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How Successful High School Boys Soccer Coaches Perceive And Develop Cultural Competency: A Grounded Theory Approach

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And Develop Cultural Competency: A Grounded Theory Approach

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Dedication

This research is dedicated to the many athletes I have coached, each of whom were teachers.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine how high school athletics coaches conceptualize the knowledge, values, and skills of cultural competence, with specific attention to learning processes and influences. In order to serve the increasingly diverse U.S. student population equitably and to the full holistic potential of extracurricular programming, high school coaches must develop a greater comfort with and capacity for exercising cultural competency. A qualitative approach using a grounded theory was applied. Seven coaches and one athletic director were recruited by purposive sampling. The research suggests a process-oriented, chronological model of how experienced coaches begin to work with conflict and challenge within a culturally diverse team environment. The model also reflects the coach's position both within broader cultural influences and in interaction with other influential human actors. Research findings suggest that more culturally competent coaches are willing to question standard practices of U.S. high school sports culture and how those cultural norms may limit, exclude or alienate their athletes. They learn to develop metacognitive awareness around their intercultural capacities; ask questions and seek information in order to make more informed decisions; and make changes to better serve their athletes with more inclusive, equitable, and beneficial programming. This study contributes insight to coach education development in terms of how coaches learn, grow, adapt, change, and develop cultural competency through experiential learning and reflective practice.

Keywords: cultural competence, coaching education, athletics, coaching behavior, multicultural education, sport coaching

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

More than 7.6 million athletes participate each year in high school sports programs, according to the 2015-16 High School Athletics Participation Survey conducted by the National Federation of State High School Sports Associations. Less than 2 percent will go on to compete at the collegiate level and even fewer will participate as professional athletes (NCAA, 2016). Participation in high school athletics has been shown to be beneficial to students in a variety of ways, including a positive correlation with improved educational achievement (Conroy & Coatesworth, 2006; Hartmann, 2008). Among other benefits of participation is the unique learning environment in which athletes of diverse races, needs, ages, and abilities can develop and grow as teammates with shared values and goals; this has been shown to have positive effects on immigrant students in the United States and other countries (Garrido, Checa Olmos, Garcia-Arjona & Pardo, 2012; Peguero, 2011). In positively controlled environments, teammates can learn and practice such important skills as teambuilding, leadership, understanding difference, and resolving conflict (Conroy & Coatesworth, 2006).

The high school athletics coach has a central, powerful role in creating and cultivating an environment in which these beneficial relationships between teammates grow, develop and thrive (Woodward, 2011). Similarly, they are influential role models for all those involved in the considerable human infrastructure of supporters and stakeholders, which includes the academic community; parents and community members; and finally, the media, often a prism through which the local high school sports team is viewed (National Association for Sport and Physical Education, 2018). With the demographic shifts in the United States, an increasingly diverse population of youth with different racial, ethnic and cultural identities enter the school systems

and athletic programs (Harrison, Carson, & Burden, 2010). The diversity of students in U.S. schools who will be racially, ethnically or culturally diverse by 2025 is projected at 56 percent (Bottiani, Larson, Debnam, Bischoff, & Bradshaw, 2017). Thus, like teachers in U.S. high schools, coaches are encountering and will continue to encounter in an increasingly diverse population of athletes.

Similar to the positive effects of cultural competence in teachers (Gay, 2000), the development of cultural competence in relationship-building and sport pedagogy of coaches working with high school athletes has the potential to increase positive influence of the coach on the athlete, lower barriers of participation, and increase retention with long-term health and intellectual benefits to the athlete (Conroy & Coatesworth, 2006). Further, the sports program, like the classroom, has the potential to be a transformative site of social justice and inter-cultural learning and appreciation (McDonald, 2016).

Though the coaching role comes with high expectations for technical competence, pedagogical expertise, and significant responsibility for emotional and physical wellbeing of an increasingly diverse student-athlete population, there is no national standardized training or certification process to become a high school coach (Conroy & Coatesworth, 2006; Dieffenbach & Wayda, 2010; Van Mullem & Van Mullem, 2014). Each state has differing requirements, all of a limited and relatively superficial nature, and some with no requirements at all (Conroy & Coatesworth, 2006; Dieffenbach & Wayda, 2010; Van Mullem & Van Mullem, 2014). Cushion (2011) points out the paradox of having "a body of coaches not influenced to any significant degree by formal coach education and yet deemed 'competent' practitioners" (p. 166). Importantly, most coaching education, when it does occur, relates to sport-specific technical knowledge rather than addressing skills levels related to an athlete's personal development, such

as sport psychology, sport pedagogy, conflict resolution and interpersonal skills, among other "soft skills" (Van Mullem & Van Mullem, 2014). Not all high school coaches are credentialed teachers, who may have some diversity training in a pre-service or professional development program. Further, coaching is a dynamic, complex and challenging environment that differs dramatically from the classroom. Cushion et al. (2009) cites "a growing appreciation of the subtle idiosyncracies that make up the coaching process, conceptualizing it as multifaceted, dynamic and messy in nature" (p. 1).

Concurrent with a lack of conceptualization is a lack of understanding about what cultural competency means for coaches and how it is assessed. Among some coaches, there is recognition of a need to place more value on and articulate desired skills related to cultural competency in coaches (Mesquita et al., 2011; Santos et al., 2010, as cited in Burden & Lambie, 2011; Schinke et al., 2013). The first conceptual model of coaching to include possible standards and benchmarks of cultural competency for coaches, as well as to propose a developmental model, is the "Sociocultural Competencies for Sport Coaches" (Burden & Lambie, 2011). However, this model is not empirically grounded. How coaches conceptualize cultural competency and then learn and develop the skills and knowledge required for that competency is still unexplored. The capability and ability of the high school athletic coach to welcome, develop and grow with athletes of different cultures therefore becomes a pressing need and an important issue of inclusive access and equity. Thus, learning more about how experienced and successful high school coaches actually identify, perceive, develop, and define cultural competency in their particular context would be especially valuable to coaches, coach educators, and others concerned about developing this important skill set within this demographic.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to research the genesis and development of cultural awareness in successful high school athletics coach and to explore the development of that awareness into a set of skills and knowledge related to cultural competence. This exploration includes high school coaches with successful experience coaching diverse athletes. Information about coaching background, relevant formal training and cross-cultural experiences outside of the coaching context will be collected to correlate factors that may contribute to coaching competence. The main research questions are:

1. How do high school athletics coaches, specifically varsity boys' soccer coaches, talk about or conceptualize the knowledge, values, and skills of cultural competence in their learning and practice environments?

2. What are the learning processes involved in the development of this competence?

3. What are the various factors that may affect this development?

As discussed by Kunz (2011), the coach-athlete relationship is a considerable factor in not only the success of the individual athlete's development but of the achievement of the program goals itself. The efficacy of the coach's role is first and foremost based on a relationship with an athlete. Cultural backgrounds do impact coach-athlete relationships (Myers et al., 2006). A coach who is sensitive to cultural differences is better positioned to develop the athlete's physical talents, as well as his/her whole person. More culturally competent coaches are better able to build positive relationships to achieve positive individual and team results (Bell & Riol, 2017). Analysis of the factors that contribute to and the process by which athletics coaches become more culturally competent is valuable to the training and professional development of

athletics coaches. The findings could assist coaching educators and coaches themselves.

Significance

High school athletics programs are unique places of educational opportunity that should be accessible to all students in the United States. Among other "gatekeepers," the head coach is most probably the single most important person who can determine an athlete's access at the high school level to participate in sports (Woodward, 2011). The position of head coach has been considered "the most visible position of power and prestige throughout the sports world" (Tucker Center for Research on Girls and Women in Sport, 2009, p. 3). With an increasingly diverse student demographic, there is a correlated need for culturally competent head coaches to develop skills and knowledge related to working with athletes of diverse cultures (Bell & Riol, 2017). More culturally competent coaches are better able to create equitable systems of access to athletic programs and to the athletic experience (Woodward, 2011). They can build positive relationships with and among athletes, and teach important skills of understanding, empathy, teamwork, and conflict resolution (National Association for Sport and Physical Education, 2018). Viewing the sports program as an important pedagogical site, coaches are also in influential positions of mediating, positively or negatively, the construction and/or deconstruction of dominant narratives related to race and racism (McDonald, 2016).

The considerable acknowledged gap between coaching theory and practice extends to cultural competency (Craig, 2016). What high school coaches identify as applicable knowledge and skills in the coaching context may be helpful to understanding the concept itself in the coaching context. A more clear understanding of the processes by which coaches develop skills and knowledge related to cultural competency would be helpful, as would collection of data related to their motivations for growing cultural competency. Learning from these coaches about

how they actually identify, perceive, develop, and define cultural competency in their particular context may be especially valuable to coaches, coach educators and others concerned about developing this important skill set within this demographic. The research may also provide data in regards to specific processes or learning opportunities by which cultural competency is developed or cultural awareness heightened in the education, professional development, or training of athletics coaches. This research could inform both the content of the trainings and the development of best practices.

Personal Context

For the past 18 years, I have coached cross country in Harrisonburg City Schools, a district with a remarkably diverse student population. Because the cross country program is inclusive, meaning all athletes are welcomed to participate and compete with equal opportunity regardless of ability, the team is a fertile and polyglot space of socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, linguistic, and intellectual diversity. Acknowledging and resolving conflict, some of it arising through cultural tensions, has always been a coaching challenge. Though by most standards I would be considered a veteran coach, it became clear that the skills I lacked were directly related to cultural competency: I needed to know how to help athletes navigate their new environment and how to teach their peers to be more sensitive and empathetic teammates. I needed to know when and how to react to culturally-based misunderstandings. I needed to be able to mediate these situations with the best interests of the team and individuals involved.

But when I sought to learn more specifically about this topic, I found little information that related directly to the sports world, and even less to the high school sports environment. Some concepts of culturally competent teaching, for example those outlined by Gloria Ladson-Billings (2007) can be adapted for coaching: positive perspectives on parents and families,

communication of high expectations, learning within the context of culture, student-centered instruction, culturally-mediated instruction, and teacher as facilitator. But in general, there is a lack of understanding when it comes to application of the concept to the coach's role.

If we consider that millions of young athletes participate each year in high school sports, why is there so little discussion of the coach's role within this valuable educative space in our multicultural world? If coaches are not prepared for the challenges of cultural diversity on their teams, then how many young athletes are losing out on the benefits of participation in athletics or maybe worse yet, when they do participate, dealing with the negative effects of a coach who lacks cultural awareness?

Definitions of Terms

A list of term definitions is included below.

Table 1

Definition of Terms

Key Term	Definition
Coach	A person involved in the continued performance development of an athlete, using a variety of teaching methods devoted to holistic improvement (Ryall & Olivier, 2013); a person who aims to influence the values, behaviors and morals of the athlete and competitors in order to achieve positive potentials of sport participation (Loland, 2011).
Diverse populations	"Groups of people living in a common social environment whose backgrounds vary in respect to biological, cultural and social categorizations based on gender, race/ethnicity, religion, (dis)ability, age or sexual orientation" (Craig, 2016, p. 11).

(Table 1 continued)

(Table 1 continued)

Key Term	Definition
Cultural competence	One who is accepting and respectful of cultural difference and continually engages in self-assessment to expand their cultural knowledge; is able to work positively with others of cultures different than his/her own (Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989).
Culturally responsive approach	Using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them; it teaches to and through students' strengths (Gay, 2000).
Cultural awareness	Includes knowledge of cultural dynamics and knowledge of how ethnicity, race and power influence human functioning. (Person, Benson-Quaziena, & Rogers, 2001)
Sport	A wide range of activities that are institutionalized (governed by rules), competitive (of varying degrees), and structured as play or games (Spaaj, 2011)
Successful	For the purpose of this study, a successful coach will be defined by a combination of the following factors: positive coaching reviews and good reputations among their peers; experience in a head coaching position at the high school varsity level or above of at least five years and a winning record (above 50% within a season) with a team that consists of at least 25% members of a non-majority culture. (See further discussion of this term below.)

Discussion of the term *successful.* Defining a successful coach in the high school sports

context of the purposes of this study is a complex activity. Not all experienced coaches are

competent (Bell, 1997; Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, as cited in Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003),

though it's clear based on research that experience is required to become a competent coach

(Cushion, 2001; Lyle, 2002, as cited in Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003). Further, general

competence does not necessarily mean a coach is culturally competent. Defining general success

is simpler in the elite sport contexts of intercollegiate or professional programs where talent

levels are more homogenous and measures of expertise and competence can be tied to competitive success. For example, in their study of expert coaches, Nash and Sproule (2009) required coaches with the highest available coaching award from their national governing body; a minimum of 10 years continuous coaching experience; coaching at a representative level (a level in which athletes were selected to "represent" a geographic area or age group); and had developed national performers on a regular basis. These criteria do not fit this research study, but are useful to suggest broad parameters for the term success: some kind of coaching education, years of experience, positive athlete development (as represented by continued employment at a high level and also development of athletes into ranked performers).

A study about knowledge acquisition of Canadian high school teacher/coaches (Wilson, Bloom and Harvey, 2011) suggests the following parameters: participants were chosen by referral from supervisors with the criteria of positive teaching reviews, positive peer reviews, and professional commitment to coaching. Their further requirements fulfilled study purposes to investigate the particular question as related to how professionally trained educators acquire coaching knowledge; the sample included full-time educators and coaches of at least two sports with between five and 15 years of head coaching experience. That participants have prior formal education as a teacher or a coach is not necessary for the purposes of this particular study. Instead, references from athletic directors or peers will help to find coaches with positive coaching reviews and good reputations among their peers. Success will be defined by experience in a head coaching position at the high school varsity level or above of at least five years and a winning record (above 50% within a season) with a team that consists of at least 25% members who are persons of color.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

As the current high school student population grows in diversity, coaches working in extracurricular athletics programs designed to serve and include those students are challenged to learn new relational skills and acquire new knowledge to work positively with those students (Harrison et al., 2010). Research indicates that coaches possessing these culturally related skills and knowledge can build positive relationships and communicate more effectively, two foundational qualities that contribute to positive development of both individuals and teams (Bell & Riol, 2017; Craig, 2016; Greenfield, Davis, Suzuki, & Boutakidis, 2002; Kunz, 2011; Sasaba, Fitzpatrick, Pope-Rhodius, & Saikuma, 2017). Cultural competency has been widely discussed and conceptualized in other service professions, and its developmental processes explored; however, the field of coaching education and sport psychology has been slower to address the need (Burden & Lambie, 2011; Gill, 2017). The considerable acknowledged gap between coaching theory and practice extends to cultural competency as well (Craig, 2016). Factors complicating a conceptual and developmental understanding include a non-standardized training process for the role, a perspective that the coaching role involves more technical skill and knowledge than relational skill, and sport-specific cultural differences. The aim of the current study is to examine how successful, experienced boys' varsity high school soccer coaches understand and develop cultural competence.

This literature review discusses theoretical approaches to learning and social interaction, the ways in which and processes by which coaches who work in the high school context add to their knowledge and skills, and the cultural dimensions of coaching at the high school level. The

conceptual development of cultural competency is explored, as well as its application to the coaching environment. A discussion of applicable assessments follows.

Theoretical Approaches to Learning and Social Interaction

This research is situated in theories of social learning and practice. Wenger's theory of social learning (1998) makes the assumptions that humans are social and knowledge is competence in valued enterprise. He further suggests that knowing is an active participation in that enterprise, and meaning is the ultimate product of learning. His theory of communities of practice can be applied to the specific context of the learning environment, in that the relationship between one who teaches or mentors and the student or mentee is a socially constructed, relationally interdependent process situated within social and cultural contexts. The communities of practice have foundational characteristics of a shared repertoire of skills and knowledge, joint enterprise and mutual engagement. Learners construct knowledge through direct experience of social practice, a continual endeavor that builds on experiences of situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1996). Specific consideration of the coaching context, similar to the context and roles occupied by teachers, suggests that coaching is a complex process existing within a system of social interactions that influences each participant in a reciprocal relationship (Jones & Wallace, 2006).

Côté and Trudel (2009) propose that an analysis of coaching knowledge can be framed within Anderson's (1982) definition of knowledge, as declarative (knowing) and procedural (doing). This dichotomous but complementary definition includes all of the coaches' personal behaviors, experiences and strategies that help to meet the various demands of coaching. Côté and Trudel (2009) also utilize Collinson's (1996) model of knowledge for expert teachers that includes: professional knowledge (i.e., subject matter, curricular, and pedagogical knowledge),

interpersonal knowledge (i.e., relationships with students, the educational community, and the local community), and intrapersonal knowledge (i.e., reflection, ethics and dispositions). Successful and effective coaches, Côté and Trudel (2009) point out, are able to continuously construct new knowledge through reflection related to athlete outcomes, whether that be performance-related or through change in personal attributes, such as self-esteem and confidence (more discussion of these outcomes and the prioritization of these outcomes in current coaching education will follow). Connecting this definition to social systems and interactions within those systems suggests that good coaches are constantly constructing and reconstructing knowledge within a variety of relationships: athlete-coach, coach-coach, coach-parent, as well as other relationships that may enter into and have impact on the athlete's development, such as with teachers, administrators, athletic directors or athletic trainers/medical staff.

Piaget (1985) discusses equilibrium and dis-equilibrium as a motivational factor for learning. With equilibrium being one's natural, preferred state, dis-equilibrium is a situation that requires new experience, attitudes or understanding. Such a situation can be a problem or a conflict that causes one to reflect on possible solutions. This model of intellectual skill acquisition proposes that problem-solving skills provide the context for learning (Van Lehn, 1996, as cited in Nash and Sproule, 2009). This reflection pushes one to new understandings of oneself, relationships to others, society and the environment. These theories of learning have direct implication to the development of cultural competence in general and more specifically, to its development within the particular role this research is exploring.

Coaching Education in the United States

Understanding the contextual factors related to coaching education in the United States is an important prerequisite to this study. Generally speaking, a coach is defined as a person

involved in the continued performance development of an athlete, using a variety of teaching methods devoted to holistic improvement (Ryall & Olivier, 2010). An athlete is a person involved in sport, defined as a wide range of activities that are institutionalized (governed by rules), competitive (of varying degrees), and structured as play or games (Spaaj, 2011). More holistically, the coach aims to influence the values, behaviors and morals of the athlete and competitors in order to achieve positive potentials of sport participation (Loland, 2011). The latter application of the definition of a coach may depend on a number of factors, including the developmental level of the athlete; for example, at the high end of the developmental spectrum, elite athletes are likely to be participating in order to maximize their individual competitive success (Gilbert & Trudel, 2000). Notably, one of the few models outlining the conceptual and operational knowledge of coaching (Côté et al., 1995) derived from empirical data collected from elite gymnastics coaches (Lyle, 2002) does not mention a goal of holistic development. When validating the model in a case study of a veteran hockey coach, Gilbert and Trudel (2000) mention this omission.

This omission is important to understanding the historic perceptions regarding the role of the coach in the United States. Most youth, middle and high school coaches come to the vocation with little to no formal training as related specifically to the coaching role (Van Mullem & Van Mullem, 2014). Some sporting organizations require coaching education requirements and certifications regardless of level of athlete coached; others require minimal training (Dieffenbach & Wayda, 2010). A higher level of formalized training is most often experienced by collegiate coaches, gained by the acquisition of certification by a sport-specific governing body, and/or a related degree (i.e. kinesiology, sports management) (Dieffenbach & Wayda, 2010; Gilbert & Trudel, 2006). In the youth, middle and high school contexts, coaches are undervalued (Aspen

Institute, 2013a); this is shown though low remuneration (coaches are often volunteers or paid at a very low rate) despite high expectations (of time and outcomes) (Lumpkin, Favor, & McPherson, 2013; NFHS, 2015). While some high school coaches are often teachers, this number is declining, due to demands such as "increased paperwork, limited budgets, out-of-season tasks, demanding parents and long hours for low pay" (Williams, 2015, para. 6). Because of the vocational nature of the position, there are few expectations regarding training or professional development. Despite being undervalued, the position of head coach has been considered "the most visible position of power and prestige throughout the sports world" (Tucker Center for Research on Girls and Women in Sport, 2009, p. 3).

The large role that coaches play in influencing programming, participation levels and holistic athlete development was raised in the Aspen Institute's 2013 Project Play report. According to research aggregated by the Aspen Institute in 2013, lack of quality coaching was a significant influential factor related to the falling rates of youth participation in sport. Concurrent with this finding was the call to revise the organization, operation and execution of sport activity in the United States to encourage, among other goals, universal access to sport programming and the teaching of developmentally appropriate skills for the purpose of holistic athlete development. In response, the United States Olympic Committee (USOC), in partnership with several national governing bodies of sport, created the "American Development Model" (2015), which acknowledged four key principles: 1) universal access to create opportunity for all athletes; 2) developmentally appropriate activities that emphasize motor and foundational skills; 3) multi-sport or multi-activity participation; and 4) fun, engaging and progressively challenging atmosphere. The fifth principle, quality coaching at all age levels, implicitly acknowledges that the coach exerts control over each of the preceding principles.

Perceptions Among Coaches Regarding Coaching Education Programming

Considering this recent push for quality coaching education, a brief overview of current coaching education opportunities and coaches' perceptions regarding these educational opportunities is helpful. Côté (2006) points to three main settings in which coaches learn: coach education programs, experiences as coaches and experiences as athletes. Further research has helped to show that coaches working with different skill levels, such as recreational and developmental athletes (high school athletes could be considered in the latter category) access slightly different types of resources at a higher rate (Rocchi & Couture, 2017). Of these three experiences, specific coaching education programs provide the most formalized training. However, there are several widely supported criticisms about the limitations of these generalized programs, namely factors such as the many variables under which coaches work (athlete age, development skills, sport, etc.), the complexity of the coaching role and environment, and the lack of transfer of practical knowledge from the large-scale top-down approach back into the practice and competition context (Côté, 2006; Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2013).

Furthermore, these programs often prioritize and isolate technical sport skills over relational skills which are so important to the coach-athlete relationship (Sasaba et al., 2017). This point about the importance of interpersonal skills, and specifically cultural competencies, to the coach's role will be revisited later in the literature review. However, the 2015 directives published by the USOC suggest that the coach's role in holistic athlete development draws as much on interpersonal skills as it does on technical knowledge, and that by identifying it as an area of concern, quality coaching includes a judicious combination of both. The prioritization of technical skill over "soft skills" is a key point in the consideration of how coaches learn and

develop cultural competency, as is the preferred way in which coaches learn and develop their overall coaching competencies.

Reflective Practice

Multiple studies have shown that coaches prioritize their experiential learning above that of more formalized pedagogical experiences (Cushion et al., 2010). Engaging with one's experience in a reflective practice allows for more responsiveness to the "ambient and behavioral components" (Côté, 2006, p. 220) likely to affect the coach's learning environment (Nelson et al., 2013). In countries where standardized professional coaching education is promulgated, there is evidence that coaches operate under institutionalized, technical expectations and then once certification has been achieved, fall back to comfortable and preferred methods and behaviors which have developed from experience (Cushion, 2011). Research on effectiveness of professional development and delivery methods in the United States and Canada, both countries with no standardized training, supports that finding (Van Mullem & Van Mullem, 2014). Gilbert and Trudel (2001) found that many youth coaches in Canada, lacking formal training, create a conceptual framework based on experiential learning and reflective practice. Knowledge and skills are translated through six components: (1) coaching issues, (2) role frames, (3) issue setting, (4) strategy generation, (5) experimentation, and (6) evaluation.

> The last three of these components – strategy generation, experimentation and evaluation – comprise a sub-loop of reflection within the larger cycle of a reflective conversation. Model coaches often cycle through this sub-loop numerous times, without returning to the issue setting stage. Connected cycles through a reflective conversation often result in what coaches sometimes define as 'insights.' These somewhat

spontaneous revelations are in fact the result of numerous cycles of reflective

conversation. (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001, p. 30)

For this reason, several experts support moving coaching education from "knowledge-transfer"

courses to "cooperative learning opportunities where coaching knowledge is shared and created

in context" (Côté, 2006, p. 220).

Within the topic of reflective practice, metacognitive approaches, defined as "knowledge

or cognition about cognitive phemonema," are valuable (Flavell, 1987, p. 906). Coaches can help

athletes develop both the procedural knowledge and the metacognitive practices necessary to

evaluate the changing factors related to practice and competition (MacIntyre et al., 2014).

Knowledge about where, why and how a skill is acquired is an important contributor to athlete

success, thus a skill that coaches may also acquire in their own acquisition of skill and

development (MacIntyre et al., 2014). Côté (2006) also notes, however, that "more studies are

needed that focus on understanding how different learning activities and social contexts interact

to stimulate coaches to reflect throughout a coaching career" (p. 220). Similarly, Cushion et al.

(2010) and Nelson et al. (2013) report a dearth of research evaluating the structure, content and

provision of coach learning, plus how this directly impacts on the coach practitioner.

Given that the majority of coaches come to their roles with no formal coaching education

and the deficits and general emphases of what formal training may be offered, it's important to

this research to understand the reflective and individualized process by which coaches *do* learn.

Considering also the prioritization of technical skill above interpersonal skills, a discussion of

cultural competency is important. What exactly is cultural competency and why is it important in

the coaching context?

Cultural Competency

To begin our exploration of the term *cultural competency*, the definition of culture, according to anthropologist James Spradley (1980), is useful: culture is the "learned, shared knowledge that people use to generate behavior and interpret experience" (p. 18), in essence the actions, knowledge and tools that are learned and then shared among a group. Cultural differences grow from varying backgrounds and "categorizations based on social, class, gender, race/ethnicity, religion, (dis)ability, age or sexual orientation" (Craig, 2016, p. 11). Cultural awareness includes knowledge of cultural dynamics and knowledge of how ethnicity, race and power influence human functioning (Person, Benson-Quaziena, & Rogers, 2001). The practical application of cultural awareness has engendered several nuanced terms: the descriptors *cross-cultural*, *intercultural*, or *multicultural* often precede the nouns *competency, awareness, proficiency, responsiveness,* and *intelligence*. For the purposes of this study, however, the term cultural competence, or one who is culturally competent, will be used.

If competence is an ability or set of skilled behaviors that are considered appropriate or effective within a certain context (Spitzberg, 2009), then cultural competence is both awareness and behavior: possessing an attitude of acceptance and respect of culture difference and being able to work positively with others of cultures different than his/her own while engaging continually in self-assessment to expand one's cultural knowledge (Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989). This idea of competence pre-supposes a foundational, cultivated understanding of one's own culture, and an awareness of how the individual functions within the cultural context; Gill (2017) posits that the essence of cultural competence is the "ability to simultaneously recognize and consider both the individual and cultural context" (p. 20). Some definitions of cultural competence have an ontological and epistemological basis, describing a way of being

and a kind of relational consciousness. For example, Simons and Krols (2011) describe an interculturally competent person as someone who sees a multifocal social reality, is able to cope with ambivalence and ambiguity, pursues understanding and insight of others' experience through dialogue and introspection, and aware of his/her own frame of reference and others. Specific skills in this conceptualization relate to relationship-building, active listening, creative problem-solving, and conflict resolution: all employed through the lens of culture.

The model of cultural competence as a complex and dynamic developmental process that is evolutionary yet iterative is rooted in cultural identity models. The first was Cross's "nigrescense" (1971), five stages related to one's exploration of identity beginning with pre-encounter and advancing through "internalization-commitment." A key point of Cross's model is its non-linearity, as he suggests that one could revisit different stages and thus revise one's identity while involved in different experiences throughout life. Subsequent models that are both racially/ethnically specific and non-specific have built upon this framework, including Bennett's (1986, revised 1993, 2004, 2013) Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, which describes six stages total: three related to varying degrees of ethnocentrism and three related to emerging ethnorelativism. The process is thus described as highly individualistic, with motivation largely dependent on one's "effort and interest" in exploring one's "own worldview, life experiences, biases and beliefs" (Rothman, 2009, p. 16). It's also been described as "a paradigm shift from viewing cultural differences as problematic *to* learning how to interact effectively with other cultures" (Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2009, p. 4). Some of these conceptual factors make training and assessment challenging.

The recognition that cultural competence is a special skill first appeared in the seminal work of Cross et al. (1989) in research related to health-care providers. The concept has since

been adapted and developed in varying forms, and spread through many professions as an important and highly applicable skill (Dervin & Hahl, 2015). Specifically, those fields related to human services, including medicine and health, psychology, social work, and education, are most actively involved in ongoing conceptualization, development and assessment. In all fields, a culturally competent provider enhances services offered to diverse communities, whether that service is medical or mental health care, social services, or educational content. For example, culturally responsive pedagogy, developed by Geneva Gay (2000) requires a culturally aware teacher to use the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them; it teaches to and through students' strengths. Cultural competency models have been developed in related fields, such as physical education, athletics training, sports psychology, parks and recreation practitioners (Burden & Lambie, 2011). Conceptual developments related to cultural competency in the coaching context will be explored later in this literature review. But first, why is cultural competency important in the high school coaching context?

Cultural Dimensions of the High School Coaching Context

In the United States, high school athletics coaches work for school-sponsored programs; they manage the practices and competitions for various sports involving athletes in a wide range of developmental stages. While goals of specific programs vary at the high school level, there is some value placed on wellness-related issues, with the purpose being to provide accessible opportunities for all students to participate in physical activity for current and long-term health (Gill, 2017). Research generally supports the positive benefits of extracurricular participation in a number of social, educational, and developmental outcomes for all students, including specific groups such as racial and ethnic minority adolescent youth and first-generation American

adolescent youth (Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2012; Gardner, Browning, & Brooks-Dunn, 2012; Peguero, 2010; Peguero, 2011). Developing relationships that encourage participation and retention once in programming is one role of the high school coach, who can be considered a "gatekeeper" to the provision of extracurricular activities to all students (Woodward, 2011). With the demographic shifts in the United States, an increasingly diverse population of youth with different racial, ethnic and cultural identities enter the school systems and athletic programs (Harrison et al., 2010). Shifts in the diversity of students in U.S. schools who will be racially, ethnically or culturally diverse by 2025 stands at 56 percent (Bottiani et al., 2017). Thus, like teachers in U.S. high schools, coaches are encountering and will continue to encounter in an increasingly diverse population of athletes.

Research shows that interpersonal skills in general play a large role in athlete success, as many authors suggest that an effective coach-athlete relationship is necessary for a successful coaching outcome (Craig, 2016; Kunz, 2011). Coaches can have a dramatic effect on the athlete's success if they take personal responsibility for the goal of achieving success (Schempp, McCullick, & Mason 2006). Just as their impact can be positive, it can also be negative (Alfermann, Lee, & Wurth, 2005). Coaches have been shown to influence young people's sports involvement, enjoyment and withdrawal, athletes' perceived competence and skills, and self-esteem (Peguero, 2011). Interviews with elite-level athletes reveal the tremendous positive, but sometimes even destructive influence coaches can have on the athletes' sport career and their physical and psychological welfare (Schinke et al., 2013). Cultural differences can play a role in the success or failure of a coach-athlete relationship (Bell & Riol, 2017; Greenfield et al., 2002; Harrison et al., 2010; Sasaba et al., 2017; Schinke et al., 2013). Further, one study found that recognition of cultural differences was not the only important piece of knowledge; coaches

realized that an unwillingness to articulate those differences — expressed as "a perceived stigma regarding discussion of race" (Sasaba et al., 2017, p. 25) — was a barrier to understanding. Conversely, public discussions and interactions can also construct difference and transmit racist narratives (McDonald, 2018), which can also cause deep rifts in the coach-athlete-team relationship.

Thus, a coach's ability to communicate and relate to athletes of a culture different from his/her own is an important skill with consequences for one's instructional and motivational impact on the athletes and the team. An understanding of cultural differences, and application of that knowledge to specific issues that arise in the coaching context, can help the coach to communicate more effectively and to understand and mediate conflict. For example, viewing athlete behaviors as cultural derivations of individualistic or collectivistic behavior brought a new lens to understanding a host of different conflicts between teammates on girls' and boys' high school sports teams (Greenfield et al., 2002). In this study, coach favoritism as related to these behaviors, which were linked to cultural norms, was found to be an influential factor to cultivating rather than mitigating intragroup conflict. Similarly, a study of men's and women's NCAA basketball coaches with team members of both "cross-national and intra-national diversity" confirmed a correlation between cross-cultural communication competence and collective efficacy (Bell & Riol, 2017, p. 182). A better understanding of cultural dynamics may help coaches anticipate relationships and conflicts among athletes and their leadership, and bring a greater understanding of potentially divisive language and behavior as related to cultural differences (Burden & Lambie, 2011). The acknowledgement that cultural differences can and do impact the coach-athlete relationship now moves into an exploration of the concept of cultural competency and how it has been articulated and developed for the coaching context.

Cultural Competency in the Coaching Context

Before exploring a proposed model of cultural competency in the coaching context, it's important to explore perceptions among coaches and within coaching education about cultural differences. Previously in this literature review, it has been noted that coaching education prioritizes the acquisition of technical skills related to the specific sport above interpersonal skills, of which cultural competencies are a subset (Sasaba et al., 2017). The same researchers observe that while all coaches in the study expressed awareness of cultural difference and considered how those differences interacted with their coaching philosophy, methods of instruction, and strategies, that awareness was often coupled with an unwillingness or discomfort with engaging on the subject. While some participants reported a willingness to adapt their philosophy, instructional methods and strategies for cultural differences, others were not.

One factor that has clearly shown to contribute to cultural competency in coaches is experience. In one widely cited study, physical education teachers of color working in any school setting were found to have higher cultural competence scores, as were White teachers with experience working in diverse school settings, rather than those working in racially homogenous schools (Harrison et al., 2010). A second qualitative study (Sasaba et al., 2017) that came to a similar conclusion found that coaches who reported awareness of their own cultural difference were better able to understand cultural differences in their own athletes, to not perceive those differences as a barrier, and to communicate and react more positively and adaptively by changing their coaching philosophy. Those who had not had this experience were more likely to observe differences but not think they were important variables in the coach-athlete relationship.

Among some coaches, there is recognition of a need to place more value on and articulate desired skills related to cultural competency in coaches (Mesquita et al., 2011; Santos et al., 2010

in Burden & Lambie, 2011; Schinke et al., 2013). This need has lately been recognized by the National Association of Sport and Physical Education's (NASPE) latest revision of the *National Standards for Sport Coaches*, first developed in 1995 and revised most recently in 2006. A current draft (2018) includes two new standards related to sociocultural competency. NASPE, the largest of the five national associations of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD), is considered the leading body in the development of national standards for physical education and the preparation of physical education teachers, coaches, and sport management and exercise science professionals (Zieff, Lumpkin, Guedes, & Eguaoje, 2009).

As for an in-depth model both of competencies and the acquisition process, the most developed is "Sociocultural Competencies for Sport Coaches" (Burden & Lambie, 2011), which the authors recognized then as "the first conceptual model to define the characteristics of a socioculturally competent coach" (p. 18). Burden and Lambie (2011) couple the model with a "call for action," stating that coaches are accountable for "promoting social justice and equality among their athletes" (p. 18). Further they note that sociocultural conflict – caused by racial ethnic differences, gender/sexual conflict, religious conflict and disability – leads a need for a coach's self-identity awareness and how that influences his/her attitudes, beliefs, and actions.

This model applies seven relevant standards of 40 total standards within the *National Standards for Sport Coaches* (2006) to its conceptualization. Integrating Bennett's (1993) model with that of Cross (1988) and his colleagues (Cross et al., 1989), the model's design identifies behavioral characteristics a coach may exhibit in three major competencies, acknowledging that coaches may be at one level in one competency and a different level in another. The competencies include self-awareness of personal values/beliefs and biases; understanding of

athlete's diverse perspectives; and enhancing multicultural skills and strategies. Each competency includes standards and behavioral benchmarks. The continuum has six stages: 1) sociocultural destructiveness, 2) sociocultural incapacity, 3) sociocultural blindness, 4) sociocultural precompetence, 5) sociocultural competence, and 6) advanced sociocultural competence. Notably, citations of this article in other scholarship are low in number.

Development and Assessment of Cultural Competency in Coaches

Burden and Lambie's (2011) proposed model provides the most developed standards and benchmarks related to the question of what cultural competency might look like and how it is developed in the coaching context. Situating this model within a larger discussion of development and assessment of cultural competency will create a broader understanding of not only how the topic is perceived in the coaching world, but also the particular strengths and weaknesses of Burden and Lambie's model itself. The model can act as an assessment but is not specifically designed or validated as a competency-based instrument. In this context, a competency-based instrument would include either researcher-collected or subjected-collected information about the presence and/or quality of behaviors or practices (Fraenkel & Hyun, 2016). There appears to be no validated test to assess cultural competency in coaches.

Two tests have been developed to measure general coaching competency. The Coaching Efficacy Scale analyzes the coach's self-reported abilities to enact behaviors and fulfill tasks expected of coaches (Feltz, Chase, Moritz, & Sullivan, 1999). This test includes four dimensions: motivating athletes, strategy use, coaching technique, and character-building skills. It does not offer indicators related to cultural competency. The Coaching Competency Scale (Myers, Wolfe, Maier, Felt, & Reckase, 2006) is for athletes to assess coaches on the four competencies of character building, game strategy, motivation and technique.

One relatable validated instrument is the Multicultural Teaching Competency Scale, developed by Spanierman et al. (2006), to test multicultural teaching knowledge and multicultural teaching skills. This test was used to assess the cultural competency of physical education teachers as related to their race and experience working with populations of students of color (Harrison et al., 2010). One notable study (Bell & Riol, 2017) of cross-cultural communication competence and collective efficacy in the coaching context used two separate questionnaires within the same online survey: the 7-point, 23-item Cross-Cultural Communication Competency (CCC) Questionnaire (Matveev, 2002, as cited in Bell & Riol, 2017) and the 10-point, 20-item Collective Efficacy Questionnaire for Sports (CEQS) (Short et al., 2005, as cited in Bell & Riol, 2017). Short's questionnaire was specifically developed to be used across a range of sports research and validated among 286 college-aged athletes.

Though Burden and Lambie's (2011) model of sociocultural competencies for sports coaches provides a useful framework for this research, there is no evidence that the benchmarks are empirically derived, nor any evidence that the model has been validated among the coaching population. These considerations suggest that research into perceptions of what cultural competency actually is in the coaching context and how those competencies are developed may result in a reframing or revisioning of parts of the model.

Significance and Research Gap

Considering that cultural competence is defined in various ways, that there is minimal research regarding the application of the concept specifically to the high school athletic coaching context, and lack of a valid instrumentation for assessment, this study fills several research gaps. Here the views of experts are important: recall the suggestion (Côté, 2006) that more understanding related to "how different learning activities and social contexts interact to

stimulate coaches to reflect throughout a coaching career, and also how coach practitioners are impacted by various learning experiences, including the informal and self-reflective" (Cushion et al., 2010).

More research into the ideation of cultural competency, the metacognitive process through which the coach understands and perceives the need for cultural competency and how he/she articulates its conceptualization would provide more data towards new understandings of the concept. It may also lead to support, revision or remodeling of the model. Collecting data regarding the factors which influence one's development of cultural competency is also helpful to understanding both what competencies are valued and the developmental process that occurs. The potential of encountering and exploring defensiveness or hesitation may also be valuable to further discussions related to a coach's developmental experience. The coaching vocation and profession may benefit from more standardized requirements for training, education and professional development in regards to cultural competency. The research may provide data in regards to both content and specific processes or learning opportunities by which cultural competency could be developed or cultural awareness heightened in the education, professional development or training of athletics coaches. This research could inform the content of the trainings and development of best practices.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research and design and methodology used to explore research questions related to the topic of how coaches conceptualize cultural competence, the process by which cultural competence is developed, and the factors that influence that development. More specifically, the research questions are as follows:

1. How do high school athletics coaches, specifically varsity boys' soccer coaches, talk about or conceptualize the knowledge, values, and skills of cultural competence in their learning and practice environments?

2. What are the learning processes involved in the development of this competence?

3. What are the various factors that may affect this development?

The selection of a qualitative approach is explained as well as the adopted research philosophy. Three grounded theory studies on the topic of cultural competence development in health care help to support the choice of grounded theory as the primary research design. Information about the sample collection is also provided. A section about ethical issues, validity, reliability and generalizability concludes this chapter.

Research Design

The design of this research was qualitative, because the research questions attempted to understand "the meaning people have constructed" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 15). The research question is "based on the belief that knowledge is constructed by people in an ongoing fashion as they engage in and make meaning of an activity, experience or phenomenon" (p. 23). The nature of the question and its philosophical basis suggested application of several methodologies of qualitative research: a preference for hypotheses that emerge as the study

develops, a preference for holistic description of complex phenemona, and preference for expert informant samples, among other characteristics (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2016). Thus, the most applicable and efficient research design utilized the characteristics of qualitative research: "the focus is on process, understanding and meaning; the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis; the process is inductive; and the product is richly descriptive" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 15).

A pragmatic constructivist research philosophy framed this study. In accordance with the observation by Cruickshank, Collins and Minten (2015) that sport psychology is "a practical science, aimed to uncover how an applied process worked" (p.42), the pragmatic research approach helped to offer useful, applicable theories to the participants, grounded within the specific environmental context and role of the high school athletics coach in the United States. Research conclusions may be useful to the field in terms of a better understanding of how cultural competency is developed and acquired, which may have application to coaching education and professional development. If presented in a non-academic forum, such as a magazine or newsletter, the research may directly help to inform athletic directors and coaches about the subject.

A social constructivist approach situated the research in theories of social learning and practice. Wenger's (1998) theory of social learning makes the assumptions that humans are social, knowledge is competence in valued enterprise; knowing is an active participation in that enterprise, and meaning is the ultimate product of learning. His theories of communities of practice integrate not just coach-coach communities of practice but the athlete-coach community of practice. The coach-athlete relationship is a socially constructed, relationally interdependent process situated within social and cultural contexts. Learners construct knowledge through direct

experience of social practice. Coaching and the process of educating the coach is a long-term endeavor that builds on experiences of situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Additional learning theories of Piaget, as related to equilibrium and dis-equilibrium as a motivational factor to learning, also play a role (Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2015).

Grounded Theory

I sought to construct a grounded theory that helps explain shared elements of the participants' subjective perceptions of reality, as related to their knowledge and skills in their roles as coaches of athletes of diverse cultures. According to Wimpenny and Gass (2000), "grounded theory, through a process of constant comparison and reduction, aims to establish tight, well-integrated theory built from well-defined concepts arising directly from the empirical research in hand" (p. 1486). Grounded theory is an appropriate research approach to the question of how coaches understand, create and develop cultural competence for several reasons. First, the research question focuses on a social process and its operation in context (Creswell, 2007). Additionally, it is focused on social processes and the understanding of their patterns and relationships, including causes, contexts, contingencies, consequences, covariances, and conditions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Further, Creswell (2007) suggests that grounded theory is useful under three conditions: 1) when a pre-existing theory is not available to describe a process; 2) if available theories were not developed with particular populations, or 3) if existing theories are incomplete. In this particular research problem, the second of these conditions, that theories available were not developed with particular populations, best describes the current context. Theories related to the development of cultural competence have been developed in regards to educators, social workers, and to various professions in the medical field, more specifically nurses (Fisher-Borne, Cain, & Martin, 2014; Garneau & Pepin, 2015; Lindsay,

Robins & Terrell, 2009). A grounded theory study of how the particular subset of high school coaches perceive, conceptualize and acquire cultural competency remains to be conducted.

To grounded theory, I also brought a blend of discourse narrative analysis and structural discourse analysis techniques, which are related to language and social interaction. These techniques were useful because of the focus on the context of storytelling, the examination of in-depth individual cases, and an attentiveness to details of the storytelling as important to the participant's process of meaning-making (Riessman, 2008). Further, the narrative methods lend themselves to constructivist approaches, especially in grounded theory methodology which suggests the theory is implicit but undiscovered, based on "something which had been already in the text or talk before analysis began or, alternatively, to approach narrative data and resulting research reports as emerging, situated, and social constructions" (Sutherland, Breen, & Lewis, 2013).

Methodological Framework

Three studies have provided a methodological framework from which to further explore this topic. The research design is similar to that conducted by Kucuktas (2016) in his examination of faculty members' multicultural teaching competences at a four-year institution. Several parallels can be observed between Kucuktas' target populations and that of this study: the growing diversity of student populations and corresponding need for cultural competency among higher education faculty mirrors that of middle and high school populations and their coaches. Lack of cultural competence among professors can lead to barriers to success among college students; similarly, a lack of cultural competence among coaches is one of many factors that can lead to a negative athlete experience. Yet like faculty at higher education institutions who lack standardized teaching training that would include cultural competence training, coaches

also lack specific cultural competency training in the athletic context. Kucuktas's study (2016) considered other cross-cultural experiences, such as sustained experiences living, working or interacting with people of other cultures, as influencers to cultural competency. Training provided in another profession, such as education or nursing, may also have an effect on the growth of cultural competency.

The field of health care is also working to understand cultural competency, and two studies in that field ask similar questions as this research study does of coaches. A study of health professionals (Garneau & Pepin, 2015) claims that though cultural competency in the field is widely understood as beneficial and necessary, "current models of cultural competence fail to present development levels" (p. 1063) and an understanding of the processes that nurses go through in developing cultural competence is lacking. The authors suggest that cultural competence is constructivist and relational, and that the process is iterative and cyclical. Their critique is that current models present domains (cultural sensitivity, knowledge, awareness, skill and encounter) without "presenting the learning processes involved in the concurrent evolution of these domains" (Garneau & Pepin, 2015, p. 1063).

In Garneau and Pepin's (2015) research, a grounded theory design is utilized to study cultural competence development among nurses and student nurses in a diverse urban area. Twenty-four participants were selected from a healthcare center in a culturally diverse urban area. Data was collected from semi-structured interviews and participant observation. The purpose of including both nurses and student nurses was to observe the continuum of practical experience. Because all participants deepened their cultural competency through the study, the authors' observations contributed to an understanding of multiple levels of cultural competence. Research developed into four core components of cultural competency, which included three

levels of development triggered by the immersion experience. The authors claim that the results of the study are in line with other studies showing that "cultural competence affects the cognitive, affective, behavioral and environmental dimensions of the person through awareness raising, knowledge, sensitivity, skills, development and cultural encounters" (Garneau & Pepin, 2015, p. 1067).

A grounded theory methodology was also used to explain the experience of providing cultural safety in mental health care to Aboriginal patients in an effort to better understand both the depth of awareness and the thoughts, feelings and actions related to the concept (McGough, Wynaden, & Wright, 2018). Australian mental health professionals received training in several cultural frameworks, including cultural safety, defined as the "establish[ing of] a safe place for patients, which is sensitive and responsive to their social, political, linguistic, economic and spiritual concerns" (McGough et al., 2018, p. 205). The research population included 25 registered nurses and three psychologists with experience working in mainstream mental health services in Western Australia clinics where most Aboriginals sought treatment. Mostly female and born in Australia, the U.K. and from other overseas countries, none of the participants were of Aboriginal descent.

Because the process of knowing the definition of safety involved some understanding of one's own cultural identity and power, participants described a process of disruption to self-awareness, followed by seeking solutions and navigating through information. McGough et al. (2018) concluded that all participants utilized a similar socio-psychological process to understand the problem and a similar cognitive process to manage the problem. Two phases of socio-psychological problem were described: being unprepared and fluctuating emotions. The

process of managing the problem was spectral: it began with neutralization and ended with becoming a culturally proficient practitioner.

These grounded theory methodologies contribute to the methodological framework of this research study, in that they both explored conceptualization and the process of knowledge acquisition in a field that lacks empirical data to support competency-based frameworks.

Sample Selection

Coaches were selected for interviews through a purposeful or purposive sample approach, which is "based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 96). Within the purposeful sample for this study, two further types were used: the homogenous sample and the snowball sample (Fraenkel et al., 2016). The homogenous sample criteria included male high school boys varsity soccer coaches with at least five years experience and a winning record (above 50% wins) with a minimum 25% non-majority culture team members. The snowball sample technique allowed for recruitment to the study of coaches meeting the definition of success who were recognized by their peers or supervisors as having a high level of proficiency and good reputations. These coaches were also identified by seeking geographic areas with high schools serving highly diverse populations, cross-checking rosters with the recommendations of athletic directors who identify successful coaches working with diverse groups of athletes, and utilizing peer references from among the coaches themselves.

Several considerations were involved in limiting the sample size to coaches of one gender and one sport. Gender differences, combined with race, ethnicity and culture (intersectionality) can play a major factor in the relationship between coach and athlete; race, ethnicity and cultural differences create a complex environment (Person, Benson-Quaziena, & Rogers, 2003). Further,

female athletes, and specifically female athletes of color, deal with stereotypes that can engender diverse and negative situations with wide-ranging effects to the coach-athlete and team-athlete relationship, such as eating disorders, nutritional concerns, sexual harassment issues, and sport-related injury (Person, Benson-Quaziena, & Rogers, 2003). Considering these factors, limiting variables in the gender of athlete coached may be helpful in development of themes.

A team sport requires a coach who can motivate and lead athletes away from individualism to function as one unit (Bell & Riol, 2017) in a highly efficient manner. While this sport sampling in no way presupposes a higher level of cultural competency among coaches of team sports, the team sports' design and competitive format implicitly calls for more cohesive strategies of communication between athletes. Similar to the sport of basketball, soccer asks players to develop high levels of "group tacit knowledge among players in order to unconsciously communicate in a manner required to successful play" (Berman et al., 2002, as cited in Bell & Riol, 2017, p. 179), knowledge which relies upon communication to develop interdependence and coordination (Keidel, 1985, as cited in Bell & Riol, 2017). Soccer is reportedly the most popular sport in the world, according to a 2018 survey conducted by Neilsen's World Football Report (Boudray, 2018). It is the dominant sport in both global participation and fandom; the majority of the population in 19 counties, with the exception of the United States and China, expresses interest in soccer (Boudray, 2018). Thus, it is reasonable to assume that populations of athletes attracted to the sport at the high school level would be more likely to display the levels of diversity desirable to explore the research question as outlined above.

Participants. The participant sample (see Table 1 for this information) included seven coaches in the southeastern region of the United States, ranging in experience from 14 to 40 years. The participants were located in three different geographic subregions. All coaches but one met the pre-set criteria for inclusion of five years experience at the varsity level, a successful (50%) win-loss record and at least 25% athletes of diverse cultures on their current roster. In all cases but one, coaches reported an extensive multiple-year history of rosters showing diversity far greater than the requisite percentage. One coach reported that his roster demographic has become more diverse within the last two years. One participant in the sample did not meet the head varsity soccer coaching requirement, having five years experience as a JV head boys coach. This individual was added to the sample on the basis of three considerations: experience, triangulation, and depth of knowledge. First, the supposition that varsity coaches are often the most experienced is generally correct, but not in this case. This individual has more than 24 years of coaching experience, including nine years in another sport at the high school varsity level and also as director of a large recreational age-group program, among other significant experiences. In his role as JV boys soccer coach, he collaborated closely with the current varsity boys coach, who had agreed to participate in the study. Some degree of triangulation was enabled by including both in the study, as was the opportunity to explore one JV and varsity program's cohesive approach. This was particularly useful considering the coaches worked with a highly diverse population of athletes, having the most racial and ethnic diversity on the rosters of any programs represented in the sample. Furthermore, this particular coach was able to articulate an exceptional depth of knowledge and awareness and brought the professional perspective and nuance of a language teacher to the sports field. Prior discussions about this topic with this

former colleague of the researcher were particularly rich, leading to the request for a formal interview, which then added much data.

The pool of participants shared several characteristics, none of which was selected for in the initial criteria. Most significantly, each of the seven coaches had experienced long-term involvement in the sport within their particular geographic region. This depth of knowledge became an important contributing factor in their personal observations related to their own development amidst changing cultural demographics. Their observations may have been more disjointed and showed less continuity if they had experienced coaching in different areas of the United States. Similarly, their rootedness created a sociocultural awareness about the changing perspectives regarding the sport of soccer itself in their communities.

Other similarities also emerged in terms of commitment and dedication. At the time research was conducted, six of the seven participants coached only soccer. However, three reported considerable past experience coaching other sports, including golf, football, swimming, and wrestling. All participants held at least a bachelor's degree. Seven of eight participants worked in education and held teaching credentials. Six of the participants taught health and physical education, and teachers of elementary, middle and high school levels were represented. All participants also had significant (more than five years) experience coaching at other levels of the same sport as well. While most coaches work their way up through developmental levels and several of these coaches were now solely coaching elite teenaged or college-age athletes, all of them at some point had spent different seasons of the same year working with different ages and talent levels. Gaining the experience of coaching both genders and all levels, from developmental to early competitive to elite competitive, seemed to be a common acquisition process among all the coaches. Before starting families, several reported coaching year-around

with other programs besides the high school team; this included head coaching responsibilities of recreation and travel teams, or assistant coaching roles at area universities. Leadership or instructional roles at summer soccer camps was a staple experience of all the coaches.

No requirements regarding race or ethnicity were part of the initial set criteria. Six of the eight participants recorded their ethnicity as white. One participant was Hispanic and one of Middle Eastern ethnicity. Unfortunately, a prospective participant from a country in east Africa did not attend a scheduled interview; his participation would have added more diversity to this pool.

Additionally, one athletic director who had supervised two of the coach-participants was interviewed using a separate set of questions. This interview proved helpful in understanding responses of the coach-participants from a person who had observed, supervised, mentored and guided those in similar roles. This data was also helpful to understand a different perspective related to both the developing cultural competency of a coach as well as an individual in a different, though related role.

All participants were assigned a number for identification purposes. This identification number, as well as some basic information about experience, profession, professional and coaching education is listed in Table 4.1.

Data Collection

Interviews. The data was collected through interviews, "a conversation that has a structure and a purpose" (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, as cited in Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 107). Individual interviews were necessary in this case because the study is interested in past events that cannot be replicated and in the participants' reflections and conceptualizations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Mertler (2017) suggests that truly qualitative data is best collected

through semi-structured interviews, which are built around foundational questions but offer space for follow-up prompting questions that may or may not be used. A section of the interview was structured around sociodemographic questions designed to gather similar data about coaching experience, education and cross-cultural experiences (see Appendix A for interview guide and questions). This was followed by a semi-structured section of open-ended questions of flexible wording and designed to guide the conversation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The focus of this section was on participants' experience with athletes from diverse cultures, situations in which they thought they expressed or witnessed cultural competence, and significant moments in their personal or professional experience that impacted on the development of their cultural competence. In accordance with grounded theory approaches to interviewing, the researcher followed the major concerns of points of view of the participant, considered the best strategy for "securing the personal and private concerns of respondents" (Wimpenny & Gass, 2000, p. 1487).

The athletic director was asked a separate series of questions (see Appendix A). These questions followed the semi-structured format as well. Questions related to the understanding and conceptualization of a culturally competent coach, knowledge and skills related to cultural competence, and specific examples of positive and negative interactions of coaches with their athletes. This participant was also asked to reflect on his own learning process in the development of cultural competency, as well as what was observed in coaches employed and supervised.

The semi-structured interview allowed further probing and clarification. I anticipated that many interview subjects may not have had the opportunity, time or space to reflect upon their experiences working with athletes of diverse cultures. Questions guided the conversation but allowed for flexibility in how more information is collected. The content of initial interviews was

narrative-heavy, contrasted with a later "sharper focus" that develops in the process of data collection and analysis (Wimpenny & Gass, 2000, p. 1487). The questioning began with elements of phenomenology, a research approach "to reveal the object or phenomenon to which meaning is being attached" (Wimpenny & Gass, 2000, p. 1491). However, the interview plan called for moving forward after this initial approach "to saturate emerging categories" (Wimpenny & Gass, 2000, p. 1491). The interview questions were modified throughout the interview phase as the data analysis of each interview was used to inform the structure of subsequent interviews to develop the theory as it emerges (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Seven interviews were conducted in person and digitally audio-recorded. Two were collected via Skype and digitally audio-recorded. Interviews lasted at least 60 minutes, with most averaging between 75-85 minutes. Some follow-up questions were asked of specific participants. Interview times were not limited, so that data saturation had the most potential to be reached with each participant. This strategy proved efficient. Anticipating that the topic was not a common one for self-reflection, the open-ended interview allowed for development of understanding and consideration from the participant, who often returned to previous questions or narratives in the course of the interview. At this point, it is worth noting that the researcher was familiar with four participants through her own coaching experience. Some of the candid responses were no doubt a result of this prior familiarity.

In research projects of this nature, final sampling decisions may be made using the principle of data saturation (Holt & Tamminen, 2010). In the grounded theory approach, the principle of data saturation means the point at which no new information appears within the collected data, or the information that appears is relatively minor (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) suggest that "for most research enterprises […] in which the

aim is to understand common perceptions and experiences among a group of relatively homogeneous individuals, twelve interviews should suffice" (p. 79). Because of time limitations, the goal of data saturation was not met, though significant common themes did develop across data. Most participants were reluctant to schedule interviews outside of the regular work day, which created conflicts with the researcher's full-time work schedule. A significant amount of time was required to schedule interviews to suit both researcher and participant. One participant did not attend the scheduled interview, which lessened the amount of data collected.

Researcher journal/field notes. A second source of data collection was field notes that described the participants, setting, activities, and behaviors of the participants, but also can include a reflective component (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This record of "feelings, reactions, hunches, initial interpretations, speculations and working hypotheses" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 152) acted as a way for the researcher to include valuable insights and speculations in addition to the recording of facts. These included reflections on analysis (patterns and connections, for example); method; ethical dilemmas and conflicts; frame of mind; and clarification (Fraenkel et al., 2016). Limited field notes were taken during the interviews, in part because of the necessity for close and attentive listening. Post-interview "de-briefing" sessions were utilized to collect other thoughts. The combined field notes and reflective journal was a resource when analyzing interview formats, process, and collection.

Strengths and Limitations

One strength of using interviews was that candid conversation around guiding questions in a one-on-one setting allowed a reflective space. Standal and Hemmestad (2011) suggest that coaches may internalize or minimalize their own behaviors in relationship-building because of a common public perception that their technical knowledge is more highly valued to the

individual, team and program success. Given time for reflective opportunity in an interview, coaches showed a heightened awareness of their own development and potential for improvement. An anticipated limitation of the interview format was the amount of time it might take to get candid and/or articulate answers. In some cases, it did take extensive questioning and rapport-building to gain insight; in at least one case, the interview format necessitated a complete change in order to elicit answers of some depth. The semi-structured guide allowed for some flexibility in sequencing and wording of questions, but this did result in different information being collected (Fraenkel et al., 2016). As a researcher, it was my intent to maintain distance to promote objectivity, yet some success of the data collection depended on a positive interpersonal relationship. There was a possibility of bias from the researcher in the unscripted portions of the interviews, for example in the follow-up/probing questions.

A strength of the reflective journal was the capability of reflecting on one's own subjectivity and how one's own attitudes influenced perception (Fraenkel et al., 2016). Additionally, the journal enabled transparency, which provided more reliability and validity. A related concern that the journal captured was expectations for how questions might be answered, perhaps based on the participant's experience level or core beliefs. Because I brought some researcher bias and experience with the topic to the interviews, productive use of reflective journaling helped to initiate preliminary analysis and to thoughtfully develop new lines of questioning that drew out more information and new themes.

A mixed methods approach would strengthen the research; for example, administering some kind of cultural competency assessment survey to either screen participants or validate participants could provide more contextual information.

Data Analysis

An overall inductive and comparative analysis strategy was utilized, as is appropriate for a qualitative study using grounded theory. A grounded theory includes categories, properties and hypotheses that are conceptual links between and among the categories and properties (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As data are identified, they are coded in relation to topic, literature, field notes and intuition (Sasaba et al., 2016). The process began with initial or open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) after each interview. Following open coding, two other phases are employed: axial coding, which is refining categories through the process of relating categories and properties, and selective coding, in which core categories or hypotheses are developed (Corbin and Strauss, 2015, as cited in Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In the axial coding phase, linguistic temporal markers and chronological narratives contributed evidence related to the process themes. Further coding resulted in categories related to knowledge, values, and skills and three "friction points" that emerged as cognitive dissonance, presenting sticky problems that the participants spent time, energy, and resources delving into. Comparisons were made across and between tentative categories until a substantive theory grounded in and emerging from the data could be formulated (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). More information about the process of coding and the emergence of themes is included in Chapter Four.

Ethical Issues, Validity, Reliability, and Generalizability

Ethical Issues

Permission to conduct this study and approval for the use of human subjects was approved by the university's Institutional Review Board. Participants were asked to sign a letter of informed consent that described the nature of the study, the level of participant involvement, and their volunteer status (see Appendix B). Participants were informed that they could elect to

stop participation at any time and their data will not be used. To protect participant confidentiality, pseudonyms were used. Data was stored and maintained on a Samsung Galaxy 7 phone and home computer, both protected by multiple passwords. The computer remained in a locked, protected area in my home.

Internal Validity

Establishing trustworthiness is an essential component of qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). It ensures the research process was conducted properly and the findings are worthy and credible. Triangulation of data is an important principle to establishing validity, or "how well the research findings match reality" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 242). Triangulation in this study consists of multiple sources of data, including interviews, field notes and a researcher's journal. Four of the participants were tapped for member checks after the conclusion of the analysis, though none offered responses or input. Further discussion of the different strategies used to establish trustworthiness follows:

- The researcher was trained in the methods of qualitative research and consulted regularly with a faculty advisor who conducted the trainings and has significant qualitative research experience.

- A pilot interview was conducted to allow the researcher to practice, enhance interview skills and validate the effectiveness of the interview guide (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

- Prolonged engagement involves the investment of time by the researcher to become familiar with the culture and vocabulary of the participant, as well as build trust with them (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To this study, the researcher brought 17 years of middle and high school coaching experience to aid in the establishment of relationships with interview subjects.

- An audit trail was kept to provide a detailed description of how data is collected, how categories are derived and how decisions are made (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

- Member checks helped to establish credibility (Mertler, 2017). Member checks occur when the findings are tested by the participants to ensure the information provided is correct. The first occurred at the end of each interview during a debriefing session. At this point, the participants were given the opportunity to add or alter any answer or idea communicated during the interview. Four participants were also asked to review and state any concerns, questions, or comments with regard to the findings. This member check plan is based on one used in a qualitative study of Canadian high school coaches' acquisition of knowledge (Wilson, Bloom, & Harvey, 2011).

External Validity and Reliability

The findings of this study cannot be replicated. In qualitative research, especially, generalizability is problematic, as "a single case or a small, nonrandom, purposeful sample is selected precisely because the researcher wishes to understand the particular in depth, not to find out what is generally true of the many" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 254). It is possible, however, that transferability could take place: this means that the person seeking to make the application elsewhere is provided with enough rich, descriptive data in which to find the sites at which transferability could be sought (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

<div align="center">

Conclusion

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This chapter outlined the qualitative methodology related to the research questions. An overall inductive and comparative analysis strategy as is appropriate for a qualitative study using grounded theory was utilized. The philosophical approach related to constructivism and positivism was also discussed. The chapter outlined a plan for purposive sampling of participants

and also how data collection was implemented. Some considerations about how the data was collected were shared, along with the process for data analysis. These subjects are also included at more length in the next chapter. This chapter concluded with some information about validity, reliability and generalizability.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

This research began because of the researcher's interest in how coaches spoke about their experiences in coaching athletes of cultures different from their own. Exploring their conceptualization of cultural competency seemed to be a good starting point for a clearer understanding of its development within the coaching context. In particular, the researcher was interested in how the categories of knowledge, values, and skills interacted; whether these categories were abstract and discrete or were they linked; and what factors influenced coaches in their development. These interests led to the following research questions:

1. How do high school athletics coaches, specifically varsity boys soccer coaches, talk about or conceptualize the knowledge, values, and skills of cultural competence in their learning and practice environments?

2. What are the learning processes involved in the development of cultural competence?

3. What are the various factors that may affect this development?

The data was provided by interviews with a purposive sample of participants who met a set criteria for experience, success, and engagement with athletes of cultures different from their own. This chapter provides more specific information about the participants in the purposive sample, explains data collection, and the analysis which led to the findings. The interpretation and analysis resulted in a developmental "trajectory," consisting of five phases. Further emerging from the data were conceptualizations related to a) cognition, adaptation, and growth in perceptions and b) understanding about relationships between power, privilege, and cultural difference. The dynamic here is that of expansion: expansion of the thought process and strategic

approaches to issues, as well as expansion of one's understanding of equity and cultural difference. These categories emerged in selective coding and include the concept of cognitive rigidity and flexibility and discernment of issues of equity and cultural difference. This chapter concludes with how the analysis ties back to the research questions.

Description of Participant Sample

Eight interviews were conducted, seven with boys varsity soccer coaches and one with an athletic director. Volunteer participants were drawn from a purposive theoretical sample of experienced professional high school coaches and athletic directors identified because of their knowledge about the field of coaching (See Table 2). Brief descriptors of each participants are also highlighted:

Participant 1, a White male, has coached at the collegiate level for five years. He was formerly a health and physical education teacher with eight years of experience as an athletic administrator, all in the same school district. His soccer coaching experience includes nine years as an assistant collegiate coach, eight years as a varsity boys head coach, and four years as an assistant varsity coach. All but one year of his high school coaching experience was with one program. Significant cross-cultural experiences include short-term travel, influential interactions with a family member who is an ESL teacher, and his own teaching experience.

Participant 2, a White male, is a health and physical education teacher and an assistant collegiate coach for the past five years. He recently concluded a 14-year high school soccer coaching career. His coaching experience includes nine years as a head coach with a varsity boys team and five years in a JV/assistant capacity, all at the same high school. Significant cross-cultural experiences include hosting exchange students in his home during high school and some short-term travel.

Participant 3, a White male, is a health and physical education teacher. He has logged two different boys varsity soccer coaching stints at the same high school, as well as five years as a head coach of the girls' JV soccer program. His current high school reports the following demographics: 42.7% Hispanic or Latino, 39.1% White, 12.3% Black or African American, 3.5% Asian, 2.1% of two or more races; students with limited English proficiency, 35.2%; students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, 66.2% (Kena et al., 2015). This participant served in the military, which he notes as a significant cross-cultural experience.

Participant 4, a White male, is a health and physical education teacher. He has been the boys varsity soccer coach at the high school where he works for the past 14 years. He also headed the boys' golf program for five years and was an assistant football coach. The high school reports the following demographics: 50% White, 38.4% Black or African American, 3.3 % Two or more races, 2.7% Asian; students with limited English proficiency, 6.5%; students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, 56.8% (Kena et al., 2015). Among his significant self-reported cross-cultural experiences were several short- and long-term mission trips in the United States and abroad while a youth. He also played on a collegiate team with an unusual diversity of players and a head coach of color.

Participant 5, a Hispanic male, immigrated to the United States from a South American country as a child. He has worked and coached both boys and girls' teams at two urban high schools over the course of a 30-year career in education. He has also spent 12 years heading boys and girls' travel programs. His current high school reports the following demographics: 58.9% Hispanic or Latino, 18.6% White, 13.9% Asian, 5.1% Black or African-American; students with limited English proficiency, 27%; students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, 59.6% (Kena et al., 2015).

Participant 6, a White male, is a core subject teacher with 24 years of coaching experience across three different sports. He works in the same high school as Participant 3, where they collaborate in leadership of the boys soccer program. Participant 6 coaches the JV team. Among other coaching experience, he has led the boys and girls varsity swim program at the same high school for nine years and has also spent nine years as director of a large regional, multi-age-group summer swim program. His current high school reports the following demographics: 42.7% Hispanic or Latino, 39.1% White, 12.3% Black or African American, 3.5% Asian, 2.1% of two or more races; students with limited English proficiency, 35.2%; students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, 66.2% (Kena et al., 2015). This participant served in the military, which he notes as a significant cross-cultural experience.

Participant 7, a Middle Eastern male, is the only non-teacher in the sample. He has 18 years of coaching experience, including 10 years as a collegiate head coach of a women's program. He has coached both boys and girls high school and youth/recreational teams, and currently coaches the boys varsity team at a high school reporting the following demographics: White, 66.7%, Black or African American, 19.3%, Two or more races, 7.7%; Hispanic or Latino, 4.5%, Asian, 1.3%; students with limited English proficiency, 1.7%; free and reduced-price lunch, 42.6% (Kena et al., 2015). This participant moved from a Middle Eastern country to the United States at age 19 to attend university.

Participant 8A, a White male, has seven years of experience as an athletic director at the same high school as participants 3 and 6. He comes from a non-teaching background.

The following table (Table 2) provides more information about each participant, including their professional and coaching education.

Table 2

Study Participants

Participant ID	Race/ethnicity	Coaching Experience	Profession	Professional Education	Coaching Education
Participant 1	White	16 years 8 years athletics administration	College coach (former PE and health education teacher)	—Bachelor's degree in education and teaching credential (coaching minor) —Some graduate school (athletics administration)	—NSCAA State Goalkeeping Diploma —NSCAA Regional Goalkeeping Diploma —NSCAA Special Topics Course Diploma —required NCAA general coaching training
Participant 2	White	14 years	PE and health education teacher; college coach	—Bachelor's degree in education and teaching credential (coaching minor) —Some graduate school (education)	—NSCAA State Goalkeeping Diploma —sport-specific professional development required by high school state governing body — NCAA required general coaching training
Participant 3	White	20 years	PE and health education teacher; head varsity soccer coach	—Bachelor's degree in kinesiology and teaching credential —Master's degree in education	—NSCAA State Goalkeeping Diploma (Class C) —USSF referee license —sport-specific professional development required by high school state governing body

(Table 2 continued)

(Table 2 continued)

Participant ID	Race/ethnicity	Coaching Experience	Profession	Professional Education	Coaching Education
Participant 4	White	17 years	PE and health education teacher; head varsity soccer coach	—Bachelor's degree in exercise science; teaching credential —Master's degree in kinesiology (concentration in athletics administration and coaching)	—NSCAA Advanced National Diploma —NSCAA Goalkeeping Diploma (Class A) —sport-specific professional development required by high school state governing body
Participant 5	Hispanic	30 years	PE and health education teacher; head varsity soccer coach; head club soccer coach.	—Bachelor's degree in education and teaching credential	— NSCAA Advanced National Diploma — NSCAA Goalkeeping Diploma —sport-specific professional development required by high school state governing body t
Participant 6	White	28 years	Core subject teacher; head varsity coach (other than soccer); head JV coach and assistant varsity coach, soccer	—Bachelor's degree and teaching credential	—Master Coach certification through high school state governing body —sport-specific professional development required by high school state governing body —other sport-specific national association certifications

(Table 2 continued)

(Table 2 continued)

Participant ID	Race/ethnicity	Coaching Experience	Profession	Professional Education	Coaching Education
Participant 7	Middle Eastern	18 years	Professional sciences; head varsity soccer coach	Bachelor's degree	—AYSO training —NCACE Advanced Coach, Coaching Instructor and Referee —USSF Grade 8 Referee and "D" coaching license —state high school referee's certification —sport-specific professional development required by high school state governing body —NCAA required general coaching training
Participant 8A (athletic director)	White	7 years	Athletics administration	Bachelor's degree; teaching credential	—sport-specific professional development required by high school state governing body

Abbreviations: American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO); National Council for Accreditation of Coaching Education (NCACE); National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA).

Data Analysis

The transcripts from the interviews served as the primary source of research data. The interview protocol and guide for both coach-participants and athletic director-participant is listed in Appendix A. Information representing each person's experience was highlighted in the coding process. The researcher coded interviews manually and reviewed for emerging themes on a regular and consistent schedule to best employ grounded theory methodology. The focus of coding was on understanding how the participants shaped their personal experience in working with athletes of diverse cultures within the sport context. The researcher acknowledges a

selective process, potentially biased by her own experiences as a coach and athlete, as an influential factor in determining what arose as most compelling and insightful.

In seeking to understand conceptualization, two strategies of data collection, linked to both grounded theory methodology and structural narrative analysis, were key: first, an open-ended prompt invited participants to enter into the interview in a way of their own choosing and second, participants were asked to reflect on their own experiences and articulate points of challenge and conflict related to working with athletes of different cultures. This process provided rich, authentic detail, as well as exposed the researcher to how participants thought about and conceptualized their experiences. Analysis of the text in terms of narrative construction of time helped to answer the research question related to the conceptualization of cultural competency, especially concepts related to the larger cognitive processing of interactions.

Each transcript was analyzed first, with general notations and then more detailed phrases. Words that were repeated—for example, "trust" seemed to represent both a value and an actionable skill (i.e. building trust) or "expectations"—were labeled as initial concept codes. A wide array of other observations, thoughts, and experiences also emerged. Concept codes included service to community, melting pot, fluidity to strategy, treatment of the athlete, comfortable space, "family," styles of play, athlete buy-in and trust, passion for the sport, identifying with the team, creating boundaries, lack of understanding about commitment, care for athlete off the field, questioning, process, learning backgrounds, U.S. sports culture and global sports culture.

The axial coding process reassembled the data into a more linear fashion. This process looked at relationships between the data to determine if a more complex relationship existed. In

the axial coding process, a trajectory of the coaching experience as related to working with athletes of different cultures became apparent. This coding highlighted both process (the process by which coaches develop values, skills, and knowledge related to coaching athletes of diverse cultures) and factors that influenced their development. Sorting the data around central themes, the developmental trajectory became identified as stages. The five themes that developed from this coding progressed linearly and then into a reflective circle, with two "sub-themes" regarding influential conceptualizations that seemed worthy of notation.

Within axial coding, several issues were noted as common to most participants, while others were common to only a few. For example, three participants suggested that they were particularly attentive to the establishment of a safe space for their athletes, many of whom had come from situations of trauma and were at sensitive points in their transition between cultures. However, the ways in which these coaches created that space differed widely. One created strong boundaries for the athletes and coaching staff regarding the expression of social identity markers, while another emphasized the sharing of joint non-sport-related activities. While some of these categories were definitely more developed than others, once the process of selective coding began, two additional categories linked strongly to the theory that was developing. These categories offered information about participants' expansion of both mental processes and topical understandings. These two examples seemed to suggest a complex convergence of values, knowledge, and skills.

The results of the analysis, outlined in the next section, incorporate quotations from participants in the purposive sample that support emergent themes and subthemes. The following conventions are used for consistent and accurate sourcing of quotations. Quotations are italicized throughout, whether within a sentence of text or set off by indentation. Each participant is

identified by a number (see Table 2 for numerical assignments). The date of the interview is included.

Section I: The Trajectory

A trajectory of the coaching experience as related to working with athletes of different cultures became apparent in axial coding through multiple participants' consistently applied emphasis on temporal linguistic markers within experiential vignettes. Data combined in the axial coding process highlighted the development of values, skills, and knowledge related to coaching athletes of diverse cultures and factors that influenced their development. The broad theme emerged primarily through the open-ended and purposefully vague question that began the interview and invited the participants to reflect on their experience with athletes of diverse cultures. Four of seven participants chose to answer the question with a narrative focus on their own chronology of experience, during which the phases appeared clearly. For one participant who entered the question a different way, through a discussion of values (specifically relational values), his discourse did adopt a chronology later in the interview. These five participants— specifically those who expressed the most dramatic shifts in their understanding—differentiated themselves from the other participants in two structural narrative discourses that suggest a deeper reflection on their coaching identity, role and responsibilities when working with athletes of diverse cultures: 1) the length of reply to the researcher's later questions asking for a self-selection and articulation of particular situational analysis related to conflicts with specific athletes and 2) consistency of main subject referents, showing that the participant's ensuing analysis adhered to focused analysis and reflection.

Five stages emerged from the data collection. The first foundational two stages are linear and progressive. Early formative experiences are an introduction to the sport that includes

positive and influential interactions with coaches and teammates. Often these experiences are highlighted as the first understanding of the sport's cultural impact and importance beyond the dominant American sports culture. The call to coach marks the beginning of a more formalized awareness of the individual's desire to coach, aptitude for the role, and development of programmatic philosophy and guiding values. Two discussion points about global and American soccer culture are introduced within this section (the data collected did not include enough evidence, or exploration, to identify them more formally as subthemes). These two broader contexts in which the athlete-as-future-coach develops his skills and interest in the sport introduce possible influences on behavior, attitudes, and values.

The next stages occur as parts of an accretive, repetitive cycle that includes disequilibrium, inquiry, and accommodation. The state of disequilibrium is defined by the researcher as a disruption to a prior stability of understanding or conceptualization. The theme of inquiry leads from initial awareness through information-gathering, with an emergent emphasis on questioning, specifically process discovery questions. The theme of accommodation includes changes to programming and coaching strategies based on new gathered knowledge and reflection. Following these phases through a trajectory, the researcher hypothesizes a return to stasis at a different point along the progression of the coach's developmental experience. The composite model of this developmental trajectory is labeled Figure 1. The figure provides an overview of the five thematic stages that emerged in axial coding. Presentation of data follows.
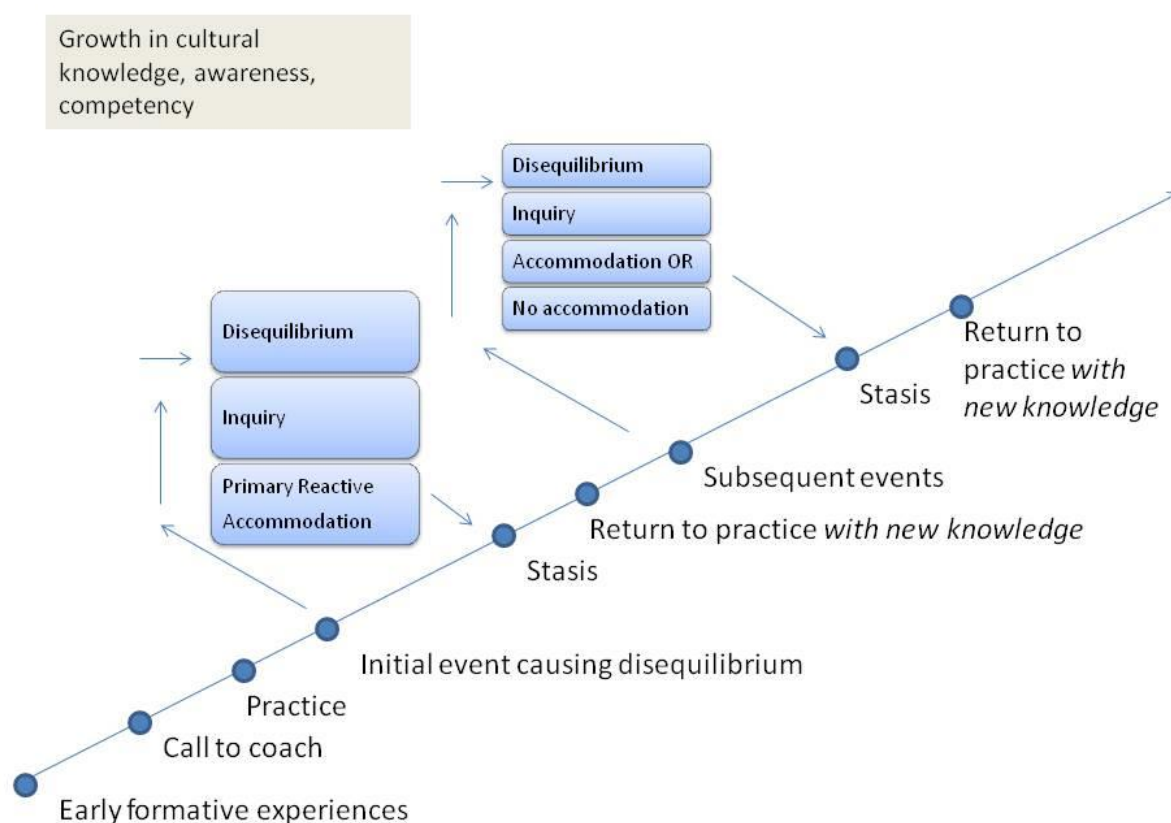
Figure 1. Developmental growth in cultural knowledge, awareness, and competency

Early formative experiences. Each of the seven coaches began his experience as a youth player and developed early positive feelings towards the game, which led to continued interest in supporting young athletes. Additionally, these early experiences of being coached also created both models of the coaching role and conceptualizations of how a team operated. With the exception of one, all continued playing competitively in high school. For the one coach who played other sports in high school, his first experiences with diversity in sport were provided by soccer, with several recreation-level and camp coaches from other countries. These experiences were clearly formative, as he recalls a sense of community, mutual respect, and equality in treatment (he admits that he was not particularly skilled):

I also had growing up excellent coaches who coached with positive attitudes. They might identify mistakes, but they didn't criticize. They were always building, building you up. Making you recognize that your greatness was through your improvement ... Every single one of those coaches, regardless of where they came from, coached from a positive perspective. Being coached by these people from foreign lands that I didn't even know existed, but they accepted us and worked with us, was important. (Participant 6, personal communication, September 1, 2018)

He also relates that the value of those experiences has influenced one of his core coaching values:

That's an important stage of life, so building a community on the team, they're going to maintain those friendships within far beyond high school, years down the road. I would say that how I value my high school relationships does parlay into what I want for my kids on my team. I want them to form those bonds that they will always be able to say, "I was part of that team. (Participant 6, personal communication, September 1, 2018)

His current efforts to "build community" and long-lasting friendships among his players are closely linked to his own personal experiences.

The participant from the Middle East recalls the pervasive pull of soccer throughout his childhood, living in a country where "*when the national team played, everything shut down*" (Participant 6, personal communication, September 1, 2018). Soccer was played, class against class, throughout his grammar school years. His free time was filled with soccer:

Even in the summer time, we played in our neighborhoods from eight in the morning until lunch time, then we'd go home, eat, take a nap and go out again… Twenty kids in the neighborhood played everyday. We'd go into other neighborhoods, find other teams...we

played for Pepsi or drinks or a soccer ball. (Participant 6, personal communication,

September 1, 2018)

This idyllic childhood experience of bonding and building community through soccer was also

strongly linked to the family and extended family that he left behind when Participant 6

immigrated: "*All of my family members were in soccer, so that was just something I carried over*

when I came here" (personal communication, September 1, 2018). It is not surprising that many

years later, this particular participant influenced his children to play soccer and was drawn into

coaching through their shared interest.

Two participants recalled important relationships with athletes of diverse cultures while

in high school. Participant 3 mentioned an influx of Middle Eastern and Vietnamese youth into

his club soccer program, which heightened his awareness of the sport's global influence

(personal communication, October 3, 2018). Participant 1 recalled how, at a time when

traditional American sports of baseball, football, and basketball were more popular, the passion

of two Mexican brothers and the fans they brought to his high school games both enlivened and

legitimized his own love for the sport:

>*[The brothers] were my first introduction to a culture that just loves soccer because at*
>
>*that time, soccer was not seen as really a sport. It was not well respected by the school or*
>
>*the athletic director. We couldn't even practice at the school. We had to be shipped to*
>
>*[the middle school fields]…. We were very much the outsiders. It was not publicized like*
>
>*baseball or softball was. Their community would actually come out and support us more*
>
>*than some of ours.* (personal communication, August 30, 2018)

This particular coach still appreciates these athletes for their local impact on the sport and his

own life, in part because he continued his participation with the sport in the same geographic

area. He witnessed a slow shift in the entrenched local sports culture: It took 10 years for his own high school to offer a junior varsity program, and the same 10 years for the adjacent school district to offer any soccer program. As an adult, this participant advocated for the sport and its athletes within area school systems, adapting necessarily (as we'll see later) to the changing demographics that fed its growth.

Some participants spoke about the college experience as particularly formative. Of the six who played in high school, five continued their play in college, one on a club team and four others on collegiate teams. The four who played on a collegiate team reported a vast increase in cultural diversity among athletes and coaching staff at that level. One participant recalled this experience of being among the minority as an intellectually expansive opportunity and acknowledged its significant influence on how he sees the coaching role:

> *The first year I was there, I was one of six Americans on the entire team. ... And it was really cool for me at that point because I'm learning new languages, learning new things about cultures and it's not just one [culture], it was like Norway, Brazil, France, a ton of countries from Latin America, and then of course a lot of people from different parts of the United States. It was just a very diverse team and it will stay like that for my entire time and it still is now. And Coach [name] from [a Caribbean country] is probably, I'd say, one of my top three mentors my entire career.* (Participant 4, personal communication, November 9, 2018)

Participant 4's high school soccer coach was also influential; this individual was "*very much an American football coach who was also a soccer coach, a man that I respect tremendously but at the same time never had to coach through a lot of diversity in his life at that school*" (personal communication, November 9, 2018). The experience of moving from a homogenous to a

heterogenous cultural team environment and of being coached by men at what he perceived as "*two opposite ends of the spectrum*" was impactful: "*Those kind of experiences kind of meshed together and I would definitely say created my mindset and how I approach everything as a coach now, just having those two kind of opposite ends of the spectrum growing up*" (Participant 4, personal communication, November 9, 2018).

The experience of the participant who competed as a club athlete is worth recounting. He immigrated to the United States at age 19 to attend college and played with other international students on a skilled team that at times played and defeated the collegiate team. These individuals realized later that the collegiate team hosted open tryouts, an opportunity they were not aware of, nor were they made aware of it through outreach and/or invitation. This participant clearly linked that experience to a cultural barrier: "*None of the players moved up because they didn't know how the system worked. ... You brought up about barriers and different countries and stuff*" (Participant 7, personal communication, October 26, 2018). He is reminded of this experience, he says, when he works with non-English-speaking athletes. In response to a follow-up question about how this experience impacted his work specifically with athletes, the participant referenced feelings of empathy but did not offer specific examples.

Call to coach. Consistent and positive experiences of sport and activity as youth and teenagers led five of the seven participants into careers as health and physical education teachers. A strong affinity for a leadership role with youth in the sports context is exhibited by all of these coaches. Participant 4 expressed this most clearly: "*I got my provisional license to teach health and PE and there was an opening to coach that very first year and it was like the perfect fit, just like it was placed by God in your lap. It was just unbelievable. And so then I haven't moved anywhere since then. I'd say that I got into teaching because I wanted to coach*" (personal

communication, November 9, 2018). An appreciation for mentorship was also apparent in all participants. For example, one coach shared strong connections to and emotions about his athletes:

> *They become a part of your family. I love every kid that I coach. Each one is individual and has their stuff that they do and you get attached to these kids. That's part of the coaching. It's my passion.... If you come to my office, I have pictures everywhere, all soccer, all these kids. ... I hope I have some impact in the outcome, get you in the right direction, teach you in a positive way, and you learn something.* (Participant 7, personal communication, October 26, 2018)

All participants also shared similar perspectives, and several examples, of the positive long-term impacts of playing sports, often tying participation to the nurturing and development of values that were beneficial to their former athletes' post-graduation success in work, relationships, and parenting.

> *I just enjoyed watching kids come back and I did it long enough, I can see what kids do after college, after high school, and even outside of playing soccer, which is kind of something I tried to focus on ... I really wanted to see them succeed in life outside of soccer as well.* (Participant 2, personal communication, October 3, 2018)

All seven participants spoke about former athletes becoming coaches themselves and passing on their own love of the sport. This legacy shows an implicit valuing of the former athletes on their prior experiences, as well as awareness of the potentiality of their own coaching role to impact young athletes.

Another rationale that arose within the theme of the call to coach relates to the current primacy of club/travel soccer, a "pay-to-play" system that is widely recognized as omitting large

numbers of skilled athletes who cannot afford to participate. One coach specifically linked a goal in coaching at the high school level to economic parity:

> *I feel like everybody should have the opportunity that is able to, not just because you can pay a certain amount to be on a team, which is why I stuck with the high school ranks as opposed to a club.* (Participant 2, personal communication, October 3, 2018)

A second participant also suggested this purpose behind his high school coaching vocation. He voiced his opinion that athlete development should happen through high school programming, a more holistic system open to all athletes, regardless of socioeconomic status, that inherently supported the development of other values important to student-athletes, such as academic success and character. Notably, six of seven participants had no significant involvement with club/travel soccer programs; one coach currently coached in a travel program in addition to his high school coaching responsibilities, and had logged a total of 12 years coaching club/travel. The influence of the club/travel programming structure on athlete development, and its limitations in serving and developing athletes of diverse cultures, was a topic that all coaches raised during the interview in different contexts.

All seven participants clearly indicate that coaching is a major part of their lives, though at times they had taken time away from the role or reported overall changes to time commitments, mostly for family or professional reasons. Six of the seven have shown a preferential prioritization of soccer throughout their coaching careers (three have coached other sports, including football, wrestling, and swimming). The persistent prioritization of time, energy, and resources toward the role and act of coaching soccer highlights the importance of that specific sport in their coaching identity. While all of these coaches now solely work with teenaged or college-age athletes, all have at some point coached athletes of different ages,

genders, and talent levels—sometimes during different seasons of the same year. Before starting families, several reported coaching year-around with other programs besides the high school team; this included head coaching responsibilities of recreation and travel teams, or assistant coaching roles at the collegiate level. Leadership or instructional roles at summer soccer camps were a common experience of all the coaches. This commonality clearly highlights that the sport itself is a major factor in drawing coaches to their roles. At the same time, however, the general vocational draw also shows a desire to work with youth and an interest in sharing positive values and behaviors related to health and physical education.

  Soccer's global importance as a potential influential factor. Unlike any other sport in the American sports culture, soccer exists in a unique cultural space. To play and coach soccer is to intersect and interact with a larger, globalized cultural phenomena. As noted above, all seven coach-participants spoke of a growing awareness early in their playing days of soccer's global influence. This influence and the implicit differences of the U.S. soccer culture should be considered when thinking about a coach's development of cultural competency. An understanding of the primacy of soccer within cultures outside the United States was addressed in several ways, most simplistically, in statements such as the following:

- *For these kids, in their culture, this was their number one sport.* (Participant 1, personal communication, August 30, 2018)

- *They've been watching the game of soccer since they were little and [learned] through their parents.* (Participant 3, personal communication, October 3, 2018)

- *The World Cup is truly international. And right now each continent has its cup, so every kid that comes has that background on the street level.* (Participant 7, personal communication, October 26, 2018)

Five of seven participants also engaged at some point in the interview in nuanced comparison of playing style and technical skill related to players from different cultural backgrounds. Coaches were particularly aware of developmental differences between players in the American training system who were highly drilled and efficient, but then executed with fewer technical skills and creativity. According to one coach, U.S.-born players of non-White cultural backgrounds whose primarily developmental experience was within the U.S. soccer system retained a different understanding and physical expression of the game than did White players: one participant summarized this succinctly: "*Maybe we call it a sport, maybe other countries call it an art*" (Participant 4, personal communication, November 9, 2018). Data collection did not specifically address the point at which participants began to identify and understand this global influence. The larger point is that the global status of the game, which is played all over the world, means that participants who continue their careers beyond the youth, pre-teen stages have an awareness of culturally-derived differences.

A second influential factor underlying the coach's developmental trajectory of cultural competence is the lesser and politicized status of the sport in the United States. Again, this was not fully explored in interview collection, but emerged as worthy of brief introduction. With the exception of the two non-native participants who experienced the particular (and strong) soccer culture in their country of origin, the other participants grew up in a different sports culture in the United States where soccer, for a variety of reasons, has struggled to gain a more mainstream foothold. This lesser status was most strongly expressed by the participant who contextualized his youth and high school soccer experience as one of marginalization, with less attention and resources: "*We were outsiders*" (Participant 1, personal communication, August 30, 2018). The "outsiders" theme was also noted by participants 1, 4 and 6 in their later coaching experience in

terms of media attention focused on their international rosters. Participant 1 suggested this attention was undue and excessive; Participant 5, who coached a state championship team that was 100% Hispanic, was questioned about "*how it felt*" to bring such a team to a high school state championship (personal communication, November 21, 2018). This is the same school that did not field a varsity football team recently; in comments to a newspaper article about this announcement, one reader wrote, "Demographic change, i.e., illegal influx.... Build the wall…" Again, this theme was not fully explored with participants in interview questions, but emerged in the data as a potential influential factor in the coach's development. A diagram of those influences and the relationship to the coach is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. External cultural influences on high school boys soccer coaches

Soccer as the 'chosen' space. Having introduced the potential influence of these two factors—the global soccer culture and the American soccer culture—a return to the *call to coach*

discussion brings a slightly different perspective to participants' statements of motivation. All seven participants emphasize the transformative impact of playing not just any sport, but soccer in particular. Coaches viewed the soccer field as a unifying and common space where such personal growth can occur, regardless of differences in language and culture. "*Soccer is one sport that brings everybody together … the culture is not an issue … when we were on the soccer field, they were like everybody else … the game itself carried them,*" said Participant 7 (personal communication, October 26, 2018). "*I don't care where you're from or who you are. If you can play soccer, that's going to be the common language for us,*" said Participant 4 (personal communication, November 9, 2018). "*The sport becomes the unifier between all these kids speaking different languages,*" said Participant 6 (personal communication, September 1, 2018). Another observed that soccer brought players together in ways that he didn't see with the school's basketball or football teams: "I*n soccer, they come together … they seem to be able to work with each other better than some other sports. I don't know why… Maybe they see different cultures on these international teams and clubs, where it's all mixed and it's no big deal*" (Participant 3, personal communication, October 3, 2018).

Disequilibrium. In narrating the chronology of their coaching involvement, five of seven participants (four coaches and one athletic director) spoke about the phenomenon of disequilibrium, using words related to disruption that described a dramatic physical and emotional impact. A key similarity is that each participant began their coaching career interacting with a more homogenous athletic population. In most cases, a demographic shift occurred after the coach had acquired at least four years of coaching experience. The experience of realizing that one's prior coaching practices may not address the needs of this new population was expressed in vibrant phrases: for example, "*eye-opening,*" being involved in "*a clash,*" being

startled or "*thrown off*," or having "*an awakening*" were common. Only one participant

expressed more of a gradual change with somewhat passive awareness in the phrase "*a shift*

happened" (Participant 2, personal communication, October 3, 2018)

One participant who coached at the same high school talks about returning to the boys

program after time spent coaching the girls' team, a demographic he described as "all White girls

the whole time," and some seasons completely away from coaching. Though he had watched the

boys team play games during that time, he had not been aware, as a spectator wouldn't, of the

extreme difference between these athletes and those who were on the team in the years prior.

While facilitating his first team tryouts, he describes a state of disequilibrium and an awareness

that his prior approaches were no longer relevant:

> *That was an awakening ... because I'm looking at the skill level increased tenfold and 95*
>
> *to 98 percent of the people coming out* [to tryouts] *were from somewhere else. That was*
>
> *like: okay, I gotta change my game ... my whole approach to soccer changed.* (Participant
>
> 3, personal communication, October 3, 2018)

At this point in his narration, the participant identifies difference in skill level and a wide

diversity of cultural difference as initial factors that elicited reflection and eventual changes to

programming and delivery. Later in the interview, he observes other culturally-derived

challenges, including the athlete's varying perceptions of team management related to playing

time, offensive and defensive strategy, and teamwork, as well as the more obvious challenges of

establishing commitment and communication.

The stage of disequilibrium as described by these five participants disrupts prior

established understandings of coaching practice. Here a coach describes his model of coaching,

informed over many years by his previous soccer experiences and the American sports culture:

Culturally when I first took over [school name] there in 2007, that was extremely eye-opening because I was pulling on what I had at [previous team coached] the year before, my experience in college and high school and briefly, the years I volunteered in college and just thinking, "Hey we're going to have practice every day and here's what we're going to do and roll it out."... And all of a sudden we're missing guys this day that day and they are not coming. (Participant 1, personal communication, August 30, 2018)

This participant outlines culturally-derived understandings about commitment as the first disruption to his prior constructed knowledge that he was relying on (he describes this action of tapping into prior constructs as "*pulling on*") in a new coaching situation. "*All of a sudden,*" he's aware that his prior knowledge—established through the cultural construct of commitment as derived from prior settings of high school and college soccer settings in the United States—and his reliance on that shared cultural knowledge with the athletes is no longer accurate.

The Hispanic participant spoke about two jarring experiences that were transformative to his vision of his role as a coach. The first occurred as he was becoming more committed and applying himself towards learning more about coaching. Pointedly, he elevated this relational experience above all of the more formal and technically-oriented trainings he attended:

I took classes, I went to see people train, I went to see people talk. I got my national advanced license. I was able to translate the game better, but the most important thing at that school that I needed and what I do here too—those kids, basically a lot of Hispanic kids, those kids needed a father figure, how might I say, not like I was their father or their friend, but like somebody who they respect and look at, maybe talk to. So that threw me off a little, because I'd never see that before. It threw me off. (Participant 5, personal communication, November 21, 2018).

This realization increased his commitment to the coaching role. Shortly after this experience, he expanded the school's extracurricular intermural soccer opportunities to provide more competitive opportunities for his own athletes, but also to expand his own influence with those students who loved soccer but may have lacked the talent or commitment to play for the high school team.

This participant also named a second moment of disequilibrium, after nearly two decades of coaching, at the high school where he currently works: *"I started seeing the change from White middle class and African Americans to a lot of Hispanic kids. I thought, 'Hey, that is something that I would like, something I was awake to'"* (Participant 5, personal communication, November 21, 2018). Though this participant shares some cultural heritage and native language skills with the majority of his athletes (the phrase "*awake to*" implies some familiarity), he related later that working with a different population brought unfamiliar coaching challenges. The acquisition of new knowledge—for example, learning about the ways in which socioeconomic inequities limited his athletes' opportunities and futures—broadened his general awareness of his own ignorance: "*When I was growing up, my parents paid for [club soccer opportunities], I was playing and that was that. I knew a little bit about that, but I didn't know all of it, and when you're a coach, you've got to know everything*" (Participant 5, personal communication, November 21, 2018). These two experiences moved him into a different understanding of his athletes' needs: From these moments, and surely others, he began to change his program objectives: "*Before I said, you know, they're here to play soccer only, but it's not that way anymore. They're here to study … so I had to change sometimes and I think I have and I think that's what's making me a part of some of this success, because I am willing to change*" (Participant 5, personal communication, November 21, 2018). This participant has developed a

winning program at a high school where other athletics teams are suffering from lack of participation, while also emphasizing in his team culture good character, academic success, and community service. His response to moments of disequilibrium is key to this positive development.

Another example of disequilibrium—of awareness that a current model of understanding may not meet new needs—was offered by an athletic director. He recalled the "*buzz in the staff meeting*" when the first student from sub-Saharan African arrived on campus and "*we were scrambling*" to find a translator: "*That kind of was my first kind of 'Wow, you know, we're pretty diverse and there's kids here who don't come in every day and they don't speak English'*" (Participant 8A, personal communication, November 11, 2018). He experienced a similar feeling after the first rained-out soccer game during his first spring season as athletic director, when he realized in speaking with the coach that the most common option—rescheduling to a Saturday—would require a forfeit. Most of the team worked or had family obligations.

> *There is that clash of, you know, you need to make it happen. I can't do that...That's something that coach had to kind of come to terms with and we as a program had to come to terms with.* (Participant 8A, personal communication, November 11, 2018)

This participant goes on to outline the available options, which include forfeiting games rescheduled to Saturdays or working with the opposing school's athletic director to "*accomplish what we need to accomplish which is play games in a way that doesn't interfere with other activities that are kind of non-negotiables for those students*" (Participant 8A, personal communication, November 11, 2018). This participant related that in that particular moment, he was aware that supporting a policy of inclusion for athletes of different cultures put him at odds with the traditional U.S. sports culture that prioritizes competition over other commitments:

"*Maybe that other school, you know, he's trying to force it because they know that if you're depleted they have a better chance of winning. And so there's that concept of winning versus competing*" (Participant 8A, personal communication, November 11, 2018). His role of advocacy was more clearly delineated for him at this moment in the act of explaining the circumstances to another athletic director and negotiating for the game to be played on a different day.

Inquiry. As participants reflected on self-selected situations with athletes of different cultures, another theme that appeared was inquiry. Participants framed their uncertainty and their need for information in the form of questions. All forms of questioning are important to understanding disequilibrium and how participants sought understanding. Across nine interviews, a total of 95 questions or question-related vignettes occurred. This theme appeared as few as three times and as many as 21 times. The average number of times this theme appeared in each interview was 11.8. The inquiry theme and total percentage could be broken down into four categories:

Process discovery questioning	43%
Questions related to specific information-gathering from the coach (coach to coach, athlete or other source)	35%
Non-specific but clear references to lack of situational understanding not posed as a question	12%
References to athletes questioning the coach	8%
Other questions	2%

Types of questions. The process discovery questions highlight the participant's understanding of the ongoing nature of the inquiry. In these questions, participants grappled with

the process of addressing major challenges. This category will be discussed more thoroughly below. Another category of questioning described specific requests for information. These questions were addressed to athletes, asking for clarification on behaviors, situations, or interactions. For example, Participant 7 related the use of racial slurs in a joking way by members of a girls' team he coached. He asked one athlete if being called a "Spanish girl" was offensive to her (personal communication, October 26, 2018). The athlete and the coach eventually chose to raise the issue in a team meeting. The initial question helped this process to occur. Participant 2 noted a use of questioning, about an athlete's prioritization of work over soccer, that, was not fruitful: *"I try not to push too hard on some of those things, but I couldn't get a clear answer from him why he felt he needed to do that"* (personal communication, October 3, 2018). Within this category were also questions to teachers, other coaches, staff, and others who had cultural knowledge to share. For example, the same participant talks about asking an assistant coach or school secretary to translate for his athletes.

A third category relates to situations in which a coach expressed lack of understanding or confusion about a situation but did not specifically use a questioning technique to highlight any kind of conceptual process of understanding. For example, one participant offered this anecdote, which implicitly suggests the posing of questions to his resources:

> *The first day when those things happen [conflicts or misunderstandings], I try to understand it and I'm lucky the other coach or [name of teacher] or [name of cultural liaison], they understand the culture more, so they explain it so maybe I can make my approach different.* (Participant 3, personal interview, October 3, 2018)

A small subset of the category related to participants talking about athletes questioning the coach. For example, Participant 7 related situations in which his athletes might ask to miss

practice. Questions or acts of questioning that did not fall into any of the categories were coded as "Other questions."

Resources utilized or accessed by coaches in their inquiry process include athletes on the team, former athletes working with the team, parents, coaching colleagues and/or mentors, school staff, ESL or language teachers, district cultural liaison, athletic director, school nurse, and family member (spouse and/or children, extended family)l.

Process discovery questions. The high percentage of process discovery questions within the interviews suggests the important role of process. Many of these questions seemed symbolic of the broader, ongoing process of recognizing and working towards a solution. This kind of questioning also generally appeared at places in the participants' narratives of their coaching experiences in which the more dramatic cases of disequilibrium occurred. Further denoting their importance in the developmental trajectory are adjacent explanations, in some interviews, of the next phase of the trajectory, accommodation. The following analysis gives a sampling from this category of questioning. In some cases, specific context is offered.

- *We have [an Eastern European player] and a country club kid with $400 cleats who really doesn't fit outside of that he plays soccer. How do I get them to understand and everyone on the same page?* (Participant 1, personal communication, August 30, 2018). Diversity of language, culture and socioeconomic inequalities are raised; this participant identified those as ongoing challenges to building a team culture.

- *How can this White man who culturally has been [in the area] his entire life, how can I gain their trust, their respect?* (Participant 1, personal communication, August 30, 2018) This question explores themes of Whiteness, power, privilege, and seeing one's own identity as an important factor in coaching athletes of color.

- *I'm wondering what experience made him act like this, who mistreated him, what is really happening? ... How has he been damaged, [and how do I find this out] without asking him?* (Participant 4, personal communication, November 9, 2018). This coach self-selected, and stated clearly, building relationships as a strong skill in his experience of working with all athletes, including White athletes of different socioeconomic backgrounds. "*Trying to understand first where they came from*"—another version of his question"*what is really happening?*"—through patient empathetic listening, bias identification, and awareness of his own limitations of perspective is a priority. This participant identified himself as a White male from a privileged background and was able to view interactions with his athletes through that lens.

- *How do we resolve the real issues between players of different nationalities?* (Participant 3, personal communication, October 3, 2018)

- *They need to work, help pay rent, make money. A lot come to the U.S. for a better life ... they want to work and pay for their families. That has been very challenging. What can I do to help this?* (Participant 5, personal communication, November 21, 2018)

- *How do we teach them, at the same time when the other opponent isn't doing that [playing with honor and respect for the rules], how do we take them out of their framework they're looking at it from and say, "We have something else that we aspire towards for you and your team and what you'll contribute to the team is more important than the individual moment when you're mad?"* (Participant 6, personal communication, September 1, 2018)

A subset of process discovery questions had metacognitive overtones, with questioning used in a continuous process of monitoring and assessment:

- *How do we change? ... After every session with the team and every season, it was like, "What went well? What didn't go well? How can we change things so that the hope is you create this perfect universe where everyone gets along, everyone is on the same page and everyone is working at the same intensity level and we're achieving great things?"* (Participant 1, personal communication, August 30, 2018)

- *I continue to ask myself what went wrong.* [in one particular situation that has reoccurred over time with other athletes] (Participant 3, personal communication, October 3, 2018). This act of questioning has metacognitive overtones.

- *That's what I'm trying to do. Is it working? I think it is. Does it work all the time? Maybe not. I don't know how it will work this year. We'll see.* (Participant 5, personal communication, November 21, 2018)

Each of these questions highlights the coach's approach to processing issues, conflicts and challenges. The emphasis in this theme is the coach's cognitive approach when confronted with disequilibrium to frame his awareness in the posing of a question. The question alludes to a process of discovery. Contextual information in the interviews suggest that the posing of these questions is ongoing and repetitive—that the topics are important, ongoing challenges that even if eventually resolved in a temporary way, may occur again in a different context with different athletes. With rosters, personalities and cultural background changing each season, no one solution to any issue will inevitably serve all future teams.

Yet, the information gathered through inquiry informs the coach's ability and capability of working with future athletes and bringing a more layered understanding to other scenarios involving athletes. Transference leads coaches to build from one specific incident to others. For

example, in the context of talking about developing a team culture within the sport, Participant 6 commented that each new acquisition of information informs him in future situations:

> *I don't necessarily know ahead of time this kid's coming from a war-torn country or where in one situation, this kid saw his best friend get shot and killed by the enemy. They were captured, and someone made a choice and shot the child's best friend. So that was a huge scar for that kid. I didn't know that ahead of time, but once I found that out, that changed a lot about my understanding about what he was dealing with and how he reacted to different situations. Or the kid who used to walk off the field, I know he came from a place where violence was an everyday occurrence...* (Participant 6, personal communication, September 1, 2018)

Participant 4 talked about one conversation with a player, a refugee who had lived in a camp before coming to the United States, then witnessed a murder in his home involving his parents: "*We had that conversation and I'm glad we did because I could probably sit down and have this conversation with every kid I have … learning more about them than just what's happened in this country. This gives me some insight into how they deal with adversity on the field and in the classroom*" (personal communication, November 9, 2018).

Coaches take the information acquired from their inquiry and reflection into the next stage, which relates to decisions regarding the need to alter one's template or structure in order to accommodate differences.

Accommodation

A final theme that emerged from the data is accommodation. In Piaget's (1985) theory of cognitive schema, the term adaptation describes how learners may respond to new information. Accommodation, or an alteration in cognitive structure to include new knowledge, is part of the adaptive process. This term is useful to describe how participants began to understand and adjust to the disequilibrium they encountered in interactions with athletes of diverse cultures. A common response was an evaluative process informed by inquiry and focused on creating solutions to the issue presented by athletes. As noted before, eight participants identified demographic changes to their student-athlete populations within their coaching careers. Six of the seven coaches and the athletic director identified the disequilibrium associated with these demographic changes as a motivating factor to make changes in their philosophy, goals, practice formats and other aspects of coaching or athletic management. The theme of accommodation did not emerge from the interview with the coach who identified the least demographic change in his region. In interviews, a total of 14 types of accommodation appeared (see Table 3). Five of these accommodations appeared as primary reactive responses to experiences of initial disequilibrium.

Table 3.

List of Accommodations

Accommodation	Participants
PRIMARY REACTIVE	
Changing practice schedules	1,2,3,5,6, 8
Modifying attendance requirements	1,2,3,5,6, 8
Negotiating with parents about athlete's attendance	1,2,3,5,6, 8
Increased communication around commitment (i.e. what it means to be on a team)	1,2,3,4,5,6,8
Modification of practice structure	1,2,3,4,5,6,8
LATER	
Prioritizing different goals for the program, including the modification of expectations for competitiveness	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8
Changing selection/try-out criteria and format	1, 3, 4, 6
Involving other communicators to enhance comprehension among non-English speakers	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Accepting and encouraging different cultural styles of play and interaction on the field	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8
Employing different communication techniques (such as drawings, diagrams, etc.)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Establishing other opportunities to play and improve, such as an after-school league or weekend tournament instead of costly travel soccer participation	4, 5
Acting more assertively in a parental-type role	1, 3, 4, 5, 7
Increasing access to travel programs, through fundraising and refereeing opportunities	5
Advocating for individuals in other levels of play, such as club/travel/collegiate soccer, through coach's social capital/networking	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Primary Reactive Accommodation. As noted above, participants experienced an initial disequilibrium which eventually led to a change or changes in their programming—an accommodative process that included an adjustment to a new cultural dimension of athlete-coach relationship. Five participants identified the perceived high-stakes cost of not making a change as an important factor to their initial recognition of disequilibrium caused by cultural differences: Athletes who disengaged from their team would not benefit from participation in the program, which included, among other goals expressed by coaches, personal and social growth in a positive team environment. These five coaches also linked participation on an athletic team to academic participation (a dynamic that several coaches and both athletic directors noted that administration was aware of): "*For a lot of these kids, the only reason they come to school is because if they don't come to school, then they can't play*" (Participant 2, personal communication, October 3, 2018). This goal of academic participation superseded the goal of competing on a team at a high level; no participant suggested that winning games was more important than the participatory, pedagogical goal: Participant 3 said: "*Sport is not everything, and I've learned that*" (personal communication, October 3, 2018). Participant 5 voiced this common goal: "*They're here to study ... it's got to be number one, no matter who the kids are ... soccer is a little thing, but I want them to succeed in the classroom and if soccer helps them, hey, we won*" (personal communication, November 21, 2018).

To summarize, six of seven coach participants and the athletic director discussed recognizing and experiencing disequilibrium when large numbers of athletes of different cultures began to want to participate in their athletic program. These coaches and the administrator valued their athletic skills, linked participation to academic success, and saw inclusion as a valuable way for the athletes to build friendships across cultures, become part of a group on

campus, and learn and practice English. Additionally, participants valued this exposure and the relationships that could be formed for their White athletes. Including these athletes meant developing new understandings of cultural difference and considering new ways of "being a team." A key, initial understanding was that athletes, and parents, of different cultures see involvement in sports in an entirely different way. Notably, the participant who had experienced a less major demographic shifts at his high school also identified this theme of cultural differences related to sports programming (however, he did not speak about this difference in the context of it as a potential change agent).

While their population of athletes in prior seasons had come with the knowledge of commitment and priority, coaches related that athletes of other cultures did not have this understanding. The highly organized American youth soccer system is a total surprise to foreign-born athletes who are more accustomed to informal play; one participant said: "*They come from the street level. Everyone from another country comes here and tells me their high school is not like this, everything is so organized here*" (Participant 7, personal communication, October 26, 2018). One mother took her son out of the program after finding out what was involved: "*To mom, soccer was going out on the weekends and playing with your friends and coming home. It wasn't everyday after school and then travelling twice a week. That's not soccer to them because that's not what it was in their home country*" (Participant 8, personal communication, November 11, 2018).

American high school sports culture also prioritizes athletics participation: "*In our culture, sports trumps the church*," said Participant 3 (personal communication, October 3, 2018), speaking about conflicts with athletes and parents over religious commitments. Cultural differences mean that some athletes, their parents, and other influential adults may not view

participation on the high school athletic team, let alone consistent, regular attendance at practices, as important when weighed against other priorities, including economic needs, usually related to working to provide financial support for the family; other family-related commitments (for example, watching younger siblings, providing translation services, or taking part in activities related to extended family); or religious commitments. Some parents consider extracurricular participation to be a poor use of time and energy if it will not lead directly to other advantageous economic opportunities such as a college scholarship or professional work.

The presence of an alternative competitive opportunity highlights these cultural differences. All participants spoke of the draw to their players of the local adult amateur league, commonly called Hispanic league soccer (though the league is open to all players and attracts a diversity of players). Games are played once a week, usually on Sundays. Participation involves no practice time, fewer language barriers, playing time for the highly skilled, along with prestige, cultural connection, and a host of other values including networking and social benefits. Here one participant talks about the necessity that he made changes to his program in order to keep athletes in the high school program:

> I*t was the realization that if we don't give on something, we're all going to walk away. We won't have 100 kids [at tryouts] because there is a free option with Sunday league. We wanted to keep those talented kids and then also use sports as a way to teach them life lessons.* (Participant 1, personal communication, August 30, 2018)

A second participant's anecdote addressed his initial challenge of creating commitment to and pride in the high school sports program in the way he talks about the differences between informal play with the Hispanic leagues and the formal high school experience: "*I'm trying to change that perception ... We play in a stadium, people come to pay to watch them play, we have*

uniforms. We have a good following of people … people coming to away games because they

know the coach is good and the team is good. I want them to feel proud" (Participant 5, personal

communication, November 21, 2018). A few sentences later, he noted that participation in his

program means abiding by rules: showing up on time, behaving in class, and earning a specific

GPA.

The implicit suggestion is that in contrast to the informal play options, participation in the

high school program comes with an understanding of rules and a willingness to follow them. All

participants spoke of this particular challenge in having athletes of diverse cultures involved on

the team: *"So there are those who struggle sometimes with the rules that we've put in place, but*

they understand that to be a part of us and that's something they desire to be, they'll do what it

takes. They'll make those efforts" (Participant 6, personal communication, September 1, 2018).

Helping athletes of other cultures who were new to organized sport in the United States

understand the standards and expectations of the team, the school, and also the state governing

body for high school athletics was for several participants the first culturally-derived challenge

they recognized. Further, the participants were also forced by this challenge to develop a better

understanding of the system in which they operated: the highly organized and rule-bound format

of American high school sports programming.

After inquiry and reflection, coaches developed specific accommodations related to these

specific issues (see Table 4). Five coaches changed their practice schedules to allow athletes to

go to work, watch siblings at home, or attend church events (participants 1, 2, 3, 5, 6); the

athletic director spoke about working with coaches on this aspect of accommodation. The same

participants and athletic director talked about modifying attendance requirements and negotiating

with parents regarding attendance at practice. This same group, plus Participant 4, also spoke

about increased communication with their athletes around the commitment required to participate on the team; all participants explicitly linked that commitment level to competitive success, which was often an important value the athletes brought to their own expectations of team participation (often without the understanding that competitive success requires consistent, dedicated practice). The same participants spoke about modifying their practice structure. One participant described this as "*making it more inviting*," and enjoyable. "*My practices are hard enough*," he said, "*so I started to reduce it a little so they have some fun when they get ther*e" (Participant 3, personal communication, October 3, 2018).

Whether such accommodations resulted negatively in lowered behavioral standards or perhaps less competitive outcomes is a topic for more specific research. Only one coach spoke of challenges related to his athletes taking advantage of his less rigorous policies regarding missed practices. All other participants did not find this to be a problem. Participants 1, 3, 4, and 6 spoke of cutting athletes (and sometimes highly talented athletes) from their teams who did not meet their behavioral standards. For example, Participant 3 spoke of challenges in his current coaching era to the understanding of what playing on a team meant:

> *I kicked off maybe a total of 24 guys from our team because they couldn't assimilate into the team or the school rules or they felt they were the best player on the team and they weren't getting any playing time. When I'd ask them to go into sub, they'd say no. This was culturally-based ... I'll be the star during games but no practice. They didn't want to condition. They don't want to go through drills. They just wanted to play in game*s.
>
> (personal communication, October 3, 2018)

Several participants spoke about dismissed athletes returning to the team the next season after seeing what they were missing and realizing that they were willing to play by the rules. The

coaches who had the best team records, as well as the highest number of athletes continuing their play post-high school, did not talk about any accommodations related to practice attendance as impacting their team culture. In both cases, they saw such accommodations as strengthening team culture. Notably, both of these leaders shared many expectations for their athletes: In return for the privilege of being a team member and access to each coach's significant network of social capital (connections to local club/travel programs or collegiate programs), athletes displayed high character, worked hard in the classroom, participated in community service, cared for each other, and showed attributes of discipline and a strong work ethic.

Later Accommodations. In addition to the five initial accommodations that participants discussed making after their first experiences related to disequilibrium, participants also talked about other accommodations made in response to situations, challenges or conflicts encountered further in their developmental trajectory. Each change to programming delivery and structure was made in response to cultural differences that emerged and were explored. These changes included:

- prioritizing different goals for the program, including the modification of expectations for competitiveness (Participants 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8),
- changing selection/try-out criteria and format (Participants 1, 3, 4, 6),
- involving other communicators to enhance comprehension among non-English speakers (Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8),
- accepting and encouraging different cultural styles of play and interaction on the field (Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8),
- employing different communication techniques (Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8),
- acting more assertively in a parental-type role (Participants 1, 3, 4, 5, 7),

- establishing other opportunities to play and improve, such as an after-school league or weekend tournament instead of costly travel soccer participation (Participant 4 and 5)

- increasing access to travel programs, through fundraising and refereeing opportunities (Participant 5),

- advocating for individuals in other levels of play, such as club/travel/collegiate soccer, through coach's social capital/networking (Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

Many of these changes are related to increased awareness of barriers and limitations to athlete success. For example, the junior varsity coach said that his cultural knowledge about athlete behaviors, specifically as linked to trauma and stress responses, has helped him to be a more sensitive evaluator during the intensity of tryouts; he has advocated for the inclusion of young athletes onto the JV squad who have talent or leadership capabilities, but also exhibit behavioral issues or difficulty working in team situations. In assessing language barriers, participants employed different communication techniques, such as drawings, diagrams, and video in specific ways to differentiate instruction for English language learners. All participants at times utilized other athletes to provide translation. One participant prioritizes accuracy of communication to the point where he used only qualified translators for formal pre-game instruction or to speak with parents; though this is a luxury not all coaches have available, this preference shows a sophisticated understanding of the power of language to overcome difference.

Besides behavioral or linguistic barriers, participants also made accommodations in response to socioeconomic barriers. In many high school sports, competing year around to maintain fitness and build skills is encouraged — and often expected. Soccer club/travel programs have arisen to prominence in this new era of specialization, in part to showcase athletes at tournaments attended by collegiate recruiters. Heated debates occur about this systemic shift,

chief among them whether the "pay to play" approach is leaving behind an underserved portion of the population that may invigorate the U.S. national team (both the men's and women's teams) with talent and athleticism; in 2016, then-chair of USA Soccer's diversity task force Doug Andreassen pointed out in a *Guardian* news article that the system, which leverages fees that average $3,000 a year to participate, is "only working for the white kids" (p. 6). A coach's approach to accommodations related to the club/travel system seemed to differ based on his experience, opinions and perspectives, geographic location, and current network with collegiate coaches. All of the coaches offered out-of-season practices to address fitness and skill development. Some offered low-cost competitive opportunities to those on the roster; two opened up these opportunities to all interested athletes, even those who were not selected to either the junior varsity or varsity teams. In terms of accessing collegiate networks, all of the coaches were willing to utilize their access to collegiate coaches on behalf of their athletes, but most had very different opinions about whether their athletes should get involved in the club/travel system. The coach who lived in the more urban geographic region, in which competition to be seen by collegiate coaches was fierce, leveraged his own club coaching networks to help interested and more talented athletes fund their participation in club/travel programs. However, another coach did not encourage his athletes to participate in club sports and utilized his network of NCAA Division I, II and III collegiate coaches to advocate for players. He estimated more than 30 of his high school athletes had gone on to play collegiate soccer, many of them successfully at top Division I programs. More research could be conducted into how coaches help or hinder their athlete's access to these larger opportunities, but regardless, this small group of participants all showed a willingness to use their social capital and resources to expand their athletes' opportunities beyond the high school experience.

Conclusion and ties to research questions. To summarize this section, the primary reactive accommodation is delivered by the coach in response to a first culturally derived challenge. The coach then returns to statis with more cultural knowledge and awareness. Later cycles of disequilibrium and inquiry may lead to different accommodations in the form of major changes, more slight adjustments or no adjustment based on the need of the situation. Regardless, the coach returns to statis and towards the next challenge with more awareness and more knowledge.

This analysis section relates to several aspects of the original research questions. One way that coaches conceptualize the values, knowledge, and skills of cultural competency is in the shape of a continual process of discovery and learning process. The analysis also includes several factors that may affect the development of a coach's cultural competency, including global and U.S. soccer sports culture, early formative experiences that included working with athletes and other coaches of different cultures, and experiences with athletes of other cultures that cause new perspectives related to program delivery and objectives. In the process of analysis, two other thematic areas arose from the data that did not seem linked to any particular phase of the sub-loop but provided clues to how coaches experienced the developmental trajectory. Both can be categorized under the descriptive phrase of "adaptation and growth in understanding."

Section II: Further Conceptualizations Related to Adaptation and Growth in Understanding

This section of analysis, derived from axial coding, relates to cognition, adaptation, and growth in perceptions and understanding about relationships between power, privilege, and cultural difference. One subcategory elucidates a development of cognition, from rigidity to

flexibility, that participants expressed in the process of their developmental trajectory. A second subcategory relates this approach to ways of understanding perspectives of equity and cultural difference. These two parallel conceptualizations illustrate the complexity related to "teasing out" and narrowing discrete conceptualizations of values, skills, and knowledge.

Growth in cultural competency happens as participants experience conflict and challenge. This process demands motivation to resolve the problem, but also the capability to approach difficult concepts with self-awareness around process and perception, and to hold potentially divergent concepts while experiencing physical, emotional or mental resistance. Both of these approaches indicate expansion—expansion of the thought process and strategic approaches to issues, as well as expansion of one's understanding of equity and cultural difference.

Rigidity and flexibility: cognitive approaches to accommodation. One clue to how participants understand and engage with the theme of accommodation emerged in a sub-theme of rigidity and flexibility. Participants described both their difficulties in adapting to new information and their capabilities to act on new understandings in words related to control and elasticity: verbs such as *loosen, compromise, think outside of the box, change, see their perspective,* and words such as *barrier, wall, rigidity, structure* and *mindset* were present.

Cognitive rigidity was specifically addressed by the athletic director as a negative attribute. Specifically, he referred to an inability to critically examine and expand upon prior conceptions of high school sport programming. The more "*rigid and structured*" teachers who are also coaches "*may not be open to*" the challenges of working with athletes of different cultures. "*You have to think outside of the normal, outside the box of what we consider school sports to be,*" he said. A coach who can't do that is putting up a barrier against inclusion instead of "*intentionally breaking down a barrier and changing how you operate to make that work.*"

Coaches have struggled with that kind of approach "*because it's not part of what we've known as sports in our culture*" (Participant 8A, personal communication, November 11, 2018).

Similarly, the participant who has built a thriving, successful team within an otherwise languishing athletics program hypothesized about a "*defensive*" mentality among his peers and leadership. "*You can't be the way we used to be and that is the culture that is around here. You gotta change something*" (Participant 5, personal communication, November 21, 2018). For example, the athletic director wanted him to cut an athlete from the soccer team who had missed three practices to attend an out-of-state college showcase. "*I said, "This is a joke, right? How can I touch this kid who is doing all he can to get to the next level, just because I have these rules? We have got to be able to work with people*" (Participant 5, personal communication, November 21, 2018). *Working with people* to this coach meant, among other changes, moving his practices to early mornings so that athletes can have a job, go home to take care of siblings, or study in the afternoons. *Working with people* means setting up weekly fundraising opportunities so that all athletes can wear team clothing, or connecting his players to the local youth program so that they can earn money refereeing youth games and pay to participate in travel programs. This coach sees his capability of working with a changing population, to question and adapt his programming to better meet the needs of his athletes, is key to his success: "*So I had to change sometimes and I think I have and I think that's what's making me a part of some of this success. Because I am willing to change*" (Participant 5, personal communication, November 21, 2018). Willingness to change is an important part of his current success, but also an ongoing development.

Another participant's reflection highlights a slow and gradual change in perspective over the course of several years. He became aware that his "*mindset*," a kind of default judgment

when athletes came to him about conflicts with practice, was that "*they didn't want to be there or were making excuses.*" Eventually, he was able to see that this "mindset" did not allow for other explanations about behaviors:

> *The last, you know, four, five, six years, I kinda started to notice some of that, you know, some of the rigidness. It frustrates me sometimes when I hear these, what I would call excuses, like, "Hey, I can't come to practice today. I got to go pick my uncle at the airport." "You don't have anybody else?" And then I was like, it's kind of sad that this high school student has to be driving to DC to go get his family member because that's the only person who can do that for the family. And just kind of recognizing some of those things, being a little more sensitive to it instead of having the kind of mindset that they don't want to be there and trying to find an excuse.* (Participant 2, personal communication, October 3, 2018).

This participant suggested that professional development workshops contributed to this new knowledge. He began to ask more questions about underlying causes or reasons for behaviors.

> *There is a push now for, you know, recognizing the reasons for bad behavior and not just treating the bad behavior, seeing what's underneath those kinds of things.... Yes, that's obviously a bad choice, but why are they making this choice? What has happened to cause that child to do that? So that that could have caused it. There's a lot of similarities in that approach... just kind of recognizing some of those things being a little more sensitive to it instead of having the kind of mindset that they don't want to be there and they're trying to find an excuse [not to practice].* (Participant 2, personal communication, October 3, 2018).

One participant expressed this process as a lack of control, a search for control, a shaping within a state of control, and a loss of control again. He mentions his first two years being challenging because of inconsistency, then making some significant changes that aided his team culture. "*We had to give a little of what they wanted for them to give what we wanted. And so that helped out*," he said. But emphasizing the process, he concludes, "I *would say it took me four years to really gain a hold*" (Participant 1, personal communication, August 30, 2018).

Giving was also mentioned by Participant 3, the coach who had dismissed 24 players in three seasons. Shortly after sharing this statistic, this participant noted that he "*loosened things up and had a bit more fun*"at his practices. The compromise was worth it:"*You may not get where you want to go with your game planning and what you need to get done, but you trade off. You're not putting up such a wall...*" (personal communication, October 3, 2018). This participant referred to flexibility as a positive strategy in both anticipating and resolving conflict. For example, he spoke extensively of how he negotiates "a compromise" with parents about practice attendance when another commitment is present. He is willing to "change my approach" after consulting with one of many resource persons to learn more about a specific culture. When working through culturally-derived issues with players (for example, he has ongoing challenges with players of different nationalities, mainly Central and South Americans, not passing the ball to each other), he says aggressive, confrontational tactics rarely work: "*I find if you get in their faces too much and say, no, you gotta do this, you gotta do that, then they just shut down completely.*" Instead he "*tries to get in their mindset and find out what transpired.*" He names communication and "*getting to know the culture and how they understand things from their mindset*" as the top two skills that coaches need -- and that he is continually working on (personal communication, October 3, 2018).

Another participant who repeatedly emphasized throughout the interview his concerted efforts to understand each athlete's unique backgrounds and life experiences also talked about thinking outside expected parameters as a beneficial strategy. He and his staff utilize a flexible approach to personnel management to build trust and coachability with athletes of diverse cultures. While "*fall[ing] in line and do[ing] something for the team*" is an expectation, he has found an approach that helps motivate athletes to make that sacrifice when the time comes. The team's tactical formations allow for and encourage individual creativity, playing style and strengths, which is often culturally-derived. "*We take the labels off*," he said, in evaluation, planning and execution. "*But they really respond to that because we allowed some of their freedom to do certain things and they understand that they have to kind of give in response to that*," he said (Participant 4, personal communication, November 9, 2018).

One final example brings the discussion to the next subtheme, related to discernment about issues of equity and cultural difference, the athletic director spoke about putting up and breaking down barriers with athletes of different cultures. Not making accommodation or changes to programming for athletes with these different priorities and commitments results in those athletes not participating. "*Being able to adapt that to make it [programming] fair and equitable for everyone keeps them involved and engaged*," he said. "*You have to intentionally break down the barrier and change how you operate to make that work… that is the most equitable way and part of the coach's job is to see that others understand that*" (Participant 8A, personal communication, November 11, 2018).

Discernment of issues of equity and cultural difference. Five participants, including the athletic, director, linked decisions regarding changes to programming to a conceptualization of equity within the sports environment, although only two used the word *equity*. Participant 3,

who had learned so much from the trauma-informed, restorative justice-oriented professional development in his school district, found that understanding more of what his athletes were going through — their personal experiences and challenges — caused him to think harder about his initial goal of "*trying to treat everyone the same*." This observation related to all of his athletes, American or foreign-born. He said, "*Treating everybody equally is not treating them the same. I wish I'd come around a little quicker to that kind of idea, you know, trying to better understand how I could help them and what they needed*" (Participant 3, personal communication, October 3, 2018). Though Participant 4 has years of experience working with athletes of different cultural backgrounds "*and many crazy, crazy stories of the things they've gone through, especially the African athletes*," he strives to see each person as an individual. "*I know even American kids have their problems. Our divorce rate is high, there's sexual abuse, and all kinds of things they've been going through.*" Balancing fairness, "*treating all my athletes the same*," while also "*in my subconscious, knowing they've been through a lot and that affects who they are*" (personal communication, November 9, 2018) is this coach's way of introducing challenging conceptualizations of equity and equality.

Several coaches suggested that the process of discerning whether the conflict or challenge with an athlete or athletes is culturally-derived is an important one. In talking about concerns about commitment, one coach interrupted his analysis to say: "*I mean, there's people in every culture in the world who don't want to show up for work every day*" (Participant 4, personal communication, November 9, 2018). A second coach offered this: "*We have to understand that some of this is just kid stuff. They're kids*" (Participant 6, personal communication, September 1, 2018). This concept of developmental stages was echoed again by a third coach, who talked about his philosophy of holistic athlete development in the context of soccer:

Another thing as coaches we need to realize is that they're growing as individuals, that

there's maybe an immaturity level at one point we're dealing with and that we might be

frustrated with, but they're growing and developing and you have to give him time. You

can't expect everybody toe the line right at this moment. So as a coach, if they struggle,

you help them through that struggle. You don't just say, "I'm done with that." So there's

patience involved. (Participant 6, personal communication, September 1, 2018)

Participant 3 analyzed the many different ways he communicates with athletes because of language challenges, utilizing diagramming and drawings, skilled language translators and teachers, but he also pointed out that he is always working on communication techniques and strategies, from whole group instruction to individuals or smaller groups. "*That works a lot because being talked to in a group can isolate a kid whereas if you go personally to them and explain, they respond that much better. But all of that is just like in a classroom anywhere*" (personal communication, October 3, 2018). This same coach also talked about cultural differences in receptivity to authority: Athletes with different cultural backgrounds

> "*will react differently to what you're saying or asking. Some will be accepting and*
>
> *respond and that's their culture. He is the coach. You listen no matter what. Some*
>
> *cultures don't have that respect for authority, or they will see my culture as an issue. You*
>
> *have to patient with that*" (personal communication, October 3, 2018).

This coach also suggested that cultural difference may not have anything to do with how his athletes respond to him:

> "*The reality is I've got 24 guys on my team, and that doesn't mean all 24 guys love me.*
>
> *Doesn't have to be a cultural thing either. They just don't like my style ... I played on a*

ton of soccer teams and I didn't always like the style of my coach, but if I wanted to play,

I found a way to play" (Participant 3, personal communication, October 3, 2018)

Viewing conflict through a more informed analytical lens, gained by experience, can help the coach defuse situations. Participant 6 shared two situations in being able to determine whether an issue is culturally-derived was particularly important. A Middle Eastern athlete was complaining of not getting the ball from his Hispanic teammates; the coach used game film, with the other athletes in the room, to explain to him that he was out of position. In a second example, the coach explained that one of his major tasks has been to work with athletes on their responses to provocation; some players on his team come from areas where violence is traditionally met with violence in return. On the soccer field, opponents "*learn who the hotheads are and use that against us*" (Participant 6, personal communication, September 1, 2018). In one instance, a red card was issued to an opposing player but the targeted athlete retaliated and also earned a red card. Though he acknowledged the layers of cultural nuance within this incident, the coach explained to the athlete that the red card did not come because of racism, as the athlete claimed, but because of the retaliation. His analysis was able to focus the athlete on the root cause of the immediate issue that was related to a behavioral standard set for all athletes, instead of the athlete's perception of racial or ethnic bias.

The athletic director named such discernment in several examples, suggesting that in the context of a coach's development, learning to question one's situational perception about the influence of culture is key. For example, he said a conflict between athletes because of playing time may have "*cultural elements in play*." An informed coach will at least consider that possibility in evaluating a situation, he said. He offered a second example of athletes not passing the ball to each other. One coach may be "*just thinking from a soccer standpoint, not that the*

kid's Honduran, Guatemalan or from El Salvador, and there might be a thing between them

that's cultural, and then there's the other possibility that it's just personal" (Participant 8A,

personal communication, November 11, 2018). That discernment, he added, is important in

creating a positive team environment.

This idea of understanding equity and cultural difference seems to be rooted in a shift in

one's perceptions regarding, first, one's own cultural identity, and then how that identity

interacts with others. A growing awareness of cognitive rigidity, of resistance to new ideas and

new explorations, helps coaches to see and understand where their own values, beliefs, attitudes

and actions may create points of resistance. A more malleable, flexible approach aids in

understanding the complex situations where cultural understandings interact.

Synthesis and Conclusion

This chapter began with a discussion of the research process and how coding within

grounded theory was used. Ultimately, a larger chronology to the coach's development emerged,

named by the researcher as the trajectory and including five stages. The first foundational stages

are linear and progressive. Early formative experiences are an introduction to the sport that

includes positive and influential interactions with coaches and teammates. Often these

experiences are highlighted as the first understanding of the sport's cultural impact and

importance beyond the dominant American sports culture. The call to coach marks the beginning

of a more formalized awareness of the individual's desire to coach, aptitude for the role, and

development of programmatic philosophy and guiding values. At this point, for the purposes of

the model, we can suppose a phase of coaching involvement described as practice, which implies

the operationalizing of the coaching activity and repeated application and implementation.

Within the practice of coaching come conflicts and challenges -- on a daily, weekly or seasonal basis.

The next stages occur as parts of an accretive, repetitive cycle that includes disequilibrium, inquiry and accommodation. This stage emphasizes the cyclical, progressive nature of how the coach addresses issues, challenges and problems. The state of disequilibrium, defined by the researcher as a disruption to a prior stability of understanding or conceptualization, leads from initial awareness through a sub-process of inquiry and information-gathering to reflection. The researcher hypothesizes an initial cycle, engendered by an initial disequilibrium related to working with athletes of diverse cultures, that results in primary reactive accommodation, that is, changes to programming and coaching strategies based on new gathered knowledge and reflection. After disequilibrium, inquiry and accommodation comes a return to practice, or stasis. Analysis suggests that once this state of disequilibrium is recognized as generated by cultural difference and the ensuing stages of accommodation/ adaptation and stasis reach resolution as a result of new information and analysis related to that cultural difference, then new phases of disequilibrium may be viewed within that particular lens. This loop can be generated by a smaller experience centered around a situation or interaction experienced in practice or competition or a larger contextual situation or interaction within the season. Once the participant is aware of the influence of culture on his particular coaching environment, he is more inclined to integrate awareness of cultural difference as a lens. Later cycles of disequilibrium, inquiry and accommodation (both of cognitive awareness but potentially also changes to programming) build upon the previous cycles of learning. This accretive growth impacts further decision-making and enables broader, deeper understanding to approach new disequilibria. Each cycle then returns to stasis at a different point along the

progression of the coach's developmental experience. Thus, for coaches who have developed

capacity to adapt and flex as a result of assessing the cultural differences of their athletes, the

model of knowledge acquisition is not a closed loop, but a cyclical, accretive loop along a

progressive and linear trajectory (see Figure 2). This loop is also informed by experiences related

to cognitive flexibility and discernment around issues of equity and cultural difference.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this qualitative grounded theory study was to research how high school athletics coaches conceptualize the knowledge, values, and skills of cultural competence in their specific environment. This chapter contains discussion and future research possibilities to help answer the research questions:

1. How do high school athletics coaches, specifically varsity boys' soccer coaches, talk about or conceptualize the knowledge, values, and skills of cultural competence in their learning and practice environments?

2. What are the learning processes involved in the development of this competence?

3. What are the various factors that may affect this development?

This chapter includes a discussion of major findings and their connections to literature on learning theories, coaching education, cultural competency in the coaching context, and development and assessment of cultural competency in coaches. Implications of the research that may be valuable to coaching educators, athletic governing bodies, current coaches, and those who work in or plan to pursue the coaching profession are also covered. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the study, areas for future research, and a brief summary.

Summary of Findings

This research into how high school boys varsity soccer coaches conceptualize cultural competency has resulted in a chronological and multi-dimensional model. Two of these stages, early formative experiences and the call to coach, are on a linear track. Within these stages, coaches are influenced by participation in the sport and their experiences with teammates and coaches. With soccer in particular, coaches learn and develop an interest in the wider global

sport-specific culture. This influence may provide a foundational and generally positive perspective on cultural diversity within sport, in general, and within soccer, specifically.

Beginning the practice of coaching, the coach operates from a template generated by prior experiences that has shaped expectations, pedagogical strategies, and relationships with athletes. An initial observation of culturally-derived disequilibrium begins the first of ongoing progressive repetitive cycles that include subsequent stages of disequilibrium, inquiry, and accommodation. The state of disequilibrium is defined by the researcher as a disruption to a prior stability of understanding or conceptualization. The theme of inquiry leads from initial awareness into information-gathering, with an emergent emphasis on questioning, specifically process discovery questions. Inquiry is aided by the coach's accessing of various human resources, including other coaching colleagues, teachers, support staff and others, who provide information and build cultural knowledge. The theme of accommodation includes changes to programming and coaching strategies based on new gathered knowledge and reflection. After a return to practice, the next experience of disequilibrium pushes the participant into further cycles stages of information-gathering, reflection and accommodation. These further cycles occur along a continuum of growing cultural awareness and competency.

The cycles of disequilibrium, inquiry, and accommodation are informed and influenced by several subthemes. These subthemes present areas of "dis-ease," points at which coaches begin to grapple with uncertainty regarding their understanding and command of a situation. These points of structural and systemic tension include cognitive rigidity and the development of cognitive flexibility, and attentive discernment related to issues of equity and cultural difference.

Discussion

The study complements the work of several researchers and adds data in support of their proposed models. Collectively, these models present conceptual frameworks that describe the development of cultural competency (Bennett, 1993; Cross, 1988; Cross et al., 1989), the development of cultural competency within the coaching profession (Burden & Lambie, 2011), and the development of coaching practice based on experiential learning and reflective practice (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001). This particular data set has led to the development of the following three new theoretical propositions within a new conceptual framework describing the learning and reflective process by which coaches develop cultural competency:

- The coach's development of cultural competency manifests itself on a continuum of experiences, rather than as experiences independent of each other.

- Knowledge builds upon knowledge, resulting in cyclical, accretive growth.

- Challenges to one's "set" of understanding or templates occur through conflict, physical or emotional unease, or otherwise mental or emotional unsettling of pursuit towards objectives.

The first proposition—that development occurs on a continuum of experiences—links to prior work in developmental models that relate generally to cultural competency (Bennett, 1993; Cross, 1988; Cross et al., 1989) and more specifically to the sole model presently focused on cultural competency within the coaching context (Burden & Lambie, 2011). The second proposition of cyclical, accretive acquisition of knowledge is rooted in Gilbert and Trudel's (2001) conceptual framework related to the development of coaching practice based on experiential learning and reflective practice, rather than formalized training. While Gilbert and Trudel's "continuous sub-loop" relates to stages of general problem solving, the present model's

"continuous sub-loop" reflects specifically on the development of cultural competency, identifying and defining an initial stage of developmental awareness, followed by subsequent growth caused by continual issues-based reflection and inquiry.

The third proposition relating to catalysts along the developmental continuum supports Piaget's (1985) "disequilibrium" as a cause for intellectual skill acquisition. According to Van Lehn (as cited in Nash & Sproule, 2009), problem-solving skills can provide the context for learning. In the model, the catalyst that provides motivation to engage with cultural difference includes witnessing new or unexpected interactions, conflict, and challenges caused by cultural difference. Burden & Lambie (2011) posit that sociocultural conflict—caused by racial ethnic differences, gender/sexual conflict, religious conflict and disability—leads the coach to an awareness of the need to understand self-identity and how that self-identity influences his/her attitudes, beliefs, and actions. The research suggests that sociocultural conflict is indeed an influential factor in initiating a coach's entry into the developmental continuum, and further, in moving the coach along that developmental continuum.

One overarching dynamic that emerged in the research also links to learning theories. Coaches do not function in an autonomous environment; they work within a constantly shifting environment, influenced by multiple, sometimes competing factors. Data produced by the sample also support the idea that coaches consciously access their "communities of practice" (Wenger, 1998), utilizing a variety of human resources to acquire knowledge and determine actions or behaviors. The joint enterprise of working together towards a common goal builds community through mutual engagement, a specific value ("building community" or "building family") that several coaches expressed as foundational to their philosophy. The community-building

experience also enhances the coach's personal emotional health, wellness and resilience when working to meet challenges to both his program goals and philosophy.

Research data also supports the theories of cultural competence developed by several researchers (Cross et al., 1989; Gill, 2017; Simons & Krols, 2011). Coaches reflected on their own cultural competency in terms related to awareness and behavior, with special consideration to continual self-assessment to expand cultural knowledge (Cross et al., 1989). Their experiences reflect several aspects of Simons and Krols' (2011) model, including the capability of seeing a "multifocal social reality," coping with ambivalence and ambiguity, pursuing understanding and insight of others' experience through dialogue and introspection, and awareness of their own frame of reference and others.

Several participants in this research linked the motivation to examine their perspectives and understandings about equity and equality to an implicit values-based judgment that their sports program was a beneficial experience for youth. This finding is contrary to the logical supposition that a coach may be more motivated to understand and develop cultural competency because of the desire to include athletes who could contribute to the team's competitive capabilities. Instead, the data collected in this research project suggests that high school coaches, at least this particular representative sample, are largely motivated to increase their capacities for understanding and working with different athletes because they see value in the sport as a venue for holistic personal development. This contradicts Rothman's (2009) suggestion that exploring competency is motivated by one's "effort and interest" in exploring one's "own worldview, life experiences, biases and beliefs" (p. 16). Though most coaches in the sample showed a high interest and in some cases affinity for cultural exploration, their intrinsic motivation was not self-oriented but other-oriented. Problem- or conflict-solving was a necessity in order to extend

inclusion, even to athletes who bring with them challenges to the coach's worldview and perspective. In this way, coaches work with similar motivation to teachers who seek to be inclusive and create learning experiences that are appropriate, effective, and build upon student strengths (Gay, 2000).

Entering into self-exploration as a means of bettering pedagogical skills may be a subconscious or conscious choice. More research could clarify this important entrypoint into the developmental process. It would be helpful to know how a coach makes the decision to interrogate his own social and cultural identity and to gain more awareness of how his identity interacts and reacts with that of others and specifically, his athletes. The data does, however, support research that interpersonal skills are influential and important in building relationships with athletes, and that the strength of the coach-athlete relationship is a powerful indicator of whether the experience will meet its potentiality (Alfermann et al., 2005; Craig, 2016; Kunz, 2011; Peguero, 2011; Schinke et al., 2013). Further, these participants contributed evidence towards the supposition that cultural differences can play a role in the success or failure of a coach-athlete relationship (Bell & Riol, 2017; Greenfield et al., 2002; Harrison et al., 2010; Sasaba et al., 2017; Schinke et al., 2013). The data also confirms that a better understanding of cultural dynamics and difference, expressed through language, behavior and interaction, helps coaches anticipate relationships and conflicts among athletes and their leadership (Bell & Riol, 2017; Burden & Lambie, 2011; Greenfield et al., 2002).

Limitations of the Study

The constructive methodology of this research means that its theoretical application is limited both to the focus of the research, which is the development of cultural competency, and that particular topic within the purposive sample of high school boys varsity soccer coaches.

More specifically, the general conclusions, the theoretical proposition, and the model generated by the research provide insight only into this specific group of coaches. This particular model needs more data from practicing coaches of different ages, experience levels, genders, and sports to be a fully credible source of prediction. It offers a window into the experiences of this particular group of coaches and suggests many areas for further research. In the analysis, more common themes arose, and more areas of interest, arose than the researcher had time to follow. Even the addition of one or two participants, of different ages or a different race or ethnicity, would have changed the data and the results as interpreted. Similarly, the addition of more athletic directors would also have contributed a different data set.

Methodology

One limitation of this study lies in the research's constructivist methodology. In following the grounded theory methodology, data was collected using varying follow-up and probing questions. Further, analysis offers considerable room for differing interpretations of the data. In both these processes—data collection and analysis— there is room for interpretation. Additionally, the researcher's past coaching experiences also presented potential bias. To establish rapport and credibility, a succinct descriptor of these coaching experiences was included in the initial correspondence to prospective coaches, so all participants knew this background and even expressed interest in learning more about the researcher's own experiences during the interview. This enabled collection of rich data; however, it may be true that this created a limitation in data collection and interpretation through personal bias.

Acknowledgement of some limitations in hewing accurately to the requirements of grounded theory methodology is also necessary. The researcher's full-time employment meant that interviews had to be scheduled around work responsibilities. Some interviews were

scheduled in consecutive time slots because that was when participants were available, which then meant that processing and analysis of transcripts was delayed. One tenet of grounded theory methodology is that the analysis of collected data happens concurrently within the interview process, leading to the development of new theories and new questions. This was difficult to do with my other responsibilities and time commitments. Though the exact definition of data saturation is open to interpretation, the researcher is fairly certain it was not achieved (Guest et al., 2006).

Another limitation related to methodology happened during data collection. The open-ended qualitative nature of the inquiry was unsettling, at first, to several participants, none of whom expressed any experience with similar kinds of research before and seemed to equate the term *research* with quantitative research. Preparing them beforehand with specific questions may have been a useful strategy, especially since the challenge of identifying specific conflicts with athletes of diverse cultures on the spot was difficult for most. The challenge of answering this question about a specific situation sometimes brought the interview to a standstill or at least to a sputter, which then needed more questioning to restart, often on a different topic. These patterns of discussion contributed to data sets that were distinctly untidy.

Priming with possible questions may have not only prepared participants more thoroughly and ensured more efficient data collection, but also contributed to more candor in the interview. As suspected before beginning the research, participants expressed some reticence to speak about their experiences because of the sensitivity of the material. In all, the participants were most willing to share their experiences, some of which clearly brought back painful or unsettling memories. Prior established personal relationships with five participants enabled the collection of rich, deep reflections; however, my relationship to participants could also result in

biases. With participants the researcher had not met prior to the interview, it is quite possible she overlooked lacuna in their narratives or did not press with follow-up questions in areas where discomfort or unease was perceived.

Sample Size

Limitations in the sample size include the small number of participants and the inclusion of just two participants of color. A wider ethnic/racial diversity of participant may bring different perspectives to the research questions; similarly, the addition of women and women of color would widen the data collection as well. Inclusion of coaches of other sports would also contribute interesting information. As noted previously, soccer's global cultural influence may predispose soccer coaches to a higher level of appreciation for cultural diversity, thus influencing and even perhaps hastening their development of cultural competency. Another possibility is that the global influence creates the opposite, however, such as a predisposition for stereotypes or a more casual rather than intentional strategic approach to working with athletes of diverse cultures. Investigating the experiences of coaches of other sports with a less global influence would provide new data and triangulation.

Further, more participants in different areas of the region would also bring substantively different data, as the student-athlete population in different areas comes from different cultural backgrounds. Similarly, different data on this topic would be collected from coaches who are professional educators and bring to the coaching context formal training in child and developmental psychology, pedagogical strategy, behavior management, or even perhaps cultural diversity training (if that was a part of their pre-service curricula). Coaches who are not professional educators would obviously bring different backgrounds and training that may or may not relate to the coaching context. A data sample may be more useful if participants came

from one background or the other, or if the percentage of participants were reflective of the actual percentage of those coaching without any formal pedagogical training.

A final important note is to point out what could be called generation-related limitations. By chance, these coaches were all working with student-athletes during a broader demographic change in their specific region that spanned approximately 15 years. Though the demographic changes localized in the various communities at different times within this span and at different rates, each coach was affected by these changes in their athlete population. Thus, each experienced a "before-after" kind of narrative. Also, by happenstance, each of these coaches had worked for long periods of time in the same region. A sample would have different characteristics with the inclusion of coaches whose only experiences were working with athletes of diverse cultures. These coaches may exhibit a completely different (or no) developmental trajectory, different influences on the coach's development, and different strategies of working with athletes of diverse cultures.

Implications for Coaching Practice

This study contributes insight to coach education development in terms of how coaches learn, grow, adapt, change, and develop cultural competency through experiential learning and reflective practice. The findings may be helpful to individuals and organizations charged with the development of coach education curricula and, potentially, other organizations interested in the development of cultural competency in different contexts and with different populations. This research may enhance understanding of how experienced coaches develop cultural competency and inform the understanding of a developmental trajectory for a novice coach. Though more data is needed to substantiate or challenge the model, it can be used as a guide for further inquiry into the subject.

Two limitations covered in the literature review are important when considering implications of this research. The first is that most coaching education—and indeed some coaches, athletic directors and parents—prioritizes technical knowledge above relational knowledge. This means that coaches may not choose to spend their time learning about, thinking about, or considering the "soft" skills. Perhaps they may also disregard cultural difference as an impacting factor to their success. The second limitation is the profession's lack of standardization and inconsistencies in pre-professional training and professional development. Some pre-service coaches receive training in their higher education curriculum as part of a coaching minor. It would be worthwhile to explore if cultural competency and cultural differences are introduced at that time. Other coaches may only receive training through their state governing body or through sport-specific professional organizations. Again, a summary of the characteristics, quality, and quantity of such training or discussion would be helpful information.

For practicing and more experienced coaches, however, dissemination of research findings is challenging. Data collected from the soccer coaches show participation in professional development as required by the high school state athletics governing body. In the particular state where these coaches worked, professional development is limited to a one-time-only online training and corresponding multiple-choice test that covers a huge range of topics; shoehorning the complex topic of cultural competency into this is a superficial treatment at best, but could be introduced. Coaches in this sample reported a high level of participation at the national soccer coaching conference, potentially a place where the model and research could be presented in an interactive workshop session.

Also promising would be promotion of the topic to athletic directors, who with varying degrees of influence, shape and impact the entire athletic program philosophy; hire, train, and mentor coaches; and make important logistical decisions that could result in inclusion or exclusion. It's important to acknowledge limitations, too, related to the influence of the athletic director, who it must be remembered works with a coaching staff of seasonal employees with many demands and responsibilities and a correspondingly low rate of compensation. These individuals also usually work full-time jobs on site or elsewhere. The athletic director may want to create and support a program and system that emphasizes each coach's personal and professional growth, reflective practice, and evaluation, but be unable to effectively accomplish this. Yet he or she is still an important influence and tone-setter and would be a valuable ally in introducing reflection and discussion around issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion in the coaching context.

Another important consideration is potential resistance, ambivalence, or ignorance related to this topic. One cannot assume that all coaches are interested in or have the capacity or motivation to begin exploring cultural competency. In the interviews, some participants' peer-coaches and the supervising athletic director are less willing to reflect on, analyze, or learn more about cultural differences. Some coaches may lack the capacity and understanding to recognize cultural difference in and between themselves and their athletes. If this difference is recognized even at a minimal level, some coaches may not see cultural difference as impacting their work or even relevant to their goals. They may be unwilling to respond to cultural difference, demanding assimilation or perhaps viewing any change to their prescribed program structure or role in a negative way. All of these perspectives—and that list is not comprehensive, of course—are important to consider when thinking about how to begin conversations about cultural

competency with coaches who bring a range of perspectives, identities, experiences, attitudes and beliefs. How coaches might be led into this challenging material in a way that invites engagement and interaction rather than alienation?

Some basic foundational principles may help to establish common ground. Coaches should have clarity around their values, purpose, and goals as related to the student-athlete population they serve and interact with. A shared understanding of the role and purpose of developmental sport in their particular context should be part of an ongoing conversation with peers, teachers, support staff, and athletic directors. An emphasis on building relationships and trust is also an important value, not only for the benefit of the student-athlete but for those in community with that coach and athlete.

From these points, coaches may be more willing to move into discussions related to how understanding and critiquing one's social and cultural identity in the coaching role is also an important step in building positive relationships with all athletes, whether from the same or different race, ethnic affiliation, or socioeconomic class. Coaches may also have more clarity around their own values related to the learning environment of developmental sports and gain awareness related to cultural dynamics within their particular context, sports culture, and the athletes involved. Developmental sport has many benefits which can only be available to all youth if coaches are aware of, willing to think about, and able to make changes to the limitations created by the systems they operate within and their own biases and prejudices.

In general, the importance of encouraging reflective practice is clear. More specifically, a metacognitive approach may also provide an entry point into developing self-awareness, exploring conflict and challenge, and learning more about how to resolve and transform those conflicts and challenges in proactive, positive ways (Flavell, 1979). Conflict, whether of cultural

derivation or some other reason, can be a transformative catalyst, a challenge to the coach's template that may result in expansive paradigm shifts. In a practitioner-based profession, coaches actively construct their own learning environments within complicated and unique contexts. Yet they do not function in an autonomous environment; they work within a constantly shifting environment, influenced by multiple, sometimes competing factors. Helping coaches become more aware of how they learn, acquire, and analyze knowledge; work with positive and negative influences (such as parents, fellow coaches, administrators, etc.); and develop within those contexts could be beneficial. These moments often lead to reappraisal of one's role, values, coaching strategies, and outcomes. Further, knowledge acquisition and reflection can result in being in relationship with athletes, parents, teaching staff, and coaching colleagues in new and different ways; in reorienting and reconciling expectations with performance outcomes; and in developing new strategies to achieve goals, among other outcomes.

The findings of this research also suggest the value of integrated approaches to developing cultural awareness and competencies. While these coaches worked within their own self-created structures of knowledge and skill acquisition, reflection and discussion with others was a useful activity and resource. Among the more culturally aware coaches, this process included constant interrogation of their personal social identity. Support from administrators in this process was also important; the overall influence of the administrator/s fluctuated from program to program, and coaches often operated autonomously. However, a lack of support or understanding from administration as the coach worked through cultural challenges generally resulted in conflict or stress. Ideally, proactive and positive perspectives on creating opportunities for participation are shared throughout the school environment, which also encourages the personal growth and development of culturally competent coaches and

administrators. The suggested integrated approach would be in accordance with other research. For example, pre-service teachers in multicultural service learning sites developed more positive development of a multicultural awareness through interrogation of their personal social identity, discussion of their teaching experiences, and leadership from a site supervisor (Chang, Anagnostopoulos, & Omae, 2011).

The research findings affirm that coaches need to engage and reflect on their experiences with interpersonal skills and competencies in semi-structured or structured professional development programming. Self-selecting situations of conflict or challenge to analyze in collaboration with colleagues could provide a grounded basis from which to expand perceived limitations of generalized coaching education programs (Côté, 2006; Nelson et al., 2013). Reflection upon the metacognitive processes of identifying and resolving conflict or difference may be a valuable opening into discussions of cultural difference. The potential of encountering and exploring defensiveness, confusion, frustration or even anger may also be valuable to further discussions related to a coach's developmental experience. Attentiveness to moments of dis-ease, physical or emotional discomfort may be helpful in attuning the coach to necessary reflection.

Directions for Further Research

This project was unique in that it focused on a specific subset of coaches, further narrowed by coaches of one gender, developmental ability, and sport, to the research related to coaching development. Such a focused sample at the high school level has not been utilized in research related to cultural competency of coaches. This study points to many opportunities for further research in both methodology and topic exploration.

It would be worthwhile to test the proposed model further, expanding upon the limitations noted in this chapter. It is very likely that expansion of the sample, especially to

include coaches of color and those who have always coached within heterogeneous populations, would uncover new dynamics and chronologies. Coaches working in more individualized sports that do not require high levels of cohesive teamwork, such as gymnastics or track and field, may have different experiences. For them, the trajectory of development of cultural competency may happen in an entirely different way. Research with a sample that includes professional, collegiate, or youth/recreational coaches may also uncover different information.

In general, more research on how coaches learn and develop skills, acquire knowledge, develop cultural awareness, adapt to differing needs of their athletes, and ultimately transform within the coaching role would be helpful. Experiential learning and reflective practice are important components of coaching education for both novice and experienced coaches. How a specific curriculum related to cultural competency impacts the pedagogical practice and philosophy of current and future coaches would also be interesting. Finally, the use of self-identified cultural dilemmas presents a useful pedagogical tool. Research that seeks to understand the coach's problem-solving process within these scenarios could lead to the development of a productive reflective, analytic tool, useful in experiential learning and reflective pedagogy exercises, to develop cultural competency.

Conclusion

In an increasingly diverse student demographic, high school coaches are important "gatekeepers" who can limit or expand access to an extremely valuable pedagogical site of extracurricular sports. Coaches also wield extreme power in determining whether the adolescent athlete's experience is positive and affirming or negative and frustrating. Further, coaches are influential in modeling positive relationships and interaction with all athletes, including those of different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds; in modeling constructive conflict resolution;

and in modeling approaches to understanding and dismantling systems of prejudice, privilege, and oppression. This role-modeling is important to athletes of all cultures, whether those athletes are more privileged or marginalized racially or socioeconomically. In order to serve the student population equitably and to the full holistic potential of the extracurricular programming, high school coaches must develop a greater comfort with and capacity for exercising cultural competency. This research suggests a process-oriented, chronological model of how experienced coaches begin to work with conflict and challenge within a culturally diverse team environment. The model also reflects the coach's position both within broader cultural influences and in interaction with other influential human actors. Conflict, whether of cultural derivation or some other reason, can be a transformative catalyst, a challenge to the coach's template that may result in expansive paradigm shifts. Research findings suggest that more culturally competent coaches are willing to question standard practices of U.S. high school sports culture and how those cultural norms may limit, exclude or alienate their athletes. They learn to develop metacognitive awareness around their intercultural capacities; ask questions and seek information in order to make more informed decisions; and make changes to better serve their athletes with more inclusive, equitable, and beneficial programming.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Questions: Coaches

Coaches: Part I

1. List each sport you have coached. Please include the number of years of coaching experience, level (club age group or middle school, high school or college), and title (assistant, head).
2. What is your full-time profession?
3. List your educational degrees, if any, including major/minor.
4. What is your current employment status, outside of coaching?
5. What coaching certifications do you hold? Specify the sport, level and organization.
6. If you have attended any professional development opportunities related to coaching besides certification courses, such as workshops, clinics or conferences, please list the title, organization and topic.
7. Have you attended any non-coaching-related coursework, professional development or trainings related to cultural competency? If so, provide a brief description.
8. Describe any cross-cultural experiences you have: long-term travel or work in another country, significant cultural change via a move, significant relationships with people of different cultures, etc.
9. In your own words, how would you describe your race or ethnicity?

Coaches: Part II

Introductory language: Now we're going to move into the second part of the interview. I have five questions that ask you to think about your experiences related to coaching athletes of different cultures, but I want us to think of this as a conversation in which we can explore topics that come up. The first question is open-ended.

INQUIRY DOMAIN: conceptualization of cultural competence
QUESTION: Let's spend a few minutes first talking in general about your experience in coaching athletes of different cultural backgrounds on your soccer team. Tell me about your experiences in coaching athletes from different cultural backgrounds.
This open-ended question focuses on the research question of conceptualization by opening up a space for the coach to have the freedom to construct his own narrative regarding the coaching of athletes of a different culture. If necessary, I can provide some starting points, but my preference would be to see how the coach answers this question.

INQUIRY DOMAIN: learning process

QUESTION: Can you think of a time when you experienced a situation of conflict or concern with an athlete of a different cultural background? Tell me about it. How did you handle that situation? What did you learn from that situation?

Based on whether this conflict was positively or negatively resolved, the next question would address the opposite situation. (i.e.. describe a situation that was positively resolved or unresolved.)

QUESTION: In working with athletes of different cultural backgrounds, what do you think are your strengths as a coach? Can you give a specific example of working with an athlete or athletes of a different culture in which this strength became apparent?

QUESTION: What are your weaknesses when working with athletes of a different cultural background? Provide a specific example of working with an athlete or athletes of a different culture in which this weakness became apparent.

INQUIRY DOMAIN: other factors

QUESTION: Have you had any cross-cultural experiences that have affected the way you coach and interact with athletes of different cultural backgrounds? Describe those experiences. What did you learn from them?

QUESTION: What resources have you used to help you in working with athletes of different cultural backgrounds? What has been most helpful and how has that resource aided you?

WRAP-UP

Is there anything you'd like to add to our conversation?

Do you have any concerns you'd like to share about our conversation?

Interview Questions: Athletic Director

Introductory language: As you know, I'm interested in how coaches think about and conceptualize cultural competency as they work with athletes of different cultural backgrounds. As an athletic administrator who has worked with a wide variety of coaches in their particular sports contexts and who has watched them interact with athletes of different cultures, your perspective is helpful to understanding how coaches might think about cultural competence and develop skills and knowledge related to coaching athletes of different cultural backgrounds.

1. Speaking generally, describe your particular high school setting and demographics of the athlete population.

2. In this particular cultural context, describe the ideal coach.

3. Describe an issue that has arisen that is related to a coach's lack of skill in working with athletes of different cultures?

4. Discuss an example of a coach who has improved his/her cultural competency. Follow-up, if necessary: What is the process by which this improvement took place?

5. How would you characterize cultural competence in the high school athletic coaching context? What do coaches need to know and what skills do they need to develop? What values are important?

6. What kinds of professional development are offered to coaches at your school?

7. What factors do you think contribute to a coach's cultural competency?

8. Is there anything you'd like to add to our conversation?

9. Do you have any concerns you'd like to share about our conversation?

APPENDIX B

Consent to Participate in Research Form

Identification of Investigators & Purpose of Study
You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Lauren Jefferson from James Madison University. The purpose of this study is to explore how high school athletics coaches, specifically varsity boys' soccer coaches, talk about or conceptualize the values, knowledge and skills related to working with athletes of different cultures. This study will contribute to the researcher's completion of her master's thesis.

Research Procedures
Should you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form once all your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. This study consists of an interview that will be administered to individual participants at James Madison University, or at a location convenient to the participant. You will be asked to provide answers to a series of questions related to your experiences with coaching athletes of different cultures. The interviews will be audio-recorded. If you do not want to be audio-recorded, interviews can be conducted without the audio recording.

Participation in this study will require between 30-90 minutes of your time. Potentially, a second or third interview of shorter duration may be necessary at the researcher's discretion and the participant's availability. An overall estimate for participation is around 120 minutes over the course of the research study, from July 2018 to February 2019.

Risks
The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks from your involvement in this study (that is, no risks beyond the risks associated with everyday life).

Benefits
There are no direct benefits to participants. Potential benefits from participation in this study include the opportunity to engage in reflective practices regarding one's coaching techniques, pedagogy and philosophy. This reflection may lead to benefits to the coach, individual athletes in contact with the coach, and the team. More broadly, you would be contributing to research that may provide data in regards to both content and specific processes or learning opportunities by which cultural competency could be developed or cultural awareness heightened in the education, professional development or training of athletics coaches.

Confidentiality
The results of this research will be presented at James Madison University and potentially in other venues, such as conferences or coaching workshops. The results of this project will be coded in such a way that the respondent's identity will not be attached to the final form of this study. When the results of this research are published or shared publically, no information would be included that would reveal your identity. The researcher retains the right to use and publish non-identifiable data. All data will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. Upon completion of the study, all information that matches up individual respondents with their answers, including audio recordings, will be destroyed.

Participation & Withdrawal
Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose not to participate. Should you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

Questions about the Study
If you have questions or concerns during the time of your participation in this study, or after its completion or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

Researcher: Lauren Jefferson
Education Foundations and Exceptionalities
James Madison University
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Questions about Your Rights as a Research Subject
Dr. David Cockley
Chair, Institutional Review Board
James Madison University
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cocklede@jmu.edu

Giving of Consent

I have read this consent form and I understand what is being requested of me as a participant in this study. I freely consent to participate. I have been given satisfactory answers to my questions. The investigator provided me with a copy of this form. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age.

☐ I give consent to be audio-recorded during my interview. _____ (initials)

☐ I give consent to allow the researcher to take field notes during my interview. _____ (initials)

_____
Name of Participant (Printed)

_____ _____
Name of Participant (Signed)   Date

_____ _____
Name of Researcher (Signed)   Date