

**Hockey and Coach Education: Perspectives of Aboriginal Coaches from
Manitoba's Interlake Region**

by

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Abstract

Focusing on the perspectives of coaches from a First Nations community in Manitoba's Interlake region, the purpose of this study was to understand the importance of hockey in the community and to explore needs/interests in relation to coaching education. Of specific interest with respect to coaching education was the identification of content and delivery elements that would optimize the relevance of such initiatives to the needs and interests of the selected community. Grounded in a qualitative tradition, a case study design was employed using individual interviews with Aboriginal youth hockey coaches to collect the data required for achieving the purpose of the study. Thick, rich description was used to provide a context for the importance of hockey in the community and thematic analysis was used to interpret the data specific to identifying needed content and delivery aspects of coaching education. A collective member checking meeting with the coaches was used to confirm, reject, or add to the researcher's interpretations from the individual interviews.

The findings revealed that the coaches viewed hockey as a critical means for positively altering behavioral patterns and attitudes of children by stimulating interest, motivation, self esteem, confidence, and hope; creating a spirit of community pride and togetherness; providing an opportunity for physical activity; offering a positive alternative to vandalism and other delinquent behavior; providing an environment for children to learn life skills and values such as respect, effort and commitment; and developing social skills. The findings also make clear the need for sport organizations such as Sport Manitoba, Hockey Manitoba, and the Manitoba

Aboriginal Sport and Recreation Council to use their resources to deliver ongoing coaching education tailored to the needs of the selected community and other communities that may share a similar context.

Chapter I: Introduction

From a lifelong involvement in the game of hockey as a youth and junior player, Canadian university student athlete, provincial sport governing body administrator, and coach at the Canadian university, professional, and international hockey World Championship level I have developed a tremendous passion for the game. I have benefited immensely from my participation in hockey and in return, I am committed to sharing my experience with coaching peers in the interest of coaching education and the continued growth of hockey at both the elite and “grassroots” developmental levels in Manitoba. This passion for hockey and commitment to coaching development led me to search for a research topic that would benefit youth hockey coaches and players in Manitoba. I eventually chose a study that would benefit coaches and players in a First Nations community in Manitoba's Interlake region by seeking a better understanding of hockey in this community and views of the coaches on coaching education. This community was selected because of my previous experiences as a coach mentor working with the youth hockey coaches and players in the community.

Coaching Education in the Selected Community

During the 2008/09 hockey season, I served as a mentor in a Sport Manitoba hockey coach mentorship program involving the coaches from the selected community. It was these same coaches who were invited to participate in this study. My involvement in the mentorship program began with a meeting held in September, 2008 attended by Community Development and Coaching Managers from Sport Manitoba, the key youth hockey contacts from the selected community and myself to

discuss a coach mentorship program for the 2008/09 season. The mentorship program was an extension of a Sport Manitoba hockey coaching education pilot program delivered in the selected community in January, 2008. The pilot program had been enthusiastically received by the coaches and a "follow up" to the program was requested by the community. It was agreed at the meeting that I would be responsible for communicating with the community contacts to plan the delivery of the "follow up" mentorship program.

Sport Manitoba provided the leadership in the consultation, planning, and delivery of the pilot program in 2008. The objective of the pilot program was to assist the community by enhancing the skills and abilities of their hockey coaches so they have the resources and confidence to provide a quality youth hockey program to retain and attract new participants to the sport in their community.

The pilot program was a one and a half day seminar coordinated by Sport Manitoba with assistance from Hockey Manitoba and members of the host community, and conducted by instructors from Hockey Manitoba. The seminar included the presentation of teaching modules produced by Hockey Canada for their National Coach Mentorship Program, on basic puck control skills, small ice games, and practice planning. The community coaches participated in on-ice (3 x 90 minute) and classroom (3 x 90 minute) sessions, and also received the opportunity to exchange ideas with the Hockey Manitoba instructors in more informal settings. The Hockey Canada materials are excellent resources and the report from Sport Manitoba (Kirby, 2008) indicated that the pilot program was a success in their opinion, based on the comments received from the coaches, in achieving its objective.

In my role as a hockey coach mentor I visited the selected community on five occasions from November, 2008 to March, 2009. I met with 2-4 coaches from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. to discuss various coaching topics and preview the practice plan. I would then go on the ice for a practice session with the Novice (7 & 8 yrs.) and Atom (9 & 10 yrs.) players and coaches from 5:45 to 7:30 p.m. followed by a “wrap up” talk with the coaches in the dressing room. The meetings with the coaches were a combination of presentations on selected topics, a preview and summary of ice sessions, and informal question and answer discussions. A transition in the responsibility for planning the practices was attempted in the program from; the mentor planning and operating the initial practices, the mentor planning and operating the practices with input from the coaches, the coaches planning and operating parts of the practice, to the coaches planning and operating the final practices themselves with the on-ice support of the mentor.

The mentorship program content focused on practice planning and developing a seasonal plan to adhere to specific objectives set by Sport Manitoba. I was also responsive to the coaches' requests and presented/discussed material that they identified as a need for their coaching context. Other program content included skill and tactical development in areas which I observed a need based on my assessment of the players' current ability level. The skills, tactics, and concepts presented/discussed in the coach meetings and/or the on-ice sessions are listed in Table 1. All the on-ice practices emphasized fun, competition, fair play, teaching and skill refinement.

Table 1. Mentorship Program Content

Practice planning	Seasonal planning	Fun games
Ice utilization	Equipment fitting	Playing rules
1-2-3 Attack principle	Support	Goaltending
Defensive zone coverage	Breakout progression	Timing/control
Technical skills; skating, puck control, deking, passing & receiving, and shooting	Coaching players with varying levels of skill and experience	skating

The mentorship program was personally a very positive experience as I immensely enjoyed working with the coaches and young players who shared my enthusiasm and passion for the game of hockey. It was from my interaction with the hockey coaches through the mentorship program where my thoughts and interest for this study originated. I witnessed the dedication of the coaches and their commitment to teaching both sport and life skills to their players. I also recognized the value of the pilot and coach mentorship programs in assisting the coaches by enhancing their knowledge and confidence levels. To build on the strengths of the coaches and the coaching education programs I began to wonder if there was a way to provide even more relevant and meaningful coaching education for the community.

In my analysis I reflected on the involvement the coaches had in the planning process. Although the community contacts, who were also coaches, had input into the coordination of the pilot and coach mentorship programs it was Sport Manitoba, Hockey Manitoba, and myself that played the lead role in setting the objectives, and in the planning and delivery of the content. Further, the content consisted of resources produced by Hockey Canada for the Canadian mainstream hockey model. The Oxford Canadian Dictionary (2005, p. 497) defines mainstream as “the prevailing trend in

opinion.” In a Canadian context I recognize the prevailing trend to be the ideas and activities that align with the dominant white, middle class group in our society. Upon reviewing the process, I concluded that more insight from the Aboriginal coaches should have been sought in the initial planning phase rather than “importing” a Hockey Canada program without fully considering the local context, to ensure that the specific needs and interests of the coaches were fully addressed through the pilot and coach mentorship programs. My thoughts were consistent with Baker and Giles (2008) who suggested that recreation/sport programmers cannot simply assume that they know what a community needs without dialogue as this “suppresses not only community-generated ideas, but also the programmer’s ability to expand their own education to include other ways of knowing” (p. 240). In some situations the material from Hockey Canada may not be applicable to the context of the selected community as illustrated in the following example related to practice planning principles in a practical coaching situation.

My youth hockey coaching experience has been primarily working with white males aged 6 to 15 years, from families in an upper middle class income bracket, who reside in a suburban area. From my previous experiences coaching youth hockey in the context described above and from the Hockey Canada resources, I believe that to operate an effective on-ice practice for youth that maximizes learning, skill development and motivation, the ideal length of the practice should be 60 minutes. During a mentorship program practice in the selected community, I suggested to the coach that it was perhaps time to “wrap up” as we had been on the ice with the players for 90 minutes. I was surprised with the coach’s response as he firmly replied;

“No, we have the ice for two hours and we will use all the time.” He supported his response by posing the question, “If these kids were not on the ice then what else would they be doing?” After his firm response we continued the practice and I watched from an altered perspective. I observed that some children did leave the ice because they had lost interest but, the vast majority stayed and participated in a low structured activity (i.e., a shinny game) with enthusiasm for the remainder of the two hour time slot. I interpreted the coach's comments as meaning that socio-economic conditions limited opportunities for sport and physical activity for the youth in the community and that being on the ice was a good place for the kids. This coach through his philosophy and actions demonstrated an awareness of his context which differed from the Hockey Canada mainstream model and was one that I was still learning about. As a coach mentor I had to learn more about the context in which the coaches were working and realize that some of my perceptions on coaching may not be relevant and meaningful to this community.

This example further stimulated my thoughts on conducting a study to better understand hockey within the community and the views of the coaches about coaching education to ensure that future coaching education would be even more relevant and meaningful to the community.

A Strengths Perspective

The study was conducted from a “strengths perspective”. According to Baikie (2002), the “strengths perspective” is an approach that focuses on peoples' and communities' strengths as opposed to the more common “deficits” approach which identifies problems and seeks to solve or cure these problems. A strength's

perspective does not mean ignoring the drawbacks but rather, starting from a different vantage point (i.e., strengths). By using a strengths perspective the study looked at the current attributes of the youth hockey program in the selected community and used these successes as a foundation for improvement. “Strengths theorists do not believe that the world is the best possible world. We believe that building on strengths and positives is the best way to make the world, individually and collectively, a better place to live” (Baikie, p. 75).

During my experiences as a coach mentor in the selected community I observed many strengths of its youth hockey program. The strengths start with the dedicated coaches who are committed to the youth in their community. These coaches volunteer their time almost daily during the hockey season to work on ice with their players. They have a passion for the game as was evident by their enthusiasm on the ice, and demonstrate a sincere interest in the well being of the youth with whom they work. They have a good base of coaching knowledge and show a willingness to learn by participating in coaching education programs such as the Sport Manitoba pilot program referred to earlier in this chapter, and sharing experiences with myself in a mentorship relationship.

The players in the community's youth program are themselves a strength. Their “pure enjoyment” of the game, their hard work to improve their skills and consequently their confidence, and their respect for the coaches and teammates creates a positive environment for all participants. They have a good basic skill level and demonstrated clearly noticeable improvement throughout the 2008/09 hockey season. Although winning is not the main priority in youth sport it still has meaning,

and it was very rewarding for everyone in the youth hockey program, myself included, to experience the community's first regional championship that season.

The arena in the community also represents a strength as it supplies access to an artificial ice surface for the youth hockey program from October to April, and provides a clean, safe environment for the participants. Another strength is the support that the youth hockey program receives from the Band Council which provides funds to cover the cost of registration in the regional minor hockey association, includes the arena's operating cost in its annual budget, and sometimes issues money to families for out-of-town tournament expenses. Finally, the support received from outside organizations is also a strength. Sport Manitoba has shown its leadership and commitment through coaching education initiatives and Kidsport (www.kidsportcanada.ca) has provided equipment to support the youth hockey program in this community.

Concerned Engagement

My passion and commitment to hockey development in Manitoba and the opportunity to work as a coach mentor with youth hockey coaches in a First Nations community lead to a "concerned engagement" which stimulated my interest in better understanding hockey within the community and the views of the coaches on coaching education. Ellis (1998), states that "concerned engagement distinguishes interpretive inquiry from other forms of human inquiry that seek only to describe or just to understand human phenomena" (p. 30). The researcher brings a caring concern through the inquiry (Ellis). This caring concern that I feel stems from a good relationship based upon trust, respect and honesty that was previously developed with

the coaches who were invited to participate in the study. This relationship was built during my role as a hockey coach mentor in the coaches' community during the 2008/09 hockey season. While working with the coaches, their enthusiasm and willingness to accept new ideas, and the sincere appreciation they showed when I visited their community made a lasting impression on me. Following one practice prior to Christmas, a big meal was prepared at the rink by members of the community for all the players and coaches to celebrate the holiday season and to thank me for my efforts in helping the youth hockey program. I was also encouraged by the clearly noticeable improvement in the players' abilities and the coaching skills of the coaches throughout the season. Perhaps above all, what I really enjoyed during my visits was the "pure enjoyment" the children displayed for the game of hockey.

It is the concerned engagement or "caring concern" resulting from my previous experiences and relationships as a coach mentor with the coaches participating in the study, and my desire to provide even more relevant and meaningful coaching education in the future to the selected community that provided the motivation to conduct thorough and quality research in which the results will benefit the community.

Statement of Purpose

Hockey, its overarching significance in the selected community and optimal coaching development specific to needs/interests of coaches in this community, was the focus of this research. Specific to the latter aim, the intention was to identify content and delivery methods for optimizing coaching education in ways that were

relevant and meaningful within the context of the selected community and would, ultimately, benefit the youth hockey program and participants.

The study was grounded in a qualitative tradition with the actual approach being a case study. Key terms used in this written report to describe and distinguish various groups of people are clarified through the following definitions presented by Simpson (2000b):

- Aboriginal Peoples; Inuit, status Indian, non-status Indian, and Métis communities in Canada and the United States (Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996)
- Indigenous Peoples; used in an International sense (Indigenous Affairs, 1997)
- First Nations; status Indian communities in Canada (Assembly of First Nations, 1997)

The Selected Community

It is important to provide some general information about the selected community and its youth hockey program without disclosing the community's identity, to give the reader an overview of the context in which the study took place. By knowing the size of the community, the low income level, and the number of children playing organized hockey one can better form a picture of the setting and the socio-economic conditions that may affect the youth hockey program.

The youth hockey coaches invited for this study are from a rural First Nations community in Manitoba's Interlake region, approximately a two hour drive on a major highway from a large urban city. The community is situated on a large reserve area and has a total registered population of approximately 1,500 people as of May,

2009. Slightly over half of the population is under 20 years of age, and of the whole population, 30% speak an Aboriginal language at home. According to the 2001 Canadian census statistics (Indian and Northern Affairs, First Nation Profiles, 2009) the average total income of people living on reserve is approximately \$10,000. This is well below the poverty line which the Canadian Council on Social Development (www.ccsd.ca) lists as \$27,122.00 (before tax) for a family of four living in a rural area in 2006. There is an indoor ice arena with artificial ice located in the community and the youth hockey program has daily access to ice for games and practices. The youth hockey program has a Novice team (7 & 8 yrs.), and an Atom team (9 & 10) that compete in a regional minor hockey league. There are approximately 20 players, both male and female, participating in the youth hockey program with some players competing at both the Novice and Atom level.

In summary, findings from this study provide a deeper understanding about hockey and its significance in the life of the selected community and perspectives of community coaches on the key elements (content and delivery methods) for optimal coaching education that is relevant and meaningful to the community. The information derived from this study could be useful to sport organizations such as Sport Manitoba, Hockey Manitoba, and the Manitoba Aboriginal Sport and Recreation Council in the delivery of future hockey coaching education to the selected community and other communities that may share a similar context. The motivation for this study came from a concerned engagement developed from my experiences working as a coach mentor with the coaches and players from the

community, and my commitment to coaching education and the continued growth of hockey at both the elite and “grassroots” developmental levels in Manitoba.

Chapter II: Literature Review

The review of extant literature focused on: the benefits of sport; Aboriginal sport in Canada; and Aboriginal pedagogy. Also reviewed in this chapter are leadership theories in sport and current coaching reference materials most commonly used at the community hockey coaching level.

There are many benefits of sport and physical activity for Aboriginal Peoples as outlined in the Maskwachees Declaration (2000) which further motivated my interest in this study. However, according to authors such as Paraschak (1995, 1998, 2000, & 2001), Halas, Champagne, and van Ingen (2003), Robidoux (2004), and Winther, Petch, and Nazer-Bloom (1995) some Aboriginal Peoples have experienced barriers to participation in sport in Canada that included racism, discrimination, and low socio-economic conditions.

An introduction to Aboriginal teaching pedagogy was very beneficial in helping to guide the research design of this study and better prepared me as a researcher. It was also worthwhile to find that many of the traditional Aboriginal teaching and learning methods are transferable to a sport and coaching context.

The provision of leadership is a key role performed by coaches and sport organizations. The literature review describes various leadership theories that are applicable to a sport context and may help to understand the type of leadership most appropriate for the selected community based on the coaches' perspectives from the study. Finally, the literature review critiques some existing coach reference materials to provide a perspective of their value to current and future Aboriginal hockey coaching education.

The Benefits of Sport

The benefits of sport, including hockey, are well documented. I have selected the Maskwachees Declaration (2000) because of its origin from representatives of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada to illustrate the importance of sport.

A National Recreation Roundtable for Aboriginal Peoples was held in Hobemma, Alberta in 2000. The roundtable discussions resulted in the drafting of the Maskwachees Declaration which calls for more physical activity opportunities for Aboriginal Peoples. The Maskwachees Declaration contains a commitment from the Roundtable delegates to “improving the health, wellness, cultural survival, and quality of life of Aboriginal Peoples, through physical activity, physical education, sport and recreation.”

An important component of the Maskwachees Declaration (2000) is a statement outlining the benefits of Traditional Lifestyles and Active Living, including sport:

- offer preventive strategies that are much more powerful and cost effective than reactive treatment;
- provide personal development for success in life: for example, mutual respect, honesty, teamwork, healthy work ethic, dealing with conflict, fair play, self-esteem, pride and confidence;
- provide inclusive opportunities for all ages and cultures to interact and to develop respect for each other;
- provide inclusive opportunities for leadership development and role modeling;
- provide opportunities for positive relationships and partnership building;

- increase activity levels across the life span to improve quality of life, enhance mental health, and help reduce the incidence of osteoporosis, some types of cancer, and conditions such as heart disease, type II diabetes and obesity;
- provide opportunities for developing a spiritual foundation of the individual, incorporating traditional values; and
- provide opportunities for the family unit, including parents, to be involved in the development of children, youth and communities.

The Declaration also recognizes the many health (e.g., type II diabetes, heart disease, and fetal alcohol syndrome) and social issues (e.g., rates of incarceration, substance abuse, harassment and racism) faced by Aboriginal Peoples and declares that “sustainable commitment and investment in active living, physical activity, physical education, recreation and sport are essential to promote health and address the social issues facing Aboriginal Peoples in communities across Canada” (*Sport Canada's Policy on Aboriginal People's Participation in Sport*, 2005, p.11).

To summarize, sport is highly valued in many Aboriginal societies as an avenue to develop life skills that enable a person to be a contributing member of the community. The Maskwachees Declaration (2000) outlines the many benefits of sport and physical activity for Aboriginal Peoples which increased my motivation to conduct a study related to hockey coaching and Aboriginal Peoples. Despite these positive contributions, many Aboriginal Peoples encounter barriers to participation in sport such as racism, discrimination, and low socio-economic conditions which are discussed in the next section.

Aboriginal Sport in Canada: Barriers and Challenges

Euro-Canadian culture has largely determined the physical leisure practices that are considered as “legitimate” for Aboriginal participants (Paraschak, 1998). With the passing of the Canadian Indian Act of 1876 the federal government assumed paternalistic control over all aspects of Aboriginal social life and governed with policies of cultural suppression. Racist government regulations resulted in the banning of traditional Aboriginal ceremonies such as the Potlatch and Sun Dance as they were considered “too exotic” for the Eurocentric conception of what was “civilized” (Paraschak). Carl James (1995) as reported in Paraschak and Tirone (2003), defines racism as “the uncritical acceptance of a negative social definition of a colonized or subordinate group typically identified by physical features... These racialized groups are believed to lack certain abilities or characteristics, which in turn characterizes them as culturally and biologically inferior” (p. 122). An additional definition of racism is provided in the Aboriginal Coaching Manual (2003), “Racism is the belief in the inherent superiority of one race over another. Discrimination based on prejudice and stereotypes about a race is racism” (p. 15).

According to Paraschak (1998), although the Potlatch and Sun Dance were religious ceremonies, federal bureaucrats viewed them as recreational activities and attempted to replace them with Euro-Canadian forms of activities. To achieve their assimilation goal, federal bureaucrats offered financial support for sport and recreational activities but only those that reflected Euro-Canadian views of “legitimate” activities (e.g., sport days and agricultural exhibitions). This system in

essence, rewarded Aboriginal People and communities for adopting the cultural values and norms of the dominant society.

Some sport organizations followed the governments lead in instituting racist practices during this period as well (Paraschak, 1998). For example, in 1867 George Beers modified the rules of lacrosse, a traditional Aboriginal game, by making it less violent and more “gentlemanly” to be palatable to Euro-centric sensibilities – a step that was followed by banning Aboriginal athletes from amateur championship play (Paraschak & Tirone, 2003). “The power relations of the larger society were thus clearly reproduced through lacrosse; a game that originated with the First Nations was appropriated by non-Natives and re-invented as a mainstream, non-Native activity” (Paraschak, p. 124). This is an example of institutionalized racism where the sport system is structured to produce outcomes that discriminate against non-Whites and privilege Whites over others (Paraschak & Tirone). Stokely Carmichael, an American Black activist in the 1960's, defined institutionalized racism as “the collective failure of an organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their color, culture, or ethnic origin” (www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institutional_racism).

Racist sport policies continued into the twentieth century with federal government officials in the 1970's still advocating that Euro-Canadian sports were the sole “natural” form of legitimate physical activity (Paraschak, 1995). Although the federal government had created the Native Sport and Recreation Program in 1972 to provide services to a “disadvantaged” Aboriginal population, the activities funded through this program were predominantly Euro-Canadian sports (e.g., hockey, water safety,

fastball, bowling, track and field, boxing, basketball and curling). The government's clear objective for the Native Sport and Recreation Program was integration into the mainstream sport system by "raising the level of performance to the point where Native athletes will be able to participate in broader competitive events with other Canadians" (Paraschak, p.5). In contrast, Aboriginal leaders within the N.S.R.P. emphasized Aboriginal "distinctiveness" and developed a segregated sport system independent of the Euro-Canadian system by creating Aboriginal only competitions at the community, provincial and national levels. This strategy was implemented to develop Aboriginal sport in a way that met the needs of Aboriginal Peoples rather than fulfilling the expectations of government. Aboriginal leaders viewed sport development as an opportunity to build a better future for their people and not as a stepping stone to mainstream competition. Viewing these objectives as falling outside "legitimate" Euro-Canadian guidelines, Aboriginal efforts in sport development were suppressed by the federal government through the termination of the N.S.R.P. in 1981 (Paraschak).

As articulated by Paraschak (1995), Aboriginal Peoples are not against participating in mainstream sports they just want to do it on their own terms. An example of this is the highly successful North American Indigenous Games that have been held every two years since 1990. The N.A.I.G. are restricted to people of Aboriginal heritage and involve participants from both Canada and the United States. The Games are comprised solely of mainstream sports but an important component is the cultural program that showcases various traditional games and dances. Through the N.A.I.G., Aboriginal coaches, athletes, and organizers experience more "power"

in sport as they are in charge of its structure, its practices and meanings, and traditions (Paraschak & Tirone, 2003).

Another example of institutionalized racism relates to the allocation of federal government funding for the Arctic Winter Games that features mainstream sports versus the Northern Games which is an Inuit and Dene traditional games festival. The Games are held annually in the Northwest Territories and since 1970, both have received government funding. In 1978, however, funding for the Northern Games was discontinued because their traditional sports did not align with the federal government's Eurocentric definition of "legitimate" sport (Paraschak and Tirone).

Institutionalized racism by the federal government and sport organizations have created barriers to participation in sport for Aboriginal Peoples in Canada as funding is provided only to "legitimate" Euro-Canadian mainstream sports. The development of traditional Aboriginal sport is suppressed because of a lack of financial support therefore, limiting opportunities for Aboriginal Peoples to participate in and derive the benefits of traditional sport. The challenge is to broaden the definition of what constitutes "legitimate" sport so that the Canadian sport system becomes more inclusive for Aboriginal Peoples.

Robidoux (2004) encountered overt forms of racism during his research in the Kainai Aboriginal community of southern Alberta. In 2001, the Kainai minor hockey teams were banned by non-Aboriginals from participating in a regional league as a result of various alleged violations committed by players, officials, and parents. Although some of the very best Kainai players would be picked up by neighbouring communities to strengthen their teams, the ban would mean that approximately 250

Aboriginal youth would not have the opportunity to play organized hockey aside from the occasional open-ice times at the local rink.

Although the Kainai Minor Hockey Association acknowledged that they needed to make organizational improvements to better adhere to league rules and bylaws, they believed that they were unjustly removed from the league. The exclusion of the Kainai teams is an example of existing racial tensions between Kainai and neighbouring non-Aboriginal communities (Robidoux, 2004).

During his fieldwork, Robidoux observed open hostility towards people from Kainai on numerous occasions. Further, in interviews with Kainai men, they recalled playing youth hockey in certain non-Aboriginal communities where parents would call them racial slurs but “it was something you just ignored” (p. 294). This type of racism also represents a barrier to participation as it makes people uncomfortable in this hostile environment so they choose not to participate in mainstream sport.

It is a difficult challenge to reverse the ban that keeps the Kainai teams from competing in the regional hockey league. According to Robidoux “what needs to occur before a successful reintegration can take place is an acknowledgement and subsequent reconciliation of two conflicting narratives at the heart of the dispute” (p. 299). The two conflicting narratives, although malevolent fiction, are one; in order to play organized hockey, Kainai must cater to the demands of the Other, in their view a prejudicial Other that marginalizes First Nations people, and two; if the non-Aboriginal directors allow Kainai to re-enter their regional league “they will supposedly put themselves and their children at risk by being exposed to the dangerous, uncivilized behavior of the Other who refuses to adhere to league policies

and norms” (Robidoux, p. 299). Until this racial tension fed by misconceptions of the Other, is acknowledged by both sides, the issues that led to the ban of the Kainai teams will not be successfully resolved. The implication for this study was that as a coach/researcher going into the selected community it was important for me to be aware of how I was constructing my ideas of the Aboriginal Peoples and community I was working with so as not to be influenced by misconceptions of the Other.

Robidoux's work in Kainai, Alberta has a connection with the selected community as both youth hockey programs compete in regional leagues with rural non-Aboriginal communities. Given the shared colonial history of Manitoba's Interlake Region and Southern Alberta, there was a good possibility that the coaches in this study had also experienced racism through their involvement in hockey.

Halas, Champagne, and van Ingen (2003) presented the benefits and negative aspects of two physical education programs for youth that included many Aboriginal students. The connection between physical education and sport is that they occur in dynamic environments and both should create responsive programs that develop relationships while teaching life and athletic skills. From the previous work of Halas and Watkinson (1999) they listed some of the physical and socio-emotional benefits to be: burning off energy, feeling good, having fun, relieving boredom, reducing the stress of the school day, developing a sense of belonging and connection to the school, and helping with feelings of anger. For other students, however, physical education is not a positive experience. This is especially acute among girls and those who are less skilled and often results in exclusion, which entrenches disempowerment and low sense of self worth and competence. This often results in students “dropping

out” of class. These negative experiences or barriers to participation are associated with three problematic areas in the delivery of physical education for Aboriginal youth (Halas, et al.): 1) changing for class; 2) being forced to participate in physical activities that held little personal value; 3) not being fully informed or prepared for the culture of extra-curricular sport.

Halas, et al. (2003) note that to overcome the barriers such as those listed above, the challenge is to develop culturally relevant education programs where teachers nurture caring relationships with the students and create more responsive programs to maximize student engagement. As previously mentioned, these should also be the goals of a coach in a sport setting. Aboriginal youth want to succeed in Physical Education and effective educators who have the desire, courage, and determination to change traditional mainstream teaching practices can not only enable Aboriginal students to succeed in Physical Education but use the physical education experience as a motivator to stay in school and succeed academically (Halas, et al.).

Winther, Petch, and Nazer-Bloom's (1995) report *A Comprehensive Overview of Physical Activity and Recreation/Sport Issues Relevant to Aboriginal Peoples in Canada* outlined several barriers to participation for Aboriginal Peoples living in Aboriginal communities. These barriers included: the lack of financial resources for Aboriginal families; participation fees; transportation; a lack of resources such as trained personnel, programs, volunteers, facilities and equipment.

Participants in the Winther et al. (1995) study indicated that the lack of employment and consequently, finances, (i.e., low socio-economic conditions) made it difficult if not impossible, for Aboriginal children, youth and adults to access many

existing sport and recreation programs. One could theorize that colonization through the residential school system has influenced the social and economic opportunities in Aboriginal communities. The definition of colonization according to the Oxford Canadian Dictionary (2005) is “to impose a culture on” (p. 151). As Miller (1997) wrote in *Shingwauk's Vision*, the residential school system in Canada was used as a tool of oppression that had a multi-generational negative impact on the socio-economic conditions in Aboriginal communities. Miller states; “In the areas of academic instruction and vocational training, treatment of Aboriginal culture, influence of the gender identity of schoolchildren, care and supervision, it seems clear that the schools performed inadequately in most respects, and in a few areas, wrought profoundly destructive effects on many of their students” (p. 418). Forsyth (2007) further emphasizes that these students “were neither prepared to take their place in the dominant labour force, nor able to contribute effectively to reserve life” (p. 102). I have included Miller and Forsyth's work to provide added context that may account for continuing socio-economic problems in many Aboriginal communities, including the community in which this thesis research was conducted.

Other barriers to participation cited by Winther et al. (1995) were increasing program registration fees necessitated by budget restraints faced by recreation boards and “user pay” policies that further reduce access to sport and recreation opportunities. Transportation was another barrier as many people did not have the means to get to the recreation/sport facilities. Finally, in many Aboriginal communities the lack of facilities and equipment was a barrier to the provision of recreation/sport programs, and in those communities that did have adequate facilities

there was often a lack of trained personnel and volunteers available to provide the recreation/sport programs.

In conclusion, the Canadian sport system is not always welcoming or inclusive of Aboriginal Peoples. Various forms of racism, discrimination, and socio-economic challenges (e.g., lack of employment, financial resources) have limited opportunities for Aboriginal Peoples to participate in both mainstream and traditional sports. To overcome these barriers to participation requires, among other things, a broadening of the definition of "legitimate" sport, a better understanding of the Other, developing culturally relevant and responsive physical education/sport programs, and an improvement in socio-economic conditions in Aboriginal communities.

Working With the "Other"

I am a member of the dominant group in Canadian society (i.e., white, middle class, educated) and in this study I worked with Aboriginal coaches who represent the Other in our society. Paraschak (p. 77, 2001) defines the Other as "individuals who differ from ourselves in socially-constructed and –differentiated ways" (e.g., by race, sex, ethnicity, class, age, ability, religion, nationality, or sexual orientation).

According to Paraschak (2000) the dominant group in a society will "accept in an unquestioned manner, the 'truth' of their way of life - a way shaped by power relations which privileges some individuals over others" (p.153). The dominant group focuses on the differences between themselves and the Other, does not recognize viewpoints and experiences of the Other as being legitimate, will not explore the ways both groups are implicated in each others lives thereby, failing to acknowledge the connectedness to the Other (i.e., the shared human condition). As a result of this

“us-them” way of thinking, the dominant group is less equipped to see clearly, challenge and change the conditions within which they live (Paraschak).

Paraschak (2001) has identified three ways in which “dominant” or “privileged” researchers can look at the Other in relationship to themselves and perhaps learn more about themselves through the Other. These three ways are privileging the text, privileging difference, or privileging commonalities.

Privileging the text means that “academics generally produce knowledge in keeping with mainstream, ethnocentric assumptions, thus ensuring that the locus of power remains in tact with the status quo” (Paraschak , p. 78). Academics therefore, will situate their stories within the “textual knowledges” that already exist about the Other by seeing new things as versions of things already known. Researchers thus “control any possible threat to the established view of the Other” (p. 78). In working with Aboriginal coaches in this study it was important to identify and legitimize their views and to avoid replicating stereotypes in order to extend rather than reproduce existing knowledge of the Other.

By privileging differences researchers set out to find differences between the dominant group and the Other, and use differences as the “definer of social life”. In doing so, researchers must be careful not to be bounded by their ethnocentric concepts and make generalized observations of the Other based on differences they expected to see (Paraschak). In working with the coaches in this study I did not look only for differences when seeking their perspectives on hockey and coach education however, when differences between the coaches’ viewpoints and my knowledge/experiences occurred I used this as an opportunity to reflect on my own

experiences in sport. In this process I learned more about myself through the Other. An example would be that as a youth I never experienced the barriers to participation in sport that I learned about in the selected community. From this difference I realized how privileged I was in my sport experience, and the importance of finding ways to reduce barriers so that more youth can gain the benefits of participating in sport.

An alternative way to building “social life” knowledge based on differences is by privileging commonalities. This way includes the use of the “universal singular” approach which Denzin (1989, p. 19) as cited by Paraschak (2001), describes as “no individual is ever just an individual. He or she must be studied as a single instance of more universal social experiences and social processes.” By using the universal singular approach, research on the Other shifts from an emphasis on differences to also exploring commonalities between the researcher and the Other. Along with looking at ways in which people see themselves as different or similar to others, this approach examines the differential or similar power relations embedded in those situations (Paraschak). For example, on my initial visits to the First Nations community as a coach mentor I did feel somewhat uncomfortable as I was the only non-Aboriginal in the arena. I was now similar to the Other, but there was still a difference in the power relations as I held the role of coach mentor. From this experience I better understood how many Aboriginal Peoples might feel in an all non-Aboriginal sport setting. I soon felt very at ease in the community as I discovered many commonalities between the coaches and myself. We shared a passion for the game of hockey and a sincere interest in the physical and emotional development of young athletes. Working in the community I was reminded of my passion for teaching

hockey skills to young children which coaching at the university level normally does not allow the time to do. Again I had learned more about myself through the Other.

In summary, Aboriginal Peoples represent the Other in Canadian society (i.e., individuals who differ from the dominant group). Paraschak outlines three approaches used by “dominant” or “privileged” researchers to look at the social life of the Other in relationship to themselves: by privileging the text, privileging difference, or privileging commonalities. Each of these approaches provides an opportunity for the researcher to reflect on their own experiences to learn more about themselves through working with the Other.

Aboriginal Pedagogy

An overview of the basis of Aboriginal education; the role of Elders, modeling, storytelling, listening, the Medicine Wheel, and the traditional Seven Gifts are discussed as examples of pedagogical approaches that are relevant in some Aboriginal contexts and transferable to the sport environment and this study.

Often in Aboriginal societies the people who are the most knowledgeable about traditional teaching and practice of ceremonies, physical and spiritual realities, and meanings in the Aboriginal languages are Elders. Elders have been typically educated in the Aboriginal oral tradition and are highly respected in their communities “as sources of wisdom because their way of life expresses the deepest values of their respective cultures” (Brant Castellano, 2004, p. 101). Elders view knowledge not as a commodity that can be bought and exploited but rather as a product of a formal and long-established way that Aboriginal Peoples are required to follow when seeking particular knowledge rooted in spiritual traditions and laws (Brant Castellano).

We had our own teachings, our own education system – teaching children that way of life was taught by the grandparents and extended families; they were taught how to view and respect the land and everything in Creation. Through that the young people were taught how to live, what the Creator's laws were, what were the natural laws, what were these First Nations laws...the teachings revolved around a way of life that was based on their values – Elder Peter Waskahat as cited in Brant Castellano, 2004, p.100.

Aboriginal pedagogy is based on nurturing to bring out knowledge and one of its main principles is respect; for knowledge, the student, the community and for the culture. It is premised on lifelong personal growth and learning in which the person learns how to be a good human being who develops skills that will enable them to be a contributing member of society (Lanigan, 1998). “Indigenous teaching is planted like a seed, then nurtured and cultivated through the relationship of teacher and student until it bears fruit” (Cajete, 1994, p. 223).

Traditional Aboriginal teachings and learning are intertwined with the daily lives of the teacher and learner, and Brant Castellano (2004) states that these teachings and learnings are conveyed through example (i.e., modeling rather than direct instruction). In a sport context this would suggest that an effective teaching format for some Aboriginal hockey coaches might be on ice practical demonstrations versus classroom instruction, and coach mentorship versus a clinic setting.

According to Simpson (2000a), teaching or the transmission of knowledge in Aboriginal cultures also occurs through experience and storytelling. The ability to teach through the use of storytelling, oratory, and song is highly regarded because

“the spoken or sung word expressed the spirit and breath of life of the speaker, and thus was considered sacred” (Cajete, 1994, p. 33). Storytelling is the oldest of arts in all cultures and is the basis of intergenerational communication (Lanigan, 1998).

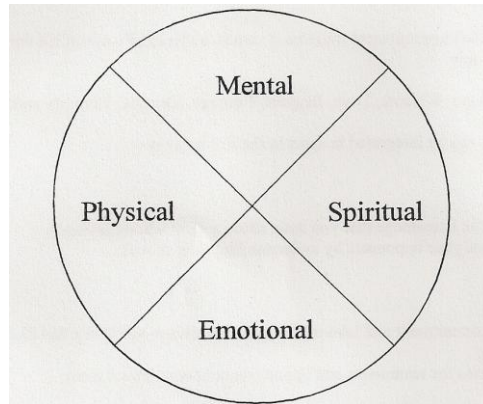
In Aboriginal communities the elders, the grandmothers and grandfathers, hold the stories of their families and their people. It is they who give the stories, the words of good thought and action to the children. They tell the children how the world and their people came to be. They tell the children of their experiences, their life. They tell them what it means to be one of the people. They tell them about their relationships to each other and to all things that are a part of the world. They tell them about respect - just as their grandparents told them when they were children. So it goes, giving and receiving stories – helping children remember to remember that the story of their community is really the story of themselves. (Cajete, 1994, p. 69)

Listening is another important Aboriginal teaching that is taught to children at a very young age. “An attentive listener will be able to view a story from many sides and learn different things each time the story is told” (Lanigan, 1998, p. 108).

For some Aboriginal groups on the prairies the Medicine Wheel is an ancient symbol used as a foundation in teaching. It represents a view of life that is whole and shows the interdependence of all facets of life. The teachings of the Medicine Wheel are revealed through different relationships expressed in sets of four (e.g., four directions, four peoples, four gifts, four aspects of nature) with each possessing four domains. One of the fundamental principles in using the Medicine Wheel is that harmony and balance in all four domains is the goal of learning and change

(Aboriginal Coaching Manual, 2003). The figure below from the North American Indigenous Games 2002 Teacher's Resource Guide (p. 171) describes the four aspects of nature in the Medicine Wheel and relates them to an athlete-coach context. For an athlete to perform to the best of their ability these four aspects need to be in balance.

Figure 1. Medicine Wheel



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Spiritual: The spiritual aspect of human nature allows people to look beyond the present circumstances in order to see the purpose in life.

Athletes need to have a vision in order to attain goals, both athletically and personally.

Emotional: Every human being has the need to be loved and belong. Athletes have a strong sense of belonging. This emotion is fostered through teamwork and cooperation.

Physical: Every human being has physical needs. Athletes are strongest in this aspect of life. Through conditioning, hard work and determination, athletes are at the best physical form.

Mental: The mental aspect allows humans to have the capacity to think and have conscious control over surroundings. Athletes need to be in the best mental form to stay focused, allowing training to be put to the test.

There are Seven Gifts of the Grandfathers that are also very important in some Aboriginal cultures such as the Anishinaabe, as they represent traditional values, beliefs and ways of life (Rice, 2005). These Seven Gifts or teachings are described and integrated into a sport context by the North American Indigenous Games 2002 Teacher's Resource Guide (p. 172):

Wisdom: Apply the knowledge that you have about sport while playing it.
Outsmart your opponents by understanding their moves.

Love: Show commitment and love of the game even when you don't feel like playing.
Show love for teammates and opponents in how you treat them.

Respect: Support your teammates when they are feeling down.
Encourage your opponents instead of using put-downs.

Courage: Stand tall when faced with defeat.
Don't give up.

Honesty: Own up to your mistakes/fouls that are made during games.

Humility: Don't boast when you win.
Show good sportsmanship.

Truth: Be true to yourself. Only do what is in your heart.

In summary, the writings of Brant Castellano, Lanigan, Cajete, Simpson and Rice speak with pride of the value and validity of Aboriginal Peoples' traditional teachings and knowledge, and provide a helpful introduction to traditional Aboriginal pedagogy such as modeling, storytelling and listening. The North American Indigenous Games 2002 Teacher's Resource Guide offers a good overview of the Medicine Wheel and the Seven Teachings and shows that they can be transferred to a sport context thereby, contributing to current and future Aboriginal coaching education. This study would determine if there was a need to incorporate traditional Aboriginal pedagogy such as modeling, storytelling, the Medicine Wheel and the Seven Teachings into the coaching education program for the selected community.

Leadership Theories in Sport

Leadership is central in sport and recreation and exists at all levels within sport organizations. Leadership is evident "in the transmission of skills to individual participants, in the process of coaching or mentoring individuals, and in the encouragement and nurturing of others with responsibilities as program managers or executives" (Edginton, Hudson, and Scholl, 2005, p.viii). In a sport context, leadership can be defined as a force that enables individuals to use their creative energies, seek their full potential, and use their knowledge, skills, and abilities to advance their individual interests while pursuing organizational or team goals (Edginton et al.). Kouzes and Posner (1995) further define leadership as the process of building commitment amongst individuals and mobilizing them as they struggle for shared aspirations. Therefore, based on these definitions we can state that the

purpose of leadership is to influence others to achieve their own or the group's goals (Edginton, et al.) which aptly describes the role of a coach and a coach mentor.

Following the defining of leadership the literature will now describe what makes exceptional leaders. Kouzes and Posner (2007) uncovered practices common to personal-best leadership experiences and entitled them; "Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership" (p.14):

Model the Way	Leaders must clarify the values they believe in and then set the example through daily actions that demonstrate their commitment to their beliefs.
Inspire a Shared Vision	Leaders have a vision of exciting possibilities and enlist others in a common vision.
Challenge the Process	Leaders challenge the status quo, searching for ways to innovate, grow, and improve. Experiment and take risks while learning from the experiences.
Enable Others to Act	Leaders foster collaboration and build trust among all those who have a stake in the vision. They empower others and create a sense of ownership.
Encourage the Heart	Leaders show genuine acts of caring and reward individual excellence to motivate others. They also create a culture of celebrating values and victories.

As a leader, the general expectations of a coach are to arouse enthusiasm, direct specific action, demand discipline, arouse positive goal-oriented emotions, resolve

personality differences, and teach skills (Edginton, Hudson, & Scholl, 2005).

Edginton et al. outline more specific functions of a coach in a leadership role (p.109):

- responsibility for liability
- responsibility for the medical fitness of the players
- responsibility for safe facilities
- knowledge of the need for nutrition and hydration
- decisions on the number of games and practices
- knowledge of the rules
- ability to discipline players firmly and fairly
- maintaining personal emotional control
- encouraging and practicing cooperation
- demonstrating loyalty
- exemplifying perseverance
- responsibility for care of injuries

As outlined by the extant literature above, leadership is a very challenging and highly important role with many responsibilities needed to be performed by a coach.

To aid them in performing these responsibilities the coach/leader must select an appropriate approach to leadership or leadership style.

Leadership involves a number of interrelated elements that influence a person's approach to leadership. These elements that influence each other, as identified by Mondy, Holmer, and Flippo (1980) and presented by Edginton et al. (2005), include the leader, the group members, and the setting. The coach, or also a coach mentor, should consider these three elements before choosing the most appropriate approach

to leadership (i.e., leadership style). A discussion of the leader, the group members, and the setting, plus the factors to be considered in each element follows.

Leader:

As previously discussed, a leader influences others to achieve their own or the group's goals. The following list details some of the factors that a leader must consider in the selection of an approach to leadership.

Leader; Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

The coach is the key to moving the group or team towards action and achieving team goals. It is important that coaches consider their own knowledge, skills, and abilities and his or her particular strengths and weaknesses when selecting his or her approach to leadership.

Leader; Need Disposition:

The expectations of the coach as well as their needs, wants, and interests will influence the type of leadership that they choose. For example, achievement or winning oriented coaches have a different motivation than those more socially oriented.

Leader; Experience:

The coach who has developed successful patterns of interaction with individuals within team settings will draw on these proven techniques in the future. Therefore, their previous experience will greatly influence the type of leadership they adopt.

Leader; Style Flexibility:

Style flexibility can be a strength of a coach (i.e., the ability to change their leadership style to meet varying conditions). Other coaches may be more rigid and lack the ability to adapt their basic approach to leadership to meet the conditions.

Leader; Source of Power:

There are five different sources of power for a coach; legitimate or formal, reward, coercive, referent, and expert. The source of power may determine a coach's leadership style. For example, if the coach's only source of power is formal than they will likely use a more task oriented or authoritarian style of leadership than perhaps a coach whose source of power includes intra-personal skills and expertise/experience.

The ability of a coach to accurately evaluate the three elements, leader, group members, and setting will lead to the adoption of an appropriate approach to leadership and ultimately success.

Group:

The coach must consider each team member as well as the characteristics of the team when selecting an appropriate approach to leadership. The coach must have good listening skills and be sensitive to the needs, desires, and expectations of the team if they are to be successful in positively influencing the group.

Group; Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

Each team member possesses different knowledge, skills, and abilities and the coach must have an awareness of each individual's capabilities in order to organize group tasks and maximize the group's resources.

Group; Need Disposition:

Individuals are motivated to join teams because of the opportunities that teams provide for social relations, achievement and increased self-esteem, and personal learning and growth. Understanding the needs, wants, and interests of individual team members, in other words their motivation for joining the team, is essential for the coach when selecting their approach to leadership.

Group; Experience:

The level and type of experience of the team members must be considered by the coach in choosing the appropriate approach to leadership. Prior successful experience by the group will allow the coach to be less directive, whereas, a lack of experience by the group requires the coach to be more authoritarian.

Group; Task-Relevant Maturity:

Task-relevant maturity refers to the ability of the individual team members to set and attain high goals and take responsibility for their actions. The coach should vary their approach to leadership based on the maturity level of the team to complete the task at hand.

Setting:

The term setting refers to the locale within which the sport, leisure or recreation program is being provided. There are three basic types of settings in which sport, leisure and recreation programs are found; public governmental (e.g., municipal park and recreation departments, federal and provincial park departments, museums, and art galleries), nonprofit or non-governmental (e.g., YMCA, YWCA, amateur sport organizations, and local community centres), and commercial/private (e.g.,

amusement parks, fitness clubs, resorts, and professional sports). Each of these settings has unique conditions in terms of specific norms, goals, methods and processes, roles, and social conditions that the coach/leader must be aware of when choosing an approach to leadership.

Once the coach has completed an assessment of himself/herself, the group, and the setting he/she will select the most appropriate approach for leadership. There are three general approaches or leadership styles; autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire. An autocratic leader will dictate orders and determine all policy without involving group members in the decision making process. Democratic leaders request the cooperation of others and will set policies through group discussion and decision. They are more considerate of the group members' feelings and needs, and encourage and help group members to interact. The laissez-faire leader takes a "hands off" approach and does not participate at all in their group's decision making (Johnson & Johnson, 1994).

A popular leadership theory developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1977) suggests that there is no single all purpose leadership style (i.e., autocratic, democratic, or laissez-faire) and that successful leaders are those who adapt their behavior to meet the demands of their situation. Since I agree with Hersey and Blanchard that there is no single all purpose leadership style I will use their Situational Leadership Theory as the "lens" in viewing the coaches' perspectives to determine the most appropriate approach to leadership or leadership style for the coaches in the selected community.

Situational Leadership Theory is based on the amount of direction (task behavior) and the amount of socio-emotional support (relationship behavior) a leader must provide given the situation and performance readiness level of the follower or group. Task and relationship are two important dimensions of leadership behavior and had previously been labeled as autocratic and democratic respectively. Task behavior is the extent to which a leader engages in one way communication by explaining what each task a follower is to do and how it is to be accomplished. Relationship behavior is the extent in which a leader engages in two way communication and provides socio-emotional support (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977).

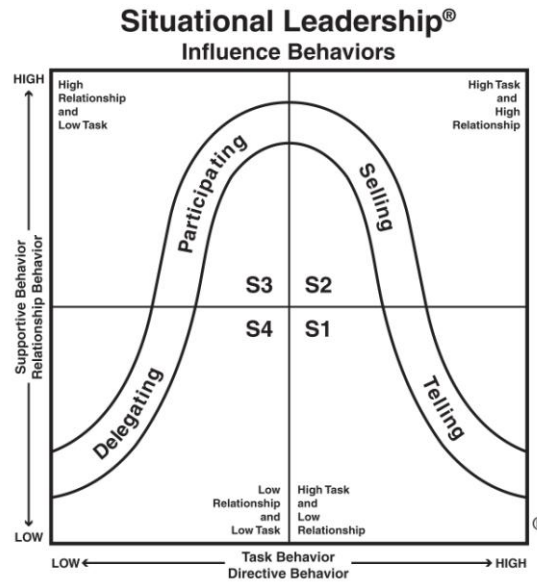
Situational Leadership Theory suggests that effective leadership is not either/or task and relationship but a combination of these dimensions that can be categorized into four basic leader behavior styles (see figure 3); High Task and Low Relationship, High Task and High Relationship, High Relationship and Low Task, and Low Relationship and Low Task. Any of these leader styles can be effective depending on the situation and performance readiness level of the followers. In defining the performance readiness of the followers it is their capacity to set high and attainable goals, confidence, willingness and ability to take responsibility, and their education and/or experiences that are the determining factors (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977). According to Hersey and Blanchard, it is important to note that these variables of readiness should be considered only in relation to a specific task to be performed and that people will have varying levels of performance readiness depending on the specific task the leader is attempting to accomplish.

The basic concept behind Situational Leadership Theory is that as the performance readiness level of the followers continues to increase in accomplishing a specific task, the leader should reduce the amount of task behavior and increase relationship behavior. Figure 3 portrays the relation between task relevant readiness and the appropriate leadership styles to be used as the follower moves from low to high in performance readiness. The bell-shaped curve in figure 3 determines the appropriate leadership style that a leader will choose once they have assessed the degree of readiness of the followers by using the Performance Readiness continuum;

Low:	S1: high task – low relationship
Moderate:	S2: high task – high relationship, or S3: high relationship – low task
High:	S4: low relationship – low task

Figure 3 shows that if the followers have a low readiness level in completing a specific task then an S1 leadership style is most effective (i.e., high task and low relationship). However, as the followers move to an above average level on the performance readiness continuum then the leader should gradually decrease task and also relationship behavior as socio-emotional support is no longer necessary, and use an S4 leadership style (i.e., low relationship and low task). In this situation the follower can provide their own emotional reinforcement, and the reduction of close supervision and increase in delegation by the leader is an indication of trust and confidence (Hersey & Blanchard).

Figure 3. Hersey and Blanchard Situational Leadership



Performance Readiness®

HIGH	MODERATE		LOW
R4	R3	R2	R1
Able and Confident and Willing	← Able but Insecure or Unwilling →	← Unable but Confident or Willing →	← Unable and Insecure or Unwilling →

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According to Hersey and Blanchard (1977), the four leadership styles in Situational Leadership Theory can also be labeled as “telling”, “selling”, “participating”, and “delegating”. S1 can be referred to as “telling” as the communication is mostly one way as the leader defines the roles of the followers and tells them what to do, and how, when, and where to do it rather than providing socio-emotional support. The low relationship behavior does not mean that the leader is not friendly or personable to the follower but the leader spends more time directing the person(s). In S2, the leader is “selling” or attempting through more two-way

communication and socio-emotional support to get the followers to psychologically buy into decisions that have to be made. With this leadership style most of the direction is still provided by the leader. The S3 leadership style is called “participating” because the leaders and followers share in decision making through two way communication since the follower(s) have the ability and knowledge to accomplish the specific task. In S4 the leader “delegates” as the follower(s) are high in performance readiness and are willing and able to take responsibility for directing their own behavior.

Situational Leadership is one leadership theory that is useful in a sport context as it can be directly applied to a coach-athlete or a coach-mentor relationship. In a coach-athlete relationship for example, once the coach has an understanding of the athlete's ability, confidence and willingness to perform a specific task (i.e., their performance readiness level) then the coach can use Situational Leadership Theory to choose a leadership style that provides the right balance of task behavior and relationship behavior for the situation. Situational Leadership Theory however, does not consider all situational variables that a coach might encounter in the coach-athlete relationship (e.g., special issues that the coach has to deal with such as their athletes not receiving the proper nutrition, not supported from home, etc). Contingency Theory of Leadership, therefore, could also be useful in helping a coach choose an appropriate leadership style. Contingency Theory is similar to Situational Leadership Theory as they both suggest that there is no single leadership style appropriate for all situations. The main difference between the two theories is that Situational Leadership Theory focuses more on certain behaviors that the leader should adopt

given situational factors such as the follower's performance readiness level, whereas, Contingency Theory takes a broader view that considers contingent factors about leader capability and other variables within the situation. Vroom and Yetton's Normative Model of Leadership Style is an example of a Contingency Theory which emphasizes that leadership behavior must be adapted in accordance to demands or variables within the situation (Vroom & Yetton, 1973).

Coaching Resources

The *Aboriginal Coaching Reference Material* (2003) was published by the Aboriginal Sport Circle in partnership with the Coaching Association of Canada and Sport Canada. The reference material was a response to Aboriginal coaches' desire for reference material that reflects Aboriginal cultures, values, and lifestyle.

The *Aboriginal Coaching Reference Material* was developed as a supplement to the National Coaching Certification Program in order to (Aboriginal Coaching Reference Material, 2003, p.iii):

- provide culturally relevant courses for Aboriginal coaches and athletes
- increase the accessibility of the N.C.C.P. to Aboriginal coaches
- increase the capacity of non-Native coaches to coach Aboriginal athletes
- improve the quality of the sport experience for Aboriginal athletes
- increase the number of Aboriginal certified coaches
- improve the understanding of the application of Aboriginal culture in sport and coaching
- make the wisdom of Aboriginal culture available to mainstream sport

The *Aboriginal Coaching Reference Material* contains three chapters: A Holistic

Approach to Coaching; Dealing with Racism in Sport; and Lifestyle, Health and Nutrition.

A Holistic Approach to Coaching emphasizes the importance of creating a positive and safe sport environment where athletes can talk, trust, and feel. This chapter describes the Medicine Wheel which is an ancient symbol used by many Aboriginal Peoples of the North American Plains to help provide purpose and understanding to their lives. The Medicine Wheel is divided into four quadrants or directions and one of its fundamental principles is that harmony and balance in all four directions is the goal of learning and change. The Medicine Wheel represents “a view of life that is whole and shows the interdependence of all facets of life” (Aboriginal Coaching Reference Material, 2003, p. 2). The four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel are physical, mental – emotional and intellectual, cultural, and spiritual and a holistic approach seeks to find balance in each of these aspects for the coach and athlete. “The holistic teachings inspired by the Medicine Wheel can be powerful tools to help a coach better understand the whole individual and provide ways to influence positive, holistic change” (Aboriginal Coaching Reference Material, 2003, p. 9). It is important that a coach must first apply these holistic teachings in their own life before they can offer the teachings to their athletes.

Values, defined by the Aboriginal Coaching Reference Material as deeply held beliefs, are also an important traditional Aboriginal teaching and holistic tool to help coaches and athletes develop a positive self image and provide a guideline for sport and life. The Aboriginal Coaching Reference Material states that there are four pillars of values reinforced in some Aboriginal communities; Respect, Integrity, Honesty,

and Trust. In this document it is suggested that coaches live by the teachings of the four pillars and consistently put these values into action if they wish to have their athletes model good behavior and make positive lifestyle choices.

The second chapter in the Aboriginal Coaching Reference Material (2003) addresses racism in sport and emphasizes the coach's role in creating an environment where racism is not tolerated. This chapter provides good examples of positive responses to acts of racism and provides guidelines to assist the coach in creating a positive environment through the development of a code of conduct and establishing positive and meaningful coach-family relationships. Based on Robidoux's work, it is evident that issues of racism arise in Aboriginal sport. Therefore, this information is very important to assist coaches in properly handling these difficult situations.

Chapter 3 focuses on the unique lifestyle, health situations and challenges that Aboriginal athletes face. The first recommendation made for coaches of Aboriginal athletes is to gain an understanding of the community where they coach by looking, listening, and feeling the community spirit in order to know the environment and challenges that they and the athletes may encounter. This will help the coach to identify the resources available and the needs, and establish realistic expectations of what might or might not be accomplished.

This chapter addresses the health and lifestyle issues that have become common among many Aboriginal Peoples due to the effects of history; that is, changing the Aboriginal hunter-gatherer lifestyle, European diseases, confinement on reserves, changed diet, and introduction of alcohol. These health and lifestyle issues also include physical inactivity, obesity, type II diabetes, hepatitis B, childhood asthma,

fetal alcohol syndrome, tobacco, alcohol and substance abuse, sexual activity, and gang activity. Important guidelines are provided for the coach to recognize these issues and know how and when it is appropriate to intervene. For example, the need to intervene should be determined by whether or not there is a threat to the athlete's health, safety, or welfare, and as a coach, their primary role is to identify signals and then follow up with family and community professionals (Aboriginal Coaches Reference Material, 2003). The chapter concludes with a coaches guide to nutrition for Aboriginal young people, and an emphasis on the importance of a proper diet and hydration for the well being of the athlete.

The Aboriginal Coaches Reference Material (2003) is an excellent resource for non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal Peoples, including those who may be unfamiliar with Aboriginal Peoples' traditional ways, as it provides an overview of a holistic approach to coaching. The reference material also provides coaches with practical responses to incidents of racism, addresses current health issues among Aboriginal Peoples, and emphasizes the importance of nutrition and hydration for athletes. Upon reviewing the reference material, I felt that my capacity to coach Aboriginal athletes had been greatly enhanced although I realize that the information was generalized and that distinct differences exist among various Aboriginal cultures and contexts. The reference material is generic for coaching and does not contain sport specific tactical/technical information which is provided by Hockey Canada's National Coaching Certification Program.

In my opinion, Hockey Canada is an international leader in producing high quality of hockey development resource materials including videos, manuals, books,

and clinics. Recently, Hockey Canada has re-designed the National Coaching Certification Program for hockey in an effort to deliver coaching education activities that will allow the coaches to have a more meaningful and positive impact on their athletes. There are several key changes from the previous N.C.C.P (Hockey Canada National Coaching Certification Program Development 2 Reference Manual, 2004, p. 4):

- coaches have the opportunity to attend educational sessions that are targeted to meet the needs of the athletes in the particular stream that the coach is working e.g., Coach (community, recreational); Developmental (provincial, regional); High Performance (national, international).
- the coaches receive coaching materials/tools that are practical and easy to implement with their players and allow for a transition from theory-based lecture activities to interactive sessions with their teams.
- the new program is learner-driven and the coach will become an active learner before, during, and after the educational seminar.
- the coaches participating in the N.C.C.P. will be required through a series of practical assignments to demonstrate their capabilities as a coach therefore, the new program is more competency-based.
- the N.C.C.P. has adopted an athlete-centered approach to training coaches which means that the coaching needs are defined by the needs of the athletes they are working with.

In Hockey Canada's new N.C.C.P., coaches attend an educational session/clinic in their respective coaching stream (i.e., Coach, Developmental, or High

Performance). For the Coach stream (i.e., for coaches at the recreational or community level) the coaches attend a one day clinic in which they receive a basic understanding of the following coaching concepts (Hockey Canada Coach Stream Learning Log Workbook, 2004, p. 2):

- utilizing effective and efficient practice plans and yearly plans
- designing a communication plan and conducting effective meetings with players and parents
- defining a personal code of ethics to guide your coaching
- teaching key technical hockey skills and detecting and correcting player error in the execution of these fundamental skills

At the conclusion of the clinic the coaches receive the Coach Stream Learning Logbook which is a tool to guide their learning and help them to gain the most from their coaching experiences during the hockey season. To adhere to the competency-based philosophy of the new N.C.C.P., the coaches are required to maintain the logbook throughout the season and complete the required tasks prior to receiving N.C.C.P. certification. The coaches also receive the Hockey Canada Skills Development Manual (1998) which is a series of pre-designed practice plans for the age group in which they are coaching. The practice plans are divided into three phases and cover the technical and tactical skills, and team play concepts that are recommended by Hockey Canada to be taught at that age group.

Hockey Canada's National Coaching Certification Program Development 1 Coach Workbook, and Coach Stream Learning Log Workbook (2004) in my opinion, are tremendous resources for the community level coach. They cover the basic but

essential topics that a coach needs to operate an effective hockey program and provide a positive experience for the athletes. The competency-based philosophy ensures that the coaches effectively apply the information received from the clinic to their practical coaching context. The competency-based approach has corrected a recognized weakness of the former N.C.C.P. where the clinic participants received the information but no “follow up” process was in place to evaluate the coaches’ capabilities in applying the information. The Hockey Canada Skills Development Manual (1998) is an ideal supplement to the N.C.C.P. as it provides the coaches with well-designed, age appropriate practice plans containing drills that are clearly described and illustrated, and the practice plans follow a progression that is consistent with a hockey seasonal plan.

Based on my experiences as a coach mentor with the hockey coaches in this study whom I witnessed using the resources, and my confidence in the validity of the material, I believe that the Aboriginal Coaching Reference Material and Hockey Canada’s N.C.C.P. and Skills Development Manual should continue to play an integral role in Aboriginal hockey coaching education programs. The perspectives of the coaches from this study, however should determine if there is a link between these resources and what they consider to be relevant and meaningful for coach education development in their community.

Chapter III: Method

Research Design

Grounded in a qualitative tradition, a case study approach was used in this study, with individual interviews with the youth hockey coaches from the selected community as the method for collecting data. Following the completion of data analysis the coaches participated in a collective member checking process to confirm, reject, or add to the researcher's interpretations of the collected data. Leadership theory, in particular, Situational Leadership Theory was the conceptual framework or "lens" through which the data were interpreted. Leadership was chosen because it is prevalent in all aspects of sport especially in the athlete-coach and mentor-coach relationships.

Qualitative researchers "seek to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved" (Merriam, 1998, p. 11). Further, the methods used in qualitative research are open ended with the intention of learning from the participants, first hand, about their experiences, perspectives and understandings about the issue or topic of focus (Jupp, 2006). A qualitative approach is therefore consistent with the aim of seeking from the perspectives of coaches in the selected community a deeper understanding of the significance of hockey in the community and identifying content and delivery methods for optimizing coaching education in ways that were relevant and meaningful within the context of the selected community.

According to Schinke, Bodgett, Ritchie, Pickard, Michel and Peltier (2009), qualitative research is often the tradition of choice when conducting research in some

First Nations communities because its open ended and holistic methods for generating information are consistent with the value of oral communication in many Aboriginal cultures. The centrality of oral histories in these cultures suggests that qualitative approaches as opposed to data collection strategies that rely on fixed responses to narrowly constructed questions are more culturally appropriate (Schinke et al.).

Of the five qualitative approaches to inquiry cited by Creswell (2007), this study used a case study methodology. "Case study research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system, i.e., a setting, a context" (Creswell, p. 73). Patton (2002) expands on this by stating that cases can be individuals, groups, neighborhoods, programs, organizations, or cultures. For this study, the issue was youth hockey and hockey coaching education, and the case was a group of Aboriginal hockey coaches bounded by the context of their rural First Nations community in Manitoba's Interlake region.

Case studies are employed to gain in-depth understanding of an issue and what it means to those involved. The insights gained can directly influence policy, practice, and future research (Merriam, 1998). Merriam's definition is very applicable to this study as the results could influence practice such that the development of future hockey coaching education better reflects the specific needs and interests of the end user. Patton (1990) provides another applicable definition of a case study; a case study allows the researcher to describe the people involved, the environment, and the activities all from the perspectives of those involved in the program being studied. A case study, therefore, was selected as the method for attaining the purpose of the study.

Merriam (1998) outlines several types of case studies that are categorized by their overall intent (e.g., descriptive, interpretive, to build theory). Interpretive case studies contain thick, rich description and are used to gather as much information as possible to analyze, interpret or theorize about a phenomenon (Merriam). Since hockey and its significance in the community was an overarching interest in the study, an interpretive approach was deemed to be the most appropriate type of case study because of the in-depth description it could provide to satisfy that interest.

The Participants

A purposeful sampling approach was used to select participants for the study. “Purposeful sampling 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, 1998, p. 61). Volunteer coaches presently involved in the youth hockey program in the selected community were invited to participate because their experiences provided the best insight into the significance of hockey in their community and identifying content and delivery methods for optimal coaching education in their community. The participants represent a homogeneous purposeful sampling as individuals with only similar attributes (e.g., Aboriginal, active coaches, local residents) were used in the study (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2006).

Recruitment

I purposefully chose a community that I knew and have an already established rapport with the youth hockey program. A key community member, who serves as the contact for the community's youth hockey program, was asked to participate in the

selection of the research participants and assisted in their recruitment by providing contact information and encouraging participation (see Appendix A: Letter to Community Contact). The selection criteria were that the participants must be Aboriginal, reside in the selected community, participated in the Sport Manitoba pilot and coach mentorship programs, and be actively coaching in the youth hockey program in the selected community for the 2009-10 season. This resulted in the selection of four coaches which represented 80% of the coaches in the youth hockey program. A thorough description of each coach is provided in the Findings Chapter while Table 2 provides an overview.

Table 2. Selected Participants

Participants (pseudonyms)	Angela	William	John	Ted
Gender	Female	Male	Male	Male
Age	40	37	43	35
N.C.C.P. Level	*Coach	Coach	Coach	Coach
Coaching Experience (seasons)	6	10	3	0

* Coach is a pre-level to N.C.C.P. Level 1

A letter was sent to each of the coaches providing an outline of the study's purpose, approximate amount of time required to complete the individual interview, plans for using the results from the study, and inviting them to participate (see Appendix B: Letter to Coaches). A follow up phone call was made to each coach to further discuss the study, confirm their participation and schedule the individual interview time, date and location.

Ethics and Confidentiality

The study reflected appropriate ethical standards in regards to informed consent, protection from physical and emotional harm, and confidentiality. “Informed consent means that participants have been given information about procedures and risks involved in the study and have been informed that their participation is voluntary and they have the right to withdraw from the study without repercussions” (Lodico et al. 2006, p. 147). The qualitative nature of this study and the setting for the individual interviews did not place the coaches in a physically harmful situation nor did the line of questioning create emotional distress. The ethical standards were reviewed in-person prior to the individual interviews and the coaches were asked to sign a consent-to-participate form (see Appendix C: Informed Consent and Assent Form).

The collective member checking process used to confirm, reject or add to the researcher's interpretations, and the detailed description of the coaches and their context in the final report made it difficult to keep confidentiality but this was attempted (Lodico et al.). The coaches were asked not to divulge to anyone the names of the persons participating in the collective group meeting or what was said in the meeting. Complete confidentiality of all records was maintained as no responses were connected to any individual participant or the community by name. Only the researcher had access to the audio-recordings, full transcriptions and notes, which were kept in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's secure office at the Max Bell Centre, University of Manitoba. Upon the completion of the study's final report, all written transcriptions and notes were shredded, and computer files and audiotapes erased by July, 2010.

Data Collection

Individual interviews with Aboriginal youth hockey coaches from a First Nations community in Manitoba's Interlake region were used to collect the data required to achieve the purpose of the study. The interviews were conducted in the conference room of the Anishinaabe Child and Family Services office located in the participating community. This location was chosen because of its familiarity to the coaches who participated in the Sport Manitoba pilot and coach mentorship programs, which were held in the same conference room. The interviews varied in length from sixty to seventy five minutes.

According to Kvale (1996), "the qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects' points of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations" (p. 1). Patton expands on this definition by stating that "qualitative research begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit" (Patton, 1990, p. 278). Interviews are conducted to find out from people those things we cannot observe such as feelings, thoughts, points of view, and how they interpret the meaning of their experiences. "We have to ask people about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective" (Patton, 1990, p. 196).

Interview Guide

An interview guide approach was used to converse with the coaches during the individual interviews. In this approach a list of topics to be explored were prepared in advance to ensure that the discussions with the coaches revolved around the same

basic topics. "The interview guide provides topics or subject areas within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject" (Patton, 1990, p. 283). As such, the interview was developed to reflect a conversational approach with the interviewer having the flexibility to word questions spontaneously while maintaining focus on the topic. The advantage of the interview guide is that it provides a framework to make the interview more systematic and comprehensive by determining in advance the topics to be explored thus allowing the interviewer to get the most out of the limited interview time (Patton, 1990).

The questions asked in the interviews for this study were predominantly open ended in nature. An open-ended question means that the respondent supplies their own words, thoughts, and insights in answering the questions. The advantage of open ended questions is that they yield in-depth responses about people's experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings, and knowledge (Patton, 2002). Probing questions were also used in appropriate places within the interviews. "Probes are used to deepen the response to a question, to increase the richness of the data being obtained, and to give cues to the interviewee about the level of response that is desired" (Patton, 1990, p. 324). Probes were used to solicit greater detail about activities and experiences mentioned by the coaches and/or to seek clarification on the coaches' response.

For a sample of the topics included in the interview guide see Table 3. Please refer to Appendix D for the complete interview guide designed for this study, which was based on guidelines recommended by Patton (1990). All questions and

discussions were audio-recorded and notes were taken during the interviews to maintain a complete record of the proceedings (Patton, 1990).

Table 3. Topics and Sample Questions for Interview Guide

A. Describing the context (i.e., significance of hockey in the community):

Describing the youth hockey players: age? skill level? interest in hockey?

How is hockey perceived in the community - value? importance? why or why not?

What do the coaches see as the strengths of the youth hockey program? challenges?

B. Identifying key elements (content and delivery methods) for optimal coaching education that is relevant and meaningful to the community:

How did the coaches learn to play hockey - coach? was it in the same community?

What content should be included in coaching education? delivery approaches?

resource materials?

What did the coaches think of the pilot and coach mentor programs - likes? dislikes?

C. Discussion closure:

What do the coaches believe are the key elements for optimal hockey coaching education? Anything that the coaches would like to add?

Data Management

Data Analysis

The interpretive function of the researcher in the analysis of the data collected from the interviews was to write a thick, rich description that provided a deeper understanding about the significance of hockey in the life of a rural First Nations community, and to provide insight categorized into themes, to identify content and

delivery methods for optimal coaching education that is relevant and meaningful to the community.

Data analysis involves making sense out of what people have said, looking for patterns, and integrating the statements made by different people in the interview process (Patton, 1990). For a case study, analysis consists of making a detailed description of the case and its setting (Creswell, 2007). Following the transcription of the individual interview audio-recordings verbatim, a thick, rich descriptive account of the significance of hockey within the context of the selected community was written from the coaches' perspective. According to Patton, "thick, rich description provides the foundation for qualitative analysis and reporting. Good description takes the reader into the setting being described" (2002, p. 437). Therefore, the thick, rich description should contain as much information as possible.

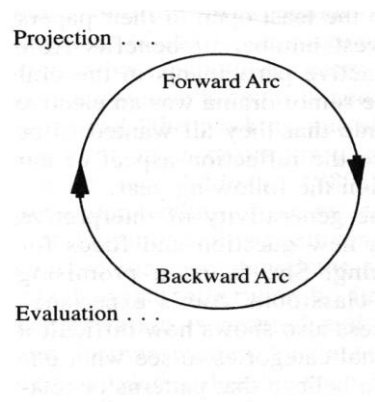
Next, a thematic approach was used to analyze the coaches' perspectives on content and delivery methods for optimal coaching education specific to needs and interests in their community. Thematic analysis involved taking the coaches' perspectives, in the form of statements transcribed from the individual interviews, and grouping them into themes that captured recurring patterns that cut across the data (Merriam, 1998). This was done by reading and re-reading the statements using the hermeneutic circle. The hermeneutic circle is described in the following section.

Acknowledging Pre-Existing Assumptions and Ideas

As discussed in the Introduction chapter, my extensive involvement in hockey as a player, coach, and administrator, and past experiences working with the hockey coaches participating in this study, resulted in a high level of "concerned

engagement” within the study. As such, it was important to make transparent my pre-existing assumptions and ideas stemming from this concerned engagement that would influence my interpretations of the data collected in the study. Therefore, I used the hermeneutic circle in the data analysis process to establish confirmability of my interpretations. Ellis (1998) describes the hermeneutic circle as having a forward and backward arc. In the forward arc the researcher uses their fore-structure (i.e., existing preconceptions, pre-understandings, or prejudices including purposes, interests, and values) to make initial sense of the research participant, text, or data (Ellis). In the backward arc the researcher conducts an evaluation process of their initial interpretation by “re-examining the data for confirmation, contradictions, gaps or inconsistencies” (Ellis, p. 26). In other words, the backward arc is a deliberative process to uncover what may have been “unseen” or overlooked in the analysis.

Figure 4. The Hermeneutic Circle (Ellis, p. 27):



Note. From *Teaching from Understanding: Teacher as Interpretive Inquirer* (p. 27), by J. Ellis, 1998, New York, NY: Garland Publishing, Inc. Copyright 1998 by Taylor & Francis Group. Reprinted with permission.

Projection...entails making sense of a research participant, situation, or a set of data by drawing on one's fore-structure, which is the current product of one's autobiography (beliefs, values, interests, interpretative frameworks) and one's relationship to the question or problem (pre-understandings and concerned engagement).

Evaluation...entails endeavoring to see what went unseen in the initial interpretation resulting from projection. The data are re-examined for contradictions, gaps, omissions, or confirmations of the initial interpretation. Alternate interpretative frameworks are purposefully searched for and "tried on" (Ellis, 1998, p. 27).

A journal was also used to articulate my thoughts and experiences so that I was conscience of my fore-structure and therefore, aware of "taken-for-granted assumptions about the way life is or should be" (Ellis, 1998, p. 31). This also included my expectations as to what might be found in the data as well as assumptions about the coaches prior to the interviews. Acknowledging pre-existing assumptions and ideas through the use of the hermeneutic circle and a journal helped ensure that the findings/interpretations have earned their way into the analysis and that they are not an extension of pre-existing assumptions or ideas (see Appendix E: Researcher's Fore-structure).

Managing the Data

To manage the data in a systematic and effective manner, I followed the Transcript-Based Analysis process steps described by Krueger (1994). The individual interviews were audio-recorded and notes were taken during the conversations. The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim then the recordings, transcripts and

field notes were stored in a locked cabinet in my office for future analysis. When the data analysis process commenced each individual transcript and accompanying field notes were divided into two areas; understanding the significance of hockey in the selected community, and identifying content and delivery methods for optimal coaching education that is relevant and meaningful to the community. Next, for each area I listened to the interviews and reviewed the transcripts and field notes looking for emerging themes. The hermeneutic circle was used during the process of identifying themes. Coding categories were developed and index cards were used to sort the data into categories. For example, in a category entitled "Content to Include in Coaching Education" a sample of themes included leadership, nutrition, and power skating.

Once the data were coded into categories then the analysis was diagramed (see Appendix F: Analysis Diagram). The next step was to examine the data that were left out of the interpretation and consider revisions, if appropriate, for accurately and fully reflecting the data gathered in relation to the purpose of the investigation. I also included some additional information that arose from discussions with the coaches during the collective member checking process (see p. 69) that strengthened the findings.

Quality of Analysis

Patton (1990) suggests that the task to conduct high quality analysis is to make sense out of things; "a qualitative analyst returns to the data over and over again to see if the constructs, categories, explanations, and interpretations make sense, if they really reflect the nature of the phenomena" (p. 477). Lincoln and Guba (1985) use

four criteria to measure the quality of the analysis; credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility refers to the confidence in the “truth” of the findings. One approach to fulfill this standard in this study was the triangulation of data sources (i.e., four coaches). The interview guide used in data collection also contributed to credibility by including probes at the end of each interview that enabled the participants to summarize key points (e.g., what do the coaches believe are the key elements for optimal hockey coaching education? anything that the coaches would like to add?). The coaches did not offer many comments during the closure probes other than one coach who reinforced the need for “respect in sport.”

Following collection and initial analysis of the data, the coaches' were asked to participate in a collective meeting for the purpose of member checking to further affirm credibility in the study's findings. Member checking gives the study participants the opportunity to confirm, reject, or add to the interpretations made by the researcher from the data collected in the individual interviews (Stake, 1995). Three of the four coaches who participated in the individual interviews attended a sixty minute meeting at the Anishinaabe Child and Family Services office. Using a flipchart, I presented my interpretations of the data collected and the coaches were given the opportunity to comment (i.e., confirm, reject, or add to the interpretations). In the meeting the coaches agreed with all of the interpretations which again affirmed the credibility of the study. The coaches did add further perspectives and stories to strengthen the findings and these are presented in a subsequent chapter.

Transferability shows that the findings have applicability in other contexts. By

using thick, rich description to describe a case in sufficient detail, the findings can then be evaluated to determine if they are transferable to other settings, situations, and people (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A value of this study is that the findings related to optimal coaching education might be transferred to other communities that may share a similar context to the one described for the selected community.

Dependability shows that the findings are consistent and can be repeated. Lincoln & Guba (1985) suggest that external audits can be used as a technique to measure dependability. A problem with using an external auditor is that they cannot know the data as well as the researcher immersed in the study and consequently, may not agree with the interpretations. This leads to confusion as the question of who is right becomes an issue (Qualitative Research Guidelines Project, 2009). For this study an external auditor was not involved, rather, member checking was used to ensure that the findings were dependable.

Confirmability is the degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings reflect the participants' perspective and not the researcher's bias, motivation, or interest (Qualitative Research Guidelines Project, 2009). As previously discussed in the data analysis section, the study used the hermeneutic circle and a journal for reflexivity (i.e., an effort to make transparent the researcher's pre-existing assumptions and to ensure that the interpretations earned their way into the findings). The inclusion of numerous narratives and stories from the coaches to accurately represent their perspectives also helped to confirm the findings.

Aboriginal Ethics and Research

In Aboriginal research, ethics plays a very important role. Brant Castellano (2004)

suggests that reciprocal relationships and collective validation of knowledge are two valued ethics in some Aboriginal societies. According to Brant Castellano, a reciprocal relationship means:

That all aspects of the world we know have life and spirit and that humans have an obligation to learn the rules of relating to the world with respect. We enter into mutual dialogue with the many people and other beings with whom we share the world (p. 104).

In an Aboriginal research context, this means that it is important for the researcher to develop a reciprocal relationship with the research participant in the sharing of knowledge. Brant Castellano (2004) states that often in an attempt to seek objectivity, the researcher violates this ethic by maintaining a distance from the participant. Consequently, attempts to understand Aboriginal life by using an objective, short term, outsider vantage point has produced much research that Aboriginal Peoples do not accept as legitimately portraying their reality. Wilson (2001) believes that Indigenous research methodologies should be grounded in relationships (i.e., reciprocity, interdependence, and interrelatedness between individuals).

Paraschak, Heine, and McAra (1995) also recognized the importance of developing reciprocal relationships in order to attain the legitimacy necessary to conduct research within an Aboriginal community. They described examples of strategies used by some researchers to develop reciprocal relationships and attain legitimacy in northern Aboriginal communities that led to the community's participation in a research study. When one researcher went to a Northern community to complete her fieldwork, she began by offering to teach gymnastics in the school.

She lived in the homes of Aboriginal Peoples and participated in community activities like making mukluks with the older women, and helped organize regional sport competitions. "Thus she worked towards legitimacy by first letting people get to know her on their terms, rather than asserting her legitimacy on academic grounds" (Paraschak et al., p. 64).

Gallagher (2003) provides another example of a reciprocal relationship during his study on traditional knowledge pertaining to fisheries in Lake Nipigon. Gallagher worked alongside the "fishers" on a boat and discovered first hand how difficult their job was, while admitting his own deficiencies in the job of a deckhand. By carefully observing the fishers work habits his job performance improved and he began to earn the trust and respect of the fishers. As a result, "the knowledge fishers possessed flowed more freely when they felt that I earned the knowledge" (Gallagher, p.188).

Collective validation is an Aboriginal way of ensuring that individual perceptions are validated by community dialogue and reflection before they become collective knowledge (Brant Castellano, 2004). Some Aboriginal societies respect individual vision however, it is the function of the community councils responsible for family or community affairs to validate individual perceptions before they became collected knowledge which is the basis for collective action (Brant Castellano). The researcher working in certain Aboriginal communities must respect this ethic of collective validation and seek information from those members who are authorized to express the collective knowledge of the community.

Brant Castellano (2004) provides good insight into research ethics that are important to some Aboriginal cultures. Aboriginal ethics related to reciprocal

relationships (also referred to by Wilson, Paraschak et al., and Gallagher) and collective validation of knowledge must be respected by researchers to limit the risks and maximize the benefit of research to Aboriginal communities. These ethics were respected and helped guide the research methods used in this study. For example, I worked towards legitimacy and earning the trust of the coaches in the selected community by visiting the community several times before the study was conducted to mentor the coaches and players in the youth hockey program. To respect collective validation, prior to and throughout the study I communicated with the key community member who served as the community's youth hockey coordinator and held a collective member checking meeting with the coaches to present my interpretations of the data.

Aboriginal Research Methods

Schinke is a non Aboriginal sport psychologist who has participated in many bicultural research projects, mostly with the Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve in Northern Ontario. In working with the Wikwemikong, Schinke has learned effective research methods that have resulted in successful bi-cultural research projects. Tuhiwai Smith (1999) defines bi-cultural research as a model of research that involves both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers working on a research project and shaping that project together.

According to Schinke, Hanrahan, Eys, Blodgett, Peltier and Ritchie (2008) the Wikwemikong had developed a distrust for research from their previous research experiences. The Wikwemikong had been "researched" before by mainstream academics who met with community members a few times to collect data and then

provided no follow-up or report to the community of their findings, and presented the knowledge to the mainstream academia as their own. Schinke and his colleagues may have alleviated the concerns of the Wikwemikong from their previous experiences with research by using research methods more aligned with local Aboriginal practices. The effective research methods used by Schinke and associates that were implemented in this study included: using a community member to help in the selection and recruitment of participants; the selection of a research topic that was perceived as being real and of value to the community; using research methods in the data collection process and language/terminology that was relevant and meaningful to the selected community; developing reciprocal relationships based on trust and honesty; and making a commitment to present the research findings back to the community and to Sport Manitoba in ways that are useful to them. Weber-Pillwax (2001), an Aboriginal researcher, also advocates that “Indigenous research has to benefit the community” (p. 169).

By using effective research methods that integrate community culture and practices with mainstream research both the researcher and the intended Aboriginal community benefit. For the mainstream researcher, their research is more likely to truly represent the specific culture and consequently, affirm credibility (Schinke, et al., 2008).

Chapter IV: Findings

The findings are presented in two sections that reflect the stated purpose of this study (see Appendix F: Analysis Diagram). In the first section a thick, rich description drawn from the coaches' perspectives from Part A of the interview guide was used to describe the coaches, and provide an understanding of the significance of hockey in the life of the selected community. In chronicling the significance coaches attributed to hockey in their community the discussion included: the strengths of the youth hockey program, opportunities and challenges faced by the coaches, supports and barriers for children to participate, and the hockey program's support network.

In the second section, thematic analysis of the coaches' perspectives from Part B and C of the interview guide was used to identify content and delivery methods for optimal coaching education that is relevant and meaningful to the community. These findings include: what a new coach in the community needs to coach hockey; content to be included in coaching education; and effective delivery approaches.

This chapter also incorporates the results of the collective meeting used for member checking that helps to affirm the credibility of the study's findings. Additionally, through the chapter numerous stories and narratives from the coaches are used to capture their passion and to ensure that the coaches' perspectives are accurately presented.

Describing the Coaches

Based on my experiences as a coach mentor in the selected community, the quality of the coaches is one of the central strengths in the community's youth hockey program. They have a passion for the game as evident by their enthusiasm on the ice,

they have a willingness to learn, and they demonstrate a sincere interest in the well being of the youth in their community. This sincere interest was evident in the individual interviews, which I have attempted to convey through the narratives and stories shared by the coaches.

The following section provides a description of the coaches (using pseudonyms) including how they learned to play hockey, how they learned to coach, and how long they have been coaching. This is important context as it helps to understand the coaches' previous learning experiences and how this has influenced their perspectives on hockey, how they coach, and coaching education programs.

William first learned how to skate and play hockey with his uncles on the lake in his home First Nations community which is adjacent to the selected community. When he was eight he played his first organized hockey game on an outdoor rink at his school in a rural community approximately ten kilometres from his home community. William then played three years on a team his uncle formed for players aged 10 to 12 in his home community. The team would play games but they received very basic coaching instruction and did not have any structured practices; instead the players would practice on their own on the outdoor rink in the community. William's uncle would have the players over to his house on occasion to watch hockey games on television where he would point out tactics used by the teams and individual players. William stated, "We would have a Hockey Night in Canada night, we would watch hockey and he would show us on the television, 'See here is what they are doing, look how he's taking the puck.'" William would later have an opportunity to

play high school hockey in a Northern Manitoba community followed by two seasons of playing an elite level of junior hockey in a large urban centre.

When William started to coach youth hockey he drew on his experiences playing high school and junior hockey and used drills and tactics that he learned from the coaches/role models at those levels. He furthered his coaching education through the Sport Manitoba pilot project and the coach mentorship program delivered in his community. He often utilizes the reference material (e.g., manuals and DVDs produced by Hockey Canada) that were distributed at the pilot program. William has been coaching youth hockey in the selected community and a neighbouring community for ten years.

Ted also learned to play hockey outdoors by skating on frozen dugouts in his home First Nations community near the selected community. His community did not have an indoor ice arena but he used to play hockey in an open ice program at an arena in a nearby community. He did eventually have an opportunity to play organized youth hockey on a school team in his community and played hockey until he was 12 years old. Like William, Ted used observation of hockey games on television to learn more about the game.

Ted is a new coach in the youth hockey program of the selected community. He finds himself looking back to his previous experience with a former coach/role model to guide his current coaching behavior. "I just remember him being so positive and it wasn't always about winning. I think he would probably be the one who influenced me a lot. When I was asked to coach minor hockey, that is one person who stood out the most, it was Bob."

Angela is a female coach who never really played hockey with the exception of a few recreational tournaments. She began coaching 6 years ago when her son became interested in youth hockey and a volunteer was needed to keep the program going in the selected community. The previous coaches were no longer interested in coaching because their children had grown too old for the program.

Angela learned to coach by starting with the introductory level of the National Coaching Certification Program for hockey. She was the only female attending the clinic along with 40 men and found the experience to be quite intimidating. "I thought that my community is relying on me and I have to do this regardless if I'm feeling intimidated. I couldn't just stop and back off just because I was the only female." Angela noted that in the short time since that clinic, she had noticed more women now involved in coaching. Angela also participated in the Sport Manitoba pilot program and coach mentorship program and credits those initiatives for motivating her as a coach. Through observation of a coach mentor and reading the manuals received from Sport Manitoba and Hockey Manitoba she was learning daily about coaching.

John is the fourth coach in the study and like Angela never played organized hockey. John was from a low income, single parent family so they never had the resources to buy hockey equipment but he did like skating. John really didn't have an interest in playing hockey in his youth anyways because of some negative experiences his peers encountered while playing hockey. He made a reference to racism when he stated, "In the past it wasn't fair for First Nations people. My peers would go and play hockey and come home hurt and say the ref cheated us out."

John first learned to coach from his participation in other sports and through observation of hockey games on television and listening to Don Cherry on Hockey Night in Canada. "I wouldn't just watch the players, I would watch the coaches and how they would govern the players." John also participated in the Sport Manitoba pilot program and coach mentorship program and has been actively coaching hockey in the selected community for three years.

In summary, two of the coaches, William and Ted, initially learned to play hockey through informal, unstructured activity. They learned to skate and play hockey with family members and friends on a lake or on dugouts, and they noted that this was the same in every community in the area. They had the opportunity to later play in a structured hockey program on elementary school teams, although it was acknowledged that the coaching they received was very basic. William would eventually move to larger communities to compete at the high school and junior hockey level. Angela only played hockey in a few recreational tournaments and John never learned to play hockey due to the economic barrier and some negative experiences of his peers.

The three male coaches commented that they learned about hockey and coaching by analyzing the games on television. From watching "Hockey Night in Canada" they learned the rules, tactics, and how coaches conducted themselves on the bench. William and Ted referred to their experiences with previous coaches/role models as positive influences that have guided their current coaching behavior. All the coaches participated in the Sport Manitoba pilot program and coach mentorship program delivered in the selected community and credited these programs as providing a very

positive influence in their coaching development. According to Angela, "With the mentor programs in place, that really helped the coaches."

Understanding Hockey Within the Community

The Importance of Hockey

"The Principal is saying, 'William, what are you doing to the children?

They are behaving and their attitudes have changed! What are you guys doing over there?' (quote from William describing the importance of hockey to his community).

All four of the coaches clearly indicated that, in their opinion, hockey has a large and positive impact in the community, perhaps most noticeably in the school system. There is an increasing interest from parents in the selected community to have their children participate in the youth hockey program because of a perceived improvement in attitude and grades for those players in the hockey program. The hockey coaches all adhere to a philosophy that negative behavior or attitudes at school result in the player losing the privilege to participate in a hockey practice or a weekend of games. Consequently, the hockey players are displaying a positive behavior change resulting in improved attendance and fewer incidences of students being sent home or receiving detention because of bad behavior as had frequently occurred in the past. According to William, "We're starting to get calls from Manitoba River (pseudonym) and the parents from there are wanting to come on board with our hockey because they see what we are doing is changing children's lives and attitudes in school."

Coach Angela provided a specific example of one child whose participation in hockey helped resolve his negative behavioral issues at school:

The grandma says she is the caregiver and legal guardian and the boy is eager to be allowed to play but because he is too bad in school and has behavioral issues she can't let him play. I said maybe give him a chance so then the following year she brought him in, the grandma and the mom registered him, and with this boy there was a drastic change in his education and schooling, his grading, and his behavior issues stopped and he's just a super kid now.

Three of the coaches remarked how the youth hockey program is generating a spirit of pride and interest that is also having a positive impact on the selected community. The players are receiving recognition within the community which the coaches felt builds their self esteem, and the community itself is receiving recognition in the region through hockey. As William explained, "People from the community come up and say how did your team do and they don't have children or grandchildren in the program. They'll stop me at the gas station and see how we are doing."

Coach Ted summarized the importance of hockey to the selected community with this response, "I really see it's valuable for the community because parents get to spend time with their children, it sort of brings the community together, and gets young people into sport, getting together and just being a community." Ted also added that hockey provides a positive alternative and, "it does keep the young kids from going into vandalism and doing other mischievous things."

All four coaches acknowledged that there are very limited opportunities for children in the selected community to participate in physical activities where they can derive the benefits of sport. Hockey is one of the few options and therefore, plays a

very important role in the community. Most of the programs such as curling, broomball, snowshoeing, and cross country skiing target adults, so for the children hockey is the main option in the community. As coach Ted pointed out, "Children in the winter months, out here I can't picture any other thing." Coach Angela quoted a young boy who had asked them when the ice would be put in at the arena, "that's all I have to look forward to in the winter is hockey time and hanging out at the arena." Angela further supported the previous references regarding the limited opportunities in the selected community by stating, "It is important to have hockey because without it there is nothing in our communities." Angela described the high interest level of the children to play hockey and how they benefited from their experience in hockey:

I find that the more skilled skaters were just gung-ho to be there and with that interest comes self-confidence and they have something to look forward to and to motivate them. They're not left at home with nothing to do and just only games and TV. As for the ones that are less advanced skaters with them too there was lots of interest. Like I said it was a big thing, for instance, my son just for him to be around his friends and go on the ice, he wasn't a more advanced skater but he loved to come out and skate and just be with his friends. It was a motivational thing, and I'm speaking for my son and what I've seen at home because his behavior was more stable and content. He looked forward to things and it was a goal setting thing.

From Angela I learned of a story about a young female softball player from the selected community that powerfully portrays what sport can do for young people in

terms of hope, self esteem and confidence:

I held a clinic this June that was through Sport Manitoba and it was supposed to be a clinic to get coaches certified and to help parents get involved. Unfortunately, I was the only parent and we had 30 or 40 kids come out. One of the clinic people was a recruiter and he invited two of the girls to go try out for Team Manitoba and I believe that one of them made the team. This 14 year old girl, she was at the edge of taking her own life and she gave up in school and she was ready to take her own life. I found all this out after that clinic. Her schooling was back on track and her teacher was asking what happened? What made the change in this young girl's life? It was the softball clinic that motivated her and made her look forward to this tryout for the softball team. I was really discouraged when I didn't have any turnout of parents but, I thought in the end that it should pay off if I at least help one child, so that made a big difference. I was beginning to think am I doing this for nothing for our community? I was really discouraged but after hearing that it put a big smile on my face. So that's what motivates me, if it's helping a child within themselves and that's not only for softball but this applies to hockey too.

Coach Ted shared another story of how sport, in this case through a positive role model, can motivate and inspire children in the community:

Then we (Ted and his daughter) had met up with Ouellette (female player from Manitoba on Canada's National Female hockey team) from Team Canada so she met her and took her picture with her. I said I'm really thankful

for you to take time to sit down and talk to my daughter when there were a lot of people around at that one tournament. Later that evening, when we were coming home, my daughter said to me and my wife that she wants to someday join Team Canada. All summer long she was just ready to get back on the ice come October and she kept asking when the hockey season was going to start. Still today she always wants to know when the ladies Team Canada is playing.

When the coaches were asked what they hope their players will gain by playing hockey, their responses further illustrated the importance of hockey to the community. All the coaches spoke of learning respect (e.g., towards their teachers and others in the community) as a result of the children's experience in hockey. They also spoke of how hockey can help the children develop a good attitude and stay on "the right path" in life, and teach life skills such as patience, commitment, effort, perseverance, and courage. They also see hockey as contributing to the development of social skills like how to be a team player and work as a team, and communication skills. Coach William explained, "Some children are very shy and as Aboriginal People, a lot of our children tend to be shy, including with one another and nobody talks much. But in the locker room, man they talk! The little guys are talking up a storm! The communication skills and social skills, things like that are a plus."

The responses from the coaches participating in the study clearly indicate the importance of hockey to their community: in positively altering behavioral patterns and attitudes of children by stimulating interest, motivation, self esteem, confidence, and hope; creating a spirit of community pride and togetherness; providing an opportunity for physical activity; offering a positive alternative to vandalism and

other delinquent behavior; providing an environment for children to learn life skills and values such as respect, effort and commitment, and developing social skills.

Strengths

Using a strength's perspective (Baikie, 2002), the strengths of the youth hockey program in the selected community were identified through the perspective of the coaches. A strength of the hockey program as identified by two of the coaches are the parents of the participating children, and according to one coach it is the mothers in particular who are more involved than some of the fathers. They are active in operating the canteen, bringing the children to the arena, and in fundraising. Since it is difficult for the volunteer coaches to undertake all the responsibilities in running a youth hockey program, other support is needed for the program to operate. According to Angela, "without them (mothers) we wouldn't be here."

John acknowledged the commitment level of the children as another strength of the hockey program, "A strength would be those who do come on a regular basis, the players have good commitment."

An important strength identified by Angela is the coach mentorship provided by Sport Manitoba:

The mentor projects that they are bringing to our communities is a really big thing. Not only for the coaches but for everybody involved, even the parents of the children because they get so excited to know that it's not just the local coaches that are here. It is a really big thing to have someone come out and for them to know that us local coaches are not in the same neutral position, that someone is coming out to teach us to teach our kids. It's really motivational

and educational for everybody, not just the coaches but the kids too.

The well maintained indoor ice arena that provides accessibility to ice times for practices and games was mentioned by all the coaches as a strength for the youth hockey program. As John stated, "I think it is a good strength if you do have a rink and I feel sorry for the communities that don't have it. The neighbouring communities are comparable sized communities and they don't have an arena."

The interest and enjoyment expressed by the children resulting from their experiences in the youth hockey program, and conversely, the opportunity through hockey to identify and help resolve negative behavioral issues was described by Angela as a further strength of the hockey program:

A strength for me as a coach would be seeing the children happy. That gives me so much strength to let me know that I'm doing something, there is nothing better than knowing when you are coaching children that a child is happy and having fun. It's different if you have a child that has behavioral issues, that are really angry. Something is going on in their little lives and maybe that's where two coaches come in to be a lifesaver. In some situations that can be maybe a strength too.

Coaching Opportunities and Challenges

All the coaches were quick to recognize the opportunities they receive from volunteering their time to coach in the youth hockey program in their community. Foremost is the recognition they receive from the children in the program as William explains:

It has been nothing but positive for us here, working with children and the

recognition I receive from them, not so much from the parents, more so from the little guys, that is my payback. As a volunteer, I never received any financial help to be on the ice but, that is what I enjoy, the little guys.

The opportunity through coaching hockey to build relationships and help make a positive difference in a young persons' life was also very important to the coaches. They all spoke of the limited opportunities available in their community and how it was essential to take the children to games and tournaments in other communities to expose the children to sport and education opportunities that they otherwise would not know existed. The motivation to pursue these new found sport and education opportunities (e.g., university sports, Indigenous Games) could keep the children on the right path and away from alcohol and drugs, and encourage them to go farther towards achieving their true potential. According to Angela, "When a kid or youth doesn't see or have those opportunities to see what is out there, that there are opportunities out there, and if they don't see them at all then it will never be."

All the coaches interviewed acknowledged that the biggest challenge they face is not receiving enough help and encouragement for the children from parents during practices. This statement from William captures the frustration felt by all the coaches at times:

Parents in the community tend to think of us as a drop off centre sometimes. I talk and encourage the parents to stay there during the practice and watch the child skate. I'm on the ice with them but they (children) keep looking back and they want to see if mom and dad or their caregivers are watching them. I tell them (parents) that it encourages them (children) so they try harder. I let them

know it is not alright just to drop off your child. Some parents say, 'oh well I'm bored,' well I say 'grab a stick and come on the ice and I'll show you what to do.' I try and ask the parents to help on the ice because sometimes I'm by myself with 20 kids you know, come be a pylon or something, wave that stick on the ice back and forth, I can always use that help. You don't have to have skates on, and I tell them just come out with your runners on. I can't help out everybody, like tying laces, it's a lot of work. That's why I'm getting at the parents, getting at them to come help out, come to the locker room and help out.

A lack of funding is another challenge that all the coaches identified. It is difficult to find the money to purchase equipment items like pucks, water bottles and goaltending equipment.

Supports and Barriers to Participation

The coaches all identified the biggest support for the children to participate in the youth hockey program to be the parents. The parents will bring the children to the arena, purchase equipment for their children, operate the canteen, and coordinate fundraising activities. Another support for participation mentioned by Ted is positive peer pressure. Friends are influential in getting others involved in hockey by providing positive encouragement. Also, the willingness of community members to exchange hockey equipment (i.e., to pass forward equipment that no longer fits their children to others in need) was identified by three coaches as a support. This provides the opportunity to play hockey for those who otherwise could not afford to do so.

The main barrier preventing children from participating in youth hockey as identified by all the coaches was a lack of family finances. The social programs in the

community have received cutbacks in recent years so those families on social assistance who now receive only \$300.00 to \$400.00 a month may not afford to purchase hockey equipment. Although as previously mentioned, some equipment is donated or passed forward there are still equipment items that need to be purchased. Some families may not have a vehicle and if they do, may not be able to afford the gas to transport their child to the arena for games and practices. Coach William described the difficult situation faced by some families:

Those are some of the barriers that put a tear in your eye when you know they are trying; they don't smoke, they don't do drugs, they don't drink but they just can't afford it and they're not educated enough to get a job and they don't have any source of employment.

Support Network

The coaches mentioned several agencies/organizations that comprise the support network for the youth hockey program in the selected community. One of these organizations, which was referred to earlier, is Sport Manitoba. Sport Manitoba has played a large role in positively impacting the youth hockey through its coach mentorship program. Kidsport, which is an organization that provides support to children in order to remove financial barriers that prevent them from playing organized sport, has made several generous donations of used equipment to the community which has helped many families overcome the barrier to participation associated with the cost of purchasing equipment. The local school also supports the youth hockey program by permitting the children to leave school on a Friday if the team is traveling to a weekend tournament. This happens only once or twice a season.

The local Band Council is another agency that supports the hockey program by providing funds to cover the regional league registration costs, and on occasion contributes funds to participate in out of town tournaments. The Band Council also allocates funds for the operation and maintenance of the indoor ice arena therefore, the youth hockey program does not have to pay for ice rental fees. Finally, other agencies such as the Anishinaabe Child and Family Services, Interlake Tribal Council, the health centre, and local businesses support youth hockey by donating items for fundraising initiatives like silent auctions.

The responses from the coaches during the individual interviews have provided a thorough understanding of the significance of hockey in the life of the selected community. By understanding the importance of hockey to the selected community, the strengths of the youth hockey program, opportunities and challenges faced by the coaches, supports and barriers for children to participate, and the hockey program's support network we better know the context of the case being studied. I elected to use several first hand narratives and stories from the coaches in order to best capture the emotion and passion expressed during the interviews. Also, I believe that using these narratives and stories best provides the thick, rich description required by qualitative analysis to take the reader into the setting being described (Patton, 1990).

It is interesting to note the contradiction in the level of support provided by the parents for the youth hockey program in the selected community. From the coaches perspectives they were seen as both a support to participation because of their commitment to bring the children to the arena but also a challenge for the coaches because of their unwillingness to stay and assist during practices. There also emerged

a theme related to gender difference in the amount of parental support provided. According to one coach it was the mothers in particular who were more involved in helping than some of the fathers which is not an unusual phenomena as explained by Horna (1989) and Shaw & Dawson (2001). According to Horna, mothers are more involved in the area of leisure with their children and are much more active than fathers in voluntary activities at the child's school, clubs, and associations. Shaw and Dawson reported that "mothers spent more time than did fathers in family activities, and it was the mothers who were primarily responsible for the planning and organizing of family activities" (p. 229).

Optimal Coaching Education

Upon better understanding the significance of hockey in the selected community, the focus shifted to identifying elements (content and delivery methods) for optimal coaching education that would be relevant and meaningful to the community. Several interview guide topics addressed coaching education, which upon analysis resulted in themes subsumed within three overarching categories: what a new coach in the community needs to coach hockey; necessary content to be included in coaching education; and best delivery (teaching/coaching) approaches.

What a New Coach in the Community Needs to Coach Hockey

Possessing and demonstrating good values such as patience, caring, commitment and respect, was the prominent theme among the coaches when discussing what a new coach would need to coach hockey in the selected community. Consequently, these values should be emphasized in coaching education. According to Ted, a coach must realize that the young players are experiencing many situations for the first time

therefore, the coach must display patience when working with them. Secondly, demonstrating a caring interest in the players is also very important for a new coach as William stated, "To help children in our hockey program you have to show caring because if you don't have caring in your heart the children are going to pick up on it right away." Three of the coaches referred to commitment as another value that good coaches need to possess and that new coaches must realize the time it takes to coach and be committed for the season. To quote Angela:

Dedication and commitment has to be there. You cannot start your team and drop out a month or two later or slack off from your team. If you let your kids down by not showing up at practice you're letting the whole program down. It's a discouraging thing for a child who might not even want to come back, so you have to be determined to make the time and commitment.

Finally, respect was a value identified by William that a new coach must demonstrate and reinforce within the hockey program. According to William, treating the players in a respectful manner is essential at all levels of hockey. "If you are yelling at children or using foul language in the room, that is a big no-no. We try to run a respectable hockey group."

It was interesting to hear all of the coaches express that it was not necessary for a new coach to have a hockey background. They believed that possessing the values discussed above was more important and that the new coaches would learn the hockey technical component from the other coaches, and through the Sport Manitoba/Hockey Manitoba coaching education programs. As Angela stated, "I'm not the best know it all coach but, at least I can be there for the kids and not let them

down. You don't need to know it all, you learn as you go, you don't need to be a hockey fanatic." William further supported this idea by saying, "You don't need a hockey background because if you are here, you will learn."

Content to Include in Coaching Education

From the coaches' perspectives three main themes specific to content in coaching education were highlighted; leadership, technical/tactical, and health and fitness. Each of these themes included embedded sub-themes, which are outlined in Table 4.

Table 4. Content in Coaching Education

Themes:	Sub-themes:
Leadership	Handling coach-athlete and coach-parent issues Respect in sport Time management and organizational skills
Technical/ tactical	Power skating Puck control and passing Team play systems/positioning Rules of the game Body checking
Health and fitness	Nutrition

Leadership.

Both Ted and Angela mentioned that they would like to receive more leadership education that will help them in dealing with the many and varied coach-parent and coach-athlete issues that arise through the course of a hockey season. For example, how to deal with players that are late for practices? Also, under the theme of leadership was the need expressed by William for more emphasis on ethical coaching conduct (i.e., respect in sport). This is a need not confined to their community but to a

larger provincial context. In his coaching experiences William has witnessed examples of coaching behavior that are simply not acceptable:

I have seen in the past with my experiences in coaching where some coaches will lose their temper, some coaches will swear on the bench, and I believe that our hockey system in our province needs to address that. I've seen a coach where he has screamed all heck and hollering out loud and banging on the boards and pointing his finger at the child. That one coach was from Winnipeg and he screamed his head out at that kid, getting mad at that kid in front of everybody and he was only seven or eight years old.

Time management and organizational skills to help the coaches efficiently handle the various roles and responsibilities associated with coaching youth hockey was a final sub-theme under the theme of leadership recommended by Ted.

Technical/tactical.

Under the technical/tactical theme the coaches identified the following skills and strategies in which more information was needed; power skating, puck control and passing, team play systems/positioning for second year Atom players (10 year olds), rules of the game, and body checking for those players entering the Pee Wee division (11 & 12 year olds). The youth hockey program in the selected community previously consisted of Novice (7 & 8) and Atom (9 & 10) teams. For the 2009/10 season, the program expanded to include a Pee Wee team to provide an opportunity for those children too old to compete in the Atom division to continue participating in organized hockey. Since the coaches previously were involved at the Novice and Atom level, they lack the experience and expertise to teach body checking to the

older players in the Pee Wee division where body checking is now permitted within the rules.

The information the coaches require is how to teach the specific technical/tactical topics listed above (i.e., key teaching points, and examples of drills to introduce and refine these key points). This information is available through the National Coaches Certification Program, and also in the manuals and DVD's produced by Hockey Canada and distributed through Hockey Manitoba.

Health and fitness.

The need for more information on nutrition was the main issue identified by the coaches under the health and fitness theme. This need for nutrition information that could be passed on to the players and their parents and/or caregivers was strongly conveyed by William and John. They described the poor nutritional habits of families in their community and the need for an increased awareness of healthy eating alternatives. According to John, "The nutrition program is the biggest one. I see players on the bench and parents coming in feeding their kids hamburgers before the game." The Aboriginal Coaching Manual Reference Material produced by the Aboriginal Sport Circle could serve as reference in this area as it contains a coaches' guide to nutrition and traditional foods for Aboriginal youth.

Best Delivery Approaches

The preeminent theme in this category was the need for ongoing coaching education that emphasizes a mentorship approach. All the coaches clearly indicated that to continue their development as coaches the best delivery approach for coaching education is mentorship. Ideally, all the coaches would like to see a mentor visit the

community every 2-3 weeks to listen, support, and encourage the coaches through the various situations they encounter. Angela describes the support that a coach mentor provides:

Sometimes you're wondering and to have a mentor be there to tell you well, you could have done this or yes, you handled that okay. That is good to know rather than being just on your own and not having enough support and feeling discouraged, feeling unworthy, or asking yourself should I even be here? So to have that support there is great.

All four coaches recommended that the structure for mentor visits remain consistent to the format during the 2008/09 hockey season. This featured a classroom presentation to discuss various coaching topics and preview the practice plan, an on ice practice with the players and coaches, followed by a "wrap up" talk with the coaches in the dressing room. Combining classroom time with a practical on ice session was important for the coaches, as William explained, "We're more of a hands-on type of people and we like to see things and be shown how to do it on the ice."

An important aspect of coach mentorship identified by the coaches was the necessity for the mentor to be sensitive to the coaches' needs and their context. According to Angela, by having the mentor ask the coaches for input encouraged them to perform a self analysis of their coaching and program needs:

That is the great thing about this whole thing, is that you came in and asked us what we wanted and I thought thank God! What do we need, where do we need help, what do we need to look at? Rather than you just coming in and

saying this is what I'm going to show you today, this is what we're going to do today and then it got us thinking okay, well Mike is coming again next week, what do we need to do? It was what we need, so that was the best part because you weren't telling us what to do, it was what we were seeking.

The most important comments from the coaches related to mentorship were that it must be ongoing as passionately expressed in the following coach narratives.

Angela: Sometimes I think that prior to Sport Manitoba bringing up any programs to us, I almost quit because I was feeling discouraged but these programs brought out to our communities, it uplifted the whole program at every aspect for everybody, not just one person. Now when I look back I think this type of mentorship program is so beneficial to all other Aboriginal communities everywhere, even where they do have hockey programs or for the ones that are struggling, so it's key to have it ongoing. We've come a long way over the last two years and it takes time, it doesn't happen overnight.

William: I think that it would just have to be a program that would be ongoing. I know that Sport Manitoba had mentioned to me that it might just be for a short time but, I think something like this needs to be ongoing especially for a community that is struggling like we are. It's something we can't lose because once it's lost the whole program is gone, that it will be hard to get it back on track and get it going again.

Along with ongoing coach mentorship John expressed the need for equipment resources such as; whistles, pucks, pylons, and rink diagram boards to better maximize their coaching efficiency. He also suggested that small achievement awards

(e.g., medals or pins from Sport Manitoba) to be presented at the end of the season to children who participated regularly in the youth hockey program would be an effective motivational tool within the hockey program.

In discussing content to include in coaching education and best delivery approaches with the coaches I had expected to receive recommendations for the inclusion of traditional Aboriginal teachings and learnings such as the Medicine Wheel or Seven Teachings. Although the coaches made no direct statement about their inclusion it was very clear from the individual interviews that the coaches through their beliefs, values, and actions in coach-athlete relationships, followed the traditional Seven Teachings of wisdom, love, respect, courage, honesty, humility, and truth.

Collective Member Checking

Upon completion of the data analysis, a group meeting served as a method for collective member checking. The meeting held in the selected community provided the coaches with an opportunity to confirm, reject, or add to the findings described above. Three of the four coaches who participated in the individual interviews attended the meeting. In the collective member checking the coaches agreed with all of the findings which affirmed the credibility of the study. The coaches did however, add further perspectives and stories to strengthen the findings.

Regarding the importance of hockey to the selected community, William described how more people without children in the program were coming to watch the games. This reinforced the role that hockey is playing in the selected community in creating community pride and a spirit of togetherness.

All the coaches spoke of how the youth hockey program was instilling confidence in the children and they strongly agreed with the hockey programs' affect in positively altering behavior. Angela shared another story of one twelve year old boy that had set fire to two homes in the community and since joining the hockey program has shown no acts of delinquent behavior. Angela further stated, "with the structured setting in the hockey program that everything comes along with it such as discipline and respect."

One of the challenges that the coaches identified during the individual interviews was not receiving enough help and encouragement for the children from the parents during practices. In the collective member checking the coaches acknowledged that this was improving and the parents were now staying in the dressing room and helping to tie children's skates and have conversations with the coaches.

In terms of barriers for children to participate, the coaches again emphasized that transportation was a major barrier. Due to a lack of financial resources many families in the community could not afford a vehicle/gas to bring their children to games and practices. William told the story of one mother who would walk with her son almost two miles one way during winter to get to the arena for practices. She was too proud to ask for rides.

During the collective member checking I learned more of the various roles that organizations/agencies played in the youth hockey support network. The local Band Council in addition to providing the funds for the operation and maintenance of the indoor ice arena, paid for the registration fees for the teams to participate in the regional league, purchased new uniforms, and contributed \$400.00 towards new

goaltending equipment. Angela saw this as the Band Council, “acknowledging the need for the program to continue” and she appreciated this “sense of support.” The Anishinaabe Child and Family Services provided funds for a hockey school in the community and allowed the use of their facilities including meeting rooms, by the youth hockey program. The Interlake Tribal Council at times has covered the registration fees for tournaments, and the local school has allowed children to miss school a few days each year to participate in tournaments and marked the children as participating in an extracurricular activity.

For content to be included in coaching education, the coaches reinforced the need for more leadership training in ethical coaching conduct (i.e., respect in sport).

William provided more examples of inappropriate behavior of coaches from other communities during games which included a coach yelling at the referees and William, and threatening to pull his team off the ice because of a disputed goal scored. Angela suggested that all coaches be required to repeat every two years the online Respect in Sport course so that they are reminded of its message.

A final point made by William and supported by all the coaches was the need for extrinsic factors such as participation awards (e.g., medals, pins, pucks, certificates from Sport Manitoba) to recognize the commitment by the children to the youth hockey program in the selected community.

Summary

For an outline summary of the findings interpreted from the coaches' perspectives that were presented in this chapter refer to Table 5.

Table 5. Summary of Findings

Significance of Hockey Within the Community (key points from thick, rich description)

Importance of Hockey:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - positively altering behavior and attitudes - creating a spirit of community pride, togetherness - opportunity for physical activity - alternative to vandalism and delinquent behavior - learn life skills (e.g., respect, effort, commitment) - developing social skills
Strengths:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - parent volunteers - players' commitment - Sport Manitoba coach mentorship program - indoor ice arena - opportunity to identify & resolve behavioral issues
Opportunities for Coaches:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognition/appreciation from children - build relationships and positively influence lives
Challenges for Coaches:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - not enough parental help for practices - lack of funding for equipment, awards
Supports for Participation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - parents help for transportation, fundraising, etc. - positive encouragement from friends - community members who "pass forward" equip.
Barriers to Participation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of finances for equip. & transportation
Support Network:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sport Manitoba, Kidsport, Anishinaabe Child and Family Services, Interlake Tribal and local Band Councils, local school, health centre and businesses

Identifying Content and Delivery Methods for Optimal Coaching Education (key themes and sub-themes)

What New Coaches Need to Coach:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - awareness of time commitment - values (i.e., patience, caring, commitment, and respect)
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Table 5 (continued). Summary of Findings

Content for Coaching Education:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - leadership; subthemes: dealing with parent and athlete issues, respect in sport, time management, organizational skills - technical/tactical; subthemes: power skating, puck control and passing, team play systems, rules, and body checking - health and fitness; subthemes; nutrition
Best Delivery Approaches:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - coach mentorship; subthemes: ongoing, classroom and on ice components, seek coaches input

Through an analysis of the importance of hockey, the strengths of the youth hockey program, opportunities and challenges faced by the coaches, the supports and barriers for participation, and the support network for the youth hockey program, this study has provided an in-depth understanding of the significance of hockey in the life of the selected community.

The study findings revealed the importance of hockey to the selected community by: positively altering behavioral patterns and attitudes of children by stimulating interest, motivation, self esteem, confidence, and hope; creating a spirit of community pride and togetherness; providing an opportunity for physical activity; offering a positive alternative to vandalism and other delinquent behavior; providing an environment for children to learn life skills such as respect, effort and commitment; and developing social skills.

The strengths of the youth hockey program as denoted by the coaches were: the parents (mostly mothers) who operated the canteen, brought the children to the arena,

and fundraised; the coach mentorship program offered by Sport Manitoba that provided motivation, support, and encouragement to the coaches; the indoor ice arena which provided a well maintained, safe environment and good accessibility to ice for games and practices; the commitment, interest and enjoyment expressed by the children resulting from their participation in the youth hockey program, and conversely, the opportunity through hockey to identify and help resolve negative behavioral issues.

Next, the opportunities faced by the coaches were found to be the recognition they receive from the children, and the opportunity to build relationships and help make a positive difference in a young person's life while the primary challenges were not receiving enough help and encouragement for the children from the parents during practices, although this had improved, and a lack of funding to purchase equipment items such as pucks and goaltender equipment or participation awards for players.

The study found that the biggest support for the children to participate in the youth hockey program were the parents. The parents brought the children to the arena, purchased equipment for their children, operated the canteen, and coordinated fundraising activities. Friends who provided positive encouragement to participate, and community members who "passed forward" used hockey equipment to others were also identified as supports for participation. A barrier to participation was a lack of financial resources by some families to purchase hockey equipment or transportation (i.e., vehicles/gas, to bring their children to practices and games).

The coaches acknowledged several agencies/organizations that comprise the support network for the youth hockey program in the selected community. These

included Sport Manitoba, Kidsport, Anishinaabe Child and Family Services, Interlake Tribal Council, and the local Band Council, school, health centre, and businesses.

The study also identified several themes emerging from the individual interviews with the coaches regarding the content and delivery methods for optimal coaching education that were relevant and meaningful to the selected community. These themes were sorted under three categories; what new coaches in the community need to coach hockey, content to be included in coaching education, and best delivery approaches.

In the first category it was interesting to find that the coaches did not believe that it was important for a new coach to have a hockey background. Rather, a theme that emerged was the importance for a new coach to have an awareness of the time and commitment required to coach youth hockey. Values represented another prominent theme as the coaches identified the need for a new coach to possess and demonstrate good values such as patience, a sincere and caring interest, commitment, and respect.

The themes that were identified from the coaches' perspectives in the second category (i.e., content to include in coaching education) were: leadership, including dealing with the many and varied coach-parent and coach-athlete issues, ethical coaching conduct (i.e., respect in sport, and time management and organizational skills); technical/tactical, such as power skating, puck control and passing, team play systems/positioning, rules, and body checking; and health and fitness in which the main sub-theme was nutrition.

For the third category, best delivery approaches for optimal coaching education, the findings clearly disclosed that mentorship was the prominent theme. As a sub-

theme, the coaches strongly emphasized that the mentorship must be ongoing and ideally a mentor should visit the community every 2-3 weeks. Another sub-theme was the format for a mentor visit. According to the coaches, the ideal format was a classroom presentation to discuss various coaching topics and preview the practice plan, an on ice practice with the players and coaches, followed by a “wrap up” talk with the coaches in the dressing room. A third important sub-theme under coach mentorship was the necessity of the mentor to seek input from the coaches when selecting coaching topics to be discussed. This motivated the coaches to perform a self analysis of their coaching and program needs and ensured that the mentorship was relevant and meaningful to their context.

Chapter V: Discussion

The purpose in this study was to better understand the significance of hockey in the life of a First Nations community in Manitoba's Interlake region and to identify, from the perspectives of the coaches in the community, what optimal (i.e., relevant and meaningful to community needs) coaching education would entail. The results clearly indicate the importance of hockey to the selected community and the benefits for the youth participants and community as a whole. These benefits were consistent to those outlined for sport in the Maskwachees Declaration (2000), specifically: provide personal development for success in life through mutual respect, honesty, teamwork, healthy work ethic, dealing with conflict, fair play, self-esteem, pride and confidence; provide opportunities for positive relationships and partnership building; provide opportunities for the family unit, including parents, to be involved in the development of children, youth and communities.

Based on its value to the selected community, continued development of the youth hockey program is a priority. The most effective way to enhance this ongoing development is to invest in developing local coaches through coaching education. According to the True Sport Report (Mulholland, 2008) on "*What Sport Can Do*", one of the primary determinants of whether youth will have a positive or negative sport experience is the quality of coaching. Providing a greater understanding of all that goes into a hockey program (e.g. skill development, coach-athlete relationships, etc.) through relevant and meaningful coaching education enables the coaches to offer a positive youth hockey program that is fun, educational, and challenging for the youth in the selected community.

It should be noted that athlete skill development is not the primary objective of youth sport and as the Aboriginal Coaching Reference Material (Kent, 2003) states, that more important than teaching skills, planning practices, and motivating players, is the responsibility for providing care, protection, and encouragement for athletes. Advancing the development of coaches by delivering coaching education that is relevant and meaningful to the selected community would help the hockey coaches to achieve all these objectives within their youth hockey program and consequently, provide a positive and rewarding experience for the participants. This will retain players and attract new participants so that more Aboriginal youth will have the opportunity to derive the benefits offered by a quality youth hockey program.

A prominent theme from the coaches' perspectives in the study was coach mentorship as the best delivery approach for coaching education in their community. From the review of extant literature on Aboriginal pedagogy I learned that mentoring is similar to "modeling" which is a traditional form of teaching in some Aboriginal cultures. In modeling the teachings and learnings are conveyed through example, i.e., modeling rather than direct instruction (Brant Castellano, 2004), which is also characteristic of a coach-mentor relationship. Coach William stated; "We are a hands on type of people." Therefore, the opportunity for a mentor to help coaches with the application of theory to a practical coaching situation through a mentorship relationship is consistent to the traditional "hands on" learning or modeling. A familiarity with this traditional pedagogy perhaps explains why the coaches recommended coach mentorship as the best delivery approach for coaching education.

A sub-theme related to coach mentorship that emerged from the coaches' perspectives was the importance of a mentor to be open and responsive to the needs and interests of the coaches. This insight is important for sport organizations in helping them prepare mentors to work with the selected community and other communities that may share a similar context. It was very important to and appreciated by the coaches that their input was sought by the mentor in the selection of coaching education topics rather than having a program "imported" to the community. The opportunity for input also motivated the coaches to perform a self analysis of their coaching and program needs and ensured that the mentorship was relevant and meaningful to their context. It was this concern about "importing" coaching education programs that may not be the most relevant and meaningful to the selected community that originally stimulated my thoughts for this study.

Coach mentorship links to the new competency-based format of the National Coaching Certification Program. The competency-based philosophy ensures that the coaches effectively apply the information received from the clinic to their practical coaching context. Sport Manitoba supports the N.C.C.P.'s competency-based philosophy on coaching education through the delivery of coach mentorship opportunities as part of the "Bilateral Program." Through my role as a coach mentor with Sport Manitoba I learned that the Bilateral Program is a jointly funded initiative by the federal and provincial government that Sport Manitoba has been given the mandate to deliver. The Bilateral Program was created in 2004 with the goal to increase participation in sport and recreation by Aboriginal Peoples and new immigrants. The program attempts to achieve its goal in two ways: by providing

funds and expertise to assist in the delivery of sport and recreation programs at the community level; and by paying the expenses (e.g., travel costs, registration fees) for Aboriginal or new immigrant coaches to receive certification. Sport Manitoba along with Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, Culture and Tourism, and the Manitoba Aboriginal Sport and Recreation Council have worked together to identify potential First Nations communities that could benefit from the Bilateral Program. In assessing the communities they looked for communities where sport and recreation programs are needed to help improve the quality of life, and the readiness of the community to deliver the program(s). Unfortunately, there were only three communities receiving hockey coach mentorship at this time. This was not due to a lack of funds in the Bilateral Program but rather because of a lack of readiness of communities to initiate a mentorship program and a lack of qualified people available to travel to the communities to work as mentors.

In addition to revealing the similarity between coach mentorship and the traditional Aboriginal pedagogy of modeling the extant literature on Aboriginal pedagogy was valuable to this study in other ways. From the writings of Simpson (2000a), Lanigan (1998), and Cajete (1994) I received an understanding of the valued role that storytelling plays in some Aboriginal cultures and this helped to guide the design of this study by reinforcing the notion to select research methods that are aligned with this Aboriginal pedagogy (i.e., the use of open-ended questions in data collection to facilitate storytelling). I often experienced this form of teaching during the individual interviews with the coaches as they told many stories when sharing their perspectives on issues. Lanigan also wrote about “listening” as an important

Aboriginal teaching and from this I became more cognizant of being a respectful and attentive listener during the data collection.

During the data collection process I found the coaches to be very open and willing to share their perspectives and stories, and two of the interviews well exceeded the scheduled sixty minutes. I believe this “openness” was a result of a reciprocal relationship built on trust, respect, and honesty that was developed through my sharing of knowledge as a coach mentor in the selected community prior to the study. The development of a reciprocal relationship was emphasized in the writings of numerous authors (e.g., Wilson, 2008; Paraschak, Heine, & McAra, 1995; and Gallagher, 2003). Further, using ethical research methods which I learned from the work of Schinke et al. (2008), Weber-Pillwax (2008), and Brant Castellano (2004) also helped to maintain the coaches' interest and trust. For example; using a community member to help in the selection and recruitment of the coaches, the selection of a research topic that was perceived as being real and of value to the community, using research methods and language/terminology in the data collection process that were relevant and meaningful to the community, and making a commitment to present the research findings back to the community and to Sport Manitoba in ways that are useful to them allowed me to attain the legitimacy necessary to conduct quality research.

In the data analysis I was expecting themes to emerge that suggest the inclusion of other traditional Aboriginal pedagogy such as the Medicine Wheel or the Seven Teachings in the content or delivery approach for coaching education. The coaches made no direct statement that these traditional teachings should be included in future

coaching education however, it was very clear from the coaches' stories in the individual interviews that their beliefs and values were based on the same principles included in the Seven Teachings. Because of the coaches' sincere caring for their athletes they exemplified wisdom, love, respect, courage, honesty, humility, and truth in their coach-athlete relationships.

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, there are many benefits that hockey contributes to life in the selected community however, the extant literature also revealed barriers and challenges that exist for Aboriginal Peoples in Canadian sport including discrimination, racism, and low socio-economic conditions.

In their study on physical education programs for marginalized youth that included many Aboriginal students, Halas and colleagues (2003) found that many students, especially girls and those with less developed skills, may have negative experiences (e.g., exclusion, discrimination, disempowerment) that may eventually lead to dropping out of physical education. The coaches in this study did not mention "dropping out" as a problem when discussing challenges faced by the youth hockey program in the selected community. Halas et al. suggested that to keep youth engaged in sport required coaches/teachers to develop caring relationships with the students and create more responsive programs. From the conversations with the coaches in this study it was very apparent that they possess a caring attitude for the children and develop positive relationships that seemed to enhance motivation and ongoing engagement in hockey. Further, the philosophy of the coaches that demands the children to display positive behavior at school or lose the privilege to play hockey has provided a strong incentive to succeed academically. The philosophy and attitude of

the coaches in this study therefore, positively reflects the recommendations cited by Halas et al. for keeping youth engaged in sport.

Robidoux's (2004) study of race relationships in southern Alberta described the racial tension between a First Nations community and rural white communities. Since First Nations communities in Manitoba's Interlake region also were colonized it was anticipated that the coaches would too have encountered racism. In discussing barriers to participation, one coach observed "In the past it wasn't fair for First Nations people. My peers would go and play hockey and come home hurt and say the ref cheated us out." This statement caused me to reflect back on some of the extant literature on racism and wondered if this "unfairness" was a reflection of racism. It also led me to wonder if the other coaches had encountered similar experiences that went unmentioned. Racism is a very difficult subject for people to talk about and this could explain why it was not mentioned by other coaches, but it could also be because it was not a line of direct inquiry in the study. Based on the writings of Paraschak (1995), one might interpret the coach's experience of past "unfairness" of the officials and, indeed, current coaching education programs based on mainstream models (e.g., N.C.C.P.) to be expressions of institutionalized racism. For example, one might view the coach mentorship program as "rewarding" Aboriginal coaches from the selected community for participating in a mainstream or "legitimate" sport (i.e., hockey), which represents the kind of institutionalized racism Paraschak attributes to the mainstream Canadian sport system. To assess whether or not this interpretation is appropriate exceeds the scope of the present study, but it does appear inconsistent with the findings that clearly support a mentorship approach to coaching education

that reflects the interests and needs specific to the context in which the coaches will ultimately apply their skills.

The biggest barrier to participate in hockey for the children in the selected community was a lack of family finances. Some families did not have the funds to purchase equipment and/or vehicles and gas to bring their children to the arena. This is very concerning because it indicates that socio-economic conditions have not significantly improved in many Aboriginal communities during the 15 years since the publication of the Winther, Petch, and Nazer-Bloom (1995) report; *A Comprehensive Overview of Physical Activity and Recreation/Sport Issues Relevant to Aboriginal Peoples in Canada* that also identified the lack of financial resources for Aboriginal families as a barrier to participation in sport in Aboriginal communities.

Another challenge for the youth hockey program in the selected community is the lack of parental assistance with certain functions needed to support the coaches. This is somewhat of a contradiction as parents were acknowledged by two of the coaches as a strength of the hockey program for their contributions in operating the canteen, bringing the children to the arena, and in fundraising. In other areas such as helping on the ice and in the dressing rooms during practices, there is a lack of parental support which was a challenge for the coaches. One coach identified mothers as being more involved in helping than the fathers, which is consistent with variations in parental involvement reported in numerous studies in recreation and leisure generally (Horna, 1989; Shaw & Dawson, 2001). Horna found that mothers are more involved in the area of leisure with their children and are much more active than fathers in voluntary activities. Shaw and Dawson reported that mothers spent more time than

did fathers in family activities, and in the planning and organizing of these activities.

For this study Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory (1977) was used as the "lens" in viewing the coaches' perspectives to determine the most appropriate approach to leadership or leadership style to be used by the coaches in the selected community. Situational Leadership Theory is based on the degree of direction (task behavior) and socio-emotional support (relationship behavior) a leader must provide given the situation and performance readiness of the follower or group.

Hersey and Blanchard categorized basic leadership behavior into four styles or quadrants; High Task and Low Relationship (S1), High Task and High Relationship (S2), High Relationship and Low Task (S3), and Low Relationship and Low Task (S4). I believe that S2 would be the most appropriate leadership style for a coach working with the youth in the selected community based on the description of the players provided by the coaches in our conversations. According to Hersey and Blanchard, in the S2 leadership style most of the direction is still provided by the leader. Although the players are more willing, capable, and confident from the experience of two or more seasons in the youth hockey program to complete tasks like on ice drills and basic team play tactics, they are however, still very much in need of direction and social-emotional support from the coaches to give them reassurance and confidence.

Further to leadership theories, to assist the coaches in handling the various coach-athlete and coach-parent issues that arise during a hockey season, and which the coaches identified as content for future coaching education, the "Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership" by Kouzes and Posner (2007) could be useful. Among these,

“inspiring a shared vision” and “enabling others to act” could help the coaches to get the parents actively involved with the program, while “modeling the way” and “encouraging the heart” (i.e., reward excellence, celebrate success) are effective ways to inspire and motivate the athletes.

Regarding current coaching resources it should be noted that three coaches regularly used the Hockey Canada materials received from the Sport Manitoba pilot program thereby, indicating their value for future coaching education. Also, the Aboriginal Coaching Reference Material (2003) could be a good resource in meeting the coaches expressed education needs and interests in the areas of leadership (e.g., values and respect in sport) and nutrition for athletes.

Limitations and Future Directions

A possible limitation could stem from my previous involvement with the community that led to the “concerned engagement” in the study. Working as a coach mentor, I was able to develop an excellent rapport and a reciprocal relationship based on trust, honesty, and respect, with the coaches who participated in the study. This was a strength of the study as the coaches were very willing to meet with me and share their stories and perspectives. This however, could also be a limitation as the coaches saw me as a “mentor”, and not wanting to offend me, may have been reluctant to suggest some content and delivery elements that were critical of the previous mentorship program.

For future research, a recommendation would be to conduct a similar study to the Halas, Champagne, and van Ingen (2003) research in which children were interviewed about their experiences in Physical Education classes. Whereas the

present study sought the perspective of the coaches, it would be interesting to examine the perspectives of the children participating in the youth hockey program in the selected community. The feedback would be valuable to the coaches in helping them to deliver a sport program that is responsive or athlete-centered (i.e., meets the needs and interests of the children). The athlete-centered approach is consistent to the new National Coaching Certification Program.

Another recommendation for future research would be to examine why more female coaches are not active in the youth hockey program in the selected community and identify some of the barriers/challenges/opportunities that exist for female coaches. The information resulting from this study might be useful in helping to resolve the lack of volunteer coaches in the community by recruiting mothers to these positions. As previously discussed with reference to Horna (1989) and Shaw and Dawson (2001) women are more likely to participate in volunteer activities than men. It would also be useful to ask the fathers why they are not volunteering as coaches.

Conclusion

The most valuable lesson I learned from this study was an understanding of the significance of hockey in the life of the selected community. The importance of hockey has been clearly and passionately articulated by the coaches who participated in the study as: positively altering behavioral patterns and attitudes of children by stimulating interest, motivation, self esteem, confidence, and hope; creating a spirit of community pride and togetherness; providing an opportunity for physical activity; offering a positive alternative to vandalism and other delinquent behavior; providing an environment for children to learn life skills such as respect, commitment, and

effort; and developing social skills.

Largely driven by the socio-economic conditions in the selected community there are very few sports and recreational activities or programs available for children, and currently none that offer the same positive impact that the youth hockey program currently provides to the community. Hockey represents a “strength” in the community and an investment in their children, therefore, youth hockey is a program that Provincial sport organizations and the local Band Council must continue to support philosophically and financially.

The best way to support the continued development of the youth hockey program is to invest in the education of its coaches. The coaches’ involved in this study identified the key content and delivery elements or guidelines that would optimize the relevance of coaching education to their needs and interests (see Table 6).

The study results have practical applications for sport organizations responsible for delivering coaching education in Manitoba. Organizations such as Sport Manitoba, Hockey Manitoba, and the Manitoba Aboriginal Sport and Recreation Council should consider the guidelines outlined in Table 6 to ensure the delivery of relevant and meaningful hockey coaching education to the selected community and other communities that might share a similar context. Based on the findings of the study it is recommended that coaching education through a mentorship program be continued in the selected community and further attempts be made to expand mentorship opportunities to similar communities.

Table 6. Guidelines for Sport Organizations

CONTENT	DELIVERY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Leadership; parent and athlete issues, values, respect in sport, time mgmt, organizational skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mentors should become familiar with context prior to working with coaches.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Technical/tactical; power skating, puck control and passing, team play systems, rules, and body checking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mentors must show respect for the community by seeking input from coaches and be responsive to their needs/interests.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Health and fitness; nutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mentor visits must be ongoing/regular e.g., every 3 wks. during hockey season. ✓ Mentor visits should consist of classroom discussions and on ice practical sessions.

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LETTER TO COMMUNITY CONTACT
(Appendix A)

August 19, 2009

Dear XXX,

I hope that you had a good summer and that you are now looking forward to another fun and rewarding hockey season.

Further to our telephone conversations, I am writing to provide more information on the study that I am planning to conduct on hockey coaching education. The purpose of the study is to receive insight from the youth hockey coaches in your community on what they believe would be meaningful coaching education that meets their needs, interests, and experiences. The results of the study could offer potentially significant benefits to hockey coaches, players, and communities by providing valuable information that can be used in developing future coaching development programs.

Thank you for your help in selecting the coaches and arranging the interview times. Because of their coaching knowledge and experience, I believe that these coaches will make a valuable contribution to the study.

The individual coach interviews in your community will take 60 minutes. The interview questions will be related to the coaches' hockey background, the importance of hockey to your community, and the coaches' thoughts on meaningful hockey coaching education. In October, I would welcome the opportunity to meet again with the coaches in a group to discuss the findings from the individual interviews.

The results of the study will be used for my thesis as part of the requirements for a Masters Degree from the University of Manitoba.

I will call you soon to answer any questions that you might have and confirm the interview times. Thank you again for your time and cooperation.

Yours truly,

Mike Sirant
XXX XXXX

LETTER TO COACHES
(Appendix B)

September, 2009

Dear XXX,

I hope that you enjoyed a successful, rewarding and fun 2008/09 hockey season.

I am writing to invite you to participate in a study that I am planning to conduct on hockey coaching education. The purpose of the study is to receive insight from youth hockey coaches on what they believe would be meaningful coaching education that meets their needs, interests, and experiences. The results of the study could offer potentially significant benefits to coaches, players, and their communities by providing valuable information that can be used in developing future coaching development programs. Because of your knowledge and experience coaching youth hockey in your community, I believe that you can make a valuable contribution to the study.

To collect information for the study, individual interviews will be held in your community with a specific date, time, and location to be arranged in the very near future. There will be 3-4 other coaches from your community also invited to participate. The interview will take 60 minutes and the questions will be related to your hockey background, the importance of hockey to your community, and your thoughts on optimal hockey coaching education.

The results of the study will be used for my thesis as part of the requirements for a Masters Degree from the University of Manitoba.

I will call you soon to answer any questions that you might have and to hopefully, confirm your participation. Thank you in advance for your time and cooperation.

Yours truly,

Mike Sirant
XXX XXXX

INFORMED CONSENT & ASSENT FORM
(Appendix C)

Research Project Title: *Hockey Coach Development: Perspectives of Aboriginal Coaches from Manitoba's Interlake*

Researcher: Michael P. Sirant, Graduate Student, University of Manitoba
XXX XXXX

Supervisor: Dr. Jennifer MacTavish, Professor, University of Manitoba,
Room 313 Max Bell Centre, Winnipeg, MB., R3T 2N2,
XXX XXXX

This consent form, a copy of which you can keep, is only part of the process of informed consent. It tells you the main idea of the research and what your participation will involve. Please take the time to read this letter and any other information that comes with it carefully. If you do not understand something, or you want to know about something not mentioned, please feel free to contact the researcher.

1. Purpose of the Research:

The purpose of the study is to explore the perspectives of Aboriginal youth hockey coaches on coaching development. The data collected will be used to provide insight on optimal coaching education that reflects the needs, interests, and experiences of youth hockey coaches in your community. The data from the study will be used for the researcher's thesis as part of the requirements for a Masters Degree from the Faculty of Graduate Studies at the University of Manitoba.

2. Research Procedure:

Participants will be asked to participate in individual interviews. The individual interviews will be held in the participants' own community and will take approximately 60 minutes to complete. The questions will be related to your background in hockey, the importance of hockey in your community, and your thoughts on optimal hockey coaching education. All questions and discussions will be audio-taped for accuracy. A group meeting will later be held in the community with 3-4 other coaches from the youth hockey program to confirm, reject, or add to the findings.

3. Risk Assessment:

There are no undue risks for participants in this study. This study offers potentially significant benefits to hockey coaches and players by providing valuable information that can be used in developing future coaching development programs.

4. Confidentiality:

Complete confidentiality of all records will be maintained. No responses will be connected to any individual participant by name. Only the researcher will have access to the full transcriptions and notes, which will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's secure office at the Max Bell Centre, University of Manitoba. Upon the completion of the study's final report, all written transcriptions and notes will be shredded, and computer files and audiotapes erased by July, 2010.

5. Participation and Compensation:

Participation is completely voluntary, you are free to withdraw at any time for any reason, without consequences of any kind. Should you decide to withdraw please notify the researcher (Michael Sirant, XXX XXXX) and all your data from the study will be destroyed. There is no paid compensation for participation in the study however, this study offers potentially significant benefits to Aboriginal hockey coaches and players by providing valuable information that can be used in developing future coaching development programs.

6. Feedback:

There will be an opportunity for those interested participants to receive a copy of the final written report and discuss with the researcher how the study findings can be used in a meaningful way in their community. To receive a copy, please contact the researcher.

INFORMED CONSENT & ASSENT FORM

*Hockey Coach Development: Perspectives of Aboriginal Coaches from
Manitoba's Interlake*

Researcher: Michael P. Sirant, Graduate Student, University of Manitoba
XXX XXXX
Supervisor: Dr. Jennifer MacTavish, Professor, University of Manitoba,
Room 313 Max Bell Centre, Winnipeg, MB., R3T 2N2

Signing your name on this form shows that you understand the information about the research, your role and rights as a participant, and that you agree to take part (be a participant). By signing you are not giving up your legal rights and not releasing the researcher or involved institution from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free, without prejudice or consequences, to stop participating at any time, and you do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to. Also, your participation during the project should be as informed as your initial consent, so if you have any questions, or would like further information, at any time, please feel free to contact Michael Sirant.

The Education Nursing Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba has approved this research. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact the above named person or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep.

Participant's Signature Date

Researcher's Signature Date

I would like a copy of the study's summary of results. **Yes** **No**

If yes, print name and mailing address:

INTERVIEW GUIDE

(Appendix D)

A. Describe the context (i.e., significance of hockey in the community):

Describe the youth hockey players: age? skill level? interest in hockey?
enthusiasm?

What do the coaches hope their players will gain by playing hockey?

How is hockey perceived in the community - value? importance? why or why not?

What do the coaches see as the strengths of the youth hockey program? challenges?

What are the opportunities that the coaches face? challenges?

Who supports the hockey program: parents? the school? the band council? in what
ways?

What are the supports and barriers for children to participate in the hockey
program?

What are the physical activity opportunities for children in the community during
the winter – other than hockey?

B. Identify the key elements (content and delivery methods) for optimal coaching
education that is relevant and meaningful to the selected community:

How did the coaches learn to play hockey - coach? was it in the same community?

What a new coach in the community needs to coach hockey?

What content should be included in coaching education? delivery approaches?
resource materials?

What did the coaches think of the pilot and coach mentorship programs – likes?
dislikes?

C. Discussion closure:

What do the coaches believe are the key elements for optimal hockey coaching
education?

Anything that the coaches would like to add?

RESEARCHER'S FORE-STRUCTURE
(Appendix E)

My coaching beliefs at the professional or Canadian university level are based on development, performing to potential, and winning. This is consistent to the needs and interests of the athletes who have expectations of advancing their hockey careers to the next level and winning. The coaching mandate that I adhere to in the professional or university situation is:

1. Set the standard for excellence.
2. Expect excellence from the players.
3. Be energetic and enthusiastic at all times.
4. Show players that we care about them.
5. Establish "belief" by preparing to win.
6. Make our players better.
7. Never compromise our values.

The values that I strongly believe in and attempt to consistently model in my coaching and personal life are; honesty, integrity, hard work, respect, unselfishness and commitment.

Coaching youth hockey at the community level requires a shift in emphasis for some beliefs compared to university hockey although, the values remain the same. At the youth hockey level I believe that a coach should emphasize 3F's; fun, fair and firm. Practices and games should be fun and with all players receiving an equal opportunity to participate. To ensure a safe environment and a positive experience the coach must clearly outline expectations regarding acceptable behavior of parents and players and firmly enforce those expectations. Skill acquisition to build the players

confidence through effective teaching is also very important as well as promoting sportsmanship. At all hockey levels a coach should endeavor to build a positive coach-athlete relationship based on trust and respect.

I have a passion for the game of hockey and a commitment to contribute to the development of the game in Manitoba at both the elite and developmental levels. I have a specific interest in helping the youth hockey program in the selected community and this concerned engagement was developed through my experiences working with the coaches in a mentor relationship prior to this study. From this experience I had several pre-understandings of hockey and coaching in the community: hockey is important to the community as it provides one of few options for sports and deriving its benefits; the players show a real enthusiasm for playing; the coaches have a genuine interest in the children and demonstrate a willingness to learn through their active participation in coaches clinics and a mentorship program held in their community.

From these pre-understandings I expected the following findings:

- hockey was important to the community in re-enforcing positive values and behaviors, and providing an opportunity for physical fitness
- recommended content for coaching education would include topics such as leadership and team play systems
- the best delivery approach for coaching education would be coach mentorship
- the lack of financial resources represents a barrier to participation

ANALYSIS DIAGRAM
(Appendix F)

