

Andragogy
Fact or Fiction within a Swimming Coaching Context?

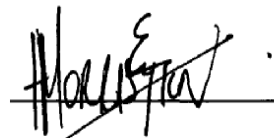
Heather Morris - Eyton

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School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial
fulfilment of the Degree Master of Education (Adult Education)

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DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the Degree of Master of Education (Adult Education) at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Heather Morris-Eyton', is written over a horizontal line.

Heather Morris-Eyton

23-09-2008

Date

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ABSTRACT

The global population is ageing, and with it has been a growth of mature aged participation in sport. Following this trend, swimming amongst the adult population in South Africa, whether it is for recreation or competitive purposes, has increased. This research reports on the coaching strategies used by one coach who is training Masters swimmers in Johannesburg. It examines whether or not andragogical principles and teaching methods could be applied to an informal swimming coaching context. Qualitative methods were used for data collection, including an interview with the coach, focus group discussions with the swimmers, pool deck observations and video recordings of the training sessions. Results indicated that adult education principles could be applied to an informal swimming coaching context through flexible and accommodating coaching practices, ensuring effective communication between the swimmer and the coach and utilising the community of practice between the swimmers and coaches to ensure effective adult learning.

KEY WORDS

Masters swimming; swimming coaching; adult education; community of practice; informal learning; andragogy

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

- Coach – a person who is involved in the training of swimmers.
- Competitive Swimming – swimming at a club, provincial, national or international level including pool and open water events.
- Masters¹ Swimmer – any swimmer who is 25 years old or older and is registered with a provincial and national swimming body as a Masters Swimmer.
- Open Water Swimming – swimming in a dam, adhering to organised competitive rules.
- Recreational swimming – swimming to keep fit.
- Session – a swimming training programme completed within a particular time frame, usually done within an hour to an hour and a half depending on the mileage.
- Sets – a specific predetermined part of the session that will focus on technique the training of specific energy systems or broken down aspects of a stroke (kicking or pulling for example).
- Squad – a group of swimmers who train together, usually on a daily basis.
- Training – “preparing someone for performing a task or role” (Tight, 1996:18). This would include some kind of instruction and practice in order to achieve a level of swimming competency.
- VO_{2max} – a quantitative expression of a person’s capacity for adenosine triphosphate (ATP) resynthesis. It is an important factor in determining a person’s ability “to sustain high intensity exercise for longer than 4 to 5 minutes” (McArdle, Katch and Katch, 1996:126).

¹ Masters is the accepted terminology used for referring to competitive swimmers who are over the age of 25 years. This term does not use the (‘s) when referring to either an individual, a group of swimmers or when referring to masters swimming. This term is used throughout the report.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

FINA	Fédération Internationale de Natation, the international aquatics body to which National swimming federations are affiliated.
SSA	Swim South Africa, the South African National Swimming Federation.
SAMS	South African Masters Swimming, affiliated to SSA.
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
ATP	Adenosine triphosphate

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

It is 7.30am. The cold, light drizzle and grey cloud are characteristic of a typical Midmar Mile morning. Beryl stands in the queue with a black plastic bag around her body, trying to shield herself from the rain and cold. A cheerful volunteer uses a black permanent pen to write Beryl's race number on her arm. She watches the other women and young girls, wearing their different coloured swimming caps, making their way to their respective holding pens. 'Why is Midmar always miserable and cold?' Beryl thinks silently to herself. 'Why at sixty five years of age am I doing this?' Her mind drifts back to the warm bed she left at 5.30am. But then she gets caught up in the excitement of the atmosphere – all the swimmers, all facing the challenge that lies ahead.

This weekend sixteen thousand swimmers will race from one side of the Midmar dam to the other – sixty five year old Beryl is one of them.

After standing around in the rain and cold for what seems like hours, the marshal has allowed all the red cap swimmers through to the start at the waters edge. Beryl walks slowly with the mud sloshing through her toes to avoid the stampede of youngsters who want to ensure a prime spot at the start. It is race one of the Midmar mile – girls 13 years and younger and women 31 years and older. At the start, there is no regard for age. The red caps are the fastest seeded bunch for the day. Beryl is proud of being able to start with the red caps this year. She takes her position at the back of the pack, her feet not even in the water yet, as she waits for the siren to signal the start of the race. Beryl never heard the siren, instead she sees a frenzy of arms and legs thrashing up mountains of white water, in what a few seconds ago was mirror calm. She gets in and starts her race. As she swims she constantly thinks about what her coach has told her about breathing to both sides, stretching her arms out in front of her to get a good under-water pull, find a rhythm. Another swimmer touches her toes and pulls on her leg to get past her. Beryl just keeps on swimming, concentrating on finding the perfect rhythm, the perfect stroke. After thirty-two minutes and twenty seconds, her feet touch the slimy concrete slipway. She stands up exhausted but still needs to move quickly to the official finish. A photographer captures the

moment. Beryl has improved her time by thirty seconds from last year. She smiles, thinking that all her training over the past six months has been worth a thirty-second improvement. She receives her medal and an orange energade for her efforts. As she moves towards the hoards of applauding people who are waiting for their friends and family to complete the mile, Beryl wonders what position she finished in the 60+ age group and if she will be there again next year.

My research is not specifically about Beryl² and the Masters³ swimmers she trains with, three times a week ten months of the year, as it is about their coach, Jill⁴, and her interactions with the swimmers. It is also not about the theoretical underpinnings of coaching and teaching adult swimmers, but rather about the community in, and through which they operate. Through Beryl, I will introduce a sixty five year old competitive swimmer, who optimises the values of Masters swimming by promoting fun, fitness and friendship. She provides the narrative for my research process and, in so doing, strengthens my personal connection to this research and to the swimming community which imbues my own existence.

With the opening up of international sporting competition (since 1992), South Africa has enjoyed the privilege of competing in all sporting codes on the world stage. Swimming has seen a meteoric rise in popularity since then with the likes of Penny Heyns and the 2004 Olympic gold medal relay winners. With the success of South Africa's international swimmers and the concerted efforts by Swim South Africa (SSA) to increase water safety awareness, swimming amongst the adult population, whether for recreation or competitive purposes, has increased.

This popularity is seen by the increase in registered swimmers with SA Masters Swimming (the controlling body for Masters Swimming in South Africa) over the past decade. It is not only the number of competitive pool swimmers that have increased, but open water or dam swimming has also seen a rise in popularity. A case in point is the number of entries received for the 2007 Midmar Mile that was billed as the world's largest open water swimming event

² Not her real name.

³ Refer to definition of terms for grammatical explanation.

⁴ A pseudonym is used to protect the identity of the coach.

(<http://www.southafrica.info/about/sport/midmar.htm>). The increase in the number of competitive and recreational adult swimmers has created a need for professional coaching and training.

1.1 Aim and rationale of the case study

Limited research, with a specific focus on adult swimmers and their coaches, has been done within the South African context. My aim was to examine a coach's perspective and attitude to adult learning within a swimming coaching context and the coaching strategies used for training. I also explored the swimmers' responses to their coach's training strategies, as well as how they viewed the swimming pool as a potential learning environment. By considering these responses, I felt I would be able to identify key factors that either promote or hinder Masters swimmers from reaching their full potential. By examining the coach's perspectives of Masters swimmers within their training squads and relating it to the process of learning and motivation of adult swimmers, a better understanding of how adults respond to different coaching methods and environments can be achieved. This may then provide the insights necessary for coaches to give an effective training framework for Masters swimmers, which takes into account their motivational and self-directed needs. It may also improve the coaching environment in which they train.

1.2 Research problem and questions

The problem as I see it is that coaches who train Masters swimmers do not necessarily take into account the adult education principles and tenets of adult learning as put forward by Brookfield (1996) and Knowles, Holton and Swanson (1998). These principles include motivation, self-directedness, voluntary participation, drawing on prior experience, readiness to learn, critical reflection, collaboration and respect. The problem is twofold. Firstly, Masters swimmers (especially those who have had prior coaching or competitive experiences) do not necessarily want to be told what to do in a training environment, nor do they question their coach or communicate with their coach about their needs and goals for training. Secondly, some coaches tend to ignore the effects of aging on the body, use commonsense pedagogical methods of instruction and do not recognise

that there may be distinct differences between coaching adults and children (Killmier, 1993). The purpose of my study was to describe the coaching strategies used to coach one group of Masters swimmers, and to examine whether or not adult education principles and teaching strategies could be applied within an informal swimming coaching context.

The focus of my case study revolved around the following research questions:

1. Can adult education principles and teaching strategies be applied in an informal swimming coaching context, and if so, in what ways?
2. What coaching strategies / methods are currently being used to train a selected group of Masters swimmers?
3. What perceptions does the coach have regarding the training of Masters swimmers?
4. What are the key factors that promote or hinder successful training of Masters swimmers?

It should be noted that my personal philosophy on adult education is located within the humanistic realm. The purpose of education, as conceived within this particular philosophy, is the enhancement of personal growth and development and the facilitation of self-actualisation. Experiential learning, self-directed learning, empowerment and group dynamics are the methods and practices that guide this philosophy. Consequently, the humanistic approach towards adult education forms the theoretical and methodological underpinning of my research.

The remainder of this research report is organised into the following chapters:

- Chapter 2: This chapter provides a theoretical framework for the study. It also includes a literature review of andragogy, its critics and application to a swimming coaching context, adult learning and swimming practice, as well as swimming coaching and training as a community of practice.
- Chapter 3: This chapter outlines the research design, as well as the tools used for data capture and analysis.

Chapter 4: A description of the training facility, the participants, the analysis of the data and findings are presented in this chapter.

Chapter 5: This chapter provides an analysis and discussion of the research questions based on the findings, as well as providing recommendations for future research and conclusions drawn from the study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter provides the theoretical framework for the research. It includes a literature review of andragogy, its critics and application to a swimming coaching context, adult learning and swimming practice, as well as swimming coaching and training as a community of practice.

Global ageing is upon us! The demographic reality of ageing can be seen in the unprecedented rate of ageing within the global population. This is primarily due to a decrease in fertility and an increase in longevity (Arsenault and Anderson, 1998; Bronte, 1997). Together with an ageing population, the global growth of mature aged sport has increased at a rapid rate over the past few years. Appleby (1993), attributes this to a number of factors including; changing attitudes - mature adults now have a desire to enhance their education; they are becoming more active within the community; have a better understanding of the associated benefits of living a healthy lifestyle; there is an increase in leisure time; more people are able to afford to do sport; as well as more opportunities being made available to participate in organised competitive sport.

With the re-entry into international sporting competitions in 1992, South Africa has enjoyed the privilege of competing in all sports codes on the world stage. This has included opportunities for Masters athletes to showcase their talent in international competitions such as World Championship events (sport code specific) and the quadrennial World Master Games (<http://www.samaster.co.za/history.html>). Swimming has seen a meteoric rise in popularity since 1992. This has lead to an increase in participation amongst the adult population, whether for recreation or competitive purposes.

The focus of my research was to examine the coaching strategies used for Masters swimmers and whether or not adult education principles and teaching methods can be applied within an informal swimming coaching context. This literature review will take into account, selected research regarding the coaching of Masters athletes, andragogy and its critics, adult learning and communities of

practice. As there has been limited research specifically looking at the coaching strategies used for Masters swimmers, the knowledge base regarding adult education and learning require contextualisation within a specific learning environment – the swimming pool. This review of the literature attempts to relate the research and debates regarding adult education and learning to swimming coaching and training. It is beyond the scope of this review and research report to delve into the power structures, class relations and identities that structure the South African swimming context. The fact that an opportunity to engage in a swimming coaching programme is in itself exclusionary, based on socio-economic power and identity, will not be fore-grounded. It is important however to “recognise the learner as a social being affected by a range of contexts and relations of power” (Grace, 1996:388).

2.1 Defining adulthood and swimming coaching

I feel that contextual definitions of words used in this study are important in order to provide a framework within which adult learning concepts can be situated. To clarify and define who the adults and coaches are, I will begin with the meaning of the term “adult”, which according to Knowles, Holton and Swanson (1998), has four different possible definitions. These include the biological, social, legal and psychological definitions. Gravett (2005:7) however, contends “it is difficult to pinpoint a moment in which a person unmistakably becomes an adult”. She goes on to argue that adulthood is generally socially constructed and is seen and understood differently in different cultures. Rachal (2002:220) takes a similar view regarding adult learners in defining them as those learners “who have assumed the social and culturally defined roles characteristic of adulthood”. Thus, the meaning of what constitutes an adult can be seen as both socially and culturally dependent. For the purpose of this study, an age-based definition will be used to identify Masters swimmers in order to align itself with the swimming context. The term ‘Masters swimmer’ is used to define an adult swimmer who is twenty-five years or older, which is in line with the rules set out by FINA (Fédération Internationale de Natation) and adopted by SAMS (South African Masters Swimming).

From personal experience and observation, the term coach, within a swimming context can be seen as a person who will give instruction or direction to an individual swimmer or group of swimmers in a squad. Jones and Turner (2006:181) define coaching as “related to improving others’ sporting experience and /or performance”. Training, on the other hand is defined by Tight (1996:18) as “preparing someone for performing a task or role”. This would include some kind of instruction and practice in order to achieve a level of competence. Edwards, (2007) expands this definition to include the provision of skills specifically for employment. A swimming coach not only instructs and directs, but also provides the opportunity for practice in order to improve competency. In the case of Masters swimmers these skills may or may not be used in preparation for competition, depending on whether the swimmer is competitive or swims recreationally. The overarching concept of coaching is that it is “not about just having the expertise of training methods, tactics and strategy, it is also about dealing with people” (Chambers, 1997: vii). Coaching is thus a social process (Jones and Turner, 2006; Wright, Trudel and Culver, 2007) and involves amongst other things, the understanding of how learning takes place, the application of skills and techniques, the use of scientific training principles, effective communication, as well as the holistic development of the swimmer involved.

2.2 Coaching Masters swimmers

Beryl arrives at the gym at 6.15am with her tog bag slung over her shoulder, carrying a net swimming bag containing a kick board, cap, goggles, paddles and a juice bottle. She walks a little hunched over, moving down the ramp to get to the pool. Jill, her coach, greets her and they chat about everyday things. Other swimmers start to arrive for their training session, chatting and bantering in a friendly manner with each other. Here, Beryl is not a mom, a wife, a grandmother or an employee past retirement age. Here at the pool, Beryl is a swimmer – she is in a place where she can just be Beryl. She places her bag in the corner and gets ready for the training session. Her movements are slow and deliberate as she carefully gets into the pool, her old bones using the steps to guide her body into the water. She swims under the lane rope to the next lane. This is her lane. This is where Beryl the swimmer resides. Here her aging body, with all its aches and pains becomes light and free

in the water. She swims with ease as she listens and does what Jill tells her to do. Two of her male counterparts, who are in their late sixties, join the lane. They have arrived late and are now trying to catch up on what they have missed. As the three of them jostle for prime swimming position in the lane, Beryl's competitive drive will not allow Jonty and Hymie to go in front of her – even if it means a collision half way down the pool. Age is no barrier for Beryl.

Initially I will review the literature specifically looking at the physiological changes that take place during the aging process and the effects these have on sports performance. I will then focus on coaching per se and the effects of coaching on adult athletes.

Physiological and health considerations

As we age, physiological changes in our bodies start to occur. In athletes, these changes generally start after 35-40 years. After 60-70 years “exercise performance declines exponentially” (Tanaka and Seals, 2003:14). This decline includes a reduction in endurance and VO_{2max} ,⁵ power, muscle mass and strength, agility, co-ordination and work capacity, sight and/or hearing loss, inflexibility, reduced lung capacity, slower reaction times and reduction in large muscle dynamic performance (Killmier, 1993; Tanaka and Seals, 2003; Goldman, and Klatz, 2005; Di Pietro, 2001). In swimming, physiological functional capacity, as assessed by swimming performance, shows a curvilinear decline with advancing age, and a linear decline in endurance swimming until the age of 70, when performance declines radically (Tanaka and Seals, 1997:846). It is therefore important, when coaching older swimmers, to take into consideration physiological changes and make specific adaptations to training sessions in order to accommodate the needs of the individual.

Training adaptations for Masters swimmers may include:

- Considering pre-existing medical conditions that may affect training or swimming technique.

⁵ VO_{2max} refer to definition of terms –page vii

- Including a longer warm up and cool down set in the training session.
- Increasing the time intervals between sets to allow for longer recovery periods.
- Being cautious when using high intensity anaerobic sets.
- Sacrificing correct biomechanical swimming techniques to take into account any physical limitations the swimmer may have.
- Using non-traditional strokes, which are still accepted for competition (for example, the use of breaststroke kicking whilst swimming butterfly).

The coach would also need to consider the following:

- The background and experience in training of the swimmer.
- Adapting communication styles to include the athlete in terms of making decisions regarding their functional ability, as well as taking into account his/her personal needs and goals.
- Awareness that motivation for participation may differ. For example social and health reasons may be more important than performance and competitive outcomes.

(Killmier, 1993; Australian Sports Commission 2007; Bartley, 2007; Masters Swimming Canada, 1997).

The ageing swimmer has a “variety of needs, motivations and health related problems, which could place the athlete at considerable risk if trained the same way as age group and elite counterparts” (Killmier, 1993:97). It is these risks and the specific needs of the Masters swimmer that form the distinction between coaching adults and coaching children and adolescents. The fact that many coaches may not recognise this difference (Killmier, 1993) was, in part, what stimulated this research.

Motivation and coaching style

It is not only the physiological changes of older athletes that set their coaching requirements apart from children (including adolescents and young adults), but the motivation for adults’ participation in sport must be considered. A study examining motivation profiles in sport among adult sports participants showed that motivation was associated with the level of sport involvement and participation (Vlachopoulos, Karageorghis and Terry, 2000). Participation in a coaching

experience can be seen as a place for learning where adult swimmers are motivated to train for “increasing or maintaining one’s sense of self esteem and pleasure” (Zemke and Zemke, 1988:57). Masters Swimming Canada (1997:4) observes that swimmers who train “are there of their own volition, so motivation is internal rather than external”, but feedback and encouragement from the coach is still required. This internal motivation of Masters swimmers plays an important role in defining how adults learn as observed by Knowles et al. (1998). Knowles’s concept of self-direction, can also be seen as a source of motivation by adult learners. Houle, (in Gravett, 2005) identifies that some adult learners may be activity-orientated. This implies that adult learners will pursue activities for social or personal needs and, through their experience in these activities, will have their needs satisfied. This can be linked back to what motivates adults to participate in sport or recreation in the first place.

To enhance the internal motivation of Masters swimmers, the coach should adopt a democratic as opposed to an autocratic coaching style. The democratic vs. autocratic coaching style can be linked to Knowles’s pedagogy vs. andragogy debate, which will be discussed in detail later in this chapter. A democratic coaching style allows Masters swimmers to be encouraged (through their internal motivation) rather than being pushed by the coach (seen as an external motivator). In a study examining athletes’ perceptions of an ideal coach, Schoeman, Bester and Le Roux (2005) found the following:

- Coaches are expected to be a calming influence for the athlete especially in stressful situations.
- Coaches should have their emotions under control. Athletes are against coaches who “run up and down the side of the field shouting abuse” (p.145).
- Coaches whose athletes have low self esteem require a sense of security and thus need a more authoritarian or dominant type coach. Females, however, mostly prefer a more democratic approach to coaching due to the accessibility it offers to the coach.
- Coaches are expected to be “reliable, stable and consistent, to be precise with regards to [training] schedules and programmes, to be knowledgeable about the [events] in which their athletes are participating” (p.145).

Adult motivation for learning and participation in a swimming training programme, the coaching style used, and the swimmers' perceptions of their coach are all factors that can be linked to the principles of adult education and learning. It is these principles that underpin the theoretical framework of my study.

Coaching is dynamic and multi-dimensional. It involves the creation of an environment in which learning can take place in order for the athlete to perform at optimal levels, and has been defined as both an 'art' and a 'science'. The 'science' of coaching involves the scientific use of physical and mental training principles which have been verified by research. The 'art' of coaching provides the application of the scientific information to a specific coaching situation, providing a foundation for athlete support and development (Chambers, 1997). Coaches thus need a wide range of skills, abilities and knowledge in order to teach, guide and manage athletes (Schuman, Bester, and Le Roux, 2005, Jones and Turner, 2006). It is the context of a 'specific coaching situation' that sets apart coaching younger and elite swimmers from coaching Masters swimmers. The 'pedagogical' effectiveness and roles that a coach could take on (Aussie Sports, 1994) have not been researched as they relate to coaching Masters swimmers. Rather the focus is on coaching as a generic discipline with the development of coaching philosophies and the implementation of researched scientific coaching principles (Hannula, 2003; Cushion, 2004, 2005). Coaching requires the ability to teach. In order to teach, the coach needs to have "an understanding of basic learning principles and teaching techniques" (Chambers, 1997:6). Teaching, coaching and learning principles specific to the older swimmer and the implications for training are not evident within the literature. My research investigated this gap.

Edwards (1997) puts forward a separate argument questioning the boundaries between education, training and leisure. He argues that the 'values' and 'boundaries' between education, training and leisure affect the "forms of learning opportunity available to adults" (p.98) as well as who is responsible for the provision and funding of learning opportunities. A distinction between education, training and leisure resides in the fact that education provides for the "general development of the individual and is primarily the responsibility of the state" (p.98), whereas training is concerned with the provision of skills for employment and the responsibility lies with employers. Leisure provides recreational pursuits for adults

who, for the most part, will also provide funding for them. Within the context of this research, participation in a swimming training programme overseen by a coach can be seen as a leisure pursuit where payment of the coach for their services will take place. Edwards (1997:104) sees a sharp differentiation between leisure and adult education as problematic because for some adults “the learning may be educational, it may train them, it may be leisure, or it may be a combination of these”.

From the preceding discussion, two issues require clarification. First, we need to be reminded about the definition of training within a sports coaching context. Training in this context is not as Knowles (1987:176) would say for “dogs and horses”, but would include instruction from the coach and practice by the athlete in order to improve skill. Secondly, as I am using Brookfield’s (1999) adult education principles as the theoretical underpinning of this research, the term education requires contextualisation. Formal education is seen as primarily the responsibility of the state and something that is usually done at certain times in life (Edwards, 1997; Arsenault and Anderson, 1998). Arsenault and Anderson (1998) divide learning into three components: informal learning (unplanned learning occurring during daily activity), formal learning (takes place in organised and structured systems such as schools and tertiary institutions) and non-formal learning (any learning activity taking place outside a structured system). Swimming training and coaching within the context of this research report falls within the parameters of non-formal learning. For clarity, I will use Edwards’ (1997) delineation of learning as encompassing education, providing training, as well as being situated within a leisure context.

In the next section, I will be reviewing andragogy as a premise for adult education, as well as looking at a range of theories regarding adult learning. This forms the theoretical framework underpinning the research.

2.3 Why Andragogy?

The term andragogy had European origins from as early as 1833 (Rachal, 2002). Malcolm Knowles introduced his theory of andragogy (adult learning) in the mid-1960s. Andragogy was defined by Knowles et.al. (1998) as “the art and science of

helping adults learn”, (61) in contrast to pedagogy, the “art and science of teaching children”. Later this became known as the andragogy vs. pedagogy debate. In his later work, Knowles moved the parameters of this debate and declared that andragogy and pedagogy were not oppositional but formed a continuum “ranging from teacher-directed to student-centred learning” (Merriam, 2001:6), depending on the learning situation.

Knowles et al. (1998) argued that adult learners have specific expectations and motivations for engaging in learning and that adult learning includes a different set of assumptions and strategies to ensure that it is a meaningful process. In the development of an andragogical model Knowles et al. (1998), identified six core assumptions about adult learning which were different from the assumptions about children’s’ learning on which traditional pedagogy was premised. These assumptions are:

1. Need to know – adults need to know why they should learn about something before engaging in the learning process. Masters swimmers thus need to know why the coach requires them to do certain sets in training or the reasons behind correcting a particular stroke.
2. Self-concept – adult learners are autonomous and self-directed. This is linked to intrinsic motivation driving swimmers to train and compete.
3. Prior experience – there is a greater volume and variety of experience that adults bring to the learning environment. By contrast to children, “adults are themselves a rich resource for learning” (Knowles et al. 1998:61). The downside is that adults also bring with them fixed ideas, habits and thinking which may cause difficulty “in learning new ways of thinking and doing” (Gravett, 2005:9). This can be seen with Masters swimmers who have difficulty in changing their stroke technique because they have ‘always done it that way’.
4. Readiness to learn – in addition to their experience, adults also have a readiness to learn due to their need to develop effective coping strategies to deal with real life situations. In a swimming coaching context swimmers who participate in squad training will learn from the coach and other swimmers to be more effective in the water and develop strategies to cope with competition.

5. Orientations to learning – adults have a life-centred orientation to learning which is contextualised and problem centred. This contrasts with pedagogy, which is often, more subject centred within the school system.
6. Motivation – adults have the motivation to learn in order to become more competent in dealing with issues that they confront in their daily lives. Intrinsic motivation and the quest for job satisfaction or a better quality of life plays an important role in defining how adults learn (Knowles et al., 1998). Adding to the intrinsic motivation of adult learners Lieb (1991) proposes that social relationships, personal advancement, the ability to give back to society, cognitive interest, as well as the desire to provide a contrast to daily living are sources that will add to the motivation of adult learners. This can be related back to research that has shown that “self motivation has consistently been correlated with physical activity levels in several adult populations” (DiPietro, 2001:13) and has application to Masters swimming.

The distinction between andragogy and pedagogy is important in this study, as it illustrates the different ways in which knowledge is presented within a particular learning environment. Pedagogy is seen to be more teacher-directed where the learner is relatively submissive in carrying out the teacher’s instructions. Within a swimming coaching context, this can be compared to a more autocratic coaching style where the coach decides what needs to be done and how to do it, with no involvement in the decision-making process from the swimmers themselves. Andragogy on the other hand gives more responsibility for learning to the individual and can be compared to a more democratic and sharing type of coaching style.

Young (1985:166) sees pedagogic and andragogic as “two modes of human accompaniment”, where adults are either guiding children to become adults, or guiding other adults to a more “refined [and] enriched adulthood”. It is through the guiding process and the understanding of the differences between guiding a child or an adult that Young (1985:167) sees the potential for undermining relationships of mutual understanding and trust “if these differences are not respected”. The consequences of this undermining are “that the relationship of authority will change from an authoritative to an authoritarian one” (Young, 1985:167). Within a

swimming coaching context, this would mean moving from a democratic to an autocratic style of coaching. It is the question of pedagogic or andragogic and whether or not the coach plays an authoritative or authoritarian role that is important in this study.

It was however, within the realm of educational practice that Knowles (1987) believed that andragogy could best be served. The implications for practice had certain requirements that included:

- Providing a climate conducive to learning, including having fun.
- Ensuring mutual respect and trust.
- Collaboration rather than competitiveness.
- Support rather than judgement.

These practical implications require consideration within a swimming coaching context, to establish whether they can be successfully applied to the coaching of Masters swimmers.

It is important to remember that the learning environments referred to in the literature tend to be the traditional classroom, whereas this study has as its learning environment the swimming pool. It remains to be seen whether andragogy can be taken out of its 'traditional' environment and be applied within a sport-coaching context.

2.4 Critics of andragogy

The debate around Knowles' definition of andragogy has been primarily focused on the "philosophical underpinnings of the concept rather than its empirical efficacy" (Rachal, 2002:211). It is perhaps on the validity "of andragogy as a theory of adult learning" (Merriam, 2001:5) that most of the critiques and debates have been focused. This view is reiterated by Smith (1999) and St. Clair (2002) who argue that an adult learning theory cannot be based on the characteristics of adult learners when no explanation is offered as to how and why people learn.

Brookfield (1990) argues that andragogy has an emotional appeal for facilitators of adult learning. It is learner-centred, has democratic practices, separates adult educationalists from their peers in "childhood, secondary and higher education"

(p.96), thus giving them status within the field. He goes on to take a middle-of-the road approach, saying that “ what are called pedagogy and andragogy are both appropriate, at different times and different purposes, with children, adolescents, young adults, the middle aged, and the elderly” (p.121). Hanson, (1996:107) agrees that there are differences between pedagogy and andragogy, but that these differences are based on “context, culture and power”. This is in contrast to Day and Baskett (1982:149) who argue that there seem to be “no clear-cut differences between children and adults as learners” and that andragogy is more an “educational ideology rooted in an inquiry-based learning and teaching paradigm” (p.150) than a theory of adult learning.

If andragogy implies collaboration, a change in the “role and function of the teacher” (Pratt, 1998:164) is required. “Most teachers were taught in systems that place the teacher in a central position of dominance and power, with almost exclusive authority over and responsibility for making decisions regarding the conduct of education” (Pratt, 1998:164). An assumption could then be made that coaches who have a teaching background could have this type of entrenched behaviour which would then affect their coaching style. Perhaps the same could be said for coaches who were taught under this type of educational system and perpetuate it because it is what they know – this is how a teacher should be – authoritarian and in control. If teaching is one of the responsibilities of a coach, then the coach’s own context and background may require reflection in terms of how it influences their coaching style.

In 1984, Knowles changed his sharp distinction between pedagogy and andragogy, and from this time the “child-adult dichotomy became less marked” (Smith, 1999:6). Pedagogy became seen as a content model and andragogy a process model (Smith, 1999). Knowles explains andragogy as sets of assumptions about adults as learners. These assumptions are based on two presuppositions “that intrinsic to adulthood is a sense of self-directedness and in congruence with this self-directedness, andragogical practice is a collaborative venture which involves the learner in most or all instructional functions” (Pratt, 1998: 160). Pratt (1998) goes on to pose questions about the self-directedness and collaboration of andragogy. “What are we to make of the self-directed adult learner who consciously chooses to relinquish control over instructional functions?” (p.161), as

can be seen in a coaching environment where the coach gives all the instructions and the swimmer listens and acts without asking questions or engaging in the coaching process. An adult learner can thus be self-directed but also dependent. Nevertheless, as Pratt (1998:165) points out, self-direction is “a situational attribute of learners, not a general trait of adulthood” and that dependency should be temporary with the capacity for change through appropriate support and direction. This support and direction often becomes evident when learners lack the capacity for making informed decisions or when the commitment or ability to achieve one’s goals declines. Brookfield (1990:94), however, argues that self-directedness, “that is, autonomous control over aspects of work life, personal relationships, societal structures, and educational pursuits – is an empirical rarity”.

So, is there a case for andragogy at all? I would argue that there is, based on the purpose of the learning-teaching situation, the teaching approach and methodology used, as well as taking into account the needs of the learners (Imel, 1995). Generally, the literature on adult education supports the view that “teaching adults should be approached in a different way than teaching children and adolescents” (Imel, 1995:1).

It could also be said that the six core assumptions about adult learning made by Knowles focus on ideal teaching and learning situations (Rachal, 2002) without any explicit meanings as to what constitutes andragogical practice. Jarvis (1984:37) argues that this is because the assumptions have no “rigorously argued theoretical basis” and that the theory of andragogy has “acquired the status of an established doctrine of adult education, but without being grounded in sufficient empirical research to justify its dominant position” (cited in Brookfield, 1984:91). Concern has also been expressed over adult learners being in control “over not only the objectives but also the learning strategies, as well as evaluation procedures” (Rachal, 2002:213). Critics maintain that the perceived needs of “learners cannot and should not, determine course content and educational processes” (Gravett, 2005:11) and that learners do not often have an awareness of their specific learning needs (Brookfield, 1990).

Thus, most of the debates around andragogy centre on whether or not it is an adult learning theory, a teaching method, a set of assumptions about learning, a

model of teaching, a philosophy, a set of guidelines for teaching practice or all of the above (St. Clair, 2002; Smith, 2007; Merriam, 2001). It is the “divergence of interpretations of andragogy [that] reflect the diversity of philosophies and ideological orientations held by those who see themselves as educators and trainers of adults” (Brookfield, 1990:120). Despite the debates and critiques, it is as a guide to practice that “andragogy has had its biggest impact” (Merriam, 2001:8).

Regardless of these debates, and the perhaps outdated terminology (andragogy), I have persisted with a humanistic approach. This is due to the fact that Knowles’ concept of self directed learning is embedded within humanism, a trait that defines my philosophy in adult education, even though Finger and Asún (2001:73) compare andragogy with humanistic psychology and describe both as “ ahistorical, astructural, apolitical and non-institutional”. Despite this criticism, I agree with Rachal (2002:224) in that “as much of the spirit of andragogy as possible should infuse adult learning situations”. If learning is to be truly productive, and in the case of a swimmer, efficient, then sound andragogical principles should be applied to the coaching environment. What this requires is “an adult teaching approach that confirms and promotes adulthood by fostering independence, responsibility and self direction” (Gravett, 2005:9).

2.5 Andragogy and evaluation

In terms of evaluation, andragogy prescribes a process of self-evaluation where the learner gets “evidence ... about the progress they are making towards educational goals” (Tight, 1983:61). Knowles does not say much about assessment and evaluation other than that it is self-directed and a mutual undertaking between the learner and the facilitator. Swimming evaluation can take place in both training and competition. In competition, evaluation occurs through the times and results achieved at a swimming gala or at open water events. Time is the standard criterion against which performance is measured. For recreational swimmers it may be that their fitness levels have improved enough to feel the health benefits or to enable them to compete for fun in open water events. During training, the coach is able to evaluate progress through time trials and performance during training. Thus, swimmers learn how to swim fast by the

kinaesthetic sense given during speed swimming, as well as evaluation against the clock. It is this 'evidence' that provides the swimmer with a self-evaluation tool regarding performance. If we revisit Beryl and her performance at the Midmar Mile, we can see that, not only did she improve her time for the race, but she was also wondering about where she had finished in her age group.

The next question that needs to be asked regarding evaluation within a South African context is whether Outcomes Based Education (OBE) can be combined with swimming coaching. It is not within the scope of this literature review to review OBE or have an in-depth discussion around comparisons with andragogy. The aim here is firstly to contextualise evaluation practices within a South African context and secondly, to examine whether there is a 'fit' between present day conventions of competency and evaluation within a swimming coaching context. OBE is often seen as a 'learner-centred' practice where the "learning goals, teaching and assessment processes, content and pace of learning are determined mutually by the tutor and student" (Cretchley and Castle, 2001:487). This is a view shared by andragogy.

Returning to a swimming coaching context, if a swimmer and coach have a mutual understanding about the goals to be achieved, are both aware of the work load required to achieve them, a 'learner-centred approach' prevails. This approach would include understanding the coach's role, what the swimmer is required to do, the time constraints, motivation and realisation that on the day of competition it may or may not be your day to perform. Even though there is a link between 'learner-centred evaluation' practices in the classroom and the swimming pool, ultimately evaluation is between the swimmer and the clock and not between the learner and the content taught. This could be debated in that the swimmer needs to learn the 'content' of swimming before being able to race. My view is that even if you have all the knowledge about swimming fast, on the day there are a myriad of factors such as temperature of the water, what was eaten before the race, how the swimmer was feeling, was the swimmer over or under-prepared, that can influence performance. Therefore, the basic premise of 'learner-centred' evaluation involving communication between the swimmer and the coach can be evident in swimming coaching. However, performance has a number of extraneous influences that will affect positively or negatively on what the swimmer is able to achieve.

2.6 Adult education teaching principles and the swimming coaching context

Lifelong learning encompasses all the learning a person does across the lifespan (Arsenault and Anderson, 1998; Bronte, 1997). It is typically divided into informal (unplanned daily learning), formal (organised structured systems that occur, typically during school and tertiary education) and non-formal learning. Non-formal learning is viewed as any organised learning activity outside the established formal system where individuals engage in activities serving particular needs and learning outcomes for the purposes of satisfaction and self-fulfilment (Arsenault and Anderson, 1998). Swimming coaching, whilst perhaps not viewed as an organised education activity, could fall within the parameters of non-formal learning because learning takes place outside of an established formal system. It is part of Edwards' (1997) definition of leisure.

Whether in formal, informal or non-formal learning, Brookfield (1999, in Patterson and Pegg), developed a framework aimed at facilitating adult learning through “the advancement of six central principles” (Patterson and Pegg, 1999:46). These principles include:

1. Voluntary participation – where adults choose to engage in learning.
2. Mutual respect – adults need to feel valued and respected.
3. Collaborative spirit – collaboration between the learner and educator for the fulfilment of needs and objectives.
4. Action and reflection – engagement by the learner and educator in exploring, acting and reflecting on experiences.
5. Critical reflection – adopting a democratic student centred approach to learning.
6. Self direction – where adults take responsibility for learning.

In a study looking at providing teaching strategies within leisure studies programmes in the United States, Patterson and Pegg (1999) suggested andragogical teaching strategies for application within a classroom for each of Brookfield's six principles (summarised in table 1).

These six learning principles and teaching strategies are relevant to coaching Masters' swimmers and I have adapted them for use within a swimming coaching context, which is discussed further in chapter five. The learning principles and teaching strategies formed the framework that I used when doing the observations and questionnaires for the participants who took part in this study.

Table 1: Adaptation of Patterson and Pegg's (1999) andragogical strategies

Learning principle*	Teaching strategy for leisure studies
1. Voluntary Participation	Short lecture – 20 minutes Group work and integration of material with personal experience Small groups moving to action Role play
2. Mutual respect	Facilitator should be: warm, supportive, open, enthusiastic and respectful Delegation of power – democratic learning Participatory teaching strategies Informal setting
3. Collaborative Spirit	Students design learning objectives Develop learning objective agreement
4. Action and reflection	Application of learning experiences to real-life settings Guest speakers Use of AV teaching methods Field trips
5. Critical reflection	Learners reflect on and make decisions about their own interests, needs and values Established in consultation with instructor
6. Self direction	Responsibility for own goal setting and evaluation criteria Problem based learning

* (Based on Brookfield, in Patterson and Pegg, 1999)

I have used these principles above to guide my research. Brookfield (2000:47) however sounds a cautionary note when he remarks, "one cannot take techniques and methods used in one context and simply transfer or apply them to another". If this is the case, then examining the application of adult education principles generally used within a classroom context cannot simply and unquestioningly be transferred and applied to a swimming coaching context. Despite this caution, I used this framework as a tool to show how coaching strategies can be aligned to adult education principles and teaching practices. This is discussed further in chapter five.

It is within the theoretical frameworks of Knowles et al. (1998), and Brookfield in Patterson and Pegg (1999), that this study situates itself. Both are central to exploring the strategies used to coach adults within an informal learning environment – the swimming pool. It is important to understand learning in a water environment in order to improve swimming efficiency and enhance the participation of every swimmer.

It is however, not enough to look at facilitation and the principles of and assumptions about learning. What is required is the understanding that “learning is inherently social in nature” (Hansman, 2001:45) and how this can be applied to Masters swimmers.

2.7 Adult learning and swimming practice

“To make meaning means to make sense of an experience; we make an interpretation of it. When we subsequently use this interpretation to guide decision making or action, then making meaning becomes learning.”

(Mezirow, 1990:1)

It is important to develop an understanding of the nature of adult learning and its application to the swimming coaching context. This is because coaching involves teaching and training involves learning. For a coach this implies that the construction of meaning and knowledge is “situated within a socially constructed context” (Cushion, 2004:1), taking into account learners’ personal experiences and how they were taught. For the coach and the swimmer the implications are that the interactions between learning tools (such as language or a kick board), the activity and the social context will play a part in shaping learning (Hansman, 2001). However, experience and engagement with the task will still require cognitive meaning in order for execution of the task. In an attempt to establish relevance for this research, I will briefly describe the selected learning theories and relate them to the swimming environment.

Experiential learning has as its premise that people can learn from their experience, a process whereby “knowledge is created through the transformation

of experience” (Kolb, 1984:38). For example, to learn or refine a swimming skill, the swimmer needs to engage with the task in hand, rather than simply listening to an instruction. After watching a demonstration, a learner will only know how to carry out the task “cognitively and indirectly through memorisation” (Jarvis, Holford and Griffin 1998:53). A swimmer will need to execute the skill in order for the learning to have meaning. Jarvis, et al. (1998:55) argues that, “all forms of experiential learning can be behavioural, action based, cognitive or social”. Swimming learning is multi-faceted, as it involves, amongst others, skill development, fitness training and motivation to participate and learn. Swimming coaching and training “occurs in the action mode of experience rather than in communicative interaction” (Jarvis et al. 1998:53). Even though active engagement with the task is required, communicative understanding (learning) will ultimately determine the success of learning and participation. Beryl will thus need to understand the language that Jill uses in order to execute a correction to a stroke.

Smith (1990:57) argues, “any programme to develop, enhance, modify or reorient someone’s learning skills and strategies must start with the learner’s perspective”. Swimmers tend not to learn at the same rate or in the same way, depending on their ability and previous experience. The coach needs to understand each swimmer’s own personal context in order to optimise their learning and experience. Experiential learning is characterised by Kolb (1984) as learning that is a continuous process grounded in experience and involves a transaction between the environment and the person. Brookfield (1990:99) argues that some adult learning may take place with no “specific goal in mind...it is unrelated to life tasks and instead represents a means by which adults can define themselves”. I agree with Brookfield (1990) as Masters swimmers may or may not have a specific goal in mind when embarking on a swimming training programme. The swimming environment also becomes a place for Beryl to define herself as a swimmer. This is who she is at the pool. Her fellow swimmers and coach do not necessarily see her as a mother, a grandmother or an employee. At the swimming pool she is defined as a swimmer.

Instrumental learning involves the manipulation and control of the environment (Mezirow, 1990), and can be seen as a form of experiential learning. Performance

can be an indicator for changes that have taken place resulting from instrumental learning. For example, when swimmers are learning the intricacies of the various stroke techniques in the water, they are learning 'how to do' by manipulating and controlling the environment. Performance (time taken to cover a certain distance under different conditions, i.e. racing or just training) is the yardstick against which this type of learning is measured. I feel that this type of learning is also dependent on communicative learning where there is "understanding of the meaning of what others communicate" (Mezirow, 1990:8). In swimming, you cannot learn how to manipulate the environment unless you are able to find meaning in what the coach has said to you and then apply it to the environment. It is also important to note that there needs to be critical assessment of other people's experiences and interpretation is necessary before they can be accepted (Jarvis et al. 1998).

2.8 Swimming coaching and training as a community of practice

Contemporary learning theories such as situated learning and communities of practice put forward by Lave and Wenger (1991, 1999), challenge Knowles et al. (1998) concept of andragogy. Whereas Knowles sees adult learners as autonomous and self-directed, where the learning resides within the individual, Lave and Wenger's concept of communities of practice supports the view that learning occurs in a social environment. Communities of practice de-emphasise individual learners (St. Clair, 2002) and focus on the interaction between people within a community. Whilst andragogy encourages facilitation and negotiation of learning between the educator and the adult learner, Lave (1993:64) recognises learning as being a "social phenomenon constructed in the experienced, lived-in world". Both agree on the social context where learning takes place, although the emphasis is different.

Learning has already been identified as social in nature (Hansman, 2001) and that meaning and knowledge construction are situated within a social context (Cushion, 2004). These concepts can now be further developed by considering whether or not coaching and training can be viewed as a community of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991). Communities of practice are groups of people who are self-organised, share a common purpose and have a desire to learn and practice from each other (Lave, 1993, Merriam, Courtenay and Baumgartner, 2003). If this is the

case, the coach can be said to be operating within a coaching community of practice and the swimmers learning in another community of practice. Both swimmers and coaches then form the larger swimming community.

Lave and Wenger (1991:31) view learning as “an integral and inseparable aspect of social practice”. In a community of practice, learning and mastering of skills are required to function within a community. This implies that you learn how to ‘do’ through participation. In a community of practice, new comers enter and participate on the periphery and, over time, develop knowledge and skills in order to gain full participation as members of the community (Cushion, 2004). ‘Legitimate peripheral participation’ describes “a position in a community of practice that provides increasing access to resources for learning” (Light and Nash, 2006:78).

Coaching any athlete is a dynamic and complex process. Wright, Trudel, and Culver, (2007:141) define coaching as a “social activity” where coaches will learn from interactions and relationships formed with each other. Learning through experience (informal learning) during day-to-day coaching activities and observation of other coaches form part of the process of becoming a coach in a community of practice. As a coach moves into the coaching community, his or her participation will initially be peripheral and, as experience grows, he or she will gain more knowledge and learn the norms of the community (Cushion, 2004). This enables the movement towards ‘full legitimate participation’. Similarly, a training situation can also be seen as a community of swimming practice, where the ‘old-timers’ induct the ‘new comers’ (Lave and Wenger, 1999) into the ways of doing things within the squad. The ‘new comers’ become immersed in the culture of swimming squad practice over a period of time. This involves being able to train with the squad, understanding the use of language by the coach and squad members and being able to communicate in order to develop a joint understanding of meaning. By engaging in this process ‘new-comers’ move from ‘legitimate peripheral participation’ to becoming full participants within the community of practice. Learning becomes embedded in the everyday activities of the swimming squad and takes place through observation, demonstration and participation. Learning is thus a process of becoming a member of a sustained community of practice.

2.9 Conclusion

Understanding the social context in which learning takes place within an informal environment is important for this study, as it takes into account that learning is not simply about cognition in the head of an individual. It is about the development of a social construct within which members of a community share experiences, make available resources for learning and, in so doing, ensure that knowledge is generated through participation. It also takes into account the differences between learning and teaching in adulthood and traditional pedagogy.

Even though global aging is a reality, more and more older people are becoming active participants in recreational and sporting activities. These activities can be seen as growing fields in lifelong learning and it is therefore important to see if theories of adult education apply, how they can be applied and the effect of their application, not only on performance but also on the delivery of sports and leisure programmes.

Masters swimmers such as Beryl require specific coaching adaptations to meet their individual needs. These 'needs' include taking coaching to another level in order to accommodate the specific physiological, motivational and learning requirements of Masters athletes. Beryl and Jill need to develop an intrinsic understanding to work together in a community of practice and in so doing enhance performance and the socialisation of being a swimmer.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN

The previous chapter reviewed the literature related to adult education and learning, coaching Masters swimmers and a swimming community of practice. This chapter discusses how the research was designed and conducted. It begins by defining the specific research questions, elaborating on the methods and procedures used, revealing how Beryl gave her permission for the research and the limitations of the methods used.

3.1 Research questions

The main purpose of this research was to describe the coaching strategies used to coach a group of Masters swimmers, and to examine whether or not adult education principles and teaching strategies can be applied within an informal swimming coaching context. In order to do this, a holistic picture of Jill's training strategies, techniques and her perceptions regarding Masters swimmers, as well as an understanding of how the swimmers perceived her coaching techniques was examined. The following were used as the specific research questions:

1. Are adult education principles and teaching strategies being applied in an informal swimming coaching context, and if so, in what ways?
2. What coaching strategies / methods are currently being used to train a selected group of Masters swimmers?
3. What perceptions does their coach have regarding the training of Masters swimmers?
4. What are the key factors that promote or hinder successful training of Masters swimmers?

3.2 Research method

An empirical qualitative approach was adopted for this study. According to Creswell (1998:14), qualitative research is conducted in a “natural setting where the researcher is the instrument of data collection”. The suitability of qualitative research methods for this study was further reinforced by using multiple sources of information during the data collection process. A case study was selected as it allowed detailed and rich information to be gathered and recorded. This included a detailed description of the coaching environment, and seeking interpretations and explanations of the Masters swimmers interaction between each other and with their coach. By developing a detailed understanding of the ‘informal’ learning environment, a platform to explore the principles of adult education and learning within this particular context was created.

There are however, limitations associated with the case study approach. These include a possible lack of data to provide an in-depth picture as well as limiting the boundaries in terms of “time, events and processes” (Creswell, 1998:64). What this implies is that a fixed period needs to be set in order to give the case study a beginning and an end. This was done by negotiating appropriate times with Jill, the Masters swimmers and the venue management to observe and video tape training sessions. In consultation with Jill, it was also decided that the best possible period for data collection was between the Midmar Mile open water event (which took place in February) and the Masters National Swimming Championships in March. January was not a good month for data collection as Jill had taken a break over Christmas and the majority of the swimmers were still on holiday and not back into training. Because of the limited time for data collection it is possible that there could be a criticism that there is a lack of data generated to provide an in-depth picture as described by Creswell (1998). However, I do feel that for the purposes of this study, sufficient data was collected.

In this study, I was the research instrument, collecting a variety of data from the participants who were observed in their ‘natural’ training or coaching settings – the swimming pool environment. I was thus able to generate a ‘thick’ description where the actual words and actions of the participants are conveyed, a coherent account of the phenomena being studied was given together with “ample empirical

evidence ... [and] a strong theoretical base” (Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit, 2004:7).

By employing a multi-method approach, an ‘interpretive, naturalistic approach to subject matter’ is implied (Creswell, 1998:15). Popper (as cited in Crotty, 1998:11) describes the interpretivist paradigm, as “where social reality is regarded as the product of processes by which social actors together negotiate the meanings for actions and situations”. I was focusing on the interactions at various levels between the coach and swimmer as well as between the swimmers themselves – all of which required interpretation and understanding. The interpretivist paradigm also recognises the fallibility of measurement and thus I integrated a variety “of data and different sources and analysis methods in order to strive for validity” (Henning, 2004:20).

3.3 Selection of participants

Purposeful sampling techniques were used to select the participants for my study. This allows the researcher to have samples that are chosen “because they are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomena the researcher is investigating” (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006:319). Jill, who coaches Masters swimmers and has two separate Masters squads, was identified from within the Johannesburg area. Eleven swimmers who matched the following selection criteria were available to participate in the study:

- The swimmer was older than 25 years of age. This criterion was aligned with the classification of a Masters swimmer according to FINA regulations.
- The swimmer had to have been training with the coach (Jill) for a period of no less than three months. I felt that three months was a sufficient period for a coach and swimmer to have built up some kind of working relationship.

3.4 Research procedure and instruments

A mixed-method approach was used for this research where I drew on “multiple sources of information such as observation, interviews, documents and audio-visual materials” (Creswell, 1998:62). Thus, a range of research tools were used for the collection of data. These included video and non-participatory pool deck observation, questionnaires for Jill and the swimmers, an interview with Jill and a focus group discussion with purposefully selected swimmers. A pilot study was conducted prior to the research which tested all of the proposed tools. It was during this phase of the research process that adjustments were made to the observation schedules and questionnaires. These adjustments included:

- Adapting the observation schedules which were based on Patterson and Pegg’s (1999) andragogical strategies, to have more relevance to the swimming pool context.
- Aligning the questionnaires for the coach and swimmers to the research questions.
- Including an e- version of the questionnaire which required different formatting. Electronic questionnaires were not used in the final data collection.

The methods used included:

Video and non-participatory observation – see instrument in appendix E

Video observation took place over a period of two weeks. Three sessions were video-taped for both squads. To observe both Jill and the swimmers in their ‘natural’ swimming environment, I needed to be sure that they were familiar with the camera to ensure that the quality of the interactions between the swimmers and the coach were minimally disrupted (Creswell, 2003). The most suitable placement for effective observation of Jill training her squads was to set up the video camera on the pool deck. However, this limited the space available for movement on the pool deck, as the camera and tripod were relatively bulky. The video camera ran throughout the training session, allowing me to make additional notes on the behaviour of and interaction between Jill and the swimmers.

I also observed Jill coaching her junior squads (no video recoding was done of these sessions). This took place over one week where three of her sessions were observed. My role in this observation process was non-intrusive. I did not participate in any aspect of the training sessions and was a non-participant observer (Creswell, 2003). My observation may have been imposing, but as I was familiar with the participants, there was already a certain amount of trust that had been generated and I did not view my presence as being disruptive and / or intrusive. However, I may have missed certain nuances between Jill and the swimmers, as I lack the understanding of the relationship that was previously established between them.

An observation schedule was drawn up and correlated with the andragogical teaching strategies proposed by Patterson and Pegg (1999) – see table 1 in chapter 2.⁶ This schedule was used to ensure that the information gathered was consistent and could be related back to my research questions. The same observation schedule was used for the Masters and the junior squads. This enabled me to make comparisons between Jill's coaching strategies of the junior and Masters swimmers. Notes made during observation supplemented and supported the visual material collected on video (used only for the Masters group).

The advantage of using both the video and non-participant observation was that I was able to obtain in-depth information on the training sessions, the interactions between Jill and the swimmers and the swimmers themselves, as well as noting the training methods used by Jill. Any unusual events were captured on video for later analysis and all the information was recorded in real time (Creswell, 2003). However, during the analysis of the video material, there was very little time where you could see the interactions between the swimmers and Jill. More time was spent observing swimmers swimming up and down in the pool, which was not only time consuming but did not add any value to the data collected. For another study of this nature, I would not recommend using the video recorder.

⁶ See page 22

Questionnaires – see instruments in appendix F (coach) and G (swimmers).

I attempted to correlate the questions in the questionnaires for both Jill and the swimmers with the assumptions and principles of adult learning as proposed by Knowles et.al. (1998) and Brookfield in Patterson and Pegg (1999). This allowed the data captured to be related to the theoretical underpinning of this study.

The advantages of using questionnaires are their economy, anonymity and “the same questions can be used for all subjects” (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006:194). For my study, two questionnaires were drawn up – one for Jill and the other for the swimmers. I used predominantly closed question types to allow for easier question analysis (Bell, 1993), however open questions were included which allowed for further probing during the interviews and focus group discussions.

The questionnaires were distributed and completed before the observations took place. This allowed me to make comparisons between what Jill and the swimmers said and what was observed by me as the researcher.

Interview with Jill – see instrument in appendix H.

A standardised interview with a semi-structured format was used “according to strict principles of objectivity and neutrality, that will yield information that represents reality more or less ‘as it is’ through the response of the interviewee” (Henning et al., 2004:52). Advantages of the interview are its adaptability, the opportunity to probe responses to questions which have been asked previously, as well as to “investigate motives and feelings” (Bell, 1993:91). The disadvantages include the time it takes to conduct an interview and the time required for transcription (Bell, 1993; McMillan and Schumacher, 2006).

The interview gave me an opportunity to clarify and further comprehend data obtained from the questionnaires and to extend my understanding of the information gathered from my observations. “Interviewing is an important way for the researcher to check the accuracy of – or verify or refute – the impressions he or she has obtained through observation.” (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1993:384). During

the interview an opportunity was created to provide additional information regarding Jill's coaching strategies, as well as to obtain additional information relevant to my research due to my being able to "control the line of questioning" (Creswell, 1998:186). A disadvantage of this technique was the way that Jill and I veered off track and tended to talk about issues that were not immediately relevant to the question asked. This was primarily because we knew each other. However, in the analysis of the transcription, it was through these additional comments and seemingly irrelevant discussion that some interesting facts regarding Jill's coaching and her perception of the Masters swimmers became known.

Focus group discussion – see instrument in appendix I.

A focus group discussion was used for the swimmers. This type of discussion creates a social environment, which is stimulated by the group members "perceptions and ideas, where the researcher can increase the quality and richness of data through a more efficient strategy than one-on-one interviewing" (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006:360). I facilitated two separate focus group discussions. Six swimmers were purposefully selected from the information given on their questionnaires, which I felt would add value to the data collected. Due to the time constraints and the availability of the swimmers, only four were able to participate – two swimmers in each group discussion. One discussion with two swimmers took place at the Masters Swimming National Championships in Durban. The venue and time chosen for the discussion were not ideal. This was because the discussion took place after one of the swimming sessions and swimmers were in a hurry to get back to their hotels to rest before the final afternoon session. The second discussion took place after the National Championships, in the evening at the gym that provided a more relaxed atmosphere for discussion. In both groups, the discussion related primarily back to some of the questions asked in the questionnaire, as well as those asked in the interview with Jill. These responses were then compared with the questionnaires, the interview conducted with Jill, as well as with the data collected through video and pool deck observation.

3.5 Data collection procedures

- A research journal was kept to describe and include a detailed record of pool deck observations, dates when questionnaires were distributed and returned, times and dates for the recording and observation of training sessions.
- For each training session observed the same non-participatory observation schedule was used (Appendix E). Each schedule with the notes made were then compared to the same-videotaped session in order to cross check for any similarities and differences observed. The junior and Masters swimmers observation schedules and notes were also compared and checked for consistency.
- For the analysis of the questionnaires, a descriptive statistics sheet was drawn up. The purpose of this was to extract the most relevant information under each section as well as to generate descriptive statistics for the Masters group. Interesting quotes from various questions were also generated on a separate sheet. This allowed for simple cross checking between the responses of the swimmers and Jill to questions that were similar in both questionnaires.
- A similar technique was used for the interview and focus group discussions. Interesting quotes relating to the research questions and those asked in the questionnaires were extracted and generated on a separate sheet. The two focus group discussions were collated in order to compare responses.

In order to ensure validity and verification of data collection, I did the following:

- Clarify researcher bias. This was noted as a limitation of the study. By being aware of my own personal ideas and opinions, a conscious effort was made not to have these influence data collection and the analysis and interpretation of the findings.
- The fallibility of the selected data collection tools was made explicit in the selected approach and method chosen for this study.
- The information collected was triangulated through the process of video analysis, observation recording, the interview with Jill, the swimmers focus group discussions as well as the data collected from the questionnaires. Comparisons and checks were then made between all data collected. This provided a rich account of what was happening during the training sessions

observed, and gave detailed information on the feelings and opinions of the participants involved in the study.

- Member checking was done after the data collection and transcription of interviews and focus group discussions. Jill examined a draft copy of the interview transcript to check for accuracy of meaning and validation of the account recorded. Information obtained from the observations and questionnaires was confirmed in the interview and focus group discussions. It is important that participants be given a voice throughout the process not only during the member checking but also in the write up of the final report. Beryl thus provided the narrative for the research process and the swimmers words from the focus group discussions were used in the writing of the research report.
- Reliability could have been further enhanced by agreement evidence, which is “established by determining the extent to which two or more persons agree about what they have seen heard or rated” (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006:186). Objectivity can then be established through inter-tester reliability (Thomas, Nelson and Silverman, 2005). As I was the only person conducting this research, neither of these was established.

3.6 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis is an ongoing process throughout the collection of data and lends itself to inductive analysis (Henning et al., 2004; Maykut and Morehouse 1994; and Bogdan and Knopp Biklen, 1992). “In order to make sense of the inquiry, we elicit meaning from the data in a systematic, comprehensive and rigorous manner” (Henning, et al., 2004:127). Thus, the ongoing process of analysing data requires rigorous attention in terms of coding, classifying, interpreting and managing the data collected. This was done by doing a mini analysis of each tool used as soon as the data was received. After each training session my observation notes were checked against the video recordings. Triangulation was conducted with data from questionnaires, the interview with Jill and the focus group discussions with the swimmers. A code sheet was drawn up for the pool deck observations (including the video analysis). Codes were allocated to specific categories and corresponding themes that were identified. Thus, emerging patterns, categories and themes from the data were organised,

coded and categorised using emic⁷ terms that are distinctive to the swimming environment.

3.7 Ethical considerations

In any research project, permission to conduct the study is required prior to any research being performed (Bell, 1993). Informants need to be kept anonymous, understand that they are voluntary participants and are well informed about the research process (Creswell, 1998). In an attempt to ensure the above considerations were implemented in my study, the following steps were taken:

- Verbal consent was obtained through a briefing with the selected swimmers and Jill.
- Written, informed consent was obtained from all participants (appendix A). An information sheet outlining the purpose of the study, as well as the data collection methods that were going to be used was included (appendix B). Participants were made aware that they knowingly and willingly participated in the study and could withdraw from the process at any time.
- The identity of all participants and the venue at which they train was kept confidential. The research report is written so that the identity of participants and the venue is concealed. All data collected was coded in order to protect the confidentiality of the site and individuals.
- Permission to use a video camera on site was obtained from the management of the pool where my data collection took place. A separate venue consent form was generated for this purpose (appendix C).

Ethics approval from the University of the Witwatersrand was received for all the intended research instruments (appendix D).

⁷ Emic is defined by McMillan and Schumacher (2006:372) as representing “insider’s views such as words, actions, and explanations that are distinctive to a setting or people” – such as those used by the swimmers in the swimming pool context e.g. using ‘zoomers’ which means using ‘fins’.

This was how I got Beryl's permission to conduct the research:

It is now 6.30am. The sun is already blazing down on what promises to be another hot summers day on the Highveld. Beryl and the rest of the swimmers are already in the outside pool waiting for Jill who has walked over from the gym. Jill introduces me as the researcher. As I explain the research requirements, Jonty gets impatient, "yes that's fine – just leave the forms. What must I do for a warm-up?" He starts swimming without hearing what Jill has told him to do. The others follow suit. Beryl makes a deal with me. Yes I can have her permission "as long as when you video me, I want to see myself swimming. I have never seen myself swimming before and Jill must tell me what I am doing wrong". I keep my end of the deal.

3.8 Limitations

As with any research, it is important to identify limitations, which may then affect the validity of the project. I personally have recognised a number of limitations, which must be taken into account when viewing the findings. These include:

- Bias on the part of the researcher.
I am a competitive swimmer myself and have 'insider' knowledge regarding the coaching of Masters swimmers within the Johannesburg area. I could have allowed my own my own personal interests; values and opinions to influence the data collection, analysis and interpretation of findings. However being aware of the possible pitfalls and exercising caution during the fieldwork assisted in the prevention of some of the shortcomings associated with being both an 'insider' and 'outsider' researcher.
- Only Masters swimmers who trained with one specific coach (Jill) were used in the study.
- The study was confined to the Gauteng region, where only one coach and two different Masters swimming squads participated in the study.
- Co-operation from the participants. Not all of the swimmers originally selected for the study participated. This was due to swimmers missing training sessions when I was on pool deck, which meant that I was not able to obtain the necessary consent for participation.
- Time constraints. There was a limited window period available for data collection as it fell towards the end of the swimming season – between

February and the second week of March. This is discussed in more detail under the methodology section. Other time constraints included the period set for concluding the study and the day to day living that interrupted the research process.

- No similar research of this nature was found in the literature. Thus, all the questionnaires and observation schedules were drawn up, implemented and analysed by me and no comparisons could be made to standardised data.
- More observations over a longer period of time as well as comparing other coaches and Masters swimmers would have broadened the scope of this study and perhaps added to the research findings.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter explains how the study was conducted. I have rationalised the criteria for participation selection, described the methods used and justified their selection. The data analysis was outlined and the limitations of the study clarified. Appropriate qualitative research methods were used in order to provide a rich account of how Jill trains her Masters swimmers and their reaction to her.

Having received Beryl's consent to conduct the research, chapter four will examine what Beryl does in training, who she trains with and what her perceptions of Jill are. It will also provide a description of Jill, her coaching strategies and her perceptions of the Masters swimmers she trains.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

6. 15 am. Beryl has arrived at the gym where the parking lot is full and people are still arriving to start the day with a dose of exercise endorphins. Others are leaving, feeling refreshed and ready to start their day – only to sit in traffic on their way to work. As Beryl swipes her card to gain access to the gym she notices that there are people who are in their own little worlds exercising to their own headphone beats, oblivious to others around them. Some are pumping iron with all the extra testosterone found in the free weights section, while others are following the mechanical beeps of the circuits.

This is where Beryl meets Jill at the indoor swimming pool, three mornings a week to train.

This chapter describes the training environment, the communication and coaching strategies Jill used, as well as the perceptions she has regarding the swimmers training in her Masters squads. The cohort of swimmers is introduced and the perceptions they have of Jill and her training strategies are described. Lastly, a community of practice is explained in the light of adult learning.

The results of this study will be presented in the form of a portrait which presents “a composite picture” (Henning, Van Rensburg, and Smit, 2004:111) of the data themes that emerge. These were obtained from the pool deck observations, the questionnaires, the interview and discussion with Jill, as well as, the focus group discussions with the swimmers.

4.1 Who is the coach?

“The coaching of sport is a complex task and at the centre of all sporting activities are the coaches”

(Schuman, Bester and Le Roux. 2005:143).

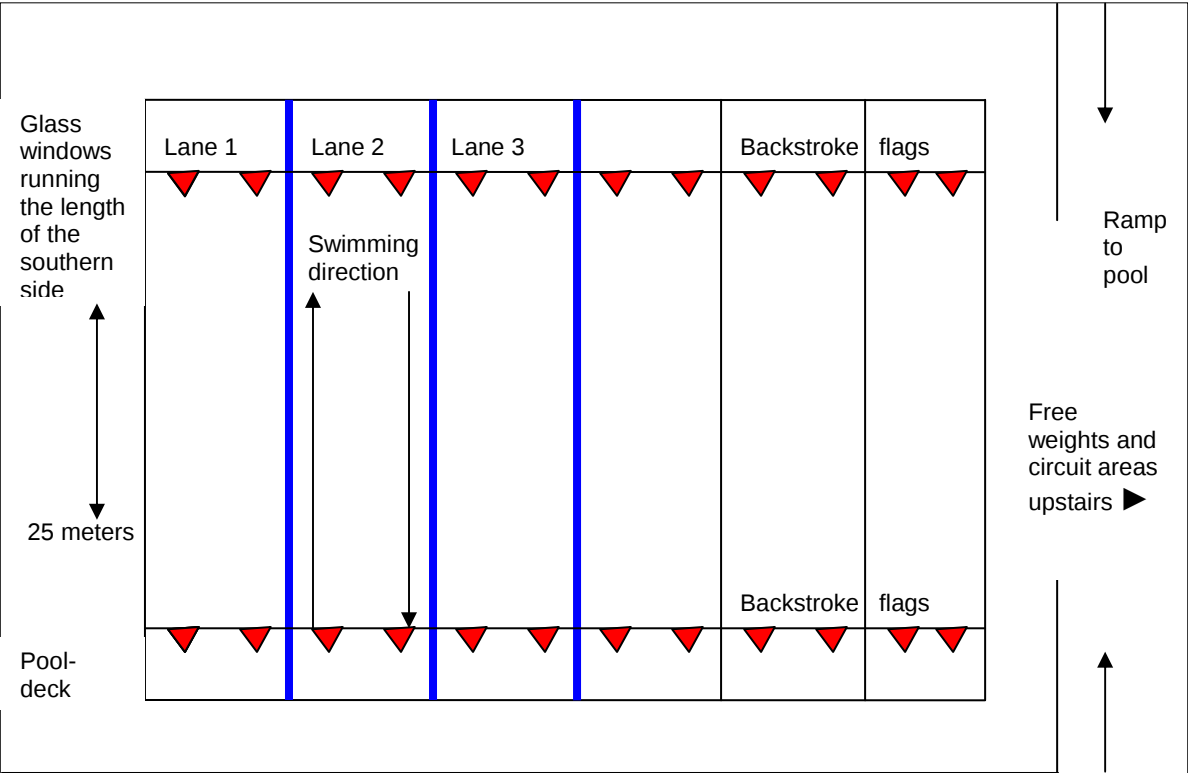
Jill is the swimming coach who agreed to participate in this study. She coaches on a part-time basis in the Gauteng area and has coached various swimming squads over the past five years. She has coached Masters squads for the past two and a half years. Jill also taught swimming for three years and is still involved in teaching school swimming at one of the local schools during the summer season. She is a former competitor, having participated at both national and international levels. She has tried to come back and swim competitively at a Masters level but prefers to coach rather than train and participate in competition. When she is not coaching, Jill is a full-time mother and a manufacturing goldsmith. She has a matric certificate, as well as a Swim South Africa swimming teacher's and life saving qualification. Jill has no official coaching qualifications, as Swim South Africa does not offer any formal coaching certification. What they do have is a coach's bridging course, which introduces swimming instructors/teachers to coaching. All coaches and swimming teachers need to be registered with SSA. Jill thus relies on her extensive experience as a swimmer and swimming teacher as well as working with a colleague to design and plan training sessions for the swimmers she coaches. Jill appears to be the 'norm' regarding the 'qualifications' of swimming coaches in South Africa. Many of them were Olympic and National swimmers using their vast competitive and training experience to launch a career in coaching.

Where does Jill coach?

Training takes place inside a gym, which is nestled in a green, leafy, wealthy Johannesburg suburb. There is a heated, 25-meter swimming pool with six lanes, which forms a central feature of the gym. Members who are on the upper level doing the circuits or free weight training are able to view the swimmers and their coach whilst training. There are fixed glass windows on the southern side of the gym running the length of the pool allowing natural light to be reflected on the

water’s surface. Occasionally, depending on the weather, an outdoor 25-meter pool is used for both the morning and afternoon training sessions. The Masters coaching sessions take place in the mornings. Two separate groups train from 5:15am – 6:30am and from 6:30am to 7:30am. The age range of these swimmers is 21 – 70 years⁸. Masters groups include both recreational and competitive swimmers. Junior (primary school) and Senior (high school) swimming squads train in the afternoon from 3:15pm. Between two and three lanes of the pool are used, depending on how many swimmers arrive for the training session. The lanes closest to the edge of the pool are used for coaching, which makes it easier for Jill to see each swimmer as she walks up and down the pool deck during training sets (refer to figure 1). Swimmers (between two and eight in a lane) will usually swim in an anti-clockwise direction with the fastest swimmer leading the lane, and the other swimmers following behind one another. This creates a very structured training environment.

Figure 1: Layout of the indoor, heated swimming pool



Jill usually does the allocation of swimmers to the lanes for each session; however, the experienced swimmers who have been training with her over a

⁸ Not all of the swimmers training with Jill qualify to swim at a Masters level due their age. Some are younger than 25 years.

period of time know which lanes they will swim in. Within the lane environment there is an observable 'pecking order' that is determined by the speed of the swimmers. The fastest swimmer will go first with the others following behind in an orderly fashion. This leads to a lane structure that enables the coach to control and see what each swimmer in each lane is doing. By having this control, Jill is able to be flexible and differentiate the training programme based on the age and ability of the swimmers in the lane. For example she could have one lane doing a set of 5 x 100 meters freestyle going off every 2 minutes (using the pace clock) and another lane doing the same set but having more rest and going off every 2½ minutes.

Jill's training programme

Jill works in collaboration with a colleague who coaches at another pool. They work together in planning the training sessions, but Jill is flexible about changing the sessions according to the needs of the swimmers on the day. This flexibility extends not only to the actual plan for the training session but also to the individual swimmers. Jill explains this as "I have to like (sic) test the waters, see who is being prickly, if everybody is bubbly, if people are tired, sometimes they [the swimmers] come into the water and I can just see that what I have set out for the day is just not going to work. And then I adjust it [the training programme]" (Jill, February 2008).

The training programme is generic⁹ for the Masters swimmers. I did not observe any input from the swimmers regarding their own training or what they could do in any given set. For example, swimmers were not given the opportunity to decide which strokes they wanted to use during a training set. Jill determined the sequence, stroke, distance and time allocation for each training session.

Jill continuously observed the swimmers from the pool deck in order to assess not only what was being done above the water but also what was being done under the water. She uses positive reinforcement such as 'well done guys' for swimmers after a hard set or training session. This was observed across all squads. In the Masters squads, Jill was particularly attentive to how some of the older swimmers

⁹ The training programme is set by Jill and all the swimmers do the same sets in training

were feeling during the training session and would check on a regular basis to see how they were doing during a set. If she saw that, a swimmer was struggling or looking tired in the water she would extend their rest periods or get them to do something less strenuous by perhaps using fins.

Jill's communication

Language is a key underlying factor in determining the way in which Jill communicates with the squads that she coaches. Her body language on pool deck, where she usually stands rather than sits during instruction and stroke correction, indicates a position of authority. However, Jill would at times kneel down on the pool deck to get as close as possible to the level of the swimmers whilst instructing or doing stroke correction. This type of behaviour was observed across all the squads. The verbal language however changed considerably for the junior and senior squads. It became more authoritarian. For example when a ten year old boy challenged her about why he had to do freestyle in the warm up, Jill replied "cos when you are in the water, I'm the boss" (February, 2008). This was done in order to maintain discipline and exert authority.

Jill also used a whistle in order to get the attention of the junior and senior swimmers either for discipline purposes or for stroke correction. She does not use a whistle for the Masters swimmers and will speak to them individually at the end of the set if required. In these observations, there was no use of authoritarian language and behaviour when working with the masters squads. She explains this by saying that,

I am more forward with the children because you have that authoritarian position....with kids you can tell them not to do something and they will follow through but I find with adults you have to play it differently. Some people are very sensitive, they have been swimming for a long time and they don't like to be told they are doing something wrong They start getting very touchy with you. And you have to be careful because the whole lane environment is sensitive to that. One is getting pissed off with the coach and the others start getting pissed off with them or with the coach and then it starts getting ugly (Jill, February, 2008).

The swimmers depend on the coach to provide correction, guidance and encouragement throughout the session. Even though there is this dependency,

Jill acknowledges that she uses a differentiated approach, explaining, “often I am a little bit more reserved with the Masters than I am with the children” (February, 2008). Jill’s reservation with the adult swimmers also leads her to a feeling of being intimidated at times. She attributes this feeling to some of the strong personalities that make up the group and the fact that when she is talking to “big men who are used to getting their own way in their own environment” (February, 2008). The intimidation she sometimes feels affects her teaching, which becomes more reserved. Thus her communication and coaching strategies differ according to whom she is coaching – a more authoritarian and assertive stance with the children with a reserved and perhaps more accommodating approach with the Masters swimmers.

Jill used different language for instruction and stroke correction for the different squads. For the junior and senior squads, language was aimed at the level of the child. It became more technical as the proficiency and age of the swimmer increased. So Jill’s language would shift from explaining ‘froggy breast stroke’¹⁰ to the 10 year olds and ‘catch-up freestyle’¹¹ to the teenagers and adults. With the Masters group, more technical and tactile¹² language was used for both instruction and correction. For example, Jill would explain the intricacies of the hand entry position into the water when swimming freestyle, in order to feel the catch and pull through of the stroke. However, this technical language was not always comprehended and for a swimmer with no prior swimming experience, “given the coach’s background as an elite swimmer I think a lot is taken for granted. Not enough is done to impart knowledge to people like myself” (Kenny¹³, swimmer, 2008).

During instruction and stroke correction of the Masters swimmers, Jill used language which was demonstrative and explanatory, usually on a one-on-one basis using verbal, visual and tactile cues. Tactile cues play an important role in the understanding of body position in the water whilst swimming because

¹⁰ The explanation used to describe how to swim breaststroke using circle arms and legs – like a frog!

¹¹ Catch up freestyle – a specific freestyle drill used to enhance the gliding and extension of the pull phase of the stroke

¹² Swimmers need to be able to feel what their body is doing in the water, therefore phrases such as ‘feel the pressure on your hands’ or ‘feel your hand push past your leg’ was commonly used

¹³ Not his real name.

“swimming is all about feeling and if they [the swimmer] don’t understand the feel of water, they’re not gonna catch anything anyway” (Jill, February 2008). It is the development of the ‘feel’ of water that enables swimmers to have a greater awareness of their body position and thus become more efficient whilst swimming.

Jill interacts with the masters swimmers on various levels and at various times before, during and after the training session. General discussion regarding how the swimmers are feeling or about things that have happened since the last session generally took place before training. This creates a caring and friendly atmosphere promoting a shared understanding of personal issues and the life circumstances of swimmers in her squads. Jill remarks,

there’s a lot of that stuff that comes through ... talk about relationship building ... there’s a lot of stuff that people need , not only as a coach but someone that they can confide in and I think you have to have that role as well and you have to be open to that scenario. And they must feel safe, they must feel that they can come in, that they can talk ...and its ok , its all ok. (February, 2008)

Jill will encourage swimmers to come to training even if they are not competitive, are having a bad day, want to come and swim for fun, or for stress relief. This encouragement and caring atmosphere allows a personal relationship to be built up between Jill and the Masters swimmers. Once training starts, the interaction becomes more didactic where she tells the swimmers what needs to be done in a set.

Jill’s perceptions of the Masters swimmers she trains

Jill recognises that her coaching strategies are different for her Masters squads and her junior and senior squads. She explains that this is because the children require more creativity in the explanation and demonstration of a skill in order to enhance the understanding of what is required in the water. This was observed through both her verbal language and demonstrations in order to simplify some of the more technical aspects of each stroke. For the adult swimmers, explanations are based on Jill’s personal experiences as an ex-swimmer and taking into account the swimming experiences of the Masters swimmers themselves. The down side to this are her assumptions that the swimmers already know and

understand what it is to 'feel the water' The feeling of these inexperienced swimmers is that the coach takes a lot for granted in terms of 'tactile' knowledge¹⁴.

Jill describes her coaching style as "flexible" depending on where the swimmers are in their training cycle, as well as in their lives. Jill adjusts the training sessions on the pool deck and the training programme and seasonal goals are adjusted and reassessed throughout the season. These adjustments are based on other commitments or health issues that the swimmers may have. The intensity and speed of the sets during the session are also taken into account in order to prevent injuries,

What I often find, masters have to be very careful that they don't hurt themselves, because of their ages and we just can't do the same things youngsters do because the older we get the more dodgy they [the swimmers] get...so you try balance out the structuring of the upper body and lower body work [in order to have] a nice balanced session (Jill, February 2008).

Jill and the swimmers themselves evaluate training sessions. Evaluation is based on the consistency of training and improvements seen in terms of times done for various training sets. Jill was also able to gauge how well the session went by the reaction of the swimmers once they got out of the pool. From my observations, it seemed that the swimmers for the most part, enjoyed their sessions and would come out of the pool chatting about how hard a particular set was or that they were tired but enjoyed their early morning swim. Improvements in technique, times done at galas or in open water swims, overall finishing position at the open water events are also an indication of how the swimmers are doing throughout the season. Remember how excited Beryl was when she took ten seconds off her time in the Midmar mile, and wondering where she had finished in her age group?

4.2 Observations of Beryl and her cohort

I observed from the pool deck two groups of Masters swimmers in their training environment. Swimmers are able to choose which time they want to train. The 5.15am – 6.30am squad had more of the younger swimmers training and there were usually eight to ten swimmers at this session. Beryl trained from 6.30am -

¹⁴ 'Tactile' knowledge is that sensory knowledge that a swimmer relies on in order to 'feel' the water and body position whilst swimming

7.30am where more of the older swimmers attended. There were usually between six to eight swimmers at this session. The youngest in the group was 31 years and the oldest 69. It was interesting to note that seven of the swimmers did not swim competitively when they were younger, including Beryl. A summary of the mean age and swimming experience of the participants can be seen in tables 2 and 3 below. Five now compete in both open water and pool events (see figure 2 on page 49). One swimmer had only started swimming when he was 61 years old and competed in his first World Masters Swimming Championships held in Perth in April 2008.

Table 2: Mean age and age range of participants

	Female	Male
Questionnaire respondents	4	7
Mean age	44	42
Oldest respondent	65	69
Youngest respondent	31	35
Age range	34	34

Table 3: Swimming experience of participants

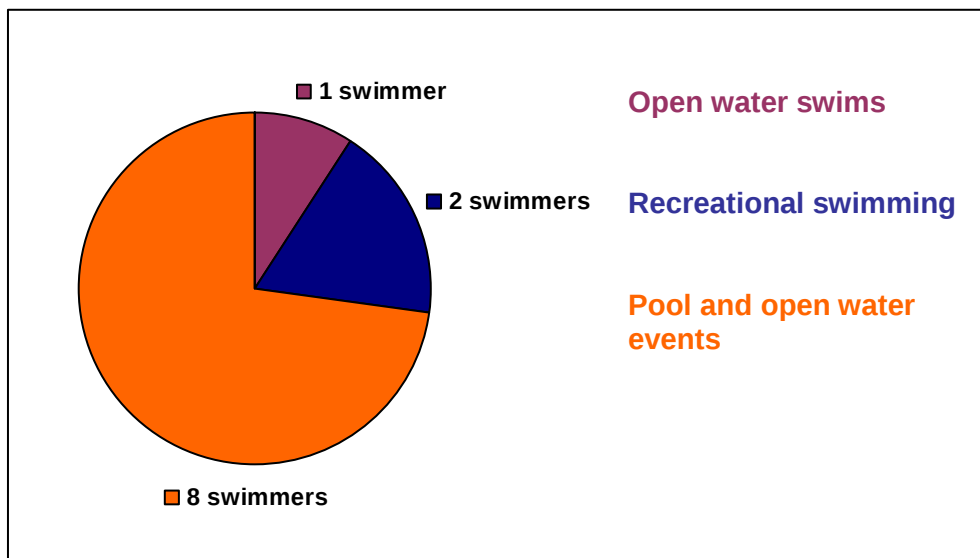
Not competitive when younger	7
Swam at school	1
Swam provincially	1
Swam at a national level	2

Swimmers in the two squads showed a variety of swimming ability. One swimmer had learnt to swim over the past two years and was training primarily to keep fit. There was only one other swimmer who trained primarily for fitness and did not compete in events. Two of the competitive swimmers in the sample group were training for the World Masters Swimming Championships.

Swimming as a discipline of aquatics sport has two foci – pool events and open water (swimming various distances in a dam, lake or the ocean). Training is based on the particular focus the swimmer has for competition (pool or open water or both). A third alternative is to use swimming as a recreational activity to keep fit and healthy. Generally, competitive pool swimmers will also swim in open water

events, as illustrated in the respondent group in which the eight competitive pool swimmers also compete in the open water events. None of them compete in galas only. However, a greater number of adult swimmers will only participate in open water events and do not make the transition to participating in pool competitions. Evidence of this is seen in the growth of open water swimming in the country. Swimming South Africa claims that Open Water Swimming is the fastest growing participation sport in South Africa (<http://www.swimsouthafrica.co.za>). This may be because open water events provide an outing for the whole family. Children and their parents can compete as the distances and different age group categories cater for all abilities. It is a fun and social aspect of competitive swimming. The pool on the other hand can be intimidating with all the officials on pool deck and everybody at the pool can see exactly how you are swimming and how fast you are going. It provides an atmosphere of competitiveness that may not suit those swimmers who want to compete for fun. One swimmer in the respondent group trains to compete in open water events only (figure 2 below). Beryl used to compete in galas but now prefers to swim the open water events.

Figure 2: Type of swimming engaged in by the Masters group



Masters training sessions

Squad training takes place three mornings a week, but eight of the swimmers train on their own for at least another one to three sessions per week. Training sessions last between an hour and an hour and a half depending on the time available to train, as well as the time allocated to Jill by the management for the use of the pool.

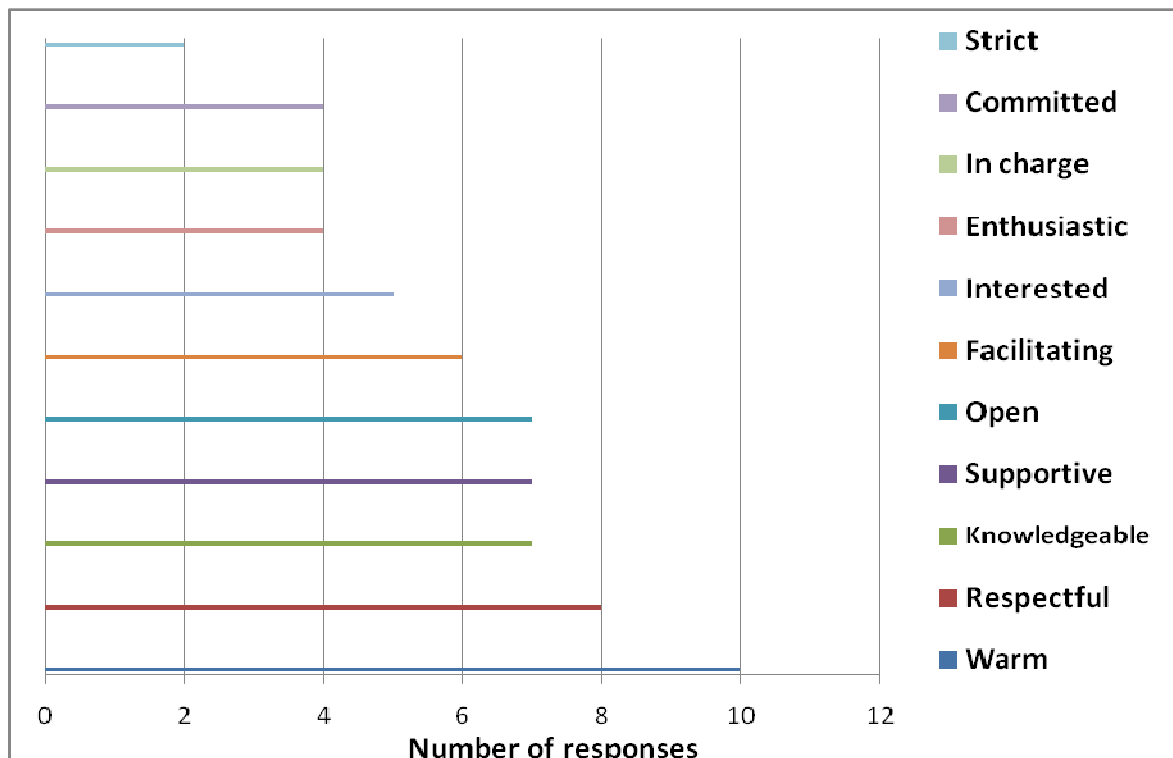
In the two weeks I observed training, a generic programme was used for all the swimmers. Some adjustments were made according to the ability of the swimmer, but even then, if it was a kick set or an individual medley set, everybody was doing it. Further adjustments take place when Jill considers it necessary (perhaps after a swimmer's injury, illness or before a specific competitive event). Jill did not provide a rationale for the training sets and they were only discussed if prompted by the individual swimmer. Non-competitive swimmers felt that a lot was taken for granted, based on the personal competitive swimming background that Jill has. Five of the swimmers said that no rationale was given for the various training sets and seven of the swimmers said that there was no discussion between themselves and Jill regarding their training or goal setting during the season. Sharon, a competitive swimmer, viewed her training sessions as having no long-term plan or goal. They were "just a whole lot of sessions and you don't really know why you are doing them" (March, 2008). However, one of the competitive swimmers felt that a rationale for training was not necessary, as his swimming training knowledge allowed him to understand what was required within the training set and the progression of training throughout the season as a whole.

Masters swimmers' perceptions of Jill

The length of time in which swimmers had been swimming with a coach, (not necessarily with Jill) ranged from four months to eight years. Despite some comments made about the lack of a 'tailored' training programme, the respondents described Jill as warm, respectful, knowledgeable, open, reliable and supportive (figure 3). She is seen as being aware of and respecting individual needs and pressures. Personal circumstances of the swimmers are taken into account. Her

coaching style is seen as 'supervisory'. She instructs in a fair and competent way, with well thought - out individual training sessions.

Figure 3: Graph depicting Masters swimmers description of their coach



In the focus group discussions, two of the swimmers saw their coach as more of a “facilitator telling us what to do as opposed to a coach” (Johannes¹⁵, March 2008). When probed to define a coach, he explained that it was “someone who... understands your strengths and weaknesses and your strokes and sits down with you and designs a programme around yourself and where you’re going to be competing... where you are able to do a generic set and then a specific set geared around yourself” (March 2008). Johannes demonstrated this by explaining his experience of swimming with a coach when he was away on holiday,

I have never seen a guy who is more alive on the side of the pool, for three hours he is just up and down ... it’s quite intensive, he is on you, your intervals and your stroke. A coach tells you when your hand is going in wrong, is on your case with every stroke to make sure you are doing it right, up and down the side [of the pool] with a stop watch (March, 2008).

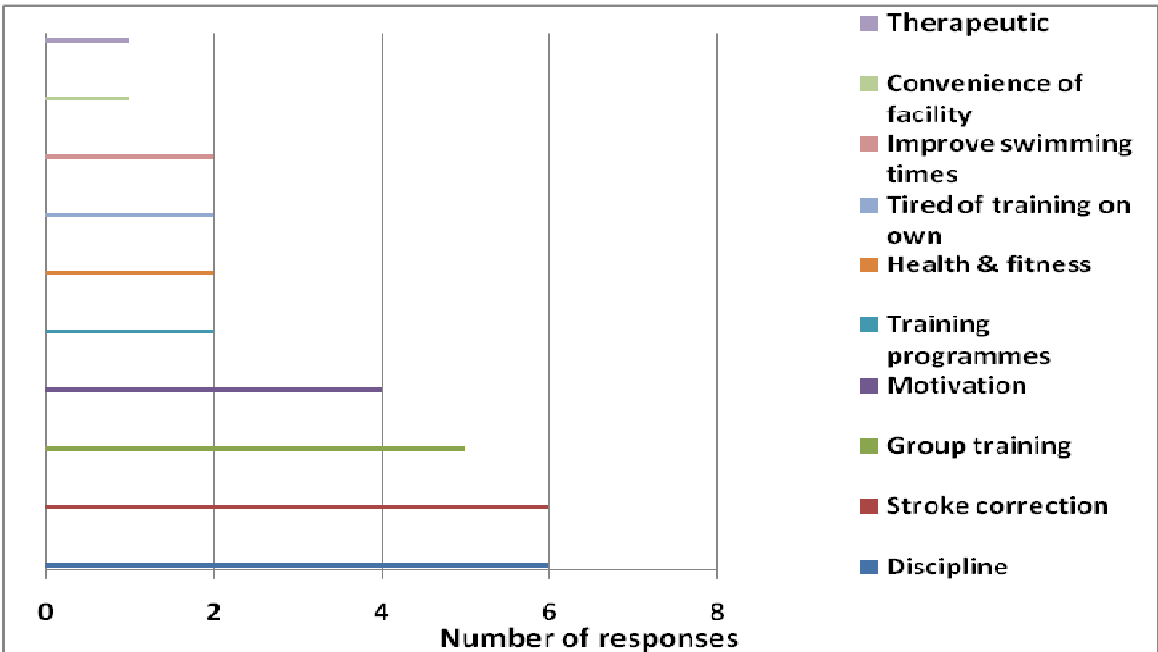
¹⁵ Not his real name

This is an apt description of an autocratic, ‘old school’, ‘barrack room’ model of a swimming coach, and will be discussed further in chapter five of this report.

Swimmers motivation for training with a coach

Swimmers were asked their reasons for deciding to come and train with a coach. For most swimmers there was a range of motivations for training with Jill. The reasons given were the structure, discipline and stroke correction that a typical coaching environment provides. Other reasons included the social aspect of swimming in a group and the motivation (“need some pushing” and “being told what to do” in a session) provided by the coach and fellow swimmers which stimulate self-motivation (figure 4). The swimmers see the pool environment as a place to relax, have fun, socialise, learn new things and where ‘de-stressing’ can take place.

Figure 4: Graph depicting reasons for training with a coach



Swimmers were also asked whether Jill paid sufficient attention to their individual needs. Five of the male swimmers felt that this attention was lacking. Max¹⁶ identified a potential problem where a squad has differing ability levels and motivations where it becomes “difficult to get one-on-one coaching [and] we all get

¹⁶ Not his real name

the same sets [during training]" (February, 2008). Since generic training sets are given with little or no individual adjustment according to stroke or swimmer input, individual goals and needs may be undermined. Stan¹⁷, another competitive swimmer, was adamant that he was self-motivated and did not necessarily need any one-on-one coaching – "at my stage of life, just give me the sets" (February, 2008). Sixty nine year old Mike¹⁸ felt that the coach needed to be more "healthily critical" and discuss with the swimmers their techniques before galas or open water swims, as well as give information regarding any "improvement or deterioration from one period to another" (February, 2008). More discussion about goals, structuring individual training sessions and attention to individual technique were issues highlighted by the swimmers as being missing in the coaching environment. It must be noted however, that when asked during the focus group discussion whether or not the swimmers actually went to Jill to discuss their goals and training plans the reply was "Well I suppose I haven't really, [communicated with Jill] but I wonder if that would make a difference?" (February, 2008). It seems that the lack of communication between Jill and the Masters swimmers regarding their training needs and goal setting for the season, as well as the adjustments that could be made during the season based on performance, is an area for coaching improvement.

4.3 Community of practice

An unexpected result of the pool observations, coach interview and swimmers' focus group discussions was the idea of a community of practice. It was whilst I was observing the swimmers during their training sessions, that I noticed how communal a squad training together is. There are certain rules that everybody adheres to, the language and terminology used, not only by the coach, but between the swimmers themselves is unique, and as a result, a certain type of community is set up within the squads as well as within the lanes that the swimmers train in.

¹⁷ Not his real name

¹⁸ Not his real name

In describing the group of Masters swimmers, Jill made an analogy to an ecosystem where,

they don't socialise outside of that little special circle. But they will especially come because they are committed to each other. Within that they've each got their own facet and they miss it [if a person is not there in the morning] ...because suddenly there is a space in the lane [that that person should fill]. Everyone has their own little special place and that's why I call it a little ecosystem because it's all there, a little environment. Its very special because they look out for each other and they are very chuffed when they see each other, but they don't come and have coffee, they don't do that ... they are quite happy to see each other, tease each other when they get to the pool and then they've had their fill...off they go into their little lives (Jill, February, 2008).

When swimmers come into a new coaching environment, they are entering into a community of practice where there are certain rules that are not necessarily explicit or easily understood. It is through observation and trial and error learning that the pecking order of the lanes or the nuances of a particular stroke are emulated, experimented with and ultimately learnt. The 'feel' of the water for example is not something that anybody can teach you. It is through creating an awareness of how your body travels through the water, watching other swimmers more skilled than you, experimenting with what the coach says to you regarding technique, that the tactile nature of swimming is learned. Swimmers observed in this study asked each other for advice regarding stroke correction or what needed to be done in a particular set if Jill was not immediately on hand. Within a particular lane, there would always be a person that anyone could ask for ratification of what needed to be done.

Swimming lane etiquette dictates that if you are swimming behind another person, you wait for at least 5 seconds or wait until the person has gone past the backstroke flags (which are placed 5 meters from the wall refer to figure 1 – pool layout) before you push off to start swimming. This allows you sufficient time to be comfortable behind the person and not touch their toes when swimming. If you do touch their toes, they will stop and allow you to go in front of them, and so the 'pecking order' is established. It is through these sometimes implicit rules that a swimming training community develops and provides an environment for 'new comers' to learn.

When new members of a squad join the group, it affects the dynamics of both the group as well as the lane. Jill will introduce the swimmer to the squad and during the warm up assess the ability and potential 'pecking order' of the lane into which the allocation has been done. Once this process is done, "the only thing that changes is the pecking order of the lane [where swimmers will swim one behind the other, usually in an anticlockwise direction, with the strongest swimmer leading the group] If they are unfit, fins are encouraged" (Jill, February, 2008). However if she has made a wrong call, the order is sorted out very quickly by the swimmers themselves.

As with all communities, there are those that do not always conform to 'normal' practice. This was found in Beryl, Jonty¹⁹ and Hymie's²⁰ group, whose ages ranged between 65 and 69, and who in my observation, form their own community within the community. It was fascinating to observe a group of swimmers who had been swimming together in the same lane for the past couple of years where there was no pecking order despite obvious differences in speed and ability. Each of them wanted to lead the lane and they did not want to let anyone else go in front of them. There was no waiting to give the person who was going in front their own space to swim. They swam over each other, next to each other and yet they always swam in the same lane together. Jill describes this as,

their own system, that's the way they work. And you can't tell them any different, that's just the way they are comfortable. And they will be damned if any one of them beats the other or if they want to pass each other and so they will make life very uncomfortable...maybe they have just got a bit of dementia, they forget, I don't know, I think that it's just that they are really competitive amongst themselves [and they have] got a point to prove (February, 2008).

The language that is used both by the coach and the swimmers is also unique to that community and is not one that is necessarily understood by people observing the swimming taking place, or by people with no swimming background or experience. An example of this would be if the coach said, "use fins and go 400 sliding drill". What this means is that you would use fins (swimmers would generally use short blade fins and not the long fins used for scuba diving), for 400 meters using a particular freestyle drill which is used to enhance technique and

¹⁹ Not his real name

²⁰ Not his real name

feel for the water. Any person (especially with no swimming background) coming into a squad would then need to learn a new vocabulary that is used amongst swimmers and coaches to enhance stroke correction, coaching strategies and training. This is usually learnt from either the coach explaining what needs to be done, or other more experienced swimmers assisting the novice in getting it right.

One of the questions posed in the interview with Jill, was whether learning within a particular coaching environment actually takes place. Jill responded that whilst she may be spending time explaining a correction in technique to one swimmer, everybody else in the lane/s is listening and “then suddenly everyone else is doing it. So I don’t have to tell everybody because I know everybody is listening anyway” (February, 2008). Therefore, it is through listening and thinking about the explanation, that learning takes place and is manifested in the water whilst the coach is observing. However because swimming is about ‘feel’ in and through the water, the coach needs the swimmer to understand what they are doing wrong, and, through various corrections to the stroke, begin to ‘feel’ the difference between the correct and incorrect technique they were using. Because the coach can’t “physically climb into their [the swimmer’s] skin you know you can just keep saying ‘just tilt your hand in a little bit’ or ‘pull down a little shallower’, ‘can you feel the difference’? I don’t know if they do or not, because I can’t feel it for them, ...[however], over time they are putting it into practice and they are learning” (Jill, February 2008).

Most swimmers who took part in the focus group discussion felt that they were learning from Jill as well as from each other, especially in terms of motivation and competitiveness. By watching and trying to emulate other swimmers (who may be younger, provincial swimmers) and perhaps faster and more efficient in the water, the adult swimmers are “learning from experimenting ... seeing what they [other swimmers] are doing and trying out different things” (Sheri²¹, March, 2008). Learning will take place even if swimmers are not getting any direct feedback from the coach as explained by Jill. Essentially the learning became self-driven and self motivated. However, one swimmer in the focus group discussion did not feel that any learning was taking place “because I have swum all of my life, I am not being

²¹ Not her real name

taught anything new, swimming is swimming” (Anthony²², March, 2008). This type of attitude reflects the difficulty that Jill has when trying to correct the strokes of some of the competitive swimmers who have “been swimming for a long time and ... don’t like to be told they are doing something wrong” (Jill, February, 2008).

Why is it that Beryl listens to Jill and does what she tells her? Is it because Jill is an authority standing on pool deck, giving instructions? No, it is because Beryl and Jill trust each other. Jill understands Beryl’s needs as a Masters swimmer. She knows what makes Beryl, at 65 years old, get up at 5.30am to be in the water at 6.30, three times a week and not miss a session. Beryl trusts Jill to have the knowledge and skill to train her as a competitive swimmer. Jill knows what makes Beryl the swimmer tick.

Whereas this chapter described the findings of the research, the final chapter will discuss these in the light of the literature, draw conclusions and reflect on the implications of the results for swimming coaching as a possible variant of adult education.

²² Not his real name

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

This chapter will discuss the findings of the research in light of the literature presented in chapter two and the research questions posed in chapter one. Conclusions and recommendations are made for further research based on the discussion and analysis provided.

5.1 Question one:

Are adult education principles and teaching strategies being applied in an informal swimming coaching context, and if so, in what ways?

To answer this research question I used the framework developed by Brookfield (1999, in Patterson and Pegg) aimed at facilitating adult learning. From the pool deck observations and video analysis, I have adapted these principles to be used within a swimming coaching context. They can be applied to swimming coaching in the following way:

1. Voluntary participation – Masters swimmers choose to engage in a swimming coaching programme of their own volition.
2. Mutual respect – There needs to be a climate of mutual respect between the swimmers and their coach as well as between the swimmers themselves.
3. Collaborative spirit – The coach and swimmers should collaborate regarding training programmes and goals for the swimming season.
4. Action and reflection – Engagement by the swimmer and coach in exploring, acting and reflecting on experiences in both training and competition. The coach would also need to take into account the swimmer's previous training history.
5. Critical reflection – A democratic coaching strategy should be adopted by the coach, to allow both the swimmer and the coach the opportunity to reflect critically and evaluate the effect of training on performance.
6. Self-direction – Masters swimmers take responsibility for training and learning from the coach, as well as from other swimmers.

Using the above principles, I then further adapted Patterson and Pegg's (1999) teaching strategies for a classroom context to show how they can be used to coach Masters swimmers – refer to table 4.

Table 4: Applying the learning principles and teaching strategies to a swimming coaching context

Learning principle*	Teaching strategy for leisure studies use*	Coaching strategy for masters swimmers
Voluntary Participation	Short lecture – 20 minutes. Group work and integration of material with personal experience. Small groups moving to action. Role play.	Understand the motivation for training and the chosen level of competition or recreational swimming.
Mutual respect	Facilitator should be: warm, supportive, open, enthusiastic and respectful. Delegation of power – democratic learning. Participatory teaching strategies. Informal setting.	The coach should show the same personal traits as the facilitator and understand the life circumstances of the swimmers. A democratic style of coaching favouring openness for dialogue. The pool provides an informal setting for training to take place within a structured lane environment where there needs to be mutual respect between swimmers.
Collaborative Spirit	Students design learning objectives. Develop learning objective agreement.	The coach and swimmer should actively engage together in the setting of goals and outcomes for the season.
Action and reflection	Application of learning experiences to real-life settings Guest speakers Field trips	Assist with technique and stroke correction. Give rationale for training sets and programmes that can be reassessed throughout the season.
Critical reflection	Learners make decisions about their own interests, needs and values Established in consultation with instructor	Both the coach and swimmer are able to reflect on the impact of training on performance and enjoyment, making individual adjustments when necessary.
Self direction	Use of AV teaching methods Responsibility for own goal setting and evaluation criteria Problem based learning	Swimmers have the responsibility to commit to training, set goals in collaboration with the coach and together evaluate training and performance.

(* Based on Brookfield, in Patterson and Pegg, 1999)

It was also through a community of practice that I saw adult education principles being implemented in a coaching environment. Swimmers learn from each other, have for the most part a mutual respect of each other's ability in the water (as was demonstrated through lane etiquette) and enjoy the social aspect of swimming. This lends support to Knowles (1987) who believed that andragogical practice had certain requirements. One of these was to create an environment conducive to learning where there needs to be an element of fun. This was always seen in the training sessions I observed and reflected in the some of the comments made by the swimmers after each session. Swimmers themselves saw the pool environment as a place where learning is enhanced and promoted through social interaction. Coaching may be seen as a "social activity" (Culver, 2007:141) developed within a community of practice. Coaches learn from each other and through experience gained within the coaching community. Coaching Masters swimmers could thus be developed further which has the potential to increase participation in the sport, as well as, improve performance.

Another aspect that needs to be highlighted concerning this research question was the differences in coaching strategies Jill used between the Masters squads and her junior squads. Jill was constantly aware of the physical, physiological and motivational differences between her Masters swimmers and the children she trains. Her actions and behaviour reflected the adult education principles that have already been discussed. It is through the observation of Jill's behaviour that I believe adult education principles can be applied to a swimming coaching context.

5.2 Question two:

What coaching strategies/methods are being used to train Masters swimmers?

An important factor that came up in the focus group discussions with the swimmers was their perception of different styles of coaching. One competitive swimmer saw the function of the coach as having a stopwatch on the pool deck with a disciplinarian disposition. This can be likened to an autocratic "old barrack room model" (<http://rubble.heppell.net/coaching/paper.html>) style of coaching, where the coach is a drill sergeant and swimmers train automatically and unquestioningly. This type of coaching may suit a particular type of swimmer and

could be related back to what the swimmer had previously experienced and so it felt familiar. It can be debated as to whether or not this style of coaching is conducive to learning and creating an atmosphere of mutual respect – especially with Masters swimmers. Not enough data was generated from this study to take this debate further.

In terms of coaching style with Masters swimmers Jill demonstrates a democratic approach in some instances. These include her approachability, flexibility and accommodation of swimmers' life circumstances. In other situations, she takes a more autocratic approach where she is in control of the training sessions with no input from the swimmers themselves. However, swimmers depend on the coach for guidance and encouragement, applying training principles within the season and providing technical stroke correction. What Jill could do is assist the swimmer in understanding the rationale behind the training programme and in so doing provide an opportunity for learning. This would enhance the democratic coaching strategy that Jill demonstrates and improve the collaboration between her and the Masters swimmers she coaches.

Collaboration requires a clear line of communication between the coach and the swimmer. It is an interactive process where the swimmer can discuss his/her goals and needs for the season, and the coach is then able to give an indication of the workload required in order to meet those goals. This can also be extended to the evaluation of training and performance. Planning the swimming season with goals in mind will go a long way in developing confidence in the swimmer that the goals can be achieved. For the coach, they can be used as a yardstick to measure performance and adjust the training programme if required. All these factors hinge on the development of an inherent understanding, mutual trust and respect between the swimmer and the coach.

Returning for a moment to the issue of a generic training programme that some swimmers felt did not meet their own personal needs, we need to look at the management of the training programme. In fairness to the coach, it is difficult to manage a group of swimmers who have differing ability levels and goals for the season, whose attendance at training may be erratic, and where only three lanes of the pool can be used for training. Lane management, which requires that all

swimmers perform the same task in the training set, is important. It is easier for the coach and the swimmers concerned if there is structure in the lane (especially when there are eight swimmers swimming together) and everybody has their own space within which to swim with a minimal amount of disruption.

An interesting aspect that came up in the interview with Jill was her reserved teaching stance when it came to correcting some of the “big men who are used to getting their own way” in her squad (interview, February 2008). As I was not privy to any of this behaviour during my observations, my assumptions are based on what Jill said to me. One of these assumptions is that this could be related to power relations developing between certain male swimmers and a female coach. As this was not one of the objectives of this research, I think it could be an area for further enquiry, especially as it relates to the quality of coaching given by female coaches to strong male personalities.

Jill predominantly uses democratic coaching strategies for coaching Masters swimmers. However these are located on a continuum between being autocratic (having total control over the training sessions) and democratic (her flexibility within a particular session). This can be linked to the continuum of pedagogy and andragogy put forward by Knowles (1987).

5.3 Question three:

What perceptions does the coach have regarding the training of Masters swimmers?

Jill recognises the differences between her coaching styles for the Masters swimmers and her younger squads. This is evident in the language and communication style she uses, more authoritarian for the younger swimmers and demonstrative and tactile for the Masters group. She also has a good awareness of where the Masters swimmers are in their lives and with their swimming, which lends itself to a flexible programme to accommodate swimmers who may be going through a rough patch in their lives.

In the questionnaires, the swimmers were also asked about their perceptions of Jill. In their description, words such as respect, facilitate and adaptable were used.

This implies a democratic and humanistic approach to training. It also provides a complex platform to determine what the difference is between a coach who facilitates or a 'training' facilitator who instructs in a supervisory way. As a coach, there is a need to facilitate learning of stroke technique as well as to train and instruct swimmers to improve performance. The balance between facilitation and instruction has to be done intuitively (this seems to be what Jill does) or through negotiation (which would be an andragogic principle). If the distinction between a coach and a facilitator could be further clarified, it may have an impact on the educational aspect of the coaching process for Masters swimmers. There was no clarity from the swimmers as to whether being a facilitator was seen as a positive aspect of a democratic coaching style or if it implied some kind of laxity on the part of the coach. Not enough information was gathered from the participants to make a clear distinction between a coach and a facilitator.

5.4 Question four:

What are the key factors that promote/hinder successful training of Masters swimmers?

Understanding the physical and physiological changes that occur during the aging process is vital to minimise the risk of injury to the swimmer from training. Adjustments in the training programme may need to be made regarding the distance set out for each programme (decreasing the speed and intensity of training) or adaptations in stroke to take into account any physical limitations the swimmer may have (Killmier, 1993; Australian Sports Commission 2007; Bartley, 2007; Masters Swimming Canada, 1997). Thus a flexible coaching style is required which was demonstrated by Jill.

Acknowledging and developing an environment conducive to learning is also important. This research showed that a community of practice is implicit within this swimming training environment. This is partly due to the structured environment within which the training takes place, where 'new comers' need to learn the implicit rules of the squad and the training environment. It is also due to the social aspect of training where learning is an "integral [part] of social practice" (Lave and Wenger, 1991:31). Learning within this swimming community occurs on many levels, each with their unique set of circumstances. Swimming in a lane requires

learning lane etiquette, which is important for 'survival', as well as to avoid the chaotic jostle for prime swimming position observed with Beryl, Jonty and Heimie. Swimmers will learn from each other, not only from those who swim in their lane, but from swimmers in other lanes, and even swimmers who may not belong to the squad. Coaches are part of this community of practice when they learn from the Masters swimmers in their squads, as well as from other coaches that form the broader coaching community. It is through the interaction among swimmers and their coaches that learning takes place.

Another key factor to promote successful training is communication and the use of language. Coaches need to be aware that not all Masters swimmers come from a swimming training or competitive background and may lack the technical understanding of some of the language used within a training context. Swimming coaches generally come from a competitive swimming background themselves, and thus assume that swimmers understand the language they use to describe sets or to correct a stroke. The coach needs to check for understanding, so as not to alienate those swimmers who have only entered the swimming scene later in life and lack the technical knowledge and physical knowledge regarding strokes or training programmes. This can then adversely affect the quality of learning experienced by the swimmer. Communication between the coach and the swimmer is central to developing an inherent understanding of what the goals and motivation are for the season, what training strategies will be used and how they will then be evaluated against performance. It is also where the community of practice may assist 'new-comers' in understanding the nuances of language and communication within a swimming squad.

Some swimmers indicated that not enough individual attention was given to them during training sessions. This I think is dependent on the swimmers' level. Some swimmers needed to feel that the coach is watching them to develop the confidence that what they are doing is correct. This would be the case for swimmers who are new-comers to the sport, or who have had their stroke adjusted in some way. Competitive swimmers who come from an extensive training background usually demonstrate self-motivation to train and simply want to be given the sets without further input from the coach. Coaches are thus required to understand the needs of their swimmers and make adjustments accordingly.

In summary the key factors promoting successful training according to the presented findings would be:

- Understanding the effects of aging on the body, and in so doing minimising the risk of injury.
- Developing a training and coaching environment conducive to adult learning.
- Understanding that some swimmers will come into a training environment lacking the specific terminology and understanding of the language used within a community of practice. Checking for understanding will assist 'new-comers' in developing the swimming vocabulary that will promote success within the training environment.

5.5 Conclusions

This research report has proved that Jill, in her coaching of Master swimmers unconsciously made use of andragogical teaching principles. Coaching any sport is a dynamic and complex task. Coaching Masters swimmers adds further complexity because of the "diverse variety of needs, motivations and health related problems" (Killmier, 1993:97) that older swimmers bring to the training environment. To ensure successful coaching of Masters swimmers the following recommendations should be made explicit to all Masters swimming coaches:

- Understanding the needs and motivation for adults coming into a swimming training environment.
- Awareness of the physical and physiological differences that adult swimmers present during training and make the necessary adjustments.
- Engage in democratic coaching strategies with effective communication between the coach and swimmers. This is crucial to developing an inherent understanding of what the training and performance goals are and how the coach is going to assist in their achievement.
- Increase the amount of interaction between the coach and swimmer to enhance adult motivation and to fulfill the self-directedness of the adult swimmer.
- Develop a strong community of practice among the swimmers to enhance the learning environment, making the pool a fun place to be and one in which swimmers are able to socialise and create a swimming identity for themselves.

- Within the coaching community of practice, enhance the awareness of the differences between coaching Masters swimmers and age group or elite swimmers. The stronger the community of practice among coaches, between coaches and the swimmers they train, as well as between the swimmers themselves, the greater the opportunity to enhance learning and improve coaching practices for Masters swimmers.

5.6 Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, my recommendations for further research are to examine the following questions:

- Can the results of this study be expanded to indicate a trend in Masters sports coaching that has underlying andragogical principles and practices? It would then be interesting to explore the possibilities of transference of best coaching practice to other sports that cater for Masters athletes.
- Could the coaching of sports for adults be seen as a variant of adult education?

If Dara Torres at the age of forty-one can win an Olympic silver medal for the 50 meters freestyle in Beijing, surely there is scope for mature aged athletes to achieve at the highest level. Age is no limitation for what is accomplished. Coaches should be encouraged to provide training environments that will safely give older athletes such as Beryl the opportunity to excel.

5.7 *Where is Beryl now?*

Beryl sadly has left South Africa to go and live with her grandchildren in Israel. She continues to pursue her passion for open water swimming. Later this year Beryl will live out her dream of competing in an open water event in the Sea of Galilee.

Shalom. Todah.

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Appendix A: Participation Consent Form

“Andragogy – Fact or Fiction in a Swimming Coaching Environment”

Hi, my name is Heather and I am conducting a study on the application of adult learning principles within the swimming coaching context. This research project is part of the requirements for my Masters degree in Adult Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. I would like to invite you to participate in this study as your input will provide valuable insight.

Data will be collected using the following protocols:

1. A pool side video and non-participatory observation of the coach's training sessions. This will take place over one week for a maximum of 3 training sessions.
2. Questionnaires will be given to the coaches and masters swimmers participating in the study.
3. An interview will be conducted for selected coaches. Transcripts of interviews between researcher and coach will be generated.
4. A focus group discussion will take place between selected masters' swimmers who are participating in the study. Transcripts of this discussion will also be generated for analysis. The researcher will be the primary data collector and will be assisted by an assistant during the focus group discussion.

Please feel free to ask any questions regarding the study either before participating or during the time you are participating. I will be happy to share the findings of my study with you once the research is completed. Your confidentiality will be respected and ensured throughout the research process and will not be associated with any of the research findings as your identity as a participant will only be known to myself. There are no known risks and/or discomforts associated with this study. Should you decide to participate, you have the right to withdraw from this study at any time without consequence. Please sign your consent with full knowledge of the nature and purpose of the research procedures. A copy of this consent form will be given to you to keep.

I, (Full Name) _____ understand
the nature and conditions of the study, and give my consent to participate in the study
Signature of Participant _____ Date _____

Heather Morris-Eyton, principal researcher

Appendix B: Participant information

“Andragogy application – fact or fiction in a swimming coaching environment”

Good day,

My name is Heather, and I am conducting a case study investigation on the application of adult learning principles within the swimming coaching context. As I am a swimmer myself and a lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand, I am particularly interested in the coaching of Masters Swimmers. This research project is part of the requirements for my Masters degree in Adult Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, and I would be very grateful if you would assist me with my data collection.

Purpose of the case study: To determine whether adult learning principles can be applied to a swimming coaching context. Information gathered from the study may then be used for improving coaching strategies of Masters Swimmers.

Procedure: If you agree to participate, you will be required to complete a questionnaire which should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. You will be provided with an unidentified envelope into which I will ask you to place your completed questionnaire and seal the envelope. The questionnaire is anonymous; please do not put your name on it. I will also be doing a video analysis of three training sessions. The video cameras will be placed on pool deck in such a way as to only capture the interactions between the coach and swimmers as well as between the swimmers themselves. I will also be conducting a focus group discussion with volunteer participants which will take no longer than an hour on a day and time that is convenient to everybody.

Confidentiality: Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary with your confidentiality and identity being respected and ensured throughout the research process.

Feedback and Queries: If you have any queries please feel free to contact me on 082 820 4816 and I will be more than willing to share my research findings with those who are interested once the study is complete.

If you are willing to participate please be kind enough to sign the attached consent form.

Heather Morris-Eyton
Principal researcher

Appendix C: Venue Consent Form

26th June 2007

Hi, my name is Heather and I am conducting a study on the application of adult learning principles within the swimming coaching context. This research project is part of the requirements for my Masters degree in Adult Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. I have identified this site as being one where a swimming coach has a Masters' swimming squad training on a regular basis.

As part of my data collection I will be using a pool side video and non-participatory observation of the coach's training sessions. This will take place over one week for a maximum of 3 training sessions. I intend to use the video camera in the following ways:

1. Set up the video camera in such a way as to capture only the interactions between the coach and swimmers.
2. Ensure that no advertising or other easily identifiable branding be seen during the videoing process.
3. Have a member of staff on duty to assist me with the correct placement of the video camera to ensure that the integrity of my research as well as that of the venue is in no way compromised.
4. Ensure that I let yourself or a member of staff know the dates and times I will be at the venue.

The confidentiality of the venue as well as the participants in the study will be respected and ensured throughout the research process and will not be associated with any of the research findings as the identity of the venue will only be known to myself.

Please sign your consent with full knowledge of the nature and purpose of the research procedures. A copy of this consent form will be given to you to keep.

I, (Full Name) _____ understand the nature and conditions of the study, and give my consent for the video camera to be used at the venue where I am the manager.

Signature of Manager

Date

Heather Morris-Eyton, principal researcher

Appendix D: Ethics clearance



Wits School of Education

27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 • Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa
Tel: +27 11 717-3007 • Fax: +27 11 717-3009 • E-mail: enquiries@educ.wits.ac.za • Website: www.wits.ac.za

STUDENT NUMBER: 8602860W
Protocol: 2007ECE105

Mrs Heather Morris-Eyton



24-Aug-07

Dear Ms H Morris- Eyton

Application for Ethics Clearance: Masters in Education

The Ethics Committee in Education of the Faculty of Humanities, acting on behalf of the senate has considered your application for ethics clearance for your proposal entitled:

Andragogy: Fact or Fiction in a swimming coaching environment.

Recommendation:

Clearance is granted

Yours sincerely

Matsie Mabeta
Wits School of Education

Cc Supervisor: Dr J Calvert-Evers (via email)

Appendix E: Video and non-participatory observation schedule - Masters

Checklist for coaching observation - Masters Swimmers

For office use only			
Coach ID: _____	Site: [REDACTED]		
Date observed: <u>5/3/08</u>	<u>5:15 am.</u>	Size of squad: _____	
Demographics of squad:			
Age range: _____	# of male swimmers: <u>4</u>	# of female swimmers: <u>1</u>	

TRAINING TIME				
How long is the session?	30 mins	45 mins	<u>60 mins</u>	90 mins
POOL SETTING				
How many lanes does the coach use?	2	X	4	Whole pool
How many swimmers in a lane?	1 - 2 X	4	6	Other
INTERACTION - COACH & SWIMMER				
Before the session starts				
Does the coach.....	Explain the purpose / outcome of the session	X Give instructions regarding the warm up	Have no interaction with the swimmers before they get into the pool	Allow for swimmer to be involved in the planning of the session core activities

Frequency of interaction	Lane 1 Swimmers =	Lane 2 Swimmers =	Lane 3 Swimmers =	Lane 4 Swimmers =
Type of interaction	instruction	assistance	correction	discussion
At the end of the session Does the coach.....	Review the outcome of the session	Find out how everybody felt about the session	Have no interaction with the swimmers after the warm down	other
INTERACTION – SWIMMERS IN THE LANE				
Frequency of interaction	Lane 1 Swimmers =	Lane 2 Swimmers =	Lane 3 Swimmers =	Lane 4 Swimmers =
Type of interaction	instruction	assistance	correction	discussion
Interaction takes place when.....	Prior to getting in	During breaks	After the session is complete	Other
BREAK ALLOCATION				
How many? When? How long?	Between sets	After warm up	Before cool down	Other
COACH QUALITIES / ATTITUDES TOWARDS SWIMMERS				
Warm respectful strict in charge	open interested	supportive committed	enthusiastic facilitating	knowledgeable
COACHING STRATEGIES				
Is the coach.....	Swimmer centred	Coach centred		
Does the coach.....	Stand and instruct	Come down to the levels of the swimmer and discuss		

Appendix F: Coach Questionnaire

Name (you may use a pseudonym to maintain confidentiality) [REDACTED]
Age: 46 Date: 26 FEB 2008

Please indicate with a **X** your response to the following questions

Highest qualification: ☒ matric ☐ diploma ☐ degree

Were you a competitive swimmer?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If yes, at what level?

☐ school ☒ club ☐ provincial ☒ national ☒ international

SECTION A: Coach's Role

1 Is coaching swimmers your full time employment?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If no then what other employment do you have?

MANUFACTURING GOLDSMITH

2 How long have you been coaching master's swimmers for?

2 1/2 years. /

3 Do you have any other swimming squads?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If yes what squads do you have?

School Development GRADES 6-7 [REDACTED]
Junior club squads ages 6-17.
3 separate squads.

3.1 How long have you been coaching these squads for?

2 1/2 years
little squad 6-9 5 years.

- 3 Would you adjust the training programme accordingly to cater for their specific seasonal goals?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes how AND when would you adjust their goals?

Season is set in 3. First cycle is 4 months
2 Cycle is 4 months 3 cycle is 3 months.
We reassess goals due to illness, school commitments
holidays, body changes (Puberty, Growth).

- 4 Do you use any demonstration techniques for stroke correction?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes who does the demonstration?

Juniors I use both water and dry techniques
Masters I used dry land technique work.

- 5 Do make available your training sessions to your swimmers?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes when AND how are they made available?

- 6 How would you describe your coaching style?

flexible: I have many swimmers who swim for
school, fitness, health and the love of water.
I adjust my sets daily on pool deck depending
on who comes to training.

- 7 How would you describe yourself in the coaching environment?

☒ warm	☒ supportive	☒ open	☒ respectful
☒ enthusiastic	☐ strict $\frac{1}{2}$	☒ in charge	☒ facilitating
☒ knowledgeable	☒ interested	☒ committed	

8 How would you describe the swimmers in your masters squad?

motivated to improve and maintain fitness.

Age range of squad: 21 - 70 years

What do you think their reason for training is?

Medical, ex school swimmers, fitness, competitive swimmers.

9 How do you think the adults in your masters group learn (with specific reference to swimming)?

Some find stroke correction as a form of criticism (specially ex swimmers)

Old habits are very hard to break in masters as in children / teenagers it is not so set.

SECTION C: Behaviour

1 How many lanes of the pool do you use for your coaching?

1 (2) 3 4 5

2 How many swimmers do you usually have per lane?

2 3 4 (5) 6+

3 Do you divide the swimmers into their lanes?

(Yes) No

If yes how do you do the lane allocation?

STRONG - WEAKER.

Appendix G: Swimmers Questionnaire

Swimmers Questionnaire

Name (you may use a pseudonym to maintain confidentiality): _____

Gender Female Age: 65 Date: 27/2/2008

SECTION A: Swimming Experience

Please indicate with a **X** your response to the following questions

- 1 Were you a competitive swimmer when you were younger? Yes ☐ No ☒
- 2 If yes at what level?
☐ school ☐ provincial ☐ national ☐ inter-national
- 3 Place a **X** in the following box to indicate the type of swimming you engage in and how long you have been participating for.

Type of swimming	Time spent participating			
	< 6 months	> 1 year	1-3 years	4+ years
Competitively (in galas)	X			
Open water/dam swims				X
Recreational/keep fit				X

- 4 How many times a week do you train?
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☒ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ >6

- 5 Why did you come and train with a coach?

I wanted to improve my swimming.
I enjoy the discipline. It has become
a feeling of belonging. I push myself more
when swimming in the group

SECTION B:

Coach's Role

1 How long have you been swimming with your coach?

2 Did you train on your own before coming to your coach?

Yes No

If yes, why did you decide to swim with a coach?

I did aquarobics & then wanted to swim. I could barely get across the pool. Water is relaxing & therapeutic for me. Helps alleviate depression.

If no, who were you training with?

3 Do you discuss with your coach your goals for the season?

Yes No

If yes, when would this discussion take place?

Stopped competitive swimming because I didn't enjoy it. Want to improve my style, fitness and have discussed both issues when relevant.

4 Does your coach adjust the training programme to cater for your specific

seasonal needs?

Yes No

If yes, when would this adjustment take place?

When necessary e.g. ~~swim~~ with backstroke

5 Does your coach give you a rationale for doing particular sets in your training programme

throughout the season?

Yes No

If yes please explain in more detail

Being masters at our age and it is not tradition coaching as with youngsters, I think we ask more questions. We respect her knowledge but is adult to adult relationship.

6 Does your coach use any demonstration techniques for stroke correction?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes who does the demonstration?

We watch others when there is someone she points out, but mainly she demonstrates on the pool

7 Does your coach discuss with you the various aspects of your training sessions throughout the season?

☒ Yes ☐ No

8 Does your coach make available the training sessions before each session?

Yes ☒ No

9 How would you describe the coaching style of your coach? Please give reasons for your answer

She is knowledgeable. She respects ^{our} individual pressures & needs e.g. swimming & ping-pong. ~~At our age we~~ At our age ~~we~~ have work, personal demands & come & go as I am able

10 Do you think your coach pays enough attention to your individual needs?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If no, what would you like your coach to do differently?

With regards to your coach -

11 Is there anything you would like your coach to start doing?

Stretch exercises

12 Is there anything you would like your coach to stop doing?

No

13 Is there anything you would like your coach to continue doing?

Training as

14 How would you describe your ideal coaching situation?

15 How would you describe your coach?

☒ warm

☒ supportive

☐ open

☒ respectful

☒ enthusiastic

☐ strict

☒ in charge

☒ facilitating

☒ knowledgeable

☒ interested

☒ committed

Pushes me when necessary

16 What kind of environment is created at the pool for each session?

☒ Place where I can learn new things

☒ Place where I can socialise with my fellow swimmers

☒ A place where I can relax and have fun swimming

☐ A place where I feel stressed because of the hard training sets

☒ Other – give reason

Where I can destress

SECTION C: Behaviour

1 How many swimmers do you usually have in your lane?

to
☒ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6+

2 Do you feel comfortable with the number of swimmers in your lane?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If no, what would make you feel more comfortable?

*When swimmers of different levels
it is sometimes awkward*

3 Does the coach give you your lane allocation?

Yes No

If yes how is the lane allocation done?

We more or less know which lane to swim in, if problem Kari allocates

4 How long are your training sessions?

☐ < 45 minutes ☒ 60 minutes ☐ > 1hr 30

5 How do you evaluate the success of your recent training sessions?

The sessions were good. My frustration is my not achieving for myself & my personal limitations of not doing as much as I would like to do

6 How do you evaluate the success of your last swimming season?

My fitness is going down instead of up because of my time restraints?

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire.

Your time and patience is appreciated.

My pleasure

Appendix H: Interview schedule for Jill

- What are the differences between coaching junior and Masters squads?
- How would you describe yourself as a coach?
- How do you set up your raining programmes?
- Do you see yourself as a coach or a teacher?
- Why do some of your Masters swimmers train?
- Do you chat with your Masters swimmers about their goals for the season?
- Do you think your Masters swimmers learn anything when they train?
- How do you assess your training sessions and the season as a whole?
- How do you assist a new person coming into the squad – lane to swim in etc?
- Are the swimmers involved in determining decisions about their own training sessions?
- What more would you do for your Masters group?

Appendix I: Sample focus group discussion with two swimmers

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION 2

VENUE:

DATE:

TIME:

2 Swimmers

H	As I said I just want to have a discussion and I just want to get a feel for some of the coaching stuff that we have already talked about in the questionnaires and whatever. Also just to get your feelings about the coaching and the swimming that you do. So the first question I want to ask you is why do you swim ?
S1	I have done it all my life
H	Have you ?
S1	And my mom was a swimming teacher , I don't even remember learning how to swim , it has just always been something that we have done, the entire family and then I gave it a break. Then I decided that exercising was important and swimming seemed the logical thing really.
S2	I swim because I have always liked to do a bit of exercise , I used to run and cycle and do everything , but because of injuries I decided that swimming was the least hammering on my body . I think once you are swimming fit , what do you call those things ? Endorphins ?
H	Yes, your endorphins kick in
S2	Ja you feel so shocking if you don't, so when you do get swimming fit and you don't swim then you feel miserable about it. That's what drives me to swim and I also find if you get swimming unfit , it is hell of a difficult to get back
H	Yes especially the older you get
S2	I am not that much into fitness but if you keep ticking over it just becomes a hell of a lot easier to get up there when you need to .
H	Ja I think the older you get , its just the consistency , you just keep going and going and then you don't loose it . And when you are younger, I mean I found when I was younger it was a huge difference, you could take 3 or 4 weeks off in winter season and then get back in and it took you two weeks maybe. Now , it's a battle , it's an up hill battle the whole way.
S1	Yes it is
S2	Ja it is I think it is less about trying to be competitive for me , its more about maintaining a level of fitness
H	I mean you get up early, you are in the early group, the half past five group so that motivation is just because you enjoy it.
S2	Ja well I enjoy the feeling afterwards, I don't like getting up early , it's a struggle, some days I find it easy but at the moment it's a battle just to get out of bed. But its that sort of feeling of satisfaction, after I am finished , its worthwhile.
H	So then why did you decide to come and train with a coach?
S2	I think it is more a discipline thing but I also like the friendship with the other people , nice seeing a couple of girls in the water , it just makes it fun to be around and if I swim on my own I sort of battle to do like 2kms you know.
H	Even if you have got a session?
S2	Ja I just battle, I end up getting out and cutting it short. I go through phases where I am disciplined enough to do something like that but I certainly am

	better off swimming in a group . You know it doesn't necessarily have to be a coach , but in a group
H	So its more the group thing than the coach thing, you know the structured sessions and things like that.
S2	Ja , it also disciplines me to get there on time. Its very easy to end up half an hour later, you do a shorter session , so its definitely discipline
H	And you ... why did you come ?
S1	I was training on my own and I got bored with that and I also new that I wasn't quiet pushing myself as I should have. Its very easy to do things without any of the effort . So I thought being in a group , having a coach would provide that little bit of a push .
H	And do you also like the group dynamics and the social thing , or is it more the structure
S1	No its both
S2	From what I can see you are a bit of a social butterfly so
S1	(laughing) It's also difficult you know to get the motivation to get there and do it you know
H	So then how would you describe your coach.
S2	Um , I think she is for me just more a facilitator of telling us what to do as apposed to a coach. That's really you know a coach.
H	You see her as a facilitator , so what for example would she need to do to be a coach ?
S2	I think a coach , I mean I am not necessary saying , well I suppose I need a coach . How I would define a coach , someone who picks you out as an individual and understands your strengths and weaknesses and your strokes and sits down with you and designs a programme around yourself and where you are going to be competing . And sets up a programme , were you are able to do a its called a generic set and then a specific set that is geared around yourself . Whether you are doing long distance swimming or a sprint you know its more around that but , ja that's how I see a coach. I also think that a coach , you know a real quality coach, they operate in a real disciplined environment, it's a you know, no nonsense environment . Ours is just more a group where we just swim together and the coach is on the side. But I mean a coach tells you when your hand is going in wrong, is on your case with every stroke to make sure you are doing it right , up and down the side with a stop watch . I have had the experience once in with a coach there , this guy is good . I have never seen a guy who is more alive on the side of the pool, for 3 hours he is just up and down you know and as I say you've also got to know what you want. I could do it for a while , its quiet intensive , he is on you , your intervals and you know your stroke .
S1	Ja I agree with that
S2	You know ours are just a whole lot of sessions and you don't really know why you are doing the sessions
S1	There is no kind of long term planning or goals
S2	Ja and a hell of a lot of backstroke , I don't know if gives you guys backstroke. I mean maybe backstroke is good , but I don't even DO backstroke but I end up doing so much backstroke and breastroke. I am not quiet sure .
H	To come back to that now , would you ever sit down with ... and say ok these are my goals for the season , this is what I want to achieve
S1	For me that's not really because I am not here to do it seriously , I am not here to compete I am here to improve my overall time , but you know if I

	don't that's not an issue . Its more just the putting in the extra effort while I am training , I'm going to train in any case but it's more a question of doing it instead of doing it you know $\frac{3}{4}$, I actually make an effort because its with a group . So for me I don't think I would actually like a serious coach because that is not what I am looking for. So I like this kind of atmosphere where it is pretty informal.
H	More structured
S1	Ja and more facilitation of the session than actual coaching
S2	I probably am in a similar space although I find it necessary to improve my swimming , but I don't think that ... , without being critical , I mean we haven't really given her a chance and that. But I don't think she has that capacity and capability to do what one of the other leading coaches could do . And I am talking about a total balance , with weight training , guiding and all of those aspects. So in line , at the moment , you know one could argue , why do you swim with , I like a lot and I quiet enjoy the vibe and the people , I suppose for me the biggest driver of swimming here in this squad is that its close to home . For me convenience is 90% of it and that's why I actually , whether it's a thing of having to leave ... and force us to join You know its just if you've got to drive to in the morning and get back in time , its just ...
S2	Ja the traffic is getting worse and worse and trying to get kids to school. So for me its all about just convenience.
H	Is that the same for you as well?
S1	Oh absolutely , I actually moved recently and was looking to see if there were any schools closer but there weren't , so it was just not an option.
H	Do you think that you are learning anything in the squad when you come to train ?
S1	Um quiet honestly , no , not really . Because I have swam all of my life, I am not being taught anything new , swimming is swimming. So No, the only thing I should possibly learn is a little more tolerance .
S2	I keep learning , I have been trying hard , not that it shows I am sure. I have been trying hard to change my stroke over the last while , but its all self driven you know, I don't really get feed back from ... , but I have been trying hard to try and swim more smoothly than I used to . So I am learning from experimenting and things like that.
H	So its more an internal learning , like feel the water and that kind of stuff
S2	Yes , like feel the pull differently and trying to concentrate. I don't do stroke count anymore I do try sort of a light flutter in the water , but I battle a lot. I think I am learning , but I sometimes feel like I am taking two steps forward and two back
H	But that's also part of the learning process
S2	Ja , sometimes you just feel like a duck out of water and other days you feel no its all coming together . A duck in the water and the next day you cant remember what you did the day before and it doesn't feel good
H	Do you think that you maybe learn or pick up things from others in the squad , or they pick up things from you
S2	Yes everyday
S1	Ja , I do
S2	I definitely get a lot from that
H	Do you think you get more from the rest of them , or others in your discussions during your sets and that , than possibly you get from ?
S2	I personally don't get from discussions and stuff , but maybe just from

	looking . Not taking anything away from the swimmers in our squad but its more looking at other lanes . Like if I see those ... kids swimming at times , those girls I just watch them and I just see the way they swim and the rhythm . Sometimes you feel like you swimming with them , but ja you sort of emulate them , ja
S1	Ja I find we don't really get a lot of stroke correction at all , so anything you are doing is from watching other people , see what they are doing and trying out different things .
H	You are the half past six group hey ? Have you ever been to the half past five group at all ?
S1	Ha ha – NO !!!! I watch the end of their session and that's it
H	Because there are some interesting group dynamics in some of the lanes in your time slot , so that's why I am trying to get as much information about it . so you are a new comer and you come in , and how do you fit in and how do you know what to do. How do you know where you slot in in your lane?
S1	Well you get told , I kind of arrive and I am told to go into that lane
H	Oh does ... tell you where to go
S1	Ja – but that probably also because all the training I was doing I was doing here so she had kind of seen me swimming so had a vague idea of what she thought I should be doing , Ja , so she stuck me in that lane
H	And then , within the lane ? How do you know where you slot in ?
S1	Its just a question of as you do stuff you get to see who is being held back , who is quicker and we kind of change depending on what we are doing. Depending on whether we are doing kicking or stroke , would depend on who and what order we follow. But we know amongst ourselves who should go in what order .
H	So if somebody new comes in , or somebody who has been out for a while moves into that lane, then there is a bit of an adjustment within that group dynamics
S1	Ja
H	To try and fit everything in. Because the interesting thing , you know that the first lane withand all of them. I mean they are incredible to watch. Have you ever watched them ? They do not wait for one another at all, they are either swimming on top of each other , next to each other , over each other , past each other . They cannot wait for one person to go , get to the place and then the next one
S1	Ja , and none of them can swim straight either Maybe its because they are a bit older
S2	We are pretty much organised ourselves, you know, we know who goes first.
H	My last question is both of you trained when you were younger, so if you think about how you were coached when you were younger, compared to how you are being coached now as an adult . What do you think the differences are ?
S2	I think the last time I swam with a coach was in primary school , but I stopped swimming when I was in high school . I started up when I was in my 20's for about two years again . I was doing more triathlon training . So things have definitely changed , the whole coaching methodology.
S1	Ja I am definitely trying to remember because I did synchronised swimming for the last part of my career so you cant really compare fit , its something very different. But when I was swimming, for one we didn't do winter training at all, we did land training , and the coaches had different styles. You knew that you would start off with the same thing and always end off with the

	same thing and it was very , there wasn't a lot of variety in what we had to do. From what I can remember.
H	And in terms of how your coach treated you.
S1	Oh ja , that is different, very much so. You know a lot of the time as an adult child relationship you are told to shut up and get on with it , where as with an adult to adult you kind of cant do that , so then coaches have to be more polite and swimmers have to be more polite and have a lot more kind of respect in a relationship .
H	You mean like relationship building
S1	Ja , although you know that's with swimming , I mean my [REDACTED] coach was totally different .
S2	I must be honest , I mean if I had the discipline then and the self sort of drive that I have now , then I would have been a much better swimmer. But I didn't have that discipline you know as a kid. I used to go and only because I knew if if my dad came home he would ask why I wasn't training and that would drive me to go . But I think now, you know that drive that I have got , makes me go and get up.
H	So what do you think that drive is ? Like if you didn't have it when you were younger , then what changed that you have it now.
S2	I suppose it gets back to your very first question , the fulfilment and the satisfaction. I mean especially when you are working , you need something to relieve the stress and certainly swimming does help and it gets me going for the day and I get up the next morning because I know the feeling that I have the whole day
S1	And as an adult you chose to do it , you know you have a choice. As a child you didn't necessarily have the choice , I had to be at the pool , I was one of 5 kids and the older one was also a swimmer. So you had to be at the pool whether you wanted to swim or not. You could sit for an hour and do nothing , or you could swim. So I swam. I mean as an adult you have kind of chosen to do it and you know why you want to do it , so you have the motivation
H	So it goes back to that old internal motivation and drive
S2	I am certainly not goal LESS when it comes to swimming because I have one or two events that I do want to do well at during the year and um , at one stage it was about the pool swimming and doing well in the pool and doing better times, now I am just going to buy myself some speedo skins
S1	Buy the new speedo laser costume it will work
H	Oh really ?
S1	Ja ,they are about R4000 bucks each and they each and they last for four swims.
H	No you kidding me
S1	Ja I saw it in the paper the other day
S2	You know its true hey . I know that my shark skin suite , that first time I wore that suite I swam the fastest I have ever swum , I have never ever done that time again so I certainly believe that thing has got a life . I still wear the shark skin suite I mean I have worn it plenty but ja
S1	Ha ha ha , maybe its all in your mind though .
S2	No , its not
S1	That if you've got a suite you are going to have to swim faster Its proven that in theory , or scientific theory is that it can make you go faster
S2	I will have to see , you see the water , I think you saw on the tv guy , you just see lots of bubbles on the body so it is water proof and it just sort of blasts that water off , where as mine sort of absorbs it . Well I will believe it

	when I see it . But it looks good
S2	But this last midmar I shaved as well . I was just messing around with my son and I ended up shaving my whole body and I had a great midmar
H	But also don't you find that when you shave , I mean , I don't know how did you feel when you were in the water. It just feels awesome
S2	Ja you just glide , but you girls don't really have hair all over your body so ..
S1	The thing that's interesting , when I was swimming , we were told not to shave before a competition because it like numbs the outer layer of your skin , so you couldn't actually feel the water level on your legs to show sort of where your position was .
S2	I wonder if the technology is still all about that
H	Ok well that's it , thanks for your time , thank you for doing this .