back region* interactions were off bounds (e.g., removing a learner from the course, gossiping about the resignation of a line manager, and complaining about organisational issues) (Goffman, 1959). On these occasions, the participants would whisper to one another, turn their backs, leave the room, sit in one another's cars, explicitly ask me to disregard interactions (e.g., "This goes no further mind, Cal"), or exit a certain space (e.g., "Do you mind sitting this one out, mate?"). Nonetheless, I became aware of the detail of such interactions because other participants disclosed what events unfolded.

Reflexive criticality throughout the observational work was fundamental to developing my interpretations and noticing 'the strangeness of an obstinately familiar world' (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 38). One way I sought to 'make the familiar strange' was to turn attention back on myself and interrogate my own situatedness (i.e., subjectivities) (Matthews, 2021; Scott, 2015, p. 16; Woodward, 2008). I tried to reconsider the insider knowledge that had served as a pragmatic starting point for my observations by attempting to ask reflexively naïve questions to the effect of 'What is going on here', inclusive of what interactions were happening, where they were happening, when, why, and who was present (Tracy, 2013, p. 27; Wood, 2018). Another related method I used in the field was conceptually 'making it look strange' (Ybema and Kamsteeg, 2009, p. 110). This involved taking time between courses, blocks, workshops and interviews to recursively read theory, compare my readings with the data, and engage in discussions with my supervisors to open up and unpack recorded interactions in new ways (Matthews, 2021).

In this sense, I developed a more theoretically robust and coherent perspective by utilising the voices and feedback of *critical friends* (Smith and McGannon, 2018). The content of these conversations included challenging what interactions I had (or not) seen or heard, how I probed

participants in-situ, my conceptual interpretations, and spatial positioning within the setting (Matthews, 2021). For me, these steps formed an important phronetic process that introduced further questions and shed light on my observational ‘blind spots’ to what was going on (Townsend and Cushion, 2021, p. 263). Subsequently, it informed how I conceptually understood and organised the interactions I observed, what I looked for, what I asked, who I probed, and the spaces I inhabited (Ybema and Kamsteeg, 2009). In turn, then, because I observed and inquired about *front* and *back region* interactions I was not originally privy to, I was able to more completely understand, record (see section 3.6.2) and represent (see section 3.8) the general foundational social processes in dramaturgical terms (Goffman, 1959).

I also found that, to a degree, I was able to ‘break the friendship bond’ with some participants by immersing myself in and observing the interactions of those with whom I was less familiar, and speaking to them about their interpretations (Ybema and Kamsteeg, 2009, p. 111). The different views and events that I encountered induced an element of disenchantment with the espoused interests, beliefs, and values of the participants I was more intimate with, and paradoxically meant that I could focus on the mundane aspects of social exchange (Coffey, 1999). In a similar vein, ‘distancing by immersion’ helped me to describe the (dis)connections (i.e., functions, perceptibility) and interactions which demarcated the *front* and *back regions* (Goffman, 1959; Ybema and Kamsteeg, 2009, p. 112). Indeed, my ability to enter in ‘through the backdoor’ and move amongst these spaces allowed me to compare *front region* performances with the realities of *back region* processes (Goffman, 1959; Ybema and Kamsteeg, 2009, p. 113).

### 3.6.2 Fieldnotes

I used descriptive fieldnotes throughout the observational work to record the details of what I saw and heard in the field (Delamont and Atkinson, 2021). Fieldnotes help researchers to analytically (re)describe social interactions, events, and spaces through the process of reporting their characteristics in written prose (Hirschauer, 2006; Sanjek, 1990). In my case, being able to reconsult previous sets of notes concerning my observations and interpretations helped me to manage the emergent nature of fieldwork and organise the ‘mundane activities and jarring crises’

experienced by participants (Emerson Fretz, and Shaw, 2011, p. 14; Tracy, 2013). The recording of social situations, then, was selective because of my ‘choices, positioning, personal sensitivities, and interactional concerns’, as well as the sensitising concepts that I employed as part of my developing analysis (Emerson et al, 2011, p. 9). Thus, the things that I noticed, what I recognised, and how I represented data undoubtedly rendered some events *unseen* and resulted in ‘missing’ other ways that such events might have been presented or framed’ (Emerson et al, 2011, p. 13; Garfinkel, 1967).

From the beginning of the fieldnote process (i.e., the first observation), I attached considerable importance to unpacking the tacit knowledge associated with my insiderness (Emerson et al, 2011). For the most part, I wanted to avoid glossing over social interactions, prematurely discarding data, and missing the less enchanting workings and understandings within the organisation (Stewart, 2016; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). I started with a broad observational scope that gradually narrowed as I became more aware of what was important for pragmatically answering the research questions (Tracy, 2013). To begin with, I used a note-taking strategy that included systematically, comprehensively, and at times frantically describing everything that occurred when I was present (Wolfinger, 2002). Like Goffman, my vivid moment-by-moment descriptions of the settings, the people, their movements, and actions reflects Burke’s (1945) *perspective by incongruity*, as I tried to ‘defamiliarize the apparently trivial nature of everyday life’, and conceptually (re)describe the ‘ordinary’ and ‘unremarkable’ (Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2015, p. 41; Scott, 2015).

Furthermore, to ensure that I achieved desirable levels of rich description, vividness, and clarity at this initial stage, I adopted an *incomplete knowledge* approach to recording and observing (Emerson *et al.*, 2011). This meant that while I had some existing working knowledge of the setting, I remained curious about the questions I asked of the data, my interpretations, people, interactions, and spaces (e.g., “where are the *front* and *back regions*?”) (Emerson *et al.*, 2011). To do this, particularly in the exploratory ‘getting to know you’ stages of fieldwork, I always carried a spreadsheet that was populated with Goffman’s (1959) and Hochschild’s (1983) dramaturgical

concepts (Tracy, 2013, p. 123). Here, I prioritised matters of imagery and dialogue that presented themselves as heuristically meaningful events that could be later explored with the participants in-situ or during interviews (Goffman, 1974; 1989). The descriptions of imagery included the physical setting (the layout, aesthetic features, furniture), who was present (i.e., coach educators, learners), how the participants individually and collectively moved within and between settings (i.e., who did what, where they stood, sat, spoke, and when), and how they appeared and conducted themselves in these spaces (i.e., behaviour, clothing, emotions, use of props, manner). Dialogue, on the other hand, involved documenting what participants spoke about, when, how, and to whom (Mulhall, 2003). I also noted expressions like tone of voice, humour, sarcasm, eye-rolls, fleeting glances, and body language that evidenced the relational conditions of the participants' work (Goffman, 1989).

I gradually progressed to *saliency-focused notes* once I understood what interactions or events were the most conceptually interesting and important for the participants (Wolfinger, 2002). At this stage, I was less of a 'clue gatherer' and more a 'lawyer compiling evidence that supports a certain argument' (Tracy, 2013, p. 120). I constantly compared the original comprehensive fieldnotes with the developing fieldnotes, the responses offered by participants when we explored what I had recorded, and the ongoing fieldwork (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). After numerous rounds of probing, I was able to identify patterns in the participants' meaning-making and was able to make theoretical connections between my recordings, observations, and my evolving interpretations (Emerson *et al.*, 2011). The experiential and conceptual links that I generated allowed me to notice, record, and interpret social interactions or events with greater clarity (Kalthoff, 2013). That is, because I became increasingly familiar with the common mundane and extraordinary *critical incidents* were the data (i.e., what happened, where, when, how, with whom, why), through *funnelling* (i.e., a narrowing observational focus), I selectively attended to certain things more than others for the purpose of richly addressing the research aims (Tracy, 2013; Tripp, 1993).

I sought to maintain rigour by regularly consulting with *critical friends* (i.e., supervisors) who encouraged me to reflect upon alternate interpretations of the fieldnotes I had made (Smith

and McGannon, 2018). They offered sets of questions based on the data and my own positioning (e.g. “How do you know?”, “I would like to know more about that”, “What was *x* doing when that was going on?”, “I wonder why they chose to do that?”, “Who was leading those discussions?”, “Where were you as this was happening?”) that drew my attention to observational and theoretical gaps (Smith and McGannon, 2018). When I believed that participants could contribute extra richness to the data (e.g., when I could not access *back region* interactions), I invited them to engage in *member reflections* (Smith, 2018). I hoped that by giving them the chance to add their own perspectives alongside my own, strands of dialogue would ensue that would reveal *goings-on* that I had overlooked (Smith, 2018). Depending on the detail of my notes, member reflections took place immediately after events, throughout coffee or lunch breaks, transitions between spaces, at the end of workshops, or when I had written full fieldnotes. Instead of presenting the participants with written accounts to read, their personal preferences, time constraints, and my wish to conceal less enchanting entries meant that it was more practical to have informal discussions (Smith, 2018).

To record observational data, I utilised an array of *tools*; a notebook, mobile phone, and an audio recording device (Orne and Bell, 2015). I had to remain reflexive about how, when, and where I took notes to judge whether or not my method of recording was socially and culturally acceptable (Thorpe and Olive, 2016). In many ways, my decision-making was contingent upon the setting (i.e., corridor, staircase, car park, classroom, pitch), what was happening (i.e., lunch or coffee breaks, workshop delivery, private conversations), and my level of involvement (i.e., participation, detachment) (Orne and Bell, 2015). There were moments when I was able to record events as they were happening, and equally, instances where I opted to wait until they had concluded (Walford, 2009). Further, given the intimate nature of classroom-based workshops and the spatial constraints of venues (e.g., distance to the toilets or car park, audible spaces), I was rarely able to just ‘sneak away’ to my car, the toilet, or to another *back region* area (Goffman, 1959; Tracy, 2013, p. 114)

In classroom-based settings, then, I tended to use the *notes* section on my mobile phone or a written notebook (Tracy, 2013). At the start of the fieldwork, although it was not always possible,

I attempted to take a *common sense* approach and waited until unobtrusive moments arose to record notes (i.e., when learners were writing, walking from the classroom to the pitch, during breaks or group tasks, or when the tutors' gaze was not on me) (Cunliffe and Alcadipani, 2016; Tracy, 2013). I would also sometimes give the impression that I was texting a friend or browsing social media (Orne and Bell, 2015). After the first couple of observations, however, I was less cautious and took notes whenever something important transpired (Orne and Bell, 2015). In practical activities, on the other hand, from time to time I would use an audio recording device because I could create more physical distance between myself and the participants (i.e., stood behind a goal or on the touchline) (Tracy, 2013). This was a useful method for the practical-based workshops because there were lots of (inter)actions and movements taking place in tandem (i.e., tutors observing and discussing learner-led sessions, setting-up and delivering activities, giving feedback) that would have been missed, at least partially, if I had to keep making written notes (Phillippi and Lauderdale, 2018).

There were situations in the classroom when I had to limit the participants' perceptions of what I recorded (i.e., when they were stood behind me, sat next to me, spoke to me between tasks, or when I visited the bathroom) (Emerson *et al.*, 2011). The strategies I used included messy writing, incomplete sentences, codewords, closing my notebook when I exited the room, adopting another spatial position, and dimming the backlight on my phone (Emerson *et al.*, 2011). Relatedly, I opted not to take notes in some social situations for fear of appearing unfriendly, uncaring, and rude (Goffman, 1989). For example, when I was immersed in private *back region* interactions or ad-hoc conversations, or if sensitive or embarrassing circumstances arose (e.g., when an error occurred, when the participants disclosed their frustration), I took mental notes that were recorded soon after the incident (Emerson *et al.*, 2011; Goffman, 1959). This was a sensory activity where my empathy with the participants and their emotions informed my decisions (Sparkes, 2016).

The nature of my fieldnotes also reflected the balance of my involvement and detachment in *front* and *back region* activities (Goffman, 1959). While I endeavoured to write down everything I saw and heard at the outset of the fieldwork, a trade-off emerged concerning what I ought to record (Emerson *et al.*, 2011). To try and navigate this, I took up a marginal position before

workshops started (i.e., when participants arrived) to note features of the physical setting, how it was being organised, how the participants appeared (i.e., clothing, equipment), and the public interactions that took place between team-members and learners (i.e., humour, greetings). Given that I usually recorded *front region* activities (i.e., the delivery of content) from the back of the room throughout workshops, the way(s) *back regions* were managed (i.e., music, spatial position, tasks, my access) meant that I was too far away to hear the discussions (Goffman, 1959).

Here, my own difficulties of accessing information was indicative of the function and justification of such strategies in the creation of quasi-private *back regions* (Goffman, 1959). All I could do at times was take notes on their spatial, performative, and expressive aesthetics. I was also faced with dilemmas when the *front* and *back regions* presented themselves at the same time (e.g., when non-delivering team-members were engaged in discussion as another team-member was delivering) (Goffman, 1959). In these situations, once I was happy enough with my descriptions of the spatial trends concerning the participants' individual and collective behaviours, my priority then turned to getting close to the interactions which I believed contained *rich data* (Tracy, 2013). Despite these challenges, my fluid position meant that I could benefit from observing the moment (s) when:

‘A performer leaves the back region and enters the place where the audience is to be found, or when he returns therefrom, for at these moments one can detect a wonderful putting on and taking off of character.’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 123).

When I participated in *front* and *back region* activities, I chose not to actively take notes, at least early on in the fieldwork, because of the strangeness of the social scene (Goffman, 1959; Orne and Bell, 2015). Participation, then, allowed me to become familiar with the details of interactions (i.e., topics) and experience first-hand (i.e., feel, hear, see) how *back regions* functioned and how the way(s) they were created served to construct successful performances (i.e., limiting the perception of attendees) (Goffman, 1959; Sparkes, 2016). In those moments when I was not directly involved in these interactions, I took up less visible positions (i.e., sat next to tutors, stood over their shoulder) that allowed me to record conversations word for word and note the nuances of each participants' collaboration and contributions. For me, understanding how these *regions* linked



together meant that I could move from describing situations to providing my interpretations (i.e., such as what fleeting glances or inviting questions *really* meant) (Orne and Bell, 2015).

Relatedly, as fundamental social processes in the context became clearer, I stopped describing isolated individual acts and began to record the collective coordination of entire events (e.g., the sequence of interaction between team-members). In such cases, I waited to take notes until these significant events had concluded so that I did not miss crucial details (Emerson *et al.*, 2011). Rather than taking notes in the moment, I would often rely on memory at a later point (i.e., at home, in the car) or refer to a *key word* I had discreetly written down (Thorpe and Olive, 2016). The formulation of fieldnotes, then, was a mix of jottings and mental notes, whereby observed events were ordered as an ‘outpouring of memories, thoughts, and words’ (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, 2007, p. 357). Crucially, as ‘knowledge - including memories – are always constructed’, I was not concerned about the accuracy of accounts and timeliness of recordings (Thorpe and Olive, 2016, p. 132).

Throughout the observational work, I primarily utilised *jottings*, which are defined as ‘quickly rendered scribbles about actions and dialogue’ (Emerson *et al.*, 2011, p. 29). Generally, this involved writing a couple of words or shorthand sentences that I could refer to when I was ready to produce full fieldnotes (Emerson *et al.*, 2011). To ensure that this was an efficient and durable process, particularly in the *frantic* phase, I usually jotted down key identifying details of what was happening, my sensory experience, and a list of tentative concepts that I thought were relevant for explaining what I had recorded (Emerson *et al.*, 2011). Occasionally, I created spatial maps and took photos of scenes (i.e., private team-member discussions, workshop delivery, setting up activities), settings (i.e., classroom), and materials (i.e., learner packs, PowerPoint slides, posters) to capture the intersecting features of social organisation (Philippi and Lauderdale, 2018). After each observation (that evening or the next morning), I transformed these jottings into headnotes and full fieldnotes (Emerson *et al.*, 2011). While accuracy was not a primary issue, I did this at the earliest opportunity to avoid forgetting lines of thought or losing vivid detail to memory (Mulhall, 2003). Additionally, I found that immediately developing my notes made it easier to

revisit, reflect, alter, modify, and expand upon them as my sense-making evolved (Kalthoff, 2013). The intensity of the fieldwork also meant that this was a pragmatic choice (Tracy, 2013).

Headnotes include ‘focused memories of specific events, as well as impressions and evaluations of the unfolding project’ (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002, p. 159). For me, I believed that a combination of the chronological and critical approaches to writing offered the most rigour (Emerson *et al.*, 2011). The former involved temporally working through my jottings and mental notes; I tried to depict and identify the strange, mundane, and conceptually significant events that unfolded in each stage of the workshops (i.e., pre, enactment, and post) within and across my observational accounts (Emerson *et al.*, 2011). Throughout this process, I annotated each section with bullet points that highlighted emergent topics, (inter)actions, events, and settings that I used to plan for following observations and interviews with the participants (Emerson *et al.*, 2011). Here, I compared critical incidents in each phase to establish conceptual generalisability (i.e., what can be found where).

The length of the fieldnotes ranged between three and eight pages per workshop observation; the fieldnotes decreased in length over time (but not in detail) as I became more selective (Tracy, 2013). To represent the data from the various positions I adopted (i.e., involvement and detachment), I chose to use a flexible and loose writing style that alternated between third and first person (Emerson *et al.*, 2011). I wanted to generate both a personal and ‘omniscient point of view’ (Emerson *et al.*, 2011, p. 100) without falling foul of ‘methodological roboticism’ (Smith and Atkinson, 2017, p. 639). To make analysis less daunting, I organised the fieldnotes into units that were clearly marked by specific interaction groupings; these were assigned by phase of the workshop (i.e., pre, enactment, and post), setting (i.e., classroom or pitch), interaction (i.e., individual or collective), and space/region (i.e., front or back) (Goffman, 1959). I used an array of organisational strategies, including sketches (i.e., photographic snapshots of social scenes), episodic tales (i.e., descriptions of incidents within interaction sequences), and transitional summaries (i.e., records that bridged my movement between spaces) (Emerson *et al.*, 2011).

To consolidate the aforementioned accounts, every so often I drew upon the principles of realist and confessional tales to write brief summaries about the fieldwork. For me, this comprised a reflexive activity whereby I utilised a *writing forward* perspective that combined my analytical fieldnotes (e.g., asides, commentaries, in-process memos, and memos) (Emerson *et al.*, 2011). Primarily, the goal was to summarise the theoretical ideas that I had generated up to that point in relation to the research questions; a) individual impression management, b) team performances, and c) contextual dynamics. Following this, I discussed challenges and possible lines of inquiry with *critical friends* (i.e., my supervisors) and (re)entered the field with a greater sense of direction and comprehension (Probyn, 1993; Emerson *et al.*, 2011). The remaining content included a phronesis of my concerns, ambiguities, mistakes, emotions, and the participants' responses to the fieldwork.

### 3.6.3 Cyclical Interviews

In total, I generated 55 hours' worth of interview data with the participants. The duration of the interviews ranged between 60 and 210 minutes. Based on practicality, availability and the anticipated length, interviews were conducted in a range of settings (e.g., coffee shops, leisure centres, coaching venues, pubs, places of work, and coaching venues). Alongside the participant observations and fieldnotes, I used interviews as a means to 'create a conversation that invites the participant(s) to tell stories, accounts, reports, and/or descriptions about their perspectives, insights, experiences, feelings, emotions and/or behaviours in relation to the research question(s)' (Smith and Sparkes, 2016b, p. 103). I chose interviews because observational data alone cannot 'provide adequate understandings of people's definitions of situations, activities, interchanges, dilemmas, and strategic interactions' (Grills and Prus, 2019, p. 53). Simply, interviews contribute layers of richness by unveiling aspects of social interactions that cannot be directly observed, such as how people relationally organise and assign meaning to events (Brinkmann, 2013).

There are three types of interview that a researcher can choose from; *structured*, *semi-structured*, and *unstructured* (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). *Structured* (or quantitative) interviews are conducted in a standardised manner and consist of sequential, identical, and closed questions (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Patton (2015) explains that this approach is underpinned by the

positivistic belief that data contains objective and generalisable truths. For scholars of this ilk, one advantage is that data can be compared and contrasted amongst larger samples to achieve verifiability (O'Reilly, 2012). However, the overly rigid structure interviewers must adhere to prevents them from probing, following up, or exploring potentially enriching lines of inquiry in depth and detail (Tracy, 2013). Comparatively, the *semi-structured interview* is more flexible and socially co-constructed in its design (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). Even though these interview guides are pre-planned, they are characterised by open-ended questions about a particular topic(s) (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). Thus, the format accounts for the participants' experiences, meaning-making, and unanticipated data that may emerge (Silverman, 2000). Crucially, as the intimate disclosure of privileged information, such as secrets, frustrations, and challenges is contingent upon the nature of the researcher-participant relationship, the data may be of limited quality if a researcher fails to establish desirable levels of rapport (Grills and Prus, 2019).

*Unstructured* interviews follow a similar trend, but place more of an emphasis on participant control (Tracy, 2013). Unlike the kind of focused-flexibility that is associated with semi-structured interviews, the unstructured method is used to address a much broader range of subjects (Silverman, 1993). Moreover, the sort of questions that are directed towards interviewees tend to be deliberately general and vague (i.e., "Tell me about", "What is your experience of", "What is your view on") (Tracy, 2013). Again, like the semi-structured approach, this encourages spontaneity and accommodates unexpected ideas or details that may come to the fore (Smith and Sparkes, 2016b). However, because of the freedom afforded to interviewees, researchers may have to deal with large volumes of irrelevant data (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). Throughout the fieldwork, then, I predominantly used one-to-one semi-structured interviews because I believed that 'keeping on target whilst hanging loose' allowed me to probe conceptually meaningful topics as they arose and subsequently devise increasingly focused questions (Patton, 2015; Rubin and Rubin, 2005, p. 42).

For the most part, the interview schedules were progressively informed by what I had recorded or noticed during the observations, my interactions with the participants in the field,

previous interview responses, common themes amongst the participants, ongoing analysis, and concepts I wanted to explore in more detail (Grills and Prus, 2019; Sparkes and Smith, 2014). Accordingly, I split each schedule into topic sections based on areas of focus that related to the research questions (e.g., planning and preparation, working as a team, relationships with team-members and line managers, enacting policy and organisational constraints, dramaturgical loyalty, personal front). For Parker, the first two rounds of interviewing were guided by a pre-set interview design that was structured by Goffman's (1959) and Hochschild's (1983) writings. Over time, the questions that I asked in both instances reflected my evolving interpretations of the participants' individual and collective experiences and meaning-making (Tracy, 2013).

The interview process spanned beyond the fieldwork context (Coffey, 1999). For example, the participants would sometimes make interesting comments in non-research settings (e.g., at the pub, coffeeshop, before or after coaching) on topics that we had spoken about previously or incidents that occurred during the observational work. When they did, I took mental notes or recorded the highlights of the conversation in the *notes* section of my mobile phone and earmarked it to be addressed in a more focused and integrated manner in the next interview(s) (Rubin and Rubin, 2012). Relatedly, moments arose over the course of the observations where participants would draw my attention to aspects of interactions or events in-situ (through eye contact, side glances, raised eyebrows, head nods, grins, smirks, or verbally – “you know what we were talking about the other day? Well he's just come and said that to me there”) that demonstrated certain subject matters that were discussed in earlier interviews (e.g., tensions between team-members) (Coffey, 1999).

When conducting the interviews, I believed it was important to adopt a role that was ‘understood and accepted in the interviewees’ world’ (Rubin and Rubin, 2012, p. 74). I tried to account for my relationships with the participants and manage the novelty of the interview situation in ways that made them feel more comfortable and willing to share (Purdy, 2014). I took several steps (e.g., clothing, humour, small talk) to make the conversations as informal, jovial, and spontaneous as possible (Tracy, 2013). Bearing in mind how unfamiliar the interview procedures

may have seemed to the participants, I remained enthusiastic, respectful and courteous, or at least adhere to the behavioural norms our relationship necessitated (Gratton and Jones, 2010). This entailed active listening, thinking, making notes, and displaying attentiveness and responsiveness through my facial expressions, posture, demeanour, and attitude (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). Further, I drew upon my *insiderness* to decide when it was emotionally appropriate and productive to laugh along with the participants, show displeasure, anguish, and when to stay silent (Patton, 2015). For example, when emotive or conceptually interesting topics surfaced, I changed the way I sat in my seat (i.e., leant forward, shuffled inward) to prompt continued disclosure (Patton, 2015).

At the beginning of the opening interviews, I broached a number of *easy* topics relating to the participants' biographies (e.g., background, personal life, education, full-time jobs, and coach education employment) (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). The reason I did this was because the assumptions that underlay my familiarity with the participants may have led to a glossing over of key details if they remained implicit and unexplained (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995). I was also aware of the potential importance of this information for later on in the research, especially in terms of scope for interpretation (i.e., how it connects to participants' performances and contextual understanding) and progressive questioning (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995). There were occasions, where I elected to not ask *difficult* questions to certain participants to avoid ruining rapport (Purdy, 2014). For example, when I wanted to explore less-enchanted *back region* interactions (e.g., derisive comments about colleagues or insidious team-member agreements), I would ask those participants with whom I had the best relationships (Goffman, 1959; Randall and Pheonix, 2009)

When the participants gave responses that were vague, unclear, linked to previous answers, or were conceptually fruitful, I utilised a variety of follow-up questions and probes that presented them with the chance to expand upon, justify, and rationalise their (inter)actions, decisions, agendas, goals and motivations (Bernard, 2002; Smith and Sparkes, 2016b). One advantage of the recursive approach I used was the ability to revisit data with participants at a later point that, upon (re)reading or listening back to transcripts, I had missed during the interview (Rubin and Rubin, 2012). However, I did have opportunities to probe and follow-up throughout interviews, such as

when the participants invited me to comment on their clarity (e.g., “Do you know what I mean?”, “Did that make sense?”), immediately following an answer, or later in the conversation (Rubin and Rubin, 2012). If I anticipated that a response was going to form the basis of a question further into the discussion or that it had added additional interpretive value to another section, I made a connecting note to refer back to later in the interview (Rubin and Rubin, 2012).

The first method of probing I used was *levelling*, which entailed asking questions that drew on the participants’ experience (e.g., “how have you come to learn what is expected of you when working with co-tutors?”), knowledge, opinions, and feelings (e.g., “What emotions did you experience when learner y challenged you?”; “How did the way you dealt with that situation reflect the way(s) you are evaluated?”) (Orne and Bell, 2015). Secondly, I utilised *theoretical probes* to explore hypothetical situations that addressed the reasons why participants chose certain courses of action over others (e.g., “What would the consequences be if you openly challenged your co-tutor?”, “If learners became aware of your strategic plans, what would happen?”) (Rubin and Rubin, 2012). The third lot of probes I employed focused on *elaboration* and encouraging the participants to *tell me more* about a topic they had introduced (e.g., “That’s really interesting, tell me more about that”) (Bernard, 2002). I also used these probes to ask questions relating to topics that I wanted to explore in more detail (i.e., gaps in the data). I found it useful to figuratively *walk through* spaces with the participants to talk about the interactions that I had observed (e.g., “I noticed that you kept on moving away from the learners during tasks to engage in planning discussions with your co-tutor, tell me more about that”, “what was going on when?”) (De Leon and Cohen, 2005).

The remaining strategies I used included *clarification* probes (e.g., “I am not sure what you mean, could you explain that again?”; “I wonder, how does that relate to what you told me earlier?”) and the use of silence (e.g., giving the participants time to think about and build upon their response (Bernard, 2002). To introduce alternate ways of thinking and help the participants to consider their experiences more critically (usually when I identified patterns across the data), I deployed sets of *antagonistic* questions as a devil’s advocate technique that revealed the answers

given by others (e.g., “Some people have raised y as an issue, is that the same for you?”) (Rubin and Rubin, 2012). When I asked questions that were based on theory or my fieldnotes, there were occasions where the participants demonstrated a limited (but changing) awareness of their practice in conceptual terms (e.g., “I am not sure what you mean”, “I suppose so, I have not thought about it like that before”, “I have not noticed that until you pointed it out”). To guide these conversations, I would share my own experiences or interpretations, give hypothetical examples, reflect on events I had observed or experienced *with* participants throughout the observational work (e.g., “Do you remember the chat we had after the session broke down?”), or ask more direct questions that related to the concept I wanted to unpack (e.g., “Do you ever do x?”) (Rubin and Rubin, 2012).

This matrix of strategies helped me and the participants to become more aware of *why* they (inter)acted with others in the way(s) they did, inclusive of the social forces that influenced them (Orne and Bell, 2015). Thus, the interview process allowed me to interpret *what* I was seeing and hearing, and progressively facilitated more focused and detailed observations and discussions over time (Braun and Clarke, 2013). For example, because of the various explanations given by the participants regarding the purpose of their individual and collective (inter)actions, contextual demands and pressures, ambiguities, challenges, evaluative mechanisms, and relational obligations, I was able to connect notions of *personal front* (i.e., appearance, manner, scripts, props) with concepts such as *idealisation*, *realisation*, *mystification*, and *misrepresentation* (Goffman, 1959). It also shed light on the veiled complexities of *region management*, *dramaturgical loyalty*, *discipline*, and *circumspection* that would have remained otherwise unexplored (Goffman, 1959).

To preserve an accurate record of the data, each interview was recorded using an audio recording device (Tracy, 2013). The use of a digital voice recorder meant that I was able to remain attentive during the interview situation (e.g., active listening), review and re-interpret data, identify patterns or contradictions, and make notes for subsequent interviews and observations (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009). Once each interview had concluded, it was transcribed verbatim using a word processing document (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). To get ‘closer to the data’, I noted subtle illustrations of meaning within brackets, including the use of pauses, hesitations, laughter, silences,



ums, ahs, humour, and sarcasm (Purdy, 2014, p. 167). I also assigned pseudonyms to each participant, to the people that they referred to, and to the names of organisations that could reveal their identities. At each stage, I reminded the participants of this, that the information they provided would be confidential, and that data would be stored in a locked filing cabinet (Purdy, 2014).

When each interview was fully transcribed, I attempted to carry out *member reflections* with the participants to achieve intersubjectivity (Smith and McGannon, 2018). I either sent an email or text to the participant with a short excerpt of the transcript attached and invited them to add further comments (Smith and McGannon, 2018). In my interactions with the participants between bouts of data generation (i.e., over a coffee, on the golf course, when working together), I provided them with a verbal summary of the data and asked for elaboration. This involved asking them for more clarity on selected statements (e.g., “Can you explain what you meant here?”) and whether or not my interpretations (presented through annotation) were adequately developed (e.g., “Is this what you meant?”) (Smith and McGannon, 2018). In terms of the temporal nature of the fieldwork, this meant that participants could make changes to previous responses as their sense-making evolved after interviews (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009). Relatedly, I asked participants to elaborate on any experiential or theoretical gaps in the data (e.g., “What did you do when  $x$  happened”, “how did that affect your planning?”) that could be explored within the following interviews. The redundancies that followed a restructure at TCSG due to the Covid-19 pandemic meant that the participants had limited time and opportunity to engage with data in the latter stages.

### *3.7 An Iterative Approach to Data Analysis*

Traditionally, accounts have depicted data generation, data analysis, and the writing up of results as three distinct and separate phases of the research process (Tracy, 2013). Typically, data analysis has followed a researcher’s complete withdrawal from fieldwork (Markula and Silk, 2011). For me, however, rather than being sequential, I believe that these research activities form a phronesis that ought to be considered as an ongoing cycle of iterative reflection (Tracy, 2020). The loop-like sense-making properties offered by the iterative approach have been recognised by key sociological theorists such as Goffman (Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2015). Goffman himself was said to use

*creative abduction* (Smith, 1999b) or a *double-tracked* (Williams, 1988) method that entailed shifting between empirical observation and immersion in order to compare, revise, reject, develop, substantiate, or supplement the tentative theoretical ideas he derived from his own fieldwork.

To harness Goffman's thinking, I employed an abductive, problem-based, and phronetic-iterative approach that 'tags back and forth between emergent findings from the data on one hand, and existing research interests and literatures on the other hand' (Tracy, 2018, p. 74). What this involves, then, is progressively adopting the *etic* (i.e., theoretical reading of data) and *emic* (i.e., immersing in data) perspectives over multiple rounds of analysis to connect data to evolving insights, questions, and interpretations (Tracy, 2020). As a result, a researcher's focus narrows over time through a process of abduction, which follows: a) constructing an observational hypothesis (from theory or data), b) carrying that into the field, and c) revising it when or if it is 'neglected' by the emergent data (Tracy, 2018). Importantly, though, because 'patterns, themes, and categories do not emerge on their own', this is equally driven by what a fieldworker 'wants to know and how the inquirer interprets what the data are telling her or him.' (Srivistava and Hopwood, 2009, p. 77).

Similar to Goffman, the method that I adopted was largely inductive in nature. What I mean by this is that my analysis was a predominantly data-driven and *bottom-up* process, rather than a *top-down* deductive one, which locates all observation, interview, and data analysis activities within a rigid and predetermined theoretical framework (Braun, Clarke, and Weate, 2016). To reiterate a point that I made in section 3.6.2, I did not enter the field with the intention of simply *looking for* examples of Goffman in action, and nor was I merely testing the utility of his concepts in coach education work. Instead, my methodology and analysis were driven by what was *actually* happening, the things people were saying, *how* the participants performed, *where*, and *why*, which then informed my decision to explore a range of explanatory concepts. As I go on to explicate further in this section, while Goffman provided a useful framework for initially and tentatively thinking about what could or might be happening, his work had several explanatory limitations. In reality, then, my analysis reflected a continuous blend of inductive (i.e., emic) and deductive (i.e., etic) techniques at different stages in the data generation process (Tracy, 2020).

The analysis process started once I began my initial research activities (e.g., reading, formulating research questions, preliminary thinking) and continued into the latter stages of data generation (e.g., writing up fieldnotes, interview transcripts, analytical memos, advanced thinking) (Tracy, 2020). Prior to undertaking the main phase(s) of analysis, I selected an organisation system. I decided to organise the fieldnotes and interview transcripts by placing them in chronological order, which involved ordering the fieldnotes and transcripts by their date(s) of collection (Tracy, 2020). I did this so that I could chart the temporal development of my analysis. As the earlier rounds of fieldwork were primarily guided by Goffman's (1959) and Hochschild's (1983) writings, I believed it was important to document the evolution of my original observational *hypothesis* and conceptual ideas so that I could reconsult them when I revised, narrowed, and supplemented my analysis with other explanatory theories (e.g., Burkitt, 2014; Goffman, 1961a, 1963, 1967, 1974; Scott, 2015) (Tracy, 2020).

I manually coded the data by using different coloured highlighter pens (Tracy, 2020). Each colour represented a code as it related to what had been said, written, or observed (Tracy, 2020). In short, a code is 'a word or salient phrase that symbolically assigns a summative ... essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data' (Saldana, 2021, p. 3). Thus, 'one can think of a code as a conceptual bucket and coding as finding examples of data that belong to that bucket' (Tracy, 2018, p. 64). The main phase(s) of analysis began with *primary-cycle coding*, which entails an 'examination of the data and assigning words or phrases that capture their essence' (Tracy, 2013, p. 189). The coding process started almost immediately once I had written up the first lot of interview and observational data, and continued upon the conclusion of further data collection thereafter (Tracy, 2020). To ensure that these rounds of analysis were data-driven, I employed descriptive open (or line-by-line) coding for a sustained period (Tracy, 2020).

Despite being intuitively aware of what portions of data contained the richest insights for comprehensively addressing the research questions (or at least for providing further direction), the relatively small amount of data I had at the beginning of the fieldwork meant I could thoroughly work through all of the material (admittedly, though, the richer data did serve as a cornerstone for

the analysis at that time) (Tracy, 2018). I started to analyse every section by making a brief note in the margin to indicate the phase of the workshop (i.e., pre, enactment, or post) that the portion of data represented. Then, I went back through the materials and jotted down a couple of descriptive words about the *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, and *why*, with a particular focus on, but not limited to: spaces, appearance, conduct, interactions, and props (Tracy, 2020). Doing this meant that I could generate some consistency and difference(s) within the codes across the participants in relation to workshop activities (Tracy, 2018). In the pre-workshop phase, some of these included *discussions about timing*, *small talk with learners*, and *gossip*. The workshop enactment phase contained codes such as *enthusiasm*, *eye-contact with team-members*, *questioning*, and *obligations*. Examples of post-workshop codes are *criticising learners*, *preliminary planning*, and *exchanging feedback*.

The most common codes from the first rounds of analysis formed a ‘start list’ that pointed out ‘where to look’ for relevant data in following fieldwork and way(s) of coding subsequent data (Tracy, 2018, p. p. 66). At times, I had to expand, rename, or collapse codes and create more inclusive terms to account for events and evolving definitions as my focus narrowed (e.g., changing ‘discussions about timing’, ‘roles’, and ‘content’ to ‘planning conversations’). Eventually, this form of coding stopped when I could not identify any new relevant codes in the data and became more focused with my analysis (Tracy, 2020). Over time, I generated roughly 30-40 codes across the three stages of the workshops that illuminated the most and least conceptually significant or relevant data for addressing the research questions (Tracy, 2018). After each analysis session (as I mentioned earlier), I created a sort of ‘to do list’ that informed the interviews and observations that followed (Tracy, 2018, p. 64). Moreover, because I anticipated that connections would exist between certain concepts in specific spaces, I decided to fracture the codes in each portion of data (i.e., coding everything that was going on in detail) (Tracy, 2020). Having a number of descriptive words that identified the distinct features of social scenes meant that I could closely examine how the codes were grouped together and provided explanatory value later in the analysis (Tracy, 2018).

Once first-level codes had been tentatively established, I progressed to *secondary-cycle coding*, which involved interpreting, organising, and synthesising the data (Tracy, 2020). To begin

secondary-cycle coding, I created a spreadsheet that defined and described every one of Goffman's (1959) and Hochschild's (1983) concepts, and proceeded to recursively highlight the various fractured (sub)codes in relation to each phase of the workshops against these concepts (Tracy, 2018). As some of the codes were less relevant or common than others (or not relevant at all), I specifically did this for the data I considered the most significant for aspects of individual impression management, team-member performances, team-performances, and participant interpretations (Tracy, 2018). This also included *hierarchical coding*, whereby I worked upwards from the subcodes to generate an all-encompassing umbrella code that related to a theoretical concept (e.g., private discussions, strategic plans, spatial position, posture and body language, eye-contact, disguised questions → hidden communication → team collusion) (Goffman, 1959; Tracy, 2018).

In future rounds of analysis, I used this loose framework to compare the explanatory value of concepts and codes to emergent data, and to (re)examine those I had assigned to previous excerpts based on what I believed data were 'telling me' (Tracy, 2018, p. 62). Following this process allowed me to make preliminary explanatory links between concepts, *map out* how they were connected, and outline core themes (Tracy, 2019). For example, I was able to identify where the *front* and *back* regions' were, the specific intersecting theoretical concepts (or individual and collective activities) that demarcated and connected them, and how these were grounded in the participants' sense-making and contextual knowledge (Goffman, 1959; Tracy, 2018).

I attempted to 'road test' the codes when my analysis developed (Tracy, 2018, p. 71). Here, there were instances where emerging insights from the participants (particularly after interviews) could only be partially explained through the original dramaturgical framework (i.e., Goffman, 1959; Hochschild, 1983). These new layers of data offered fresh directions that pointed me towards other theoretical work that added definitional and explanatory richness to their experiences (e.g., Burkitt, 2014; Goffman, 1961a, 1963, 1967, 1969). For example, some of the working conditions that participants referred to encouraged me to examine concepts such as *primary* and *secondary adjustments*' alongside my initial coding around planning discussions (Goffman, 1959, 1961a).

Other insights entirely altered my observational hypothesis throughout the fieldwork and introduced new avenues of inquiry that could benefit from additional data generation and probing (e.g., team-member relations); At such times, I was pushed toward alternate theory that presented perspectives that more accurately described the data (e.g., Bauman, 2000; Scott, 2015).

The last step was writing about the themes and codes that I had constructed (Tracy, 2018). To explain these in analytical terms, I supplemented the activities I undertook throughout the observational work with additional *memos* and evaluative conversations with *critical friends* (see section 3.6.2) (Smith and McGannon, 2018; Tracy, 2018). The critical dialogue that I shared with my supervisors and colleagues encouraged reflexivity when I was certain that I had observed a concept in (inter)action – they posed questions that highlighted *voids* in my knowledge that warranted further investigation (Smith and McGannon, 2018). The presentation of my initial theoretical readings of the range of concepts that were interwoven in social scenes enabled reflexive questioning like, “I wonder what other concepts this is connected to”, “Where does this happen”, and “What conditions make this necessary?”, as well as the proposal of summaries and alternative viewpoints that problematised the *something else* that was going on (Grills and Prus, 2019; Smith and McGannon, 2018). These discussions also meant that a degree of consensus and intersubjectivity was developed concerning the construction of meaning within the generated data and between the various theoretical concepts (Smith and McGannon, 2018).

The memos were split into three distinctive headings: pre-workshop, workshop enactment, and post-workshop. In each one, I wrote about the conditions or events under which emergent codes (or concepts) arose and why (i.e., where planning discussions happened), what consequences it had (i.e., how it affected what was delivered and by whom), and the arguments (or narratives) I could make about the codes (Tracy, 2018). What this led to, then, was a *loose analysis outline*, where I began to illustrate how the emerging codes and my use of concepts answered the research questions, and how the arguments I formulated could be made more coherent by targeted fieldwork activities (Tracy, 2018). This process shed light on existing codes and new emerging directions that best illuminated the concepts most relevant to the thesis as a whole (Tracy, 2018).

### 3.8 *Navigating The Dilemmas Of Fieldwork: Reflections on Ethical and Positional Challenges*

Researchers typically forego two main forms of ethical activity; these being *procedural ethics* and *ethics in practice* (Tracy, 2020). Procedural ethics is that which is governed by “University Ethics Committees” (UECs) to ensure that anticipated research procedures sufficiently consider informed consent, intent, confidentiality, deception, exploitation, rights to privacy, and the prevention of harm to human subjects (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). Broadly, UECs are responsible for assessing research proposals against accepted standards of ethical conduct and safeguarding the wellbeing of participants (Palmer, 2016). Problematically, the regulatory criteria used to evaluate ethical integrity are based on the principles of positivist biomedical inquiry, which do not speak to the goals, methods, and complex situations that characterise fieldwork (Sparkes and Smith, 2013).

The arbitrary, pre-planned, and formulaic nature of the ethical approval process fails to account for the emergent and unpredictable essence of fieldwork, as well as the lack of control a researcher can exercise over a setting and its inhabitants (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). Nor does it recognise the necessity of “optimal” split second ethical judgements that fieldworkers are often required to make in fluid research contexts fraught with ambiguity, paradoxes, and dilemmas (Tracy, 2020). Moreover, UECs overlook how these features are interwoven with the relational components of fieldwork, such as the ethical issues that arise from interaction(s) with participants and other activities that comprise a researcher’s involvement within a setting (Sparkes and Smith, 2013). It is also assumed that research is conducted with “strangers”, rather than with friends or professional colleagues, which is at odds with how I obtained access for this project (Palmer, 2016). That is, little ethical guidance is offered to fieldworkers whose associations with people and organisations predate, and will endure beyond, the conclusion of the fieldwork (Palmer, 2016).

For these reasons, ethnographic researchers should deal with ethical issues in a manner that directly reflects their epistemological beliefs and methods (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). That said, like many ethnographers feel compelled to do to “get through the process”, I recited the “gold standard” ethical measures that I knew the UEC expected me to adhere to, and to avoid the type of over-scrutiny that social science projects are usually susceptible to (Dunn and Hughson, 2016;

Wolcott, 2001). Even though I intended to respect the research procedures I outlined in the application, I knew that these were aspirational, at best, and that I would likely only refer to them as pragmatic guidelines throughout the fieldwork (Palmer, 2016). After a couple of rounds of feedback and “back and forth”, I gained ethical approval from “The Faculty of Health and Life Sciences Research Ethics Committee at Northumbria University”. Unsurprisingly, though, my experience(s) of “ethics in practice” contradicted the reductionist ideals of “procedural ethics”.

*Ethics in Practice* deals with how researchers consider and manage ethically poignant events and interactions that arise during fieldwork, as well as how they choose to engage with interpersonal dynamics, select, report, and analyse data, and write about participant experience (Palmer, 2016; Tracy, 2020). For me, the rigid adherence to ethical procedures (e.g., informed consent) was highly problematic due to my “insider status” and the multiple identities I continued to perform within the setting (Wood, 2018). In reality, my ethical decision-making and conduct were fluid and dialogical, and linked to a web of intersecting obligations, interests, social ties, and current and anticipated future selves (i.e., personal and professional relations, employment at TCSG, academic expectations) (Taylor, 2011). Mostly, my ethical reasoning and behaviour(s) were specific to emergent circumstances, and reflective of what I perceived was necessary to “keep the research going”, appease my conscience, secure ongoing access, produce a high-quality PhD, and preserve my status within the relational network (Alcadipani and Hodgson, 2009). Together, these complexities rendered each regulatory ideal as overlapping features of the research process.

One fundamental consideration was the nature of *informed consent*. In my case, the method of “discovery” central to ethnography, in combination with my “intimate insiderness”, meant that full disclosure about the project was neither practically viable nor desirable (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). Even though the participants signed a consent form before the fieldwork had begun, I had doubts about whether it was sufficiently “informed” or “meaningful”, and whether they actually understood the scope of the project (Alcadipani and Hodgson, 2009; Champ et al, 2020). For instance, the level(s) of trust that characterised my established ties with many of the participants (e.g., friend, colleague) led to informal and passive (almost disinterested) agreements



to participate in the research, illustrated by responses such as “go on then, mate”, “put my name down”, and “you know I’m always happy to help out wherever I can”. Moreover, my inability to foresee, with certainty, the interactions and activities that would likely transpire in the field, limited the “accuracy” of the information that I was able to provide (Tracy, 2020).

Although my “insiderness” afforded me a degree of insight into what I would see and hear, I opted to be strategically vague about my purpose to avoid the unnecessary distortion of data and to negate issues with initial access; more so with individuals I considered as “strangers” (Bengry-Howell and Griffin, 2011). I framed the project as “appreciative” and roughly outlined the research aims (“to explore how you deliver workshops”), methods, demands of participation, and possible outcomes. Further, I did not seek consent throughout the fieldwork as a means to minimise any facades that were designed to conceal ordinary workplace routines and rituals (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). Also, given that data were iteratively generated over time, it was not feasible to constantly remind the participants of my research objectives (Champ et al, 2020). Crucially, I was aware that learners pay hundreds of pounds to attend courses, and did not want to disrupt their experience(s). I continually evaluated the “state” of consent and permission to observe and ask questions through the participants’ engagement and the use of *member reflections* (Taylor, 2011).

Another key ethical consideration surrounded participant confidentiality and anonymity. Despite the use of pseudonyms and the fictionalisation of dates/times/venues, I explained to the participants that I could not guarantee their anonymity for several reasons (Sparkes and Smith, 2013). First, their biographies, thoughts, feelings, and (inter)actions were essential to addressing the research questions, the richness of fieldnotes and interview quotations, theoretical rigour, data analysis, and representation; censoring the data would have weakened the quality of the research (Palmer, 2016). Second, the dense population of the local TCSG network and “tight knit” nature of the coach education team meant that an individual’s practices, behaviours, and opinions could be used to identify them (Damianakis and Woodford, 2012). Notably, that colleagues who were present *during* or took part *in* interactions or events could identify them. Third, that my goal of examining ordinary” and “everyday” workplace interactions implied that “nothing is off the table”

in terms of what qualifies as observation and interview data (see “protecting subjects from harm” for more detail) (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). Finally, that they could be identified via their associations with me, particularly by those who are aware of my research and employment (Champ et al, 2020). In the course of my discussions with the participants, I was surprised by how many were unbothered by the prospect of being identified, and were open to freely offering their opinion.

Next, I dealt with the participants’ *right to privacy*. My unique position within the network somewhat blurred the boundaries that separated the “public” and “private”. Not only was I able to move freely within the coach education space, but I also had access to the participants’ workplaces, homes, and recreational “spots”. When I was actively observing workshops (pre, during, and post), the *front* and *back regions* were easy to identify, and given that they were publicly available, either aurally or visually (or both), I believed it was appropriate to record all interactions that unfolded in them (Coffey, 1999). Moreover, participants frequently disclosed information during in-situ conversations, invited me to sit with them, and coerced me into “private” discussions. Now, given that each participant understood, to a degree, what my research goals were, this indicated that they were happy for me to assume the encounter as data. I applied the same principles to the formal interviews and exchanges I had with the participants away from “the field” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). Every interaction that happened, then, was “fair game”, largely because I wanted to understand *how* performances functioned within and between the “public” and “private” regions.

Finally, preventing harm to the participants was a key factor in respecting their consent, confidentiality, and *right to privacy* (Champ et al, 2020). On the one hand, I felt a responsibility to report everything I saw and overheard, but, on the other, I had to consider my embeddedness as a social actor (i.e., friend, colleague, employee) and researcher (Townsend and Cushion, 2021). After much deliberation, I decided to hone in on data that directly related to the research questions, and ensured that I did not reveal information that could affect the participants’ wellbeing, employment status, workplace relations, or TCSG’s *informational economy* (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). Even though I had “juicy” data relating to ethically problematic situations, I did not want to break the participants’ trust or threaten my possible future beyond/after the fieldwork (Wood, 2018).

These events often required micropolitical action to strike a balance between my access to rich data and personal and professional obligations to others in the field (see section 5.6 for an in-depth discussion) (Townsend and Cushion, 2021). My positionality – a white, heterosexual, working class male, friend, colleague, employee – limited the extent to which I could distance myself from the “native perspective” and call out unethical behaviours (e.g., bullying, sexism, backstabbing), enact change, or stage any form of *ethnographic intervention* (Dennis, 2009). On top of this, the multitude of identities I “performed” in relation to the participants provided several challenges in terms of fulfilling my duties as a researcher and friend/colleague, such as whether to tell a close friend that another participant had made a cruel remark about them. I chose to adhere to ethical codes of conduct, but, as a consequence, harboured “guilty knowledge” (Puttick, 2017).

In this sense, my “intimate insider” status was a double-edged sword; it allowed me to access, identify, take part in, and “notice” interactions, but it meant that my attempts to establish analytical distance or reclaim integrity as a researcher were tension-ridden and risky (see sections 3.6.1 and 3.6.2) (Taylor, 2011). The social conditions at TCSG and its orbiting networks made it necessary to think of my continued access as a process of exchange; if I performed “correctly” and re- or co-produced contextual norms, rituals, and behaviours (e.g., masculine bravado), I could observe, ask questions and move through the different social spaces unrestricted (Coffey, 1999). That is, I knew that my refusal to “play on” – join in with conversations or contribute to activities – would be to the detriment of the research and my own image (Purdy, 2016).

The reality of access at TCSG is that internal gatekeepers choose who they let in and for how, and, to a degree, render researchers powerless. TCSG reject thousands of research requests each year, so I knew how vital it was to “toe the line” carefully (Townsend and Cushion, 2021). Undoubtedly, then, my ethical conduct, observations, interpretations, and representation of data reflect my positionality; an “intimate insider” view of the everyday interactions, routines, and practices of coach education work. Throughout the fieldwork, I challenged the dominant white, heterosexual male understanding via a range of reflective processes that facilitated analytical rigour, including reading, critical conversations, and charting my emotional responses to situations.

### 3.9 Representation: *Realist Tales*

In ethnographic inquiry, researchers do not simply write-up research ‘pertaining to an objective reality, out there, waiting to be seen’ (Richardson, 1990, p. 9). Rather, they are tasked with carefully communicating, describing, presenting, and explaining the social foundations that are central to the coordination of group life based on what is said and done in the field (Van Maanen, 2011). Thus, ‘culture is not itself visible, but is made visible only through its representation’ (Van Maanen, 2011, p. 3). Representation, then, functions as a bridge between the fieldwork and social phenomena by rendering it into a written narration (Van Maanen, 2011). For me, this take on representation, or *telling*, renders the activity as an interpretive, selective, and intersubjective process because researchers continually make decisions about the sequences of the words, phrases, and concepts they use to frame, orchestrate, and shape accounts (Matthews, 2021; Sparkes, 2022). The paradigm that scholars subscribe to also contributes to how the data is expressed in the final write-up, as particular views of the social world prioritise and eliminate data (Sparkes, 2005).

In relativist research, considerable focus is given to the interactions, behaviours, opinions, and interpretations of participants, and inviting readers to enter into a shared framework of understanding (see section 3.10) (Woolgar, 1988). Such a stance on representation, however, continues to be problematic for those who seek to create an objective, distant relationship between themselves and the reader (Atkinson, 1990). Debates surrounding the issue of distance or whether or not lived experience can be directly captured within accounts have led to the emergence of opposing standpoints, which is commonly known as the crises of legitimisation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Another concept - the crises of representation - reflects the notion that to make sense of participant experience(s), one must actually synthesise it (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Eminent sociologists, Like Erving Goffman, thought that the sense-making role(s) of a researcher made it impossible to directly mirror nuanced, complex, and multi-layered social realities within sociological descriptions of human relations (Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2015).

Fieldworkers have a suite of *tales* available to them through which they can narrate participant voice(s) and experience (Sparkes, 2002). Even though each tale has its own conceptual

merits and strengths, I decided to use *realist tales* to present the observational and interview data. These type of tales provide third person accounts of what people say, do and think, and are the most used form of representation in sociological inquiry because of their compatibility with the goal of participant-observation (Sparkes, 1992; King, 2016). Crucially, realist tales are prevalent in Goffman's dramaturgical theorising and documentation of his own fieldwork on the Shetland Isles, and were considered fundamental to his propensity for providing dense examples and illustrations of the mundane features of social life in ways that illuminated familiar settings and events in a conceptually strange, albeit resonant, fashion (Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2015).

Traditionally, realist tales are expected to exhibit several trademark features. These include (a) a demonstration of the *typicality* (or sameness) of the people and situations observed, (b) author absent analysis and explanations of events and scenes (i.e., what is said or done, when, where, and by who), (c) a presentation of the native's perspective (i.e., why events happen in the ways they do), and (d) an assumption that the interpretation offered in the final analysis is the correct one (Purdy, Jones, and Cassidy, 2009; Van Maanen, 2011). The key issues for interpretivist scholars, though, is the notion of interpretive omnipotence and author evacuation (Sparkes, 2005). For those conducting relativist research, however, the adoption of a third-person perspective should not be confused with attempts to authentically speak about or describe a person's voice, behaviour, or experience in the mould of realist definitions of validity and reliability (Lincoln and Denzin, 2000).

From a relativist standpoint, at least, author absence is considered as a 'textual illusion' because researchers are always present throughout written accounts as writers and are responsible for selecting interview quotations and fieldnotes that create the story that is eventually presented (Purdy et al, 2009, p. 327; Sparkes, 2002a). Like Sparkes (2022), I reject the claims to interpretive omnipotence that are often associated with realist tales and want to acknowledge that the data *and* my interpretations, as acts of second-order sense-making, are inherently provisional, tentative, and open to alternative theoretical analysis. Thus, the tales that I have constructed are only one possible, yet plausible, reading of the data (Stewart and Lord, 2010). Relatedly, King (2016) argues that researchers enter into narratives and storytelling on the basis that 'one cannot make an

intentional choice to be reflexive or not' (p. 299). She also advocated for a type of modified realist tale that appears first-hand by way of effect, evocation, structure, or design.

To follow in the footsteps of Sparkes (2022), then, I opted for a modified realist tale as described by King (2016) and Sparkes himself in his earlier work (e.g., Sparkes, 2002). While I could have made a case for using any of the available narration techniques, King (2016) argues that realist tales help researchers to connect theory with data in a manner that integrates participant voices within a coherent and data-rich text to provide an engaging, complex, and nuanced depiction of social life within a particular context. Similar to Sparkes (2022), this spoke directly to the aims of my thesis, where I anticipated using extensive quotations and fieldnotes to share, describe, and theoretically explain the participants' point of view, behaviours, interactions, scenes, and the minutiae of organisational group life. The depth and detail I was able to achieve by using realist tales allowed me to communicate the micro-level realities for the participants, as I saw and heard it, in a way that brought together and interwove their voices, thoughts, feelings, and (inter)actions to produce a rich understanding of their everyday individual and collective workplace performances.

To echo Sparkes (2022), I was drawn to realist tales because I wanted to ensure that the evidence I presented concerning what people did, how they did it, where, when, with whom, and why was sufficiently lucid, life-like, and colourful to resonate with readers and inform appropriate contextual generalisations (see section 3.9). I also believed that realist tales would enable me to manage the tension(s) between the fieldwork (i.e., speaking to and observing people) and analysis (i.e., writing about my findings) in a way that I could meaningfully represent, and do justice to, the complexity of the participants' everyday work (Sparkes, 2022). On a more pragmatic level, it made sense to select realist tales because there was a clear consistency between the research questions, the (post) dramaturgical writings of Goffman, and the implications of the thesis. In terms of connecting theory to data, then, I was able to conceptualise and explicate the data at a level of detail that reflected the theoretical framework and addressed the research questions. I could also demonstrate the temporal dimensions of the data and map out connections between them over time.

The idea of a modified realist tale gave me some agency to locate my own immersiveness within the research process (Sparkes, 2002a). Even though I accept, to a degree, that explicitly acknowledging ‘one’s own social location offers no guarantee of additional layers of insight, creativity, or methodological and theoretical course’ (King, 2016, p. 299), I think it is important to recognise my role as the ‘maker of a quilt’ (Sparkes, 2022, p. 7). Ultimately, then, what the reader receives is a first-hand account of what I saw and heard in the observational work, my dialogue with the participants, interview responses, *and* my interpretations, which reflects the mutual dependence amongst the data and my observational positions, movements, positionality, theoretical interests, judgements, encounters, and level of involvement within the setting (Sparkes, 2002a). Although I see the benefits of typical realist tales, I believe that modifying them helped me to embrace the responsibility I had to represent the lives of the participants, as well as the value of interpretation for developing of rich sociological insights (Purdy et al, 2009; Richardson, 1990).

### *3.10 Generalisability*

Generalisation refers to when findings ‘can be applied to other settings and cases or to a whole population, that is, when the findings are true beyond the focus of the work in hand’ (Holloway, 1997, p. 78; Smith and Caddick, 2012). Generalisation in qualitative or interpretivist research has remained largely overlooked because it is typically considered as a marked characteristic of quantitative inquiry (Gobo, 2008; Smith, 2018). As of late, however, generalisation is becoming recognised as an indicator of rigour in relativist research (Smith, 2018). Indeed, ‘being concerned about generalisability does not however require sacrificing detailed and rich understandings of human being, social life and materiality.’ (Smith, 2018, p. 139). This represents the antithesis of the statistical-probability generalisations that are made by realist researchers; those broad inferences concerning the likelihood of a phenomenon occurring based on the instances of that phenomenon in a large-scale sample (Gibson, 2016; Smith, 2018). Rather than generalisations that are objective, final, and a-contextual, then, they are instead provisional, subjective, and contextual (Smith, 2018).

There are a host of other relationships that interpretivist researchers can have to generalisation other than that of their (post)positivist counterparts (Collingridge and Gantt, 2008).

Some questions have been raised on the relevance of generalisation in interpretivist research based on the temporal, contextual, and idiographic goals of this form of inquiry, and the emphasis placed on participant meaning-making (e.g., Denzin, 1983; Guba and Lincoln, 1982; Wiltshire, 2018). Chiefly, the inability to control for a number of external variables, measure data in a way that leads to predictability, and develop predictions that will hold *true* across different contexts form the primary concerns underpinning these criticisms (Taylor, 1994). Critically, though, it is important to note that such comments have arisen from the positivist schools of thought (Smith, 2018).

Williams (2000) argues that if we consider generalisation to describe a ‘general notion or proposition obtained by inference from particular cases’ (p. 212), then interpretive research offers much scope for making generalisations. Williams (2000) encourages researchers to subscribe to *moderatum* (i.e., moderate, lifeworld) generalisations; these are ‘generalisations of everyday life’ (Williams, 2000, p. 215) and are fundamental ‘if we are to say something about something’ (Geertz, 1979, p. 218). The priority here is shedding light on a ‘shared world of meaning’ which illustrates a cultural consistency integral to the coordination of social life in certain social contexts (Williams, 2000, p. 220). Simply, day-to-day activities, (inter)actions, knowledge, and interpretations are taken as identifiable characteristics of specific social worlds (Williams, 2000).

I subscribed to the principles of *moderatum* throughout this thesis (Williams, 2000). Ergo, the methods that I employed to interpret data (i.e., observations, fieldnotes, interviews) were not used to produce sweeping sociological statements that apply across time and space, but rather for those people employed in related workplace contexts (e.g., coach education, coaching, sport) (Williams, 2000). Thus, because the nature of the knowledge produced in this project is ontologically and epistemologically context-specific and relational, inferences should be drawn relative to those who are, individually and collectively, likely to encounter social situations, working conditions, and social forces (e.g., networks, obligations, evaluation, pressures, ambiguities, dilemmas, challenges) synonymous with the ones reported by the participants (Williams, 2000). Relatedly, the purposive sampling strategies that I employed at the start of the fieldwork (i.e., theoretical, convenience, snowball) meant that there was a situated patterning to the



specific spaces, timeframes, and activities that occurred; thus, I could theorise *cultural consistency* through the interactions that participants highlighted as important in the coordination of coach education work, their shared (and also nuanced) interpretations of these events, and experiences of *social forces* (Williams, 2000).

An integral part of this was (re)considering *who* the participants were (e.g., novice coach educator, senior coach educator, regional manager), the different meanings that characterised their lifeworlds and dealings with others, how these were explained by the theoretical framework, and to what extent this was reflected (or not) across the sample (Payne, Williams, and Chamberlain, 2004). Although Williams (2000) concedes that variation in the data can be problematic when seeking to produce moderatum generalisations, I contend that by locating the point where interpretations of (inter)actions or events intersect and depart, relevant inferences can be made regarding the various contextual and connected roles (or statuses of individuals and groups) that, as illustrated above, must be coordinated. The nature of this thesis also speaks to Smith's (2018) recent discussion on *analytical generalisation*. This happens when a researcher:

‘Generalises a particular set of results to an established concept or theory ... or re-examine[s] established concepts and theories in a study through a different methodology and, in turn, produce new conceptual and theoretical understandings of a topic.’ (p. 141)

Building on Williams' (2000) position, then, *analytical generalisations* can be drawn from the suite of dramaturgical concepts that I systematically applied, alongside an ethnographic approach, to generate new understandings of coach educators' contextually-situated interactions (Smith, 2018). Researchers can therefore anticipate that Goffman's and Hochschild's theorising can be used to demonstrate, unveil, and explain the social order that shapes the everyday realities for coach educators in similar workplaces. Inferences can also be made concerning how particular concepts can be employed to address individual and collective dimensions of interaction. Even though I explicitly committed to specific types of generalisation, I invite the reader to resonate with the data in a way that they see fit (Smith, 2018). What I am promoting here, then, is a *naturalistic* form of generalisation, whereby ‘the research resonates with the reader's personal engagement in life's affairs or vicarious, often tacit, experience’ (Smith, 2018, p. 140). To encourage this, I have

included a range of vivid interview quotations and fieldnotes in the next chapter that provide exemplars of rich description readers can use to critically reflect (Smith, 2018). I would also like to request that neither my conclusions nor those of the reader are discarded for the purpose of seeking *legitimacy*, but are instead considered in combination as a form of dialogue (Smith, 2018).

### *3.11 Judging the Quality of This Project*

To date, relativist approaches to research have frequently fallen foul to positivistic evaluations (Burke, 2016). With respect to the plethora of approaches available to qualitative (or interpretivist) researchers, it is surprising that misunderstandings still exist regarding the judgement of this kind of scholarship (Smith and McGannon, 2018). Traditionally, Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Guba and Lincoln's (1989) work on the *parallel position* has been used as the *gold standard* for judging relativist outputs (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). These scholars were amongst the first to problematise the philosophical differences between quantitative and qualitative research, and recognised the need for unique sets of evaluation criteria (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). To remedy this issue, they developed a set of *parallel* criteria for assessing the *goodness* of qualitative inquiry in relevant and meaningful ways (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). Here, Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Guba and Lincoln (1989) replaced the conventional hallmarks of realist evaluation criteria (i.e., reliability, validity, objectivity) with credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. If a piece of research demonstrated all four benchmarks, it was thought to have a high level of trustworthiness, which, in turn, was used to judge the *quality* of the project (Sparkes and Smith, 2014).

However, scholars (e.g., Sparkes, 2002; Sparkes and Smith, 2014) have critically questioned the premise on which researchers are expected to evidence the aforementioned definition of *quality* and *trustworthiness*. Mainly, criticisms have been levelled at the lack of methodological coherence that characterised the ontological (i.e., relativism) and epistemological (i.e., foundationalism) assumptions that underpinned Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Guba and Lincoln's (1989) espoused methodology (Smith and Deemer, 2000). Arguably, the methods they propose do not align with the logic of qualitative inquiry, and instead maintain quantitative standards of accuracy, validity, and verifiability (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). For example, to achieve

notions of *dependability* (i.e., reliability) and *confirmability* (i.e., objectivity), researchers must create an accurate, consistent, and confirmable audit which documents their decisions and actions to separate their interpretations from those offered by the participants (Sparkes and Smith, 2014).

To attain sufficient credibility (i.e., internal validity), fieldworkers are required to adhere to a static and rigid criteriology (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). That is, to generate multiple, trustworthy, and valid insights, researchers must follow a pre-set methodology (e.g., member-checking, persistent observation, triangulation) (Sparkes, 2001). Moreover, given that the relativist stance on temporal meaning-making means that stepping ‘into the same stream twice to locate truths’ is rendered impossible, the emphasis placed on theory-free knowledge, reproducibility, and the belief that participants are bearers of whole, timeless, and accurate accounts, makes this approach unsuitable for interpretivist research (Sparkes, 2001; Sparkes and Smith, 2014, p. 180). Despite Lincoln and Guba developing their perspective in recent years (e.g., Lincoln, 2010), their original framework is still heavily cited across disciplines (Sparkes and Smith, 2014).

That said, researchers are starting to identify alternate standpoints from which to critically appraise relativist scholarship (Burke, 2016; Smith, Sparkes, and Caddick, 2014). More recently, Tracy (2010) developed the *big tent* position; non-foundational, and criteriological approach that helps audiences to decipher between *good* and *bad* research. Even though this position addresses the need to evaluate research on its own terms, criteria are offered for determining whether outputs are authentic, trustworthy, and related to the way people construct meaning (Tracy, 2010). This includes eight universal standards, consisting of: (i) a worthy topic area, (ii) rich rigour, (iii) sincerity, (iv) credibility, (v) resonance, (vi) meaningful coherence, and (vii) an ethical and significant contribution to discipline knowledge and theory (Tracy, 2010). To achieve these benchmarks, a researcher must: (i) spend a long time in the field, (ii) use thick description, (iii) reflect on their subjectivities, and (iv) use naturalistic generalisations (Tracy, 2010).

Recently, Smith and McGannon (2018) raised questions about whether these criteria can realistically be realised in tandem all of the time. Although the framework has grown in popularity, it has been widely criticised for promoting qualitative research criteria in pre-determined,

permanent, and ubiquitous terms (Burke, 2016). Under these conditions, then, ‘universal criteria operates in an exclusively and punitive manner to produce a closed system of judgement that establishes and maintains a narrow band of what constitutes good research’ (Smith and McGannon, 2018, p. 14; Sparkes and Smith, 2009). Moreover, such a *fixed checklist* approach can discount high-quality research and result in stagnant accounts (Burke, 2016). To an extent, the universal position stands in stark contrast to relativism because it suggests that criteria are *out there* waiting to be discovered as opposed to socially constructed throughout the research process (Smith and McGannon, 2018). This means that researchers are limited in their ability to alter criteria in line with the purpose of the project and the nature of data (Schinke, Smith, and McGannon, 2013).

Alternatively, researchers have been encouraged to utilise lists that are open-ended (e.g., Smith and McGannon, 2018; Sparkes and Smith, 2009; Sparkes and Smith, 2014). One frequently cited perspective is the *letting go* approach (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). Here, a researcher must *let go* of traditional steps concerning the specific research activities that are required to establish validity and instead refer to criteria that relate to the evolving characteristics of the project (Sparkes, 2001). Unlike the foundational criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), these criteria are socially constructed during the course of the research and are inherently more situationally flexible (Sparkes and Smith, 2009). Thus, the interactions between researchers, participants, and the broader data generation and analysis processes are accounted for (Sparkes and Smith, 2009). Rather than seeking out *truths*, then, readers construct their own interpretations based on how the research affects them (Frank, 1995).

Recently, Ronkainen and Wiltshire (2021) accused relativists of believing that ‘anything goes’ (p. 17) and argued that it is unclear how multiple realities are managed or how final interpretations are chosen. Smith and McGannon (2018) provide a retort to this (unfounded) criticism, noting that ‘those who adopt a relativist approach do not believe that ‘anything goes’ as judgements always need to be made about research’ (p. 116). In reality, relativists judge research based on their epistemological and ontological positions, research questions, subjectivities, methodology (e.g., participants, theories), and the characteristics of data (Smith and McGannon,

2018). In addition to informing readers about any underpinning philosophical assumptions, ‘it is equally vital that the execution of the study – from the data collection methods, analysis as couched within a particular methodology, ethics, and write-up of results, aligns with said criterion, epistemology, and ontology’ (Sparkes and Smith, 2009; Smith and McGannon, 2018, p. 117).

### *3.11.1 How I Would Like This Project to be Judged*

As an interpretivist researcher, I do not see value in judging research outputs against pre-ordained, concrete, and foundational criteria (Sparkes, 2012). On these grounds, I chose to merge the *letting go* (Sparkes, 2001) and *big tent* (Tracy, 2010) perspectives. Fundamentally, this meant that I was able to tailor the evaluation criteria in relation to the iterative nature of data generation (Smith and Caddick, 2012). That is, I considered the criteria as *loose* characteristics that took form as part of a growing list that reflected the various interpretive research activities I undertook (Smith and Caddick, 2012). Even though I have presented a number of criteria that I believe represents the essence of the thesis, I invite readers to judge the data from their own standpoints and be open to the various ways it might influence them (Sparkes, 2001). I referred to the works of Sparkes (2002), Sparkes and Smith (2014), and Barone and Eisner (2012) to construct the following list:

1. Has the project made a substantial contribution to your understanding of the social and emotional features of coach education work?
2. Is the study coherent with existing theory and does it relate conceptually to previous work?
3. Have I demonstrated sincerity through reflexivity concerning my own values, inclinations, and transparency in terms of my methodological choices and the challenges I faced?
4. Have I demonstrated richness and rigour through the use of appropriate theoretical constructs, data from the field, sample orientation, contextual detail, and data generation and analysis?
5. Has the topic elicited an emotional response? How does it relate to your experience?
6. Has the way I have depicted the participants’ experiences helped you to understand yours?
7. Is the topic worthy in relation to relevance, timeliness, significance, and levels of interest?
8. Does it inspire you to explore and delve deeper into the experiences of coach educators?

# CHAPTER 4

## Results and Discussion

This chapter presents and conceptualises the data generated with the participant coach educators regarding the ways they planned for, enacted, reflected upon, and gave meaning to workplace interactions. A particular emphasis is given to the individual and collective strategies deployed by these workers to develop and maintain positive working relationships with learners, co-tutors, superiors, and subordinates. Theoretical explanations that address who was involved, what they did, how they did it, where they were, and why are also included, which explore the opportunities, dilemmas, and challenges that characterised the participants' attempts to influence the thinking, feeling, and acting of said others. As will be shown, efforts to meet expectations were driven by, at times, more individualist, and at others, more collaborative intentions, shaping the nature of their social encounters. Three key phases were identified as comprising a coach education *performance*, and so this chapter is structured accordingly; pre-workshop, workshop enactment, and post-workshop. These sections are presented chronologically as a sense-making aid to assist in the storying of everyday life for the participants, and particularly, to demonstrate the layered interconnectedness that characterised their temporally emergent interactions and relationships.

### *4.1 Pre-Workshop*

In this section, data relating to the interactions, issues, worries, and ambitions that preceded the participants' individual and collective workshop enactment are presented and discussed. The recursive data analysis process that I comprehensively described in chapter 3 (see section 3.7) produced three interrelated core themes: (i) The consequences of working conditions on the composition of teams, (ii) constructing cohesive performances that conceal the reality of coach education work, and (iii) developing effective relationships with learners and tutors.

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<sup>3</sup> Research participants are referred to as *participants*, *tutors*, and *participant coach educators*.

#### 4.1.1 *Employment conditions, Teams, and Planning*

The participant coach educators highlighted that the casual, temporary, and sporadic nature of their employment was a major barrier to productive collaboration in the preparation of a *performance*.

As I will demonstrate throughout the chapter, these employment conditions continually shaped their interactions with others. In particular, the participants frequently referred to the unfamiliarity that characterised their relationships with colleagues and how they were just *thrown together* to perform as a collective. This was further compounded by the sessional nature of their employment, which rendered them somewhat peripheral (i.e., removed from the internal day-to-day processes in TCSG) in their respective regional TCSG organisations. As a consequence, the participants described the relational ambiguities that followed the ad-hoc and contrived assembling of teams:

The whole thing around co-delivery, it's really difficult because what happens is that you basically just get thrown together with someone, it's not like you're delivering with the same person all of the time and my personality is that I need to try and suss that person out a little bit to fathom what's what, then you're expected to work together and that but it's all part and parcel of the job isn't it ... we only have to do twenty-eight days a year and there's no real hard pressure on me really so fitting it in around my other roles I mean [shrugs], yeah, that we'll only work together once a year is another thing, how're you meant to get to know how people like to work when it's only ever "it's been nice to work with you see you in six months"? [Semi-structured interview with Mike: 17.10.2019].

Logan [Regional Manager] does try to pull us together to talk about best practice but everyone's at work bar a few who work night shift so not many people attend like, when we do come to deliver we get an email off him asking if anyone fancies doing it, he'll get a few names and then make his decision from there and you'll find out who you're working with and then touch base with them when you've got a minute ... Logan will dish the hours out equally so you'll be lucky if you co-tutor with the same person maybe twice in a year erm, I know it's a bit naff ... "I'm going to deliver with you then disappear for the next two years" [laughs], can you even class it as part time? ... mostly you don't get to know people well enough before you work together and it makes planning quite stand offish because you aren't sure about people's strengths or what they're comfortable with. [Semi-structured interview with Dan: 27.10.2019].

In combination with the absence of collegial familiarity, the research participants explained that the limited offering of formal role training and CPD opportunities reduced their capacity to work effectively as a team with co-tutors because of varying levels of competence and experience. Subsequently, the participants described several issues that arose concerning the planning and enactment of workshops, including the coordination of roles, ensuring a shared (credible)

understanding of content, compromising the quality and robustness of delivery, and the necessity of constantly monitoring and managing less-experienced co-tutors (see section 4.2):

The breadth of some of the workshops you have to deliver is ridiculous, especially with the skill set of some of the tutors, a fair few of our team aren't educationalists and have only recently come on board the past year or two... yeah, no-one's received any formal training and so they don't know all of the content [puffs cheeks out], it's a bloody tricky one, even if I had the time to go and put bells and whistles on all the tasks I'd still need their [new tutors] help and support in places and if half of it goes over their heads it won't work ... I try to avoid situations where they'll be like 'what the fuck's this' coz' if they haven't seen the content before they won't even understand it themselves never mind teaching it to candidates, but the guidance and training we receive for it is zero so you can't fault them really erm, the main thing is you just want content to be delivered properly. [Semi-structured interview with Mike: 11.11.2019].

The challenge we've got within the tutor team is that there're only a limited number of courses within the [area] and I think we have almost fifteen tutors, it isn't a problem for renewing your license because [Manager] makes sure we're all sorted that way but you might only deliver with someone maybe three or four times over the space of two years so you don't have a chance to keep up with it all .... the content and just general aspects of delivery you can learn off the more experienced tutors, in all fairness I'm doing much better with level ones now because I've been doing more and more of them but that's not the case for the level two and three. [Semi-structured interview with Patrick: 13.03.2020].

Do you know that last workshop I was co-tutoring with Patrick ... that document I made? I planned to use that myself but I didn't have time during the week to share it with him [laughs] then when I got there on the night it turned out that he was actually delivering that bit I'd made it for so I had to brief him [head in hands] ... it gets frustrating having such a mix of tutors because not everyone's on the same page regarding things like that, you sometimes have to leave quality resources like that out because they haven't got the knowledge which is frustrating, then you spend half of your time guiding them through the content during the workshop when you should be helping learners ... what I'm saying is that you need to be careful that you don't plan above your station so you're both at ease if that makes sense, you're so cut off from one another because everyone's busy with day jobs and families that you aren't sure where people are in their own personal development and level of competence. [Semi-structured interview with Stuart: 14.02.2020].

These working conditions did not only create challenges for coach educators. Logan, a regional manager at TCSG, described how he attempted to compensate for the lack of formal role training by strategically assembling teams of coach educators and recruiting individuals perceived to already be in possession of the skills necessary for the job. Logan emphasised the importance of assembling teams that he anticipated would cultivate mentor-mentee relationships between novice and senior coach educators:

As it happens, the part-time tutors don't get any official training for their role, the way we do it now is basically recruit based on their skill set to innovate and adapt content ...



because I'm the only full-time coach educator, sort of, I'm expected to help develop the part-time staff so they become more competent deliverers erm, what that means for me really is a total headache ... I need to be savvy in the way that I pair tutors up to try and really drive the learning home for the novice, it's sort of like an informal learning programme they have with me or an apprenticeship that they go through with the more experienced tutors, in an ideal world I'd have fifteen [retired manager] but that isn't the case so we develop them on the job. [Semi-structured interview with Logan: 05.03.2020].

Evidently, Logan was unaware of the constraints that these actions placed on effective teamwork or the relational tensions that emerged between those coach educators considered as *more* or *less* competent. Despite the aforementioned difficulties, the participant coach educators were aware that the rigorous planning of workshops was as a pre-requisite for producing credible individual and collective performances. However, the casual and supplementary essence of coach education employment presented them with several *trade-offs* and tensions that emanated from their other, more stable, obligations, such as family commitments and full-time jobs. This meant settling for sub-par preparation, which involved limited and brief communication via text messages or social media. Dan and Patrick described how this created uncertainty around the teams' *official line*:

I don't want to ring Logan and say I'm not sure about this and this and this, I'd rather just get it done now over email for two reasons, you know, like the basic stuff, what's the workshop about and what I'll be doing ... first of all, I don't know what my week's going to look like in terms of the bairns [children], they have after school clubs and go to me Mam's and the missus can't always get them so I don't want to commit to planning a phone call then having to bail because then I'll know nothing about the workshop ... the other thing is with my full-time job at [charity], I thought I'd be finishing my day at three today and then off home but I've got loads to do, my days are forever changing with the admin and staff chasing [rolling his eyes]... it isn't a regimented nine till five and I don't have the luxury of going home or nipping out for fifteen minutes to plan, it's a case of texting or emailing a few times to make sure the 'Ts' are crossed and 'Is' are dotted til we're there on the day. [Semi-structured interview with Dan: 19.12.2019].

As a relatively new addition I'd like to have more time to sit down as a team , but I've got three kids, to be fair they're all pretty grown up now but it's not fair to leave their Ma on call for all three AND I've got my role at [full-time] which keeps me really busy but it's a good gig, I'm pretty safe there, kids are always going to need education aren't they ... I can't whack my laptop out and start [doing] some prep or Skype a co-tutor in the middle of a class ... it'd be great to plan to the tiniest grain but [puffs cheeks out] up to now people have been supportive so there hasn't been any hassle juggling the calendar ... a couple of weeks back [manager] sent me through a slide deck and it had all of these tables and graphs and that on and I had no clue ... I'll be totally honest, I don't have the knowledge and experience that a lot of the team has and when I read things like that it makes me nervous that I'm going to make a mistake which means I need to spend my own

time trawling the internet to get up to speed ... I'm chomping at the bit for some CPD but there's none offered by TCSG. [Semi-structured interview with Patrick: 13.03.2020].

The participants' outlook can be explained using the dramaturgical insights of Goffman (1959) and Hochschild (1983). For example, Goffman (1959) noted that within large social establishments (or workplaces) that it is not uncommon for individuals of a given status level to be 'thrown together by virtue of the fact that they must cooperate in maintaining a definition of the situation towards those above and below them' (p.89). Nor is the result team's composition indefinitely 'relatively stable', it 'may be either fluid and changeable, defined by the exigencies of the situation' (Goffman, 1959, p. 85). Unlike Goffman's (1959) suggestion that organisations 'select as team-mates those who can be trusted to perform properly' (p.95) or choose '[team] members who are loyal and disciplined' (p. 213), the ad-hoc nature of tutor-teams, recruitment, and lack of training brought with it a host of issues that produced a lack of shared consensus which became problematic for collaboration. In contrast to commercial workplaces like *Delta Airlines*, who trained staff via workshops and manuals to establish the emotional 'rules of the game' in *routine ways*, the participants had limited formal exposure to the *expressive rules* of coach education (Hochschild, 1983, p. 95).

Another hallmark of collective performances is the essence of familiarity between its members – or being 'in the know' - when in *back regions* that are isolated from the audience's presence (Goffman, 1959, p. 88; Scott, 2015). For Goffman (1959), familiarity develops 'in proportion to the frequency with which [team-members] act as a team and the number of matters that fall within impressional protectiveness' (p.88). Thus, the infrequent nature of coach education work, ambiguous relations amongst colleagues, fluid team-membership, and family or work obligations meant that relationships were characterised by ambiguity rather than familiarity. As a result, even though team-members were still bound by *dependency*, this prohibited both the organic emergence of familiarity *and* the automatic extension of familiarity as soon the participants became a member of the organisationally constructed team (Goffman, 1959). In some respects, the frustrations that arose between senior and novice team-members were reflective of those experienced by individuals who might be 'dissimilar in important respects' but 'find they are in a

relation of enforced familiarity characteristic of team-mates engaged in staging a show' (Goffman, 1959, p. 89). The reality for some participants, then, differed from Goffman's proposal that:

'When the individual does move into a new position in society and obtains a new part to perform, he is not likely to be told in full detail how to conduct himself, nor will the facts of his new situation press sufficiently on him from the start to determine his conduct without his further giving thought to it. Ordinarily, he will be given only a few cues, hints, and stage directions, and it will be assumed that he already has in his repertoire a large number of bits and pieces of performances that will be required in the new setting.' (p. 79).

The absence of formalised development pathways required selected team-members to fulfil hybrid roles (Goffman, 1959). As senior tutors were tasked with leading team activities), their role can be likened to a *performance director*', who 'is given the right to direct and control the progress of the dramatic action', assign roles, and bring team-members back into line (Goffman, 1959, p. 101).

Their role is also reminiscent of that of a *training specialist*, who specialises 'in the construction, repair, and maintenance of the show' and teaches 'the performer how to build up a desirable impression while at the same time taking the part of the future audience and illustrating by punishments the consequences of improprieties' (Goffman, 1959, p.152-157). As the 'dramaturgical cooperation' of team-mates is essential for fostering a desired definition of the situation, senior team-members sacrificed idealistic aspects of *expression* and *action* when planning the workshop to increase the chances of a credible team performance occurring (Goffman, 1959, p. 88).

As well as the relational conditions of the participants' employment, the general remoteness of their work contributed additional uncertainty to the planning process. Their peripheral standing within TCSG meant that they had no involvement in the organisation of venues (e.g., local schools, hubs, community centres) or the registration of course candidates. Instead of being able to plan with a specific setting or learners in mind, then, the participants described having to *just get on with it* and be responsive to the *readiness* (or lack of) of course venues and the composition of learner cohorts. Specifically, a combination of relying on venue staff, not having knowledge of the layout of the setting, the set-up, available space, or insight into learners' experiences and coaching contexts invoked feelings of vulnerability and added pressure to in-situ planning discussions:

Some of the venues we deliver in are awful, the one at the minute is grim, I delivered in it last year and they told Trevor that we'd be in the same place ... what happens when we

turn up? they've stuck us in the bloody sports hall, echoey, cold, chairs are uncomfortable as hell ... me and Trevor planned through the week over Twitter and were virtually sorted then we turn up and the venue's fucked us, there's no real point in doing all this planning because it's THAT unorganised, that's why it's important to be able to adapt and feel your way as you go ... it isn't ideal by a long stretch but we all tend to manage okay as a team ... I don't think you can plan every detail and as much as some tutors like to have things uber planned and prescriptive I don't think that's the best way to deliver the courses ... things crop up and we don't know who we'll have in front of us so the plan might need binned anyhow, what's the demographic? is there anyone that I can base the content on? ... in actual fact I'd say that the real work begins when we see the register at the start. [Semi-structured interview with Stuart: 14.02.2020].

We're sent a time and place by the course organiser and we turn up when we're told to ... I think for all of the planning that's done before the workshop it could all go out the window in the first five minutes so until we land at the venue we're actually quite limited to what we can plan for as a tutor team as the variables are MASSIVE ... who's going to be coming through that door? ... where are they knowledge wise? ... what's their level of understanding or background? ... is the level of delivery going to be right for them? ... the picture I'm trying to paint for you here is that it's difficult to plan for any of these eventualities because we have no idea ... therefore it's imperative that we're co-ordinated enough to be able to adapt to incidents AS they happen ... the new structure of the courses doesn't help either with learners jumping about all over the place across workshops ... we don't spend enough time with them as it is so you can't ever put a definitive finger on it and mark where you're ever at with the group. [Semi-structured interview with William: 13.02.2020].

At times some of it is out of your hands [and] you are waiting for someone with a key who has been paid to [open the venue] but for whatever reason doesn't, I think at times you could probably be better prepared as a tutor team to make sure that some of that stuff is in place but again if you kick off at six o'clock and the assumption is if the gate will be open at seven-thirty how many times do you need to go out and check if the gate will be open? Is it open? Nah not yet. Is it open? Nah not yet. We have still got a course to deliver ... I'm a little bit of a control freak, I like to have everything organised and mapped and ready to go so that it seamlessly goes from one bit to the next bit because as soon as you start hitting some stumbling blocks that are out of my control it is a real frustration ... it's time lost which is really important on the courses particularly when the course is full, erm ... the practical time is sort of mapped out around how many delivery slots we have got, how many people in each group are working individually or in twos or whatever, you suddenly lose fifteen minutes of practical time because the gates aren't open or something like that and it has a real knock on impact in terms of what the learners get from that practical experience ... either someone doesn't get a go because you have run out of time or we start to chop people's time or the debrief time between people's time might shrink or the period for reflection might have to be shortened so things like that. [Semi-structured interview with Logan: 05. 03.2020].

Other problems associated with their casual employment impacted upon three fundamental attributes that underpin a successful performance; *control over the front region, control over the back region*, and the development of a secure *working consensus* (Goffman, 1959). Given that

coach educators were significantly removed from central decision-making network, they had little control or pre-existing knowledge of course venues and the selection of candidates. Having minimal access to this information caused more ambiguity and left the participants 'in a position of not knowing what character he will have to project from one minute to the next, making it difficult for him to affect dramaturgical success in any one of them' (Goffman, 1959, p.137). Goffman (1959) wrote that settings 'stay put, geographically' (p. 33) and cited the 'privilege of giving a performance on one's home ground' (p. 100), but, for the participants, this was not the case because limited security existed concerning there was workplace setting(s). Crucially, the participants' ability to exercise *dramaturgical circumspection* was significantly diminished because they were unable to 'select the kind of audience that will give a minimum trouble in terms of the show the performer wants to put on and the show he does not want to have to put on' (Goffman, 1959, p. 213). Beyond this, the participants' access to *back regions* was also impaired, which was problematic given that:

'It is here that illusions and impressions are openly constructed. The team can run through its performance, check for offending expressions when no audience is to be affected by them; here poor members of the team, who are expressively inept, can be schooled or dropped from the performance.' (Goffman, 1959, p.115).

The issues that I have introduced in this sub section regarding collective impression management stemmed from a loose and ill-defined *working consensus* (Goffman, 1959). Dramaturgically speaking, a *working consensus* is achieved when each individual actor or team-member conceals 'his own wants behind statements which assert values to which everyone present feels obliged to give lip service' in a particular interactional context (Goffman, 1959, p. 20-21). In the case of a collective performance, a 'veneer of consensus' is essential for establishing a mutual definition of the situation of 'whose claims concerning what issues will be temporarily honoured' and for preventing conflict between team-mates (Goffman, 1959, p, 21). The scarcity of these structures in the participants' accounts suggested that the tutors teams' *party line* tended to be fragile and precarious (Goffman, 1959). The following section will explore the collaborative (inter)actions that unfolded between team-members in the days leading up to, and in the moments immediately before, workshop enactment that generated an agreeable *working consensus* and *definition of the situation* for candidates (Goffman, 1959). I begin to unpack the content of these

discussions, the justifications underlying them, and the suite of strategies that were collectively employed to locate, orchestrate, and manufacture *back region* spaces (Goffman, 1959).

#### 4.1.2 Concealing the Reality of Coach Education Work

The research participants highlighted that they engaged in a brief dialogue with co-tutors through the week leading up to the workshop via email and telephone to organise logistics, their individual roles, and to clarify technicalities. The participants also suggested that these exchanges were insufficient for coordinating collective performances and, in turn, required additional planning discussions shortly before workshops began whilst in the copresence of learners. This involved employing strategies that created opportunities for the tutor team to discreetly prepare without *giving the game away*. My observations indicated that the participants achieved this by constructing visual and aural barriers that prevented learners from noticing the content of their interactions. They frequently used music, arrival activities *to buy some time*, and interacted with the physical and spatial layout of the setting in advantageous ways. The discussions generally covered the flow of information, content, resources, role specifics, cues, timings, previous mistakes, possible contingencies, and plans for individual learners who were perceived to be problematic:

Logan plays a *house music* album that keeps the learners temporarily distracted. Dan sniggers “He’s got the Ibiza playlist out, arrival activity’s on the board, five minutes, off you go folks”. I spoke to Dan about the music and he remarked “It’s like hiding in plain sight really, we’re trying to pull the wool over their eyes a little bit [laughs], not in a bad way just it’ll spoil the workshop if they overhear us still sounding a bit unsure ten minutes before we start”. As the music continues to play and the candidates’ discussions fog the air, Logan and Dan withdraw and gather around the laptop at the front of the room and begin to gesture to the screen and talk quietly about the workshop [hands semi-covering their mouths]. I notice Logan is doing most of the talking. He instructs, assertively [while pointing to the screen] “See this? this is you, I need you to remind them about last week before you come onto it properly, we need to bring them out of their tell, tell, tell comfort zone ... what kind of questions are they asking their players? do they? why do or don’t they do it? get the juices flowing then I’ll hit them, who’re the questions for? I bet you already have an answer in your head? ... yeah ...” [Dan stands there with his arms folded and nods attentively]. Logan maintains “If we organise the activity like this [pointing to the screen], make em’ think, we’re in ... they’re locked and loaded for going outside, we need this information out there anyway”. They move on. Logan’s leading again [telling Dan what he’ll be doing himself and how Dan can build on him if the workshop *falls flat*] “If they’re looking a little bit dull after the theory coz’ it’s dry you’ll need to come in with a bang for your session design activity ... you’ll see the point they start to drift so make sure that you don’t dwindle too much on the content, alright?”. I spoke with Logan later

and he mentioned Dan hadn't delivered a level two before and had questions about the slides he was set to deliver. It was clear that Logan felt a responsibility to set Dan on the right path [Fieldnote extract: 14.10.19].

Dan and I are sat chatting with a learner who's arrived early and Logan rushes in with the equipment in hand [straining his body at the weight of the speaker, balls, laptop, and cones] and begins to set up as he has the previous two weeks [gasping, he hurriedly plays some background music and loads up an arrival activity on a PowerPoint before settling into his usual routine]. As the candidates arrive in their dribs and drabs, Logan directs them to the arrival activity on the screen [moments later he walks past Dan and taps him on the shoulder, tilting his head to signal that he wants him to move to the front of the room]. They converse about tonight's tutor-led practical delivery [while studying the plan Dan had designed and laid bare on the table]. Logan asks [eyes still on the plan] "Any questions following our call on Tuesday?". Dan [grimacing with his arms folded and one thumb stroking his chin] "What sort of things do you think will come out here?" "Well ... first of all ... I think it's best if we have one defender there [pointing] and one defender there [pointing] ... start with the zonal game so the principles are nice and clear and iron out any mistakes and progress it nicely to show how smooth it'll look in a seven versus seven format to see the transfer into a full game ... I'll keep on top of [learner] and set him observational tasks as he was pissing everyone off last week ... you keep prodding and probing everyone else ... I'll stay on his shoulder then we can give him the floor when we come back in ... job done". [Fieldnote extract: 21.10.19].

Stuart, Trevor, and I run to the sports hall with the resources and toolbox in tow, dragging along the floor. Hot and bothered in a race against time we burst through the door and quickly set the hall up into tables of four [Stuart floats around with haste, dispersing TCSG resources on the tarnished floor while Trevor sets up the mini-projector and PowerPoint. He loads up a playlist on his phone and places it in the middle of the room]. [Stuart's sat waiting on a table holding a learner journal as Trevor rummages through a pile of spare paper in the hope of locating a TCSG fundamentals poster]. [Trevor sits on a table opposite and checks his watch] "Pushing it close today aren't we ... we'll crack on ... get them in here for nine-thirty till eleven and then off outside for the practicals [looks for Stuart's approval – "Yep"] ... I'll do my receiving session first and hand them off to you for the pressing game ... yours is about forty minutes so I'll whizz through mine ... we set them task two and three as homework last week ... they can review that as a group before feeding back and that sets us up nicely for introducing the fundamentals [pointing to the TCSG poster on the table]". Stuart, cautiously "happy with that [sigh] ... be careful though because the fundamentals and principles are done in more detail on the level two ... I thought when we introduced the [framework] last week they were lost so I'm not sure if they're ready for that ... it's only workshop two so for now I'd like to get them at ease with the content and making connections between practices and classroom sessions [Trevor shrugs "Fair play"]" [four candidates lumber into the hall with McDonald's breakfasts. They exchange greetings with the tutors who retreat out of sight behind the net divider]. Trevor takes a moment to regather this thoughts "after lunch they can get into their groups and review the session ... [Stuart butts in "Do you remember the guy last week who was wearing that Pokémon snapback? ... I was talking to him ... he's a PE apprentice up at [secondary school] ... second year degree student ... he seemed to know a bit about reflection so he's someone we can use to fire away on that one]" [the tutors turn their attention to the laptop] ... Trevor, in a tone of resistance "We'll stick that up

[slide on setting challenges] but I reckon we should do what we usually do ... get out those challenge cards you've got and ask them to reflect on how they'd use challenges and scenarios at their clubs ... I'm not expecting much from last week's responses to be fair" ... [Stuart] "No ... neither am I mate ... when you're finishing off I'll dish out the flipchart paper and pens and we'll do a group carousel ... break for a coffee mid-morning-ish and set them a rotation task ... one person stays on a table and groups rotate and ask questions ... I'm fucking sick of having people going to Costa and taking half-an-hour to get a coffee when we're already pushed for time". [Fieldnote extract: 15.12.2019].

Logan shed further light on the importance of using physical space (i.e., corridors) and music to conceal discussions and *stay ahead* of the candidates. This is illustrated in the below excerpt:

It is just breaking that awkward silence bit ... if people are sat there in silence they will generally lower the tone of their voice to have a conversation with the people that are sat next to them so if I do need to speak to the co-tutor then and I don't want the learners to hear it is probably one of those where we need to take the conversation outside from the people that are already in the room ... [If I] put the music on the level of chat goes up naturally anyway so at that point if I do need to speak to my co-tutor or whatever no problem we can do that when we're next to the laptop and have a look at the screen and nobody will really notice. [Semi-structured interview with Logan: 05.03.2020].

Goffman (1963b) suggested that copresence in shared social spaces demands that individuals manage the flow of information from themselves to others. He claims that, in some instances, 'the region of space in which mutual presence can be said to prevail cannot be clearly drawn' because of the dialectic nature of *observing* and *being observed* (Goffman, 1963b, p. 17). Goffman (1963b) further proposed, as was illustrated by the participants, that individuals and gatherings (i.e., groups) ought to remain aware of their potential visibility and being observed when orienting their conduct. Indeed, the participants' (inter)actions spoke to Goffman's (1963b) idea that:

'Persons must sense that they are close enough to be perceived in whatever they are doing, including their experiencing of others, and close enough to be perceived in this sensing of being perceived.' (p. 17).

The research participants believed that it was necessary for planning discussions with co-tutors to take place under such guises in order to construct an *official line* that reduced the possibility of contradictions, open disagreements, untimely interjections, or (un)intentional (para)verbal and non-verbal expressions that threaten the impact of future tasks or TCSG's core messages. The quasi-private spaces that the participants created enabled them to exchange disagreements and uncertainties with co-tutors upon which mutually acceptable *happy mediums*



were agreed upon that concealed the unorganised and incoherent realities that lurked beneath the tutor team's performance that, if revealed, would discredit the collective image. They explained that *singing off the same hymn-sheet* with reference to TCSG's core messages was imperative for enhancing individual and collective credibility, and maintaining buy-in from the learners. They also spoke about how the projection of solidarity was a deliberate strategy employed by tutor teams to reduce ambiguity, sustain influence, ensure consistently satisfactory experiences for learners, avoid foreseen complications in terms of assessment outcomes, and circumvent learner complaints:

If it was a case of tutor to tutor having a conversation and you say 'X' and I think 'Y', I'll say that I think 'Y' and we'll have that discussion and that debate but what we need to agree on in the debate is something we're going to deliver ... where are we going to let it lie? what message do we need to deliver to the learners? and although I might think 'Y' and you think 'X', what we do need to do is come up with an agreed solution as to how we're going to deliver it so there's some form of pre-agreed consistency, now that at times might mean that you're going to need to back me up even though you don't completely agree and I might need to back you up but we need to make sure that the message going out to learners is a consistent one, now if it's something on tactics for example ... we can quite openly have a version 'A' and version 'B' because it's only my opinion and your opinion ... if we share that with the group it might stimulate some really healthy debate ... what we have to avoid come the assessment is for people to have received mixed messages and then kick up a stink if they don't pass the course, if they start complaining that we've diverted from where we were meant to be then actually that isn't good but yeah it just gives us that bit of security to fall back on and say "no these were the messages ... you're not where we need you to be at the minute". [Semi-structured interview with Logan: 18.01.2020].

The important bit there's around ensuring the consistency of message ... if I stand up and start taking it in one direction and my co-tutor comes along and starts spinning it slightly differently what you could end up with is mixed messages for the learners ... if we're trying to show that we care about your learning and we're two TCSG tutors who've really put in the graft behind the scenes to make sure you have a good experience and one of us goes off piste, you've killed it ... in reality it's already hanging by a thread so that'd smash the plan to bits really, the learners are obviously at the start of their journey and if it's workshop one I think what they need there is around consistency and clarity to know what's going to happen and what the course is about [Semi-structured interview with Parker: 19.11.2019].

I tend to deliver like, if one person wants to bring in an analogy or something from their experience they can ... through the week we have quite a bit of dialogue over email around who wants to deliver what and it can be quite rigid with some other tutors such as one person does one workshop and you the other it can make you feel quite redundant ... ideally it'd go "here're our parts and here's where you're going to be able to add value" because there's nothing worse than when you're right at the peak of your message and someone butts in ... it helps you to look more credible coz' you simply aren't making any howlers and given the lack of time it doesn't make sense to have fixed parts since you'd

be constantly trying to remember what you need to say, that's when you'd most likely trip over yourself [Semi-structured interview with Patrick: 14.12.2019].

The development of solidarity and coordination reportedly entailed a *balancing act* that prevented collective performances from appearing too planned and calculated to the extent that future strategic plans would be closely scrutinised to the point where a tutor team's intentions would be revealed. When I asked why this was undesirable, Stuart and Logan communicated the importance of authenticity, mystique, unpredictability, and the element of surprise for sustaining influence and deterring learners from attempting to preempt the *line* taken by the team. They explained that they evaded suspicion by identifying opportunities whereby workshop enactment could be *less scripted* to enhance genuineness, which benefited transitions between activities and eased their consciences following deceitful interactions with learners. One of the key functions of their planning discussions with co-tutors was to make sure that they were sufficiently *in the know* so that they could enter into a collective disguise of not readily available secrets:

Trevor and I aren't too confined to our own roles so if we feel at liberty to chip in we will, I think it seems much more natural than the traditional robotic style of delivering courses where it's blatantly standardised ... as soon as learners get a sniff of "they've done this a hundred times before" that connection with them immediately withers away, the crux of it is that we want learners to feel they're getting a bespoke and personal experience and start to build that connection ... of course we have to talk about things like [coaching framework] because it's a key message but if we can somehow characterise it with our personality they'll buy into the process and trust us a lot more, if everything goes perfect all of the time like bang, bang, bang the candidates end up looking for holes ... I admit as a team we DO look at what we can get away with but not in a naughty way, can we take a task in a different direction to the syllabus perhaps? I might sly in a witty comment there, if I dip in and out at the right times and continue being measured about how much we say we'll still have that free-flow and element of surprise. [Semi-structured interview with Stuart: 10.12.2019].

I suppose if we're transparent with everything, at times learners might become suspicious ... I think back to when we did a task where one of the learners went "oh, I thought that was going to be a trick, I thought you were setting us up for something there" ... on a couple of workshops they know that I've spun things to make them do the opposite thinking around a topic, like when I revealed the behavioural strategy I used with [learner] during the practical and set group observations to maintain his engagement, the next practical we did with group tasks one of the learners turned and said to me "are you doing this because we've been silly", I was like "er ... no", they've obviously remembered the message and the strategy that I'd used but actually I don't want them to think when I set a task 'oh god, he's onto us, he's using this because we're talking" or whatever", that's why it's useful to grab a few minutes before we kick off "well this is what we're going to tell them at this point to throw them off the scent of 'X' and we can't say that to them there as

they were on to us last time” ... because we have those kinds of chats I don’t have Dan glaring at me unknowingly from the other side of the room who’s going to go in and save the day and drop me in it [laughs], I don’t want to reveal all of the strategies we’re using because they could double question us and disengage. [Semi-structured interview with Logan: 22.02.2019].

Although these planning interactions served to establish a basic sense of coordination between co-tutors, they lacked the rigour, breadth, depth, and detail to sustain collaboration throughout the duration of workshop enactment. To cope with the complex and fluid nature of their individual and collective dealings with others, then, tutor teams developed shrewd systems of *checking in* with one another (see section 4.2.2). Relatedly, planning discussions became more purposeful as members of the tutor team strategically uncovered details about learners over time (i.e., practical ability, understanding, experience, coaching context, beliefs, course engagement) that cyclically informed the designing of activities, resources, strategies, and in-situ support (see section 4.2.1).

In contrast, Mike demonstrated a more instrumental and individualist attitude to planning with co-tutors. He was predominantly concerned with knowing the basics of his own team role:

For me it’s managing expectations about who is doing what. That is the key thing. Yeah, I could probably do more on that but that is just me and my way of working. That is erm. I tend to focus on what I am doing. Know what I mean. As long as I know what I am doing you can crack on with your stuff. Erm. Yeah. We can go from there. Erm. There is probably a better way to do that and it is real world and only part time. There is only so much you can do so I think, yeah. I think it is probably just a quick check in beforehand to sort out who is doing what parts of the delivery. It is usually pretty easy as in. To be honest it is usually a ‘I’ll do that night and you do that night’. Or, you do that workshop and I’ll do that workshop. The other one can chip in or it might be that. I will lead the workshop and you do the practical type of scenario so it is probably like. It is not an, erm. When I have had those conversations it has not been based on anything other than just splitting it up really. I will wait for that person to ask me for my thoughts or whatever. [Semi-structured interview with Mike: 04.11.2019].

Alongside these (often) collective acts, the participants disclosed that they would often spend time in the days leading up to a workshop handpicking supplementary content (i.e., research), facts, and supporting arguments that aligned with TCSG’s learning platform(s) and the anticipated *line* of the tutor team in order to conceal a lack of broad subject knowledge they originally claimed to possess. The participants were wise to the tendency of learners to fact-check

received information away from the course, and, in turn prioritised the presentation of verified factual evidence to avoid damaging individual and collective claims to credibility. For example:

I regularly get sent updated content but I'll adapt it when we get to know the learners a bit better, I've got articles on physiology and strength and conditioning from uni as well so I'll whack those in and for me this is where we can contribute REAL value if you like coz' I'll add bits in that're research informed and send it over to William and say "I have these ideas on things what do you think" or I'll show him before the session ... the overriding messages of the course can't be touched as they're central to TCSG's philosophy but I'll throw an eye over the scheme of work and find a gap where I can possibly play with the detail a bit and wonder if it's okay to put in there ... I know a bit about research but a few of the older tutors like William don't so depending on how in your face and visible it is we can just about get away with only knowing the headlines, the majority of what we add in can be found on [online learning platforms] so I'm not worried about having to eat my words at any point [laughs], but if we paste graphs and statistics onto a cluster of the slides that we can refer to then it's a bit more believable and gives us a more credible stance people want to listen to. [Semi-structured interview with Patrick: 04.02.2020].

I'm conscious when we're shifting content around of having 'can we do this' and 'should we do this' conversations and if what we come back to is the 'should we do this' and the answer's yes then it's more important than can we do this ... if you put the three of us in a room now with all of the other TCSG level three tutors the question would be "would we be comfortable saying this is what we're delivering" and depending on the person asking it I'd probably go yes but I wouldn't be proactively going around and saying "we're doing this and this and it's different to what everybody else is doing", we'd play our cards quite close to our chest I think but ultimately if we're asked I'd stick my neck on the line and put my head above the parapet and be prepared to be shot at ... if the comeback's "that's completely wrong" then I'd raise some counterargument as to why we think it's right, I don't mean that we'd be going mad crazy throwing loads of rubbish in there, it'd be stuff still roughly condoned by TCSG but with a little bit of a twist ... what we're doing there is based on the learners, it's on the people coming through the door and adapting to what's there based on zero experience of the candidates. [Semi-structured interview with Parker: 22.11.2019].

Evidently, the participants' limited access to *front* and *back regions* created a range of problems relating to the effective planning of a coordinated performance (Goffman, 1959). The most salient issue appeared to be the blurring of these regions and the immediate copresence with candidates that it enforced. This reality differed from the one outlined by Goffman (1959), who wrote that:

'Since the vital secrets of a show are visible backstage and since performers behave out of character while there, it is natural to expect that the passage from the front region to the back region will be closed to members of the audience or the entire back region will be hidden from them' (p.116).

As both *regions* existed simultaneously, team-members deployed *staging strategies* (i.e., music, arrival activities, interaction with space) to create partial quasi-private *back regions* which were ‘bounded to some degree by barriers to perception’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 116). In this sense, teams skilfully utilised available *props* and physical features of the *setting* as a form of ‘work control’ that concealed their conversations (discussed further in the following paragraphs), *kept the secrets of the show*, temporarily buffered the participants ‘from the [front region] deterministic demands that surround them’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 116). Dramaturgically speaking, Goffman (1959) argued that *performance teams* should seek to prevent audiences from becoming aware of undesirable information because ‘the discovery of secrets disrupts the team’s performance, for suddenly and unexpectedly the team finds useless and foolish to maintain the care, reticence, and studied ambiguity of action that was required prior to the loss of its secrets.’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 142). In Goffmanian terms, team-members *colluded* with one another to conceal *dark secrets* (i.e., the competence of less experienced coach educators and the lack of planning) and *strategic secrets* (i.e., plans for learners and the coordination of roles) in order to maintain an aura of wonder and spontaneity that enabled some control over a scrutinising audience (Goffman, 1959).

The participants, then, individually and collectively undertook hidden *back region* work (i.e., handpicking information) to avoid discrediting situations and ‘to stop candidates from adapting effectively to the state of affairs the team is planning to bring about’ (Goffman, 1959, p.142). First, this speaks to Goffman’s (1959) notion of *dramaturgical circumspection*, in that participants were aware of how they handled their ‘relaxation of appearances’ (p. 220) in front of learners, and the foreseen consequences of particular course of (inter)action. Second, this relates to Goffman’s (1959) notion of *mystification* – whereby social actors maintain some level of *back region* privacy and limit contact with the audience as a means to prevent them from finding out *too much* about the performance (Scott, 2015). Third, the strategies that team-members used can be explained by the concept of *decorum* (Goffman, 1959). *Decorum* refers to how a team-member ‘comports himself while in the visual or aural range of the audience but not necessarily engaged in talk with them’ (Goffman, 1959, p.110). The *decorum* of the participants helped them to blend into the setting.

A couple of the participants perceived to be less experienced coach educators made remarks about how their lack of foresight made it difficult to guarantee the accuracy of content and the collective strategic direction of workshop enactment. Amongst these participants, concerns existed about being regarded as a *poor tutor* if mistakes occurred and ruining the collective credibility of the team by drawing attention to falsehoods relating to their competence. Based on the diverse nature of co-tutors' competencies (and the increased likelihood of mistakes), senior coach educators employed several strategies pre-workshop to minimise errors. These involved sharing materials, advice, practical tips, and direct instruction, allocating team roles based on tutors' perceived strengths, as well as anticipated contingencies. Roles were assigned based on the ability to remain composed under pressure, avoid stuttering, mumbling, fidgeting, or becoming embarrassed in potentially discrediting circumstances (i.e., challenged by learners, unfamiliar with content). As a result, *novices* were given supporting roles that disguised their *apprenticeships* until they were considered sufficiently competent to undertake more visible team roles. For example:

I suppose number one is that you don't want things to be factually incorrect, one thing I don't want to be doing is sitting at the back of a classroom with my head in my hands, if we suddenly say that the tutor started talking about puberty from nine ... realistically it's wrong so we want to make sure that we're factually correct in what we're saying but we also want to avoid the situation where the examples that're used or the information given to the group is questioned, but not questioned in an inquisitive way where they want further information it's a question in terms of "are you sure that's right?" because if we then get into that debate about is this right or is this wrong and the tutor is not rock solid about their own information there can be elements of self-doubt which can become quite apparent to the learners "oh he's not actually sure about that he's made it up" ... the credibility thing then is that the role of the tutor doesn't just exist for this particular workshop, if you've been challenged and haven't come out of the other side of it that could last the whole block or the whole course if somebody has really picked holes in your argument, generally at level one what you say is taken for granted as learners in the room are just looking for some help and support which is fine ... level two they will start to question, level three if you did that there'd definitely be people in the room who would question and dig deep, if that does happen that tutor needs to be able to stand their ground and remain unmoved [Semi-structured Interview with Logan: 14.11.2019].

I'm still learning massively, loads and loads, and that's why it's good that I'm on this course with Logan instead of another tutor, with him being [manager] there's nobody else I'm better to learn from, I'm kind of just letting him take the lead ... well, not letting him but he's kind of taking the lead on everything because he's the one with the experience and I'm kind of gaging that really, his expectation of me though is that by the end of the course I've got a much more rounded knowledge of how to develop coaches at this level but yeah I need to be careful as the level two's a little more complex and because the

characters are a little bit more intuitive there's that potential to slip up but if you slip up at the wrong time that buy in we were talking about before you lose that because you lose integrity a little bit and then they [learners] are less likely to respect and listen to what you say because they'll think 'well he got it wrong' and it's that first impression thing, so we agreed to take it step by step ... I took a back seat for the first four workshops and on workshop five I led the theory ... the more Logan does and the less I do the better coz' I'm not just sitting on my hands doing nothing I'm trying to pay attention to his mannerisms and what he's doing and the content of the course but I'm also learning how he structures his questions and that, like, it's amazing how quickly he notices things and puts them right and no-one catches on, that's like some of the discussions we have, what could go wrong here? what do I need to look for? and how can we deal with it without drawing attention to my fuckups? [laughs]. [Semi-structured interview with Dan: 21.10.2019].

In the workshops where Dan was going to lead I either tried to give him the workshops where there was some simplistic or easy messages to deliver, which means we can avoid those situations where there are a couple of grey areas "what does this mean, what does that mean sort of stuff", the other part of it is that there're some workshops that have some hot [hard] content but Dan's going to have to eventually deliver it and do the thinking process for himself so as much as I want to avoid him being out in the front struggling, what I do need to do is make sure that he's actually done the thinking and the thought process behind it so that he could potentially deliver it himself without me being there ... if any particular day I suddenly felt ill and couldn't turn up is he going to be able to deliver the message when I'm not there? [simulates a phone call to Dan] "Dan, you're going to deliver this one next Friday, go away and look at it, make some notes, any questions give me a ring, let's talk through it and make sure there's some clarity of message, you really need to hit home on these bits, think about how long you are going to spend across this time slot and when your tea breaks are". [Semi-structured interview with Logan: 17.01.2020].

In an interview with Logan, he further acknowledged that the individual credibility of co-tutors has repercussions for the collective image, others in the tutor team, and the successful implementation of activities or strategies later in the workshop or course. Logan explained that if an individual performs poorly in a previous workshop or block, thus potentially risking their credibility, he allocates them a team role that will favourably reorient learners attitudes towards them:

We need to make sure that actually, if we're unsure of something let's see if we can get it sorted beforehand so that we can avoid that situation. But if it comes up we can manage it and deal with it but let's not make it an every workshop occurrence kind of thing. So it might be that Dan has struggled on bits in one particular workshop, we might just make sure the next one he leads on there are no grey areas, there is a real clarity of message, it's fairly simple to deliver. It rebuilds his confidence. It rebuilds the learner's confidence in him as a tutor because he delivered something that was really powerful, poked them in the eyes, and they go away and walk in the house "how was the level two tonight", "oh yeah,

Dan did this thing it was really good”. Done. Sorted. Straight away they are back in the mindset of ‘the tutor is really powerful again’. Right where we want it. [Semi-structured interview with Logan: 14. 11. 2019].

Senior coach educators, on the other hand, were allocated more dominant roles because they were trusted to communicate the credibility of the tutor team and quickly establish buy-in. As individual and collective performance were considered time-sensitive, the participants reported that it was crucial to build credibility *early doors* to avoid resistance in future workshops (i.e., when assigning tutors for in-situ visits), where a team’s reputation was believed to be harder to salvage. Even though these strategies were collusive in nature, the participants rationalised them as acts of *genuine care* for the overall experience(s) of co-tutors and course candidates. They explained that sustained credible tutor team performances often received positive feedback on social media from learners that made them more noticeable, individually and collectively, to the authorities in TCSG with influence over reputation, employment, and progression: For example:

The first couple of workshops are quite volatile in terms of people are in a new place with new people around them, there’re loads of people there that nobody knows so everyone’s being dead protective and sensitive about what they’re saying ... we need to try and gage the audience before we can start and deliver properly and they need to gage each other before they start to share experiences and improve, I think that’s your most important buy-in time where you can get them on board on what you’re trying to do and get them to see that you’re not just here because it’s your job, you’re here because you want to try and improve these people as paying customers, I can’t really give you an example but if I said something that was wrong or somebody disagreed and I didn’t argue my case properly you lose integrity to the point where they doubt you and it’s a struggle to get them on board after that ... make a good first impression and they’ll trust you, if you lose that trust it takes a long time to build it back up again and we only have three blocks so it’s a bit dangerous in that respect ... lose their respect too early you might not get them back and if you get them for an in-situ visit how on earth are they going to take your feedback seriously if they don’t believe in what you’re saying. [Semi-structured interview with Dan: 12.12.19].

I’m not saying that a less experienced tutor would, but I don’t want them to start relaying messages that weren’t factually spot on, if it’s around the project or the in-situ visits or if it’s around how people get signed off, because they [tutors and learners] may not been through that process and seen it, as soon as they start relaying messages that aren’t quite right, they aren’t areas that you can really bring back without saying “actually, that’s not right, you only get two visits or you only get one visit” or whatever it might be ... I think from my point of view it’s a lot easier and a lot cleaner for the learners, they need the real clarity of what this course is about so I would make sure that I would deliver that message really appropriately, really clearly and for me that sets the foundation for the rest of the course, we need to avoid those situations where candidates start to question whether you



know what you're talking about and the reputation of what you're delivering ... I mean further down the line what you're potentially avoiding is the duplication of questions, you get this right at the start and you're able to spend more time on the course content that matters. [Semi-structured interview with William: 18.01.2020].

Planning just makes everything a little bit tighter and if it's done right and everyone knows [what's going on] it's a good opportunity to show that you're adding value, it's quite important that if jobs come up in the future people like Patrick has a good rep with people up, down, left and right in TCSG ... again, TCSG selects which tutors they put on what courses and if I wasn't doing a good job and if they weren't getting good feedback they wouldn't use me, that's happened in the past with other tutors so I'm quite conscious of that but I think it's more of a professional standards issue, one thing I didn't quite like at first was how candidates found you on Facebook or Twitter and tried to add you but over time I've realised that they'll actually tag you and TCSG on there and sing your praises or say thanks, someone from the top office might look at that and go 'well they're obviously doing a good job' ... if learners think I'm decent then there'll be more demand for me and the others and more people wanting to come on our courses, I do think it's nice when people mention your name, "ah yeah Stuart's class, he know this and knows that", like, if helping people isn't your trail of thought why're you doing it? It isn't brain surgery and you aren't getting paid thousands of pounds, getting up on a Saturday for a level two won't make you rich. [Semi-structured interview with Stuart: 04.02.2020].

As a regional manager, Logan's *performance* was evaluated on the number of coaches that enrolled on and completed courses. For him, it was paramount that the tutor team(s) under his supervision *make a good first impression* with candidates and encourage them to *spread the word* amongst their own personal coaching networks. Logan described how *good* metrics were a personal resource that helped him to demonstrate his value to national managers which, in turn, meant that the workforce at his regional TCSG organisation *stayed off their radar*. He explained that this freedom allowed him to maintain ideal working conditions for both himself and the coach educators within his remit:

I suppose, higher up the chain am I influenced by what senior people at TCSG think of me? yeah I suppose so, look, it's always nice if somebody tells you what you do is really positive and so on, I think the reality of location, organisation, scale [and] volume means that what we do locally we don't really get on their radar too much ... maybe at level three there's more focus on us and the show we put on so planning is a really big part of that ... more broadly per region we're sort of assessed on the amount of people that come through the door so the reality is that we want the learners to go away thinking 'they know what they're talking about', there's got to be some reputable messages coming from us for sure so if we can't get it right and get it aligned then inevitably if we're mixed up the learners are going to be mixed up, part of the course is always around them trying to sell the message back to their clubs and fellow coaches and so on so if somebody asks them "what was it like last night?" what we want them to say is something really positive, that they are clear on what they're going to do and they're enjoying the work, and, [mimics

conversation] “yeah, I think you should go on it as well”, we need to avoid the flip conversation of that at all costs, from a manager’s point of view [and] it just means that I can keep the bear off my back and keep doing what we do and how we like to do it, do the essential tasks well and make sure the people who need to see it see it [Semi-structured interview with Logan: 14.02.2020].

The *back regions* created by team-members functioned as a space for developing a sustainable *working consensus*, whereby senior tutors, as *performance directors*, exercised *dramaturgical circumspection* to prepare for likely contingencies and exploit opportunities for the team to successfully coordinate (inter)action (Goffman, 1959). Problematically, performance teams had to come to terms with only partially settling ‘on a complete agenda before the event, designating who is to do what and who is to do what after that’ so that ‘confusions and lulls [could] be avoided and hence the impressions that such hithes in the proceedings might convey to the audience [could] be avoided too’ (Goffman, 1959, p.221). The content and nature of the discussions between team-members took the form of *staging talk*, which focuses on issues relating to the staging of a show and the essential attributes for maintaining a desired impression. This entailed the selection of content, sequencing of activities, and compromises. Like Goffman (1959), this was also where:

‘Questions [were] raised about the condition of sign-equipment, stands, lines, and positions are tentatively brought forth and ‘cleared’ by the assembled membership; the merits and demerits of available front regions are analysed; ...[and] past performance disruptions and likely disruptions are talked about.’ (Goffman, 1959, p.174).

The *performance director*, who had both *dramatic* and *directive dominance*, was also responsible for exercising *circumspection* when allocating roles to team-members (Goffman, 1959). Here, senior tutors had some ‘idea as to how much loyalty and discipline’ they could rely upon from each team-member and ‘from the membership as a whole’ in the staging of a successful collective performance (Goffman, 1959, p. 213). As Goffman (1959) explains, it is not unusual for team-members ‘to appear in a different light if the team’s over-all effect is satisfactory’ (p. 84). Thus, those team-members (i.e., experienced coach educators) who were considered to have sufficient levels of *dramaturgical loyalty* and *discipline* were selected to enact dominant roles throughout workshops. It was perceived that these team members ‘would not betray the secrets of the team when between performances – whether from self-interest, or lack of discretion’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 207). Nor was it expected that they would fail to have the ‘presence of mind’ to ‘suppress

his spontaneous feelings in order to give the appearance of sticking to the affective line, the expressive status quo, established by his team's performance' (p. 210-211). It was also anticipated that senior team-members would avoid becoming *flustered*, *ill at ease*, *nervous*, or *embarrassed*, and instead remain composed to avert *performance disruptions* (Goffman, 1959).

As team-members were merged into relationships of mutual dependence, any individual could 'give the show away' (Goffman, 1959, p. 210). Therefore, competent performers were selected on the proviso that they would not cause issues for the team by committing *unmeant gestures* (i.e., stuttering, slip of the tongue, fumbling), *faux pas* (i.e., giving incorrect information essential to the course), or cause a *scene* by giving offence or interrupting co-tutors (Goffman, 1959). As a team-member who commits these may 'chiefly discredit his own performance by this, a team-mate's performance, or the performance being staged by the audience', it was important that competent team-members were more visible (Goffman, 1959, p. 203). Given that teams were aware of the fragility of the *official line* and the likelihood of errors, they utilised an *unscripted* approach. Relatedly, Goffman (1959) warns of the dangers of rigid, scripted performances, writing that:

'A completely scripted performance, as found in a staged play, is very effective provided that no untoward event breaks the planned sequence of statement and acts; for once this sequence is disrupted, the performers may not be able to find their way back to the cue that will enable them to pick up where the planned sequence had been disrupted.' (p.221).

The planning discussions that I have presented throughout this section have, at times, reflected *team collusion* centred upon constructing both *benign* and *exploitative* fabrications for the purpose of manifesting a certain version of reality for the course attendees (Goffman, 1959, 1974). Benign fabrications are 'those claimed to be engineered in the interest of the person contained by them, or, if not quite in his interests and for his benefit, then at least not done against his interest' (Goffman, 1974, p.87). A kind of benign fabrication captured by the data is that of a *strategic fabrication*, which involves two elements, 'a moral one pertaining to the reputability of the deceiver and a strategic one pertaining to misdirecting of the dupe's perception (and consequently) his response' (Goffman, 1974, p. 102). Examples of this are the more genuine dimensions of the participants' interactions, such as aspiring to give candidates memorable experiences of TCSG courses and adopting a semi-scripted approach that supported a 'seemingly' authentic delivery style.

On the other hand, exploitative fabrications happen when a team contains ‘others in a construction that is clearly inimical to their private interests’ (Goffman, 1974, p. 103). Teams collaboratively achieved this by publicly falsifying the status of its members, the robustness of the *party line*, and paying *lip service* to an official stance that was often privately challenged. To collectively maintain this veneer of consensus or solidarity, then, it may be necessary for team-members to ‘be unanimous in the positions they take and secretive about the fact that these positions were not independently arrived at’ (Goffman, 1959, p.93). *Exploitative fabrications* also extended to the way(s) that team-members were *circumspect* in handpicking content based on judgements regarding the amount of information learners had access to both *internal* and *external* to face-to-face interaction that could be used to challenge claims to knowledge (Goffman, 1959).

The final strategy that was used to achieve this kind of fabrication included projecting a false image of less experienced team-members’ *rhetoric of training* (or credibility) to prevent individual and collective degradation. This *rhetoric* encompasses an organisation’s desire to ‘require practitioners to absorb a mystical range and period of training, in part to maintain a monopoly, but in part to foster the impression that the licensed practitioner is someone who has been reconstituted by his learning experience as is now set apart from other men’ (Goffman, 1959, p.55). The strategies used by *performance directors* to assign these team-members *less risky* roles echoes this concept. Role allocation also took the form of *protective practices*, which served to ‘save the definition of the situation projected’ by less-experienced coach educators following poor performances (Goffman, 1959, p. 24-25).

Together, these collaborative (inter)actions served to establish working conditions that allowed team-members to collectively coordinate their plans, strategies, and activities (Kelchtermans and Ballet, 2002a). Such social engagements were grounded in the density of interconnections that existed within the TCSG relational network (and beyond) (Crossley, 2011). For example, the participants attached considerable store to developing a good reputation amongst learner and staff networks as a means of demonstrating their value to key decision-makers (i.e., line

managers). The next section explores the individual strategies that the participants employed in their interactions with co-tutors and learners prior to workshop enactment.

#### 4.1.3 Developing Positive Relationships with Candidates and Co-tutors

The participants explained that the (largely unrelenting) conditions of co-presence that were produced by the blurring of *regions* meant that they had to be *performance ready* as soon as the *car door opened*. To cope with the difficulties of *always being on*, the participants used the liminal space (or liminality) provided by their cars to *psych themselves up* and rehearse some of the interactions they were likely to have with learners and co-tutors. The participants described how this prepared them for displaying the levels of energy and warmth associated with their role:

I kinda' sit in the car and map out the next couple of hours in my head to make sure that I've got the focus on what I want out from that workshop and bring it into the forefront of my mind, have I got the resources and photocopies and things like that, and it's a nice private space a bit like the calm before the storm because the minute you open that car door you're live as an TCSG employee, people are saying "how you doing can I have a quick word" and so on so the minute I step out I need to be on it... for me it's a couple of minutes where I can pause and take a breather so that I'm all set and ready, in truth after you've been at graft all day you're a bit drained and as much as you don't want to put the mask on you need to talk yourself around and get in the right head space erm ... there're usually four or five learners waiting at the door [laughs] so it's about making sure that I'm prepared to greet them with small talk etcetera. [Semi-structured interview with Logan: 22.02.2020].

If I'm lucky I'll be able to rush home and say "hi" to the kids and the wife and drag myself over to the wardrobe [sigh], "coat, check, hat, check, gloves, check" and off I go, it'll be fuckin' monkeys [freezing cold] outside and the last thing I wanna to do is leave a warm car to go and deliver in a freezing cold classroom or pitch ... I'll drive there with the radio on and heating blasting and go over what I'm going to do when I get there, in the winter I make a massive effort to mentally nudge myself to remember why I'm doing it so the candidates won't think I'm a grumpy bastard when they see me, I'll even rattle off [rehearse or practice] a few lines on the way as a bit of a practice run or have a quick glance in the head mirror, I could probably do with a makeover as well to cover the bags under my eyes, [but] the main thing is that these people have paid to be with me and sacrificed a night with their own families so I owe it to them to be on top form ... more than anything it helps you to get off on the right foot if it's the first block. [Semi-structured interview with Patrick: 04.02.2020].

In contrast to the challenges that were presented to tutor teams because of the scarcity of authentic *back regions* in which to collectively plan their performance(s), individual team-members had access to semi-private spaces (i.e., their cars, domestic homes) that enabled the rehearsal of anticipated interactions and the construction of a *personal front* typically associated with a TCSG

coach educator (discussed further in section 4.2) (Goffman, 1959). These partial *back regions* also functioned as layered *affective spaces* that were organised into more observable (i.e., the participants were visibly sat in their car) and less observable (i.e., internal) components, resulting in multilevel *stages* (Hochschild, 1983). For instance, the *emotion work* that the participants produced whilst travelling to venues or sitting in car parks formed part of a ‘private emotion system’ that was influenced by their sense of the ‘entitlement or obligations that governs emotional exchanges’ with learners and co-tutors (Hochschild, 1983, p. 56). Moreover, the participants used these liminal spaces to *work up* necessary emotions (i.e., enthusiasm, friendliness) through *exhortations* (i.e., self-cajoling, psyching themselves up, gesturing) – a form of *deep acting* (Hochschild, 1983).

The participants also spoke about having to frequently conceal emotions such as apathy, disdain, and exhaustion that conflicted with the image they were employed to portray at TCSG. Rather than express these emotions in their interactions with learners, the participants superficially *put on* cheerful, relaxed, and jovial personas (i.e., smiling, shaking hands, starting conversations) that were accompanied by a clean shaven and well-dressed appearance. Such behaviour was employed to convey care and empathy to learners in a bid to establish trust credibility:

I’ve got things I could be doing too, spending time with my family, playing golf, the little one might’ve had a restless night and I could be a bit tired and pissed off [laughs], when learners walk through the door they must be greeted by a friendly face and someone who looks presentable, I’ll iron my kit the night before and have a shave and stuff ... you want to look professional don’t you? their experience of us and the course starts from the first second of walking through the door so again I want to make them feel comfortable and get rid of any anxiety they have so they’re relaxed and ready to go “Hi, take a seat, I’m Stuart, nice to meet you blah blah blah”, handshake, smile, look for what badge they’re wearing and see if I know anyone from their club to strike up a conversation ... be really friendly and start to mingle in ... [laughs] most of my experience is in academy [sport] but they don’t know that, it’s all part and parcel of a good experience for them and as I say if you set the scene early and you’re likeable you’ll get the focus you need from them ... on the first day they’re bound to be going ‘what can this guy teach me about coaching?’ ‘how knowledgeable is he? [Semi-structured interview with Stuart: 14.02.2020].

As Patrick hurriedly places pieces of A1 paper and marker pens on each desk, William floats amongst the tables; smiling, and greeting, laughing, and joking with learners as they arrive. Akin to a dinner party host, he welcomes them by referencing the complementary coffee and biscuits – “Good to see you folks, come in, relax, grab a coffee and a digestive”. I get a real sense that he cares, or at least seems to. The warm and inviting tone and pitch of his voice suggests so. The topic(s) of conversation vary from revisiting interactions from previous workshops, key coaching and competition incidents that

learners had experienced since, and the differing successes that members of the cohort enjoyed in implementing taught practice(s) and theories [William breaks away from a conversation and makes his way to the table at the front of the room – where I was sat next to Patrick, who was sifting through folders on his hard-drive to find the evening’s register]. With his back to the learners, William crouches down beside me and refers to the content of a previous interview - “All that goes back to what I was saying before. I need to be Robbie Williams when I’m in here. I might be a miserable bastard when I’m not here but when I am I need to entertain them and get them up off their seats”. [Fieldnote extract: 20.02/2020].

In Goffman’s terms, the participants dramaturgically *idealised* and *realised* the TCSG tutor persona by strategically presenting the *appearance* (i.e., ironed tracksuit, clean-shaven) and *manner* (i.e., politeness, enthusiasm, caring tone of voice) of their *personal front(s)* in order to get ‘off on the right foot’ with learners and receive positive evaluations (Goffman, 1959, p. 23). Stuart managed his conduct in line with his *calculated* and anticipated *secondary impressions*; that is, the ‘expressions given’ and those ‘expressions given off’ to others (Goffman, 1959, p. 16). The presentation of desirable conduct also included displaying expected levels of *deference* (i.e., respect for the responsibility that the coach educator role entailed) and *demeanour* (i.e., how they carried themselves in their interactions with learners) to ensure that the ‘continuance of peaceful and orderly interaction can be assured’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 173). For the participants, then, ‘a status, a position, a social space is not a material thing, to be possessed and then displayed; it is a pattern of appropriate conduct, coherent, embellished, and well articulated’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 81).

In contrast to the *exhortations* that took place in *back regions*, the participants engaged in *emotional labour*, inclusive of *surface acting* (i.e., concealing true feelings), to induce positive emotions within learners in their direct interactions with them (Goffman, 1959; Hochschild, 1983). In other words, they wanted to evoke a kind of ‘passion in the audience’s soul’ that was conducive to developing positive relationships *with* and experiences *for* learners (Hochschild, 1983, p. 37). Furthermore, the way(s) that the participants carefully manipulated their expressions to distort the versions of reality received by learners reflects Goffman’s (1959) notion of *misrepresentation*. Here, the participants’ efforts to ‘misrepresent the facts’ of the performance (i.e., their coaching experience, emotionality) featured heavily in their attempts to comply with the *feeling* and *display*

*rules* that they perceived to go hand in hand with their employment as a coach educator at TCSG (Goffman, 1959, p. 65; Hochschild, 1983). Indeed, the participants seemed to understand that:

‘If this tendency of the audience to accept signs places the performer in a position to be misunderstood and makes it necessary for him to exercise expressive care regarding everything he does when before the audience, so also this sign-accepting tendency puts the audience in a position to be duped and misled.’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 65).

In an interview, Stuart explained that it was important to develop positive relations with learners because of the localised nature of coach education work and the repercussions a poor first impression would have for them within an interconnected regional sport network where a good reputation was essential for job security. Maintaining a positive reputation was beneficial for tutors because they regularly encountered candidates in other public places (i.e., grassroots clubs and supermarkets) and therefore wanted to avoid unpleasant, awkward, and discrediting situations. Equally, Stuart was enthused by the possibility of receiving social recognition and experiencing the fulfilling emotional sensations of having his identity confirmed. The benefits of TCSG employment also extended to *friendship* networks where individuals enjoyed the elevated social status:

It’s very rare that I’ll get people on a course who aren’t local to that area so there’s a good chance that I’ll bump into them elsewhere at some point, I’ve even had people come up to me like “are you Stuart the TCSG tutor?”, their mates have told them about me which is fine, these people are total strangers but they’ve thought enough of their experience to say that ... fantastic for me professionally ... if they ring [line manager] and ask about my availability even better, the alternative is if I haven’t come across well or somebody hasn’t enjoyed it, I’d be devastated if they approached me in public, wounded [feeling bad or ashamed] [and] I’m under no illusions that I’m doing a job ninety-nine percent of my mates would ditch their job for in a heartbeat, most of them dig roads and paint car parks so I’m lucky, I’m the go-to man for [sport] because I work for TCSG, I quite enjoy the status. [Semi-structured interview with Stuart: 16.12.2019].

The participants exercised dramaturgical circumspection in relation to their pre-workshop interactions with learners because of the likelihood of social encounters in other settings (Goffman, 1959). In part, the conditions of their coach education employment rendered them as *open persons* within their respective local relational/sporting networks (Crossley, 2011; Goffman, 1963b, 1972). This meant that the participants could not rely on being accorded *civil inattention* by learners or acquaintances that far reaching TCSG network (Crossley, 2011; Goffman, 1963b). Thus, their status encouraged a form of social recognition whereby others did not give them sufficient:



‘Visual notice to demonstrate that one appreciated that the other is present (and that one admits openly to having seen him), whole at the next moment withdrawing one’s attention from him so as to express that he does not constitute a target of special curiosity or design.’ (Goffman, 1963b, p. 84).

Aside from the credibility building opportunities seized by teams in the co-presence of learners, the enforced copresence with learners presented several further challenges. The participants described tensions between interacting with learners and constructing the setting for the coach education workshop. The strategies that the participants used to manage this included inviting learners to help set up tables, chairs, distribute resources (i.e., hand-outs), as well as the playing of music on portable speakers. While this was a practical decision, the participants wanted to avoid being perceived as rude or uncaring, as this would likely disrupt the productivity of future interactions:

I’ll arrive at the venue just after five-ish, but I know I’m going to basically be sat in the car for half an hour which is fine, it gives me some thinking time but the reality is, like, what I said before, you open the door you are live but you are live with five or six people just standing outside waiting for someone to open the door. I don’t know what I’m going to see in terms of the classroom, does it need changing and organising? Is it already set-up? It is quite difficult but you tend to focus on the stuff that you can get up and running really quickly ... my normal go to is to put some music on, [it’s] one of the things I try to tick off early, it makes the room a bit more relaxed where people can come in and have a chat and it’s a bit more welcoming that somebody walking in to a bit of a cold stony silence, you’re busy trying to set things up and they can see that you’re busy so they don’t really want to come and speak to you but then there’s an awkward bit when you know they’re trying to speak to you but you’re trying to sort things out for the groups like hand-outs or whatever, I’ll try and engage them to lend a hand so they’re involved cuz’ there’s a risk of coming across dismissive or unapproachable ... so yeah, as that’s all happening sort the projector out while trying to have some sort of chat with people. [Semi-structured interview with Logan: 05. 03. 2020].

Goffman’s (1959) writings on *realigning actions* are relevant here. In complex and layered social situations, such as the ones produced by an absence of authentic *back regions*, Goffman (1959) wrote that team-members may ‘extend a definite but noncompromising invitation to the other, requesting that social distance and formality be increased or decreased’ (p. 188). For the participants, this meant extending a form of intimacy to learners that cut across the differing statuses of their roles in order to prevent spoiling their relationships with them. To some degree, coach educators and learners became a type of temporary performance team that was founded upon *double-talk* (Goffman, 1959). Goffman (1959) describes *double-talk* as:

‘A kind of collusive communication different from other types of collusion in that the characters against whom the collusion is sustained are projected by the very persons who enter into the collusion. Typically double-talk occurs during interaction between a subordinate and a superordinate concerning matters which are officially outside the competence and jurisdiction of the subordinate but which actually depend on him.’ (p. 191).

Relatedly, the participants highlighted that they assembled the setting in a way as to create an emotionally safe and informal environment for interaction (e.g., background music and placement of furniture and team-members). Additionally, background interference such as music helped to protect secrets entrusted to teams by learners which if publicly revealed would lead to doubts over their collective trustworthiness. As the courses progressed and familiarity developed between tutors and candidates, table formation, group allocation, and task design became more deliberate decisions to protect younger or reserved learners from feeling embarrassed and preventing the dominant characters from opposing them. This was an ethical choice team’s made to try and encourage fruitful discussions that would benefit the course and also achieve an enjoyable experience for themselves as *the same voices weren’t always being heard*:

If we didn’t do things like play music or put a coaching video on I bet the only voices we’d hear would be those boisterous characters who think that they know it all, take [learner], perfect example of what I’m talking about, never shuts up and no-one else can speak ... if we can give the introverts, females, [and] kids a bit of a smokescreen that allows them to speak to the person next door with the safety that no-one else will hear or butt-in in any way then there’s no doubt they’ll connect better with the people on the course ... if everyone’s sound [gets on] with each other that makes it so much easier for us to pair people up and rotate tables, it doesn’t always work out like that and we need to identify those people who aren’t getting bullied ,but, like overthrown by the egos so we can bring them into the sessions ... if we didn’t have something going on in the background the level of chat and volume would plummet and those people I’ve just mentioned would be way too embarrassed to speak, the music goes on, people get buzzed [enthused] and the volume of chat goes up and that means I can grab Logan for a few minutes... at the minute we have learners with medical conditions or personal issues that prevent them from attending or taking part so we’ll speak about how we’re going to work with their partner if they can’t make it, it helps us keep everything under wraps without ruining a relationship with a candidate if word got back that we’d aired their laundry in front of people [Semi-structured interview with Dan: 17.12.2019].

Goffman’s (1959) conceptualisation of *realigning actions* can be further applied to explain how the participants created more inclusive and *safe* pre-workshop environments. The participants, who knew that the blurring of *front* and *back regions* was likely to produce uncomfortable conditions

for learners, used *props* (i.e., music, videos) to positively affect the emotional climate within the setting which, in turn, was expected to encourage more detailed peer-to-peer interactions (Goffman, 1959). *Protective strategies* were also used through the *staging of settings* (i.e., seating arrangements) and concealing of *entrusted secrets* that were disclosed to team-members by learners (i.e., health issues). Such practices were considered to play a ‘significant role in the social life of the group’ and learners’ engagement throughout the duration of courses (Goffman, 1959, p. 25).

The participants highlighted that tutor teams demonstrated their credibility and effort by making *hidden work* visible through the positioning of coaching manuals, tactical scenario cards, flipchart paper, equipment toolboxes, schemes of work, and sessions plans within classrooms. Even though these materials were associated with an *effective* learning environment, the participants hoped it would encourage learners to *hang on to their last word* and prevent unwanted resistance. For example:

I always have a big three-story toolbox with me that I leave out at the front next to all of the gear, it makes my job a lot easier I guess but it’s quite good for show as well, [and] although we don’t really use them I’ll bring some old technical and tactical manuals with me and dot them around the room or put them at the front next to the registers so the candidates can have a gleg [look at them] when they sign themselves in, I’ll have the scheme of work floating around somewhere, what else? ... the flipchart paper and pens will be put on the tables and I’ll probably walk around and stick the posters to the walls, depending on what I think the room needs I can go to the different resources I have in my toolbox but if I rock up without any flipchart paper and no pens it restricts where I can go and it won’t be that beneficial as a learning environment ... coz’ I’ve got all of this stuff I think it gives the opinion of “he’s actually thought about the session” whereas if I turned up with just the PowerPoint it limits engagement and buy-in, like make it engaging, why wouldn’t you? get them [the learners] on your side and open to listening to you, not all tutor’s do but I put in quite a bit of effort and time into making resources and adding to content so I want em’ to know that I’m trying my best for them. [Semi-structured interview with Stuart: 17.01.2020].

Tutor teams also used these strategies to display *hidden work* in order to meet the expectations of external observers and assessors. The participants explained that they were often evaluated by local organisational partners that TCSG relied on for funding and additional learner support. While the consequences of a sub-par performance were not perceived to be severe for the relationships that regional TCSG hubs shared with these organisations, positive individual and collective appraisals evidenced their commitment to the workforce and guaranteed work in the

short-term. Some of the participants drew upon knowledge from their full-time jobs to read and respond to these situations:

My bread and butter is education so I know how these things work out, there're certain criteria they're looking for, it's mainly around do you have a plan? have you got the scheme of work at hand? are you ticking the boxes? are the learning outcomes on the board? Yeah, so first and foremost, the feedback that's going to come back about us, you want that to be positive and the way I look at it is that it reflects on TCSG and to be honest with you mate I don't know what impact that will actually have, if there was a team getting bad observational feedback I'm sure that would impact TCSG because they're using College funding but technically it does look bad, I suppose good feedback's important so the relationship between TCSG and College remains on track kinda thing but you want good feedback for you yourself and obviously the other side of that is once it goes into [development officer] at TCSG that he sees we've done a good job and that'll reinforce our relationship and we all keep being valuable tutors ... I've done it hundreds of times with OFSTED and stuff but I still get a little boost when feedback like that comes in about me, you all start to breathe a little easier. [Semi-structured interview with Mike: 11.12.2019].

Goffman (1959) proposed that, 'in addition to the expected consistency between appearance and manner, we expect, of course, some coherence among setting, appearance, and manner' (p. 35). For the participants, this entailed populating the *setting* with *props* (i.e., scheme of work, session plans, stationary, resources) that made 'invisible costs visible' (Goffman, 1959, p. 42). By evidence their investments with regard to planning, preparation, organisation, and knowledge, the participants sought to dramatically *realise* and *idealise* their performances for different audiences (i.e., learners and external assessors) (Goffman, 1959). Not only did team-members wish to unveil their *hidden work* to others, but they also wanted to demonstrate their effort that was ongoing in the audience's presence. This resembled Goffman's (1959) notion of *make-work*, whereby:

'It is understood in many establishments that not only will workers be required to produce a certain amount after a certain length of time but also that they will be ready, when called upon, to give the impression that they are working hard in the moment.' (p. 112).

Similar to Logan's earlier point concerning the dependency that tethers co-tutors together, Mike shed light on the consequences that physical performances have for colleagues beyond the immediate interaction (discussed in theoretical depth in section 4.2). He perceived positive feedback to indicate his *dramaturgical loyalty* and *discipline* to colleagues and line managers, which had reputational and relational benefits within the TCSG network, including enhanced employment prospects (Crossley, 2011; Goffman, 1959).

The participants also reported adopting a calculated approach to interactions during planning discussions with co-tutors. Dan and Patrick explained that, as less experienced coach educators, the lack of a professional development pathway meant they had to form alliances with senior co-tutors to access mentorship, contacts, feedback, practical ideas, and the latest TCSG content. This led to the emergence of an *informal hierarchy* whereby the acquisition of resources was dependent on exhibiting respect, fandom, docility, and a *followership* persona in their interactions with senior colleagues and superiors. These performances involved *going along* with co-tutors' plans, expressing enthusiasm towards learning or receiving feedback (despite not wanting it), and concealing fear and anxiety when allocated challenging roles within the tutor team. Dan and Patrick did this to convince their co-tutors that they were *bought in* and to avoid *rocking the boat*. Appearing to be *onside* also had benefits for protecting and developing their reputations on a local and national scale within TCSG:

When I'm working with William and Trevor I'm massively out of my comfort zone because they're both [level four] qualified level three tutors, naturally I feel insecure when I'm working with them and I like to know their thoughts on things because I'm shit scared of making a mistake, they'll turn around and go like, "You're a tutor too", so when they start dishing out workshops I don't really feel comfortable being honest and speaking up ... they virtually know each one inside out so it's in my best interests to be quite inquisitive and as a new tutor I doubt many people would listen to me anyway [laughs]... if you show that you're invested they'll help you one-hundred percent so in that sense I rely on them a fair bit, maybe I do roll with things I don't agree with coz' if I start piping up [challenging opinions] and being awkward our relationship might change to an extent and as part of a team you don't want to be seen as a know-it-all type either ... I ask them for feedback pretty much all the time and they might not be as open to helping me in the future if that's the case, they're the leading tutors in [regional TCSG] and a good pair to have on your side when it comes to personal development coz' they'll go to bat for you. [Semi-structured interview with Patrick: 03.03.2020].

Logan's the best person to learn off because he's at the forefront of coach ed and he's been doing it the longest out our team, he'll sometimes say to me, "If you want to suggest or add anything in, go for it" but I'm conscious that I don't have half of the resources or insight he has, like, for one, I still have the old slides, he has a go-pro and all of the latest releases from TCSG which means I'm not always on the same page, I'm still quite uncertain about the workshops and what I don't want to do is suggest something where he thinks 'why the fuck has Dan just said that', [so] it's better for now if I go with the flow and accept any role he gives me whether I'm up for it or not, it's a small price to pay to stop him questioning my motivation ... as long as I show willing he'll have my back and keep me under his wing ... if you've been mentored off the top dog who's going to challenge and question you?, it's basically a quality assurance pledge, Logan needs to lead though if that's going to be the case and if I kick and scream every time he gives me

something to deliver he simply won't invest his time in me. [Semi-structured interview with Dan: 10.11.2019].

Dan and Patrick's interactional strategies relate to Goffman's (1969) notion of *control moves*, which represents the 'intentional effort of an informant to produce expressions that he thinks will improve his situation if they are gleaned by the observer' (p. 12). For Dan and Patrick, their interactions with senior team-members resembled *exchange relationships* where displays of *deference* (i.e., respect, acceptance, restraint) were offered in exchange for resources that they were unable to obtain for themselves (as low status employees) (Crossley, 2011; Goffman, 1956). The nature of expression in these instances, including the emotions that were concealed and/or presented through *surface acting*, were not governed by TCSG, but rather the relational power differential that emanated from the gatekeeping role(s) of senior coach educators (Burkitt, 2014; Hochschild, 1983).

Logan (who was considered a gatekeeper), explained that the unequal distribution of resources amongst the full-time and casual workforce simultaneously presented challenges and opportunities for how regional managers maintained effective working relationships with national managers and coach educators. Logan highlighted that his exclusive access to materials, in combination with his role in circulating them, meant that he was able to inspire respect and compliance. At times, Logan sought to re-affirm his superiority by strategically introducing these resources during planning discussions as a *hook* to cajole co-tutors into helping him to satisfy the expectations of his own line manager(s). Logan also took steps to bring himself *alongside* the tutor team in a collaborative manner to be seen as *one of the guys* and retain his influence without arousing suspicion and conflict. One way he did this was to be openly transparent about his possession of resources:

That I'm employed nationally and they're employed locally, I think that's where the credibility bit comes from for me, I wear a different tracksuit and essentially that means I need to be seen doing stuff that's beyond them and distributing resources that're momentarily out of their reach without my assistance, it's tricky because I need to get buy in from the team so that we're all pulling in the same direction and hitting the same standards for obvious reasons but because I'm given so much and it can only go through me I have to pass the materials on and introduce it myself, I can't be seen as another casual tutor in a different tracksuit but at the same time the team should be alongside me, I'll give you an example ... the last time we met up at [national TCSG venue] I was given

this book with loads of data in about professional [athletes] and I was like “wow this is amazing”, and when I was planning with Dan he was absolutely gobsmacked, that was a moment to go “Yeah I’ve got access to all this but if you buy into my process it’s yours too”, the worst thing I could do is hide the resources because they’d question my value to them. [Semi-structured interview with Logan: 18.02.2020].

In other words, Logan adopted *control moves* to the effect of *realigning actions*, albeit different to those utilised with learners (Goffman, 1959, 1969). As Logan was aware of the possible tensions that may arise from the power differential between him and the local workforce, he attempted to strategically ‘shift the interaction to one involving the performance of a new set of roles’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 188). Even though he used his *network centrality* as a *broker* to call forth *deference* from his charges, Logan’s hybrid role (i.e., a regional manager *and* coach educator) necessitated a movement ‘around’, ‘over’, and ‘away’ from the line that was officially accorded to him and his team-members by their respective statuses (Crossley, 2011; Goffman, 1959, p. 192). Here, Logan, like Dan and Patrick, set out to convince ‘his team-mates to think of him as a loyal, well-disciplined performer’ and sustain the impression ‘that he can be trusted with the secrets of the team’ in order to facilitate collaboration (Goffman, 1959, p. 131). Thus, team-members played the role of, and were considered as, an *audience in back region* interactions (Goffman, 1959). Logan’s dilemmas somewhat echoed the anticipated relational contingencies that *performance directors* are likely to face. As outlined by Goffman (1959):

‘If the audience appreciates that the performance has a director, they are likely to hold him more responsible than other performers for the success of the performance. The director is likely to respond to this responsibility by making dramaturgical demands on the performers that they might not make upon themselves. This may add to the estrangement they may already feel for him. A director, hence, starting as a member of the team, may find himself slowly edged into a marginal role between audience and performers, half in and half out of both camps, a kind of go-between without the protection that go-betweens usually have.’ (p. 103).

On a related point, the participants highlighted that a lack of familiarity between colleagues encouraged a *calculated, restrained, and reserved* approach to interaction with co-tutors. They reported using several strategies to gradually *build up a picture* of one another. The participants believed that a cautious orientation to interaction was crucial for the development of rapport and trust, and was riven by aspirations of establishing effective and mutually enjoyable methods of collaboration, forming a *shared mission* and identity, and evading forms of *banter* that could cause

offence. They embraced a *friendly* and *personable* persona (i.e., showing interest in their co-tutors' full-time work and family, disclosing *light* private information) in their initial interactions with the expectation that a genuine and safe sharing environment would emerge whereby co-tutors would reciprocate their own efforts. The participants also remained guarded in these encounters (e.g., avoided sharing intimate personal information, refrained from gossiping about colleagues, did not criticise TCSG) amidst worries that any perceived ingenuities or inadequacies would be fed back to the workforce (including line managers) and damage their reputation within the TCSG network:

With a [co]tutor you haven't met before there won't be any banter or anything like that coz' it might not be their cup of tea, I feel them out a bit and be more reserved and play down my personality in some cases because you don't know how they're going to respond to you, it's a bit of a double-edged sword, if I know people well it's a chance to catch up but if I don't it's a bit more formal, I don't think chess is the right word but aye [yes], you're going to be delivering with one another for the rest of the course so there has to be some trust there, I might talk about [sport] or give an opinion on TCSG rhetoric to see how they react and take it from there, what do they do for work? do they have kids? do they coach? over time you can start to build rapport together and gage if they're a blabber gob or not, if you hear things that you've said repeated back to you by someone else then it's best to keep your cards close to your chest and not talk about your private life or complain about other people, the last thing I want is to work with a tutor knowing they probably think I'm a massive dick because of something another tutor's said as I'm likely gonna need them to get me out the shite at some point. [Semi-structured interview with Patrick: 18.02.2020].

These accounts suggest that *back region* interactions between unacquainted team-members reflected the *intimacy without warmth* that is thought to imbue the relationships of individuals required to collaborate and coordinate a collective performance (Goffman, 1959, p. 88). However, the contrived nature of tutor teams meant *back region* relations differed from Goffman's (1959) original idea that it is here where a team-member can relax and 'drop his front, forgo his speaking lines, and step out of character' (p. 115). Even though team-members knew that *front region* performance(s) were *merely a show*, their own private exchanges formed a different stage where another show ensued (Goffman, 1959, p. 175). Despite not being able to relax in their co-tutors' presence, there was clearly an element of *in-the-know-ness*, of which Goffman (1959) writes:

'It is apparent that if members of a team must cooperate to maintain a definition of the situation before an audience, they will hardly be in a position to maintain that particular impression before one another. Accomplices in the maintenance of a particular appearance before others, they are forced to define one another as persons 'in the know', as persons before whom a particular front cannot be maintained.' (p. 88).



Although team-members did, at times, seek to exude warmth to one another, they were purposeful about what they revealed in their encounters. This speaks to another type of *realigning action*; that of *gradual guarded disclosure* (Goffman, 1959). Specifically, the ambiguity that characterised the relationships between team-mates meant that *back region* deliberations involved a sort of *protective discovery* to ensure and assess the safety of the current situation (Goffman, 1959). Goffman (1959) notes that individuals who are unfamiliar with each other's positions tend to enter into:

‘A feel-out process whereby one individual admits his views or statuses to another a little at a time. After dropping his guard just a little he waits for the other to show reason why it is safe for him to do this, and after his reassurance he can safely drop his guard a little bit more. By phrasing each step in the admission in an ambiguous way, the individual is in a position to halt the procedure of dropping his front at the point where he gets no confirmation from the other, and at this point he can act as if his last disclosure were not an overture at all.’ (p. 189).

Acts of *gradual guarded disclosure* also encapsulated various *control moves* and *uncovering moves* that were used by team-members to establishment the trustworthiness of team-mates, develop rapport, and present versions of themselves that were likely to create *back region* conditions (i.e., reciprocity, familiarity) that would engender *dramaturgical loyalty* and *discipline* from co-tutors during their collaborative *front region* performances (Goffman, 1959, 1969). Goffman (1969) defined *uncovering moves* as those which emerge when an individual, ‘suspecting that what appears to be ingenuous fact could be shot through with a gamesman’s manipulation and design, can attempt to check, penetrate, and otherwise get behind the apparent facts in order to uncover the real ones’ (p. 18). These strategies stopped team-members from falling foul to *naïve moves*, which refers ‘to the assessment an observer makes of a subject when the observer believes that the subject can be taken as he appears’ (Goffman, 1969, p. 11). In light of these realities, it was evident that:

‘The pleasant interpersonal things in life – courtesy, warmth, generosity, and pleasure in the company of others – are always reserved for those backstage and that suspiciousness, snobbishness, and a show of authority are reserved for front region activity. Often, it seems that whatever enthusiasm and lively interest we have at our disposal we reserve for those before whom we are putting on a show.’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 132-133).

William, as an experienced coach educators, explained that he often acted in a calculating manner when working with less-experienced co-tutors to evoke feelings of calmness, confidence, and *readiness* prior to delivering a collective performance. In these interactions, he secretively scanned their behaviours and *looked out for* signs of anxiety, deflation, and nervousness via several emotional cues (i.e., fidgeting, leg tapping, poor eye contact, decisiveness, self-degradation). This informed William's judgements regarding what information to reveal and conceal (i.e., feedback from previous workshops, instructions, expectations). Typically, he *bigged up* the competence of less experienced tutors by inflating his opinions of their competence, which was grounded in concerns for the overall performance of the tutor team (i.e., mistakes) and their personal wellbeing:

There're bits and pieces that you'd definitely hold back, if I think about the coming workshop there're sections where I think Patrick is probably strongest at the minute and they're the more straightforward ones, but I'll know more when we get there beforehand, he might've had a bad day at work or feels unprepared ... when I'm having a conversation with him I'll be looking at his body language and the way he's talking and carrying himself, yeah, those are nervous cues for me I think, if we sit down for a bit next to the laptop and his leg is going ten to the dozen [tapping his leg], all give away, I'll be straight on it, [mimics self-talk] "William, you're going to have to stick a rocket up him here and get him in the game" [laughs], not in a bad way, even if I know that something might be out of his current remit he needs to believe the opposite, so I'll drag him up, "do you remember what you did last session with the group feedback? I thought it was class, the group loved it" and generally make more of a fuss ... what I don't want to do is make it even worse for him then we'll have a real problem because I'll be worrying about him AND holding the fort and if we're being observed that's an issue, I don't think either of us would want a phone call the next day about what went wrong. [Semi-structured interview with William: 18.01.2020].

In conceptual terms, senior team-members engaged in individual *emotional labor* to present a *personal front* that was designed to improve morale and 'maintain the impression that the show that is about to be presented will go over well' (Hochschild, 1983; Goffman, 1959, p. 131). Arguably, similar to Patrick in the above excerpt, even though William considered the interests of neophyte team-mates, he also recognised that he was 'forced to rely on [their] good conduct and behaviour' throughout collective performances (Goffman, 1959, p. 88). In other words, he acknowledged that success was dependent on the ability of coach educators to work well as a team (Hochschild, 1983). Moreover, the *back region* work that William undertook to support the *private emotion management* reflects the *collective emotional labour* that was engaged in by flight attendants in Hochschild's (1983) text. Hochschild (1983) documented that flight attendants acted in ways that

elicited a positive state of mind in team-mates, increased morale, and enabled intimate teamwork and solidarity during *front region* performances. For example:

‘Starting with the bus ride to the plane, by bantering back and forth the flight attendant does important relational work: she checks on people’s moods, relaxes tensions, and warms up ties so that each pair of individuals becomes a team ... when one flight attendant is depressed, thinking, ‘I’m ugly, what am I doing as a flight attendant?’, other flight attendants, even quite knowing what they are doing, try to cheer her up. They straighten her collar for her, to get her up and smiling again.’ (Hochschild, 1983, p. 115).

William’s strategies also included *marking* the behaviours of his team-mates; a type of noticing where an individual does not only notice but can ‘initiate mention of what [they] have noticed’ (Mason, 2002, p. 33). In this case, William paid attention to some of the ‘ungovernable aspects’ of his co-tutors’ ‘expressive behaviour as a check upon the validity of what is conveyed by the governable aspects’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 18). Both of these features of interaction relate to Goffman’s (1974) writings on *monitoring* – or *secret monitoring*. Here, William did ‘not immediately allow the monitored to know that monitoring [was] occurring’ in order to acquire information without committing a *naïve move* (Goffman, 1969, 1974, p. 166).

In the accounts that I have presented throughout this section, the participants demonstrated individualist and collaborative attitudes, as well as genuineness (i.e., authenticity) and dishonesty in their various individual and collective performances. The ebb and flow between honesty and deceit has been coined as an essential feature for collective (inter)action and the sustenance of social group life (explored further in section 4.2) (e.g., Goffman, 1959; Scott, 2015). On this topic, Goffman (1959) adds that, ‘some performances are carried off successfully with complete dishonesty, others with complete honesty; but for performances in general neither of these extremes is essential and neither, perhaps, is dramaturgically advisable’ ( p.78). In addition, the participants’ interactions with others were simultaneously oriented towards the immediate encounter, possible future encounters, and circumstances beyond first-hand relations (i.e., the wider TCSG network) (explored further in section 4.2) (Crossley, 2011). For example, the peripherality of tutors in the TCSG network meant that desirable outcomes (i.e., enhanced reputation, more work opportunities) were often achieved on a more indirect basis through positive feedback from closely (inte)connected learners, co-tutors, and external assessors. This echoes Crossley’s (2011) *social worlds* hypothesis, which posits that:

‘Any actor belongs to a number of discrete worlds and more specifically to the networks constitutive of these worlds, and their own personal network is partitioned in accordance with them. Any actor may, for example, have work colleagues, family, old friends from school, friends associated with a particular leisure activity and so on. We would expect most of their friends to have ties to one another but we would not necessarily expect ties to cross worlds ... we all belong to and constitute the intersection between worlds which are, in other respects, quite distinct from one another.’ (p. 201).

## 4.2 Workshop Enactment

This section explores and discusses key interview and observational data pertaining to the individual and collective enactment of workshops. Four interrelated and overlapping themes are presented: acting strategically to establish expectations; monitoring performances and adapting scripts; (mis)framing situations; and navigating issues of role enactment, discipline, and loyalty.

### 4.2.1 “Figuring Out Who the Candidates Are is Paramount”

One of the main issues for the participants in the pre-workshop phase was the ambiguity that existed in their attempts to pre-empt the expectations of the course candidates (4.1.1). This uncertainty meant that they were unable to anticipate with full certainty, in advance, how to present themselves. My field observations revealed a number of strategies that coach educators used to establish expectations of attendees, particularly at the beginning of courses. Field observations of Barry and Stuart provide examples:

A TCSG video plays in the background while candidates finish brewing their coffees and concluding introductory conversations. As the video plays, Barry weaves in and out of the congregation, exchanging smiles and warm greetings, skimming post-it-notes on each desk. With a clearing of his throat and a rubbing together of his hands, he brings the learners’ attention on him at the front of the room. Barry begins “RIGHT. I’ve put some post-its on your desks. All I want you to do is note down a few things you want to take away from the course and some memorable coaching experiences you’ve had to date and how you dealt with them. If you want, you can go ahead and put down any playing experience you’ve had and if it’s relevant, what you do for work”. With a brief smile, nod, check of his watch, and an, “Okay, two minutes to do this”, candidates start to make notes. I enquired about why he did that a few minutes later and Barry explained, “Well, the post-it task is going to give me an insight into what they know broadly about coaching and let me gauge where their actual technical understanding of [sport] is.” [Fieldnote extract: 05.11.19].

Stuart begins his introductory activity [he’s brought with him a home-made document that he uses as an *ice-breaker* activity for coaches to answer some questions about their experiences]. He’s noticeably using an empathetic and considered tone when explaining the task, “It’s okay if you’ve had no coaching experience at all. Just because you haven’t had [gestures inverted commas] coaching experience doesn’t at all mean that you don’t have

any of the skill set you need as a coach”. Once the task has been set, Stuart and Trev float around the tables talking to each learner, “Where do you coach?”, “Oh yes, I’ve been there before, I’ve supported some coaches from there, do you know so and so?”. Stuart leaves Trev for a few moments and explains to me that, “This is a proper difficult one because when you have young learners they can be quite intimidated about telling us things that other people might hear, the main thing is that they feel it’s safe to share”. [Fieldnote extract 25.11.19]

During interviews, Barry and Stuart explained that knowing about the candidates’ experiences gave them an idea of how they were going to be judged and helped them to be more purposeful about the things they did and did not say or do. They described how the time-sensitive nature of courses meant that disengagement and a loss of credibility had to be avoided at all costs in order to achieve desired course outcomes. This included threatening their standing with cohorts, causing embarrassment, or offence:

Yeah, it’s a long old day the workshop, what you don’t want is for candidates to be sat there and me telling them things that they already know, if that happens it’s an up-hill battle trying to get them engaged again, you’re almost trying to get them to do the course for you in some respects but if I know where they’re coming from then I know what I need to do to tease the knowledge out of them, for example ... I might get some teachers or ex-pros on the course who’re going to be more knowledgeable than me about the educational and performance aspects of coaching, they won’t know that but they will be and that’s why I run activities like the post-it-note task because if I get can a feel for who’s in the room I know how careful I have to be with certain topics, coz’ if I get blasé with my statements it’ll only invite questions that’ll lead to, you know, quite uncomfortable situations that might cause people to doubt the content and possibly me as a tutor ... at least knowing the make-up of the group means I can plan ahead and say well, “this person could contribute to this activity” or whatever, using the people in the room well can help you out coz’ they can potentially add more value. [Semi-structured interview with Barry: 13.11.19].

I’m quite conscious of finding out really early what their [learners] experiences are, the last course I delivered there were six people with sport science degrees, I feel like I can tap into their expertise and get them to take a bigger role instead of everything coming from me, again, I’m quite an academic person and I know that people on level ones and twos [laughs awkwardly] aren’t *quite* as academic as me and might have jobs in trades or ... I think I actually apologised for this on the day for referring to research like I don’t want to eliminate people from discussions by talking at a high level, like, when they send their documents back that they’ve filled in at the start it just gives me an idea of how not to lose people, I had a traveller a few courses ago who couldn’t read or write so I had to adapt my communication, it’s quite a big part of the reason for trying to ascertain a starting point ... what we’re trying to avoid is total disengagement to be honest so we can just get people through, it’d honestly be shocking from a tutoring perspective for someone to leave the course having not enjoyed it and you hadn’t tried to fix it. [Semi-structured interview with Stuart: 12.11.19].

For William and Mike, accruing this information was crucial for creating the type of atmosphere required for applying their desired pedagogies, exercising foresight, and constructing a personalised learning experience for candidates. Their goal was to be *seen* as caring and trustworthy in order to encourage participation in activities and persuade candidates to be openly receptive to tutor demands:

It's the old saying isn't it, "Someone doesn't care what you know until they know that you care about them" ... the behaviours I demonstrate need to be appropriate for creating that environment, granted, I'm not sure who's going to be in the room but the one constant is that I need to live the values and principles of being a tutor, I'll do a little introduction like a speed dating game, "Tell the person next to you a little about yourself" and tend to wander for a bit to see what's being said, at that point I can start thinking about the next workshop, "What does coaching mean to you?, What does this technique mean?", is that person a novice?, well, I'll know by the answer they give, regardless, when the learners walk through that door they need to be having a fantastic experience and they need to feel relaxed, for me to be able to work with them in a constructivist way and for them to want to share their experiences, for them to trust me that I have their best interests at heart, I need to show them that I care and that's done by trying to adapt my delivery to reflect who they are as people. [Semi-structured interview with William: 08.01.2020].

When candidates start the course they'll always have an embedding activity along the lines of, "Write me down your expectations for the course and the key things you want to take away from it", I think that's really good for identifying gaps in their knowledge as well as highlighting the strengths they have as well, to be fair I place a fairly big emphasis on identifying which learners will be valuable to include later in the course coz' it can get boring if all you can hear is my voice for three or eight hours [laughs], yeah, like, when I look further down the line at the content in the scheme of work I can just pick and choose what I need because if you have, I don't know, most of the group working with five to ten years olds you don't want to pitch above that level because they'll be sat there like 'how is this helpful? I've bloody paid for this' ... I don't say like [laughs] "I want to see what you don't know or see how thick you are" on the first session, it's best to keep that sort of stuff under wraps coz' you don't want to make the candidates feel on edge coz' they won't want to share and engage ... [Semi-structured interview with Mike: 28.11.2019].

According to Goffman, coach educators were aware of the *feeling out process* emerging between themselves and course candidates (Goffman, 1959). Given the largely unpredictable nature of their initial interactions with candidates and the consequences an undesirable image would have for their social status and influence, participants constructed and presented their *personal front* in a considered way (Goffman, 1959). Acting strategically meant the participant coach educators were able to negotiate appropriate *lines of action* both in the present and in the future (Goffman, 1969).

This was necessary, because:

‘When an individual enters the presence of others, they commonly seek to acquire information about him or to bring into play information about him already possessed. They will be interested in his general socio-economic status, his conception of self, his attitude towards them, his competence, his trustworthiness etc. Although some of this information seems to be sought almost as an end in itself, there are usually quite practical reasons for acquiring it. Information about the individual helps to define the situation, enabling others to know in advance what he will expect of them and what they may expect of him. Informed in these ways, the others know how best to act in order to call forth a desired response from him’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 13).

The lack of *front region control* that created uncertainty for the participants left them not knowing what *character* they would have to project and thus meant that they had to exercise reticence until informative *social signals* were given and received (Goffman, 1959). Through *avoidance facework* the participant coach educators were able to disguise their actual intentions behind tasks, and therefore *misrepresented* reality to keep discrediting facts hidden and draw desired responses from the candidates (Goffman, 1959, 1963, 1967). Although this comprised part of an exploitative fabrication that concealed the tutors’ wrongdoings and deception, the strategic care given to presenting the correct personal front and setting for the interaction was to generate a positive experience (Goffman, 1967; Shulman, 2017). In this sense, both *cynicism* and *sincerity* underpinned tutors’ intentions to be *seen* as credible and trustworthy (Goffman, 1959). On the relationship between these two positions, Goffman (1959) comments:

‘Not all cynical performers are interested in deluding their audiences for purposes of what is called ‘self-interest’ or private gain. A cynical individual may delude his audience for what he considers to be their own good, or for the good of the community.’ (p. 30).

The *misrepresentation* of tasks, then, could be described as *benign fabrications* that were in the best interests of the candidates (Goffman, 1959, 1974). Broadly, these served as *uncovering moves* that allowed the research participants to exercise *circumspection* in the creation of bespoke learning environments, content, and *come to know their audience* and understand the capacity they were going to be judged by others (Goffman, 1959, 1969; Shulman, 2017). For example, if the audience consisted of PE teachers and ex-players, tutors adapted their performance(s) ‘to the information conditions under which it must be staged’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 216). As these strategic *moves* revealed information about the *audience*, they also informed a more cautious approach – through *control moves* – as to what was conveyed in order to avoid an *uphill battle* to restore

reputation (Goffman, 1959, 1969). Here, participants exercised foresight to consider the influence their initial projections could have for the future *definition of the situation* and in what ways it would be beneficial for them (i.e., avoid embarrassment, causing offence) (Goffman, 1959). Scott (2015) described why *deceit* and reticence are crucial for the maintenance of social group life:

‘We might disclose too much, misjudge the withholding of information or impute the wrong motives to another, all of which leave us vulnerable to criticism, rejection, exclusion, and shame. Juggling fun and risk gives actors an edginess in their approach to interaction, and makes honesty and deception matters of paramount importance.’ (Scott, 2015, p. 217).

In other words, the participants demonstrated *role embracement* to increase their trustworthiness (Goffman, 1961b). That is, ‘to embrace a role is to disappear completely into the virtual self available in the situation, to be fully seen in terms of the image, and to confirm expressively one’s acceptance of it’ (Goffman, 1961, p. 106). This included dramaturgically *realising* their performance, in that coach educators mobilised their activity so that it expressed during the interaction what they wished to convey to candidates (Goffman, 1959). Participants also dramaturgically ‘idealised’ (Goffman, 1959) their self-image; this included some deception as tutors concealed the ways in which activities differed from the version of events they hoped to portray and hoped that the candidates would assign them credibility (Goffman, 1959).

I noticed that when the participants introduced themselves to candidates, they focused on their experiences in grassroots football and disclosed reputable coaching roles held previously:

William takes to the floor after the introductory activity to introduce himself to the candidates. Hands stuffed deeply into his pockets, slightly stooped, he addresses the room with verve. “Good evening everyone, thanks for making it on time, I appreciate that it’s a slog getting here from work. I’m William, I’ve been an TCSG tutor for over twenty-years, I’ve coached football at a number of levels and worked with a huge variety of players, all the way from England youth, semi-professional, academy level, overseeing female football programmes, grassroots ... I’ve been around the grassroots scene now for about thirty years and trust me when I say that I’ve seen and continue to see it all [collective laughter]. What I’m trying to say is that we are all here to learn. To do that we need to get over any shyness or fear, I’m not the TCSG police and I’ve made tons and still make tons of mistakes when I’m coaching my under sixteens on a Saturday morning ... you won’t be showing me anything new. I might be stood up here with a TCSG tracksuit on but the best part of these courses for me is listening to you guys and hearing about your coaching and your experiences. On countless occasions I’ve stolen an idea or a session from a learner, we’re all here to help each other”. [Fieldnote extract: 12.12.2019].



William explained that it was beneficial to bring himself *alongside* candidates to cultivate a positive relationship with them (i.e., resonance). By emphasising specific facts relating to his coaching experience (i.e., who he has coached, where, and to what *competition* level) William hoped to come across as authentic and credible. This was also important for generating buy-in, as he explains:

Years ago when I did my [level three], one of the tutors on the course was a total prick, he constantly reminded us how great he was as a player and that he won all of the highest honours in [sport], basically his way of gaining respect, but he really struggled to make connections with people coz' he enjoyed the power of his elevated position, whenever he asked anyone a question they'd shit themselves, it was one of those where you're trying to dodge someone's gaze ... I didn't have that much respect for him coz' we just had no similarities whatsoever, in [sport] or life ... as a tutor, yeah, I still need to be able to sell myself to candidates and show that I've got the credentials behind me, like practical skills and achievements, and maybe tailoring that to the group to show I'm worth listening to ... if there're a few female learners, talk a bit about my role in RTCs or the fact that I've worked with a fair few of the current [international] players, but this doesn't come at the expense of their enjoyment and experience on the course, it's a balance more than anything ... show you aren't there to police them and that you do actually have more in common than the TCSG badge suggests [Semi-structured interview with William: 19.12.19].

Likewise, Stuart and Mike also prioritised the nurturing of a positive connection with learners. While they understood that they were ultimately deceiving candidates, they justified and rationalised their decisions through the overall benefits this had for the course and the learning experience of attendees:

I've possibly been guilty of this in the past when I go to CPD ... evaluating whether the person knows their stuff? are they adding anything to what I know? are they challenging my viewpoints around coaching? from that perspective I know what kind of tutor or what characteristics or past experience that developer would have for me to be like 'ah this is mint' [good], I'm actually quite uncomfortable with the whole "I'm Stuart and have been teaching sports coaching for over ten years and have degrees in this and I've coached some of the best youth in the country for years", if I could change seats with a candidate and I heard the tutor go "I've done this and that in your context and supported loads of coaches" it adds a little bit of "ah, right, he's been in my setting" and gives you a bit of credibility like, "he's been there and done it or still does it himself and he's tutoring courses", it comes down to the fact that I've had the problems they're going to have on their journey and I can help them overcome it ... if I go, "I'm Stuart and I've worked here, here, and here" they're going to clam up [not contribute], thinking I'm judging them when I'm not and the course will end up being a bit rubbish. [Semi-structured interview with Stuart: 15.01.2020].

That bit's about trying to put people at ease with me and dispel any negative pre-conceptions they might have about TCSG and what an TCSG tutor will be like, rightly or

wrongly, [and] the whole introducing yourself is really uncomfortable for me, I still don't know the right answer but I basically say, "I'm Mike and I've been tutoring for three or four years, I've coached at different levels but most importantly I've got loads of experience at the grassroots level", which for me is where the connection is made ... truthfully the last time I coached at that level was years and years ago but [laughs], that helps me set the scene and means we can have more important discussions and keep making a deeper connection regarding what they're doing and all of the other stuff that comes up with it ... the thing I'm trying to instil in the learners there is confidence and a genuineness on my part, if I didn't do any of that the workshop would likely be a bit cold and candidates wouldn't want to get involved in the kind of discussions they need to progress. [Semi-structured interview with Mike: 10.02.19].

In these encounters, participants tried to garner the belief that they were more similar to candidates in certain ideal ways than was the case by concealing discrediting facts (i.e., a lack of practical experience in grassroots coaching contexts) that were inconsistent with the standards associated with being a coach educator (Goffman, 1959). In this case, *idealisation* was achieved by concealing this information behind *dramaturgical camouflage* (Goffman, 1959; Shulman, 2017). That is, Mike and Stuarts' 'front stage and impression management behaviours constitute barriers to information gathering and research by observers as they obscure true attitudes and behaviours and produce blind spots in knowledge' (Shulman, 2017, p. 262). As I alluded to previously, Scott (2015) coins deception as a socially productive strategy that is endemic to social life and suggests that tactful pretence helps to *oil the wheels of interaction* by facilitating the smooth flow of situations and the achievement of individual and collective goals in accordance with expectations. She goes on to add:

'It does not matter whether deception occurs or reality has been distorted, only what the various players involved perceive to have happened, how they orient themselves in response, and the consequences for the interaction that unfolds.' (Scott, 2015, p.207).

Rather than drawing upon prescriptive organisational *feeling* and *display rules* to evaluate how their emotional expressions would elicit *affect* (i.e., emotion) and perception (i.e., credibility and authenticity), the participants reflected on their own experiences as a candidate to judge how they could influence others to feel emotion (Burkitt, 2014; Hochschild, 1983). Their ability to empathise with the emotions of others can also be described as *emotional capital* (Cahill, 1999). Emotional capital refers to an individual's ability to experience *role taking* emotions in relation to others and engage in interpersonal emotion management through such reflective processes (Thoits, 2004). Role-making for participants, was, therefore, 'a reflective, strategic activity involving

consideration of the anticipated and desired responses of others, with the aim of coordinating joint action' (Scott, 2015, p. 217). Indeed, when facing ambiguous situations without any formal scripts to rely upon, social actors 'look elsewhere' to guide themselves through the interaction (Scott, Hinton-Smith, and Broome, 2013). The participant's efforts to present a credible image as a coach educator and represent the values of TCSG was embedded in professional display rules (Bolton, 2005) that were developed biographically (Burkitt, 2014). Burkitt (2014) further explains the influence of previous experience, interactions, and relations on nurses' feeling in the workplace:

'The values, rules, and concerns of nursing are not just personal, although in many cases they become so; they are made part of the self as the person *becomes a nurse* through mutual identification with role models in the profession, and by identifying with the 'imaginary community' of nursing that is embodied in professional standards, ethics, and values.' (p. 145).

'The values of the profession are not something that is just out there in the professional body, floating in the ether, it is embodied in the very identity of being a nurse.' (p.145).

The biographical nature of the participants' emotional *knowledge* reflects Burkitt's (2014) assertion that emotional workplace competencies cannot be scripted in advance according to known and commonly accepted feeling rules, thus:

'Instead, employees have to be given discretion in order to intelligently use their feelings in particular circumstances.' (p. 147).

Many of the participants indicated that their preferred delivery style was informal and incorporated light-hearted humour. However, to understand what was perceived as appropriate conduct by learners, tutors *felt their way* by using self-deprecating jokes and deployed satirical jibes towards their co-tutors while discreetly building up a picture of the candidates based on their responses. The use of humour (explored further in the following sections) was considered as integral to authenticating the tutor persona and atmosphere. For example:

Logan is rustling about at the front as learners are getting on with their introductory arrival task [he has his back to the learners and all of a sudden he swings his arm out to the side and lets out an emphasised tut]. "DAN" [his co-tutor] he yells "I can't believe he has forgotten the sweets" [Logan looks at learners and rolls his eyes]. "What a start to the course this is. If you want to put a complaint in already remember his name is Dan" [Logan and Dan laugh with the candidates]. Dan [stood with his hands on his hips] remarks "To be fair I did say that I would bring the sweets but I don't know why because he [pointing at Logan] can take it out of his bloody expenses. I have to use my own money". [Logan was scanning over the learners as their laughter got more intense]. Logan and Dan gravitate to

the middle of the classroom in-between all of the tables and in earshot of the candidates and they begin to talk very loudly [Dan seems to be the brunt of the jokes] “I heard you had a [competition] on Sunday and [committed an error]? [Logan pretends to be the team’s coach] Oh no we’ve got to get that shite keeper’ in what’s he called again, Dan?” [Dan and the learners are laughing and a few learners add a comment]. Dan turns to Logan “Were you down when we had a [competition] against [club] with that [keeper] [Dan puffs his cheeky out and floats his hands in front of him to gesticulate that the person was overweight]? He is a proper [keeper]. A few seconds into the game and the [opponent] knackers him” [Fieldnote extract: 10.10.2019]

This was a deliberate strategy used by the participants to negate the uncertainty that surrounded the learners and to avoid creating a scene which could lead to a complaint if a tutor naively directed a jibe towards a candidate that caused offence. The responses they gave to such tutor-to-tutor interactions informed the guarded deployment of humour when *sincerely* protecting the credibility of candidates, self, and co-tutors when mistakes were made. Dan and Logan said:

We don’t want to straight away turn something into humour for someone to then go into their shell and not speak again ... the worst thing that can happen is if you do it to the wrong learner and they put in a complaint about you ... when we first started the course me and Logan batted some jokes back and forth to get a feel for the characters in the classroom but to give the classroom some character as well ... for instance ... there’s an amputee learner on the course and we saw from the off that you can have some banter with him and he’ll bat it back ... if we laugh at ourselves first and the candidates laugh along with us you’re alright ... I think if you eliminate the embarrassment that goes with some of the banter early in the first workshop it just makes the atmosphere more comfortable ... I quite enjoy humour and if some of the candidates don’t they’re going to struggle ... at the same time it’s hard because you don’t know your audience yet and that’s why there’s a big emphasis on getting to know them as quickly so you can bounce off them and be more natural where the humour isn’t as forced because candidates can see straight through you if it’s false ... that two minutes walking from the classroom to the pitch means I can have a bit crack with them and it shows that you’re interested ... I am asking questions because I care but also it’s about identifying people that we can use to our advantage [Semi-structured interview with Dan: 28.10.2019].

I’d love to see the coaches when they’re working with their players being lively and having a laugh to connect with them ... when Dan and I tutor we need to have a bit of warmth about us and a bit of homeliness so that candidates want to sit there and listen for however long ... it can be a long day if people have come from a stretch at work ... and when it’s that first workshop where candidates are trying to figure us out we have to create an ambience in the room where everyone is relaxed and chilled out ... the key is to say “Look if you can see us making an idiot out of ourselves it’s okay for you to look a bit silly sometimes as well but all we’re going to do is laugh about it and move forward ... we’re not going to dwell on it” ... so if someone has a rotten session [laughs] we’ve already hopefully created that space where people are accepting of little errors here and there ... what we don’t want to do from the start is be really flat and if ... I don’t know ... three or four workshops down the line decide to crack a joke and someone takes it really personally because we’ve been strait-laced and they’re like “Hold on what’s going on here” ... that

could well taint their experience in a negative way”. [Semi-structured interview with Logan: 10.11.2019].

The *collusive* back and forth humour that coach educators shared with one another in the presence of candidates can be likened to that of a *normalcy show* (Goffman, 1959, 1969). A *normalcy show* occurs when team-members present seemingly normal appearances by depicting whatever is happening as if it were completely unremarkable, even if the opposite were true (Scott, 2015). Dan and Logan’s interaction strategies were indicative of *realigning actions*, whereby they sought to decrease formality in their relationships with learners (Goffman, 1959). Building on data from section 4.1.3, Goffman (1959) further explains how these occur between two unknown teams:

‘This is sometimes known as ‘putting out feelers’ and involves guarded disclosures and hinted demands. By means of statements that are carefully ambiguous or that have a secret meaning to the initiate, a performer is able to discover, without dropping his defensive stand, whether or not it is safe to dispense with the current definition of the situation.’ (p. 188).

Together, team-members collaborated in producing *collective facework* in that they used tacitly agreed upon strategies to avoid being discredited (Rossing and Scott, 2014). Ultimately, this was to save their own *blushes* in front of candidates and avoid creating *scenes* or committing *faux pas*, such as offending and upsetting learners (Goffman, 1959). By attempting to figure out and demonstrate what was emotionally and affectively acceptable in situations (i.e., informality, relaxation, humour), the participants sought to collectively establish an *emotion culture* (Burkitt, 2014). Burkitt (2014) describes how emotions are collectively managed in nursing:

‘It is not so much a question of the individual management of emotions, with individual nurses suppressing or inducing particular emotions, as it is a question of a team using the place in which they work to create a situation with its own emotional culture. What is being managed, then, is not an individual emotional system but a situation.’ (p. 144).

Collectively, the participants wanted to establish the kind of ambience and environment needed to create desirable working conditions (Kelchtermans, 2009b). Much like the flight attendants in Hochschild’s (1983) accounts of *collective emotional labor*, the participants’ understandings spoke to an awareness of team-performances being akin to an “‘emotional tone’ road show’ (Hochschild, 1983, p. 115). Here, the ‘proper tone is kept up in large part by friendly conversation, banter, and joking’ (Hochschild, 1983, p. 115). Thus, the mood that was perceived to

be integral to success influenced the participants' interactions with co-tutors and learners (Hochschild, 1983).

#### 4.2.2 "The Trick is To Keep Your (Collective) Fingers on the Pulse"

The limited planning time that was available pre-workshop meant that the participants collaborated in order to monitor the performance(s) of learners and delivering co-tutors. To do this, they collectively interacted with the physical environment in a coordinated and strategic fashion:

I walk through the gate of the venue and onto the frosty 4g pitch. Two learners are beginning to set-up their practical session. Stuart and Trevor are talking to two different groups while there is a small breakaway cohort playing around with some of the equipment. After a few minutes of joining in with some non-course related chat with learners, I hear Stuart shout over to the two candidates "You ready to go lads?" [they nervously nod and the participating attendees head over for the pre-session prep]. A small group congeal together in the near corner of the area with their TCSG branded folders and begin making some initial jottings about the session. They're momentarily prompted by Stuart and Trevor to think about a few things before the tutors remove themselves towards the back of the group. Trevor leans into Stuart a little and whispers. Stuart nods and both of the tutors head over to the far side of the area, well away from eye and earshot of the candidates. As the learner's session nears it's close, Stuart walks over to the observers [who have been scribbling for a long time and have been discussing the tasks they were set beforehand] and probes them for what the group has come up with before walking over to Trevor to re-engage. [Fieldnote extract: 15.11.2019].

Dan brings the room of candidates back in "Right guys let's bring the focus back in now" and the gradual murmur of mindless coaching jargon gradually begins to fade away from the discussions that filled the air from Logan's original task. Dan is stood in front of a screen titled 'practice design and interventions'. Just as Dan begins his delivery, Logan moves across the front of the room [ducking] "Sorry Dan" [receives feint boos from the learners] and slouches against the wall, hands behind his back, pressed against it and one foot on the radiator. I observe him for five minutes or so and notice that he is intensely scanning the room, often pulling pouting faces that signal he was concentrating on something [or someone]. After a short while, Logan discreetly shuffles his way through tables of learners, profusely apologising as he kicks over water bottles and nudges learning folders on his way past "Sorry, I just need to get to my laptop at the back". Logan takes one of the spare chairs and sits behind the learners so they can't see him and aligns almost perfectly with the eyeline of Dan, who now becomes the new fixation of his focus. [Fieldnote extract: 14.12.2019].

Stuart and Dan explained that while the nature of coach education work meant that *some* ambiguity was inevitable, their strategic placement allowed them to take advantage of opportunities to both prepare and repair the performance (introduced later in this section) through combining their knowledge of *what was to come* (i.e., scheme of work, future content delivery) with the gradual

picture they were building of the candidates. This was integral to the tutors' future decision making around the ways they deployed pedagogy and selected task design, feedback, and group allocation. Despite being driven by their own values as educators, the participants were concerned that learners would become *lost* and unable to demonstrate the required competencies to the examination board, which would, in turn, bring unwanted attention to their performances. As Stuart and Logan explain:

When me and Trevor are stood together we try not to put undue pressure on the learners, we'll be stood at the side and one of us might say to the other "See Callum over there?, go and have a little listen about what they're about", I don't want to say that too loudly though because if they hear they'd be on edge "Oh, they're talking about us", we don't want to distract them from what they're doing either, we want their engagement with the content to be as authentic as possible, if we can get a bit of a dialogue going and keep dipping in and out and getting a bit more information, when we have an opportunity to get together we can be a bit more deliberate with our decisions ... so that might be around the sequencing of activities or how we actually go about doing those activities, obviously we have the scheme of work and workshop topics that we need to hit at certain times as the candidates need to complete the tasks in their packs but the more that we can touch base the more that we can steer the direction based on what they need and their current understandings rather than just trying to fit them within a template ... we have a professional responsibility to do a good job because it'd be too easy to deliver a load of shite and they wouldn't be any of the wiser. [Semi-structured interview with Stuart: 25.11.2019].

As a tutor team we need to recognise when learners aren't connecting with each other or with the content, you sometimes need to remove yourself and let things unfold naturally or you need to be a bit of a chameleon and skirt around a working group, if me and Dan need to deliver a topic in two workshops' time and we've seen that a certain group isn't working well together or learners aren't coping well with our questions or behaviours we might need to reshuffle things so they're ready to move on .. we always need to be in the room and have our fingers on the pulse and thinking about how everything is going, are they engaged?, are they on WhatsApp speaking to their missus on the phone about what they are going to have for dinner? where are they on a particular night knowledge wise? what questions might I need to ask that learner to bring them back? do I need to go in like a firework? who's dominating group discussions? ... it's easier for an experienced tutor but we should all know what a level one coach or level two coach should be able to do, we're partnered with an [external examination board] who review learner folders and they decide who passes and fails ... now if people are disengaged it's going to come back on us when they feedback, "what is this tosh. Fail. Fail. Fail." ... I'll need to explain to my boss that we weren't able to hook them in [laughs], and, so, if you can't do the job you're paid for then there's only one way you go from there [Semi-structured interview with Logan: 18.12.19].

Several participants reported a similar understanding and emphasised the importance of being able to amend, adapt, and repair their delivery to maintain the direction of workshops

towards planned outcomes. This included ongoing dialogue with co-tutors dispersed around the setting, which shaped discussions when tutors eventually *checked in* at a later point. For example:

Once our initial baseline has been agreed it's up to the non-delivering tutors to get a feel for the group throughout each workshop ... getting a little better at it as the course progresses and we become familiar with people ... if I'm delivering a topic at the front ... my co-deliverers will know what to look out for and once we've identified what learners bring what to the course they'll be able to observe them a bit more accurately ... it'll go a bit like "These are the outcomes we're trying to hit ... keep tabs on certain sections of the group to see if that's actually happening" ... then we'll all get a chance to feedback to one another at some point so we can redirect it for the next activity ... you might give candidates a task that they struggle with so you give them another one and you might shift your learning outcomes a bit ... we might not even get to that point but what I will get to is a point where I think 'yeah ... sound ... I'm happy with the level they're at' ... realistically all we need to show the [exam board] is that they're competent to go and practice at their clubs and make sure all of the right stuff is there for them to see ... you'll always get a learner or two who isn't up to scratch and does a terrible job at filling out their journal ... that's fine ... the onus is on them but if there's four or five or six candidates then it quickly becomes our problem which puts some doubt over our competence. [Semi-structured interview with Parker: 18.01.2020].

The best time to take stock is when you've set a task and you have both sets of eyes on the learners ... if it was just me I think I'd miss loads so it's always good to have someone else casting their gaze over the room ... I'm really aware that my presence could make them go into 'ah he's an TCSG tutor so I'm going to say things he wants to hear' mode ... what I've done with a co-tutor in the past is go to the front of the room and pretend to be messing about with some of the resources or whatever ... erm ... I'll be at one side of the desk and the other tutor opposite ... yeah ... we won't really speak because we're both lending ears to the discussions that're going on ... I think my delivery style helps me out because I'm not that embroiled with the learners all that often ... I can just stand back and get a good feel for the group and the individuals in it ... I'll be looking ... probably reflecting on how the group have reacted to certain tasks ... how they're working together ... all sorts ... it helps me to plan for the rest of the night and lays the groundwork for the following workshops ... if I'm going to be doing feedback or managing motivation I'll be thinking forwards and looking for things I might have to change. [Semi-structured interview with Mike: 18.12.2019].

As well as continuously observing learners, the participants explained that they felt responsible for providing feedback to their co-tutors when they reconvened in private (see later in the section). This included looking for mistakes that could threaten the credibility of the tutor team, particularly when working with less-experienced tutors, and provided an opportunity those coach educators who were supporting (and not actively delivering at the time) to adapt their own performance based on the strengths and weaknesses of their colleague's performance(s). When



observing, the participants explained that it was important to hide emotions that were associated with the evaluation of events that unfolded during their co-tutors' performance in order to avoid arousing suspicion regarding their competence. Parker, Logan, and William describe this in detail:

Candidates don't realise that you're literally running through all of this content in your head and it's hanging by the finest thread [laughs] ... when you're at the front maybe delivering new content you're not really familiar with and trying to gage the audience at the same time ... you won't get as good a read on your delivery as one of your co-tutors who's stood at the back or side of the room ... those extra pair of eyes ... fresher eyes ... who can potentially see things that you can't or what you're not even aware of is massively important ... "Did you realise the question you just asked there?" ... "When you asked that question you had your back to somebody" ... "Did you know that you contradicted yourself when you were talking about maturation?" ... that extra input from a different angle is so helpful because you can go back to people or if you're on next you can fix some of the things you've said so when the next tutor goes on to speak you've rescued the team's credibility a bit and set your mate up to secure the buy in. [Semi-structured interview with Parker: 08.11.2019].

When Dan's delivering I'll often wander to the back because I might pull a face to myself if I see something that could be better and I don't want learners to pick up on it as it might spark a "ooo Logan isn't very happy with him" or "Dan must've made a mistake" and then it gets a bit sticky in terms of him being questioned or discredited ... which makes it difficult for him when he comes to deliver ... at times I can get my thoughts to him in private but things happen and there're particular instances when you're working with someone and they have their natural level or parts where they fall down and at times you might just get a feel for the room and the way they deliver ... and you might notice everything's a little bit flat or too lively so when I come on to deliver I adjust how I deliver accordingly to try and realign the room ... uhm ... if I thought the room was a bit reserved or whatever I might go in with a bang Right on your feet everyone" to change the dynamic of the room ... I think by dialling up and down your behaviour and bouncing off your co-tutor ... you get people on board and really looking forward to attending. [Semi-structured interview with Logan: 10.12.2019].

I'll quietly perch myself on a chair or table away from the learners so they're not watching me watch the other tutor and try and read the room for them and pick up on some bits and pieces that could be better ... they might not be too clear on what they're saying or might not bridge the gap between the points they're making ... you need to read what's going on ... if you identify a part that your co-tutor didn't really hit home on you can go and add to the point and expand on some of the detail so there's no confusion ... when the gaps aren't plugged and holes are left in key messages ... and you're on next ... if they've lost the room it's going to make it tricky ... the priority has to be to take action and jump in then when the time's right to have a quick word [Semi-structured interview with William: 22.01.2020].

For less experienced coach educators, the chance to observe and give feedback to their co-tutors was an opportunity to demonstrate their value to the team and the learner cohort. However,

because they were considerably less prepared than their more experienced counterparts, less-experienced tutors lacked the foresight in relation to their own delivery and that of their co-tutors to *make sense* of what they were (or were not) noticing. This was a more prevalent issue when working in larger teams, as more prudent co-tutors *beat them to the punch*. Consequently, novice tutors struggled to make themselves visible and, thus, establish themselves as credible coach educators. For example:

I'm scanning the room and watching whoever's delivering at the time and I'm trying to see everything but I'm never sure what's relevant because I don't know what the others have got planned for later ... sometimes I feel like I probably have seen something useful that I could feed back but I'm not sure what the other tutors have planned though so I'll just not bother saying out ... one of the lads might come and stand next to me and say "Oh did you spot that?" and I'm like "Nar", I don't think I quite have the eye yet but when I get more familiar with the different workshops no doubt I'll be able to switch on quicker er ... at the minute I'm just a bit frantic and I miss the boat because another tutor has noticed whatever they've seen quicker than me and know fairly quickly what they're going to feed back or address when they lead ... I'm conscious of the fact that I'm sort of stood there like a little bit of a spare part someone who's just seen to pad points out but in reality I've got that stuff to say as well. [Semi-structured interview with Patrick: 10.02.2020].

To create situationally appropriate *scripts*, team-members collectively engaged in the secretive observation of audience members (and less so of team-mates) akin to that of *monitoring* (Goffman, 1959, 1974). Monitoring of this kind means that social actors attempt to *discredit* or, in this case, access the secrets of others by seeking to observe actions that would provide evidence that could help them to accomplish information gathering (Goffman, 1974). Indeed, discreetly accumulating information about the learners through a procedural approach allowed *recontainment*, whereby coach educators *set a trap* that encouraged the revealing of information (Goffman, 1974). At times, team-members falsified their actions (i.e., moving around the classroom, entering into discussions) to contain the candidates within a *benign fabrication* (Goffman, 1974). Even though this information was required to sustain the *definition of the situation*, the participants explained that it would also benefit the candidates' experience (Goffman, 1959). For Goffman (1959):

'There are many sets of persons who feel that they could not stay in business, whatever their business, if they limited themselves to the gentlemanly means of influencing the individual who observes them. At some point or other in the round of their activity they feel it is necessary to band together and directly manipulate the impression that they give. The observed becomes a perming team and the observers become an audience.' (p. 251).

The information that teams amassed influenced momentary transformations or *keyings* in the enactment and interpretation of the collective performance (i.e., altering scripts based on the needs of the candidates and course objectives) (Goffman, 1974). This meant that a collective ‘systematic transformation [was] involved across materials already meaningful in accordance with a schema of interpretation, and without which the keying would be meaningless’ (Goffman, 1974, p. 45). The functional purposes of these activities resembled part of a *technical redoing* (Goffman, 1974). These are *strips* of possible activity that are performed out of their usual context as part of a *run through* where the original outcome of the performance is expected not to occur (i.e., when tutors *check in* with one another) (Goffman, 1974). One aspect of this procedural monitoring was the use of *avoidance facework* strategies that required team-members to occupy different roles and take a variety of perspectives to avoid arousing suspicion and negatively impacting on the *smooth flow of interaction* (Goffman, 1967). Where participants facilitated the link between learners and co-tutors, for example, they symbolised what Goffman (1959) described as a *go-between*: These individuals:

‘Learn the secrets of each side and gives each side the true impression that he will keep its secrets; but he tends to give each side the false impression that he is more loyal to it than to the other ... when a go-between operates in the actual presence of the two teams of which he is a member, we obtain a wonderful display, not unlike a man desperately trying to play tennis with himself ... activity is bizarre, untenable, and undignified, vacillating as it does from one set of appearances and loyalties to another.’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 149).

Fundamentally, team-members exercised *circumspection* to guide their observations purposefully and notice elements of their co-tutors’ performance(s) that impacted workshop enactment (Goffman, 1959; Mason, 2002). Mason (2002) explained that productive noticing draws the moment of *awakening* (to situations) from the retrospective and brings the two closer together to shape the construction of stances, patterns, and positions in the future. Various social and contextual forces (i.e., nature of work, expectations, time constraints) determined what was given priority in these situations (Mason, 2002). Here, these pressures meant that team-members had to rely on *implicit theories of action* and pre-existing habits to avoid potential immediate difficulties (i.e., disengagement). On situationally appropriate noticing, Mason (2002) wrote that:

‘Every practitioner, in whatever domain they work, wants to be awake to possibilities, to be sensitive to the situation and respond appropriately. What is appropriate depends on what is valued which in turn affects what is noticed. Thus every act of caring and supporting depends on noticing. Noticing what students are doing and what they are likely to need in the near future in order to achieve their goals.’ (p. 7).

Mason (2002) also adds that although observational routines must be developed to *free our attention* towards achieving overall goals and outcomes, people do not have total agency in selecting the habits that are applied and when. As employees are always embedded within networks consisting of constraints and restrictions on resources, *quick fixes* need to be used, occasionally, to survive interactions (Mason, 2002). For example, one of the pressures participants negated was the expectation from external examining bodies that candidates would be *good enough* to meet awarding standards, and how the interconnections that existed had consequences for their status as coach educators if they failed to do so (Crossley, 2011). These influences required team-members to collaboratively *satisfice* (Simon, 1957). This entailed the *weighing up* of priorities against the criteria teams were to be judged against and dealing with the most pressing issues that helped them thrive in the short-term, but created challenges that had to be dealt with later (Simon, 1957).

The discussions that team-members engaged in following the observation of learners and delivering co-tutors reflected collective *extra-spection* (Mason, 2002); team-members probed and analysed one another’s performance to increase their collective awareness of credibility damaging *faux pas* (contradictions, mistakes, poor body position), and to suggest alternative ways of enacting/coordinating workshops to restore the *working consensus* (Goffman, 1959; Mason, 2002). The coordination that this developed amongst team-members, through *interspection* (group reflection), limited ambiguity in future situations and helped each team-member to *play their part* as planned. This achieved *collective validation* amongst team-members in that observations were intertwined with one another to locate issues, shared understandings, and options for action in the future (Mason, 2002). Team-members were also *dramaturgically disciplined* (Goffman, 1959) when conducting observations in the support of team-members and during their own workshop enactment interactions following the performance(s) of co-tutors.. In some respects, this echoes notions of the ‘“emotional tone” road show’ (Hochschild, 1983, p. 115), and included a form of *tact*

that did not draw attention to any previous misdemeanours committed by team-mates. Goffman (1959) expands on this:

‘A performer who is disciplined ... is someone with ‘presence of mind’ who can cover up on the spur of the moment for inappropriate behaviour on the part of his team-mates, while at the same time maintaining the impression that he is merely playing his part.’ (p. 210).

Team-members also displayed other acts of discipline, which Goffman (1959) also addressed:

‘While the performer is ostensibly immersed and given over to the activity he is performing, and is apparently engrossed in his actions in a spontaneous, uncalculating way, he must non the less be affectively dissociated from his presentation in a way that leaves him free to cope with dramaturgical contingencies as they arise. He must offer a show of intellectual and emotional involvement in the activity he is presenting, but must keep himself from actually being carried away by his own show lest destroy his involvement in the task of putting on a successful performance.’ (p, 210).

Team-members also showed discipline by exercising emotional *self-control* and *discretion* in situations where team-mates made mistakes, and avoided *giving the show away* to candidates by using *staging devices*, such as using the setting to manage the audience’s interpretation (Goffman, 1959, 1967). Being *circumspect* helped supporting tutors prevent complications in future activities (i.e., in-situ) and amend their own performances in accordance with the strengths and weaknesses of team-members (i.e., Logan “*going in like a firework*”), especially those considered as *performance directors*, who, when working with less experienced tutors, were tasked with *sparkling the show* (Goffman, 1959). For less experienced team members, providing adequate support to team-mates was a difficult task, and thus, considered themselves a *stranger* (Schutz, 1971). The *stranger* feels excluded from stocks of knowledge and are limited in their capacity to engage in collaborative activities (Schutz, 1971). As novice tutors were considered as *discreditable*, they had to remain more cautious than experienced tutors to *pass* as credible. As Goffman (1963a) writes:

‘He who passes will have to be alive to aspects of the social situation which others treat as uncalculated and unattended. What are unthinking routines for normals can become management pressures for the discreditable. These problems cannot always be handled by past experience, since new contingencies always arise, making former concealing devices inadequate. The person with a secret failing, then, must be alive to the social situation as a scanner of possibilities, and is therefore, likely to be alienated from the simpler world in which those around them apparently dwell.’ (p. 110).

These collective (inter)actions formed part of the local *negotiated order* that team-members constructed (Fine, 1984). The *negotiated order* emphasises the available individual and collective

agency within a given organisational structure (or network) in which its inhabitants constantly adapt to its properties (Scott, 2015). It focuses on ‘how people organise themselves to accomplish work ‘by the book’ and how they ‘freelance at work’ by negotiating informal working arrangements’ (Shulman, 2017, p. 92). This does not assume that (inter)actions are underpinned by bad intentions, but instead a desire to complete work tasks in ways aligned with *what is needed* to successfully satisfy expectations and produce desirable individual and collective performances (Scott, 2015).

My field observations revealed that the participants constructed windows of opportunity to reflect and plan based on these ongoing observations, akin to the strategies used pre-workshop. They utilised tasks, music, the layout of the physical setting, transitions between spaces, attire, and speaking volume to cloak their collective deliberations. Broadly, topics of discussion included tutor and learner performances, timing, sequencing, delivery of content, possible challenges, and the formulation of hidden strategies targeted at specific learners, learner clusters, and the whole group .

For example:

When we arrived at the pitch, a half empty bag of equipment lay behind the goal. I notice a cluster of observing learners on one side of the pitch. Logan went over to set them some challenges. Dan walked over to the delivering coaches to quiz them about their session. Both of the tutors then move away from the group [I notice that they’re whispering to one another. Hands in their jacket pockets and chins dipped into the collar to hide their facial expressions and lip movements]. I approached Logan and asked what they were talking about [it was hard to hear what they were saying from a couple of yards away]. He responds “Just about how we can manage everyone in the session really. Do you see that guy over there with the yellow jacket? We were discussing how to keep him engaged. We’re saying we need to give him some one-to-one stuff because he is one of those types that are really disruptive to the course. Always wanting attention and forever asking questions [in a mocking voice “Did you see that? What do you think about that?] so we can’t really let him get off task”. “We need to give him that added security to say ‘we do care about you and your development’” because if you leave him for too long without engaging him, when you do ask him to do something he’ll be like “nah, fuck you” and we need him onside for the course to work. Some of the other candidates are beginning to get a bit annoyed with him because they’re losing out. Once he’s focused we can construct some tasks for the observers so they’re thinking in line with the tasks later. Er, we’re quite strict on time so learners need to be making progress”. [Dan has walked over to engage the learner ‘back in’]. [Fieldnote extract: 18.10.2019].

Dan starts to walk to the pitch with a group of learners and Logan tugs on the sleeve of his coat to bring him to a halt. Both tutors stand still until a bit of distance is created. Logan asks “What did you want to run through in there?”. Dan responds “I’m a bit confused after that classroom session. In this practical bit, what are we actually trying to bring out?”. Logan remarks “All you need to do is show how it fits with the principles of variable

practice. If you concentrate on that I'll make sure I'm hot on the others so over the two practicals we'll have nailed it. It's about making sure that we get the key messages out and we're fully aligned on everything". Dan shows his session plan to Logan. Logan comments "That needs to be simpler straight away. Remember. This is coach education and needs to be crystal clear in terms of what kind of practice you're running so there's no room for interpretation. Why don't you take two learners out and just go with ten so there's less chance of it breaking down? I know not having the space we planned for isn't ideal but you can use that as your feedback after the session. If it runs well, happy days. If it doesn't work out, we'll put the reflection activity back till next week and for the last half an hour they can come up with solutions? Sound like a plan?". Dan replies "Yeah, it's just the uncertainty of not knowing what will be available". [later on, Dan's practice breaks down. Logan walks backwards and whispers "Dan"] [nodding his head backwards. I give them privacy]. Logan tells me [his back to the learners, whispering] "He was struggling. After a few more of these [workshops] he'll be able to do stuff off the hoof. I told him to put the learners into a game and set them challenges related to the technical points. I also told him that he needs to engage with the observers more. They aren't actually observing anything. If you look at them now, they've become completely detached. I gave him a few questions to ask to bring them back. I said "You've spent too much time on getting the practices going". He needs to get the practice running and focus on the learners to get them engaged". I said "In future print some resources out for observers or use me coz I could've helped". [Fieldnote extract: 20.11.2019].

Stuart begins to walk around the outside of the room while the coaches are engaged in a task and Trevor walks swiftly after him and taps him arm [Trevor keeps looking over his shoulder when the two are speaking. He has a learning journal in his hand that he gives to Stuart]. Trevor explains, "I've just been chatting to the guys on that table there and they're really pushing on. Do you see that lad over there wearing a [top], he's a PE co-ordinator so he'll know some of this stuff, it'd be good if we could use him. I think you should give them that task now and link it to the [tactical game]. Once you've finished, flick to page forty-two. I think we'd be best delivering that afterwards. Erm, after that get them into some age appropriate stuff which will probably take about ten to fifteen minutes I'd say. Give them forty-five minutes for the task and that'll hopefully take us up to the practical". Stuart pulls away to bring the group back in and Trevor interjects "Do you want to go and set up for ten minutes and I'll finish this off". Stuart "Yeah, no bother mate. Can I ask how you usually run this. Do you give them both scenarios with the end zones, the one where they can run and the one where they can't?". Trevor "Yes mate, both games". [Fieldnote extract: 11.11.2019].

During interviews, it was made clear that *checking in* during workshops was vital for achieving course goals and maintaining their influence. The purpose of this was to conceal activities and discussions in order to elicit compliance from candidates when instructions, explanations, and justifications were given (see section 4.2.3). Visual and aural barriers helped the participant coach educators to maintain spontaneity and avoid candidates from becoming suspicious about their plans. Amidst the uncertainty associated with the nature of their work, Parker, Logan, and Stuart explained that it was important to appear coordinated, planned, and organised:

The big one is that we hide all of the jagged stuff that will divert the candidates' focus from the material that we want them to be focused on, I think checking in with your co-tutors just stops a total disconnect between us as tutors and the room. so if they [learners] disconnect they aren't getting what they need from you and ultimately you aren't going to be able to persuade them to get on board with the messages you're putting forward ... if I set the bar too low or too high the engagement in the room will be really off and you might not be able to get to the stage with the learners that you wanted to which will look bad on us as tutors, principally it's about making sure that the course and the learners are always heading in the same direction [and] if we come off the track, how do we get back on it? ... it's that constant, like, I call it navigating your way through the process, I've got a journey that I have mapped for and it's a lovely straight line but you know that there'll be obstacles along the way. [Semi-structured interview with Parker: 05.12.2019].

We'll move away from the learners and speak quite quietly because I don't want them to know that we're doing a task, if we're talking about them we don't want them to hear, we'll take a little walk up there [gestures to an empty space], if it's stuff that we want them to deliberately problem solve without having the opportunity to go, "Logan, what about" ... nah, we don't want that, let's really remove ourselves so they've got to come up with the solutions, I might say to Dan, "Come up here for a second" and I'll just stand well away, he'll ask "Why we over here", "No reason I just don't want to be over there", another thing I don't really want to do is reveal any of the answers so if I say to Dan "Just look there, just look at the way they've set their pitch out", if they hear that they might pick up the cones and go and change it ... I don't want them to change it yet, I need them to experience for themselves it was too small as the session runs, that's where we come in and add value and enhance our credibility, that's why the candidates pay their money [and] two minutes in we might whistle "Do us a favour, grab the whites, put them out five paces and put them back down again" and give them a round of applause [when it works], great observation by us then really go to town on praising the candidates' bravery, BANG, got them in the palm of our hands coz' we just made their session burst. [Semi-structured interview with Logan: 21.02.2020].

As a task's running I think it's a good opportunity to step back and discuss how people are getting on and where we are probably going to move on to, are they coming up with the right things? are there any dynamics that we need to be watching out for? the last workshop you observed, the practical booking had to move from ten to eleven so we had to quickly get off because some people had the area, we just had to nail down what that would look like and how learners would react to it ... things are always shifting and emerging so it's important not to look like we're just rolling with it, I like to look like we've planned everything in detail and looking like we have more control than we do if truth be told, if we're all over the place, fumbling, stumbling, stuttering, how realistic is it that we have given a lot of thought to what we're saying and asking the learners to do? will they actually trust what we're doing? maybe not, [and] to be honest, I don't want them to hear what we're saying [laughs] in those instances even once because if they clock on they'll think 'well hold on, was all of the other stuff on the spot as well?' and that's always a tricky situation when you have candidates trying to look through or past what you're saying or doing instead of the content itself. [Semi-structured interview with Stuart: 27.11.2019].



During an interview, Mike spoke about how this helped to uphold the values of TCSG:

I think if we don't regularly check in it would make us look quite messy and unprepared which isn't something that's associated with TCSG ... some of the feedback might've been a little bit shabby and it probably would've looked like we didn't know what we were doing at times, if that's the case then the candidates see that it isn't planned because it breaks down and you can't really respond to things in an authentic way ... it becomes more obvious as you need to stand there and think about it or run it past the tutor team in front of everyone which takes that bit of zing away from the delivery and shows it for what it is ... I think the message that we're trying to get across to the learners about their own practice could lose some of its credibility if you like, because we're wearing the TCSG badge we need to live and breathe the values and make sure they we actually model the stuff we're asking the candidates to do themselves either on or away from the course, like, how can we tell learners to be planned if we can't do it ourselves? [Semi-structured interview with Mike: 21.02.2020].

These barriers to perception meant that feedback could be received, and communication exchanged, without revealing a lack of knowledge or, in the case of less experienced coach educators, their inferior status. Generally, this was a protective strategy that helped less experienced coach educators to maintain a credible image. As these educators lacked foresight, checking in provided stability for their own performance and prevented them from endangering others' credibility:

It's a bit of a credibility thing, it might be, "you know that practical you just delivered?, I wasn't too keen on it, I think you could have done duh duh duh", now, I don't want to say that too loudly because again going back to that credibility thing if Dan's sort of checking in, "What do you think of that Logan?" and I say "nah it wasn't very good, what're you doing?!", there has to be that sort of sensitivity around what we're trying to get, is it for the learners to hear or something we just need to share between us? if it's just for his ears I only need to speak to him in a volume that's strictly between us, learners don't need to hear that ... I might be framing the next [workshop] task for him because he doesn't really understand it, I also need to make sure he's visible to everyone so they don't question his position as a tutor because they won't actually respond to him when he delivers, at times I'll be giving him really personal feedback that's developmental and the learners need to believe that he's capable of taking them on a learning journey so when I'm divvying up the in-situ groups I don't want people in my group going "Oh yes!" and when it gets to Dan they're going "Oh god", I doubt that'd happen but I don't want people to think 'oh I wish I was in that group as I'd get a better experience out of it or become a better coach " ... that means some will think they haven't got what they paid for and true or not we can't have that being the lasting message. [Semi-structured interview with Logan: 18.11.2019].

I've never done a level two before so I'm just checking in with Logan to make sure that I'm on the right lines, that I'm not making any mistakes and making sure that the learners are getting the best possible learning experience, if I didn't check in and got all of the stuff out anyway then it would be great but I need to hear it so I can focus on it otherwise there's going to be that element of doubt in my mind ... was that good enough?, did I do the right

things? I think once you do a good session and the feedback is promising then you're quite happy to go and deliver that again and you're in a place where you can build on that in the future, having that sounding board means I'm doing the right things at the right time ... it's important for me that I don't end up butterfly tutoring, say for example we're doing some work on differentiation, I could start coaching something else entirely that Logan is going to cover next week, like, he [Logan] does this all of the time and he's familiar with the content whereas I'm not, he basically holds all of the cards doesn't he so it's not wise to try and pre-empt what's coming up [and] if content is double-covered you run the risk of being caught out with a "we did this last week" [type of comment]. [Semi-structured interview with Dan: 06.11.2019].

I had a rough idea of what we were doing up until day three of the course but what wasn't done properly was like, "you do this bit and I'll do this bit", it just meant that I was a little bit unsure, I knew what was going on but I didn't know who was delivering if you like, I didn't know what was going to happen ... obviously the other two tutors are much more experienced than me so if I didn't keep checking in with them I don't think that I would've been half as effective as I was, yeah, it just helped me to get a bit more in sync because it would've been a bit of a disaster if I'd have gone on to deliver and ruined what the tutors were going to say. [Semi-structured interview with Patrick: 25.02.2020].

Team-members utilised aspects of their *personal front*, such as their *appearance* (i.e., dipping their chin into the coat), *props* (i.e., music, tasks), as well as the *setting* (i.e., transitions, space) to create a *back region* that aided in *work control* (Goffman, 1959). Despite team-members seeking to buffer themselves from the deterministic demands that surrounded them, this was not always possible because candidates were still making judgements on their performance (Goffman, 1959). Thus, team-members skilfully adapted their *check in* routines to navigate the various opportunities and constraints presented by seemingly fluid and revolving *front regions* with different levels of *audience* access (Goffman, 1959; Shulman, 2017). Broadly, these coping strategies resemble Goffman's (1963b) ideas concerning how individuals and groups deal with the copresence of others, in that, 'when an individual whispers or uses eye expressions, his body acts as a focusing barrier, effectively restricting the usual sphere of propagation of sense stimuli, so that reception is limited to those very close to him or directly in front of him' (p. 17).

One aspect of *appearance* that participants managed was their *decorum*, such as the volume they spoke at during their deliberations while in visual and aural range of the candidates (Goffman, 1959). For Goffman (1963b), such cautiousness is required when people occupy *open positions* in *open regions*. Echoing the realities for the participants in pre-workshop interactions, they were, as

social actors, helplessly exposed to public scrutiny in social spaces where it is difficult for the audience to exercise *civil inattention* (Scott, 2015). To avoid spoiling their credibility and relationships with learners, team-members used the above strategies to observe a form of social etiquette that Goffman (1959) labelled *tact regarding tact*:

‘Tactful outsiders in a physical position to overhear an interaction may offer a show of inattention. In order to assist in this tactful withdrawal, the participants who feel it is physically possible for them to be overheard may omit from their conversation and activity anything that would tax this tactful resolve of outsiders, and at the same time include enough semi-confidential facts to show that they do not distrust the show of withdrawal presented by the outsiders.’ (p. 227).

In other words, to conceal the *messy realities* of coach education work in a ploy to seem planned and trustworthy, team-members wanted to keep candidates at a distance to prevent them *seeing behind the scenes* (Scott, 2015). The effect of these (inter)actions speak to Goffman’s (1959) notion of *mystification*, which describes the attempts of team-members to limit contact with audiences and control the flow of information in a bid to project a desirable image. The failure to do so ‘involves possible disruption of the projected definition of the situation’ and ‘possible ritual contamination of the performer’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 74). Thus, team-members collectively constructed *back regions* that provided sufficient ‘elbow room in building up an impression of [their] own choice and allow [them] to function, for [their] own good or the audience’s, as a protection or a threat that close inspection would destroy’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 76). The aural and visual barriers that teams created served the purpose of an *involvement shield*, in that while they were separated from candidates, they remained surreptitiously vigilant and disciplined in the monitoring of the scene, poised for interaction (Goffman, 1963b; Scott, 2015). This differed from Goffman’s (1959) description:

‘The back region will be the place where the performer can reliably expect that no member of the audience will intrude. Since the vital secrets of the show are visible backstage and since the performers behave out of character while there, it is natural to expect that the passage from the front region to the back region will be kept closed to members of the audience or that the entire back region will be hidden from them.’ (p. 116).

To avoid arousing suspicion successfully maintain compliance, the participants explained that they wanted to create an atmosphere of uncertainty or spontaneity to allow desired events to unfold. The team-members wanted to conceal strategic *staging talk* that not only *helped to fit lines*

*together* but also kept hidden their collusive plans for candidates (Goffman, 1959). Scott (2015) asserts that strategies such as *mystification* veil damaging secrets, which, in this case, were of a *strategic* (i.e., plans) and *inside* (i.e., lack of planning, tutor competence) nature (Goffman, 1959). Alongside this, candidates related to candidates and their performance in a way similar to that outlined in *treatment of the absent* (Goffman, 1959). To plan, reflect, and construct strategies, team members referred to aspects of workshop delivery and relations with candidates in a purely technical way, contradicting the view of the activity they maintained before the audience (Goffman, 1959).

To revisit an earlier point that I made in the pre-workshop section, Goffman believed that it is important to keep strategic *secrets* hidden because ‘these pertain to intentions and capacities of a team which it conceals from its audience in order to prevent them from adapting effectively to the state of affairs the team is planning to bring about’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 142). In turn, this meant that social scenes could be framed, or exploitatively fabricated, to conceal the conspiring of team-members, which meant that sufficient ambiguity was created for candidates that prompted planned events to occur (Goffman, 1974). These events created windows of opportunity for participants to show their value or *dramatically realise* the qualities of their performance to maintain buy-in (Goffman, 1959). On the role of ambiguity within situational frames, Goffman (1974) remarked:

‘Special doubt that can arise over the definition of the situation, a doubt that can properly be called a puzzlement, because some expectation is present that the world ought not to be opaque in this regard and insofar as the individual is moved to engage in action of some kind – a very usual possibility – the ambiguity will be translated into felt uncertainty and hesitancy. Ambiguity as here defined is itself of two kinds: one, where the question to what could possibly be going on; the other as to which of two or more clearly possible things is going on.’ (p. 302).

Even though the creation of ambiguity helped team-members to collectively influence learners, the uncertainty within the staging *of* these situations was a concern for all team-members (particularly less experienced coach educators) who were involvement in the enactment of them (Goffman, 1974). Discussions that occurred within co-created *back regions*, then, served to educate the *poorer* members of the team and ensure they would remain *disciplined* enough, expressively, during their own *part* (Goffman, 1959). The utilisation of *staging talk* helped to conceal *inside*

*secrets* through preventing *faux pas* and other disruptions that were harboured by teams around the identity of its members (Goffman, 1959). Given the lack of pre-workshop planning-time pre-workshop and the variable familiarity that team-members had with content, not every team-member could be brought up to date and considered *in the know* (Goffman, 1959). On the difficulties of remaining disciplined in the absence of instructions for coordinated joint action, Goffman (1959) wrote:

‘Just as a team-mate ought to wait for the official world before taking his stand, so the official word ought to be made available to him so that he can play his part on the team and feel a part of it ... to withhold from a team-mate information about the stand his team are taking is in fact to withhold his character from him, for without knowing what stand he will be taking he may not be able to assert a self to the audience.’ (p. 94).

To resolve this ambiguity, less experienced coach educators relied on more senior colleagues, or those considered as *performance directors* or *training specialists* to guide them through the workshop (Goffman, 1959). In addition to senior colleagues being *disciplined*, in the sense that they *brought back into line* offending team-mates, they also fulfilled a more protective role (i.e., Logan ensuring that candidates cannot overhear his feedback to Dan) – such as that of *the own* (Goffman, 1963a) - when supporting discreditable team-members. *The own* is described as a sympathetic other who reflects on their own experience of what is like to have a particular stigma (i.e., as a novice tutor) and provides the discreditable person with instruction in the ‘tricks of the trade’ of how to become accepted and with a circle of lament to which they can withdraw for moral support (Goffman, 1963a, p. 32). Given that it is important, in a professional context, for novices to be inducted into effective strategies and reactions necessary for the profession (Mason, 2002), Goffman (1963a) contended that discreditable individuals ought to have access to *back regions* that aid in *information management* in these circumstances. For example, he wrote that:

‘In all of this, special timing may be required. Thus, there is the practice of ‘living on a leash’ – the Cinderella syndrome – whereby the discreditable person stays close to the place where he can refurbish his disguise, and where he can rest up from having to wear it; he moves from his repair station only that distance that he can return from without losing control over information about himself.’ (Goffman, 1963a, p. 112).

In cases where a team-member is in possession of a stigma or becomes stigmatised, Goffman (1963a) explains that their intimates (i.e., co-tutors) come to play a major role in their

management of social situations. As an individual's stigma can *cast a shadow* over proceedings during collective performances, the acceptance of team-mates may be influenced by sympathy or by their relational duties (Goffman, 1963a). Which, in this case, included care and empathy towards co-tutors and a desire to achieve a credible team performance. As part of the negotiated order (Fine, 1984), introduced earlier, the cumulative actions of team-members resembled the adaptive techniques associated with *secondary adjustments* (Goffman, 1961a). One dimension of *secondary adjustments* includes the pragmatic (and often non 'official') design of people's behaviours and use of resources in order to achieve desired ends (see section 4.2.4) (Goffman, 1961a).

During interviews, the participants reported that they would often conceal the severity of their thoughts to protect the emotions of a co-tutor to ensure that they had sufficient confidence to *play their part well*. Reflective of the underlying worries of pre-workshop planning discussions, a main concern was the consequences that an individual tutors' performance(s) can have for the whole coach education team. The participants feared that if a co-tutor was adjudged to have delivered a poor performance, it would negatively impact their own employment prospects and reputation. In situations where the participants disagreed with the observations presented by supporting co-tutors, they presented a false outward expression of agreement to avoid conflict. This is because the participants wanted to avoid developing a bad reputation amongst colleagues, especially given that co-tutors and managers were *well connected*. As Logan, Parker, and Stuart explained:

I think you have to hide some of your emotion and really those thoughts that are probably left until the learners have gone home, if you're observing your co-tutor and it isn't quite going as well as you both hoped it's only natural that you're going to be a little disappointed but you know that you're both going to be there for the next five or six hours and you know that you're going to have other contacts during the workshop where you'll be able to help them and you're also mindful that they're going to go back on and speak ... some of the worst experiences you can have are when you go and seek some feedback from someone and it isn't what you want to hear, it can put you in a bit of a bad place mentally, you're probably struggling with your thoughts as it is and to go back out there and put on a good show is a very tough ask [and] you can do more harm than good in those situations. [Semi-structured interview with Logan: 18.01.2020].

There's a massive thing about credibility and trust ... if I want to get feedback from you I want to make sure that what you say is accurate [and] if a tutor says something and in your head you go 'no' you don't say that to them, you just won't ask them for feedback anymore, [and] if in my head I'm screaming 'nah' I'll just follow my gut instinct because I know where I want to take the learners, if I'm working with a tutor for the next seven

workshops and I go, “Well, I don’t think that’s very accurate”, I’m not sure how conducive that’ll be for us supporting one another further down the line, I’d find a way of going “Ah okay, in resting point yeah” and give the impression that I’ve taken it on board but just don’t action it, I don’t want them to feel inferior or that I don’t appreciate their views because it can spoil [teamwork] ... obviously in the network everybody speaks so I want to make sure that my conduct and behaviours are of the upmost level so if they spoke about Parker it would be positive, if it’s negative it might affect role opportunities [and] working relationships, I’m massive on the opinion that every time someone speaks about you they leave a mark, I wouldn’t want my reputation to not be good as I know the impact that has further down the line ... I’d always be wanting to walk into a room and the people in there to have heard good things, whether that’s a colleague or a learner or a line manager, I don’t want a tarnished reputation, you wouldn’t be in [sport] much longer coz’ if word got around opportunities would dry up. [Semi-structured interview with Parker: 14.11.2019].

I know that Patrick isn’t as confident as some of the other tutors that I work with in the classroom [so] I tend to try and be really skilled about the kind of feedback that I give to him, I don’t want to be *too* honest ... I might filter down some of the feedback because I don’t want to knock him off track because he’s always so focused on what he needs to deliver and he’s always right on the edge so I don’t want to make it a worse experience for him ... it’s tough because I’m weighing up loads of different things like I want him to feel comfortable, I want him to be one-hundred percent clear on what he needs to do [laughs] but I also want him to deliver the way I like to deliver if that makes sense, I know that’s quite selfish but I know the reality of it, if one of us fucks up we’re condemning the rest of the team as well so there’s definitely a wider reputation element and if candidates have a vanilla [average] experience they’re going to give us all bad feedback, there’s no part on the form to decipher between the tutors so if it’s generically bad then we’re going to get questions fired at us by [line manager] then it comes down to do I want more courses or am I going to stand by Patrick. [Semi-structured interview with Stuart: 17.01.2020].

In contrast to the visible harmony that existed between team-members when collectively deceiving the audience, there was also a dimension of deceit (Scott, 2015). For example, in feedback interactions, team-members utilised *facework* to conceal their emotions and manage those of their team-mates in accordance with their understanding of ‘professional standards (Bolton, 2005; Goffman, 1967; Thoits, 1996). These actions can be described as *protective practices*, where team-members showed extra consideration to novice tutors and refrained from causing difficulties (Goffman, 1959). For purposes of reputation and maintaining positive working relationships, it was important that team-members showed *deference* in the guise of *supportive interchanges* (Goffman, 1956, 1971). These interchanges express fellow-feeling to team-mates through shows of concern for welfare, status, and face, thus demonstrating their loyalty (Scott, 2015).

The collaborative attitudes displayed by team-members (i.e., concern for others’ wellbeing and credibility) also included the telling of *white lies*, which helped to control co-tutors’ emotions

while maintaining self-status throughout interactions (Scott, 2015). In spite of the sympathetic intentions of team-mates, however, participants were also concerned about their own credibility and the credibility of the team if an undesirable performance was given by others. In this sense, rather than being entirely self-less and collective-minded, team-members' (inter)actions were also individualist and calculating (Scott, 2015). These worries, then, were based on the existence of a *courtesy stigma* (Goffman, 1963a). A *courtesy stigma* occurs when a discredited identity is assigned to an individual based on them being *with* a discreditable person, requiring them to devise strategies to deal with the contingencies when this situation arises (Goffman, 1963a). For the participants, this was a complex decision to manage given the potential consequences that *gossiping* could have for their reputation in the network (Goffman, 1959, 1963a). For Goffman (1963b), this careful consideration can be likened to *transceivership*. Scott (2015) expands on this concept at depth:

'Goffman's transceiver inhabits a dual perspective, able to take the role of deceiver or the deceived with equal ease, moving between and even holding both views simultaneously. On the one hand, this creates an unsettling realisation of one's own perspective being limited, partial, and incomplete, and a heightened awareness of our own vulnerability to deceptive victimhood. On the other hand, it means that we can evaluate our own fraudulence from the perspective of the audience, imaging their responses and the potential social consequences of discovery.' (p. 230).

Therefore, it could be said that team-members *cautiously cooperated* with one another, exercising discipline while feigning a *breezy nonchalance* (Scott, 2015). Having an awareness of these consequences meant that participants were cautious about not falling foul of the *insider's folly* (see section 4.2.4). Scott (2015) explains this as:

'The 'rose -tinted belief that everybody is on our side in interaction, or indeed that there are no sides. Competition may be no less fierce between those who share a superficial loyalty and are obliged to conceal their personal opinions beneath the façade of team solidarity.' (p. 216).

Throughout the above excerpts, the *deference* demonstrated by team-members was seemingly incentivised by *patterns of connection* (i.e., mutual contacts) (Crossley, 2011). Specifically, the *strong ties* that composed the network (i.e., learners, colleagues, regional managers, national managers, other industry organisations) created a mutual dependence between team-members (Crossley, 2011). To briefly return to the concluding argument at the end of chapter two, Crossley (2011) described the shaping influence of relational networks on interaction:



‘How actors act is shaped on various levels by the situations in which they find themselves, the others involved and the relations they enjoy with those others. Action is always oriented to other actions and events within the networks in which the actor is embedded, and how she responds to these actions and events is influenced by both their impact upon her and by the opportunities and constraints afforded her within her networks, networks comprising other actors (p. 21).

The density of the network (meant that tutors did not want to taint their ‘known-about-ness’ to significant others (Crossley, 2011; Goffman, 1963a). As the circle of people who can come to know about an individual and their less desirable traits can become very wide, it is possible that gossip in the workplace can form negative impressions without that person being visible (Goffman, 1959). Fundamentally, *identity and uniqueness* were particularly important features in the management of professional relations and fulfilling self-interests (Goffman, 1963a). For Goffman (1963a), it is these features that leave a ‘positive mark or identity peg’ (p. 73) in the minds of others, how they are treated by them, and the opportunities they have to manage information.

#### 4.2.3 “*Like Magicians, We Just Try To Get the Candidates Focused on the Illusion*”

Despite creating opportunities to semi-privately *repair* individual and collective performances in the co-presence of candidates, the participants also had to be skilled at deploying disguised communication strategies when directly interacting with learners when delivering workshops to maintain an authentic and trustworthy version of reality. The participants engaged in these strategies when the *actual* reality differed from the one that the tutors were trying to collectively create and sustain. For example when *caught on the back foot*, participants communicated with their co-tutors through body language, eye contact, glances, concealed invitations for assistance (i.e., questions), and humour. The participants did this to bring back into line those tutors who were defecting from agreed plans or close to/having made an error, to signify to a co-tutor that they were struggling, and provide corrective instruction without interjecting. As shown by my observations:

Stuart is taking a pause after finishing a sentence [I assume to give learners a moment to think about what he just said]. Trev interjects “Sorry Stuart mate, I’ll only be a minute. Right guys ....” [I’ve noticed that Trev tends to interrupt Stuart and ends up eating into his delivery time]. Trev is ‘really into it’ and gravitates into the middle of the learners [who are sat on tables of four] and I see Stuart gradually walk around the outside of the room [he was originally stood on Trev’s left hand side] and positions himself directly across the room from Trev. Stuart clears his throat, puts both hands in his pockets, presses his back

against the wall and puts one foot up against the radiator [swapping between looking dejected and actively trying to catch Trev's gaze]. Trev looks up from the learner pack he is reading out of for a split second and notices Stuart's annoyed figure "Sorry people [turns around to the learners]. Sorry mate, you know me, when I get started I just can't stop". Stuart responds "It's okay, don't worry about it. I'll just stand over here looking pretty" [smirking and winking] [Stuart resumes] [this back and forth style doesn't look out of place]. I recall Stuart saying he had been coaching for fifteen years and Trev joked "So you must have started when you were thirty-five eh" [this jovial relationship does not correspond with their actual relationship] [Fieldnote extract: 28.11.2019].

There seems to be some cues to action when the tutors are presenting. When Logan turns away or finishes speaking, Dan often starts to talk. I was talking to Logan as he sat next to me and he said "Callum, make sure you glue me to this seat as every time I stand up I just keep talking, haha". Nearing the conclusion of Dan's slides, he tends to look at Logan after he asks "does anybody have any questions" [Logan subsequently interjects with any information Dan has missed]. Logan seems to step in during moments of uncertainty and danger and is used as a support mechanism. Dan is concluding his delivery on 'talent development' and there is an acronym on one of the slides that he doesn't know [Dan goes red and starts to fumble and stutter a little trying to buy himself some time "Hmm. The 'W of success" [Logan waves his hand frantically from the back of the room] and turns to face Logan - "Before I give my two pennies worth, what do you think Logan?" [Logan rushes over from the back of the room - leans towards the board, stroking his chin "Nah, that must be a mistake"]. Dan remarks "Erm, ha, looks like we're going to have to leave that one." [receives laugh from the coach learners]. Another example of this was when Dan was about to set the groups a planning task "Now you are going to get into groups of [ Dan pauses, scrunching his face to signal that he is uncertain - or thinking. He looks toward Logan, who is sat at the back of the room, and sticks up three fingers. Dan resumes] three." [Fieldnote extract: 18.01.2020].

The tutors are finishing off their last activities of the day. Patrick is recapping a practical session that he delivered earlier in the day. The other two tutors are sat at the 'tutor table' placed at the front of the room, overlooking the learners. A few minutes into the workshop, I see Trevor put his elbow on the table to make his watch face visible to William and puff his cheeks out with a grimace to signal that they were 'pushing for time' [William looks at the watch and nods in agreement]. A few minutes later and Patrick has failed to recognise the time. William turns to Trevor, "I'll let him know that he needs to pass it on to us". William exits to go to the bathroom and upon his return stays against at the back of the room, behind the candidates [Patrick glances at William as he shifts his glare from one table to another. William points to his watch and slices the air with his hand to direct Patrick to bring his segment to a close]. Patrick finishes up "Right. Just before we all shoot off, I think William and Trevor want to chat about the in-situs". [Fieldnote extract: 25.01.2020].

Hiding these modes of tutor-to-tutor communication helped the participants to inconspicuously conceal the uncertainties and inadequacies of their co-tutors' performance(s) as well as their own. By skilfully incorporating such interactions into the fabric of the delivery, tutors were able to protect individual and collective credibility and do it in a way that they could *tee their*

*colleague up* without candidates becoming suspicious of such gestures in the future. Logan and Stuart explained that they did this to avoid embarrassing co-tutors and damaging working relationships:

It isn't guaranteed that you'll always have that window between tasks to chat so if Dan is finishing his bit and he poses me a couple of questions in front of the group that aren't abstract to the delivery itself that's the platform for me to come in and help him out, he's telling me that he's really struggling and that's for me to recognise and pick up on those cues ... I probably need tagging in AND tagging out here so when I get invited in I'll take the direction in the way it needs to go and just tee Dan back up and pass the baton back, "Like there you go, that's where you need to take it" and there's almost like an 'ah' lightbulb moment, I'll always want to come in when things aren't going well but the last thing I want to do is kill [discredit] him without having the chance to step in and help, that only damages the relationships within the team and you lose that level of trust needed to deliver well ... you need to create an environment where the tutors are back and forth so when one of you needs a foot up the learners don't see that as a weakness which means that they'll not become overly suspicious about the genuine dialogue.[Semi-structured interview with Logan: 14.02.2020].

Who doesn't like a bit of fun? ... when I'm delivering with another tutor, like Trevor, he's really passionate and excitable about what he does and that's class ... I love delivering with him but when he interrupts he goes over the top and leaves me with absolutely nothing to say [laughs] ... obviously if he's the most domineering tutor voice in the room it sort of sends some messages out like he's the lead and I'm just the assistant and that isn't the case ... we both agreed that we'd share the voice but he gets that deep into it [laughs], yeah, by using my body language or making a sarcastic quip when he runs on I can say "Okay that's enough, give it back to me now" without embarrassing him or looking like a right twat because he'll go back to the guys and say "You'll never know what Stuart did over the weekend" and that'll create an image in others' minds of me ... like especially those I haven't delivered with much ... I'm aware that what I don't want to do is knock that passion out of him because it's great and the learners love it but I need to get over that I'm being serious without being serious if that makes sense ... I wouldn't be doing my job properly if I didn't. [Semi-structured interview with Stuart: 18.12.2019].

Several participants explained that while they would be readily seeking to assist their co-tutor, one issue was that the lack of planning prior to the workshop meant that they were *in the dark* regarding what their colleague *had up their sleeve*. Although they tried to help the delivery get *back on track*, they were cautious about ruining their co-tutors' performance. For example:

It's only fair when you're working as a team that you let the others have a fair crack at the whip with their delivery, I kinda wait for them to invite me in really ... Stuart is a really good example actually, he's someone who when I've delivered with him before he asks me things in front of the group that maybe aren't as clear to the candidates as they are to me in terms of saying "C'mon, I need you to have my back" ... everything in the lead up to the delivery is so vague I'm a little bit unsure of the breath or depth of what I can say really when I come in, I don't want to say something that they're coming onto in their head or

completely contradict what they were going to say later ... I just don't want to be seen as disrespectful, who knows what they've got up their sleeve for later or whatever, as I say, they might be coming onto what I've just said or perhaps they didn't want me to go as far into a topic ... I think there's that bit of not looking like the only voice in the room as well so you still want your co-tutor to be the leading their bit. [Semi-structured interview with Mike: 15.12.2019].

For less experienced coach educators, having *hidden lines* of communication meant that damaging secrets (i.e., not being as competent as they have led learners to believe) were not revealed. Tutors tried to ensure that their facial expressions and intonation aligned with their performed character to avoid embarrassment linked to the observation of their real professional status. Similarly, it was beneficial for these tutors to remove themselves from sight when purposefully observing their co-tutor as it gave them space to concentrate and learn without having to worry that candidates would *read into* their facial expressions. In an interview, Dan explained that he was aware of the impact of discrediting performances on his ambitions for progression and opportunities for delivering on more advanced course in the future. For example:

When you're out there and you're struggling it's a bit of a trade off because you know that your co-tutor needs to come in and help you out but at the same time you don't want to show them that you're struggling ... you want them to think that you're confident in what you're doing erm ... more so when I'm working with the gaffer ... I suppose it's part of the learning process isn't it ... if I've missed something it's only right that Logan has a responsibility to chip in ... like if I actually bring him in as if to say "Look ... I'm not a pro at this ... if I've missed anything I want you to jump in" ... it's good because if I have missed something he'll give me a wave or a nod to create a space for him to jump in without showing people 'Dan has fucked up' which'll mean the candidates will go down the road of "Dan is a bad coach and coach educator" and I just won't get any respect ... like I said ... I never *want* to invite Logan in because I want to do a good job and keep doing the coach ed ... I want to do his job one day ... when the session broke down ... I wouldn't be bothered if things went wrong in front of other tutors as they're the same as me .. now these lot are stuck with me for the next eight weeks which isn't great . [Semi-structured interview with Dan: 25.01.2020].

If I'm unsure about something I can get Logan's attention easier from the back I think ... I put my hand up and he can see me and that I want to say something ... if I'm at the side and get totally pied off [ignored] then everyone has seen that I've tried to say something like a little five-year-old schoolboy putting my hand up to go to the toilet [laugh] ... I suppose it's one of them where it protects me a little bit and benefits the learners because I get to say something I feel will add to their learning erm ... but it's kind of like a cue-based thing and also I'm out of the way ... I don't want to be right at the front especially now that I'm learning still ... sometimes I can't tell my face to act in a different way [laughs] ... if I'm concentrating on what Logan's saying because I'm trying to learn off him that might become evident to the other learners that this is my first rodeo ... I don't

really want them to know that and think I'm a 'knacker tutor' ... if somebody asked me if this is my first level two then I would probably say yes because I don't want to lie to them but just by not telling them ... I know some of the learners will see that and some of them will be watching what's going on in the classroom and on the pitch ... [Semi-structured interview with Dan: 03.02.2020].

Goffman (1959) described a performance as something that a team can *stand back from* and that its members, through expression, can attest to co-existing, incompatible realities. This encompasses both *official* and *unofficial* lines of communication that conceal secrets, that would, if revealed, discredit the *official projections* of a performance (Goffman, 1959). Team-members exercised *dramaturgical discipline* when managing these lines of communication by using an implicitly developed 'vocabulary of gestures and looks' to convey staging cues (Goffman, 1959, p. 178). Specifically, this included warning team-members when they were 'beginning to act out of line' (i.e., asking for a cue to intervene), initiating a new phase of the performance (i.e., teeing up a co-tutor), and inviting team-mates to *take the floor* (i.e., asking for help) (Goffman, 1959, p. 179).

Goffman (1959) explains that this is important for public solidarity, as team-members ought to:

'Maintain an appearance of unity in action which looks spontaneous but often presupposes a strict discipline. Sometimes cues are available by which one performer can warn another that the other is beginning to act out of line.' (p. 179).

This *benign fabrication* entailed *collective facework*, and *normalcy shows* that protected the dignity of the team and preserved normal appearances (Goffman, 1969, 1974; Rossing and Scott, 2014). These *modes of adaptation* allowed less-competent team-members to conceal stigmas through *active voicing* (Schneider and Conrad, 1981; Wooffitt, 1992). This is where a *discreditable* individual calls upon more *unchallengeable* (or credible) team-members to back them up (i.e., experienced coach educators, regional managers) (Goffman, 1963a). For Goffman (1959) this is *team collusion*:

'One important kind of team collusion is found in the system of secret signals through which performers can surreptitiously receive or transmit pertinent information, requests for assistance, and other matters of a kind relevant to the successful presentation of a performance. Typically, these staging cues come from, or to, the director of the performance, and greatly simplifies his task of managing impressions to have such a subterranean language available.' (p. 175).

Goffman (1959) also notes that:

‘Closely associated with staging cues, we find that teams work out ways of conveying extended verbal messages to one another in such a way as to protect a projected impression that might be disrupted were the audience to appreciate that information of this kind was being conveyed.’ (p. 182).

When *covering up* for team-members, participants were *dramaturgically disciplined* in the way(s) they maintained spontaneity and authenticity in their performance to avoid causing embarrassment (Goffman, 1959). By creating a social intercourse of informality in the *front region* (Goffman, team-members were presented with opportunities to repair the performance and have interactions accepted by the audience at face value (Goffman, 1959). However, the limited shared understanding that existed between team-members meant that well-intentioned acts of *discipline* could be damaging (i.e., team-members may not interpret them as intended) (Goffman, 1959). On occasion, the resistance shown by team-members upon receiving signals from co-tutors were, in effect, *protective practices* (Goffman, 1959). That is, the participants were mindful of their own conduct as not to insert unnecessary contradictions, interruptions, or statements that could cause *faux pas* or *scenes* (Goffman, 1959). Furthermore, less experienced team-members employed similar modes of adaptation in the way(s) they interacted with the setting to communicate with team-mates and *relax*, without unintentionally *giving off* discrediting information about their *actual* (i.e., personally felt) *identity* (Goffman, 1963a; Schneider and Conrad, 1981). Goffman (1959) describes:

‘Whether an individual plays a role or play at it, we can expect that the mechanics of putting it on will typically expose him as being out of character at certain regular junctures. Thus, while a person may studiously stay in role in the staging area of its performance, he may nonetheless break role or go out of role when he thinks that no one or no one important can see him.’ (p. 101).

Senior coach educators aided their less experienced team-members in the process of *identity concealment* and *misrepresentation*, which meant they could maintain a desirable *virtual social identity* that benefited the collective performance and their personal relationships with candidates (Goffman, 1959, 1963a). In contrast to one’s *actual identity*, a *virtual social identity* is the character ‘imputed to the individual in potential retrospect ... a characterisation ‘in effect’’ (Goffman, 1963a, p. 12). In other words, it is the identity that one person accords another based on their initial interpretations of them. Indeed, because the participants were *dramaturgically aware* of being

observed by learners, they employed actions that were designed to guard against *getting caught in the act* of studiously observing team-members (Goffman, 1963a).

Mason (2002) refers to this kind of educational observation as *professional noticing*. This is where an individual watches a colleague acting professionally (i.e., delivering a workshop or practical) and becomes aware of certain things they do (i.e., mannerisms) that could be used within one's own practice. Given that less-experienced coach educators undertook a hidden learning programme' (see section 4.1.1), any attention drawn to it would make it more difficult for the candidates to withdraw their attention from the stigma during interaction (Goffman, 1963a). As well as having concerns about their ability to *pass* as credible, less experienced team-members were worried about weakening their claims to credibility and trustworthiness with team-mates and the implications of utilising *secret signals* (Goffman, 1963a). The issue, then, became one of knowing if 'to display or not to display; to tell or not to tell; to let on or not to let on; to lie or not to lie; and in each case, to whom, how, when, and where' (Goffman, 1963a, p. 57). On the dilemmas that discreditable face when seeking to control the flow of information during interaction, Goffman wrote (1963a):

'A very widely employed strategy of the discreditable person is to handle his risks by dividing the world into a large group to whom he tells nothing, and small group to whom he tells all and upon whose help he then relies; he co-opts for his masquerade just those individuals who would ordinarily constitute the greatest danger.' (p. 117).

Goffman (1959) explained that the roles of team-member and audience are not *fixed* positions and that they can change throughout the course of an interaction. Relatedly, the participants reported simultaneously acting towards learners and their co-tutors, being mindful of how both sets of actors were perceiving them throughout (inter)actions. For example, the demonstration of *discipline* in the use of *secret signals* supported the collective performance by preventing disruptions, but it also threatened the tutors' status as a competent team-mate (Goffman, 1959). While being seen as a *loyal* and *disciplined* team-member was crucial for developing trust between team-mates, this dilemma was intensified by the participants' *identity commitment* and the important they attached to a competent performance (Goffman, 1959; Stryker, 1968). Even though less experienced team-members relied on mutual aid from *training specialists* and *performance*

*directors*, the visibility of their stigma to team-members meant that they *felt on* and sought to manage their image in line with the expectations of *normals* (i.e., senior colleagues) – those who do not ‘depart negatively from the particular expectations at issue’ (Goffman, 1963a, p. 15). On the multi-dimensional nature of information control, Goffman (1963a) writes:

‘The presence of fellow sufferers (or the wise) introduces a special set of contingencies in regard to passing, since the very techniques used to conceal stigmas may give the show away to someone who is familiar with the tricks of the trade, the assumptions being that it takes one (or those close to him) to know one.’ (p. 107).

All of the participants spoke about the hidden *persona work* they exercised when challenged by learners. Despite often feeling irritated, angry, and offended by learners’ outbursts, tutors described the work they endured to cut an unflustered, measured, and expecting response. This included refraining from fidgeting, stuttering, breaking eye contact, and regularly deploying vague answers and time buying scripts to appear trustworthy and credible. For example:

[We return to the classroom after a learner-led practical]. Trevor is giving some feedback to the group about their continual use of athletes for demonstrations. As Stuart continues to problematise their decisions, a learner assertively interrupts “But hold on, didn’t you say the other week that it was good to use them for demonstrations during sessions?”. [Stuart stops pacing around at the front of the room and grinds to an abrupt halt. He takes a step back and laughs awkwardly while glancing at his co-tutor out the corner of his eye “Good question”]. Stuart loudly responds [looking directly at the learner, gesturing excessively with his hands] “First of all and going back to what we spoke about before, it is about knowing your players. Secondly, from the observations that we did last week, we thought some of the explanations ran for three minutes or so, which was a bit too long. I think we just need to be more critical about our coaching. I take your point though [smiling]. As the learners finish the reflection task in the workbook, Stuart walks over to Trevor, and remarks “Always get your players to demonstrate at ten years old? What an absolute fucking knobhead”. [Fieldnote extract: 20.11.2019].

William introduces the planning activity and refers to the posters that he stuck to the wall at the start of the workshop “There are posters over there on the [philosophy]. We’ll be covering it in a couple of weeks so there’s no reason to obsess over them. It’s up to you”. He goes on to introduce the STEP principle to the group and how they can plan for differentiation with their players [he focuses on the copers, strugglers, and strivers and how coaches can support them]. A learner shouts out “Nah. See I’ve done this and what happens is that you get the other type of player demoralised and it kills your session” [William pauses “What do you think” and walks over to the spare table. He sits on it and puts his feet on the chair. Relaxed] “Hmm. Maybe. Remember what we were saying before about how skilled coaches know their players? TCSG have done some research on this and it backs up what I’m talking about. I don’t have time to go into it now but after the course you’ll be able to go on and have a look at it yourself on [online platform]”. [Fieldnote extract: 16.12.2019].



The participants explained that it was important to conceal their inflammatory emotions and respond in a polite, yet unmoved manner to maintain their knowledgeable status as an *authority in the room*. The interview data suggested that there was a fine line between responding to challenges that maintain credibility and overstepping acceptable boundaries (i.e., embarrassing or offending a learner). The participants highlighted that they did not want to upset learning for fear of receiving complaints about their conduct. As tutors had knowledge of the complaints and disciplinary process, they emphasised the significance of being *seen* to treat candidates with respect in order to garner the support of their co-tutor and the learner cohort. This meant that tutors perceived themselves as less vulnerable if they were accused of misconduct. For example:

That moment a challenge comes out of nowhere ... especially when it's a learner you maybe haven't connected with or don't really like it can make you angry and think 'what a toss pot' [laughs] ... when you see me take a step back that's me really considering what I'm about to say so the mask doesn't fall off if that makes sense ... I don't think it's a lack of knowledge or confidence I think it's just a bit 'shit I wasn't expecting that' and that couple of seconds just means I can compose myself and give an assertive answer that keeps their confidence in the things I say ... if you're too assertive then the learner might think you're ridiculing them and that could send a ripple effect through the rest of the group and have a negative impact on them as well ... if that person feels aggrieved they're well in their rights to complain but I'll try and be a bit matey with them ... if I think the challenge is with bad intentions after that I'll just go by the book ... the learners will submit their complaints and it'll go to the course co-ordinator who'll ring me to see what happened and they'll call three or four learners to get their side of the story. If you seem like you're making a genuine attempt to appease someone then you'll be okay. [Semi-structured interview with Stuart: 12.02.2020].

I'm probably not the best at dealing with challenges, I take them really personally when I'm dissecting it in my head and trying to understand where they're coming from ... you need to remember to remain unbudged, be completely unphased, don't shuffle, the tone you use, the volume, the speed you speak ... if I start to talk quickly and fidget then there's definitely a ruffle of feathers, the learners aren't fools they can pick up on anything you don't have clarity on so it's about not giving anything away, if it's a bad challenge where someone has tried to put themselves above you as a tutor and you've got thirty other people in front of you it's hard [and] if somebody throws you off kilt when you're delivering new content you have to steady the boat because someone has rocked it, you haven't planned for this off the cuff moment and you need to deal with it then and there ... I've done it on a couple of occasions where I've put someone in their box because I didn't like what was said or done in front of the group ... I don't want the rest of the group thinking 'I don't feel comfortable speaking so I'm going to stay quiet' yet if I let it slide there'd be a massive loss of respect and credibility, [the learners] thinking that I don't know and that they've caught me out, I don't have the depth of knowledge, they need to know you care but they also need to know you know. [Semi-structured interview with Parker: 05.01.2020].

Even though the participants benefited from the use of time-buying scripts and references to content not immediately accessible during workshops (i.e., TCSG's online platform) when attempting to convince learners of their credibility in potentially discrediting situations, these strategies had consequences for the image they wanted to portray to co-tutors, who were *in the know* about why tutors use them. Moreover, the discourse of constructivism also provided tutors with credibility when responding to challenges; the learner-centred principles of the approach rendered the use of questions and statements (i.e., "what do you think"; "coaching is subjective") inconspicuous. Even though such vagueness reduced the likelihood of tutors *putting their foot in it*, the participants spoke about the worries about communicating a lack of knowledge to their co-tutor.

For example:

I fire something straight back or point them to a source of information that I know will back me up even if I only have a loose understanding of it ... it's an easy get out ... I try and stay away from it to be honest as it's a bit degrading but that that would be my last call ... candidates don't have the time in their day to day to fact check everything you say ... it gives you a bit of time to read up on whatever and come back the next workshop and confidently answer any questions they've put together for you to put you on the back foot ... I think people are getting wise to that these days though especially if you're a tutor ... say you're a tutor at the front of the room and I'm one of your co-tutors and somebody asked a question of you and you went "What do you think" or "it's about your players"... I'd think you don't actually know yourself ... you might say you're trying to prompt them to think for themselves but again you're just using rhetoric as a bit of a shield ... I'm not sure how much confidence I'd have in a tutor if they did that all of the time ... it might make me step back and think 'I thought they were more competent than that' ... I might offer to take that part next time so we can hit it home'. [Semi-structured interview with Parker: 14.11.2019].

When treated unfavourably by audiences, participants used *avoidance facework* to maintain desirable *deference* and *politeness* (Goffman, 1956, 1959, 1967). Despite harbouring emotions associated with a spoiled identity, team-members opted to *misrepresent* the situation via ambiguous *scripts* (i.e., time-buying scripts), contrived *appearances* (i.e., posture, eye-contact), and *paralinguistic devices* to avoid causing *scenes* (Goffman, 1959; Scott, 2015; Thoits, 2004). To evade offending candidates, causing embarrassment, and receiving complaints, these verbal and non-verbal expressions (i.e., speed of talk, pitch, volume) helped team-members create particular realities for candidates based on claims to a credible identity (Scott, 2015). This also encompassed *circumspection*, because in order to successfully conceal uncertainty, tutors had to consider the audience's access to information sources external to the interaction (Goffman, 1959). Suppressing

one's emotional response when in receipt of untoward hostility is a form of *dramaturgical discipline* required for managing potentially discrediting situations, because:

‘When an incident occurs, the reality sponsored by the performers is threatened. The persons present are likely to react by becoming flustered, ill at ease, embarrassed, nervous, and the like. Quite literally, the participants may find themselves out of countenance. When these flusterings or symptoms of embarrassment become perceived, the reality that is supported by the performance is likely to be further jeopardised.’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 206).

Reasserting credibility with candidates without damaging relationships with them was a complex dilemma for team-members that required *emotional labor* (Hochschild, 1983). As participants were expected to induce positive emotions to facilitate productive interactions, it was necessary, at times, to engage in *surface acting* to conform to *feeling rules* (Hochschild, 1983). This form of *emotion work* was also designed as a *protective practice* to limit challenges faced by the audience when called upon to support the performance of team-members (Goffman, 1959; Hochschild, 1983). The biographical, non-commercialised nature of emotion work also meant that the participants were more susceptible to extreme negative emotional experiences, contrary to the affiliations reported by employees in Hochschild's research (Burkitt, 2014). That is, rather than having a *private* and *public* corporate self, team-members were caught ‘in the balance of affect and affection, of voluntary feeling and reflective control in a dialogue (sometimes reflective, sometimes not) of impulses, feelings, emotions, and social expectations’ (Burkitt, 2014, p. 137; Hochschild, 1983). Burkitt (2014) expands on this by presenting further limitations of Hochschild's work:

‘The essential problem is that, in adopting the metaphors of performance and emotion work, applying this to all life, Hochschild turns all socially expressed affect into affection. Affect, which is to be affected by a relationship or situation in a deep and involuntary way, can be experienced only by the private self while the social or public self is engaged in affection – in staging a self-induced performance according to the required feeling rules.’ (p. 131).

Conforming to emotional expectations was also incentivised by indirect supervision (Hochschild, 1983). Similar to the experiences of flight attendants, team-members had a sense of what course candidates could communicate to key TCSG decision makers (i.e., making complaints) and what the consequences might be (Hochschild, 1983). The *work* that constituted emotional labor of this type, then, demanded a *poise* and *attunement* often required by professionals in the workplace to maintain the right kinds of relationships needed to do their jobs effectively (Burkitt,

2014). Albeit, the various constraints and lack of resources that influenced participants' interactions and performances (i.e., time) meant that they perform, episodically, to progress through relationships quickly to have a desired influence (Burkitt, 2014). Instead of being solely designed for dramaturgical purposes, team-members were guided by *presentational* and *professional feeling rules* when making on-the-spot judgements and decisions (Bolton, 2005; Burkitt, 2014). Burkitt (2014) contends that:

‘We are not performers in social life but social beings with varying degrees of control over our own self and actions, deeply affected by the relationships and situations we are bound into in world time, as they have a profound effect on the course of our lives.’ (p. 137).

Similar to the concerns outlined by less experienced tutors concerning the use of *secret signals* in a team setting, the use of *scripts* also resulted in team-members being designated a negative characterisation by team-mates, despite being perceived positively by candidates (Goffman, 1959, 1963a). Exercising *transceivership* made participants aware that their competence was being judged by team-mates, and thus became cautious about what they revealed, via interactional techniques, to protect their credibility with others (Goffman, 1963b; Scott, 2015). Team-members, in other words, experienced dilemmas regarding *pseudomutuality* (Wynne, Irving, Ryckoff, Day, and Hirsch, 1958). This encapsulates the attempts of individuals to simultaneously convince the audience and their team-mates of their credibility (Wynne *et al.*, 1958). It appears, then, that self-presentation in team situations is more multi-dimensional, layered, fractured and complex than what Goffman (1959) originally suggested:

‘To be a given kind of person, then, is not merely to possess the required attributes, but also to sustain the standards of conduct and appearance that one’s social grouping attaches thereto...A status, a position, a social place is not a material thing, to be possessed and the displayed; it is a pattern of appropriate conduct, coherent, embellished, and well-articulated.’ (p. 81).

My fieldnotes indicated that the participants were not always able to maintain the illusion that they had worked to create for the candidates. When these situation arose (i.e., a mistake), the participants showed vulnerability, honesty, and apologised for their below par performance in a humorous but defeated manner. Ironically, these interactions helped the tutors to further cement their credibility and convince candidates of their genuineness and trustworthiness. For example:

Dan has just finished the group discussion part of his session and he wanders over to me [puffs out his cheeks and blows out, tilting his head backwards] “I have just told them, they know why it has broken down, I just really want it to be over now”. The learners come over [Dan rubs his hands together while staring at the floor, grimacing]. He says apologetically, dejected, hands on his hips “Right, so that broke down tonight, as you all saw. Well, we are all human and sometimes make mistakes. We all have bad sessions at the end of the day. These things are going to happen but at least now you can see that those things happen to us as tutors on courses. It’s just about how you try and adapt to it when those problems happen. I hadn’t planned for that so struggled a bit [I am sensing how uncomfortable this is for Dan and possibly for the learners].” When he finishes his debrief, a few of the learners hang back and Dan justifies himself multiple times and why it went wrong. I overhear him saying “I was talking to Cal about the session and seen that I didn’t have the equipment and just put my head in my hands. I suppose in my day we had proper players on the courses. Not these bloody part-timers who can’t play [laughs]” [the learners seem to be forgiving and accepting]. I hang back to talk to Dan. He approached me [strained smile etched across his face] “Wellllll. In my head what we were doing worked but one of the learners asked me a question and I just couldn’t process it [“If a player from one side if going to the middle, then it is going to be unbalanced on the other side and will fail once all of the players have gone?”]. I know we were talking about credibility and all that before. I could see it in their eyes that they were confused. After that I knew that I needed to wrap it. See, Cal, I don’t want them to know that I haven’t done a level two before, and as well, I left my session plan in the classroom didn’t I so I was trying to write it on the bloody whiteboard but it was wet with frost so it wouldn’t write. Total fucking Nightmare [Fieldnote extract: 08.12.2019].

These situations presented themselves as opportunities for participants to favourably shape the candidates’ perceptions of them through ingratiation and deliberate attempts to increase the extent to which candidates could identify with the tutors and thus forgive them for inadequacies. However, tutors tended to control the flow of information to candidates about the activity so that they could stay ahead of them and pre-emptively notice disruptions that could result in a mistake and repair it before the learners noticed, or *brush it off* as planned if it was brought to their attention. When errors were readily observable, strategically displaying a *human side* strengthened the participants’ claims to authenticity which, in turn, made up for the times when tutors duped the cohort. By partially revealing the reality of the performance, Dan and Logan believed that learners would be more willing to accept events at face value and not question their integrity when similar cases arose:

A lot of the time my first question to the group in that situation is, “Who has ever had a session that has fallen apart?”, everybody puts their hand up and me included, I make a conscious effort to put my hand up so I’m showing my vulnerability and that I’ve been in their shoes ... I’ve delivered sessions that are absolutely rubbish we’ve all done it but showing that vulnerability and human side is actually quite key, if you’re going to have a

relationship with somebody over the course what you need to have is a relationship that enables you to go and speak to them honestly, like, “That was really good Callum but this bit, did you plan that bit or was it made upon on the spot?”, “It was on the spot” , “Ok no problem”, “Tell me why”, not like, “Tell me why you did that it was rubbish”, you want dialogue to be meaningful and that happens when the learners feel a certain connection towards you ... we keep the [learners] in the dark about a lot of stuff because we need certain things to happen so it’s quite nice to bridge the gap, they buy-in a bit more I think and if mistakes happen in the future you have that relationship where you can go, “You know what, that’s happened to me and it will again” ... I think their confidence in you increases ten-fold [Semi-structured interview with Logan: 08.12.2019].

In practicals things can go wrong very quickly and if it ever does you could always try and pinpoint and ask questions to the point where the candidates will go ‘this isn’t working’ but as long as you bring them [learners] to that conclusion then you can adapt it, it’s about how quickly you can adapt it to make it look like it was planned almost so if you can plan what you’re going to say to sort of justify it to everyone, “[Learner], as soon as you moved there I realised that the area was too small which meant that you didn’t have the space to do x”, you kind of restore your credibility and if you can get in early and fix it even better ... like I deliberately give candidates minimal information about the session and I rarely show them my session plans so if something is about to go wrong they don’t know, even if it’s glaring and I need to pick it apart, as long as you do a good job you’ll still seem on the ball ... it’s funny you know like we sort of string the candidates along for the course and show or tell them things at certain points to steer them a little so when something like that happens it almost hides that we have a route already laid out for them [laughs] ... if something goes perfect all of the time you get a bit suspicious don’t you, “How many times have they done this”, “Am I being led down the garden path with some salesman spiel?”... when that [a mistake] happens I’m honest, “You know what I’ve tried to create the best environment for you guys and it hasn’t quite happened”, surely it’d be worse if you didn’t acknowledge the mistake because if candidates seen it they’ll be like “I can’t believe he missed that and he’s meant to be tutoring us” ... I’d rather bring it to their attention and for them to know I’ve seen it instead of them arriving at their own conclusions which would more than likely end up with them picking me apart. [Semi-structured interview with Dan: 16.12.2019].

Mike spoke about the importance of his persona and practice *looking* authentic and representative of the context and environment that the participants themselves would be coaching within as they progress throughout the course. He emphasised the need to reduce the *godly like status* that coach educators have in the eyes of the learners so that they are more open to influence.

For example:

I think it’s important for candidates to understand when our session goes wrong ... we don’t need to lie to them and they don’t need to lie to their players ... as a coach educator if I can explain to the candidates when I’ve made a mistake they can explain to their players when they do it ... the most important part is understanding why something went wrong because that means you can potentially stop it from happening again the next time ... I think they’ve got to see that it’s perfectly normal for a session not to go the way you want

it to but it's actually how you react ... I don't think that I am vain enough to say that I want to be like viewed as a god of coach educating so I'm kind of happy to make mistakes in front of them ... yeah they have to see I have credibility so that they can trust and benefit from what I'm trying to teach them and if they buy in it's going to be easier ... if you get a couple who're really switched on they'll see through anything that's false ... if you start feeding them bullshit they're going to see straight through it so if the session breaks down there's that thought in the back of your mind where you think 'someone will see this wasn't supposed to happen' so you almost can't let it ride. [Semi-structured interview with Mike: 16.11.2019].

When things went wrong in the classroom or during practicals, the participants experienced an array of emotions such as anger, frustration, and embarrassment. As well as being seen as an imminent threat towards their identity, participants explained that they concealed these emotions to avoid having their capacity as a coach and educator questioned and their professional future(s) reconsidered:

They'll probably think that I shouldn't be a coach educator if I'm going to show my emotions so clearly ... that's one of the reasons why I enjoy the job that I do because I've got a wealth of experience from different parts of coaching as well ... you go through ups and downs ... peaks and troughs ... when a session isn't going your way and you're a new coach you panic ... if you're an experienced coach and a session isn't going your way ... you'll hopefully understand that it's normal and it happens ... I did feel frustrated and a bit embarrassed but if they did see a display of emotion that was unfavourable it definitely wouldn't be good for my credibility and reputation as a coach educator ... you're just making it worse for yourself if you blow your top in front of everyone ... the candidates will talk to people at their clubs ... co-tutors will talk to people at work ... you'll be known as the guy who kicked off ... I think when the session broke down I wasn't trying to display anything but a natural reaction to it and in fairness I was relaxed because I felt comfortable telling a nearly truth ... it was pointless making an excuse to make myself look better because I'm a piss poor liar. [Semi-structured interview with Dan: 18.12.2019].

I suppose you can feel how you want can't you ... you can feel annoyed or brush it off but I think if you feel annoyed it'll chew you up for ages and it's going to affect what you're doing to the extent that you'll probably make the same mistake again ... I was annoyed with myself purely because I'm a level three coach and this thing that is so simple went wrong ... I was like ok I've made a little bit of a mistake but I'm just going to laugh it off ... again I'm probably going to be remembered for years to come across the tutor team [laughs] ... uhm yeah but if I lost my rag or showed any sign of being flustered or wavering that wouldn't have looked great would it? ... imagine if I'd lost it and my head totally went and the session broke down even worse ... if William sees that happen like I tutor with him the most so the next time I ask him "Can I deliver this bit or that bit" he might be a bit like "Ah are you sure because it went tits up last time" so if I push the emotion aside and move on as if nothing has happened it won't be as obvious and it shows that I can deal with things not going well. [Semi-structured interview with Patrick: 10.02.2020].

Goffman (1959) suggested that people ought to utilise interactional strategies to repair their image if it becomes discredited. For team-members, this included *defensive* and *corrective facework*

*strategies* consisting of apologies and justifications (Goffman, 1967). By deploying *realigning actions*, participants attempted to smooth out the interaction and alter the information that had been generated to communicate to the audience that their own standards had been offended (Goffman, 1959, 1961b). Rather than being *discreditable*, offending team-members were actually *discredited*, meaning they had to manage tension by *throwing themselves* on the mercy of learners (Goffman, 1963a). These strategies also served as *remedial interchanges* that controlled the flow of information to team-mates, demonstrating the rejection and disavowal of their own conduct, while encouraging others to respond politely with ‘tact’ and reciprocity (i.e., forgiveness) (Goffman, 1971; Scott, 2015). On this form of *dramaturgical discipline*, Goffman (1959) wrote:

‘If a disruption of the performance cannot be avoided or concealed, the discredited performer will be prepared to offer a plausible reason for discounting the disruptive event, a joking manner to relieve its importance, or deep apology or self-abasement to reinstate those held responsible.’ (p. 210).

The decision to demonstrate vulnerability and honesty when *performance disruptions* occurred (i.e., practical sessions failed) relates to issues of appearing overly contrived (Goffman, 1959). Goffman (1959) suggests that if a performance is given without recourse to authenticity or reality, audiences can become suspicious and doubtful over the integrity of the performers and seek out dramaturgical inconsistencies. Although team-members were sincere and genuine in their responses to these events, their apologetic personas served as *counter-covering moves* (Goffman, 1969; Shulman, 2017). Here, ‘just as subjects can be aware that they must mask their actions and words, so they can appreciate that the controls they employ may be suspected, the covers they use penetrated, and that it may be necessary to attempt to meet this attack by countering actions’ (Goffman, 1969, p. 19). That is, the participants realised that lying to candidates could expose them further and thus took pre-emptive measures to prevent it (Goffman, 1969). Furthermore, as it was not always possible to ensure that minor events did not convey incompatible impressions, the participants thought it was necessary to *key down* towards the true reality of the situation to sustain buy in and ongoing *fabrications* (Goffman, 1974). While Goffman (1959) advocated for a combination of both *reality* and *contrivance* in a successful performance, he noted the implications of *misrepresentation* on perceived credibility:



‘A false impression maintained by an individual in any of his routines may be a threat to the whole relationship or role of which the routine is only one part, for a discreditable disclosure in one area of an individual’s activity will throw doubt on the many areas of the activity in which he may have nothing to conceal ... whether an honest performer wishes to convey the truth or whether a dishonest performer wishes to convey a falsehood, both must take care to enliven their performances with appropriate expressions, exclude from their performances expressions that might discredit the impression being fostered, and take care lest the audience impute unintended meanings.’ (p. 73).

To be seen as a reliable and *disciplined* performer by team-mates and candidates, participants had to exercise *emotional poise* despite experiencing negative emotions (Burkitt, 2014). Team-members judged themselves against the feeling and expression norms and conventions (or expectations) associated with their identity as a coach educator (Thoits, 2004). The *emotion work* that participants did, then, was aligned with *professional emotion standards* (Bolton, 2005; Hochschild, 1983). The *demeanour* and *appearance* team-members tried to maintain was inextricably linked to the structure of the network that connected those present, in terms of satisfying an *emotional ideology* supported by team-mates and candidates (Goffman, 1956, 1959; Thoits, 2004). As the consequences for deviance in a densely populated network tend to be severe for the standing and reputation of the offender, participants subsumed themselves in the *micropolitics of emotion* to remain in solidarity with the team (Clark, 1990; Crossley, 2011). These actions were guided by and embedded in a wider *emotion culture* (Thoits, 2004). This is described by Thoits (2004) as:

‘Beliefs about the nature, causes, distributions, value, and dynamics of emotions in general, as well as of specific feelings, such as love, anger, and jealousy.’ (p. 362).

From my observations, I was able to infer that there were also instances where strategically planned content and tasks were presented as random, unscripted, and uncalculated. To persuade learners into thinking, feeling, and (inter)acting in desired ways, the tutors manipulated their enthusiasm, body language, and limited the use of content that was not supported by the advocated stance(s) of their respective local TCSG organisations:

As per usual, the content on the board entirely supports what Logan is talking about. The workshop is focusing on practice design. I notice that the weight of the content is heavily directed towards random and at a push, variable. Even when he delivers I notice that Logan becomes more animated, more enthusiastic, racing around the room, he talks quicker, louder “But when your kids are getting loads of touches and having fun, making lots of

decisions you're setting them challenges in the game. They're going to come back next week [demos a passing action]". I also notice that he tends to play out a satire in front of the learners about how they like to deliver more 'drill' based constant practices "So when you are at training on a cold winters night [putting on a mocking voice] and you have your kids in lines, serving balls and you wonder why they're being naughty". [Logan goes on to introduce a slide with a brief overview of some research [Cote et al, 2007] that TCSG carried out themselves] [i.e., what did the players enjoy more?] "This isn't any old research. This backs up what I'm saying [Dan nods in agreement] about effective practice". I spoke to Adam later in the workshop and insinuated that the research was a little more ambiguous than what he made out. He said "I know it is. They don't know that. These people aren't academic, they are volunteers who are giving up their time for free. I just need to make it really clear for them though because the chances are, they are giving their players way too much constant practice at the minute and they need to be doing other stuff. So, it benefits them for me to talk around the other end of the spectrum and get the message across.". [Fieldnote extract: 11.12.2019].

During interviews, Logan explained that it was sometimes important to mislead candidates to encourage them to focus on areas of their coaching practice that would be further examined in future workshops and relevant for assessment(s). Logan further spoke about how he maximised buy-in by ensuring there was no ambiguity around key messages and orienting the presentation of content in reference to the candidates' lack of expertise. The lack of alternative information available to learners during the workshop and on TCSG platforms allowed coach educators to strategically rebut their challenges in a way that further promoted TCSG's key messages:

Yeah so I think that the constant practice if you like is still common place for them so in that particular group we have quite a few learners who took the old level one so there's still loads of robin hood and the like going on ... there has been a shift over the years to deliver more games-based stuff into the variable and random, I think I said on the night like there is a place for constant practice but I don't think they have the critical thought to use them with good measure so I just flew by it ... when I've been checking up on the learners in their clubs and practicals on the course I would like to see more game-based practices and take them away from the stereotypical plan, we really need to get them bought into that from the off so we push constant messages and reinforcement all of the time ... I mean the whole course is built around the game-based philosophy so to progress and avoid going over the same ground we need to try and get them hooked, the usual practices go from A to B to C and then they break down and the kids start to misbehave ... can they get a session running well? Can they get players having fun? [Semi-structured interview with Logan: 16.12.2019]

Okay ... in terms of the research and content weighting ... there's certainly a credibility thing there and it's always nice when you can reference something like that model ... Cote's stuff ... it just gives it a bit more 'oomph' then I think because you're moving away from opinion and into actual evidence if someone does defect a little bit and go against the grain it's like well "There you go ... it has been done by someone a lot clever than me" ... at least if you can give the candidates something concrete to go away and read which I

doubt they'd do at the level they're at then you know it'll only help them to tune into what we're advertising ... if we keep banging the drum then it'll stimulate some really great conversations further down the line when we get into the nitty gritty bits of it ... we can link it to their final assessment and it just tidies up any grey areas ... they need to be independent but we just don't actually have time to answer all of their questions so it's good to signpost them when we can ... trying to refer them to other sources gives you some credibility and it can stop you from looking stupid if you're asked a tricky question that you don't know the answer to ... if you're clever with it you might be able to set it as a homework task "We'll come onto that next week" to buy yourself time to refresh your knowledge so when everyone is back you've topped up as well. [Semi-structured interview with Logan: 10.01.2020].

Several of the participants explained that the time sensitive nature of workshops meant it was essential to *cherry pick* content to persuade candidates to adopt TCSG's approach. In particular, participants were pensive in the selection of practical activities, session participants, and classroom tasks that would cause certain events to transpire. As described by Parker and Barry:

During practical workshops I'm almost a salesman trying to deliver TCSG's product, the equipment will be laid out on the floor, the cones will be organised properly, there'll be stuff on the whiteboard, black boots for me if I'm the one delivering, just that clean professional impression ... what I'm doing is modelling what their sessions should look like and I want to do a good job of it so that they look and go "Wow ... this really adds value to our coaching" or something along those lines ... you need to be organised and get straight into it ... managing the group and the players because that's going to decide if it's going to be a good session or not ... I'm a learner walking down from the classroom and I'm having a good look at the practice area ... the pitch is colour co-ordinated ... I've got the mic on ... the tracksuit ... I get the interventions bang on and my coaching points out ... what I want to happen happens and from a bit of a personal point of view it makes the learners trust me a little bit more and what I can bring to the course for them ... you know ... "Parker knows how to deliver a hell of a session". [Semi-structured interview with Parker: 23.11.2019].

It feels strange when you're choosing practical sessions because you only ever lose your credibility when there's nothing for you to go in and fix ... if it does breakdown, which I hope it does, I'll go in, "Well, why hasn't this gone right?" and give the power to them ... nine times out of ten the same things happen from course to course so you know if you choose a practice it's dead-on going to happen ... you'll get a learner who thinks they're an international [level player] so you need to manage them a little bit but yeah I'll go about and observe some of the candidates during learner-led sessions and see who's where confidence and ability wise ... moving into the games-based activities I'll choose a few people who'll definitely cause it to break down because they aren't as confident or perhaps lack a little bit of skill, I don't want to choose a person who'll crumble and that'll be it for the rest of the course ... it's just an in-time judgement ... as a coach you create scenarios for players and that's what I do on courses, create something that will highlight problems candidates encounter and use that to refer to throughout the course [Semi-structured interview with Barry: 28.01.2020].

From my observations, I interpreted that equal care was given when offering feedback to learners. As this was seen as a key opportunity to further impress TCSG's vision and generate buy-in, the participants tempered the severity of their feedback in the early stages of the course so that learners would remain openly receptive to feedback and influence throughout. For example:

As the first coach-led practicals begin, Stuart and Trev tell me that they know some of the sessions aren't that good but they don't want to say anything. "With it being week one you have to just role with it. I just say well [smile and thumbs up] if you are happy with it then deliver it. If you said something they would be like [sad face] and go 'urgh' and probably feel really dejected for the rest of the course. As tutors, by letting them deliver something that isn't up to scratch it gives us something to work with". Trev and Stuart begin to talk and a learner approaches [Trev taps Stuart on the arm and nods forward indicating that he needs to turn around]. Trev looks around and comments "That is good", "I bet they don't know why they are doing that. They have put on a game but can they tell you. I want to ask them out of interest" [Trev gives them a thumbs up but returns to us and pulls a face] [Stuart points to far group "I hate that by the way. Just going in for ages and saying loads of jargon and then going back out without actually coaching. Something for later that one I think"]. When the practices are going on, Trev occasionally turns to Stuart and says, "this is what we need to look for here, if you see what they're doing there". [Fieldnote extract: 12.11.2019].

During interviews, Stuart explained that while he was comfortable with sharing his thoughts about the candidates with his co-tutor, it was in his best interests to conceal them from the learners themselves. For Stuart, it was important to protect the candidates' emotions until sufficient trust was built up over time through acts of care (i.e., praise, body language, attentiveness). This meant that he could be sure his feedback was received in *good faith* and taken on board, thereby avoiding potential complaints, as demonstrated by the below interview extract:

That's a conscious decision because it can be quite intimidating on day one of a coaching course, some people haven't done any coaching, some people are out there out of the goodness of their hearts to get kids playing sport ... we've got that consideration to think about, the last thing we want to do is put them off ... we used [day] as an opportunity to pinpoint, "Right, okay, where are people at", they've probably never had an overview of what good practice or bad practice is, they've probably seen someone else deliver and they've copied it ... unlike some of the other tutors we're at the other end of the string and don't give much feedback until the course begins to unfold and we're building rapport ... it's just about making sure that their kids have the best possible experiences and stop those awful piggy-back races up long hills [laughs] ... I think it's really beneficial to take a step back and weigh up what we say, it's tough because we need to get them on board and bought into what we want them to do but at the same time some people don't take developmental feedback very well early on ... we could've given them feedback but what if they took it the wrong way and put in a complaint or may not have come back ... at least when that rapport gets a bit better and we have a feeling of 'We're in this together' you can

start getting a bit more constructive with the feedback” [Semi-structured interview with Stuart: 25.11.2019].

In situations where candidates could be ‘absolutely destroyed’ (i.e., heavily criticised), the participants decided to show empathy and amend the truthfulness of feedback to avoid losing the respect of learners and threatening their willingness to co-operate. As feedback was often withheld initially, tutors had to be circumspect to utilise future opportunities to provide comments and elicit changes in learners’ practice. For example:

As a tutor I’m really learner-led so I think we have got to live and breathe the approach a little bit, they will have gone about doing a task or a session in a certain way of looking at the world so I think it’s wrong for me to go, “That’s shit what have they done there because they need to do it like this” [laughs] ... you can’t set it up and get them to be reflective and improve themselves if then we resort to, “No we can’t do that we need to do this”, if we want [learners] to go away from the course and really think about their coaching, killing someone isn’t going to help them do that is it ... I’m quite conscious about where we are in the course and that the candidates are going to have to complete some pretty dry tasks to complete workshops ... that was the first session [I observed] so if I hammered them they’d be like, “Fuck that”, and the quality of the course would dip significantly, that’s why I like the process of having four opportunities to deliver, so if I check myself I’ll have time to drop feedback in to get my message across. [Semi-structured interview with Mike: 23.01.2020].

Goffman (1959) claimed that a circumspect performer is one who adjusts his presentation according to the character of the *props* and tasks out of which he must build his performance, and critically consider how he can exploit the remaining dramaturgical opportunities open to him. The circumspect performer will also adapt their performance based on the information conditions under which it must be staged (Goffman, 1959). For team-members, this meant considering how they presented *props*, their *manner*, and *appearance* in accordance with learners’ pre-existing knowledge (Goffman, 1959). By carefully choosing the information that was readily perceivable to the audience during the interaction, candidates were forced to accept social signals, despite often being falsified (Goffman, 1959). For Riggins (1990), *props* constitute social facilitators that assist with the aligning of a performance with favourable outcomes. Another contributing issue was the length of the performance, and the time sensitive expectations surrounding course completion. To meet these expectations, participants devised a number of practical and pragmatic *secondary adjustments* that helped them to have the desired influence over the duration of the course (Goffman, 1961a). The way coach educators selected and presented content and practices constituted a *benign*

*fabrication* (Goffman, 1974). Fundamentally, this was done by concealing secretive *subordinate involvements*, like *monitoring*, under the guise of *dominant involvements*, such as the unspeculative delivery of the workshop (Goffman, 1963b, 1974). Although *misrepresentation* (Goffman, 1959) may pose ethical challenges for the performer, it can also be used to achieve positive outcomes:

‘Deception can be socially good, regardless of whether or not it is morally right or wrong, insofar as it sustains actors’ beliefs in shared definitions of reality. Their motivations should be understood in pragmatic rather than ethical terms as strategic choices made in situated contexts of interaction.’ (Scott, 2015, p. 207).

Despite Goffman’s social actor receiving criticism for lacking ethical awareness or acting from a place of *cool detachment*, it was apparent that team-members were conscious of ethical boundaries in the sense that deception (i.e., feedback, selecting players) was carried out in a non-malevolent and harmless way (Scott, 2015). Indeed, to the extent that the maintenance of the social order partly relies on error, deception, and secrets, participants chose to conceal certain facts and thought in order to develop positive working relationships with candidates (Burkitt, 2014; McCall and Simmons, 1966). The decision to give feedback (or not) was based on the team-members’ *situated intelligence* around how particular actions could hinder planned scripts (Smith, 2006). That is, participants opted to be tactful in their approach to encounters, utilising discretionary *protective facework* to manage the emotions of learners and not threaten their capacity for influence in the future (Goffman, 1967).

#### 4.2.4 *Split loyalties:” It’s a tough balancing act.”*

Throughout workshops, the participants appeared to exercise agency by publicly distancing themselves from TCSG’s core coach education and coaching principles when opportunities to do so arose. Even though the participants were committed to supporting TCSG’s messages, they often provided their own perspectives on teaching, learning, and coaching when delivering workshops.

An example of this is demonstrated in the below fieldnote:

Stuart and Trevor are introducing some of TCSG’s key frameworks for guiding coaching practice. So far, the tutors have stuck rigidly to the ‘facts’ and left nothing open to interpretation. Stuart sits on the edge of a desk and holds a poster up in his right hand while underlining a specific bullet-point with his left finger. “This one here is always an interesting one for me. Ball rolling time. Officially what we are meant to be aiming for each and every session is eighty-percent boll rolling [he strokes his chin and pulls some

faces to indicate that he is being careful about the words he chooses]. I agree that this should be the aim for every coach because all kids love playing but [tuts] and this isn't TCSG saying this by the way [covers the badge] this is from my own experiences from when I've been coaching or mentoring. What if you have a group of six-year olds that need quite a bit of instruction? What if you're trying to show a few pictures to older players? What if the nature of your session means that it is going to be quite stop and start or that you need to do more whole group interventions? As I say, we should aspire to this but we need to use this wisely for our players in our contexts and use it as a thinking probe when we're planning. It isn't wholly gospel all of the time in our coaching sessions". [Fieldnote extract: 16.11.2019].

During an interview, Stuart emphasised the importance of remaining faithful to his own beliefs to achieve a sense of fulfilment and authenticity. Stuart further explained that he remained cautious about when and how he exercised agency for fear of receiving sanctions from his superiors at TCSG. Even though he considered the ability to exercise agency as a positive feature of his coach education work, Stuart described how this created ambiguity across the workforce and increased the risk of contradicting colleagues, which threatened employee relationships and personal reputation. Stuart dealt with this by delivering information and activities that he believed to be core to TCSG's curriculum and were consistently delivered by other coach educators across the workforce. He noted that he did this despite having reservations, and engaged in self-bargaining. For example:

Trying to balance my own values with what TCSG employ me to say is a hard ask at times ... there're some things that I'd love to chat about but I feel a bit restricted ... I mean one thing I do which you picked up on [the other day] is cover the badge and say, "This is my experience" when I think I have an opportunity to offer some personal insights that don't overly conflict with key messages, so ball-rolling time, is it going to be the same for nine and fifteen-year-olds? if I don't get that over and put a bit of a critical spin on it that the candidates can contextualise then all of my experience and qualifications [shrugs] ... I haven't added any personal value, I get that it's about making informed judgements around who you have in front of you and deciding how to move forward from there [but] I don't want there to be any confusion around the message like if a learner goes to another workshop on a different course and starts comparing what I've said to another tutor, "Well Stuart told me to do this", no no, here's my experience, here's the evidence, without that it leaves the door open for people to gossip, "A candidate said that Stuart has been saying this and that" without knowing the context behind it ... my motto is leave no room for interpretation then things can't get back to people in the hierarchy and they can't come poking around ... I just motivate myself a bit more and get through it because I know I'll have opportunities to put my two-pennies worth in [give his opinion] later on [Semi-structured interview with Stuart: 13.12.2019].

Like Stuart, Logan and Parker described the importance of not diverging from TCSG policy in relation to core coaching principles that were central to the curriculum, and highlighted the

necessity of differentiating personal opinion from official idea promoted by TCSG. They also added that content and materials (i.e., logbooks) that were directly assessed, either via internal quality assurance or certification processes, and thus visible to others in the organisation, were *non-negotiable*. As were the standard PowerPoint slides that tutors were expected to deliver, particularly because learners may post photos of the content on social media. A consensus existed amongst the workforce that as long as coach educators were seen to be *beating TCSG's drum* on these visible components of workshops, they would generate the necessary time and space for exercising agency during other activities. Thus, the participants were able to convey their own knowledge and values to enhance learners' on-course experience(s) without risking possible job termination. For example:

Yeah, look, there're definitely elements of the course and how it's assessed where the standards might not be aligned to your own personal preference or what you think candidates need to achieve to be a pass but I think ultimately as long as you're using your professional skill sets and are largely consistent with your judgements and adhering to the guidance that's given I don't think there can be any qualms about your decisions ... I suppose the bigger picture is if you keep banging the drum and the drum isn't TCSG's drum or it isn't the content that we're provided with then eventually if someone questions what you're doing in your role and takes that role off you ... if the content is x and we keep delivering y then eventually that's going to come to the fore on somebody's desk and they'll say "Hang on a minute I keep hearing that Logan's delivering this ... that's not aligned to TCSG or this or that ... we need to go and have a look at what he's delivering and what he's saying" .. as tutors we have a broad skillset that suggests we're capable of delivering content and putting our own personal experiences in which helps to bring it to life but we're not there to go completely off script. [Semi-structured interview with Logan: 14.02.2020].

We've got the license to produce materials and produce some tasks that'll help us to hit the outcomes of the course which is top drawer in my opinion but if it's something that starts to become a little left field it's then the identification of it as your take ... perhaps drop it into a conversation rather than putting something on an branded slide that then goes up on PowerPoint and someone takes a photo of it and it whizzes around social media and before you know it this TCSG slide is out there that's potentially not endorsed by TCSG or potentially doesn't sit within the [framework] model and so on ... it might be a way to express personal knowledge but the danger is at times it might be interpreted as TCSG have said this where actually no ... Parker said this when he was speaking as him and not TCSG ... to keep the wolves from the door make sure everything is in order and you're doing what you need to be doing without ruffling people's feathers ... with the non-assessed stuff you can just mingle it into the detail of slides ... still deliver what's there but add a few stems that really capture where you stand as a tutor. [Semi-structured interview with Parker: 10.01.2020].



I also observed some instances where participants were more explicit about their difference of opinion, and used divisive language to separate themselves from TCSG. Some tutors publicly disagreed with the sequencing of activities, content, and decisions made by policy makers. Others told learners about occasions when they had risen up against TCSG superiors on their behalf. In addition, the participants disclosed that they sympathised with learners in specific situations, but were limited in their choices for (inter)action. They also drew attention to occasions when they *put themselves in the firing line* because they altered the course to enhance learners' experience(s).

Examples are provided in the fieldnotes below:

Mike is leaning against the wall, using the clicker to move the slides on. We arrive at a slide entitled 'engagement and the learning experience' and I can see a grin sprawl out across his face. He turns to the room "Right. Erm. On this bit here right. I don't actually think TCSG have done a very good job. As in er I'm not sure how much actual theory has gone into this and it looks a bit basic. I shouldn't really say this but I actually have a proper job. Doing all of this stuff here is what I do day in and day out. I'm not sure if you've heard of [org] but we govern all of this stuff [he moves along to the next slide]. Again I shouldn't really do this but I think it'll really benefit you guys ... just have a look at these in your spare time [Mike has loaded up a list of online sources for learners to read that aren't all TCSG sourced]. Yeah. I went to my manager the other day and I'll tell you now ... I said look ... I don't think that this course challenges learners enough erm specifically you guys because everyone in here can move onto the level two so I put this together for you" [Fieldnote extract: 15.12.2019].

The candidates have finished their first practical delivery of the course [arrival activities]. Barry gets the group in a circle and begins to give some general feedback [I see a learner look at their pack] "Barry. They're asking us to reflect on stuff here that we haven't done yet. [shows Barry the pack]. I don't even know what that means" [Barry sinks into himself a little and his shoulders drop]. He responds [looking at the floor, hands out to his side, conceded tone] "I fully agree with you. Unfortunately the people upstairs have made the course this way so I've got to deliver some of the content as it is [straining his face in anguish]. I share your sentiments ... it's stupid that TCSG ask you to do things that you have never studied before. Even look at the box that you need to reflect in ... it's tiny. How can you get coherent thoughts in there [shakes head]. I think the whole course structure is a bit of a shambles if I'm honest. It doesn't make sense. I've had some very heated discussions about it in the past and I'll be sure to again after this course. You pay good money for this and it simply needs to be up to scratch. Not to worry ... when we're back inside I'll pull some of the content forward so you can fill that in for later on. [Fieldnote extract: 10.01.2020].

During interviews, Mike and Barry explained that they felt a professional responsibility to amend the course to maximise its value for candidates. They highlighted the benefits of demonstrating resistance against TCSG, trustworthiness, credibility, and authenticity in their

interactions with learners as a means to develop mutually advantageous relationships. TCSG managers (local and national) and policy-makers evaluated coach educators through candidate (and co-tutor) feedback, so to secure ongoing employment, the participants sought to create relationships of reciprocity whereby learners would be more inclined to give generous appraisals. For example:

With wearing the badge you have that responsibility to embody a part of TCSG's identity but at the same time I want people going away from the course having learned stuff properly, I don't want candidates going away with duff information, I'm here to help people regardless of the badge like some of the material is actually wrong to the point where you're beyond having reservations and you're going "Bloody hell, what're they [TCSG] doing here?, I'm not delivering that", all it takes is for someone to double-check information, like, the research is a bit sticky in some cases so if a candidate is doing a degree in [sport] coaching they might double-check it and because I've stood by the content I inevitably lose all credibility when I'm forced to backtrack ... basically it all falls on me when it comes to the feedback and other than the IQA assessment it's the only quality-assurance check we have for seeing how tutors are getting on and if we're going to have our license renewed ... there're some activities where the journal layout really limits the standard of what learners can record so I pull that up straight away, "I've got spare paper here if you need it, I know the boxes aren't great", I'm better off not covering anything up and just being up front with any flaws that'll impact their experience ... they need to know that I don't have any underlying commitment to TCSG and my only aim is to teach the stuff correctly to them [Semi-structured interview with Mike: 23.12.2019].

I try to show candidates that I'm not a typical TCSG man, that I'm actually an individual with a level of expertise and personal opinions and thoughts, that I'm not governed by fancy slogans and company tag lines ... they [the learners] need to see that because if they're going to trust me throughout the course then obviously the whole experience needs to be meaningful for them ... I've been coaching and developing coaches for almost thirty-years and I'll be damned if I'm going to be dictated to by people in the ivory tower ... I wouldn't be happy with myself if knew I could add value and didn't because it doesn't say so on the scheme of work [laughs] ... I'm very well versed in coach development and if I think something is relevant I'll use it but if not then I won't, what I tend to do is make it up as I go along and as you commented on yourself I'll tell the candidates that I'm changing things about for them especially when it is in their best interests ... it adds a bit of needed authenticity because there're too many robot tutors for me, if you look at the learner journal they need to use the STEP principle to reflect before it's even been introduced ... it goes to show just how removed they [TCSG policy-makers] are. [Semi-structured interview with Barry: 18.01.2020].

The main thing is the course isn't about me, I'll always try to reinforce that I do everything for the candidates' benefit and it's just about making a positive connection, "I'm Joe Bloggs and I'm just here to get you through the coaching qualification, forget about the badge and everything that comes with it", there're tons of tutors out there with agendas ... they'll climb over your corpse to get a leg up, if I can really put myself on the front line for the learners and they know about it that can only create that feeling of mutual commitment and trust but the most important thing is their experience because they know they're getting value they wouldn't from someone else ... less importantly, as sessional staff we rarely get visits from management and when we do they just pop their head in ... the only insights office staff get about our performance is on the feedback forms submitted by the candidates, we don't actually get to see any of the feedback that we receive which is odd

but if we've done a good job we get more courses and assume all's well and if we haven't then we'll hear about it [laughs]. [Semi-structured interview with Barry: 27.01.2020].

Goffman (1959) believed that if teams are to maintain an impression that correspond with a particular organisational image, social actors must exercise *dramaturgical loyalty* and 'act as if they have accepted certain moral obligations' and avoid 'betraying the secrets of the team' through self-interest or lacklustre discretion (p. 207). Goffman (1959) explains that team-members should not:

'Stage their own show ... nor must they use their performance time as an occasion to denounce their team ... and they must be taken in by their own performance to the degree that is necessary to prevent them from sounding hollow and false to the audience.' (p. 208).

Goffman (1959) also argued that becoming too 'sympathetically attached to the audience' can inhibit *dramaturgical loyalty* because team-members become likely to 'disclose to them the consequences for them of the impression being given, or in other ways make the team as a whole pay for this attachment' (p. 208). As actions are oriented towards other actions in a relational network with others with whom people share relations, these moral obligations were somewhat fragmented and multi-layered for participants (i.e., managing relations with TCSG managers, colleagues, candidates) (Crossley, 2011). Indeed, the participants occasionally found it necessary to deploy *dramaturgical loyalty* differently during specific interactions with learners (i.e., assessed and non-assessed content) based on the nature of consequences these strong ties had for their own performance and the performances of others (Crossley, 2011; Goffman, 1959). In some respects, participants became *renegades* in the sense that they took a moral stand in favour of personal ideals for the role that often contradicted those expected by TCSG (Goffman, 1959). On enacting roles at work, Shulman (2017) describes:

'Workers' understandings of their work, their actual work, and personal agendas inhabit organisations. While employees accept performance lines, they improvise routines in multiple ways and offshoots ... workplaces do not consist of norm-driven robots who perform like marionettes, but by people who switch from the official lines to unofficial ones and may fulfil the expectations of the interaction order by negotiated means.' (p. 93).

In situations where participants were *disloyal* to TCSG, expressions of intimacy were designed as *realigning actions* that served wider personal goals pertaining to positive feedback (Goffman, 1959). Moreover, while the participants did not enjoy unfettered agency, they were not micro-controlled to the extent of other workers, such as flight attendants (e.g., Hochschild, 1983),

and thus had additional freedom to meet candidates' expectations, develop relationships, and buffer themselves from the consequences of adhering to TCSG policies. They, were, however, aware of an *indirect supervision* whereby TCSG superiors (and colleagues) evaluated their performances based on feedback (Hochschild, 1983). This can be theorised through the influence of *network properties* in that the interconnections that existed had a greater influence on decisions regarding reputation and credibility than official prescriptions (Crossley, 2011). Crossley (2011) explains that this is because networks manifest a structure by virtue of multiple conventions relating to the goals, means, justifications, rewards, and criteria of evaluation employed during interaction. For the participants, this meant negotiating their *role* (i.e., normative expectations) and *role enactment* (i.e., actual conduct) when managing *role sets* (i.e., audiences) (Goffman, 1961b). On this, Goffman writes (1961b):

‘Where there is a normative framework for a given role, we can expect that the complex forces at play upon individuals in the relevant position will ensure that typical role will depart to some degree from the normative mode, despite the tendency in social life to transform what is usually done to what is ought to be done.’ (p. 93).

When participants were loyal to TCSG, they were, at times, *cynical* in their approach and (Goffman, 1959). Seemingly, participants were trapped, socially, by the *setting* and *personal front* they inhabited and the extent to which they could (or could not) locally improve their performance (Goffman, 1959, 1961b). Options for (inter)action were also constrained by the extent to which in-situ decisions would have (or not) benefits for the credibility of the wider TCSG network (Crossley, 2011). In other instances, the participants employed *role embracement* by completely disappearing into the virtual TCSG self and expressively confirming their acceptance of the role (Goffman, 1961b). At times, however, *role embracement* was utilised as a self-protective strategy to convince TCSG managers of their loyalty and conceal instances where they were less loyal to the organisation (Goffman, 1961b). This *role function* had two benefits for the participants; upholding the interaction order and creating opportunities for agency (Goffman, 1961b).

The Participants showed resistance to the official line by adopting dissociative or *repudiative tactics*' (Shulman, 2017). On these occasions, this included deploying strategies (i.e., covering the TCSG badge on their tracksuit, criticising TCSG policies) to achieve *role distance*

(Goffman, 1961b). *Role distance* also involves expressing a separateness between the self and a putative role and directing the audience's judgements to a lack of commitment or affection (Goffman, 1961b). Although team-members were constrained by their *appearance* (i.e., wearing an TCSG tracksuit), *props* (i.e., TCSG resources), and the *setting*, they adapted their *demeanour* and *scripts* to distance themselves from TCSG while protecting their status in the network if such (inter)actions were misconstrued or divulged. This impression management strategy has a defensive function, as Goffman (1961b) explains in the case of horse riders:

‘By manifesting role distance, the girls give themselves some elbow room in which to manoeuvre, “we are not to be judged by this incompetence”, they say. Should they make a bad showing, they are in a position to dodge the reflection it could cast on them ... by exposing themselves to a guise which they have no serious claim, they leave themselves in full control of shortcomings they take seriously.’ (p. 112).

Insofar, opportunities and constraints on agency relate to Goffman's (1961a) notion of *institutional arrangements*. These refer to micro-level structures in organisations (e.g., patterns of established practices, relations, normative routines) that are thought to exert power through controlling the behaviour of its inhabitants, inclusive of their vertical and horizontal interactions (Goffman, 1961a). In this case, this was reflected in how evaluations of tutors' performances were used as records of performances. To do this, the techniques used by the participants reflected an ebb and flow between *primary adjustments* and *secondary adjustments* (Goffman, 1961a). *Primary adjustments* describe the official tasks (i.e., delivering core content) that are essential for doing the job, as well as *learning the ropes* (Goffman, 1961a). In comparison, *Secondary adjustments* consist of ‘any set of habitual arrangements by which a member of an organisation employs unauthorised means, or obtains unauthorised ends, or both, to get around the organisation's assumptions as to what he should do and get and hence what he should be’ (Goffman, 1961a, p.189).

Here, the participants attempted to make employment at TCSG as comfortable as possible by navigating those *rules* which could be fudged or circumvented (i.e., enacting agency, interactions with learners) (Goffman, 1961a). Thus such means were employed fulfil their own interests while sustaining the pretence that they were consistently meeting TCSG's expectations. Furthermore, the participants also converted a number of vocational resources to satisfy their

desires and those of candidates, doing whatever they could get away with to subvert official standards (Goffman, 1961a; Shulman, 2017). The balance of conformity, agency, and non-conformity that team-members collectively engaged in to navigate workplace demands represents a surreptitious unofficial undercurrent known as the *organisational underlife* (Goffman, 1961a). This was shaped by *role commitment*, as Goffman (1961b) writes:

‘An individual becomes committed to something when, because of the fixed interdependent character of many institutional arrangements, his doing or being this something irrevocably conditions other important possibilities in his life, forcing him to take courses of action, causing other persons to build up their activity on the basis of his continuing in his current undertaking, and rendering him vulnerable to unanticipated consequences of these undertakings.’ (p. 89).

The extent to which the participants committed to (or did not) TCSG’s status quo was problematised by the intimacy of the [sport] coaching network and additional roles they occupied within it. For example, Logan explained that as a [coach] he was required to exhibit behaviours that were at odds with those he was ‘expected’ to adopt when delivering TCSG courses. For Logan, the interconnectedness of the [sport] world meant that he was likely to encounter candidates in other social spaces (e.g., leisure activities, coaching, competitions) which, in turn, created a dilemma for how he portrayed himself. For example:

I’ve got to say that you’re on duty beyond the course, I coach youngsters [on a weekend], now unofficially, I’m on duty there as an TCSG tutor as the perception is still going to be this is the guy from TCSG, “What’s he doing there that’s not what he says on courses”, you can walk down the street and someone will say “Hi”, let’s say I’m having an argument with someone in Tesco it doesn’t look great and it’s one of those jobs where you’re always near enough on ... if you are out and about and public facing the chances are you will bump into somebody who knows you through a course or through [sport] and you aren’t just Logan you’re Logan from TCSG so somebody will talk to you about something work related like their in-situ visit or their project or their team, the link there is work it isn’t friendship, it isn’t a safe space for me to talk about what I want to talk about it’s a work conversation ... it’s out of hours [but] it’s a work chat, like, you might be in a jeans and jumper but they want to talk on a Saturday afternoon walking along the beach with the dog. [Semi-structured interview with Logan: 18.01.2020].

Managing in the [league] you’ve got the situation where you’re potentially delivering a course Saturday morning nine till one then come half-one you’ve arrived at a ground and you’re now a [league] manager, the match starts then suddenly there’s five people who have been on the course rocked up in the ground, “come on then are you practicing what you preach” sort of stuff so then actually are you stood barking instructions at the players? are you getting involved with officials?, it becomes a real challenge ... I think the bit for me is probably what I alluded to before on the courses, at times I’m acting deliberately to

create whatever it is that's needed in the moment but a lot of the time my enthusiasm is really genuine coz' I love it, I could only name three or four occasions where I'd go over the top when I was having a chat with officials trying to influence decisions, I'm pretty confident that people would get the same version of me anywhere they went although I'm still mindful of being asked on a course, "Logan I saw you do 'x' on Sunday", because that's damaging ... what I like to do is say, "TCSG say this which I all agree with but have my own personal slant. [Semi-structured interview with Logan: 12.02.2020].

To ensure that team-members exercise *dramaturgical loyalty*, Goffman (1959) suggests that performers ought to periodically change the audiences to whom they perform. Indeed, the dilemmas of loyalty that participants faced was because of their inability to secure a type of *front region control* known as *audience segregation* (Goffman, 1959). This means keeping audience members who witness social actors in one role separate from those audiences for whom they perform a different one, lest creating dramaturgical confusion (Goffman, 1959). As this preventative strategy could not be implemented, participants considered what other information was accessible about them when deploying *secondary adjustments* and took action that would stop them from being discredited if *inopportune intrusions* occurred when playing other roles (i.e., coaching) (Goffman, 1959, 1961a). *Inopportune intrusions* occur when individuals for whom a performance is not meant witness a show that is incompatible with expectations (Goffman, 1959). This has consequences for a performance whereby said outsider would be the anticipated audience for a different routine (Goffman, 1959). For Goffman (1959), these should be avoided at all costs because:

'Performers tend to give the impression, or tend not to contradict the impression, that the role they are playing at the time is their most important role and that the attributes claimed or imputed to them are their most essential and characteristic attributes. When individuals witness a show that was not meant for them, they may, then, become disillusioned about this show as well as about the show that was meant for them.' (p.136).

These concerns shaped team-members' choices around *role selection* (Stryker, 1968). Simply put, this means that individuals choose to play whichever role is most relevant for an interaction (Stryker, 1968). The challenges reported by participant also relate to another of Goffman's concepts; *role segregation* (Goffman, 1961b). As social actors are involved in networks consisting of multiple roles, they will often have many (un)related selves to manage during encounters, and *role segregation* helps them to possess and conceal contradictory qualities by ensuring audiences in one role set do not appear in another (Goffman, 1961b). Where this is not possible, individuals experience *role conflict*, whereby dramaturgical uncertainty arises, alongside

embarrassment and vacillation (Goffman, 1961b). The notion of *biographical others* is important here because the participants were mindful of candidates building up a personal identification of them as TCSG coach educators and the possibility of that being discredited by virtue of an extended *front region* (Goffman, 1959, 1963a). Critically, this was emotionally challenging for participants as they lacked a secure *back region* where conduct was inconsequential, but rather had to consistently be *on* and act in ways to control negative implications for their biography (Goffman, 1963a). Instead of their identities *dividing the world up for them*, the participants' networks *crossed* and *connected* different worlds together (Goffman, 1963; Crossley, 2011). On this, Crossley (2011) writes that:

'The system hangs together because social actors bridge the various worlds which it involves, carrying influences over from one to the other and striving to maintain some sort of coherent and fulfilling life in the process ... the demands of different worlds might prove irreconcilable and actors might be damaged in the process of seeking to reconcile them ... worlds can go into crisis, generating repercussions in other worlds.' (p. 174).

The participants also employed protective (inter)action when co-tutors made a mistake on non-negotiable components of workshops. In these situations, they had a responsibility to fix the error without drawing attention to the misgiving. This included waiting for pauses, maintaining emotional neutrality, and indicating that they were *building on* or offering an alternative perspective to their co-tutor. As illustrated in the below fieldnote:

Trevor is giving some last-minute information to the candidates before they break out into their planning groups. I notice that Stuart was stood at the side of the room nodding in support of his co-tutor. Trevor seems to pause to collect his thoughts before setting the groups 'away' with the task. Stuart appears to have read that as a cue to interject and add some information "Guys just before you put pen to paper I want you to consider this [using an enthusiastic tone]. Trevor has just made some great points there and just to build on what he said about the different types of interventions we want to be seeing. Think about first of all who is in your session and how you are going to manage the numbers. Then, I want you to think about how you can get the information across that you need to. For example. Does it always have to be with everyone? Can you just stop a few individuals? Maybe a three or four while the others are playing" [Trevor didn't actually mention any of those points when he was talking to the group [was that interjection on purpose?]. The tutors set the task once Stuart has finished explaining [I see Trevor go over to him at the back of the room]. Trevor remarks [puffed cheeks] "Thanks for that [Stu]. I totally forgot to mention that! The most important bit [laughs]. Stuart responds "Ha. Don't worry about it mate. It's happened to me loads. That's why it's always best to have two tutors. It's a nightmare when you're doing it by yourself because you're running through



everything in your head and want to get like all of the content out but ironically you miss it all out”. [Fieldnote extract: 08.12.2019].

The participants experienced trade-offs between *not letting the mistake go* and maintaining a functional and collaborative working relationship with co-tutors. As non-negotiable content and activities were sequenced in a rigid manner throughout workshops, reparative action was necessary in order to prevent situations where mistakes might occur. The participants explained that even though they experienced negative emotions when mistakes occurred, they were sensitive to the consequences for their reputation if they were perceived by co-tutors to be abruptly interjecting or causing a scene. Instead, opportunities for re-addressing issues were identified. For example:

That task with Trevor...part of the session was to give the learners feedback on their coaching interventions which was then going to lead into our practical delivery next [day] ... if I went “I won’t bother saying anything” and we hammer them because they didn’t do any interventions they’re going to come back at us and we’ll have to go with something along the lines of “Ah yeah ... sorry we forgot that bit” ... that’s a huge part of the course so we’d look silly [laughs] ... it’s hard enough trying to keep pace with all that’s going on anyway without having to recall and avoid big bits of important information that you forgot to fix because me or Trevor will eventually slip up because it’s so central to the course ... a learner will more than likely remember something you’ve said and that’ll put you both on your arses ... I could see that he was fighting to get the information out so I brought the attention on me if that makes sense ... I never want to embarrass anyone and I think I have the social skills to get my point across without the candidates writing the other tutor off ... me and Trevor need to work effectively for the rest of the course and it’s not professional when tutors argue ... the last thing I want is for anything to get back fed back conduct wise and I wouldn’t want people dreading co-tutoring with me.” [Semi-structured interview with Stuart: 15.01.2020].

I was delivering a level two a long time ago with [superior] and he said there was no place for closed practice in coaching [laughs and shakes head], besides the fact that I couldn’t believe that he said that because for me there’s a place for every type of practice, he killed me coz’ I was delivering some content on the practice spectrum further down the line that’s vital to the course so I had to make sure that learners understood that his opinion was just that, so yeah I challenged his opinion but in a professional way, I just said, “To offer an alternative perspective, this is when it has worked for me and why I would use it in a session” ... there’d be no value in delivering some content that your co-tutor has just put on the blacklist, initially I tried to hide that bit of disbelief you have that a professional tutor would say something as black and white as that on a coach ed course just to keep that collective togetherness as a tutor team ... of course I need to make sure I’m not throwing him under the bus but if I didn’t come in there I don’t think I’d be worth my salt as an educator ... I think there’s a thin line that determines if your co-tutor does or doesn’t accept a comment on good faith but I’ll always speak to them after the workshop to make my reasons clear for chirping in during their part .[Semi-structured interview with Mike: 11.01.2020].

The participants highlighted that a shared understanding existed between tutors around content that tutors *just had to get out* because they were fundamental to TCSG's identity. This meant that when interjections happened, tutors did not experience ill-feeling towards co-tutors because they were *in the know* to each other's intentions. Controlling the flow of information to learners about the direction of delivery was a key strategy that allowed the conveying of corrections as seamless, routine, and generally unharmed. As the direction of workshops was managed on an ad-hoc basis, the participants *held things back* so that tutor team roles could be refined to re-address inadequacies without the candidates knowing that a different reality had been planned for. This was to avoid drawing attention to mistakes, as Barry and Dan allude to:

You might have a few people in the room at the same time ... other tutors and maybe some observers but there's no chance I'm lowering my standards and putting on a show to appease those people ... learners have got to be and will always be the priority and there's a broad expectation amongst the workforce that this's the right thing to do so there's never any hard feelings when a realignment has to happen ... in the kind of work we do it's reluctantly accepted that errors will occur at some point or other ... people will forget certain things but it goes back to the notion of letting things play out ... we always have the option of telling the candidates after the fact about why we've done a certain task or whatever but for the most part it's useful for the team to keep their hand hidden [laughs] ... we're fortunate in the sense that learners don't know much about what we've planned anyway but if there's a gap that'll muddy the water later then you look ahead and trade off what's most and least relevant for the needs of the group ... and slot that information in where it doesn't stand out and before the slot where it becomes essential ... we want to keep the candidates connected to the content so if we move things about when it comes to delivering it ... it needs to look authentic and seamless. [Semi-structured interview with Barry: 14.12.2019].

Because I'm a newbie still learning the ropes I've got that mindset of a learning process ... me and Logan are both on the course to get the best out the learners, I think there's a huge difference between intervening to undermine somebody and intervening to contribute to the value of the session ... it's not like Logan is stepping in to say "This session is shite and Dan is a bad coach educator", you know what I mean? maybe Logan has identified that I haven't considered or missed something or that he has a bit of a different angle to me, but if he didn't say it it'd be to the detriment of the learners and that's all that matters really ... I do welcome it from him as he's experienced and each time he intervenes it gives me a chance to listen and perhaps use that information down the line in a similar workshop, we have this shared mindset where actually I don't feel uncomfortable at all if he needs to correct anything because he's so genuine when he does it, like, how will the learners know if something has gone array, we're pretty good at holding that sort of stuff back, not in a bad way just if they know everything and something broke down then you'd take a credibility hit ... at least by holding things back they [candidates] can't see through it and won't be looking back at me [Semi-structured interview with Dan: 10.01.2020].

This differed for the *more negotiable* and less crucial aspects of delivery, where participants would actively ignore mistakes from their co-tutor and either readdress *gaps* during one of the check-in opportunities or at the end of the workshop when the candidates had gone home (see section 4.3). As tutors were aware of the consequences that *correcting* their co-tutor might have with learners, there was an *unspoken* agreement to ignore these mistakes and make a mental note of what was said so that they could re-adjust their own performances to prevent a slip of the tongue.

For example:

The first couple of weeks before you came along Dan was delivering a session on matchday management and basically during a breakaway conversation put a huge downer on playing four-four-two [puts his head in his hands] ... so I had to make a mental note 'fine ... he's said that ... remember that he's said it if you stumble upon the topic again' ... I'm not going to jump in here and say anything ... to be honest at level two [tactics] aren't even important so we'll comfortably get through the whole course without mentioning them again ... it just comes down to tutor philosophy more than anything ... it's not ideal when you have to keep the thought in the forefront of your mind when you're doing a workshop but I didn't want to put my two pennies worth in when it isn't needed and possibly shed a bad light on Dan ... simple fix ... I spoke to him during a coffee break ... "Dan ... these are new coaches ... if you tell them 'x' formation isn't great or instruction is bad or the game's always the teacher ... they're going to take that at face value" ... it's not essential so I could've easily left it till after the workshop. [Semi-structured interview with Logan: 02.12.2020].

You need to get away from destabilising the group and affecting the perception they have of the tutor team ... we have to be constantly red hot on TCSG's key messages so it's not right or even necessary to keep jumping in and amending the fluffy stuff erm ... which is more often than not where we actually get to bring the content alive around how it compares to our own coaching experience ... the only thing you're ever dealing with is the different opinions that tutors have of their own practice ... if it's opinion-based and subjective I let it pass and try not to make what I think public knowledge ... I don't need to challenge another tutor here because we both want things ticking along unless it's something major which after everyone has gone home ... I'd bring it up as a discussion point. [Semi-structured interview with Parker: 11.01.2020].

In addition to the individual dimensions of the *organisational underlife* that I introduced earlier, team-members also made collective adjustments to achieve workshop outcomes, such as those obligations felt when team-mates committed *faux pas* on negotiable and non-negotiable content (Goffman, 1959, 1961a). The understandings that underpinned these responsibilities reflect the *negotiated order* (Fine, 1984). For the participants, this included forming pacts and covert agreements that, at least appeared, to satisfy TCSG policies and agendas (Fine, 1984). Furthermore, to sustain effective working relationships, team-members relied on each other's *secondary*

*adjustments*, such as how and when (or if) they repaired the performance (Goffman, 1961a). Indeed, in their collective decision(s) to repair the performance, participants selectively applied, stretched, and *fudged* TCSG rules in accordance with their own personal interests (i.e., avoid spoiling their reputation and revealing secrets about the performance) (Scott, 2015).

In some respects, team-members had to be sensitised to the political, cultural, and social characteristics that formed the *organisational underlife* in order to manage ‘moral obligations’ associated with loyalty to TCSG and their co-tutors (Goffman, 1959, 1961a). One example of this is the *dramaturgical discipline* exercised by participants when repairing and the protective facework that concealed abnormalities about the performance (Goffman, 1959, 1967). Although Goffman (1959) contends that team-members ought to unobtrusively attend to the mistakes of team-members and remain vigilant in preparation of any new lines of action, there must also be discipline in non-action also (i.e., non-negotiables). As Goffman (1959) describes:

‘When a member of the team makes a mistake in the presence of the audience, the other team-members must often suppress their immediate desire to punish and instruct the offender, that is, until the audience is no longer present. After all, immediate corrective sanctioning would only often disturb the interaction further and, as previously, suggested, make the audience privy to a view that ought to be reserved for team-mates.’ (p. 94).

To avoid conflict between team-members, Goffman (1959) explained that individuals ought to convince one another that they are loyal and well-disciplined performers. For participants, this meant individually and collectively *satisficing* the ideal standards of teamwork to manage the various pressures placed on them and essentially, *do enough* (i.e., time constraints, lack of planning, ambiguous scripts, uncertain relations) (Simon, 1957). The technique used to conceal this was *tactful inattention*, in that team-members did not publicly attend to the errors of team-mates but were *jolted out of their habitual customs* to the extent that they adapted their performance in response (Goffman, 1959). The discretion shown by participants by virtue of this *facework* was designed as a *supportive interchange* to develop solidarity (Goffman, 1967, 1971). Team-mates, then, should have:

‘A willingness to hold in check one’s performance so as not to introduce too many contradictions, interruptions, or demands for attention; the inhibition of all acts or statements that might create a faux pas; the desire, above all else, to avoid a scene.’ (p. 224).

The participants did not only feel responsible for colleagues who were in their immediate presence, but also for those who were delivering courses at different venues. As learners were able to attend a variety of workshops on different courses to achieve certification, there was a greater risk of unintentionally contradicting and discrediting colleagues, as well as being discredited and contradicted by them. The lack of a collective identity amongst the workforce meant that there were inconsistencies in coach educators' interpretations of the content which, in turn, increased ambiguity and made it difficult to foresee what had a colleague had said or done elsewhere. To minimise the risk(s) of conflicting practice(s), tutors employed defensive scripts (i.e., "coaching is subjective") when learners pointed irregularities. For example:

Patrick is delivering a workshop segment on coach observation. He starts by talking about coaching position and whether or not a coach should stand outside the area or inside. Patrick says "You will hear a lot of people talk about not going into the middle of the activity because you're disrupting it. You should only ever just stand at different positions around the outside. What does our coaching observation give us? Pictures doesn't it. So, if we're stood can get a feel for what the participants are feeling, seeing, and experiencing rather than just going off what we see. There's nothing wrong with just getting in there and getting amongst it". A learner quickly raises their hand [Patrick smiles and nods towards them] "That's all fair enough but I was on workshop [number] a few weeks back with [colleague] and he said that you should only ever be in the middle once you have corrected something" [Patrick pauses for a second]. "Look. The thing is that [sport] is totally subjective and the reason why we all love it is because it is all about opinions. Simple as that. I'm talking from my experience and [colleague is talking about his]. Neither of what we said might work for you so you need to find your own way. There's no right answer. You just need to do a bit trial and error that's all. As long as you can rationalise and justify your decision then that's fine. [There wasn't time to approach Patrick before we broke for lunch but I caught up with him at the break to ask him why he decided to roll out that script despite clearly disagreeing with his colleague]. "As you heard there that bloke had got a different response off [colleague] than me erm which is good in one way but it just means there's a lack of like continuity and people can get confused erm. I mean, the last thing I want to do is discredit [colleague] erm so you just need to be ready for some of that stuff coming at you and erm you can just put the onus on the learner to think critically. You know like I did there just put a positive spin on it. I suppose it is all part and parcel of the role you know what I mean. We aren't like central to TCSG er because we were literally employed to deliver some of the content but draw on our own experiences of coaching to bring it to life and even at some points like critically analyse it. When you think about it like that like we were employed for our experiences. [Colleague] has been in the game longer than me and has a totally different background so actually why would we have the same outlooks. Of course there are going to be some differences in the way we interpret some of the material. It just wouldn't be right for everyone to be a robot, especially when we have invested years and years into developing our knowledge and practice. But yeah, I suppose that I can sort of say 'well, [colleague] isn't wrong and neither am I, take my

opinion on this as well'. It's a win win because I can get my point over without looking like I'm stitching someone up". [Fieldnote extract: 22.01.2020].

In these situations, the participants felt an obligation to *look after* the tutor workforce and avoid putting their colleagues in awkward and potentially damaging situations. The participants explained that they used these strategies to avoid the candidates gossiping about what they had seen, heard, or done in other workshops with the aim of comparing, and causing conflict between, coach educators. To a degree, this was a form of solidarity that served the purpose of maintaining pleasant relations with learners while also protecting the credibility of colleagues. The tutors were concerned that if they were perceived to have *over-stepped*, colleagues would be less inclined to collaborate with them when they were required to work together. For example:

I think it is important to do it because they [learners] might have a completely different tutor team if they move across for some reason ... and if they come in and say "Well Stuart said this and that" ... I don't want them to be confused if that makes sense so it is best to just set the stall out [and] I don't want candidates thinking that Stuart knows everything and the other tutor is shite ... We're [tutors] all part of a team and we need to look after one another and back each other up like if I haven't worked with a tutor before and a learner goes over and starts chatting crap like "Oh so and so said you are wrong" that's going to form the wrong impression with them straight away and when you do eventually work together they're going to have a really negative preconception of you ... so if you create an element of "You're going to have to think for yourself" it's making space for different interpretations to be made and received positively. [Semi-structured interview with Stuart: 28.02.2020].

Yeah [laughs], when you get learners coming out with "Well I was on a course with whoever and that isn't what they said" you need to be prepared to back it up "Yeah that's because that is his own philosophy and this is mine, what's yours?" I throw it back onto them ... I won't be one-hundred percent sure what other tutors have said because obviously there's a bit variation in how we see things but I don't want to be saying things I shouldn't be or giving incorrect information that puts another tutor in a fairly awkward situation where they're on the back foot or put them in a position where they need to say "I wouldn't listen to Patrick because he's wrong" ... I think some learners like playing games and see if they can pit the tutors off against each other but we know the crack ... if you run that line then what will they have to say to other tutors? Nothing. [Semi-structured interview with Patrick: 08.03.2020].

The extension of these strategies to co-tutors was often problematic because the unfamiliarity that shaped collegial relationships meant that the participants could not predict whether reparative interjections would be accepted on *good faith*. Several of the participants explained that they wanted to avoid open conflict with co-tutors in the presence of learners or being

stigmatised as a *dickhead*, which was anticipated to have negative consequences for their reputation. In these instances, the participants reported concealing their initial responses to their co-tutors' opinions and behaviours to maintain the façade of teamwork. Remaining silent was an act of bargaining used by tutors to *live their values* without conveying a sense of collegial resistance or disagreement to learners. For example:

What's the relationship like that you have with that person? if you have a bit of mutual respect or if you don't really know a particular tutor ... I'm not sure if they'd be bothered if I made a point, there're times when I'm watching people and thinking 'what the fuck are they doing here', from that initial observation I'm building a picture of that person and thinking we're poles apart, there's no point in even starting that debate ... I have a couple of people in mind who I haven't worked with too much and honestly I'm not sure how they would react, I'm intrigued by how assured some tutors are of their opinions and promote it as gospel [puffs cheeks out], I'm really lazy in those situations like why create a fuss, in that picture I'm gaging a level of respect in terms of where our beliefs align and if they don't I'm just going to let you crack on because if I say anything it'll light up ... I wouldn't even bother talking to them about it during the breaks because I'm not sure it would be taken on board positively ... it's bad to make another tutor look less competent so you've always got to try and keep that teamwork bit basically ... there're places where you need to stay silent to distance yourself from an opinion you don't agree with to make a point without chastising anyone. [Laughs]. I wouldn't want them to think I'm a dickhead or an arse you know what I mean ... from that point of view we'll be working together in the future and there's a reputation thing to it as well. [Semi-structured interview with Mike: 25.11.2019].

Goffman (1959) contends that problems can arise for performers in social establishments where different members of the team handle different audiences at the same time as cross-contamination can cause doubts over the credibility of the performance. Although Goffman (1959) argued that individuals only rely on the dramaturgical cooperation of team-members who are present in the staging of a routine, it seems that participants dealt with such contingencies by extending loyalty to *colleagues*. Despite not collaborating together like team-mates, TCSG colleagues shared a *community of fate* as actions on one course could threaten the wider scope of workshop delivery on another (Goffman, 1959). While a lack of shared interpretation and familiarity created ambiguity for exercising loyalty, employees knew about one another's shared difficulties and created *scripts* based on a *collective reference group* (Crossley, 2011; Goffman, 1959). That is, participants' knowledge of network activities shaped what they did and said when pressed by learners, as did the repercussions for relationships with TCSG managers and colleagues (Crossley, 2011). In describing the need for collegial solidarity, Goffman (1959):

‘There are colleague groupings of a more corporate character, whose members are so closely identified in the eyes of other people that the good reputation of one practitioner depends on the good conduct of others. If one member is exposed and causes a scandal, then all lose some public repute. As cause and effect of such identification we often find that the members of the grouping are formally organised into a single collectivity which is allowed to represent the professional interests of the grouping to discipline any member who threatens to discredit the definition of the situation fostered by others.’ (p. 164).

Goffman (1959) believed that team-members can threaten the previous and future stands of others by making defective concessions to the audience. Specifically, when team-members become explicitly antagonistic and indulgent at certain moments, it negatively impact the consensus established between the audience, the remaining team-members, and the transgressors themselves (Goffman, 1959). Using their awareness as *transceivers*, participants were conscious about avoiding these kind of concessions because of the possible intentions of candidates to gossip (Goffman, 1963b). That is, as well as being aware of their own performance, team-members were sensitive to the potential falsehoods in the image that the audience was presenting to them (Goffman, 1959). Shulman (2017) explains that if a party line is to be sustained in the workplace, employees must show loyalty to empower the wider working consensus and encourage others to conform in kind, cumulatively (i.e., show loyalty to colleagues to avoid being contradicted). Participants also applied this when working with team-mates, despite discreetly seeking to resist their claims. Here, participants showed discipline while simultaneously achieving *role distance* to separate themselves from poor team-members (1959, 1961b). Rather than explicitly criticising or defecting from their moral obligations, the polite appearance of consensus was maintained to avoid a scene (Goffman, 1959). Goffman (1959) explains that this is important, because:

‘Such misconduct is often devastating to the performance which the disputants ought to be presenting; one effect of the quarrel is to provide the audience with a back-stage view, and another is to leave them with the feeling that something is surely suspicious about a performance when those who know it best do not agree.’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 205).

The emphasis that participants placed on upholding their own professional and personal standards spanned beyond the protection of colleagues to the securing of working conditions that allowed the workforce to collectively perform in ideal ways often divorced from TCSG’s *blueprint*. In the presence of superiors, who were based nationally, tutors would achieve this by agreeing to operate in the *grey areas* of practice, whereby they would emphasise their commitment to the TCSG. This



ranged from the selected pedagogical methods, content that was delivered, and the conversations that occurred between the tutors themselves as well as those with the superior(s). For example:

[The tutors have moved some parts of the workshops around to fit the group. Specifically, they have delivered a workshop that is meant to be presented tomorrow morning earlier today]. William, Patrick, and [Co-tutor] walk away from the learners as the practical activities are being delivered [the tutors are stood at the opposite edge of the field to the observers]. William turns to his colleagues “Did you see the message? [rolls his eyes] [the other tutors shake their heads] My phone just pinged on the way down [big pause, hands on hips]. The fuckin’ new boy is coming tomorrow isn’t he. It’s the honeymoon period for him so he’ll want everything nailed on and by the book. He was saying he needs to get away by twelve as he has a meeting with [national manager] down at [venue]. It’s meant to be your workshop tomorrow Pat on delivering a curriculum and linking sessions” [Pat laughs “The one I did today you mean”]. “I tell you what we’ll do. Any reservations just say. He has to be away early doors so we’ll get those who delivered their session today to present their session plans to the group and talk about how it will link to the next few sessions, which pretty much sets us up for the afternoon perfectly. He’s one of those educationalist types as well so he’ll love it” [both co-tutors nod, laugh, and share a glance]. [Fieldnote extract: 12.02.2020].

[I get to the venue slightly later than the tutors and notice that Patrick is greeting the learners while ‘co-tutor’ and William are speaking to the ‘superior’. I wander over to the table and sit down, discreetly, without showing my note taking]. William is largely dominating the whole conversation [mostly small talk regarding the ‘drive up’ and a brief on some courses the tutors have previously delivered, and some feedback on the newly refurbished [level 3] while [co-tutor] is just there in a supportive ‘nodding’ capacity. [Superior, in an inquisitive and enthusiastic tone asks about this morning’s plans]. William [showing the superior a sheet of paper] “We’ve actually had to move some things around from yesterday. It was scheduled for heavy rain so what we did was get the groups to deliver and just allow them to present their session to the group today. As you know, it was Pat’s workshop today but we’re going to try and throw it over to them and see how they cope with it. At the end of the day it’s all about them and their experiences and we’ll just chime in where and if we can”. [Superior gives a nod of approval and remarks “I’ve never seen this workshop delivered in this way before so I’ll be really interested to see how it plays out”]. [Fieldnote extract: 13.02.2020].

In these situations, it was beneficial for tutors to keep hidden any evidence of previous dialogue with one another and learners so that the *performance* they gave was accepted as an authentic representation of practice. The goal in these situations was to convince a superior of the quality of performances so that they would leave swiftly and not ask any probing questions that would reveal the reality of the routine. While this surely put the participants in good stead with their managers, it also meant that their local TCSG was not on the *naughty list* and could operate how they saw fit without ongoing surveillance that would possibly disrupt the perceived ideal working conditions:

The truthfulness of the delivery, if that's what you want to call it, totally depends on which member of the national [organisation staff] comes up to observe doesn't it? I know all of the rhetoric like "Don't be a nodding dog" and "Challenge us" but that's all it is ... in reality what they say goes, some of them at the national TCSG have a right axe to grind with [local TCSG] for some reason or other so you know when you're delivering together that you will need to keep some things under your hat but the trick is to do nothing massively out of the ordinary so you don't trip up ... do enough to satisfy their agenda so when they walk away they're satisfied and it's a matter of good riddance until we get to do the merry dance again, some of them can be trusted as well like, they're not all bad ... what you find is that that they'll run to their bosses to get a gold star and a quick leg up the ladder which at a local level can have huge repercussions in terms of what we can and can't do ... we have a lot of experienced coach educators in this TCSG who do a great job but they [national staff] don't see that, they just see spreadsheets and a mystical formula to how we should all be delivering, we were employed to make the courses better so it's a hard pill to swallow knowing that these people have the final say over everything that goes on up and down the country [Semi-structured interview with Patrick: 20.02.2020].

In establishments, people of various statuses are expected to align themselves into two groupings, but this is a complex endeavour given that teams are not fixed entities, meaning that loyalty is apportioned according to the situation (Goffman, 1959). Indeed, in instances where tutor teams received visits from national TCSG staff, they reported being morally obligated and loyal to one another and their respective TCSG (Goffman, 1959). The *fabrications* that teams constructed were akin to the *visiting fireman complex* outlined by Goffman (1959). This involves a strange colleague being afforded honorific team membership when they enter the team's presence (Goffman, 1959). Rather than a sign of intimacy, this was a collusive act based on the threat associated with national managers (Scott, 2015). For participants, superiors were perceived as *informers* that pretended to be a member of the team to accrue destructive information that could be reported. This was a cynical act to avoid consequences relating to working conditions. As Goffman (1959) noted:

'When inferiors extend their most lavish reception for visiting superiors, the selfish desire to win favour may not be the chief motive; the inferior may be tactfully attempting to put the superior at ease by simulating the kind of world the superior is thought to take for granted.' (p. 30).

The pacts and agreements made by team-members formed other features of the *organisational underlife* and *negotiated order* described earlier (Fine, 1984; Goffman, 1961a). These were, however, seeded in a global awareness of the surreptitious involvements that comprised *institutional arrangements* in the TCSG network (Goffman, 1961a). In this sense,

*institutional arrangements* consisted of the assorted pockets of power-struggles and competitions that took place between different strands of the organisation in the acquisition of access to power and resources (Goffman, 1961a). By satisfying the expectations of TCSG superiors, team-members and local TCSG staff, the participants were able to access power and resources that allowed them to locally improvise performances (Crossley, 2011; Goffman, 1961a). The relative position of national managers in the TCSG network, in comparison to tutors, influenced conformity (Crossley, 2011). As network *brokers*, that is, individuals who connect different parts of a network (i.e., regional TCSG and national TCSG), superiors were considered as *strong ties* (Crossley, 2011). As a result, they were able to exercise power during interaction and lever desired responses from tutors, and ultimately constrain action, to access said resources (Crossley, 2011). On the influential nature of network structures and configurations, Crossley (2011) explains that:

‘Certain actors are better positioned within a network for certain forms of action than other actors. Equally, however, it may be that global properties of the network affect all actors within it in the same way and to the same extent, affecting their capacity to pursue individual and/or collective goals. Likewise, although networks do not cause actions, certain figurations may, for example, ‘encourage’ harmony or conflict in the respect that they variously facilitate or inhibit the generation of trust, cooperation, good communication etc. Between individual positions and the network as a whole it is often possible to identify sub-networks within a network whose presence has effects both within and beyond the boundary that demarcates them.’ (p. 145).

On top of these acts of collaboration between employees, there were moments when participants would feign their commitment to the tutor team. For instance, during gaps in delivery (i.e., breaks, transitions, manufactured backstages), tutor teams engaged in forms of satire and criticism of superiors and learners who were present, contrary to how they directly treated them throughout interactions. Even though tutors did not necessarily agree, they joined in to signify their solidarity:

William and Patrick are moving tables and chairs around for when the learners return back from lunch. Their [superior] had come in to observe. Once they had finished, William pokes his head around the door to make sure that [superior] wasn't present “Did you see the fucking email that he sent saying plan like I'm not going to be there? You're meant to be delivering you lazy bastard. No wonder there is always tension [William is very angry and frustrated]. They all laugh about him in the office. Even [colleague] said that he won't even take his arse up there and go and see them [laughs] because he bloody knows he's a joke. He has got a big decision to make if he has a future with the organisation” [the superior enters the room and goes to sit at the side] [the chat stops and the tutors return to finalising their set-up] [there's an atmosphere]. A couple of minutes pass and [superior] leaves to answer his phone [the tutors congregate]. William remarks “Patrick did you

fucking see that? He doesn't give a fuck man. You can feel the tension all of the time and it's no good for the learners. I'm telling [colleague] about this. [Patrick nods "Well, we can only do what we can do mate"]. William resumes "you can't even talk to him. Loads of people have fucked him off because of this. He hasn't contributed one fucking bit. [half an hour or so later]. William and Patrick are following the learners outside for the practical sessions [superior has gone to his car for a coat]. William turns to Pat "This is fucking embarrassing this you know. It's his fucking course and I'm only filling in. Up there he has basically just said that he doesn't want to be here. He is missing his kid. Well. I'm exactly the same [Pat says "Yeah. So am I. It's just a thing you have to deal with. I sort of get where he's coming from though]. It might sound absolutely brutal but that's just the way it is. Everyone knows what the requirements and expectations are. If you can't see it through just leave it. There will no doubt be tons of people who would love the role [shakes his head]. I feel like saying to him just go home. Pat, I'm going to take a photo of him just lurking about in the background and send it through to [colleague] to bump it up the chain. Disgraceful showing". [Fieldnote extract: 16.12.2019].

The group have stopped for their morning break after coming in from some learner-led practical sessions. Sat at the front of the room [enjoying a coffee and a biscuit], Trevor and Stuart begin to bad mouth a learner on the course [this candidate is coaching at the highest level in the room and played at a professional level in the past]. Trevor turns to Stuart [with venom and haste] "He thinks he knows everything. Swaggering around thinking 'what the hell can I learn off two level one tutors'. You know what mate [satire of the learner], you might think that you know everything but you're still only on a level one" [Stuart shakes his head, laughs, and remarks "Yeah, I see what you mean"]. Trevor goes on "Well, his practical was the worst one I had seen. I was really disappointed if I'm honest. I bet you it was nabbed straight off Youtube. Even when he went in I didn't think it was at the level he should've been giving, especially when you consider where he is coaching and where he's played" [Stuart nods, laughs, and shoots me a look out the corner of his eye as Trevor turned around to get some paper out of his bag] [as the learners come back in from their break, one of the learners approaches the desk to ask the tutors a question, upon which they revive their happy tutor personas "hello, mate. What can we do for you?"] [Fieldnote extract: 15.12.2019].

Several of the participants explained that it was important to stay neutral and not be seen or heard by others to be engaging in risqué banter. Generally, tutors were fearful of something *getting back* to superiors or colleagues that would tarnish their reputation as well as putting the future fun element of their role into doubt. Therefore, it was beneficial to *bite your tongue* to avoid spoiling relations with key decision makers (i.e., managers) and influential colleagues who could sway others' opinions of them, which would limit their capacity to portray their identity to others and have it confirmed. It was important, however, that workers at least *appeared* to be *on board* with their colleagues so that their trustworthiness remained unquestioned As tutors did not receive any

formal training for their role, they drew upon social *rules* from their full-time jobs or past experiences as course candidates. For example:

I keep my council close by and try not to give too many of my own opinions ... it's the same at [full-time role] when teachers are talking in small groups about one another and word travels fast kind ... if someone is stood in front of you bad mouthing a colleague they could easily be doing that about me ... sorry to digress but it's happened where there's been a few of us around the table at lunch and there's been a half-an-hour onslaught of spouting off about line managers or candidates on the course ... I'll nod or maybe laugh ... yeah ... once it was about somebody I'd never even met so I didn't make a negative comment or join in or anything like that for me each person has my respect until they don't .... I try to play it in a non-committed way if that makes sense because I don't want things to become really uncomfortable ... you know some of the personalities in the workforce ... imagine if I said "Howay man give him a chance you've never even met him". [Laughs] ... when I went to the car to get my bait I would've been slagged off ... I'd love to be more outspoken but to have these effective working relationships you need to bite your tongue and not give your exact opinion ... I think the relationships I have with these tutors would become less fun and more serious and formal if I'm honest and I don't like working like that ... people would not be open and honest and talk about me behind my back to others which could potentially cast a seed of doubt about my integrity with those above ... we simply don't get a lot of time together to be able to judge whether you can trust someone to keep a secret. [Semi-structured interview with Stuart: 10.01.2020].

There's undoubtedly a difference between being assigned to the team by [local TCSG] and actually being a [emphasised] part of the team itself ... I'm not going to force myself to indulge a conversation I don't agree with just to be seen as one of the lads ... I suppose although I don't care if people like me or not you still need to carry yourself so that you can still have a good time with your co-tutors and stop the courses from becoming tedious ... I won't ignore whoever is speaking or go on my phone or anything but I'll make sure that I'm not overheard saying anything that could be misconstrued ... I'll sit back and watch it unfold ... I've taken quite a bit of that stuff away from [full-time job] ... I'll say to the students "Look I don't need to be hearing that because it is a safeguarding issue" ... look at society today and you can't say what you could twenty years ago ... if we're on a course joking about a learner or the gaffer and we're overheard or a tutor passes it up the chain they could easily complain about us for bullying and discrimination which would put us out a job in [sport] for life. [Semi-structured interview with Patrick: 24.01.2020].

These decisions were even more complex for less experienced tutors who classed themselves as *easy picking* due to a lack of standing within their respective organisations. While it was important for these workers to make a good impression with management to convince them of their followership, they were also aware that if they openly resisted their co-tutors' *banter* that they could be stigmatised. This was largely centred upon how trustworthy their colleagues would see them and thus wanted to avoid suspicion, particularly as newbies are reliant on them for ongoing development. For example:

I'm a little bit more cautious with the coach ed ... if I overheard something in [full time role] I'd be a bit more vocal because I know I'm contracted whereas you're self-employed as a tutor ... if it gets back to these people that you've been speaking negatively about them they can make your job very difficult in some way shape or form ... I think tutors that have their feet under the table are stronger character than me and people high up the chain give them a wide berth ... as a new tutor I sort of hide behind them in those situations because I'm easy picking aren't I and a perfect candidate to make an example out of to the workforce ... as long as I don't go tittle tattling to anyone about what's said at any point then there's no real reason that people either upstairs or in the tutor team can't trust me ... it is only banter so nothing really needs to be reported coz' again that's going to create a bad environment for the team ... I don't really want to start anything either as all of the other tutors are your support system and do help you get to grips with the nooks and crannies of the job erm ... being honest ... most of the tutor team have been around the scene a lot longer than I have and they're much more familiar to [superiors] who are bound to know what they're like already so if I go running saying he's said this and that people will ask one can we trust you and two can Dan deal with the banter? [Semi-structured interview with Patrick: 28.12.2019].

Goffman (1959) described *back region* gossip as an everyday social practice that helps to build solidarity between team-members through the means by which they collude in restricting the flow of information to other teams and audiences. Within the limited *back regions* available to participants throughout workshops, the gossip exchanged between team-mates resembled *treatment of the absent* (Goffman, 1959). Here, team-members enter into a tirade of personal satires, extensive gripe sharing, misnaming, and generally treating the audience and its members in a way that contradicts front region conduct towards them (see section 4.3) (Goffman, 1959). Alongside gossiping about TCSG, superiors, and learners, other back region conduct included *playful aggressivity and kidding* that represented an *intimacy without warmth* (Goffman, 1959). In these situations, Goffman (1959) suggests that team-members ought to demonstrate their commitment and obligation to the team by engaging in such activities. For participants, however, conformity was not as harmonious and one-dimensional as Goffman outlined as team-members had to simultaneously navigate competing expectations. Crossley (2011) elaborates:

'Living within a flow of networked interactions has a transformative impact upon actors and their interests, which, in turn, impacts back upon the interaction such that it is always multi-dimensional and more complex than reductionist and simplified models can hope to capture.' (p.64).

In moments where participants had to *bite their tongue*, they carefully managed their *appearance, manner, decorum, and deference* (Goffman, 1956; 1959). Acts of restraint reflected the

pressures of *role dissensus*, in that obligations in relation to group affiliations with TCSG tutors, superiors, and course candidates created a plurality of competing *ideals* for self-presentation that would be consequential for their credibility and reputation in TCSG network if not met (Goffman, 1961b). Therefore, team-members had to remain *dramaturgically circumspect* in how they managed this complex web of loyalty and the repercussions certain indiscretions could have with key relations in the present and future (Goffman, 1959). The pensive *facework* used by participants was based on experience(s) of *passing off* as a loyal team-member in previous back region interactions and coming to know how defectors are treated, what others *really think of them*, and how to veer towards acceptable courses of interaction (Goffman, 1963a). The dilemma, then, was between being accepted by team-mates and sufficiently demonstrating *role distance* to candidates (Goffman, 1961b). Goffman (1963a) explains:

‘It is often assumed with evidence, that the passer will feel torn between two attachments. He will feel some alienation from his new ‘group’, for he is unlikely to be able to identify fully with their attitude to what he knows he can be shown to be. And presumably he will suffer feelings of disloyalty and self-contempt when he cannot take action against ‘offensive’ remarks made by members of the category he is passing out of – especially when he finds it is dangerous to refrain from joining in this vilification (p. 109).

Much like the constraining influence network configurations had on team collaboration, participants were similarly restricted in their expression when dealing with ambivalent feelings about the conduct of team-mates (Goffman, 1963b). By virtue of transceivership, a careful approach to demonstrating loyalty meant that team-members avoided falling foul of the *insider’s folly* (Goffman, 1963b; 1974). To reiterate, this is the:

‘Rose-tinted belief that everyone is on our side in interaction, or indeed that there are no sides. Competition may be no less fierce between those who share a superficial and are obliged to conceal their personal opinions beneath the façade of team solidarity’ (Scott, 2015, p. 216).

Witnessing the individualist intentions of team-mates during previous interactions made participants suspicious of their trustworthiness and thus pursued cooperation cautiously, exercising discipline while remaining vigilant that they may be being *hoodwinked*. Scott (2015) explains:

‘Being aware of both the deceiver and deceived perspectives and recognising that anyone can inhabit either, the actor sees the potential for the tables to be turned: Just as

we might drift from innocence to guilt, so might significant others become the perpetrators of deception, and we the victims.’ (p. 230).

As information flowed through densely populated networks, team-members wanted to avoid having future opportunities dampened because of spoiled relations (Crossley, 2011). In this respect, because team-mates had the power to stigmatise one another, it encouraged a prescribed way of (inter)acting (Burkitt, 2014; Goffman, 1963a). While the sharing of mutual contacts within TCSG network shaped collaboration, relationships of exchange and interdependence were also barriers (Crossley, 2011). For example, the limited access novice tutors had to resources in comparison to experienced tutors contributed to an increased vulnerability, meaning that *deference* had to be shown when dealing with banter to receive resources (Crossley, 2011; Goffman, 1956). This micro-politics of emotion (Clark, 1990) relates to Lawler’s (2001) notion of *reciprocal interchanges*. That is, because team-members paid forward emotions as a resource, they expected team-mates to respond in kind (Lawler, 2001). Tutors interpreted and responded to situations by drawing on previous experiences (i.e., biographies) and conventions from other social worlds (Crossley, 2011).

#### 4.3 Post-Workshop

Once learners were dismissed from their respective workshops, I regularly witnessed co-tutors conducting private discussions in classrooms and car parks. These conversations unpacked events that unfolded during the workshop and addressed issues that had arisen. The tutors reflected on the performance of candidates, created preliminary plans for the following workshop, and gave feedback to their co-tutors. From my observations, it was clear that the participants wanted to protect the privacy of these discussions and took several steps to ensure their confidentiality. This included closing doors, sitting away from entrances, and monitoring car parks and corridors:

[William checks his watch and briskly strides to the front of the room to bring the workshop to a close] “WELL DONE TODAY PEOPLE ... before you go can you bring all the pens and loose bits of paper to the front? ... there’s a referee committee meeting in here next so we need to leave the room exactly how we found it ... see you all next [day]” [learners depart with a handshake]. Patrick’s collecting in resources from tables and peeling off bits of blue tack from the walls where the [TCSG coaching framework] posters were stuck. William zips his laptop bag shut and pulls two chairs out before leaving the classroom to scan the toilets, staircase, and corridor leading to the [department] floor. On



his way back he makes sure the door's closed shut and realigns the chairs so that him and Patrick are facing the glass pane. A minute or so later, Patrick throws the spare resources next to the equipment and the tutors re-gather around the table. William remarks "peace and quiet at last ... another successful day ... what're your reflections?" [Patrick quivers a little in his seat "errr ... it went alright ... no dramas I don't think"]. William retorts [throwing his arms in the air] "everything WAS fine apart from the session wrecker at the back ... fuck me ... I hate people like that ... they come on a course and just think about themselves ... that's it ... his card's marked now ... don't ask him to join a practical again coz he killed us today" [Fieldnote extract: 12.12.2020].

While packing away, Stuart's disturbed by a group of learners struggling with the online modules [I sense that he wants to rush them out the door but doesn't out of politeness]. Mid way through the conversation, the venue caretaker crashes through the fire-door [looking a little disgruntled himself] "gents I'll be locking the gates in fifteen minutes mind". Trevor walks over to the learners, almost apologetically "fellas can I ask a favour? ... we've got to get all of this away before we get locked in ... could you either text or email us and we'll get back to you?" [I help Stuart and Trevor carry their TCSG branded resources to the car park and load the equipment. Both tutors deeply sigh and lean against their car doors]. Trevor gasps "I was shocked with how poor [Marvin's] session was by the way ... the way he was name dropping and giving it the biggun' I was expecting more finer technical and tactical detail but he did nothing ... I'd be very weary if he was delivering sessions like that at [semi-professional club] ... give him his due though ... he worked well with [course peer] and listened to what he had to say ... I thought he might try and dominate it but he surprised me ... do you think we should do anything different with the groupings next week?" [grimacing, Stuart timidly] ... "No ... I thought those two worked really well together too ... my only thing would be can we give a minimum delivery time for each coach ... it doesn't have to be in time slots either it could be I'll do the introduction and first coaching point then you could step in and do the first demo and the next coaching point and so on ... [learner] was telling me that he put his idea over and was like "this is what we do at College" and the guy was like "nah that's shite we'll do mine" but apparently he didn't explain it very well so [learner] didn't have a clue what he was doing ... I'm just thinking about the pack and what we're delivering in a few weeks' time that's all ... they're not going to be able to action their feedback if their time on the grass is really limited". [Fieldnote extract: 02.02.2020].

[Patrick and William are enjoying a cup of coffee in the County TCSG staffroom while engaged in a workshop debrief. Patrick is frustrated because he's struggling to answer questions from learners and pitch level two content in an engaging way]. William advises, softly "you labour on parts which causes the room to occasionally get away from you ... nice and short ... snappy ... we know where the characters are who're bursting at the seams to answer all the time so use them to your advantage and let the room stimulate itself [Patrick nods] ... you've got the detail in your head ... principles of [coaching framework] ... the whole course is about what they're doing in their clubs so can you tell them about your observations and get people talking amongst themselves and remove yourself ... look out for those speaking the most and use what they're saying as a springboard for how you probe the group any further ... we don't have to be a fountain of all knowledge anymore. [Fieldnote extract: 22.02.2020].

When creating plans for proceeding workshops, members of the tutor team prioritised addressing new and unanticipated issues or mistakes to prevent them from reoccurring in the future. In these instances, the participants emphasised focusing on the short-term and *worrying about the rest later*. The discussions that I observed attended to the introduction of materials and resources, provisional role allocation, session design, learning outcomes, the sequencing of activities, timing, arranging in-situ visits, and devising plans for learners. An example is provided in the fieldnote below:

[William sits down opposite Patrick with a can of ‘Monster Energy’ in hand, he pulls himself closer to the table and briefly puts his head in his hands to wipe his face. Yawning, he pulls a ‘pukka pad’ out of his briefcase and opened at a page titled ‘in-situ visits’. Tapping the page with his finger, William straightens up to talk] ... “right ... Pat ... next [date] you’re on the opener ... I think we both agree that what we saw on those initial visits was fucking frightening to say the least ... we need to address that straight away next [date] to get us on track for where we’re gonna be nudging them to go ... it’s gonna feel like a bomb’s been dropped but they need to hear it otherwise it’s going to be a struggle getting through block three” [Patrick nods while looking at the scheme of work]. [William suggests that practical groups should be split into quarters, with each group occupying half a pitch and one tutor to look after each pitch] ... “they took an age to set-up today coz’ they’re looking for constant reassurance ... if we spend all our time with a pair in the current format we’re not gonna be able to get half out that we need to” [Patrick, with his head resting on a clenched fist, nods]. William restarts “if we do four groups that’ll give us plenty of time to play with on [date] to go over the project and feedback in the afternoon” [Patrick, “I’m easy to go with the flow if I’m honest with you”]. William [nodding] “some of these haven’t even had their first in-situ yet and we can’t sign them off until that’s all done and dusted ... I’ll have a look to see who those are and we’ll give them a bit more attention so we can get more of an idea of where they’re at ... I’ll sort the groups and email you”. [Fieldnote extract: 18.01.2020]

William and Stuart explained that these impromptu interactions were necessary because of the unpredictable nature of their day-to-day lives. Obligations associated with full-time jobs and family commitments meant that they could not guarantee their availability between workshops and did not want to leave collective planning discussions to chance. Rather than having everything *set in stone* immediately after workshops, William and Stuart told me that departing with *some* understanding of anticipated content and roles were *good enough* for ensuring they were confident enough of giving a clean, sharp, and seamless performance. Thus, having a basic understanding at this point reduced the likelihood of mistakes and afforded them opportunities to interact in the week leading up to the workshop or at the venue to ask questions and establish clarity. For example:

We have those conversations afterwards, “what do you think about that?”, “what do we think that they might need next week?”, the tutoring’s only an extra for a lot of the boys so we have to use the time wisely ... people have busy lives with full-time jobs and family and you can’t predict what your day’s going to look like from one minute to the next ... I could say to Patrick, “we’ll go for next Wednesday and have a good chat” and come Wednesday it’ll be along the lines of “sorry William I can’t make it the missus is stuck in traffic on the way home from work and I need to take the little one swimming” ... the discussion with Patrick, all you can do is give a general consensus of what’s going to happen next time so you can frame it in your mind then go away and think about it, then we have time to reconnect during the week via email or text to bat ideas about, “who do you think I need to emphasise the message to?”, “how might I pitch this?” , “who could I engage with to get the discussion going?” ... it means you’re not relying on people to be there bang on five-thirty for a six start and having to rush through ... know what you’re doing and if that’s the case happy days ... if we do have the luxury of time beforehand then we can drill down into the specifics and make it really pop. [Semi-structured interview with William: 04.02.2020].

The sooner that you plan something and give or receive feedback the better ... we’re delivering on Monday and Friday ... we don’t sort anything after Monday and eventually catch up on Thursday ... I’ve got to have a good think about the workshop but I’ve also got admin to finish for [full-time role] and the bairn’s up again teething ... it’s now been left till I’m literally in the car park of the venue [laughs] ... I don’t know what I’m doing and I’m not sure what you’re doing at all so this could very well turn into an absolute shambles and I’m all of a ‘huh’ ... we do a ten-minute one stop tour of the content but I’m none of the wiser on the transitions or anything ... if we do the basics on Monday though I’ve the whole week to play with reflections and ideas and come back to you later in the week with more structure and detail and we can pin down how the gaps from the previous workshop can be plugged ... it’s good practice when each slot’s related and you can react more authentically to one another’s cues rather winging it. [Semi-structured interview with Stuart: 14.02.2020].

Barry explained that even though post-workshop discussions with co-tutors were valuable, his own individual *thinking time* away from coach education work facilitated deeper, more critical reflection that led to a more robust planning process. For Barry, the most productive times to reflect on his performance and interactions with co-tutors was on the drive home and when watching television:

After the workshop there’s always loads going on in your head ... whether that’s thinking you’ve had the outcome you hoped for or if you think it didn’t quite work ... me as an individual ... I lack a bit of criticality then because I haven’t had the time and space to actually think through and make sense of what’s happened and how we can address it in the next workshop ... most of the action points that’re suggested anyway are really spur of the moment and when you come back to it later you’ll always have more clarity on whatever it is you’ve identified together ... on my drive home is where the reflection starts for me I’d say ... normally I’ve about a thirty- or thirty-five-minute drive home to dissect everything that’s happened and that probably festers in my mind for the next few

days ... you get the odd course that's quite late in the day as well so I don't have the brain power by the time we're done ... it's absolutely no different to the process that I'd run through if I had done a coaching session ... yeah ... how could I have dealt with that situation better? ... how do we approach this next time based on what certain individuals have or haven't done or said? ... even when there's a game on the tele or I'm having dinner your mind always ventures to the next workshop [Semi-structured interview with Barry: 15.01.2020].

In comparison to the ambiguous *back regions* that limited tutor teams' deliberations prior to and during workshops, the absence of learners post-delivery created a *bounded* space that was more akin to Goffman's original contentions about the spatial features of *regions* that were introduced earlier (Goffman, 1959). In this instance, classrooms and car parks presented themselves as backstages that were deemed safe enough to knowingly contradict the individual and collective impressions fostered during the courses (Goffman, 1959). This dual use of space, dramaturgically, is not uncommon, as 'a region that is thoroughly established as a front region for the regular performance of a particular routine often functions as a back region before and after each performance' (Goffman, 1959, p.128). If teams are to *drop the mask* successfully and ensure their privacy, Goffman (1959) suggests that its members should develop *warning systems* that alert the team to the audience's presence. Participants achieved this by carefully monitoring *access points*' (i.e., car parks, corridors, staircases) and situating themselves within the physical setting (i.e., facing the door). This was also an act of circumspection, as Goffman (1959) writes:

'Circumspection on the part of the performers will also be expressed in the way that they handle relaxation of appearances ... when inspectors have easy access to the place where a team carries out its work, then the amount of relaxation possible for the team will depend on the efficiency and reliability of its warning system, but also an appreciable time-lapse between warning and visit, for the team will be able to relax only to the degree that can be corrected during such a time lapse.' (p. 220).

My observations of team-members' post-workshop interactions reflects Goffman's (1959) idea that:

'One of the most interesting times to observe impression management is the moment when a performer leaves the back region and enters the place where the audience can be found, or when he returns therefrom, for at these moments one can detect a wonderful putting on and taking off of character.' (p.123).

The falsehoods of the participants' individual and collective performances were illustrated through engaging in behaviours that reflected some dimensions of Goffman's (1959) notion of

*treatment of the absent*. Goffman (1959) explains that when team-members are in the *back region*, they will often gossip about and criticise the audience, play-out satires of their interactions with them, and work out angles to sell to or pacify them. For example:

‘In the presence of the audience, the performers tend to use a favourable form of address to them ... in the absence of the audience, the audience tends to be referred to by bare surname, first name where this is not permissible to their faces, nickname, or slighting pronunciation of full name.’ (p. 171).

He continues:

‘The team may race into backstage relaxation the moment the audience has departed. By means of this purposively rapid switch into or out of their act, the team in a sense can contaminate and profanize the audience by backstage conduct, or rebel against the obligation of maintaining a show before the audience, or make extremely clear the difference between team and audience, and do all of these things without quite being caught out by the audience.’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 172).

The use of *dramaturgical circumspection* in relation to the relaxation of appearances also meant that team-members could engage in discussion that they could not have due to their copresence with learners pre-workshop and during workshop enactment (Goffman, 1959). Thus, team-members waited to ‘punish and instruct the offender[s] until, that is, the audience is no longer present’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 94). Similar to the *back region* discussions that I outlined in section(s) 4.1.2 and 4.2.2, team-members, led by *performance directors* and *training specialists*, engaged in *staging talk* – or *post mortems* - in order to evaluate individual and collective performances, give feedback to co-tutors, and plan for future workshops. As well as exercising *circumspection*, this included repairing aspects of the performance(s) that could be problematic for the following workshop, constructing angles and bespoke approaches for learners, offering instruction and guidance, assigning preliminary roles, and briefly overviewing content (Goffman, 1959).

Evidently, there is a connection between the pre and post-workshop phases of delivery, whereby the type of discussions that team-members enjoy in each has consequences for *front region* performances (i.e., workshop enactment) (Goffman, 1959). Thus, the quality and volume of team-member deliberations in one phase influences the conversations that occur in the other, and also for the collective strategies that are used throughout workshops. For both sets of team-members (i.e., those who planned immediately after workshops and those who engaged in the days

following), there was an element of just *knowing enough* to try and ensure a coordinated, *loyal*, *disciplined*, and *circumspect* performance in the next workshop (Goffman, 1959). As the sessional nature of work and general uncertainty of the participants' lives limited the extent to which *circumspection* could be exercised, it appears that the more experienced *training specialists* (Goffman, 1959) drew upon their expertise to generate *quick fixes* (Goffman, 1959). The team-members' recognition that they would not have a lot of time to plan together in an optimal way only exacerbated this reality.

The participants who frequently delivered workshops at unsociable hours (i.e., weekday nights and weekends) had less time to put aside and demonstrated limited motivation to replicate these judicious planning interactions with co-tutors. For these tutors, my observations indicated that *getting away* as quick as possible was the main priority. This was made apparent through the lack of conversation between co-tutors and haste while *packing up*, the lack of care shown for condition of resources and equipment (i.e., crunching up paper, not zipping bags closed, dragging laptop wires across the floor), as well as fleeting farewells in car parks. These exchanges consisted of scheduling Skype or Zoom calls to plan and prepare for the next workshop, as evidenced below:

Dan whizzes around the room like a man possessed, snatching paper off the tables and throwing pens into his holdall at the other side of the room [and occasionally looking at the clock above Logan's head as he goes]. As Logan concludes the evening's *takeaways*, Dan's carrying an assorted pile of bibs in his hands while kicking a string of cones along the floor towards the pile of unused attire. Logan races through his final script [Dan crashes through tables of learners, offering the occasional apology as he does. He dashes to the portable speaker at the front of the room, yanks the plug out of the wall, and slams Logan's iPhone on the table in front of him]. There're still stragglers of learners hanging about in the classroom and by this point both tutors are hurling chairs underneath tables and rapidly inspecting the room for any damage or remaining equipment. Logan slams the top of his laptop down and shoves everything in sight into his bulging briefcase [that now fails to shut] and throws his car keys to Dan who shoots out the door with the mound of bags hanging off his person and dragging along the floor. Logan swiftly puts on his coat, jerks up the handle of the portable speaker and scrapes it along the ground [I grab the remaining bibs and balls] and takes one last glance before leaving "sorted ... off we go" with a light sprint to the car. When we get there [panting heavily] Logan asserts "Dan I'll call you tomorrow ... here [handing Dan the speaker and paper] I might be ten minutes late on [date]" [Dan accepts the items, shakes Logan's hand with the other, and bids him farewell] ... "I'm off to pick up my pizza now ... I'm absolutely starving". [Fieldnote extract: 15.02.2020].

Dan and Logan explained that the unsociable nature of coach education work often meant that they would often arrive at venues following a full day at work, tired, hungry, and without having time to go home and see partners and/or children. These sacrifices put a strain on their passion for coach education, which meant that when a workshop concluded they were very eager to go home and make up for *lost time*. After evening sessions, which took place during the week, Dan and Logan wanted to have some *family time* before going to work the next day and often felt guilty because they missed their child's bed-time. At weekends, which were full days on a Saturday and Sunday, they both felt aggrieved that other people were able to spend time with loved ones before returning to their hectic and chaotic lives. Dan and Logan communicated that they became frustrated with the demands of coach education work and highlighted its trivial role in their lives:

It hits the last thirty minutes or so and I'm just clock watching, unless it's the end of a block the final forty-five minutes are basically the candidates reviewing so if people aren't asking me questions I can get prepared to shoot off when class finishes [laughs] ... I said in one of the first one's [interviews] we did, I'll get there after a really manic nine till five and I'll be shattered, I've had to put my gear in the car because I don't have time to go home ... my lass might've packed a banana or an orange if I'm lucky [laughs], when it hits twenty past it's "let's get finished", I'll wander into the corridor and order my meat feast pizza to pick up on the way home [laughs], I really just want to get back and have a few cuppas with the missus and the bairns are only young so I don't want to get home too late after their bedtime to give them a kiss and cuddle, even at weekends, which are an absolute ball ache by the way ... those are the hardest I reckon, an office worker who does nine to five Monday to Friday can make the time up with their family but I might be lucky to get three hours with the littluns' and me feet up on the sofa watching super Sunday ... family is what life is all about so if I need to wing the planning a little bit when I'm at the next workshop then so be it. [Semi-structured interview with Dan: 22.02.2020].

There's leeway if you're doing courses on weekends or at night you aren't going to get shot if you get away ten or fifteen minutes early ... of course, that's only on the proviso that everything has ran smoothly ... the content has been received well ... everyone understands ... no-one has questions ... granted you still need to do a good job and make sure candidates have had a good experience because that's what you're paid for erm ... that night when I ran out the door basically I'd been supporting coaches for the past two nights and before that the tutors ... the next day I was supporting coaches again ... my little boy is only two and at that age he's bound to miss me ... not sure the wife does mind [laughs] ... ahh [head in his hands] ... I couldn't live with myself if he went to bed and hadn't seen my face for two days ... when I was telling you about the wall I need to climb over and slog myself through doing in-situs ... I'd much rather be with them [wife and son] but the job is the job and there're a hell of a lot worse jobs out there but I sometimes stand and think about all the time I sacrifice for helping other people when my family don't get as much of me as they should or as much as I'd like them to have. [Semi-structured interview with Logan: 27.02.2020].

The decision to postpone post-workshop discussions until a later date contributed extra time demands on collective reflection and planning. In spite of tutors' efforts to *get up to speed* with co-tutors shortly before workshops began, follow-up dialogue (via Skype or Zoom) was crucial in the day(s) leading up to the next workshop. The purpose of these discussions were to send and explain slide-decks and link between workshops, reflect on and fix previous performance inadequacies, and promote reflexivity - as Logan described:

Normally previous experience would be the starting point ... what did we do previously? ... did it work? ... are we going to repeat that model? ... if it needs a tweak let's tweak let's tweak it and if it needs a new activity let's put one in ... here's the slide-deck for workshop nine for example ... this is how it links to workshop eight and ten and how we've been building towards it without knowing from workshop one ... do you remember when we tried to deliver that a couple of weeks back? ... it didn't work did it? ... that was when we had a group of fourteen though but now we have twenty so I'm wondering how you're going to modify it to meet the needs of the group? ... don't tell me now ... have a good ponder and let me know what you've got closer to the time and we'll try and squeeze a Skype in closer to the time and polish it on the day. [Semi-structured interview with Logan: 16.02.2020].

To echo the point I made in section 4.2, the participants' capacity to adequately prepare for the following workshop was constrained by other obligations that were required to fulfil in their relational networks (Crossley, 2011). In keeping with the issues that I have presented throughout this chapter, team-members dealt with less-ideal work conditions and competing demands by *satisficing* (Simon, 1957). Here, team-members weighed up the importance of their coach education responsibilities with other commitments (i.e., full-time jobs, family roles) and settled for sub-optimal *staging talk* to ensure that they were competent *enough* for the following workshop (Goffman, 1959). Even though this helped the participants to manage their non-work relations, the prioritisation of the most pressing issues had more long-term knock-on consequences for planning the team's performance in the days leading up to the workshop and at venues (Le Maistre and Pare, 2010). Critically, the *back regions* that were available to team-members post-workshop – both *online* and in the physical setting – contrasted with those I detailed in the pre-workshop and workshop enactment phases in that they 'were closed to members of the audience' and in some respects entirely 'kept hidden from them' (Goffman, 1959, p. 116).



Arguably, the participants' emotional response(s) to these conflicts were grounded in the more permanent long-lasting relationships they shared with others beyond coach education work (i.e., wife and children) (Burkitt, 2014). The catalyst of emotion, then, was situated in *world time* rather than *stage time* (Burkitt, 2014). That is, instead of being influenced by the rules of coach education, which could be cast off in a short space of time, the participants' feelings were rooted in relationships that had implications at a moral and social level (Burkitt, 2014; Crossley, 2011). The findings also relate to Burke's (1996) and Stryker's (2004) writings on identity. Burke (1996) wrote that individuals have multiple identities with role standards attached to each one, whereby negative emotions are experienced when they are not met (i.e., such as being a *good* husband and father). Stryker explains that a person's identities are organised into a hierarchy of salience that result in undesirable emotion(s) if they remain unfilled or unrecognised. Indeed, the means by which the participants dealt with identity issues in the way(s) they did (i.e., decreased planning time), indicates that other roles were prioritised over being seen as a *good tutor* (Stryker, 2004).

In contrast to Logan, who perceived post-workshop conversations as a collaborative endeavour, Dan's experiences of feedback were characterised by dread, embarrassment, and frustration. Dan explained that he invested considerable effort to feel *part of the team* and that the constant *dressing down* of his performance(s) reminded him of his inferior status (compared to Logan). In particular, Dan highlighted how frustration emanated from the perceived expectation to take a *back seat* throughout these discussions. Dan, referencing Logan's superior status, indicated that the above emotions were compounded by having to maintain an open, receptive, and studious persona in his interactions with Logan, which was at odds with his imagined response(s). As shown below:

The first thing is that I don't want to let Logan down because I'm always learning from him ... he's miles ahead of me on the level two and three side of things so I've that respect and commitment towards him ... he's great but I wish that I could work with tutors that I'm more friendly with like [tutor] who I'm basically on par erm ... so the smallest things aren't always being relentlessly pulled apart in front of people ... at least when I'm working with [friend] the little things are generally accepted because we're on the same level bar a few extra days a year and we both walk away fairly satisfied that we've done a good job and had some level of positive impact. [Semi-structured interview with Dan: 10.02.2020].

It's quite hard to remember my place with Logan at times because I'm not a very good passenger and that's probably why I'm a bit more quiet with him than I am with [friend] ... as in I'm not challenging or questioning as much or putting things forward ... I get the impression that neither of us like being a passenger but I am where I am in my career so I've just got to suck it up ... if I've got to be a passenger then so be it but I'm really struggling because I like being active in planning workshops and venting my own opinions but when you're constantly stuck in a cycle of feedback ... feedback ... feedback ... just as you think you're getting a grasp on delivering it doesn't make you feel great and I feel like I'm making up the numbers or I'm the kid who's been brought to work by the adults [laughs] ... don't get me wrong it's a necessary evil if I want to progress and deliver more of these and higher but I have moments of real doubt. [Semi-structured interview with Dan: 16.02.2020].

Dan's account speaks to Burkitt's (1999) idea that emotional experiences are 'bound up in power relations and interdependence' (p. 128). Thus, Dan's emotions arise from situations whereby his imagined behaviours were at odds with Logan's conduct and understanding of how they were related within the local hierarchy (Burkitt, 2014). Seemingly, Dan's awareness of Logan's position as a *training specialist*, *performance director*, and *broker* in the TCSG network encouraged him to demonstrate deference (i.e., *take a back seat*) during interactions with him to obtain resources (Crossley, 2011; Goffman, 1956, 1959). In one respect, this refers to *back region loyalty*, where team-members 'must be willing to accept minor parts with good grace and enthusiastically whenever, wherever, whoever the team as a whole chooses' (Goffman, 1959, p. 208). It also speaks to Goffman's (1959) assertion concerning the attitudes that team-members may have towards *performance directors*:

'It is apparent that if the director corrects for improper appearances and allocates major parts and minor prerogatives, then other members of the team (who are likely concerned with the show they can put on for one another as well as with the show they can collectively stage for the audience), will have an attitude towards the director that they do not have towards their other team-mates.' (p. 103).

In another sense, Dan's emotions were grounded in the saliency of his coach educator identity and not having it recognised (Stryker, 2004). His feelings were further compounded by the constant process of *becoming* (i.e., receiving feedback) that was associated with his status as a less-experienced coach educator (Turner, 2009). Dan's behaviour also reflects Goffman's (1961b) idea that, 'when an individual makes an appearance in a given position, he will be a person that the position allows and obliges them to be and will continue to be this person during the

enactment' (p. 99). Logan's behaviour, then, as a perceived *normal*, reinforced Dan's sense of departure between his 'self-demands and self' and, ultimately, limited the extent to which he could establish desirable working conditions (Goffman, 1963a, p. 18; Kelchtermans, 2009b). The tensions between his self-attributions and those offered to him can be explained by Goffman (1961b):

'The individual stands in a double relationship to attributes that are, or might be, imputed to him. Some attributes he will feel are rightfully his, others he will not; some he will be pleased and able to accept as part of his self-definition.' (p. 103).

Much like the exchange interactions that I highlighted in the previous sections in relation to Crossley's (2011) theorising, Lawler's (2001) exchange theory of emotions is of explanatory value here. Turner (2009) explains that within exchange theories, actors are thought to incur social costs and make investments to secure resources from others and to make a social and emotional profit based on what they perceive is *fair* and *just*. In this instance, Dan invested in his interactions with Logan through ongoing emotion work with the expectation of receiving resources and increased agency/standing, and because the latter remained unrealised, negative emotions ensued (Turner, 2009). In Lawler's (2001) terms, this resembles a *reciprocal exchange*, which involves the offering of a personal resource to another (i.e., deference) with no guarantee, but still have the expectations that the other will return the favour in the future. Relatedly, the power relations that exist between interactees influences the arousal of emotion (Turner, 2009). For Dan, because the *payoffs* of paying forward emotion(s) that was necessitated by his power relations (i.e., dependency) with Logan were deemed as insufficiently rewarding, frustration occurred (Turner, 2009). Moreover, Dan's knowledge of these power relations factored into his interpretations of, and emotional response(s) to, Logan's gestures and language (i.e., doubts over competence) (Burkitt, 2014). Therefore, the emotions that were experienced and presented to team-mates and colleagues were professional and social, rather than commercial (Burkitt, 2014). In addition to *working up* emotion for solely dramaturgical effect, then, the expression of emotion was a necessity at all levels of work to develop and manage positive working relationships (Burkitt, 2014).

## CHAPTER 5

### Summary of Findings and Concluding Thoughts

In chapter four, I presented and interpreted data in relation to the specific phases that constituted the delivery of coach education courses; pre, during, and post-workshop. In this chapter, I look across these temporal junctures to bring together key insights concerning the commonalities and nuances reported by coach educators in their dealings with the enduring complexities, dilemmas, constraints, and opportunities that were interwoven within this employment context. By connecting these insights to existing literature in this area, the purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate how the current project has refined, extended, or contributed novel knowledge pertaining to individual and collective impression management in coach education work. To help make sense of these contributions, I have included three sub-sections that address the main research questions outlined earlier. In the first sub-section, I describe the limiting and largely unexplored neoliberal work conditions that influenced tutors' sense-making and impression management techniques. In the second sub-section, I illustrate how participants responded to these conditions when presenting themselves to co-tutors, candidates, colleagues, and managers. In particular, how participants' decision-making and actions encapsulated a plethora of under-developed dramaturgical and (micro)political concepts in coach education and in sports work more broadly. In the final of these sub-sections, I argue that this project has significantly advanced contemporary understandings of the various collaborative activities of performance teams in organisations. Next, I outline several practical implications that the aforementioned findings have for coach education policy-makers, administrators, coordinators, and tutor developers, as well as coach educators themselves. In the penultimate section, I suggest a couple of recommendations for future research based on the insights generated in this thesis. To conclude the thesis, I draw upon Hartley's (2017) theorising to provide some useful reflections on my experiences of being micropolitically astute during my interactions with the participants throughout the course of the fieldwork.

### *5.1 Contextual and Personal Influences on Impression Management in the Workplace*

Broadly, coach education work was considered a form of *serious leisure* (Stebbins, 2004), which is defined as ‘the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity that participants find so substantial and interesting that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a career centred on acquiring and expressing its special skills, knowledge, and experience’ (p. 3). Much like documented perspectives on coaching work (e.g., Potrac, Jones, Gilbourne, and Nelson, 2012; Potrac, Mallett, Greenough, and Nelson, 2017), this meant that while employees received some financial remuneration for their efforts, this form of employment was pursued for rewards such as self-fulfilment, pride, identity development, and professional recognition (Stebbins, 2004; Thoits, 2012). In contrast to recent depictions of sports work in the context of part-time and full-time employment whereby motives for engaging with work tasks were grounded in monetary benefits (e.g., Allanson *et al.*, 2019; Gale *et al.*, 2019; Ives *et al.*, 2021; Watts *et al.*, 2022b), financial return was not a priority for the participants because their economic security was sustained by alternative full-time employment (Stebbins, 2004).

This form of employment, however, was not unproblematic and incurred a number of interrelated costs (Stebbins, 2004). Somewhat reminiscent of the insights provided in Allanson *et al.*'s (2019) study, ongoing employment relied upon receiving (in)direct positive evaluations from others (i.e., learners, managers, colleagues, and co-tutors). That is, continually presenting a desirable image to meet the expectations of key stakeholders (often simultaneously to more than one audience) was integral to their reputation and the allocation of course delivery hours in both the short and long-term. Ultimately, this meant that the participants did not enjoy unfettered agency and were constantly scrutinised in accordance with their social performances within face-to-face interactions. Building on the work of Allanson *et al.* (2019), this thesis incorporates a suite of Crossley's (2011) underused concepts to contribute a unique perspective on the influence that intersecting relational networks had on the participants' interactions in coach education work (and beyond).

Reflective of recent studies from the field of sports work (e.g., Hall et al., 2021; Gibson and Groom, 2021; Potrac, and Jones, 2009b; Potrac *et al.*, 2017; Thompson, Potrac, and Jones, 2015), social performances were constructed on the basis of the interconnectedness between stakeholders – in terms of *strong* and *weak ties* – and an awareness of the collective essence of evaluation (Crossley, 2011). For example, the participants were aware of how several channels of communication existed between stakeholders beyond the immediate co-presence of these others and how negative evaluations from any of them could threaten their professional status throughout networks (Crossley, 2011). Further, the relationships that the participants had with stakeholders were inherently shaped by notions of interdependency and variable *power* in that access to resources (i.e., support, materials) was contingent upon adhering to *exchange conventions* (i.e., desirable conduct) and garnering social acceptance (Crossley, 2011).

In combination with audience judgements, the participants' work was also contaminated by the neo-liberal practice of *performativity* (Singh, 2018). This involved the measurement of employee performance and the implementation of regulatory mechanisms that incentivised, controlled, and shaped their actions through forms of comparison, judgement, reward, and sanctioning in terms of 'productivity ... or displays of quality' (Ball, 2003, p. 57). In this case, social 'performances stand for, encapsulate or represent the worth, quality or value of an individual or organisation within a field of judgement' (Ball, 2003, p. 57). Despite the introduction of these conceptual ideas in community (e.g., Gale *et al.*, 2019; Ives *et al.*, 2021) and academy (e.g., O'Gorman, Partington, Potrac, and Nelson, 2021) coaching settings, until now, theoretical understandings of the impact of such working conditions on the *doing* of coach education work have remained largely unexamined.

Similar to the influence that neoliberal evaluation criteria had on coaches' task-prioritisation and self-presentation, the participants also demonstrated the need to (inter)act skilfully, often through *tinkering* (i.e., making myriads of small consequential adjustments), to achieve desirable outcomes and make their efforts visible to others (Goffman, 1961a; Ives *et al.*, 2021; Nelson, Cushion, Potrac, and Groom, 2014; O'Gorman *et al.*, 2021). For the participants, this

was necessary because their performances were measured against metrics relating to participation, impact, and the nurturing of relationships with external bodies (i.e., colleges). Akin to some of the workplace pressures that coach educators have reported elsewhere (e.g., Allanson *et al.*, 2019; Dempsey *et al.*, 2021; Watts *et al.*, 2022b) these evaluations were centred upon candidate feedback, monitoring, the delivery of core materials, pass and fail rates, and scores provided by assessors. This thesis develops current knowledge by illustrating how such organisational mechanisms entered into the full-round of social interactions and activities that constituted coach educators' everyday work and how they individually and collectively exercised agency in their performances to deal with constraints and secure their statuses as good employees (Ives *et al.*, 2021).

More recently, neoliberalism has been cited when examining the attitudes, actions, and motivations of sports workers. The growing precarity (i.e., uncertainty, insecurity, short-term contracts) of work and employment has been described as a primary contributor to the gradual emergence of individualism and employee competitiveness (e.g., Huggan, Nelson, and Potrac, 2015; Gale *et al.*, 2019; Gibson and Groom, 2019; Ives *et al.*, 2021; Potrac, Jones, Gilbourne, and Nelson, 2012; Roderick, 2006a; Roderick and Schumacker, 2017). These researchers have shown how self-interest imbues modern work relations between employees who are tasked with coordinating their workplace performances. This has often resulted in colleagues seeking to out-perform one another to gain social validation and secure ongoing employment in contexts riven with a surplus of labour and relational and structural vulnerability, often to the detriment of collective interests.

Contrary to these reported work conditions, the evaluative mechanisms that participants encountered in their work (i.e., monitoring, local norms, collective agreements) encouraged a more collaborative attitude to working with colleagues. While such collaborative concerns and actions were sometimes driven by individualist interests (i.e., job security, reputational concerns), genuine care, empathy, and selflessness were regularly exercised in favour of the collective good and were founded upon a sense of obligation and responsibility towards team-mates (Ball, 1987; Hall *et al.*, 2021). Although precarity did exist in the sense that the participants' futures were contingent upon

others' evaluations of them, in comparison to other sports work contexts (e.g., Roderick, 2006a; Gale *et al.*, 2019; Ives *et al.*, 2021; Potrac *et al.*, 2012), opportunities for career advancement in the form of progression or promotion were perceived to be scarce, and therefore, explicit workplace competition was not prevalent. Cooperation also emanated from an awareness of the detrimental consequences that would arise for individual team-members if collective performances was poorly received, as well as the implications of being perceived as an uncooperative, selfish or untrustworthy colleague. Generally speaking, these social conditions necessitated skilful interaction involving an ebb and flow between self and group interests (Kelchtermans and Ballet, 2002a).

Crucially, despite work being poorly coordinated, it was not perceived as an inherent 'arena for struggle' as stakeholders were not engaged in overt conflict or jostling to enact their own agendas (Ball, 1987, p. 19). However, like other sports workers (e.g., Corsby *et al.*, 2022a; Potrac *et al.*, 2012; Roderick, 2006b; Roderick and Schumacker, 2017), the participants were aware of how a surplus of available and willing colleagues could result in fewer hours if they were seen to perform poorly as part of a team. Thus, it seems that an undercurrent of competitiveness was played out through being a collaborative team-member. This reflects Hartley's (2017) notion of *strategic direction and scanning* in the workplace. She defines this as an employees' analytical capacity to manage uncertainty, think through possible future scenarios and opportunities, and, rather than make short-sighted decisions to cope with immediate pressures, act in accordance with available career road map in the organisational landscape (Hartley, 2017). Here, the participants were aware that publicly explicit competitiveness would not have desired social, professional, or economic rewards. This finding demonstrates a novel contribution because researchers have not yet paid due attention to the *doing* of team-work and the working conditions that promote it.

For the participants, several salient work conditions intersected with one another to influence (and often constrain) team-work and collaboration. The first of these relates to the fluid and inconsistent allocation of team members to coach education teams. The composition of teams in this context resembles Bauman's (1996, 2000, 2003, 2007) *liquid modernity* perspective concerning the relations between employees in organisations. Bauman asserts that bonds and



obligations towards the collective interest are beginning to erode (though not prominent in this project) and suggests a catalyst for this is the contemporary view on team-work as a temporary and time sensitive strategy that is terminated upon the achievement of goals or when its benefits cease. Much like studies which have examined the demotion of the *collective interest* throughout workforces (e.g., Gale *et al.*, 2019; Ives *et al.*, 2021; Potrac *et al.*, 2012), the unfamiliarity that characterised the participants' relationships with colleagues produced similar cautious, strategic, and calculated interactions.

Unfamiliarity also created vulnerability for the participants as they were unable to 'fully approve' the effectiveness of their actions or control the outcomes of encounters, and therefore could 'always be questioned by various contextual stakeholders' (Kelchtermans, 2005, p. 999). Indeed, reflective of issues highlighted in the sports work literature (i.e., Potrac and Jones, 2009b; Gale *et al.*, 2019), the ad-hoc nature of teams created uncertainty, distrust, tension, and suspicion within team-member relations, which, in turn, limited the perceived quality of *front* and *back region* interactions (Goffman, 1959). In contrast with the findings of Gale *et al.* (2019), the non-permanent, irregular, and short-term nature of team membership meant that the participants did not place importance on or prioritise the development of trust. Instead, they were content with establishing work relations which facilitated the team's collaborative function for the duration of performances. That said, the role of trust between team-members was not entirely obsolete or passive. Rather, there was a paradoxical relationship between trust and distrust, in the sense that suspicion and collegial unfamiliarity necessitated that the participants carefully manage their interactions with team-members to establish a collaborative attitude, solidarity, and a piece of mind that the other could be relied on to act in the best interests of the team (see section 5.2).

The ad-hoc creation of teams also meant that team-members had limited time, space, and notice in which to individually and collectively prepare for the performances they were expected to deliver to candidates. The limited *back regions* described by the participants was further problematised by the remoteness of coach education work (Goffman, 1959). In contrast to research (e.g., Hall *et al.*, 2021; Nelson, Potrac, Gilbourne, Allanson, Gale, and Marshall, 2013; Potrac *et*

*al.*, 2017) which has depicted the setting(s) where workplace performances occur as consistent and stable features of employment (i.e., training facilities, club houses, offices), the participants had to navigate ambiguous *stages* and deal with feelings of vulnerability that were compounded by delivering in schools, colleges, and community centres upon which they had little control and/or familiarity (Kelchtermans, 2005). Therefore, dissimilar to Goffman's (1959) assertions about the condition *for* and coordination *of* team planning, the participants had comparatively fewer opportunities for in-depth interaction to ensure the overall team performance was credible *enough*.

The third issue that influenced the participants' individual and collective performances (and time and space to plan) was a conflict between the other roles and identities that they were expected to perform (Thoits, 2012). Specifically, the participants were often constrained in their ability to enact the *tutor role* because of a blurring of their public (i.e., full-time jobs, leisure) and private (i.e., family duties) spheres of life (Hochschild, 1983). Even though researchers have considered the dialogical connection between work and non-work relations and obligations in professional football (e.g., Roderick, 2012, 2013), grassroots coaching (e.g., Potrac *et al.*, 2017), and community coaching contexts (e.g., Ives *et al.*, 2021), this knowledge is yet to be developed in coach education, until now. Notably, these identities were not unproblematically enacted in isolation of one another, as the participants described difficulties pertaining to *audience segregation* (Goffman, 1959). For example, learners had access to *front* and *back regions* where the participants variably engaged in social performances that differed from those presented during workshops (i.e., coaching youth athletes, managing semi-professional team) (Goffman, 1959).

The conflict between identities, fluidity of team membership, relational unfamiliarity, and limited planning time meant that *front* and *back regions* were blurred, rather than fixed (Goffman, 1959). This is because the participants frequently engaged in *back region* activities in the *front region* (i.e., in the co-presence of learners) and vice versa, where *front region* principles governed private interactions (Goffman, 1959). Instead of fixed spatio-temporal regions that provided private *back stages* in which to relax, reflect, and plan, the conditions described reflect those reported by Roderick and Allen-Collinson (2020) in their analysis of the dramaturgical demands placed on

professional athletes (Goffman, 1959). Like those workers, the participants reported that genuine *back regions* were sparse as dramaturgical demands spanned beyond *front region* performances (i.e., workshops) to interactions with co-tutors and learners in various settings (Goffman, 1959).

In other words, coach educators dealt with fluid, nested regions, in that social spaces traditionally perceived as *back regions* were merely a *front region* albeit for a different performance (Roderick and Allen-Collinson, 2020). For example, teams used several strategies (i.e., music, space, volume of speech) to skilfully deal with spatial constraints and construct sensory *back regions* in the presence of candidates, and while that provided some respite from the collective performance, the participants remained strategic in their interactions with team-mates in order to protect their image and reputation (Goffman, 1959). Furthermore, the participation in multiple networks (i.e., family, coaching, coach education) resulted in the participants being rendered *open persons* who considered themselves to be *always on* and ‘performance ready’ which, in turn, influenced impression management inside and outside of the workplace (Crossley, 2011; Goffman, 1974; Roderick and Allen-Collinson, 2020, p. 7).

Problematically, then, the participants had limited *front* and *back region* control on multiple levels (Goffman, 1959). To this end, the above findings have offered significant novel and critical insights into the extent to which ‘backstagedness is relative’ in coach education work and how employees variably considered what constitutes these historically separate social spaces (Roderick and Allen-Collinson, 2020, p. 7). Furthermore, this thesis has also extended Goffman’s (1959) claims regarding the *boundedness* of *regions* by illustrating the vulnerabilities and uncertainties that can impede the staging of performance in modern workplaces.

The final working condition that characterised work for the participants was their peripherality in the FA. Somewhat different from other coach educators and sports workers who have reported intense, ongoing scrutiny and control from their employers at a micro-level of practice (e.g., Dempsey *et al.*, 2021; Ives *et al.*, 2021; Lee and Corsby, 2021; Manley, Roderick, and Parker, 2016; O’Gorman *et al.*, 2021; Sothern and O’Gorman, 2021; Watts *et al.*, 2021b) the participants were afforded *some* decision-making agency in which to achieve organisational and

personal goals (i.e., presenting non-core workshop materials, tinkering with workshop logistics, and assigning team roles) (Booroff, Nelson, and Potrac, 2016). However, in part reflective of the frustrations and challenges described by coach education policy makers (e.g., Griffiths *et al.*, 2018; Paquette *et al.*, 2014), increased agency (and a lack of structure) was also problematic as it was accompanied by a limited offering of formal training, in turn resulting in inconsistency, incompetence, and conflicting interpretations of content throughout the coach education workforce.

Subsequently, and consistent with the work of Hall et al (2021), who examined the influence of locally derived norms on the doing of hybrid management work, a contextual social arrangement similar to Goffman's (1961a) *inmate culture* developed. What emerged was a locally negotiated agreement between workers based on the coordination of role performances (Goffman, 1961a; Scott, 2015). That is, beyond their initial admission into the FA, the participants' socialisation (i.e., *know how*), professional development, career progression, and access to resources was grounded in a range of communicative practices (i.e., expectations, consequences, sanctions, rewards) between colleagues, co-tutors, and superiors (Goffman, 1961a, 1983). Therefore, rather than being entirely constrained by organisational regulations, the local hierarchy was a considerable influence on social discourse (Hall *et al.*, 2021; Lee and Corsby, 2021; Magill, Nelson, Jones, and Potrac, 2017).

The various strategies that the participants used to exercise their individual and collective agency reflects Shulman's (2007, 2017) notion of *subterranean education and shadow organisations*. This concept forms part of a framework that Shulman (2007) termed *the dramaturgical infrastructure*, which describes the spectrum of performances that employees may be required to enact in the workplace. In bringing together *organisational underlife* and *secondary adjustments*, this includes instances where 'workers obtain hidden means to actually do their work and where going by the book' meets roadblocks that informal arrangements bypass' (Goffman, 1961a; Shulman, 2017, p. 100). Here, Shulman considers how *unofficial* information is built into individual and collective interactions and performances, and forms implicit *background knowledge* (Shulman, 2007, 2017).

## 5.2 Individual Impression Management

In their dealings with line-managers, co-tutors, colleagues, and course candidates, the participants emphasised the importance of presenting a desirable and credible *personal front* (Goffman, 1959). In doing so, they hoped to maintain and advance the support and trust of these stakeholders to generate the time, space, and resources to perform tasks, establish favourable working conditions, and fulfil professional interests (Kelchtermans and Ballet, 2002a; Potrac and Jones, 2009a). To do this, the participants described interactional strategies that relate to scores of dramaturgical concepts which remain unused in accounts of coach education and under-developed in sports work literature more broadly. As such, this contributes to the existing scholarship by raising awareness of the currently under-researched dimensions of workplace interactions and drawing the reader's attention to the rich and nuanced justifications and purposes behind such seemingly mundane acts.

The participants, for instance, sought to establish their credibility through the specific aspects of *front* during interactions with candidates and team-members, such as *appearance*, *manner*, *props*, and *scripts* (Goffman, 1959). For example, they wanted to *give off* a favourable image of themselves by being clean shaven, well-dressed, equipped with visible resources (i.e., posters, books, stationery), and readily poised with time-buying and face-saving responses when vulnerable (i.e., when caught off guard) (Goffman, 1959). The use of *props* to generate buy-in resembles the findings of Potrac and Jones (2009b) and Thompson et al (2015), who reported that sports workers used session plans and PowerPoint presentations to repair and advance relationships with others. Moreover, the participants afforded considerable weight to their capacity to engage with *facework* (Goffman, 1967). In studies conducted in sports work (i.e., Gibson and Groom, 2018; Potrac et al., 2017), *facework* has been employed to produce situationally appropriate selves (Goffman, 1967).

The participants' attempts to *idealise* (i.e., demonstrate the attributes of a competent coach educator) and *realise* (i.e., be visible engaging in activities that deem one as competent) their work performances for others required them to engage in functional deception in the form of *misrepresentation*, *mystification*, and *benign fabrications* (Goffman, 1959; 1974; Scott, 2015). This

included telling white lies, controlling access to content, misleading candidates, and withholding potentially damaging and discrediting feedback (Scott, 2015). Much like footballers (e.g., Roderick, 2006a; Sothorn and O’Gorman, 2021) and sport coaches (e.g., Jones, 2006) *stigmatisation* was a source of worry for all participants (i.e., both well-versed and novice tutors), but novices were particularly aware of their own presentational vulnerability in their interactions with candidates and co-tutors, given that they harboured *secrets* about their own ability and experience that could discredit them (Goffman, 1959, 1963a). Along with existing research (e.g., Corsby, Jones, Thomas and Edwards, 2022; Steele, 2021), the participants engaged in *remedial interchanges* (i.e., humour, apologies, justification, and explanations) to repair and save face (Goffman, 1961b). Like other sport workers (e.g., Magill *et al.*, 2017; Thompson *et al.*, 2015) the participants were aware of the impact negative evaluations would have on their standing.

Somewhat reminiscent of studies which have explored the constraining influence of monitoring and evaluation in organisations (e.g., Ives *et al.*, 2021; Manley *et al.*, 2016; O’Gorman *et al.*, 2021; Roderick, 2014), the participants strategically employed (both individually and collectively) *role distance* and *role embracement* to maintain their authenticity while giving the illusion that they were complying with rules and regulations (Goffman, 1961a). Here, like Roderick (2014) and Lee and Corsby (2021), the participants shifted from authentic commitment and sincerity, to cynicism and the removal of *self* in the *playing* of a role via *primary* and *secondary adjustments* (Goffman, 1961b; Potrac *et al.*, 2017). Taking into consideration that the participants were likely to encounter course candidates in other social spaces, this was used as a protective mechanism against stigmatisation (Goffman, 1963a) – most namely, *conduct stigma* (i.e., talking about or *doing* coaching practice in ways that contradict espoused beliefs) - and reflects Kelchtermans and Ballet’s (2002a) conceptualisation of dealing with visibility, which describes the realities of navigating multiple intersecting judgements as ‘working in a fishbowl’ (p. 111). This presented dilemmas for the participants’ image when in the co-presence of co-tutors and learners.

The findings in this project also give further credence to existing studies in sports work which have explored forms of strategic interactions between team-members (i.e., Gale *et al.*, 2019;

Roderick, 2006b; Roderick, 2014). The distrust and ambiguity that imbued relationships meant that the participants, like the workers in existing studies, engaged in *expression games* with co-workers for fear ‘human maleficence’, social degradation, and because they were aware of naively falling foul to the *insider’s folly* (Bauman, 2007, p. 57; Goffman, 1969, 1974). Akin to Roderick (2006b) and Gale et al (2019), the participants were aware of *gossip centres*, and employed *covering* and *uncovering* moves to establish the trustworthiness of others (Goffman, 1959). This also meant that the participants engaged in *facework* to conceal authentic opinions (i.e., pretending to accept feedback, concealing feedback) in ambiguous situations (Goffman, 1967). As well as this strategic dimension to interaction, coach educators also cared about how their conduct would impact the emotions of colleagues – as I elaborate on further in the next page (Gale *et al.*, 2019).

It was evident that interactions did not occur in a temporal vacuum, as the participants were aware of how conduct in the present could negatively impact future relations and access to opportunities (Crossley, 2011). In this case, the participants exercised *dramaturgical circumspection* concerning how their actions could shape others’ thinking, feeling, and acting towards them (Goffman, 1959). This was emphasised more so by novice coach educators, who placed importance on demonstrating *deference* to more experienced colleagues as a means to access resources and form productive and beneficial alliances (Crossley, 2011; Goffman, 1956). Ultimately, the participants were aware of their reliance on co-tutors’ *dramaturgical loyalty* and *dramaturgical discipline* during the course of team performances, which rendered this a necessary strategy (Goffman, 1959). Indeed, similar to the two female footballers in Magill et al’s (2017) study, remaining astute in social engagements with senior colleagues and superiors was central to continued participation and employment in the context, as well as the fulfilment of *future selves* – especially for novice coach educators.

There was also an inherent emotional dimension to the participants’ interactions. Akin to the coach educators in Allanson et al (2019), this partly included concealing and manufacturing emotions that complied with contextual *feeling* and *display rules* during interactions (Hochschild, 1983). For example, the participants engaged in *surface* and *deep acting* to conceal anger,

embarrassment, and frustration, while *working up* enthusiasm in situations where *performance disruptions* threatened credibility (i.e., session breaks down, tutor errors, inflammatory candidate behaviours) (Goffman, 1959; Hochschild, 1983). Unlike Hochschild's (1983) assertion regarding the commodification of emotions in the workplace, emotional exchanges between colleagues and candidates were not organisationally scripted. Similar to Magill et al (2017) and Potrac et al (2017a), the participants not only referred to the core values of TCSG when generating emotional displays, they also drew upon a sense of collective identity, socially derived norms, and biographical experiences (i.e., as a learner, coach, educator) that shaped their understandings of what constituted a *good* tutor performance (Burkitt, 2014; Crossley, 2011).

Further, collegial interactions were conditioned by biographical and contextual *professional feeling* and *display rules*, which were locally understood between the participants (Bolton, 2005). That is, despite being a form of serious leisure, the participants still felt compelled to display emotions that were congruent with industry expectations. Crucially, I have provided original insights concerning how the participants, mainly the most experienced coach educators, managed their *personal front* to influence the emotions of their (often less well versed) co-tutors, particularly in terms of seeking to elicit a positive state of mind (i.e., confidence, calmness) prior to delivering a team performance (Goffman, 1959; Hochschild, 1983). Arguably, this was a purposeful strategy for creating conditions for solidarity, collaboration, 'cohesion, cooperation, and loyalty' (Thoits, 2004, p. 369). As well as building on earlier work (i.e., Allanson *et al.*, 2019), this adds layers of complexity to interactions by revealing situations where Hochschild's (1983) theorising on *feeling and display rules* has limited standalone explanatory value for modern-day workplaces.

Another contribution this project has made to the literature relates to employees' use of *regions* to emotionally prepare for performances (Goffman, 1959). While the participants reported a blurring of *front* and *back regions*, they were able to locate temporary spaces in which to engage in *exhortations* (Allanson *et al.*, 2019; Goffman, 1959; Hochschild, 1983). Echoing the findings of Roderick and Allen-Collinson's (2020), whereby professional athletes located *liminal spaces* (i.e.,



hotel rooms) between various dramaturgically demanding *front* and *back regions*, the participants considered their cars and homes as private spaces that allowed them to momentarily relax from the performative pressures elicited by the copresence of team-members and course candidates (Goffman, 1959). In such instances, the participants *worked up* emotions (i.e., psyched themselves up, used self-talk, rehearsed interactions) to present a credible front to others (Hochschild, 1983).

These strategies refer to several everyday workplace performances and skills described by Shulman (2007, 2017) and Hartley (2017). First, the impression management techniques reported by the participants can be described as *authentication and credibility practices* (Shulman, 2007; 2017) and *interpersonal skills* (Hartley, 2017). Authentication and credibility practices refer to the means an individual uses to construct convincing impressions in either truth or deceit to appear authentic in ambiguous situations (Shulman, 2007, 2017). The notion of interpersonal skills is concerned with the way(s) people seek to influence the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others (i.e., generating buy-in). For Hartley (2017), this draws upon Goffman's collective works and diffuses them into two core skills required in the workplace; *tough* and *soft*. While tough skills (i.e., navigating conflict) were not prevalent in this project, soft skills (i.e., the purposeful cultivation of relationships with stakeholders) frequently underpinned the participants' strategies (Hartley, 2017).

This helped the coach educators to enact many other different performances at work. For example, the way that participants sought to foster positive relations with co-tutors and course candidates reflects Hartley's (2017) notion of *building alignment and alliances*. Hartley explains that this concept entails those actions taken by individuals who seek to build a consensus with those who may or may not hold the same interests, and are thus prioritised as key relations in accordance with collective and personal goals. Indeed, this includes exercising self-control and forgiveness when presented with competing ideologies or possible conflicts amongst employees. Such acts relate to how novice tutors sought to build alliances with well-connected and resourceful experienced tutors, and, in kind, how senior tutors managed their emotions to elicit positive responses from novices (despite tensions existing over a lack of shared familiarity and ability in delivering content).

The occasional use of deception by the participants in their interactions (i.e., concealing and displaying emotions, manipulating content and practices, withholding information to allow situations to unfold, fabricating experience) can be likened to Shulman's (2007, 2017) writings on *ethical disengagement*. This concept focuses on how people overcome moral inhibitions during interaction and how they justify their decision to do so (Shulman, 2007, 2017). Here, Shulman (2007, 2017) recognises that in order to survive social encounters, individuals may need to employ less acceptable strategies and motivations for meeting demands. He explains that many social and organisational forces act back upon interactions that serve to counter normative guidelines for responsible behaviour. Building on Dempsey et al (2021), who reported the challenges faced by coach educators in achieving learner-centred outcomes within the constraints of work (i.e., limited time, evaluation, contradictory content), this thesis has demonstrated how they utilise their agency to cope with such expectations and challenges in a socially functional capacity (Scott, 2015).

The blurring of *regions* meant that participants were often tasked with managing multiple and intersecting judgements simultaneously (i.e., when engaging in gossip with co-tutors while in the presence of candidates) (Goffman, 1959). This meant that participants had to be skilled in terms of how they engineered their *appearance* and *manner* in coping with increased visibility (Goffman, 1959; Kelchtermans and Ballet, 2002a). The dilemmas that the participants faced in these scenarios can be described by Shulman's (2007, 2017) idea of *managing identity and role conflicts*. This encapsulates the choices and actions of individuals as they seek to navigate different dramaturgical pressures in the workplace, most namely, picking sides and abandoning some duties in favour of others. As well as describing how *dramaturgically disciplined* the participants were during interactions with various audiences, it also reflects the fluid situational (dis)loyalty that they exercised, such as the prioritisation of developing relationships with learners (Goffman, 1959).

It could be argued that these actions were grounded in the participants' *micropolitical literacy* (Kelchtermans and Ballet, 2002a). That is, the participants were able to read the micropolitical landscape of the work context and employ interactional strategies to write themselves into it (Kelchtermans and Ballet, 2002a). These interactions cannot be understood

without considering the role of *professional interests* (Kelchtermans and Ballet, 2002a). Despite only being a very recent addition to the coach education literature (e.g., Allanson *et al.*, 2019), *professional interests* have formed the theoretical basis of much sports work research (e.g., Gibson and Groom, 2018, 2019; Hall *et al.*, 2021; Huggan *et al.*, 2015; Potrac and Jones, 2009b; Thompson *et al.*, 2015). Echoing these studies, the coach educators sought to develop, maintain, and reinstate desired working conditions (Kelchtermans and Ballet, 2002a). Rather than existing in isolation, interests were inter-influencing and were often co-present in the actions and decisions made by the participants.

Synonymous with the findings of Allanson *et al.* (2019), the participants' *organisational interests* (i.e., access to work hours, promotions, and positions) were linked to their *socio-professional interests* (i.e., the construction and development of relationships). Drawing on findings from sports work (e.g., Huggan *et al.*, 2015; Thompson *et al.*, 2015), the latter was integral to achieving the former through the fulfilment of *material interests* (i.e., access to resources and time and space for meetings). On occasion, this meant that the participants could create working conditions that facilitated the attainment of their *self-interests* (i.e., having their competencies recognised by others) and *cultural-ideological interests* (i.e., normative ideals for and of *good* coach education performances). For example, novice tutors' sense of *professional vulnerability* prompted them to nurture relationships with senior colleagues, who were able to provide the necessary resources (i.e., content, feedback, session ideas) for demonstrating competence to superiors, thereby creating secure working conditions (Kelchtermans and Ballet, 2009b).

Echoing insights from coach education (e.g., Allanson *et al.*, 2019) and sports work (e.g., Gibson and Groom, 2018; Huggan *et al.*, 2015; Purdy and Potrac, 2016), the nature of the participants' pursuits reflected their situational *self-understanding* (Kelchtermans, 1993). Here, the participants' interactions with stakeholders (i.e., learners, co-tutors, and line managers) informed their *know how*, their concept of *self* as a coach educator, and the *interpretive lens* they adopted in certain situations (Kelchtermans, 1993). In particular, interactions influenced and were influenced by the five characteristics of *self-understanding* outlined by Kelchtermans (1993): *self-image* (i.e.,

how they typified themselves as coach educators in relation to others); *self-esteem* (i.e., how they evaluated their role performance in accordance with norms); *job motivation* (i.e., their desire to progress and advance their careers); *future prospects* (i.e., expectations they held by concerning their future as a coach educator); and *task perception* (i.e., what they believed they had to do/prioritise to be considered a credible coach educator by co-tutors, learners, and managers).

These findings are also reminiscent of the *personal skills* and *reading people and situations* dimensions of Hartley's (2017) micropolitical astuteness framework. *Personal skills* encompasses the means by which people adopt proactive approaches to interaction based on the self-awareness of their own motives, choices, behaviours, and capacity for expressive control (Hartley, 2017). Hartley (2017) explains that this entails considering how these aspects of interaction interweave with the alternative ideas, opinions, and positions of others to appropriately engage with situations and relationships. For the participants, reflecting on *the role of the other* and their beliefs and expectations was a fundamental feature of their decision-making around self-presentation (Hartley, 2017). Indeed, the feedback that was received from social encounters was a key determinant in how the participants interpreted and constructed their identity when pursuing their goals.

*Reading people and situations* involves critically scrutinising the actual or underlying interests of individuals and collectives, and the agendas they claim to support (Hartley, 2017). Generally, co-existing interests in a social setting determine how an individual seeks to write themselves into the political landscape to advance their own professional interests (Kelchtermans and Ballet, 2002a). For Hartley (2017), this is because people are able to exercise circumspection to predict others' arguments and demands in social situations and strategically orient their conduct to productively manage interactions. For the participants, this was reflected in how they cautiously approached exchanges with co-tutors to establish trust and maintain credibility, and how they observed *deference* during encounters of profit and exchange (i.e., accessing resources) (Goffman, 1956).

### 5.3 Collective Impression Management

In the staging of a successful team performance, the participants stressed the importance of exercising *dramaturgical discipline*, *loyalty*, and *circumspection* (Goffman, 1959). While these concepts have been (in)directly referred to in coach education (e.g., Allanson *et al.*, 2019) and sports work (e.g. Hall *et al.*, 2021; Gale *et al.*, 2019; O’Gorman *et al.*, 2020; Potrac and Jones, 2009b; Potrac *et al.*, 2012), the emphasises has largely been on *back region* interactions between team-mates, meaning that little attention has been given to their maintenance and function in *front region* performances (Goffman, 1959). Besides the introductory work of Potrac and Jones (2009b), Allanson et al (2019), and Hall et al (2021), which have provided initial insights concerning the role of these characteristics in recruiting reliable team-members, nurturing cooperative attitudes, and advancing collective credibility, no research has addressed these concepts, or the moment-to-moment collaborative acts that are integral to collaboration, in sufficient theoretical detail.

Therefore, I believe an original contribution of this project relates to the generation of rich knowledge concerning the fostering and functioning of interactional and/or relational *discipline*, *loyalty*, and *circumspection* in a team performance (Goffman, 1959). Indeed, the work conditions endured by the participants (i.e., limited time and space to plan, blurred regions and spaces, fluidity of team membership, ambiguous relations) rendered the enactment of these practices as a more problematic endeavour than originally outlined by Goffman (1959). That is, rather than being a straight-forward and smooth depiction of collaboration, the nature of teamwork in this thesis shows how teams *make do* amidst constraining conditions. Relatedly, a further contribution of this thesis is illustrated by unveiling the quasi-regional strategies teams used to maintain their solidarity, coordination, influence, and (diminished) capacity to exert front region control (Goffman, 1959).

One of the strategies that the participants employed to achieve ample *discipline*, *loyalty*, and *circumspection* was to skilfully manufacture quasi-private *back regions* through the use of space (i.e., standing away from candidates), *props* (i.e., music, tasks), and *front* (i.e., positioning, volume of speech, gestures) (Goffman, 1959). Crucially, other than the brief exchanging of emails in the lead up to a workshop, a great deal of *back region* activity had to be conducted in the co-

presence of candidates, becoming a part of their collective performance(s) in and of itself (Goffman, 1959). This is a significant contribution because, on comparison to Goffman (1959) and Roderick and Allen-Collinson (2020), coach education teams did not have access to physically bounded (i.e., separated by walls, doors, or partitions) or liminal spaces to deliberate in private. This meant that a plethora of issues pertaining to the creation of sensorily-bounded *regions* (i.e., touch, sound, sight) developed, especially in terms of ensuring that undesirable information remained concealed.

Further extending findings in sports work (Corsby and Jones, 2020; Corsby *et al.*, 2022b; Hall *et al.*, 2021) these spaces helped the participants to develop some basic shared understanding and consensus regarding *role performance*, consistency, and *noticing* (Goffman, 1959; Mason, 2002). Moreover, the participants reported that they were more able to pre-empt and react to the contingencies (i.e., session break down, learner conduct, progression) and opportunities (i.e., to give feedback to co-tutors, repair, create regions, advance buy-in) that emerged throughout workshops. Additionally, it allowed team-members to engage in bouts of *staging talk* (i.e., planning, evaluation of performance) and *team collusion* (i.e., generation of strategies, veiled public communication) to devise or repair *fabrications* (i.e., managing the flow of content) without divulging discrediting or disruptive facts to the course candidates (i.e., lack of planning, tutor uncertainty) (Goffman, 1959, 1974). Aside from Corsby *et al.* (2022b), who illuminated the meaning's a coach apportioned to *front* and *back region* interactions with his players, these findings are novel because they introduce new conceptual vocabulary for understanding the function(s) of *regions* in the maintenance of a team performance (Goffman, 1959).

Another significant contribution of this project is that it addresses the role of specific team-members during these discussions and how roles are distributed to enable credible team performances. For example, the participants reported that these spaces were used to negate matters of *dramatic* and *directive dominance* (Goffman, 1959). Here, a member of the team (usually the most experienced), exercised *circumspection* when assigning roles and responsibilities to co-tutors (Goffman, 1959). This echoes the limited findings of research in sport coaching (e.g., Hall *et al.*,

2021; Potrac and Jones, 2009b), which highlight how coaches recruit or disclose information to playing staff who could be relied upon to reinforce messages and credentialise their status and performances. In this thesis, *performance directors* tended to be sensitive to the fragility of the team performance and allocated roles to delivering (and non-delivering tutors based on their perceived skill level(s) and capacity to avoid committing *faux pas* (Goffman, 1959).

The participants' efforts at managing the flow of information in the genuine *front region* is another original finding of note (Goffman, 1959). While studies have explored how *individuals* achieve such a feat (i.e., Gale *et al.*, 2019; Ives *et al.*, 2021; Potrac *et al.*, 2017a), there has been little consideration given to how team-members read and respond to one another to maintain a working consensus (Goffman, 1959). As the generation of private spaces was not always possible, the participants had to adopt a collection of impromptu communicative strategies in a *disciplined* and *loyal* manner (Goffman, 1959). For example, delivering tutors would often mask their uncertainty and calls for assistance through acts of *collusion* via secret signals (i.e., brief glances, disguised questions, eye contact) to avoid discrediting themselves and the team as a whole (Goffman, 1959). On the other hand, non-delivering tutors exercised *defensive practices* in the way they used space to communicate (i.e., hidden gestures from the back of classrooms; body language), manage their appearance and *emotional poise* when mistakes or disagreements occurred, and when they were required to interject or repair the performance (Goffman, 1959; Burkitt, 2014).

Seemingly, the participants were conscious of aiding the performance while at the same time, upholding the credibility of team-mates. This stands in contradiction to Potrac *et al.*'s (2012) admission that he purposefully exercised ill-discipline and refrained from helping out his co-coach to further his own interests (to the detriment of others). That is, in a similar way to 'Kate', the head coach of a rugby team in Hall *et al.* (2021), the participants employed *sympathetic tact* as part of a wider spectrum of *protective practices* to support the team's image (Goffman, 1959). In some respects, this demonstrates how the *professional interests* (Kelchtermans and Ballet, 2002a) of team-members intersect with those of the team, and how in situations where individuals could (inter)act to the detriment of others (i.e., chastise co-tutors), they choose not to. Simply put, the

participants' interests around fostering positive relations influenced their decisions to refrain from disruptive courses of action and were based on their awareness of exchange when relying upon team-members deploying *defensive practices* (Crossley, 2011; Goffman, 1959).

In line with the demands of individual impression management, collective acts of *discipline* and *loyalty* also entailed emotional demands (Goffman, 1959). Although a growing body of research is emerging in coach education (e.g., Allanson *et al.*, 2019) and sports work (i.e., Magill *et al.*, 2017; Nelson *et al.*, 2013; Potrac *et al.*, 2017) that examines the emotion management of tutors, coaches, and athletes during interactions with others (i.e., colleagues, chairpersons, managers), no research has explored the role of emotion management in the creation of a collective image. In some instances, this bore some resemblance to one of the coach educators in Allanson *et al.* (2019) who, despite, feeling frustration and anger towards their co-tutor for defecting from the agreed working consensus, decided to *just go with it*. In other situations, such as moments of repair (i.e., when candidates became disengaged or confrontational) or transitions between tutor delivery, the participants stressed the importance of orienting their performance in response to the previous tutor (i.e., *going in like a firework*). Interestingly, novice tutors spoke about managing their gestures and emotional expressions when supporting a delivering tutor (i.e., conceal confusion) to avoid revealing discrediting *secrets* (Goffman, 1959). This cautiousness was also extended to co-tutors who endeavoured to keep these secrets hidden to help further the novice's own interests.

In developing the point I made earlier concerning the *back region* management of co-tutors' emotions, this form of *front region* collective facework bears some semblance to Hochschild's (1983) notion of *collective emotional labour*. Invariably, the participants' awareness of interdependencies with team-members and the necessity of collaboration and public solidarity influenced thinking, feeling, and acting in the sustenance of the emotional tone of their own, others', and the overall team performance (Crossley, 2011; Hochschild, 1983; Thoits, 2004). In this respect, the participants, as, at times, genuine sympathetic and empathetic team-members, sought to undertake relational work in order to reduce psychological distress and actively garner a sense of collective identity and togetherness (Potrac *et al.*, 2017; Thoits, 2004). Even though this was a



generally collaborative act, the participants, as I mentioned previously, were aware of the need to exchange symbolic social gestures (i.e., solidarity) to access resources in order to achieve personally and professionally valued outcomes both in the present and the future (Crossley, 2011).

The participants reported that a significant challenge in employing *defensive practices* was the lack of time spent on collectively aligning interactions (i.e., planning, rehearsing) and the subsequent ambiguity that existed (Goffman, 1959). For the most part, this was a direct consequence of the *satisficing* strategies – in the form of *primary* and *secondary adjustments* - that were prioritised in response to the intersecting constraints associated with the work conditions (i.e., limited time and space, organisational monitoring) (Goffman, 1961b; Simon, 1957). These findings stand in stark contrast to existing research in sports work that illustrates the depth and comprehensiveness of team deliberations (e.g., Corsby and Jones, 2020; Hall *et al.*, 2021). Clear contradictions also exist between findings in this thesis and Goffman's (1959) beliefs surrounding the idealism of what underpins a successful team performance, and is an example of the dilemmas and difficulties of coordination faced by team-members when this is not achieved. As much as *defensive practices* were used, instances occurred when this was not possible (Goffman, 1959).

One issue that was highlighted by the participants reflects the findings of Gale et al (2019) in sports work. Gale and colleagues reported that coaches were more or less *disciplined* (i.e., guarded, cautious, poised) or sincere (i.e., less guarded, authentic) with colleagues based on levels of trust and familiarity (Goffman, 1959). Moreover, the coaches explained that the absence of trust restricted and constrained the extent of their collaboration. Building on these findings, this thesis has illustrated *how* ambiguous and unfamiliar relationships impact team-members' attempts to support their team-mates and help facilitate the collective performance (or not). For example, the participants were often worried about interjecting, offering feedback, repairing the performance or offering alternative perspectives as they were unsure of how their co-tutor would react. This meant that *defensive practices* emerged in the form of silence and nonchalant, benign support that was not directly beneficial to the team's credibility (Goffman, 1959). Simply, much like the coaches in Gale et al (2019), the participants took a *circumspect* approach to employing *defensive practices*

based on their emergent readings of organisational situations and consequences for others' unwavering cooperation in the immediate and distant future (i.e., fearful of not receiving support when delivering workshops or being identified as a bad team-mate) (Goffman, 1959).

The participants also described how they were not *in the know* about the parts that team-members were playing (Goffman, 1959). Therefore, to some degree, teamwork resembled Bauman's (1996) notion of people 'living separately, side by side' (p. 18). Given the short amount of time allocated to preparation, the participants were primarily concerned with ensuring that they played their own parts well. What developed, then, was a lack of coordination and confusion regarding how to assist team-members because the tutors were unable to exercise *circumspection* relating to *scripts* and the direction of the performance (Goffman, 1959). For example, several of the participants spoke about employing restraint when feeling obliged to correct a co-tutor because could not anticipate what *they had up their sleeve*. In combination with the strategic nature of interactions, this echoes the findings of Potrac and Jones (2009b) regarding the challenges that arise from *contrived collegiality* (Hargreaves, 1991;1994). Here, the *doing* of teamwork resembled Scott's (2015) assertion that:

'Cooperation is no longer about the collective pursuit of intersubjectivity, or of harmony between actors' authentic intentions, but, rather, a fitting together of their surface performances to create an aesthetically pleasing appearance: a neatly choreographed dance whose formation collapses as soon as the music stops.' (p. 231)

The final novel contribution this project has made to collective impression management relates to the multi-dimensional and fluid nature of *dramaturgical loyalty* (Goffman, 1959). In his writings, Goffman remarks that individuals and groups can alter how (dis)loyal they are to an *official line* or organisational stance in favour of alternative action to achieve outcomes. While Goffman (1959) recognises that such social practices are not solely lateral (i.e., loyalty in favour of team-mates and colleagues) or vertical (i.e., loyalty in favour of subordinates and superiors), he does not expand on this in his theorising. Therefore, I have extended Goffman's original claims by introducing *how* loyalty is situational and bound up in workers' understandings of the professional landscape. I also believe that this contributes to extending the existing research which has only focused on the role

of *professional interests* in individual interactions, particularly how groups use their ‘power’ and ‘resources’ to achieve desirable work conditions (Blasé, 1991; Kelchtermans and Ballet, 2002a).

For example, I illustrate how tutor teams navigated demands associated with performativity (i.e., non-negotiables) that necessitated the prioritisation of TSCG’s official stance. In a similar vein to the coaches in O’Gorman et al (2021) and Ives et al’s (2021) studies, the participants also described *fabricating* (or feigning) their compliance with organisational policy to maintain their agency and negotiated *local jurisdiction* (i.e., practices and working conditions) when monitored by national managers and assessors (Ball, 1987). This meant that if errors were made when delivering content that was factored into their workplace evaluations (i.e., pass rates, assessment), non-delivering tutors were obliged to explicitly repair the performance (without drawing attention to the mistake).

What the participants described here was how they feigned their conformity in order to be liberated (i.e., create agency in which to fulfil interests). In instances where coach education teams were less visible (i.e., negotiables), the participants explained that they could prioritise the credibility of their co-tutors by ignoring mistakes or *marking* an event and adapting their own performance to avoid contradictions (Mason, 2002). Building on the work of Dempsey et al (2021), this project has demonstrated how agency is collectively manipulated in overcoming difficulties associated with performance evaluation (i.e., pass/fail rates, feedback, monitoring of content delivery). Another benefit of liberating themselves from monitoring and visibility meant that tutor teams were able to fulfil their *cultural-ideological* and *socio-professional’ interests* by prioritising candidates and adopting *unofficial lines* to meet performative expectations (Kelchtermans and Ballet, 2002a).

The *ebb and flow of compliance*, however, was constrained by the fluid and inconsistent nature of audience composition (i.e., learners could freely move from course to course) (Gibson and Groom, 2018; 2019). This meant that the enactment of *defensive practices* extended beyond the immediate interaction to separate stages where colleagues were delivering the same or similar performance(s) (Goffman, 1959). Here, coach education teams were aware of the destructive

intentions of learners (i.e., seeking to catch tutors out or pit tutors off against one another) and sought to remain *loyal* by employing *protective scripts* (i.e. “[sport] is subjective”) (Goffman, 1959). Critically, team-members exercised *circumspection* due to the influence of relational network(s) on immediate interactions, as well as understanding how their conduct when in the co-presence of stakeholders could simultaneously influence the credibility and consistency of the broader coordinated performance(s) carried out daily by others within their respective County TCSGs (Goffman, 1959).

Together, the performances that team-members collectively coordinated reflect the *group* aspects of several of Shulman’s (2007; 2017) concepts. First, *managing identity and role conflicts* (i.e., skilfully navigating webs of loyalty by prioritising stakeholders in accordance with situation, overcoming intersecting demands for loyalty at the same time). Second, *subterranean education and show organisations* (i.e., how teams maintained and advanced working conditions, achieved organisational objectives, and resisted national managers and assessors). Third, *authentication and credibility practices* (i.e., how teams collaborated to generate buy-in from course candidates and convince others in the organisation of their fealty). Finally, *ethical disengagement* (i.e., the justifications given for using deception as a means to achieve TCSG’s objectives and goals).

Having identified the original contributions of this thesis in each theme, one new idea that features heavily across the entire data set is the concept of “magnified” and “exaggerated” performances. In particular, the participants had an awareness of working in a service-based industry where getting positive reviews from coach learners and others led to them to carefully curate their “presentation of the self”. Here, getting respect and establishing credibility with coaches, co-tutors, and line managers was prioritised over learning outcomes and high-quality educational experiences. Thus, matters of pedagogy were secondary to organisational micropolitics, concerns about the self, collective image, and consumer satisfaction. For the most part, then, sense-making and behaviour were driven by an awareness of the social and professional penalties of not performing in accordance with subcultural values and expectations.

In closing this section, I believe that, collectively, these new insights speak positively to the calls for action that I highlighted in chapters one and two. With reference to Potrac's (2019) recent critique of the existing literature, this thesis has involved an expansive and in-depth application of Goffman's and Hochschild's (1983) dramaturgical theorising, alongside Crossley's (2011) writings on relational networks to advance current understandings concerning the individual and collective interactions that constitute everyday coach education work. In turn, I have developed knowledge in coach education and broader sports work domains by unveiling new social complexities, ideas, dimensions, and concepts regarding the *doing* of individual and collective impression management in the workplace (Potrac, 2019). The major contributions of this thesis are as follows: (i) revealing the interactional strategies that coach educators use, where, when, with whom, and why; (ii) showing how, when, and why tutor teams plan, enact, and reflect upon teamwork in the way(s) they do – inclusive of the tensions, challenges, ambiguities, and opportunities they experience; and (iii) revealing how they think, feel, act in relation to their (often intersecting) relational networks and working conditions.

#### *5.4 Implications for Policy and Practice in Formal Coach Education*

There are several key implications arising from the findings of this thesis that have practical relevance for the *doing* of coach education. In keeping with the philosophical position that I have subscribed to throughout this thesis, I invite policy makers, national managers, course coordinators, administrators, tutor developers, and coach educators to consider my recommendations in relation to the following: (i) their unique work contexts; (ii) policies and key performance indicators; (iii) their official roles and responsibilities; (iv) who they are connected with and obligated to in their organisational networks; and (v) the stakeholders with whom they are expected to interact, collaborate, and influence on a daily basis. To begin with, I present topics for reflection aimed at those considered to be in the *back region* of coach education work, before addressing the employees directly involved in *front region* activities, such as the planning, delivery, and revision of course content, as well as those responsible for providing in-situ support (Goffman, 1959).

#### 5.4.1 Policy Makers, Managers, Coordinators, Administrators, and Tutor Developers

The findings presented within this thesis suggest that executive stakeholders should give due attention to developing training programmes for coach educators that reflect the performative and social demands of their work. For all of the participants, the ability to individually and collectively devise and enact impression management strategies to secure buy-in was integral to their success, so it would be beneficial to integrate a suite of dramaturgical and emotional concepts into role preparation courses for coach educators. Furthermore, these might be presented in the format of Hartley's (2017) micropolitical astuteness framework (introduced in sections 5.2 and 5.3) to connect particular skills to the workplace performances that I found coach educators to participate in. Organisational leaders should consider drawing on these ideas to create a professional framework that establishes a shared understanding about the service experiences coach educators are expected to provide, including *what* they might do, *when*, *where*, with *whom*, and *why*.

Given that the participants frequently referred to the problems that arose out of the ambiguity associated with a lack of formal training and remote and casual work, it is possible that implementing a formal training programme that consists of sense-making concepts, content knowledge, behavioural guidelines, and pedagogy may help to address the lack of structure, perceived competence, workshop familiarity, and capacity for judgement and noticing that reportedly limited the quality of their performances. Adopting problem-based activities such as scenario training and role-play may develop the necessary interactional and critical thinking qualities coach educators need to achieve desirable outcomes in their various social engagements with learners, collaborative acts with co-tutors, and thrive within the conditions of their work. Rather than a typical top-down approach to role preparation, policy-makers should attempt to initiate dialogue with coach educators to inform the (re)design of training activities and remedy the perceived disconnect between SGB ideals/expectations and the *actual* realities of practice.

All of the participants, at some point, called for more structure and guidance in the role preparation and pre-course activities (e.g., core objectives, learning content, workshop structure,

pedagogical principles) in order to be better equipped to individually and collectively exercise agency to meet learner needs and deal with the uncertainties, fluid interactions, and events that tended to emerge during workshops. With this in mind, it appears that executive office holders should prioritise the development of coach educators' professional-, intra-, and interpersonal skills. One way they might do this is by introducing concepts like *front* and *back regions*, *communication out of character*, and *dramaturgical circumspection* to provoke critical thought around how coach educators prepare for workshops (e.g., anticipating challenges and possible future consequences of and for action, assigning roles, selecting and prioritising content), connect their image to the tutor team and the wider organisation, strategically manage space to orchestrate the flow and direction of the workshop (e.g., to create opportunities), and engage in reparative interaction (Goffman, 1959).

To prepare coach educators for work, then, executive office holders may wish to consult Hartley's (2017) ideas on *personal skills*, *authentication* and *credibility practices*, and *reading people* and *situations*, as well as the *pedagogy of performance* narrative that was prominent within the participants' justifications and rationales (e.g., a primary focus on the self). What I am referring to here is the emphasis that the coach educators placed on presenting a credible self-image to garner respect, advance their reputation(s), and influence learners towards desired outcomes. With this in mind, coach education managers and tutor developers should introduce concepts such as *personal front*, *dramaturgical realisation*, and *idealisation* to encourage coach educators to think about the steps they take to construct a desirable image of themselves.

Based on my findings, this could include the aesthetics of the coach educators' attire (e.g., uniform), *manner* (e.g., enthusiasm, empathy, tone), *scripts* (e.g., vocabulary, greeting, questioning, responses), and how they integrate *props* (e.g., learning materials, classroom layout) into their performances and the setting to create a positive and engaging learning environment (Goffman, 1959). In addition, ideas around *circumspection*, *mystification*, and *misrepresentation* are useful for helping practitioners make in-situ decisions based on learner needs, judge *what* information to reveal, and *how* (Goffman, 1959). For TCSG, this would mean supporting

practitioners to be able to persuade learners to adopt advocated practices and accept the underpinning arguments *of* and *for* each one.

These suggestions also have implications for teamwork and collective performances. For example, my findings indicate that both soft and hard interpersonal skills are fundamental for facilitating a collaborative attitude and establishing mutual trust. Thus, it seems that helping coach educators to develop self-awareness and group-orientated behaviours should be a priority. Broadly, this aligns with the negotiation, empathy, and influence skills associated with Hartley's (2017) notion of *building alignment and alliances*. To enhance how teams function, introducing concepts such as *staging talk* and *team collusion* may help to address some of the tensions and challenges reported by the participants in relation to *dramaturgical circumspection, discipline, and loyalty* (Goffman, 1959). Driven by a compulsory and standardised training programme, exposure to these concepts could serve to enhance the rigour and specificity of planning discussions. As a result, it may help allocated team-members to minimise mistakes, identify and fix errors in real-time, predict team-mate behaviour(s), offer high-quality support and feedback, orient their own behaviour(s) to the anticipated direction of the workshop, and utilise their favoured pedagogies.

On top of role preparation activities, it is imperative that decision-makers exercise strategic thought when assembling teams of coach educators. My findings highlight the importance of team-member complementarity with regards to their expertise and skill set(s), perceived competency, qualifications, professional background, experience of working in an agile team environment, and a willingness to perform dominant *and* supporting roles. Decision-makers may also wish to reflect on who they assign leadership or directive roles to, dynamics between employees, the demands of the course (e.g., is it a level 1, 2, or 3 course?), the anticipated learner-cohort demographic, and the venue, setting, or location within which it takes place. To echo the calls from the participants, I propose that SGBs provide more regular local, regional, and national tutor development events and/or initiatives, which, in turn, might promote cohesiveness, collegiality, and consensus.

On a related point, office holders should think about utilising concepts like (professional) *feeling* and *display rules* and *surface* and *deep acting* to design onboarding resources, learning



materials, mission statements, and persona or service frameworks (Bolton, 2005; Hochschild, 1983). My findings point to the need for service manuals, training, or resources that outline the SGBs values and the expected behaviours of its coach educators. These should be grounded in the sort of customer experience that policy-makers want coach learners to have. Similar to the flight attendants and bill collectors in Hochschild's (1983) text, this could include presenting guidelines for expressing the SGB's image, responding to consumer interactions, and strategies for managing the emotions of self, learner coaches, and team-members. As was evident in the data, creating the appropriate emotional tone for learning and teamwork was essential for delivering satisfactory consumer experiences. Even though the participants frequently drew upon their biographical experience(s) to select and successfully express emotions (and elicit emotion in others), a shared framework would establish a collective organisational identity that coach educators could use to structure their decision-making and behaviour, and, in turn, support the wider goals of the business.

The biographical experiences of potential employees, then, should factor into the decisions of hiring managers and teams when identifying the specific skills that will be prioritised in the role advertisement, shortlisting, and appointment phases of the recruitment process. My findings imply that SGBs should seek to employ individuals from service or service-education backgrounds that are metrics-driven, customer-focused, and rely on agile teamwork. It is advised that applicants be assessed against the dimensions of Hartley's (2017) micropolitical astuteness framework.

#### *5.4.2 Coach Educators*

First, coach educators should become aware of what constitutes an excellent service interaction in their respective workplace(s). It is imperative that they reflexively manage their social and emotional performances to generate trust and buy-in when (co)delivering workshops and engaging in ad-hoc interactions with learners. Coach educators may also benefit from critically considering how their workplace performances are being judged by co-tutors, colleagues, and line managers, as well as how modes of communication exist (i.e., means of official and unofficial feedback) that could potentially influence employment prospects. Thought may be given to how *professional emotion rules*, *display rules*, and *feeling rules* characterise SGB definitions and self-understandings

of a *good* tutor (Bolton, 2005; Hochschild, 1983). In addition, coach educators may find value in dramaturgical concepts like *personal front*, *realisation*, *idealisation*, *mystification*, and *deep* and *surface acting* when seeking to communicate this to others (Goffman, 1959; Hochschild, 1983).

Second, concepts such as *front* and *back region* and *communication out of character* (i.e., staging talk, team collusion) will help tutor teams identify opportunities to rehearse, manage, repair, and reflect on their individual and collective performances (Goffman, 1959). For example, coach educators may wish to consider the digital (i.e., social media, email), spatial (i.e., cars, car parks, corridors, practical areas, classrooms), and sensory (i.e., the use of music, arrival tasks) means by which discussions can take place. Furthermore, tutor teams should also aim to strategically assign roles to team-members who can be trusted to exhibit sufficient *dramaturgical discipline*, *dramaturgical loyalty*, and *dramaturgical circumspection* in the enactment of their own role and in the support of others' (Goffman, 1959). Arguably, it is also important that coach educators think about how they can demonstrate the above characteristics in their interactions with co-tutors to develop reciprocal, trustworthy, and positive working relationships. This might include how they go about dealing with public mistakes and demonstrating a collaborative attitude.

### 5.5 Future Directions

The findings presented within this thesis have provided significant, novel, and original insights into the everyday realities of coach education work for coach educators. To my knowledge, this is among the first pieces of work in coaching, coach education, and the wider domains of sports work that has undertaken a systematic application of Goffman's dramaturgical and post-dramaturgical theorising to closely examine individual and collective workplace performances, interactions, and relationships. Owing to the fact that this thesis represents a first attempt at comprehensively studying organisational life in sport through a Goffmanian perspective, new analytical possibilities and avenues for research have arisen. In some respects, the exploratory nature of the current project means it is 'an unfinished sociological assessment ... that can lead to addressing deeper questions' (Shulman, 2017, p. 71). In the remainder of this section, then, I offer a couple of topics that warrant further scholarly attention.

First, all of the research participants in this thesis identified (to the best of my knowledge) as white, heterosexual, and middle-class males; meaning the research findings reflect a masculine worldview. Therefore, to echo the calls of others (e.g., Ives *et al.*, 2021; Jacobsen, 2019; Potrac *et al.*, 2017b; Roderick *et al.*, 2017; Shulman, 2017) it is important that future research addresses how coach educators' sense-making, identities, interactional strategies, and emotional experiences intersect with characteristics such as, but not strictly limited to, race, sexuality, gender, ethnicity, and social class. This is crucial because, according to Shulman (2017), an employees' actual and perceived identity can shape the expectations for and of impression management as issued by stakeholders, organisational policies and practices, and the extent and type of presentational and emotion work that must be done to meet them, as well as how they are treated in social situations. I encourage use Goffman's oeuvre to examine how coach educators of certain demographics adopt strategies in their individual, supportive, and collective interactions with others (i.e., colleagues, learners, line managers, co-tutors) in order to avoid being stigmatised, to respond to stigma, or to conceal a stigma that could lead to becoming discredited (Goffman, 1963a; Roderick *et al.*, 2017).

For me, it is essential that researchers investigate how emotions such as guilt, fear, shame, anger embarrassment, frustration, pride, and joy feature in the everyday construction of identities (i.e., team-member) that they may interpret as offensive or demeaning (Ives *et al.*, 2021; Roderick *et al.*, 2017). To do this, scholars may benefit from consulting Hochschild's (1983) writings on *emotion culture* to analyse how emotional ideologies in coach education work (i.e., beliefs about situation-specific attitudes, feelings, responses, and physical performances) elicit feelings of (in)authenticity and distress (Potrac, 2019). Such scholarship would illuminate how conformity to role expectations produces issues of 'conflict, discrimination, injustice, and cruelty' (Thoits, 2004, p. 369).

Second, the participants cited how both the relational and employment conditions of coach education work produced tensions between their full-time jobs (i.e., limited time to complete admin), leisure activities (i.e., grassroots coaching, walking the dog, grocery shopping), and family obligations (i.e., fulfilling duties as a father and husband). The data also suggested that the

transcendence of emotions (i.e., nervousness, distress) and sense of being *constantly on* that contaminated these roles prompted continuous self-cajoling and suppression during the performances that participants believed they were required to offer. In combination with this, the general demands of *doing* the job, inclusive of the nature of their individual and collective interactions with others throughout workshops (i.e., performatively and strategically dealing with ongoing precarity, uncertainty, ambiguity, competitiveness, and scrutiny), were seemingly stressful and challenging. In light of this, I believe that an in-depth exploration of the costs of coach educators' performances and workplace conditions on their physical and mental health and wellbeing provides a fruitful avenue for inquiry (Potrac *et al.*, 2017b; Roderick *et al.*, 2017).

I contend that Hochschild's (1983) writings on the *commodification of human feeling* hold much promise for advancing this research agenda. Linked to this idea, then, would be how coach educators' respective performances and attachments to and investments in their role(s) (i.e., whether sincere or cynical) elicit feelings of alienation, depression, and/or burnout (Hochschild, 1983). Furthermore, I believe that Glucksmann's (1995; 2005) notion of the *total social organisation of labour* can add significant value, particularly in terms of exploring the home-work interface (or the interface that borders other responsibilities) and the tensions that bind the coach educators' private lives and coach education employment. Another possible option is to use Hargreaves' (1998) theorising to understand how wellbeing is tethered to the extent to which coach educators' presentational and emotion work during service interactions reflects perceived vulnerability and contradicts their deeply held *moral purposes* (i.e., reluctantly delivering content)

Finally, researchers can enrich the ethnographic approach I have used here by incorporating diaries – written, video, audio, or blog. Alongside observations and cyclical interviews, the inclusion of diaries will provide accounts of the interactions and emotional experiences that coach educators endure in regions that I have not explored in-depth or was unable to access (i.e., domestic home, full-time work settings, grassroots clubs, in-situ support sessions, leisure activities) (Day, 2016). As part of an integrated methodology, diaries reportedly help researchers to delineate processes of reflexivity, chart the temporal evolution of meaning-making,

and capture spontaneous events that would otherwise remain hidden and elusive (Cottingham and Erickson, 2020; Day, 2016). Taken together, these methods will unveil the intersecting features of coach educators' lifeworlds and offer a more inclusive understanding of their everyday realities (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019).

#### *5.6 More Than Meets the Eye: Being Micropolitically Astute in the Field*

Throughout the course of the fieldwork, I found that my reflective skills were fundamental to managing interactions and relationships with the participants. In this section, I utilise Hartley's (2017) political astuteness skills framework (introduced earlier in the chapter) as a peg upon which to hang my reflections. As a brief reminder, Hartley (2017) writes that political astuteness can be understood in relation to five dimensions. These are *intra-personal skills* (i.e., the ability to reflect and exercise emotional control), *inter-personal skills* (i.e., the ability to influence the thoughts, feeling, and actions of others), *reading people and situations* (i.e., thinking about the likely standpoints of others and what will happen when people come together), *building alignment and alliances* (i.e., forging differences in outlook into collaborative action generating relationships based on the reading of situations), and *strategic direction and scanning* (i.e., exercising foresight to strategically act in accordance with possible future scenarios and opportunities). .

In terms of the intrapersonal skills, there were occasions where I disagreed with or was angered by the participants' individual and/or collective conduct, but actively refrained from expressing my disapproval because I knew that it might impact my access to high-quality data and social spaces, as well as my relationships with them beyond the fieldwork. In these instances, I benefited from reflecting on my previous experiences within the research(ed) context and prior interactions with the participants while playing the role(s) of friend, colleague, mentee, and subordinate as a means to proactively interpret their behaviours and respond to emerging situations in acceptable ways. Primarily, this involved referring to how my own actions and decisions were responsively treated in the past, and drawing on observations where I noticed that co-workers and acquaintances suffered relational consequences (i.e., threatened reputation) by virtue of choosing particular course(s) of action over others. The below excerpt provides an example of how I

practically applied these skills by hiding my true emotions and embodying a masculine identity in my interaction(s) with the participants:

We (the participants and I) were having our usual bit of crack on the opposite touchline to where the learners' warm-up was taking place. The conversation took an expected sexualised turn following a comment that William made about *hairy pies*. The team tutor began to collectively scoff over trends in female *downstairs grooming*. I felt uncomfortable – my recent reading(s) on the gendered aspects of coach education only served to compound my shame and guilt, and sensitise me to the masculine undertones of the interaction. William gladly opened up the floor for the rest of us to share stories of our own recent sexual encounters. I stayed silent, but laughed along to show my loyalty to the group. Out of nowhere, William directly invited me in, “surely a handsome lad like Cal knows if the bush is still in fashion”. My toes curled. I cringed. But I had way more to lose than to gain by publicly calling out the obvious issues. In the back of my mind, I knew that I relied upon their cooperation for the thesis, and that I (we) shared obligations beyond the Ph.D. I didn't want to be marginalised as a *snowflake* or have them change their attitudes toward me, like other co-workers have experienced. Besides, I had happily joined in with such discussions previously. I knew what to do – how to be *the lad*. I looked around the troupe, rubbed my hands together, and sneered, “a gentleman doesn't kiss and tell boys”, followed by a knowing wink. (Luckily), a ripple of accepting chuckles ensued from the participants.

To further deal with the relational demands of fieldwork, I often utilised interactional strategies that resembled Hartley's (2017) notion of *interpersonal skills*. In particular, I consistently gave thought to *how I looked* (i.e., body language, clothing, facial expressions), *what I said* (i.e., terminology, responses, opinions), *how I said it* (i.e., tone of voice, pitch, speed, manner), and how I used the physical setting and resources (i.e., tactics board) in a bid to influence the thinking, feeling, and acting of the participants. One reason I did this was because I felt that my fieldworker identity strained the other relationships that I shared with them beyond the fieldwork itself. I believed that it was important to demonstrate my competence and credibility when opportunities arose as it seemed I was being tested to make sure I was still *one of the guys*. I was also mindful that the way(s) my behaviours were interpreted in my dyadic interactions with the participants, in combination with the interconnectedness of the TCSG network, could threaten my standing in a multitude of settings. The below excerpt illustrates how I applied these skills in a public exchange with Trevor, who was my manager for a coaching role that I held at TCSG:

Trevor marched on to an empty area of the pitch, smirking to himself, and bellowed, “come on, Mr Ph.D, you should know this one ...”. He proceeded to unpack the tactical *pictures* within the session and posed me a hypothetical scenario to solve – I felt the learners’ eyes burn a hole in the back of head. Just like he had done ten minutes ago with his co-tutor, - Patrick-, I could tell this was his attempt at a *gotcha* moment. I thought to myself, ‘you bastard’ – he had caught me off guard, right in the middle of making a quick jotting in my notebook. Given his status as my superior, I couldn’t tell him to “fuckin’ do one” (as much as I wanted to”). I was also fearful of, god forbid, getting the answer wrong in front of the group – what would Trevor think of my ability as a coach then?! These concerns were significantly worsened by the fact that I was coaching with him during the week, and my body shuddered at the thought of being gossiped about, or becoming the brunt of my co-workers’ jokes. Despite my elevated heart-rate and crippling anxiety, I calmly closed my notebook and placed it on top of my frosty TCSG emblazoned bomber jacket – while not breaking eye contact with Trevor. I stood tall and measured, softened my facial muscles, spoke loudly and slowly, with gusto, used correct technical and tactical jargon, and referred to a tactical whiteboard that was propped up against a mound of equipment. I confidently explained the solution to the problem, which was correct, whilst precisely moving the magnetic markers around the board to display precise *pictures* and justify my idea. Thankfully, Trevor agreed, and followed by providing supplementary commentary.

My acts of self-presentation were not solely impromptu or spontaneous, though, as I was often able to anticipate the stances, arguments, and attitudes that participants were likely to adopt based on my previous interactions with them. Even though I had pre-established familiarity with many of the participants, I knew that my academic identity and fieldwork activities were going to be perceived as a threat to the *everyday doing of things* or locally negotiated ways of working. For the purpose of doing a *good job* with the thesis, this was problematic because limited access to the participants’ perspectives and *front* and *back region* interactions (or unnecessarily distorted practice) would have inhibited my ability to generate rich data. From my experiences within the setting, I was aware how *of time on the grass* was lauded over the reading of books, journal articles, and understanding of theory. I was also savvy to the shared contextual belief that *academics are not [sport] people* – and that they (we?) are considered as unhelpful and untrustworthy, and generally subject to playful degradation and suspicion. As I could envisage the likely responses to academic characteristics, I strategically manipulated my self-presentation and positions on coaching and

coach education in advance of interaction(s). My sense-making and actions here reflect Hartley's (2017) concept of *reading people and situations*. The below excerpt shows this prior to undertaking an initial observation:

In the middle of filling my backpack with thermals, a flask, Dictaphone, food, and outdoor footwear, I began to ponder a previous conversation I had with Barry before a coaching session about the integration of research into practice. He had a string and unapologetic view on the esteem of academics in sport, "all they ever do is criticise you and tell you what is wrong with your practice, they don't actually help you. It's always after the fact." I finish packing my bag before leaving the house. I decide to emphasise my sameness to avoid being perceived as an outsider. I knew ALL about the scheming private discussions that co-tutors have to distort practice for unwelcome observers, and the derisive warm mocking that would be directed toward me or had at my expense if I was judged to be an academic. To prevent incurring any costs regarding my ongoing access, I wore an embroidered TCSG tracksuit as a means to confirm my collegial and coaching identities, and equipped myself with branded clipboards, water bottles, and pens. I selected the experiences, opinions, values, and half-truths that I would reveal during interactions, as well as those I wished to conceal.

I also found that managing and writing myself into the tensions that emanated from the different interests, perspectives, and arguments of the participants was an integral part of the fieldwork. On one hand, there were clusters of coach educators and superiors who disliked one another and disagreed with each other's opinions and practices. On the other, situations arose (i.e., advertised vacancy *for* and employment *of* a new regional coach education manager) that simultaneously produced divisions and alliances, rendered the participants more or less vulnerable than colleagues, and brought to the fore subtle competitive attitudes. In such circumstances, the relational standing of the participants was fluid – it was in my best interests to form my own alliances with those who were one or more of the following: (i) influential, (ii) liked by others, (iii) sources of rich data, (iv) committed to offering long-term access; (v) with whom I had immediate obligations to, (vi) would need to associate with in the future, and (vii) provide opportunities for work of further research after the Ph.D. Here, I was aware of how aligning with particular individuals might ruin more (or potentially more) valuable and meaningful relationships. This reflects Hartley's (2017) writing(s) on *building alignment and alliances*. The below excerpt shows how these skills were applied when a newly appointed regional coach education manager attended a level two workshop :



The recent appointment of Avery [pseudonym] has caused quite a stir amongst the local workforce. A great deal of the tutors agree that he is a *very nice guy* and have expressed a genuine desire and eagerness to work with him. However, William and Trevor – who considered themselves as *front runners* for the role – seem to be harbouring feelings of resentment and bitterness. I overheard William telling Trevor that Avery was as “nervous as a puppy” and that wouldn’t last “five minutes in the job”. Two camps were clearly forming – those in favour and those not. Through channels of gossip (and first-hand experience), I come to realise Williams’ and Trevor’s reputations as *individualists*, and others’ cautious approaches to interacting with them. As it happened, those with a more positive affinity with Avery were those I considered to have the most meaningful and valuable relationships with. Following introductions, Avery and I spoke about my Ph.D at length throughout the workshop. He showed great interest in using the findings to upskill the tutor workforce, as well as in supporting future projects with TCSG. I couldn’t wait to tell Paul and Edward this exciting news. Avery was evidently a very useful contact for the Ph.D and my research group at Northumbria University. We exchanged contact details and confirmed a date for continuing our deliberations. Even though I wanted to distance myself from William and Trevor, I was still reliant on their cooperation for generating data – so I sought to tread the relational boundaries carefully, and not give either *side* the impression that I was overly committed to the other. While I was equally enthusiastic and polite in both sets of interactions, I was deliberately more fleeting in my exchanges with Trevor and William, and made a point of not divulging personal information that would indicate *closeness*.

From time to time, my thinking, feeling, and (inter)acting throughout the fieldwork spoke to Hartley’s (2017) notion of *strategic direction and scanning*. Specifically, there were moments when I had to manage immediate dilemmas, internal conflicts, and social pressures as a means to create and access opportunities for data generation in the future. For example, I decided not to ask particular questions because I anticipated that it would elicit an undesirable response – such as when I had overheard gossip. Moreover, it was not always possible to remain loyal to my *closer* relations – I chose not to reveal the nasty and demeaning comments that had been made about them. I wanted to avoid causing conflict that might result in confrontation between the participants, termination of my access *to* and employment *with* TCSG, receiving complaints about my ethical misconduct, and ruining my existing relationships. This is illustrated in the below excerpt:

I sat across the table from Stuart, Dictaphone in place – I could barely look him in the eye. A chain of knots formed in my stomach and my throat felt dry. I was ridden with guilt. At a

recent level two workshop, Stuart arrived unannounced to carry out an IQA assessment. He was (expectedly) met with annoyance and surprise by the tutor team, which increased ten-fold when he eventually departed after lunchtime. When he left, William went on a tirade of criticism aimed at his lack of etiquette, “he could’ve given us a heads-up the fuckin’ bellend. Who the fuck does he think he is, wandering in – “alright lads” – I’ll be having words.”. I wanted to tell Stuart to relieve myself of the deceit, but I knew that would cross some serious ethical boundaries. I thought, ‘*What if I don’t tell him and he finds out I knew?*’, ‘*What if I tell him and William finds out it was me?*’. I didn’t want to fall out with anyone but, at the same time, I wanted to protect my reputation and future job prospects. The priority, though, was the thesis, so, I gulped down what was remaining of my integrity and inconspicuously conducted the interview – laughing, joking, gesturing,.

On the whole, my experience(s) of ethnographic fieldwork somewhat differed from the technical, harmonious, rationalistic, and linear depictions of conducting research that I have encountered in textbooks, seminars, and lectures. The reality that I endured was instead characterised by a plethora of relational, micropolitical, dramaturgical, and emotional demands that meant that the *doing* of the fieldwork was absorbing, intense, and straining (Grills and Prus, 2019). I hope that researchers can draw upon my experiences to inform their own thinking, feeling, and (inter)acting throughout the fieldwork process.

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