A PRINCIPLES-FOCUSED EVALUATION OF A COACH EDUCATION PROGRAM

by

SARA CAMPBELL

(Under the Direction of Bryan McCullick)

ABSTRACT

Coach education programs (CEPs) provide coaches with the knowledge and skills necessary to improve athlete's sport experiences. However, CEPs have historically failed to position themselves as a valuable source of coach learning (Cushion et al., 2010), indicating there is a need to evaluate and improve CEPs. Given this, the purpose of this study was to conduct a principles-focused evaluation (PFE) of United States Soccer's CEP. PFE posits that an evaluation should be judged by whether it produces information that can be used by the primary stakeholders of the evaluation (Patton, 2018c), which in this case, were the full-time staff in the coach education department at US Soccer.

The evaluation took place over 17-months and included three phases. In the first phase, the evaluator assessed and built readiness for the evaluation. In the second phase, the evaluator worked with five staff members from the coach education department to develop a list of principles guiding the CEP. In the third phase, the evaluator and CEP staff designed and implemented an evaluation of the principles and interpreted the findings to answer evaluation questions and determine forms of use.

The two evaluation questions developed were: (1) How are principles being applied and adapted by the five staff members? (2) Which principles are meaningful to the five staff members? Each staff member completed two-weeks of reflective journaling, followed by one semi-structured interview. The evaluator used narrative analysis to create seven short stories documenting how the staff used the principles in their role. The evaluator and the staff interpreted the stories to answer the evaluation questions and determine forms of use.

Together, the seven stories provide examples of how the principles were applied and adapted across a range of settings, tasks, and staff members. The stories also helped determine which principles were meaningful to the CEP staff. The staff used the findings to make changes to the original list of principles, and to teach others in the program about the principles. This study demonstrates the potential of evaluation theories, collaborative inquiry, and renewed focus on how, or if, findings are used by practitioners.

INDEX WORDS: Sport Coaching, Coach Education, Program Evaluation, Evaluation Theory, Principles Focused Evaluation

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the coaching scholars and practitioners who are yet to come. Don't be afraid to do something different.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

A coach undoubtedly serves as one of the most influential persons in shaping an athlete's sport experience. Coach behaviors have been linked to a number of athlete outcomes, including self-esteem, motivation, social cohesion, participation rates, and performance (Nichol et al., 2019). Personal accounts from athletes further highlight the integral role coaches play, with some athletes speaking to the life-changing, inspirational coaches they have had, while others bravely reveal the emotional, physical, or sexual abuse they endured at the hands of a coach (Kuhlin et al., 2019). As 'architects' of the sport experience, the role of the coach clearly extends beyond that of teaching x's and o's, 'rolling the ball out', or winning championships. Coaches serve in a variety of roles including: (a) teacher, (b) scout, (c) recruiter, (d) video analyst, (e) sports psychologist, (f) strength and conditioning coach (g) nutritionist, or (h) athletic trainer. To create a positive sport experience then, coaches must possess knowledge and skills in a variety of domains (Côté & Gilbert, 2009).

However, unlike schoolteachers, coaches commonly practice their craft with little to no formal training or oversight (Solomon, 2018), possibly putting the athletes' sport experience at risk. To protect and improve the athletes' experience, governments and organizations invest in coach education programs (CEPs). CEPs can be defined as, "learning activities applied systematically through education with the goal of (Evans et al., 2015, p. 871) enabling coaches to develop the knowledge and skills required to engage effectively in their practice" (Cushion et al., 2010, p. 1). CEPs move coaching one step closer to a true profession as they define a body of knowledge and skills required to coach effectively and provide a medium though which that body of knowledge can be disseminated (Duffy et al., 2011). CEPs come in a variety of shapes and sizes that range from a 20-minute online concussion training to a four-year bachelor's degree in sport coaching. The individuals responsible for the design and development of CEPs are *program designers*, while the individuals who teach deliver the curriculum and teach coaches are *coach educators*.

While the promise and presence of CEPs remains strong, so too do the critiques. The most common critique being that CEPs have historically failed to address the individual needs of coach learners and the complexity of coaching (Cushion et al., 2010; Jones & Turner, 2006; Nelson & Cushion, 2006; Trudel et al., 2010; Voldby & Klein-Døssing, 2019). North (2013) commented, "CEPs tend to position coaching as overly rationalistic, technocratic, and sequential solutions that are not grounded in the day-to-day problems and complexities that coaches face" (p. 287). Others have used words like de-contextualized, didactic, overly prescriptive, and instructor-centered to describe CEPs (Nelson & Cushion, 2006; Paquette & Trudel, 2016). Coaches themselves also cite shortcomings of CEPs, stating that they have little relevance to their current context (Cushion et al., 2003; Nelson & Cushion, 2006), are overly dogmatic and prescriptive (Cassidy et al., 2006), fail to create an inclusive environment for females and minorities (Bradbury et al., 2018; Lewis et al., 2018), and are often difficult to access (money, time) (Gurgis et al., 2020; Maclean & Lorimer, 2016).

To rectify these issues and reposition CEPs as a valuable source of coach learning, scholars have long called for the evaluation of CEPs. For example, in 1999, Gilbert and Trudel stated, " the evaluation of CEPs has become one of the most pressing issues in sport science research" (p. 235). Eight years later, Lyle (2007) claimed, "There is no substantive body of research on the evaluation of CEPs" (p. 33). Interest in evaluation of CEPs continues today, as evidenced by the *International Council for Coaching Excellence's* (ICCE) recent formation a program evaluation and monitoring working group, and by the increased number of conference sessions dedicated to evaluation. However, calls for evaluation of CEPs remain relatively unanswered. Only a handful of scholars have relied on the concepts and theories from the field of program evaluation to guide their inquiry (Dohme et al., 2019; Driska, 2015, 2018; Redgate et al., 2020; Stoszkowski & Collins, 2021).

Program Evaluation

Program evaluation is the systematic collection of information about program activities and outcomes to make judgements about the program, improve program effectiveness, and inform program decisions (Patton, 2012). To some this may seem eerily similar to 'research', but as Driska (2015) stated, "while the term evaluation is used frequently in sports science research, the term program evaluation refers to a specific field of inquiry" (p. 1). Indeed, evaluators have a unique identity, language, and practice that is both similar to, and different from, research (see Figure 1.1).

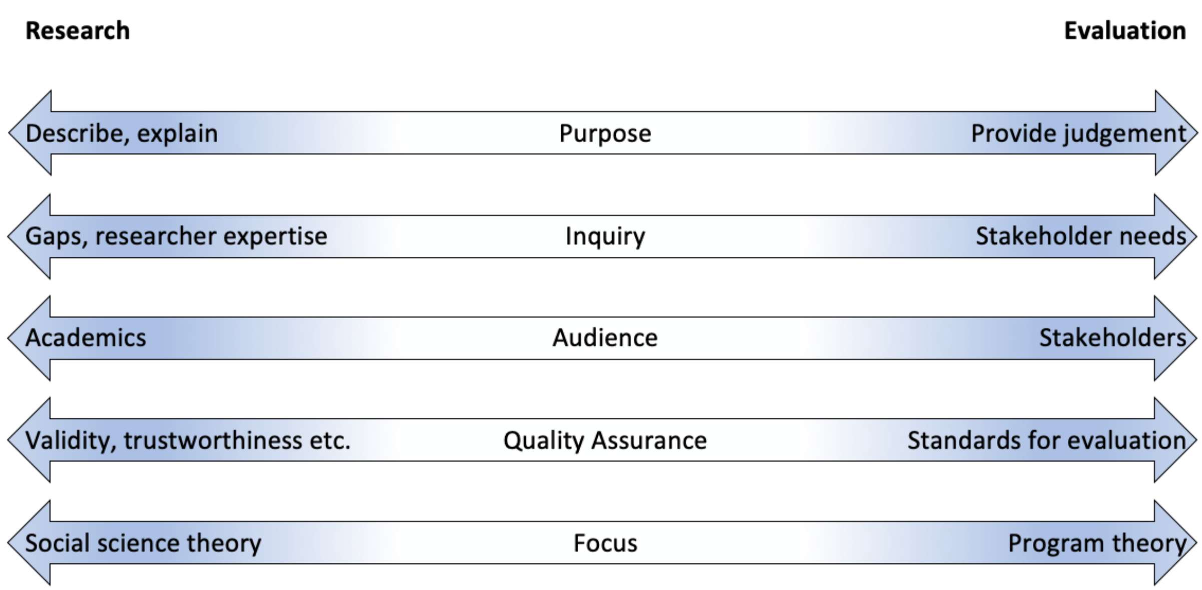

Figure 1.1: Differences between research and evaluation. Note. The boundaries between research and evaluation are not concreate but blurred. Practices vary widely between the two, and others have conceptualized research and evaluation differently (see Mathison, 2007; Patton, 2018a; Wanzer, 2020).

The most prominent difference between program evaluation and research is that program evaluation includes a judgement of a programs value, merit, or worth (Scriven, 1991). This implies an evaluation results in conclusions about the quality of a program – its "goodness, effectiveness or success" (Shaw et al., 2006, p. 23). As Schwandt (2015a) pointed out, these judgements can be related to the need for a program, program implementation, goal attainment, outcomes, impact, or cost, for example. Evaluators provide judgements on these matters to inform program decisions (i.e., invest in a program, discontinue a program, change practices etc.). These judgments are thus always linked to practical decisions, making evaluations inherently action-oriented, transformative, political, and value-laden. Research, on the other hand, generally (but not always) seeks to generate knowledge through description or explanation (Schwandt, 2015a).

Another difference between program evaluation and research relates to the roots of inquiry or the development of research questions. Inquiry in program evaluation is often driven by the needs program stakeholders (e.g., program funders, facilitators, participants), while inquiry in research is commonly based on scholar interests/expertise or 'gaps' in the literature. Evaluation asks what is valued or needed by these stakeholders, this program, at this time (Patton, 2013). The goal of basing inquiry on stakeholders interests, is to increase the likelihood that the findings are useful to stakeholders (Patton, 2013).

The primary intended audience for an evaluation is program stakeholders, while the intended audience for research is typically other academics. Evaluators produce evaluation reports that are delivered to program stakeholders, while researchers tend to compose manuscripts that are disseminated in academic journals. That said, there are a number of program evaluation journals that publish research on evaluation. Therefore, evaluators can also disseminate their work in academic journals, but primary audience for evaluations is program stakeholders.

The standards upon which evaluation and research are judged also differ. Research quality is assessed through validity, reliability, generalizability, credibility, trustworthiness, legitimation, and many others, depending on the paradigm underpinning the study. While these same criteria are commonly applied in program evaluation, the five standards for evaluation practice are used to judge the quality of an evaluation; (1) utility, (2) feasibility, (3) propriety, (4) accuracy, and (5) accountability (Yarbrough et al., 2011). These five standards, which are described in detail in the *Sage Handbook for Program Evaluation Standards* (Yarbrough et al., 2011), are widely accepted across the field of program evaluation.

There are also similarities between program evaluation and research. Like researchers, evaluators conduct their work using a variety of paradigms (positivist, pragmatism, interpretivist, transformative) and methods (quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods) (Mertens & Wilson, 2019). Another similarity is that research and evaluation are both informed by theory. However, the field of program evaluation has a distinct set of theories upon which it relies that discern it from research.

Evaluation Theory

As the well-known evaluation theorist William Shadish (1998) once stated, “To be an evaluator, you need to know the knowledge base that makes the field unique. That unique knowledge base is evaluation theory” (pp. 6–7). An *evaluation theory* refers to “an organized set of ideas about what evaluators do, or should do, when conducting evaluations” (Coryn et al., 2011, p. 199). Underpinned by ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions, an evaluation theory informs and shapes the goals, aims, and methods of the evaluation (Schwandt, 2015a). Evaluation theories thus help prioritize decisions surrounding the who, what, why, where, when, and how of the evaluation (Schwandt, 2015a).

While there are a number of evaluation theories to choose from (see Christie & Alkin, 2013; Thomas & Campbell, 2021), few have actually been taken up in coaching and CEP research. In fact, of the 103 articles published on CEPs between 2005 and 2015 (Griffo et al., 2019), only a handful of studies reference evaluation theories (Dohme et al., 2019; Driska, 2015, 2018; Redgate et al., 2020; Stoszkowski & Collins, 2021), and only two evaluation theories have guided inquiry into CEPs (utilization-focused evaluation theory and realist evaluation theory). Consequently, there are a number of evaluation theories yet to be used to investigate CEPs, one of which is principles-focused evaluation theory (PFE) (Patton, 2018c)

Principles-Focused Evaluation Theory

The evaluation theory employed in this dissertation was principles-focused evaluation theory (PFE). Conceived by Michael Quinn Patton (2018c), PFE is an evaluation theory that begins with the premise that an evaluation should be judged by whether it produces information that can be used by *primary intended users* (PIUs). PIUs are the primary stakeholders of the evaluation, or those who will put the evaluation findings to use (Patton, 1978, 2012). To enhance use, the evaluator serves as a facilitator, guiding PIUs through the evaluation design process based on their information needs. Together, the PIUs and the evaluator decide upon the purpose of the evaluation, evaluation questions, and data collection methods. After data collection, the evaluator jointly interprets the findings with PIUs and helps enhance use of the findings. The evaluation is thus a collaborative effort between scholar (evaluator) and practitioner.

The second defining feature of PFE is principles as the *evaluand*, or the object of the evaluation (Scriven, 1991). *Principles* are "statements that provides guidance about how to think or behave towards some desired result" (Patton, 2018c, p. 9). In PFE, the evaluator works with PIUs to develop and evaluate the programs principles to produce useful findings.

United States Soccer Federation CEP

The program of interest in this dissertation was the United States Soccer Federation (*US Soccer*) CEP. This is a large-scale CEP that offers hundreds of coach education courses to different types of soccer coaches (grassroots to professional) across the United States. The full-time staff in the coach education department at *US Soccer* were selected as the PIU of the evaluation since they play a large role in the development and dissemination of the CEP.

Statement of the Research Problem

Coaches play an integral role in shaping an athlete's sport experience. However, unlike schoolteachers, coaches often enter and practice their craft with little to no formal training. Therefore, coaches rely on CEPs for professional development opportunities. CEPs lay the foundation for the recognition of coaching as a profession, as they establish and disseminate coaching competencies and qualifications (Duffy et al., 2011). Despite the important role CEPs play, these programs have historically failed to live up to their expectations due to the overly prescriptive and instructor-centered instructional strategies they tend to adopt (Cushion et al., 2010; Mallett et al., 2009; Nash, 2003; Trudel et al., 2010). To rectify these issues and reposition CEPs as a valuable source of coach learning, scholars have long called for the evaluation of CEPs. Although scholars often use the term evaluation to describe their work, few have been guided by the concepts or theories established in the field of program evaluation. Therefore, little is known about the value of program evaluation for CEP practitioners and scholars.

Purpose of the Study

Given the need to evaluate CEP and given that few studies have applied program evaluation theories to CEPs, the purpose of this dissertation was to conduct a PFE of a CEP. Because the study design was dependent on the PIUs information needs, the research questions, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures were not determined a priori.

Significance of the Study

This study makes a significant contribution to both coaching literature and program evaluation literature. First, this study is guided by the field of program evaluation, and more specifically, PFE theory. Only a handful of scholars have tapped into the tools that program evaluation has to offer to study CEPs. Moreover, PFE is a novel and relatively untested evaluation theory. Therefore, putting this theory into practice provides insights regarding the challenges and opportunities of conducting a PFE, thus contributing to program evaluation literature. Methodologically, this study contributes to coaching literature by positioning CEP program designers and evaluators as partners and collaborators in the research design process. In addition, this is one of the first studies in coaching scholarship to report how the findings of a study are used by CEP practitioners. Last, this study adds to our neophyte understanding of the individuals who develop and deliver CEPs. Until recently, these individuals were virtually absent from coaching literature (Callary & Gearity, 2019a). Instead, scholars relied solely on coach perceptions to study CEPs (Campbell & Waller, 2020). This has left the field "lacking necessary information on how all aspects of a CEP fit together to be effective" (McCullick et al., 2009, pp. 330–331). This study addresses this concern by illuminating the information needs and daily experiences of CEP practitioners.

Dissertation Overview

The structure of this dissertation is as follows. The next chapter provides a review of literature. The literature review aims to position this study in the broader field of coach learning and development and discuss advances and opportunities in CEP research moving forward. Chapter three describes the theoretical framework guiding this evaluation, which is composed of three parts: (1) inquiry worldview (paradigm), (2) PFE theory, and (3) subjectivity statement. Chapter four describes the context of the evaluation, including a broad description of the landscape of coach education in the US, and a detailed description of *US Soccer's* CEP. Chapter five describes how the PFE was carried out, and chapter six presents the findings. Finally, chapter seven discusses contributions to coaching literature, lessons learned, and concluding thoughts.

Glossary of Terms

Coach education program (CEP): Learning activities applied systematically through education with the goal of (Evans et al., 2015, p. 871) enabling coaches to develop the knowledge required to engage effectively in their practice (Cushion et al., 2010, p. 1).

Coach educator: The individuals in a CEP who are responsible for delivering the curriculum or teaching coaches.

Evaluand: The object or focus of the evaluation (Scriven, 1991).

Evaluation: The systematic collection of information about program activities and outcomes to make judgements about the program, improve program effectiveness, and inform program decisions (Patton, 2012).

Evaluation theory: A set of ideas on which the practice of evaluation is based (Coryn et al., 2011; Schwandt, 2015a).

Evaluative thinking: A specialized form of thinking that combines critical, creative, inferential, and practical reasoning – a form of thinking that "forces clarity about the inquiry purpose, who it is for, with what intended uses, to be judged by what quality criteria; being explicit about what criteria are being applied in framing inquiry questions, making design decisions, determining what constitutes appropriate methods, and selecting and following analytical processes; and being aware of and articulating values, ethical considerations, contextual implications, strengths and weaknesses of the inquiry, and potential (or actual) misinterpretations, misuses, and misapplications" (Patton, 2018c, p. 206).

Evaluator: The person trained in evaluation theory and methods that is responsible for carrying out the evaluation.[1]

Primary intended users (PIUs): the primary stakeholders of the evaluation who will put the evaluation findings into use; key program decision-makers (Patton, 1978, 2012).

Principles: Statements that provide guidance about how to think or act towards a desired result (Patton, 2018c).

Principles-focused evaluation theory (PFE): An evaluation theory based on utilization-focused evaluation that places principles as the evaluand, or the object of the evaluation (Patton, 2018c).

[1] In this dissertation, the terms 'evaluator' and 'researcher' are used synonymously and interchangeably.

Program designer: The individuals in a CEP who are responsible for the development and dissemination of the CEPs.

Process use: Changes in thinking and behavior that occur among those involved in the evaluation as a result of participating in the evaluation (Patton, 2012).

Program evaluation: The systematic collection of information about program activities and outcomes to make judgements about the program, improve program effectiveness, and inform program decisions (Patton, 2008).[2]

Use of evaluation findings: When the results of the evaluation inform decisions or changed procedures in the organization.

[2] In this dissertation, the terms ‘evaluation’ and ‘study’ are used synonymously and interchangeably.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is threefold. The first aim is to situate coach education program (CEP) research in the larger body of coaching literature. The second aim is to describe how CEPs have been conceptualized and defined in the literature. Finally, the third aim is to discuss advances and opportunities for development in CEP research.

Situating CEP Research in the Body of Coaching Research

A number of disciplines have influenced coaching research including, but not limited, to sport pedagogy, sport psychology and sport sociology (Haag, 1994; North, 2013). These disciplines carry with them certain assumptions (ontology, epistemology, and axiology) that have shaped how research is carried out and thus what we know about coaches and coaching (North, 2013). Notably, the disciplines themselves have also been influenced by a larger academic community which has privileged certain worldviews and research practices over others (Morgan, 2007). As a result, there are clear trends and gaps in the types of knowledge produced in coaching research and the way topics are conceptualized and discussed in the literature.

To understand where CEP research fits in the larger body of coaching research, one must first understand the vast, multifaceted nature of coaching research. Coaching research focuses on, “the instructional processes as directed by coaches, as well as coach characteristics and cognitions” (Gilbert & Trudel, 2004, p. 389). The first portion of this definition emphasizes the role of the coach as instructor or teacher of athletes. While this is commonly acquainted with the act of teaching athletes’ sports skills, coaching research also examines the influence coaches have on athlete social, emotional, and physical well-being (e.g., Camiré et al., 2014; Côté & Gilbert, 2009). The second portion of this definition attends to who coaches are as people. Popular topics of interest in this area of coaching research include the challenges coaches face (e.g., Olusoga & Thelwell, 2017; Santos & Costa, 2018), the characteristics coaches hold (e.g., Stewart & Owens, 2011), or of interest in this dissertation, how coaches learn and develop.

One popular line of inquiry within coach learning and development research is the identification and classification of sources that contribute to coach learning (Callary et al., 2018; Erickson et al., 2008; Mallett et al., 2016; Salmela, 1995). These investigations reveal that coaches learn from a variety of sources including; (1) athletic experience, (2) mentors, (3) peers, (4) on the job experience, (5) media and books (6) conferences and workshops, and (7) CEPs (Cushion et al., 2010). Early attempts were made to rank the sources in order of importance (Erickson et al., 2008; Gould et al., 1990; Irwin et al., 2004; Schempp et al., 1998), but scholars generally agreed now that coach learning is a product of many learning experience and to separate them into discreate entities is to ignore their interconnectedness (Cushion et al., 2010). In addition, ranking of sources becomes problematic because coaches differ dramatically in the value they ascribe to different sources (Werthner & Trudel, 2009). Nevertheless, these findings have implications for this dissertation because they remind us that CEPs are but one of many mechanisms through which coaches learn. According to systematic literature reviews, research on CEPs drew little interest from scholars from 1970-2001 (Gilbert & Trudel, 2004). However, CEP scholarship accounted about 17% of coaching studies between 2005-2015 (Griffo et al., 2019), and has remained one of the most prevalent topics of interest in coaching research today (Campbell & Waller, 2020).

Conceptualizing and Defining CEPs

Researchers have proposed models that can be used to classify the different learning sources into broad categories. This research has shaped how CEPs are conceptualized and defined today, and therefore deserves review. The first model, proposed by Nelson et al., (2006), uses Coombs and

Ahmed's (1974) classification system to group the various sources of learning into three categories; (1) formal, (2) non-formal, and (3) informal. Nelson et al., (2006) placed CEPs under the formal learning category because they take place in an, "institutionalized, chronologically, graded and hierarchically structed educational system" (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, p. 8). Conferences, seminars and workshops were alternatively placed under the non-formal learning category because they take place outside of chronological education systems and target a particular subgroup of coaches (Nelson et al., 2006). Sources that are self-directed by coaches such as reflection, interactions with peers/mentors, or the consumption of media and books, were placed under the informal learning category.

While Nelson et al.'s model is still used today, it has been problematic for coach learning research. Mallett et al. (2009) argued the model has fueled sterile debates on the value of one source over another (e.g., formal vs. informal), even though sources are interconnected. For example, informal learning (self-reflection, group discussions) is often intentionally embedded within CEPs (formal) (Ciampolini et al., 2019; Cushion et al., 2003; Nelson & Cushion, 2006). Similarly, CEPs (formal) may prompt coaches to pursue informal sources (books or mentors) after they complete a course. Nevertheless, Nelson et al.'s model does help distinguish CEPs as being shaped by a curriculum and delivered through an educational organization.

Werthner and Trudel (2006) presented an alternative model for coach learning that aims to account for the interaction of different learning sources and the idiosyncratic learning paths of coaches. The authors used Moon's (2004) generic view of learning to classify learning into mediated and unmediated learning situations. In mediated learning situations, the learner is "aided by another person or through the use of a medium that simplifies the material" (Moon, 2004, p. 74). In unmediated learning situations, the learner is responsible for choosing what to learn. This may sound similar to Nelson et al.'s formal, non-formal and informal model, but Werthner and Trudel take a more holistic, lifelong learning perspective that views learning as the result of many different, interconnected situations that occur throughout a coach's career. In addition, the authors stress that the two learning situations can interact within one another.

Both models have influenced the way CEPs are positioned and discussed in coach learning literature today. The *International Council for Coaching Excellence* (ICCE) is an organization responsible for leading and developing sport coaching globally. In their *Coach Developer Framework*, the ICCE merges the two models into one (see Figure 2.1) (International Council for Coaching Excellence, 2014). Here, mediated, and unmediated learning situations interact with one another, and serve as broad umbrella terms for formal, non-formal and informal learning.

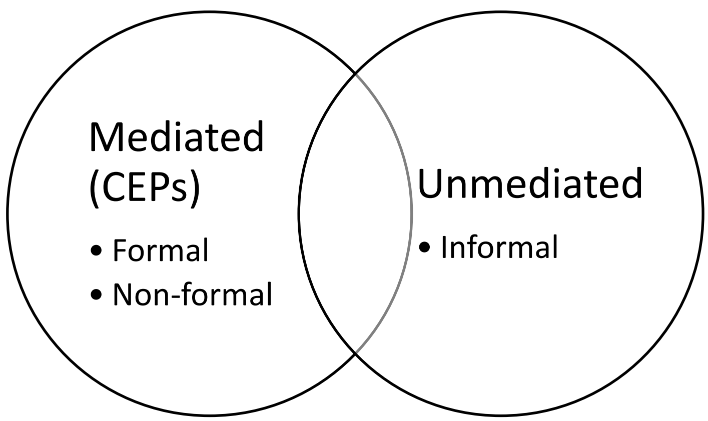

Figure 2.1: ICCE conceptualization of coach learning situations

Perhaps the most important contribution this work makes to CEP literature is in relation to defining the key characteristics of CEPs. Both models depict CEPs as purposeful, pre-planned, and directed by someone or something (e.g., technology, coach educators) outside of the coach. Given this, CEPs can be defined as, "learning activities applied systematically through education with the goal of (Evans et al., 2015, p. 871) enabling coaches to develop the knowledge required to engage effectively in their practice" (Cushion et al., 2010, p. 1).

The systematic nature of CEPs makes them a unique source of learning because inherent in all CEPs is a set of assumptions about what and how coaches should learn. For example, those who design CEPs often predetermine the target audience, content to be covered, instructional strategies, or desired outcomes (Lefebvre et al., 2016). These underlying assumptions can and should be evaluated to inform and improve CEPs.

While all CEPs are systematic and pre-planned, they come in a variety of shapes and sizes that can range from a 20-minute online concussion training to a four-year bachelor's degree in sport pedagogy. To bring coherence to the different types of CEPs, scholars often differentiate CEPs according to the organizational context in which they occur (Dohme et al., 2019; Lefebvre et al., 2016; Trudel et al., 2010). Using this approach, CEPs are grouped as; (1) small-scale programs, (2) education-based programs, and (3) large-scale programs (see Table 2.1). Any given program generally fit into one of these categories, but there are instances where CEPs cross contexts (e.g., Redgate et al., 2020). For example, a university (education-based) might assist a sport governing body (large-scale) with the delivery of a CEP.

Table 2.1: Classification of CEP types by organizational context

Context	Description
Small-scale programs	Designed and delivered by researchers to test academic theories or interventions, short term in nature, impact only a limited number of coaches.
Education-based programs	Designed and delivered by professors or teachers as part of a degree or diploma at a university, occur over a longer period of time (years), and engage learners in coaching theory, research, and practice.
Large-scale programs	Designed and delivered by delivered by sport governing bodies, the entities responsible for the oversight of a single sport or multiple sports across a country, generally offer a number of courses that target different types of coaches (novice to expert) operating in different contexts (grassroots to professional setting).

The organization context is important to consider because it often determines the researcher's positionality in relation to the program. This has implications for how CEP research is carried out. In small-scale and education-based CEPs, the researcher is often positioned within the program as a professor or consultant. This gives them control or insights related to the program design or delivery. However, in large-scale CEPs, the researcher is generally (but not always) external to the program. In this case, practitioners are responsible for the development and dissemination of the program. Consequently, the researcher generally has less control and insight of the program. Large-scale CEP research is therefore unique because the researcher is often required to work with a variety of stakeholders who have a vested interest in the program, as opposed to evaluating a program they are directly responsible for developing and disseminating.

Large-scale CEPs are often composed of many stakeholders. Figure 2.2 displays the different layers of stakeholder groups in a typical large-scale CEP (International Council for Coaching Excellence, 2014). Program designers are the individuals in the CEP who are responsible for the development and design of the CEP. They are also responsible for training coach educators to disseminate the CEPs according to the design. Coach educators are the teachers who disseminate and deliver the CEP to coaches. Coaches are the learners, or the individuals a CEP intends to serve. Athletes and parents are also intended beneficiaries of CEPs, as they stand to benefit from coach training and oversight. These various stakeholders also help identify the potential constructs of interest in CEP studies which include the espoused program theory (program designers), the theory in use (coach educators), and the effectiveness of the program (coaches, athletes, parents).

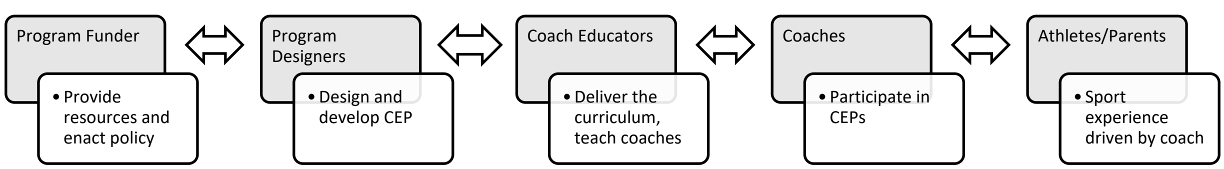

Figure 2.2: Stakeholder groups in large-scale CEPs. Note. Adapted from the International Coach Developer Framework, Version 1.1, 2014, *International Council for Coach Excellence.*

Advances and Opportunities for Development in CEP Research

The aim of this section is to discuss advances and opportunities for development in CEP research. I focus on studies that have examined large-scale CEPs since these programs resemble *US Soccer*, the CEP of interest in this dissertation. Throughout this section, I argue there are two areas that need more attention in large-scale CEP research. The first is a consideration for the program theory from the program designer's point of view. The second area is the inclusion of program stakeholders in the research design process. Together, neglect in these areas has limited our ability as researchers to provide evidence that is credible, useful, and valuable to program stakeholders, and thus is limited in its ability to influence practice. Consequently, little is known about how (or if) research findings have informed or improved CEP practice. This dissertation proposes program evaluation, and more specifically principles-focused evaluation (PFE), as one alternative that can be used address these limitations.

A Case for the Inclusion of Stakeholder Theory

The first area that researchers have tended to overlook in large-scale CEP literature is a consideration for the program theory from the stakeholder's point of view. Program theory describes the assumptions about how programs are expected to work (Chen & Turner, 2012). According to Chen and Turner (2012) there are two types of program theory: (1) formal theory and (2) stakeholder theory. Formal theories are those established in academia. Conversely, stakeholder theories are based on the ideas, experiences, values and observations of practitioners (Chen & Turner, 2012). Researchers are often charged with testing or advancing academic theories. As a result, program theory in the CEP literature commonly centers on formal academic theories as opposed to stakeholder theories. For example, learner-centeredness is a pedagogical theory established in academia (Blumberg, 2009; McCombs & Whisler, 1997; Weimer, 2002) that is commonly used to assess CEPs (Ciampolini et al., 2019; Michel Milistetd et al., 2018; Paquette, 2018). Additional examples of formal academic theories commonly used to examine CEPs include self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) or Foucault ideas around knowledge and power (Downham & Cushion, 2020; Langan et al., 2015; Langdon et al., 2015; Piggott, 2012). Thinking with these theories is essential to CEP scholarship. However, evidence indicates that many large-scale CEPs may not be based on formal academic theories. In their review of literature Allan et al., (2018) found only six of 29 CEPs mentioned the use of a formal theory in the program description. In addition, a number of scholars have noted that CEPs are underdeveloped in their theoretical underpinnings (Cushion, 2013; Lyle, 2007; Stodter & Cushion, 2019). As Driska (2018) stated, “what happens on the ground in CEPs is often a product of local expertise that is rarely theory-driven” (p. 14). Given this, it seems formal theories may be limited in their ability to influence practice because they are based on assumptions that may not align with those of the program and program stakeholders. Moreover, academic theories often contain language or concepts that are unfamiliar to practitioners and may lie outside the scope of their interests and needs. Therefore, if the goal of research is to produce information that is coherent, actionable, and valued by practitioners, a focus on stakeholder theory may be more effective.

A focus on stakeholder theory would require researchers to spend time with program designers to better understand exactly what it is they hope to accomplish, and how they plan to go about it. The assumptions of program stakeholders can then be used to develop the research questions and data collection methods. This approach requires a shift in priorities. Instead of thinking with academic theory, scholars would aim to test the assumptions of program stakeholders to produce findings that can be used by stakeholders. Program stakeholders are thus baked into the process of determining the focus of the research (evaluation) and the types of data that can inform their practices.

One explanation for the absence of stakeholder theory is that, until recently, program designers have not been included in CEP studies. Instead, scholars have largely relied only on coach perceptions of CEPs. In their review of CEP literature from 1995-2007, McCullick et al. (2009) noted the limitations of this approach when they stated, “a reliance on coach perceptions provides a one-sided account of CEPs [and] leaves the field lacking necessary information on how all aspects of a CEP fit together to be effective” (p. 330-331). These authors concluded that researchers “need to get their hands dirty” and become more involved with sport governing bodies. A similar trend in CEP literature was noted more recently by Campbell and Waller (2020). In their review of 56 studies on CEPs published between 2015 and 2019, the authors found the most popular form of data collection was semi-structured interviews with coaches after they had completed the program. To advance CEP research and provide a more complete understanding of CEPs, scholars should account for the program theory by including program designers.

Program designers are not completely absent from the CEP literature. A limited number of researchers have engaged program designers to gain an understanding of the program theory. For example, Nelson and Cushion (2006) interviewed program designers, observed program design meetings, and reviewed program documents to understand how a CEP in the United Kingdom was constructed. Likewise, Haslam (1990) used a questionnaire to collect program designer perceptions of the current learning outcomes of a CEP, but they did not go as far as to compare these findings to coach perceptions. Haslam stated, "it would certainly be interesting to replicate this study with a group of coaches in an attempt to determine if they consider these to be valid learning outcomes" (p. 212). There are other examples of studies that describe the design or evolution of a large-scale CEPs (Ciria et al., 2017; Haslam, 1990; O'Regan & Kelly, 2018; Vangrunderbeek & Ponnet, 2020). These studies illuminate how stakeholders believe the CEPs should work. Conceivable then, this information could then be used to study the implementation of that design or its effect on coach participants.

A handful of studies have accounted for the program theory, its implementation, and outcomes. For example, Stodter & Cushion (2019) first observed the training of coach educators and reviewed program documents to ascertain the stakeholder program theory. Next, they observed and interviewed coach educators to see how they implemented the program. Last, they conducted semi-structured interviews with coach participants to understand their perception of the CEP six-months after they completed the course. They found there were inconsistencies between the espoused program theory and the theory in use by coach educators, and this created confusion for coach learners. Similar findings came from an early study from Gilbert and Trudel (1999), who found a CEP was not implemented as planned, and there were no changes in coach knowledge. In these examples, the lack of fidelity to the espoused program theory indicates coach educators may need more training or the espoused program theory may need to be adjusted. While these studies provide valuable, actionable information for program stakeholders, the authors do not describe how, or if, the findings were delivered to stakeholders and if they had any impact on practices.

A Case for the Inclusion of Stakeholders in the Research Design Process

Program stakeholders could be included in the research design process to further ensure the findings are credible, relevant, and useful. Participatory approaches are underutilized in coaching research, especially in studies of large-scale CEPs. The general trend to date has been to conduct studies *on* or *for* CEPs instead of *with* or *by* CEPs. Consequently, we know little about the information needs of stakeholders, or how findings have been used by stakeholders. I review three exemplary studies that have position stakeholders and researchers as partners and collaborators in the research design process.

In the first example, researchers at the University of Ottawa collaborated with the Canadian Ski Coach Federation (CSCF) (Callary et al., 2011). The authors described the study as a "partnership" and "joint venture" where CSCF staff and researchers worked together to meet needs and interests of CSCF staff. In this study, the CSCF staff expressed a desire to understand program participants (coaches) background, education, knowledge, and desire for future learning opportunities. After researchers came to an understanding of CSCF needs, they continued to collaborate with them to co-construct a survey that could meet their needs. This study demonstrates how researchers and practitioners can collaborate to determine the research purpose and data collection methods. The authors provide a number of recommendations for the CSCF staff based on survey findings, but they do not divulge how these recommendations these recommendations were received or put into practice by the CSCF staff.

The second example of a participatory approach is a series of three studies conducted with the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP). The NCCP is an organization that oversees and guides all CEPs in Canada. In the first study (Werthner et al., 2012), the researchers interviewed program designers to understand the philosophy of the NCCP and any concerns the designers had about training coach educators to deliver the program. The program was found to be underpinned by a learner-centered approach and a competency-based model and the program designers expressed they had concerns with their ability to teach coach educators to employ this philosophy. The findings were then used to guide a subsequent study that aimed to explore the training of coach educators (Culver et al., 2019). This follow up study found coach educators were confused about the learner-centered approach and the competencies-based model. In addition, coach educators stated they were worried they would not be able to cover all of the content and still allow time for learner-centered practices such as coach reflections and questions. A third study was also conducted to examine the programs impact on program participants (coaches) (Deek et al., 2013). This study found eight of the ten coaches interviewed changed their coaching practices as a result of participation in the program. The authors noted that changes in coach participants (or the lack of changes) may be attributed to the coach educator's ability to employ learner-centered practices. In this group of studies, the program designers were not involved in the study design, data collection or analysis process, but their concerns and information needs were clearly prioritized. However, like the first study mentioned above, the authors do not discuss how (or if) the findings were received or used by program designers.

One of the most collaborative CEP studies done to date was with USA Swimming (Driska, 2015, 2018). In this study, the researcher involved the stakeholders in every aspect of the research design process from development of research questions to data collection methods and interpretation of findings. To begin, the researchers and program designers met to develop a detailed logic model, outlining how the program was expected to work (program inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact). After the stakeholder theory was complete, the researchers and program designers decided it would be useful to determine if there were changes in coach's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors as a result of the program.[3] Together, they decided semi-structured interviews with coaches would be an appropriate method for data collection. To ensure the methods selected would produce information that would be useful to program designers, the researcher provided mock findings (positive and negative) to help practitioners clarify how they would utilize different types of results. Once both groups were satisfied that the results would inform or influence practice, the semi-structured interviews with coaches began. To enhance use of findings even further, the researcher met with the stakeholders two times throughout the data collection process to help them determine how the preliminary findings could be applied to the program. The evaluation found there was an opportunity to improve the accessibility of course materials on their website and connect coach learners to continuing professional development. However, the study does not go as far as to say whether individuals in the organization actually pursued these changes as a result of the evaluation.

To summarize, there are two relatively underdeveloped areas in CEP research. The first is a concern for stakeholder theory from the program designer perspective. The second is the inclusion of program stakeholders in the research design process. More attention to these areas will improve our ability to provide evidence that is credible, useful, and valuable to program stakeholders, thereby bridging the research to practice gap. Ultimately, there is an opportunity to re-imagine the role of the researcher as a facilitator of CEP learning and development. This would require a shift from research that scholar-centered and focused on academic interests, towards an approach that is stakeholder-centered, collaborative, and focused on stakeholder interests. As Michael Quinn Patton (2012) put it, "Especially futile is the desire to conduct an evaluation that will be accepted by and respected within the

[3] This was an automated online program so there were less concerns about fidelity and implementation of the program.

academic community. Make no pretense of pleasing the entire scientific community (an impossibility), evaluation strives to attain the more modest and attainable goal of pleasing primary intended users” (p. 280).

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I describe the ideas and experiences that have shaped my (Sara) perspective and help guide this study. I break my perspective down into three sections as DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz (2017) recommend. The first section is a description of my inquiry worldview (often referred to as paradigm), which is guided by John Dewey's pragmatism (Dewey, 1910, 1916, 1938). The second section describes the assumptions underlying principles-focused evaluation theory (PFE) (Patton, 2018c), the evaluation theory used to guide this evaluation. The third section provides a subjectivity statement that explicates my relationship to the coach education program (CEP) and the primary intended users (PIUs), or the individuals who will put the evaluation findings to use. While these three components are presented separately here, they are linked to one another and constantly interacting to inform this study.

Inquiry Worldview: Deweyan Pragmatism

The purpose of this section is to describe the assumptions underpinning pragmatism, the paradigm guiding this evaluation. These assumptions are described in terms of ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology.

Ontology

When describing a worldview, authors typically begin by placing the philosophy in use somewhere on an ontological continuum that describe beliefs about the nature of reality. At one end of the continuum are positivists who believe there is a single objective reality which can be discovered through value-free inquiry. At the other end are interpretivists and critical theorists who assert there are multiple subjective realities that are socially constructed and discovered through value-laden inquiry (Prasad, 2018). Admittedly, this depiction of inquiry worldviews is grossly oversimplified and omits significant contributions such as critical realists, post-structuralists and many others. Nevertheless, most scholars can relate to this continuum due to the long-standing debates between the two ends (known as the ‘paradigm wars’).

The philosophy of pragmatism, as conceptualized by John Dewey, rejects this dualistic thinking (subjective or objective) and instead claims, “there is no problem with asserting both that there is a single ‘real world’ and that all individuals have their own unique interpretation of that world” (Morgan, 2007, p. 72). For pragmatist, the mind the world cannot be separated because reality is based on our experience of actions in the world (Biesta, 2010). In taking this stance, Dewey actually “created a revised version of metaphysics that challenged the top-down privileging of ontological assumptions” (Morgan, 2007, p. 68). Instead of focusing on abstract philosophical debates about the nature of reality, pragmatists prefer to focus on practical problem solving (Greene & Hall, 2010). Pragmatists feel the forced dichotomy between the two ends of the ontological continuum (subjective and objective) is seen as prescriptive and constraining to intellectual curiosity and problem solving since certain worldviews can limit the number of ways a problem can be approached or addressed (Feilzer, 2010).

Epistemology

Epistemology deals with the nature of knowledge, or what counts as knowledge according to a worldview (Crotty, 1998; Greene & Hall, 2010). For Dewey, knowledge was the product of *experience*, or *transactions* that take place between a living organism and their environment (Biesta, 2010). However, experience in itself does not guarantee knowledge. The acquisition of knowledge requires a combination of reflection and action on experience (Biesta, 2010). To expand further, most of the time, “our experiences occur in a relative unquestioned fashion in which the beliefs that we have acquired from previous experiences can adequately handle the demands for action in our current circumstances” (Morgan, 2014, p. 2). Dewey termed this *habit*. Habits are experiences that occur that we do not think about because they do not cause dissonance or problems for us. However, when prior beliefs become problematic, they must be examined and resolved through *inquiry* (Morgan, 2014). During inquiry, an individual or group experiments with a number of *actions* to resolve the problem. This process may require “many cycles between beliefs and actions” before the problem can be resolved (Morgan, 2014, p. 3). Importantly, a central postulation of pragmatism is to move beyond experimentation to *intelligent action* (Hall, 2013). Intelligent action requires the individual or group to consider the consequences of a variety of actions *a priori* and select the one that is most likely to result in a resolution to the problem. Intelligent action also requires retrospective reflection on the knowledge gained as a result of the action taken and how this new knowledge can be used to help guide future actions. Therefore, according to pragmatists, knowledge cannot be acquired unless both reflection and action on experience are combined (Biesta, 2010). This explains why pragmatists reject affiliation to realism (objective reality) or relativism (subjective reality). To ascribe to one of these ontologies would limit the number of actions available in the inquiry process and thus would limit intelligent action.

As we move through cycles of reflection and action, the problem is resolved when beliefs are supported by enough evidence to be confidently acted upon (Schwandt, 2015b). Instead of ‘resolutions’ or ‘findings’, Dewey termed these answers to problems *warranted assertions*. For Dewey, warranted assertions are not seen as stable, separate answers to inquiry, but instead as temporarily stable judgements which can be used to guide future inquiry if needed (Boyles, 2006). Warranted assertions are seen as temporarily stable because an individual and their environment is constantly in flux, presenting new situations that may require further experimentation of alternative actions (Hall, 2013). In summary, Dewey’s philosophy of knowledge is centered around experience which bring beliefs and actions in contact with one another through inquiry (Morgan, 2014) (see Figure 3.1).

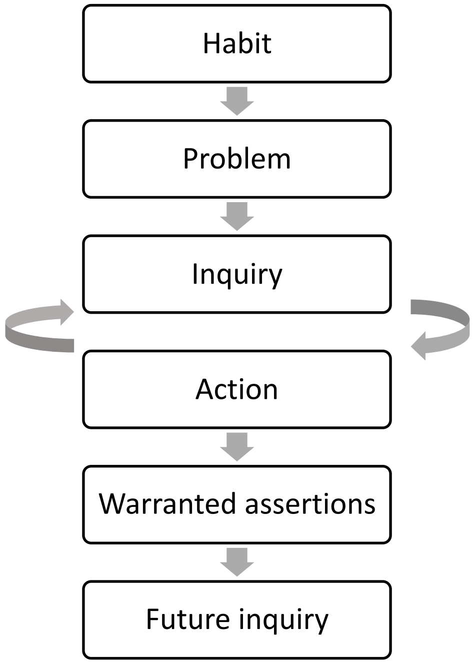

Figure 3.1: Process of generating warranted assertions in pragmatism

Axiology

Axiology deals with the role of values in social inquiry (Greene & Hall, 2010). Deweyan pragmatism places value on; (1) freedom of inquiry, (2) democracy, (3) transformation, and (4) utility. Freedom of inquiry means that “individuals and social communities are able to define the issues that matter most to them and pursue those issues in the ways that are the most meaningful to them” (Morgan, 2014, p. 6).

Pragmatism also values democracy. Dewey’s version of democracy requires individuals to share information about their experiences and take collaborative action to improve society (Hall, 2013). In other words, democracy in pragmatism is not seen as a separate political concept, but a way of life. Not all individuals will experience the world in the same way, so we must consider multiple perspectives if we are to solve to problems facing a community or a program. This concept of democracy as a philosophy for life relates back to pragmatists’ stance on ontology that rejects the world is either subjective or objective. Instead, pragmatism sees an *intersubjective* world, where a shared understanding of reality can be used to inform action.

Pragmatists also believe in the power of transformation. The process of inquiry results in a revision of an individuals or groups beliefs and actions (Morgan, 2014). Moving through the inquiry process requires a deep consideration of the consequence of acting in one way over another, and the impact those actions have on others. This transformation can occur both within individuals and whole societies. Finally, underpinning all of these values is a focus on utility. For pragmatists, the goal is not to produce warranted assertions that replicate the subjective reality of an individual or of the objective world. Alternatively, warranted assertions are viewed as credible only if they have practical worth and can be used to guide future action (Greene & Hall, 2010).

Methodology

Methodology is concerned with how we generate and justify knowledge (Greene & Hall, 2010). The process of knowledge generation in pragmatism begins with the research questions or problem. Once research question has been articulated, the methodology (action) of choice is simply the one that has the "best chance to obtain useful answers [warranted assertions]" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17). Pragmatists are therefore open to pursuing different lines of inquiry (mixing methods). What is most fundamental is that the individual or group pursuing the inquiry remain open to all methods throughout the inquiry process. The advantage of this stance is that the problem can be informed by various lines of action which increase the likelihood of reaching warranted assertions.

Morgan (2007) summarized how pragmatism provides an alternative approach to the traditional and dichotomous qualitative and quantitative methodology (see Table 3.1). The table shows how pragmatism rejects the forced dichotomy of objectivism and subjectivism and proposes intersubjectivity (shared understanding) as an alternative. Likewise, instead of working strictly inductively as one might see in a qualitative grounded theory approach, or strictly deductively, as often carried out in quantitative theory testing, pragmatists embrace an abductive process, moving back and forth between induction (theory forming) and deduction (theory testing). Pragmatists focus on whether the knowledge gained can be transferred to other settings or problems encountered (Morgan, 2007). As Feilzer (2010) put it, “Pragmatism as a research paradigm supports the use of a mix of different research methods as well as modes of analysis and continuous cycle of abductive reasoning while being guided primarily by the researcher’ desire to product socially useful knowledge” (p. 6).

Table 3.1: A pragmatic alternative to key issues in methodology

	Qualitative Approach	Quantitative Approach	Pragmatic Approach
Ontology	Subjectivity	Objectivity	Intersubjectivity
Connection of theory and data	Induction	Deduction	Abduction
Inference from data	Context	Generality	Transferability

Note. From “Paradigms Lost and Pragmatism Regained: Methodological Implications of Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods,” by Morgan, D., 2007, *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(1), p.71 (https://doi.org/10.1177/2345678906292462). Copyright 2007 by SAGE Publications.

The philosophical assumptions underlying pragmatism informed this study in four key areas. First, pragmatism allowed me (the evaluator) to conduct research with and by program stakeholders instead of on and for them. Second, pragmatism required that I pursue problems and questions that program designers had encountered. Third, pragmatism allowed us (myself and the practitioners) to tap into a variety of research methods to answer those questions in a way that practitioners valued. Last, pragmatism challenged us to focus on producing information that would be useful to practitioners and could thus influence their practice. These tenants align with the assumptions of PFE (which are described in more detail next). When discussing pragmatism, Michael Quinn Patton (1985), the creator of PFE remarked;

> The belief that evaluators must be true to only one paradigm or the other in any given situation is an extremely narrow and limiting perspective that underestimates the human capacity for handling ambiguity, duality, and mind-shifts. In short, I'm suggesting that evaluators would do better to worry about understanding and being sensitive to the worldviews and evaluation needs of their clients rather than in maintaining allegiance to or working with one perspective. (p. 308)

Principles Focused Evaluation Theory

The purpose of this section is to describe PFE, the evaluation theory guiding this evaluation. First, I provide an overview of the landscape of evaluation theories to demonstrate where PFE is positioned in relation to other evaluation theories. After situating PFE in the larger field of program evaluation, I describe what principles are, the principles guiding PFE, and the desired outcomes of PFE.

Evaluation Theory

An evaluation theory refers to "an organized set of ideas about what evaluators do, or should do, when conducting evaluations" (Coryn et al., 2011, p. 199). Like ontology, epistemology, and axiology, the theory in use informs and shapes the goals, aims, and methods of the evaluation (Schwandt, 2015a). There are a wide range of evaluation theories to choose from, making it difficult to classify and compare them. One of the most well-known attempts to classify evaluation theories was undertaken by Christie and Alkin (2013). They use the metaphor of a tree to describe the various evaluation theories. The roots of the tree represent the foundations from which the field emerged, while the branches group together various evaluation theorists whose work clusters around similar foundational ideas (see Figure 3.2).

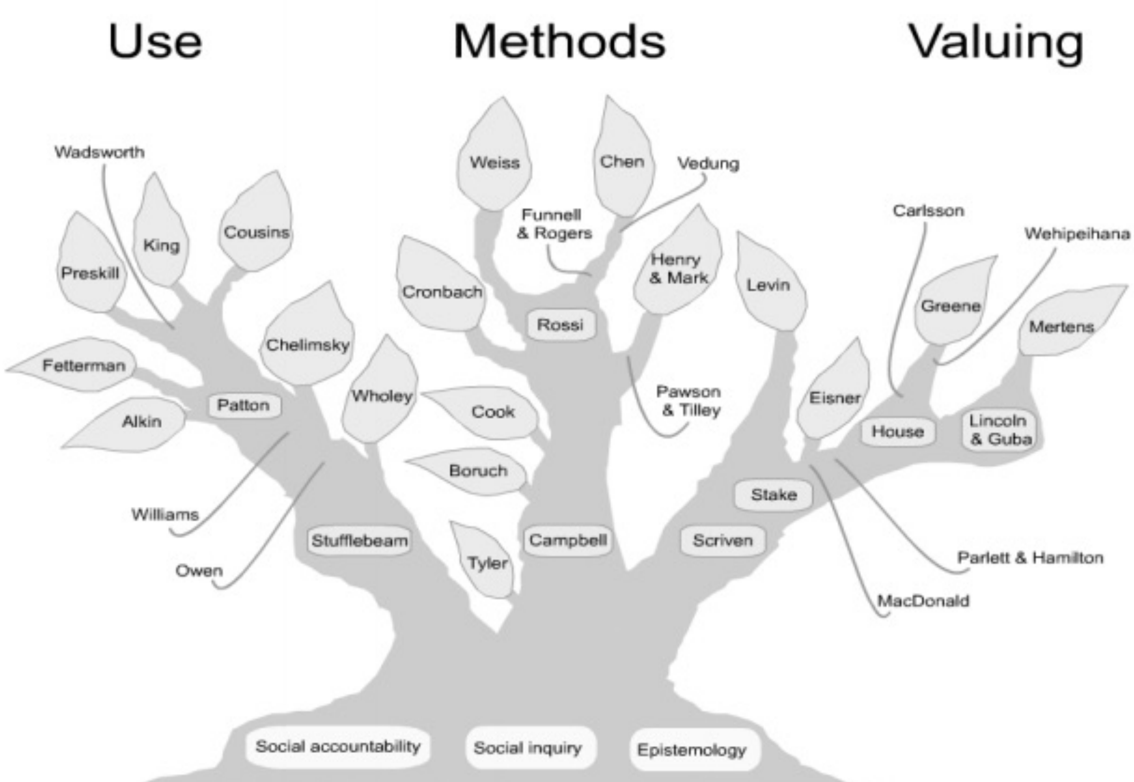

Figure 3.2: An evaluation theory tree. *Note*. From "An Evaluation Theory Tree," by Christie & Alkin, in Alkin (Ed.), *Evaluation Roots: A Wider Perspective of Theorists' Views and Influences* (2nd ed., p. 12), 2013, SAGE Publications. Copyright 2013 by SAGE Publications Inc. Reprinted with permission.

The central branch of the tree houses evaluation theorists who prioritize research methods. Theorists on this branch are underpinned by realist ontology and positivists and post-positivist epistemology. This means they believe there is one truth that can be uncovered, even if only partially. Subsequently, theorists on the methods branch often promote experimental and quasi-experimental designs. The branch to the right of the methods branch is termed the valuing branch. Theorists on this branch ascribe to relativist ontology and constructivist (interpretivist) or critical epistemology. Because they believe in multiple subjective truths, these theorists focus on the criteria upon which judgement about a program is made (i.e. what is valued, by whom) (Christie & Alkin, 2013, p. 12). More recently, Mertens and Wilson (2019) distinguished the constructivist theorist on this branch from the critical theorists by creating a transformative branch that extends off the valuing branch. Evaluation theorists on Mertens and Wilson's transformative branch ascribe to a critical paradigm that focuses on viewpoints of marginalized groups and systemic power structures to further social justice and human rights (Mertens & Wilson, 2019). The third branch proposed by Christie and Alkin (2013) was the use branch. Theorists on this branch often embrace pragmatism and express, "an explicit concern for the ways in which evaluation information will be used and who will use the information" (p. 13).

Situating Principles-Focused Evaluation Theory

PFE along with its creator, Michael Quinn Patton, reside on the use branch. The use branch arose in the 1970's and 1980's when evaluators began to recognize evaluation findings were rarely used by program decision-makers. At that time, many evaluations were commissioned by external organizations such as the federal government who were concerned with a programs accountability to the public, not the information needs of those within the program (Torres & Preskill, 2001). Patton was one of the first evaluation theorists to address this challenge with his book *Utilization-Focused Evaluation* (Patton, 1978). Utilization-focused evaluation is an evaluation theory begins with the premise that an evaluation should be judged by intended use by primary intended users (PIUs). PIUs are the key decision makers in the program who will put the evaluation findings into use (Patton, 1978, 2012). In utilization focused evaluation, the evaluator works with PIUs to help them determine their information needs to enhance use of evaluation findings (Patton, 2018c). According to Patton (2013);

> Utilization-focused evaluation is highly personal and situational. The evaluator develops a working relationship with the PIUs to help them determine the kind of evaluation they need. This requires negotiation in which the evaluator offers a menu of possibilities established in the field of evaluation … PIUs are more likely to use the evaluation if they understand and feel ownership of the evaluation process and findings. (p. 294)

PFE was born out of utilization-focused evaluation theory. Therefore, in both utilization-focused evaluation theory and PFE, the evaluator serves as a facilitator or teacher to PIUs, helping guide them through the inquiry process. This means, the evaluator and the PIUs work together to conceptualize the evaluation, implement data collection, and interpret finding. The goal of this facilitative approach is to increase buy-in, ownership, and ultimately, use by PIUs. As Patton (2012) stated:

> We discover together that they (PIUs) have questions they care about – not my questions, but theirs … I make sure that they feel it's their study, that these are their ideas, and that it's focused on their values … If evaluators are answering their own questions according to their own interests, needs and priorities the evaluator has become the primary intended user. (pp. 64, 79)

Intended use by PIUs is the foundational believe of both utilization focused evaluation and PFE but, "the distinguishing characteristic of PFE is the focus on principles as the object of the evaluation (evaluand)" (Patton, 2018c, p. 27).

Principles as the Evaluand

As Patton (2018c) stated, "No principles, no principles-focused evaluation" (p. 47). Therefore, it is essential to describe what principles are (and are not) since they are the focus of this evaluation. At the broadest level, a principle is, "a statement that provides guidance about how to think or behave towards some desired result" (Patton, 2018c, p. 9). Patton provided the acronym GUIDE to help develop and identify principles (see Figure 3.3). Together, these five GUIDE criteria can help principle-focused evaluators and PIUs develop and evaluate principles.

G

- **Guiding**: A principle provides guidance on what to do, how to think, what to value, and how to act to be effective. The guidance is distinct that it can be distinguishing from contrary or alternative guidance.

U

- **Useful**: A high-quality principle is useful in making choices and decisions. Its utility resides in begin actionable, interpretable, feasible, and pointing the way toward desired results for any relevant situation.

I

- **Inspirational:** Principles are values based, incorporating and expressing ethical premises, which makes them meaningful. They articulate what matters, both in how to proceed and the desired result.

D

- **Developmental:** Principles can be adapted and applied to diverse contexts and over time. In being applicable over time, it is enduring, in support of ongoing development and adaptation in an every-changing world.

E

- **Evaluable**: A high-quality principle must be evaluable. This means it is possible to document and judge whether it is actually being followed, and document and judge what results from following the principle.

Figure 3.3: GUIDE criteria for developing and identifying principles. *Note.* Adapted from *Principles-Focused Evaluation*, by Patton, M., 2018. Copyright 2018 by The Guilford Press.

The G of the GUIDE criteria ensures a principle tells people what to do and how to act to be effective (Patton, 2018c). This can be accomplished by attaching actions (verbs) to values (see Figure 3.4). Values are statements of belief such as, “diversity”. A value becomes a principle when an action is attached to it, such as, “*Include* diverse people” (Patton, 2018c). While there are a number of ways to go about including diverse people, this principle provides distinct direction for people in a program. A threat to G criteria of a principle is ambiguity. When a principle is ambiguous, the result is a wide range of interpretations and applications. One way to avoid ambiguity and ensure the principle meets the G criteria, is to see articulate the opposite or contrary of a principle. For example, an alternative to the principle “value diverse people” might be “find consensus” or “strive for uniform agreement”. Principles meet the guiding criteria when they “set and focus priorities, inspire, support ongoing development, and help organizations avoid mission drift” (Patton, 2018c, p. 9).

The U criteria requires that a principle be useful. For a principle to be useful, people in the program should encounter situations that call for the principle. To meet the U criteria, the principle should also be easy to interpret, meaning the language should not be too lofty or confusing. Moreover, the principle should prescribe actions that people in the program are willing and able to implement (feasibility).

The I criteria represents the inspirational nature of principles. Principles are, “grounded in values about what matters to those who develop, adopt, and attempt to follow them” (Patton, 2018c, p. 122). The principle should express what matters most to those it is meant to guide. They should feel a sense of calling, and a need to return to the principles to be true to who they are and how they should act to be effective. The values expressed in the principle “include diverse people” are those of diversity, equity, and inclusion. These values should align with the beliefs and ethics of those in the program.

The D criteria represents the developmental nature of a principle. This means that principles can be applied and adapted across diverse contexts and situations (Patton, 2018c). This differentiates principles from rules. Rules are absolute and prescriptive to ensure they are applied the same way every time regardless of context (Patton, 2018c). For example, the Rooney Rule requires National Football League teams interview an ethnic minority candidate for head coaching positions. The alternative principle, “value diverse people” allows for various interpretations making it adaptable across contexts and situation (Patton, 2018c). For example, program designers can value diverse people through hiring practices, application processing, decision making, or pedagogical content. The developmental nature of a principle also makes principles enduring, meaning they can never be fully accomplished (Patton, 2018c). The principle “value diverse people” requires ongoing attention. This makes principles different from goals. Goals have specific outcomes that can be achieved in a given timeline. Principles do not.

The E or evaluability criteria for principles refers to whether one can document adherence to, and outcomes of, a principle. Principles are expressed as statements which should be treated as hypotheses until evaluated within a given context or program (Patton, 2018c). To evaluate adherence to the principle “include diverse people” one might ask how this principle is being interpreted and applied by program stakeholders, and what results. This is the work of PFE. Patton stated, “When we ask people in programs to undertake evaluation, we are asking them to subject their perceptions and beliefs to empirical test: Is what they hope for and believe actually happening?” (Patton, 2012, p. 19).

Principles of PFE

With an understanding of what principles are, we can now turn to the principles guiding PFE. Every evaluation theory contains assumptions about how the evaluation should be carried out. PFE is no exception. Figure 3.4 displays the eight principles guiding PFE. Patton stresses that fidelity to PFE does not mean strict adherence to a highly prescriptive set of rules. Instead, the integrity of a PFE is related to an evaluator’s consciousness of core concepts and their ability to adjust and apply them given the evaluation context. In other words, all the principles of PFE must be addressed in a PFE, but how they are addressed, the order in which they are addressed, and the extent to which they are addressed, all depend on the evaluator, the PIUs, and the context (Patton, 2018c). Appendix G describes how each of the eight principles were embedded into this evaluation.

1. Matching

- Conduct PFE on principles-driven initiatives with principles committed people.

2. Distinctions matter

- Distinguish types of principles: natural, moral, and effectiveness; distinguish principles from values, beliefs, lessons, rules, and proverbs.

3. Quality

- Address explicitly how the quality of principles is assessed. Support development of effectiveness principles that meet the GUIDE criteria.

4. Evaluation rigor

- Systematically inquire into and evaluate effectiveness principles for both implementation (are they followed?) and results (what difference does it make?).

5. Utilization focused

- Focus on intended use by intended users from beginning to end, facilitating the evaluation process to ensure utility and actual use.

6. Beyond rhetoric

- Support using principles comprehensively; use them or lose them; don't let them become just a list; apply them across functions and tasks.

7. Interconnections

- The eight principles of PFE are an interdependent, interconnected whole (not a pick and choose list). Fidelity involves addressing all eight principles of PFE.

8. Learning

- Reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the PFE process and results to learn and improve; engage in principles focused reflective practice. Extract and apply lessons learned.

Figure 3.4: Principles Guiding PFE. *Note.* From *Principles-Focused Evaluation*, by Patton, M., 2018, pp. 356-357. Copyright 2018 by The Guilford Press.

Desired Outcomes of PFE

According to Patton (2018c), adherence to PFE principles results in enhanced use by PIUs. Patton (2018b) defines two types of use the evaluator should attend to in PFE. The first type is *findings use,* which occurs when the results of the evaluation inform decisions or changed procedures in the organization. For example, PIUs may decide to remove a principle because the evaluation found the principle was not being applied by those within the program. The second type of use is process use (Patton, 2008; Weiss et al., 2008). Process use includes changes in thinking and behavior that occur among those involved in the evaluation as a result of participating in the evaluation (Patton, 2012). For example, the very process of focusing on principles increases awareness of, and engagement with, principles beyond what would have occurred without the evaluation (Patton, 2012, 2018c). Additionally, through PFE, PIUs gain training in evaluation logic and skills, also referred to as evaluative thinking. Evaluative thinking is a specialized form of reasoning that combines critical, creative, inferential, and practical thinking. As Patton (2018c) described evaluative thinking as follows:

> Evaluative thinking forces clarity about the inquiry purpose, who it is for, with what intended uses, to be judged by what quality criteria; being explicit about what criteria are being applied in framing inquiry questions, making design decisions, determining what constitutes appropriate methods, and selecting and following analytical processes; and being aware of and articulating values, ethical considerations, contextual implications, strengths and weaknesses of the inquiry, and potential (or actual) misinterpretations, misuses, and misapplications. (p. 206)

An organizations capacity to think evaluatively extends beyond the life of any single evaluation. Evaluative thinking skills can be transferred to other aspects of the program to enhance organizational learning capacity.

In summary, process use concerns how PIUs change as a result of going through the process of the evaluation, while use of evaluation findings concerns how (or if) PIUs use the evaluation findings to make decisions, take actions, or change procedures. Both forms of use should be attended to throughout the evaluation.

Subjectivity Statement

The final section of this chapter includes a subjectivity statement. A subjectivity statement is, “a summary of who researchers are in relation to what and whom they are studying” (Preissle, 2008, p.

844). Both the PIUs and I bring experiences to the study that influence how the evaluation was carried out. To better understand the impact my experiences had upon this research, I articulate them in the form of discrete I's, just as Peshkin (1988) has done in their article, *In search of subjectivity – One's own*. Like Peshkin, I recognize these I's are interconnected and vary from one situation to another.

The emic I

In 2015, I took a course offered by *US Soccer* CEP. I found the course to be extremely stressful and unproductive towards my personal development as a coach. I retained little to no knowledge, and I was unable to transfer the material to my home environment. The majority of the behaviors I took on during the course were carried out to please the instructors and pass the course. I was afraid to ask questions or experiment with different strategies and instead did everything I could to conform to the course expectations. Two years later, I completed another course from *US Soccer* CEP, however, my experience was dramatically different. The content, teaching methods, and course structure had all changed. The environment was collaborative and open. I felt cared for, free to experiment, and enjoyed my time on the course.

The above monologue is a snapshot of my involvement with the CEP as a coach participant. In total, I have spent eight years engaging with this CEP in various roles. The first four of those years, I experienced different courses as a coach participant. Shortly after, I moved into the role of a coach educator, where I taught courses at different sites across the US. Throughout the last three years, my role within the program has again transitioned to one of program evaluator and research partner.

These experiences allowed me to experience the program from different perspectives before commencing this study. In addition, I had insights regarding the evolution of the program over time that helped me understand the underlying politics, processes, and expectations surrounding this CEP. I was also able to develop trusting relationships with various stakeholders in the CEP prior to beginning the study.

The etic I

I also acknowledge my position within this evaluation as an outsider. My identity as researcher supersedes my identity as a program insider. As a researcher, I am disturbed by the gap that exists between research and practice. I feel that too often we, as researchers, fail to translate our work to practitioners. Important information gets lock up in costly journals that are difficult for practitioners to access and interpret given the academic language, fancy statistics, and decontextualized findings. Worse, practitioners access academic articles, misinterpret findings, and inappropriately apply them to their context. With so many researchers yearning to stimulate change ‘on the ground’, I prefer to work directly with practitioners to see how our skillset can serve their needs, curiosities, problems. I believe program evaluation presents an opportunity to address this challenge in the context of CEPs.

I see my role in this evaluation, not as a researcher or as an evaluators per se, but instead as a facilitator/teacher who has the tools to stimulate inquiry, dialogue, direction, and collaboration for those in the organization. However, those within the organization may see me (the outsider) as a threat. Evaluation is inherently judgmental and has the potential to challenge the status quo and transform long-held practices. This can be perceived as intimidating to some people. There is a chance the evaluation may cause stakeholders to behave differently than they normally would in an attempt to portray findings that benefit themselves or the organization. PFE is a strength-based theory that positions stakeholders as part of the evaluation process. These features, along with my deep concern for participant confidentiality, will help ensure the evaluation adhered to the tenants of PFE.

Admittingly, as a researcher, I prefer conditions that grant me control. PFE undisputedly relinquishes evaluator control. Metaphorically, PFE requires me to ‘let go of the wheel’ and allow stakeholders to drive. I fear my inability to surrender control will impact the ownership stakeholders feel over the evaluation and ultimately, the use of the findings. I do not want to unconsciously (or consciously) manipulate stakeholders to pursue routes of inquiry that I might favor. And yet, I need to balance stakeholder needs with my skillset and timetable as a graduate student. I see this as a negotiation process that will require open communication between myself, the stakeholders, and my doctoral committee. It will also be necessary for me to reflect deeply on the impact my actions have upon the evaluation process and the individuals involved in the evaluation. I may not be able to drive the car, but I can show the stakeholders routes we can travel together and let them choose the route.

Last, as a pedagogy researcher (and long-time student), I carry with me preferences regarding teaching and learning methods. I believe an optimal learning environment is created through relationships, active-learning, and self-discovery. I see the teacher as a facilitator who presents problems and, when needed, guides learners to potential solutions. My preference towards this type of learning environment will inevitably shape the interactions I have with program stakeholders. To control for this, I will regularly perform member checks with stakeholders (coaches and program designers) of the program to ensure my representations are accurate. I will attempt to favor their voice and their concerns over my own, so the findings are of use to them.

CHAPTER 4

EVALUATION CONTEXT

The purpose of this chapter is to describe United States Soccer's (*US Soccer's*) coach education program (CEP), the CEP of interest in this dissertation. Importantly, this CEP is connected to, and shaped by, the larger context in which it operates. Therefore, I began the chapter by providing an overview of coach education in the US. Next, I describe the program's history and evolution, structure, goals, organizational structure, and dissemination strategy. The chapter aims to provide the reader with a deep understanding of the program. Importantly, this information is filtered through my extensive experience in the program as a coach participant and coach educator, along with my position as researcher and evaluator of CEPs.

Coach Education in the United States

In the US, coaching is not yet considered a true profession. Currently, anyone can call themselves a coach regardless of their educational background, knowledge, or skills. A move towards professionalization would require a defined knowledge base and ethical standards (Duffy et al., 2011). In addition, organizations would need to disseminate this knowledge and ensure coaches meet the minimum standards (Duffy et al., 2011).

Many of these features are just beginning to take shape in the US. For example, Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE) America recently established the National Standards for Sport Coaches (Gano-Overway et al., 2020) which outline core coaching responsibilities and competencies. There is also a US based organization that accredits CEPs that align with these national standards (National Committee for Accreditation of Coaching Education). However, CEPs are generally not incentivized or required to pursue accreditation and may lack the resources or time necessary to do so

(Fawver et al., 2020; Gano-Overway & Dieffenbach, 2019). As a result, relatively few CEPs are accredited and thus a high degree of variability exists among CEPs and professional standards for coaches.

A similar challenge exists for coaches. Much of the coaching workforce in the US remains untrained primarily since there are generally few formal training requirements. More recently, sport organizations have begun to require coaches to complete short CEPs that provide basic information on injury prevention (concussions) or abuse (physical, mental, sexual). While the training requirements in these areas are increasing, only one in three youth coaches in the US have been trained in sports skills or motivational techniques (Solomon, 2018). This is in part because much of the coaching workforce is made up of part-time volunteers (often parents) who have limited time and money to invest in their development as coaches. Because formal training is not required to coach at any level in the US (Fawver et al., 2020), coaches who pursue professional development often do so on their own accord.

Coaches who decide to pursue education typically do so through two different routes in the US: (1) universities, and (2) sport organizations. The US boasts 351 CEPs situated in universities, a number that is increasing each year (Gano-Overway & Dieffenbach, 2019). The majority of these programs are minors (66%), but bachelors, masters, and doctoral programs are also available (Gano-Overway & Dieffenbach, 2019). However, few coaches pursue this route because they do not have the time, finances, or incentives to obtain a university degree for a profession that does not currently require this qualification (Fawver et al., 2020).

The second route to formal coach education in the US is through sports organizations. In the US, National Governing Bodies (NGBs) (e.g., *US Soccer*, USA Track and Field) are often responsible for the development and delivery of CEPs. Unlike other countries, the US government does not fund NGBs. Therefore, NGBs commonly operate independently and without oversight or funding from the government.

US Soccer is one of 50 NGBs recognized by the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) (USOPC, 2020). As such, they are responsible for governing and management of all aspects of soccer in the US. One way they fulfill this duty is through coach education. *US Soccer* is also a recognized member of Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the international governing body for soccer and the Confederation of North, Central America, and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF) which is one of FIFA's six continental governing bodies. At the time of this dissertation there were no organizations providing oversight, regulations, or funding for *US Soccer's* CEPs. However, near the end of this study, CONCACAF was beginning mandate certain practices within *US Soccer's* CEP for accreditation purposes.

Program History and Evolution

US Soccer CEP is a large-scale program that serves around 40,000 coaches per year by providing soccer education at sites across the US. The program has undergone numerous revisions and staff changes since its inception in the late 1970's. The latest evolution began in 2015 when a new curriculum was developed in an effort to elevate coaching and improve player environments (US Soccer, 2020). During this time, *US Soccer* made a financial commitment to coach education that resulted in an increase in the number of full-time staff in the program and a $75 million state-of-the-art facility dedicated to coach education. While the old curriculum relied on behaviorist, instructor centered practices, the new curriculum touts a learner centered pedagogy. This shift in pedagogical practices is still underway today. Figure 4.1 summarizes the evolution of the program. The top half of the figure represents shifts in program primarily brought on through staff changes. The bottom half of the figure shows my positionality (labeled evaluator perspective) throughout these changes.

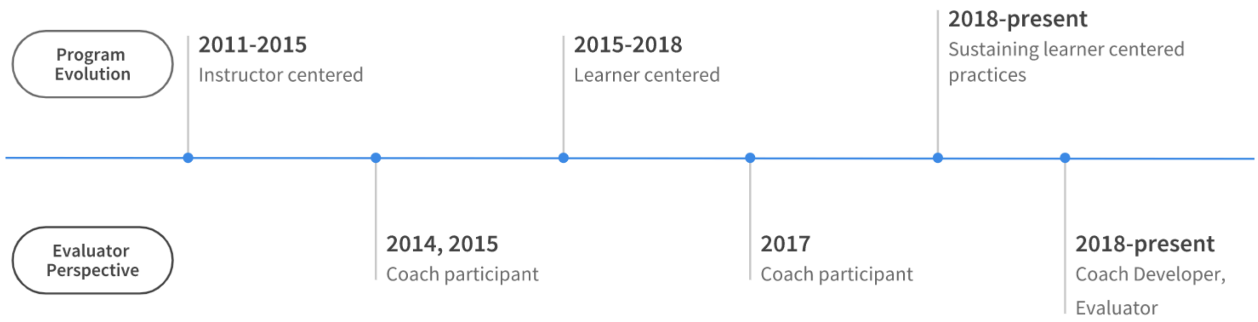

Figure 4.1: Evolution of *US Soccer* CEP and evaluator positionality

Program Structure

One of the most overt changes associated with the 2015 evolution is the structure of the individual courses within the program. Previously, coaches attended one in-person meeting where they were expected to master and apply the course content in a short period of time (days). These courses took place away from the coaches' home environment and coaches often served as athletes during field sessions. Under the new pedagogical philosophy, all courses include an in-person component where coaches travel to a site where they meet their peers and learn from coach educators. The new structure also includes a development period. During the development period, the coaches return to their home environment and experiment with curricular topics as they coach their team. They are required to submit assignments that demonstrate they are proficient in the course competencies. Coach educators provide ongoing support and feedback during this time through the Learning Center, an online learning platform designed specifically for *US Soccer* educational courses. On this platform, coaches communicate with one another (video conferencing and chat features), turn in assignments, access course materials, receive feedback, design digital training sessions, and upload video of themselves coaching.

The CEP is composed of six core courses that all vary in cost, duration, content, and target audience (see Figure 4.2). Each course is designed for coaches working in a specific environment. The six courses represent a linear progression from grassroots coaching to professional coaching. To be eligible for a course, a coach must be working in the environment specific to that course level and must hold a prerequisite license for a designated period of time. For example, a coach applying for the B-license must hold a C-license for at least 12-months and must be working with a team who plays in the 11v11 game model. Applicants are screened for eligibility to ensure they meet the criteria. A handful of supplementary courses are also offered including a director of coaching course, a talent scout course, and an instructor course. New courses are always being developed, while existing courses are adapted to better fit the needs of coaches and instructors.

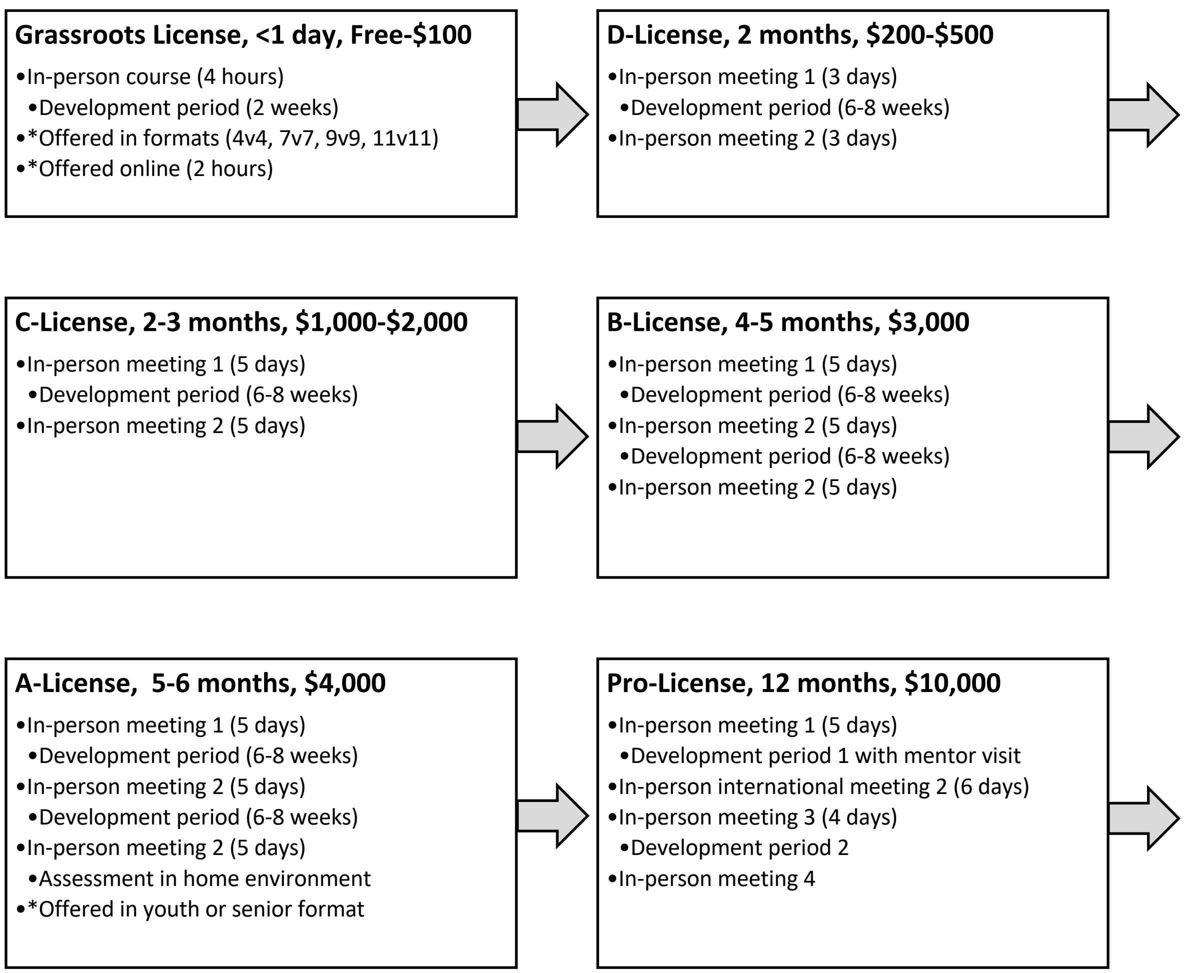

Figure 4.2: Structure of *US Soccer* CEP. *Note*. Supplemental courses and referee courses are not included in this figure. This figure represents the course structure during this dissertation.

Program Goals and Assessment

All six courses are designed to improve coaches in the six tasks of a coach: (1) coaching games, (2) coaching training sessions, (3) managing the performance environment, (4) leading the team, (5) leading the player, and (6) leadership. Each course level also has a specific coaching methodology the coaches are expected to practice and demonstrate. Coaches pass the course and receive a licensure if they demonstrate competencies in the six tasks of a coach and the coaching methodology through assignments and practical coaching assessments. Coach educators assess coaching competencies in both a formative and summative format.

Organizational Structure

At the time of this dissertation, the organizational structure of *US Soccer's* CEP was a "flatarchy", which means that individuals at all levels are encouraged to suggest ideas that can be carried forward. At the time of this dissertation, there were approximately 14 full-time staff in the coach education department. The staff were divided into two categories, technical staff, and administrative staff (see Figure 4.3 and 4.4). The 14 staff members included two directors, seven technical leads, two in-market instructors, a technology operations manager and four administrators. The two directors oversee program operations and report to US Soccer leadership. The technical leads are responsible for the design and implementation of a specific course level (e.g., A-license technical lead), with the exception of one technical lead who is responsible for integrating exercise science content into all course levels. The two in-market instructors assist with the dissemination of the grassroots and D-license courses, which have the highest number of coach participants each year. These individuals help train other coach educators to deliver the grassroots and D-license courses. The technology operations manager maintains the online learning platform and other technology components. The administrative staff help manage the course logistics such as application processing and course logistics (who will teach, where the course will take place, food, hotel etc.). Together, this group of people is responsible for all aspects of course design and implementation, which includes the training of other part-time coach educators.

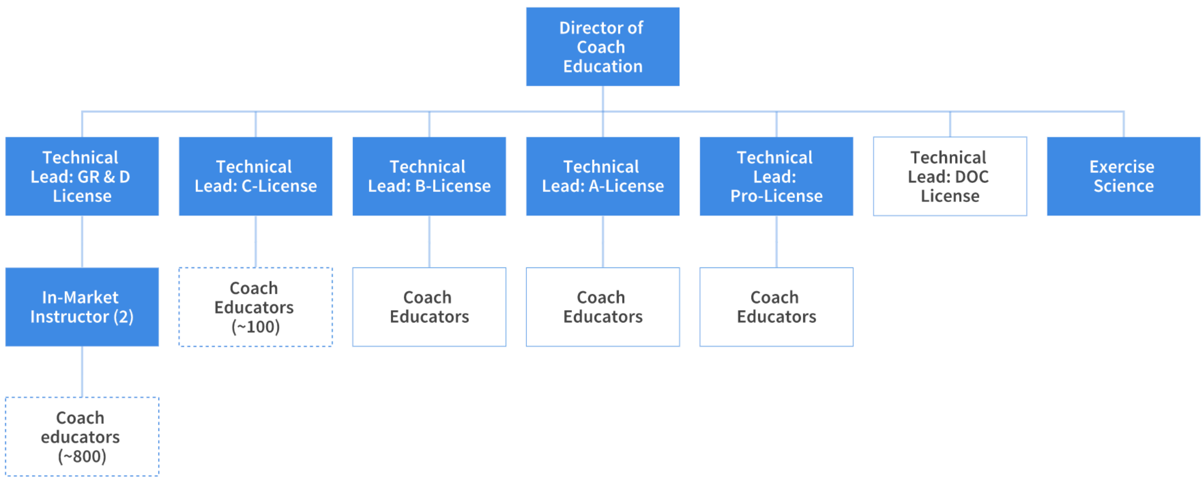

Figure 4.3: Organizational structure for technical staff. Solid blue boxes represent full-time staff, white boxes with solid border represent part-time staff, white boxes with checkered border represent coach educators hired by state associations.

Figure 4.4: Organizational structure for administrative staff.

Dissemination

A 1 to 12 coach educator to coach participant ratio is enforced in all courses to ensure coaches receive individual attention during their time on the course. The maximum number of participants allowed on any course is 36 coaches and three coach educators. The grassroots, D-license, and C-license courses are delivered by coach educators who work for local state soccer associations as opposed to working for *US Soccer*. These local coach educators are necessary given the large volume of coaches obtaining education at the grassroots, D and C-license levels (30,000/year). The remainder of the courses (B-license, A-license, pro-license) are delivered primarily by the technical leads and part-time coach educators. All coach educators, regardless of license level, undergo a training period where they complete assignments and learn to apply the five tasks of a coach educator: 1) teaching courses, 2) mentoring individual candidates, 3) assessing candidates, 4) managing courses and 5) leading the process (US Soccer, 2020). At the time of this dissertation there were around 800 coach educators certified to teach the grassroots and D-license and 100 coach educators certified to teach the C-license.

Covid-19 Pandemic

This study took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, which heavily influenced the program stakeholders, the CEP, and undoubtably, this study. Individuals in the organization who participated in the evaluation were trying to navigate job stress, Zoom fatigue, and other personal responsibilities. Nevertheless, a number of unique opportunities arose as a result of the pandemic. For instance, the full-time staff were not traveling across the country to deliver courses, which afforded them more time to meet with me to design and implement the evaluation. The pandemic also influenced the program itself. There was a dramatic reduction in the number of courses offered to coaches as program designers scrambled to find a way to deliver courses safely. For the majority of the study the courses were delivered in a new hybrid format. Program designers tried to keep course content and teaching approach the same, but many were experiencing the new course format for the first time. Luckily, principles are designed to navigate complex, dynamic systems such as these.

CHAPTER 5

METHOD

In principles-focused evaluation (PFE), the evaluator and the primary intended users (PIUs) work together to design, implement, and interpret an evaluation. In this evaluation, the PIUs were the full-time staff in the coach education department at *US Soccer* who were responsible for the development and dissemination of the coach education program (CEP). I worked with these individuals over 1-year to develop principles, design and conduct an evaluation of the principles, and enhance use of evaluation findings. The goal of this collaborative approach is to produce information that is useful to PIUs (Patton, 2012). Because the design was dependent on the PIUs information needs, the evaluation questions, data collection and analysis methods were not determined *a priori.* Instead, we remained open to range of questions and methods and selected those that met the needs and values of the PIUs (Patton, 2018c).

To ensure I was adhering to PFE theory, I carried out the evaluation using Patton's 10-step checklist to PFE (Patton, 2018c). The ten steps are mapped onto three phases of the evaluation (see Figure 5.1). In Phase One (steps 1-3), I assessed and built readiness for the PFE. In Phase Two (step 4), I worked with PIUs to develop principles guiding the CEP. In Phase Three (steps 5-10), I worked with the PIUs to design and implement an evaluation of the principles. The phases and steps were conducted in chronological order, and the findings derived from one step informed the proceeding steps. In this chapter, I describe how each phase and step was carried out.

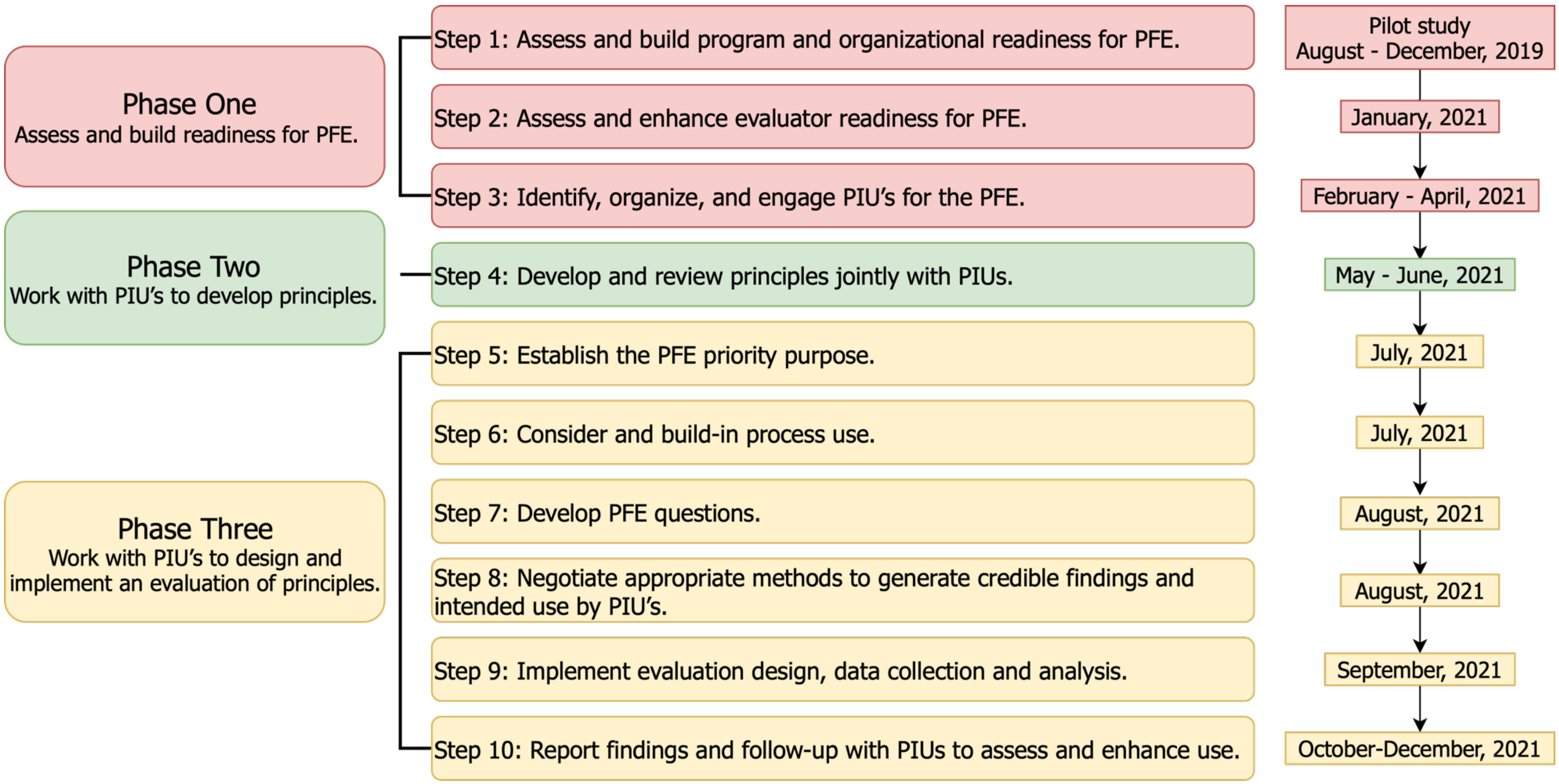

Figure 5.1: Phases, steps, and timeline for the PFE

Phase One: Assess and Build Readiness for PFE, Steps 1-3

PFE is not appropriate for all CEPs. Before undertaking a PFE, the evaluator should ensure suitable conditions are in place (Patton, 2018c). Phase One, Steps 1-3 accomplished this. During steps one, I conducted a five-month pilot study to assessed if the program was ready for a PFE. In step two, I assessed my capacity to conduct a PFE. After I determined the suitable conditions were in place, I proceeded to step three, which involved recruiting PIUs for the evaluation. The assessment process (Phase One) took place over nine months total, five of these months were dedicated to a pilot study that took place in 2019, one year before this dissertation began.

Step 1: Assess and Build Program and Organizational Readiness for PFE

In step one, I assessed if the program and organizational culture was receptive to, and ready for, a PFE. This step was completed through a five-month pilot study that took place prior to commencing this dissertation. The purpose of the pilot study was to gain a personal understanding of the principles guiding the program and assess the organizational culture. To accomplish this, I observed courses, interviewed the coach education staff (potential PIUs), analyzed course documents, and attended staff meetings. This pilot study allowed me to build trust with the staff and give them a rudimentary introduction to principles and PFE. However, this was not considered a PFE because the PIUs had little involvement in the study design or principles development process.

Throughout the pilot study, I noted several features that make this CEP ideal for a PFE. First, the people in the program were principles driven. Although they had not devised an overt list of principles, they had expressed a commitment to certain practices and values, and they regularly referred to these in meetings and conversations. For example, they regularly referred to the importance of self-reflection and collaborative decision making when faced with challenges or decisions. PFE is ideal for principles driven people and organizations such as this (Patton, 2018c).

Second, the program designers displayed curiosity and commitment to the pilot study. They helped set up data collection methods (interviews, course observations, documents), they were engaged in the study findings, and they expressed a desire to find out more about principles and test their effectiveness. For a PFE to be successful, PIUs must be willing and able to commit time to the evaluation. Moreover, after I completed the pilot study, the staff continued to voice an interest in moving forward with an evaluation.

Another key requirement for PFE is the willingness of PIUs to use findings from the evaluation to adapt or change the program. During staff meetings and informal conversations, I noted the PIUs regularly changed program practices. For example, I noted that they regularly created new content for courses or adapted course application procedures. They were dedicated to their principles, but agile enough to implement changes.

Third, my time in the program allowed me to recognize the complexity of the program. The program is composed of many courses, targeting different types of coaches, delivered at different locations across the country. The targeted audience, course content, duration, and learning outcomes differ for each course. In addition, the staff are responsible for a variety of tasks carried out in different settings (see Table 5.1). In complex, dynamic systems like these, control is problematic because "what is needed, what is possible, and what will be optimal will always be changing" (Rogers, 2013, p. 1). These conditions are ideal for PFE. Principles provide a rudder for navigating this complexity because are adaptable, yet they also set priorities and inspire change (Patton, 2018c). In summary, through the pilot study, I was able to conclude that *US Soccer's* CEP was well matched for a PFE.

Table 5.1: Evidence of CEP as a complex, dynamic system

Program Stakeholders	Program Tasks	Program Locations
• US Soccer	• Curriculum design	• Online
• State associations	• Instructor training	• In-person (multiple sites)
• Full-time program designers	• Staff development	• Participant home environment
• Local coach educators	• Staff hiring	• Kansas City (education facility)
• Coach participants	• Accounting	• Chicago (organization base)
• Athletes	• Course admissions	
• Parents	• Strategic planning	
• State/Member associations	• Facility management	
• OSOPC, SafeSport	• Online learning	

Note. Program stakeholders may be involved in multiple tasks at various locations.

Step 2: Assess and Enhance Evaluator Readiness for PFE

Patton (2018c) recommends the evaluator also assess and build their own capacity to conduct a PFE by reflecting on their strengths and weaknesses in three areas: (a) general program evaluation, (b) PFE, and (c) substantive knowledge of the program. I composed a written self-assessment reflecting on my experience in each of these areas (see Appendix A for the full statement).

In short, my formal education and research interests have allowed me to develop expertise in the general field of program evaluation. However, my practical experience conducting evaluations is limited. To account for this, I communicated regularly with one of my dissertation committee members who is an experienced evaluator. Similarly, I hold a deep understanding of PFE through readings and workshops, but this was my first time conducting a PFE. I used my theoretical understanding of program evaluation and PFE to guide me through the process. I also reached out to other evaluators who had experience with PFE. I am particularly grateful to Dr. Patton himself who was responsive to the emails and questions I sent him. Last, I hold substantive knowledge of the program based on my extensive experience in the program over the last seven years (see subjectivity statement, Chapter 3). Altogether, I concluded that I hold the specialized knowledge and social support necessary to conduct a PFE.

Step 3: Identify, Organize, and Engage PIUs for the PFE

The goal of step three was to identify, organize and engage PIUs. This was accomplished through a series of virtual meetings that took place over three-months. To begin, I met with the directors of the coach education department (N=2) virtually to see if they were interested in participating in the evaluation. I provided a brief overview of the evaluation process, walked them through the external site authorization form, and answered their questions. After consulting with their legal department, they agreed to take part in the evaluation and signed an external site authorization form (see Appendix B). IRB approval was then granted from the university (see Appendix C), allowing me to recruit PIUs. Next, the directors helped set up recruitment meetings with the full-time staff in the coach education department (N=10). During the two 15-minute, virtual recruitment meetings, I described the evaluation process, the anticipated time commitment, and the consent form (see Appendix D). After the recruitment meetings ended, I sent a consent form to the staff via email. Those interested in participating were asked to read, sign, and return the consent form within two-weeks.

At the end of the two-week recruitment period, five full-time staff volunteered to take part in the evaluation as PIUs. I do not reference their names or positions within the department to ensure their privacy and confidentiality. However, it should be noted that the five PIUs served in differing roles (administrative, leadership, technical leads, coach educators) and performed a variety of tasks including curriculum design and development, course delivery, training of other coach educators, communication and collaboration with other departments and outside organizations, strategic and financial planning, and administrative tasks such as customer service and application processing. Next, the PIUs and I worked together via email to select a regular time to meet virtually.

Phase Two: Develop Principles, Step 4

The purpose of Phase Two was to work with PIUs (N=5) to develop a list of principles guiding the CEP. The principles development process took place over two months of bi-weekly virtual meetings (five meetings total). The general process for each meeting was as follows. First, I would greet PIUs and present our agenda for the day. Next, I would review our study timeline and tasks. This was often followed by a short PowerPoint presentation on information that would help us carry out the tasks. Then, we would have an open discussion related to the decisions that needed to be made.

Each meeting was recorded, transcribed, and uploaded to NVivo. I reviewed the meeting recordings to reflect back on the meetings and prepare for upcoming meetings. After each meeting, I sent a follow-up email to PIUs that provided; (a) a brief summary of the meeting, (b) resources from the meeting that PIUs could access (meeting recordings, PowerPoint slides), and (c) a follow-up question or activity PIUs could complete on their own between meetings. The follow-up questions/activities were designed to collect individual feedback and give PIUs time to process the information presented or decisions that needed to be made on their own. PIUs completed the follow-up questions/activities in a Google Drive Word Document that both PIUs and myself could access and edit. I refer to this document throughout this dissertation as our group reflective journal. The feedback provided by each PIU in the group reflective journal was then reviewed and discussed in subsequent meetings. Next, I describe the principles development process.

Step 4: Develop and Review Principles Jointly with PIUs

During our first meeting, I introduced PIUs to program evaluation and PFE. I asked PIUs if they had taken ever taken part in an evaluation and, if so, what their experiences were like (Patton, 2012). Next, I defined our roles and responsibilities in the evaluation (Patton, 2018b) (see Figure 5.2), reviewed the estimated timeline and tasks we would complete together (see Figure 5.3), and distinguished effectiveness principles from natural principles and moral principles (Patton, 2018c) (see Figure 5.4). To further clarify what principles are, I differentiate principles from rules, goals, and values, and introduced the PIUs to the GUIDE criteria (Figure 5.5), which can be used to develop and review principles to ensure they are of high-quality (Patton, 2018c).

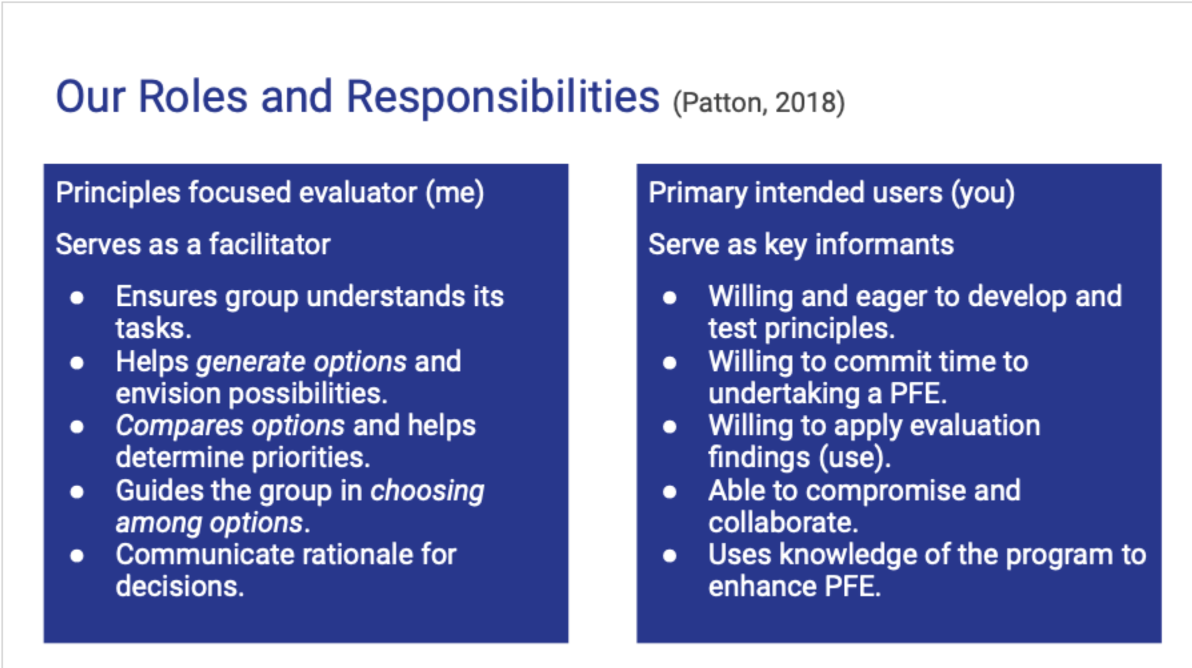

Figure 5.2: Presentation of evaluator and PIUs roles and responsibilities

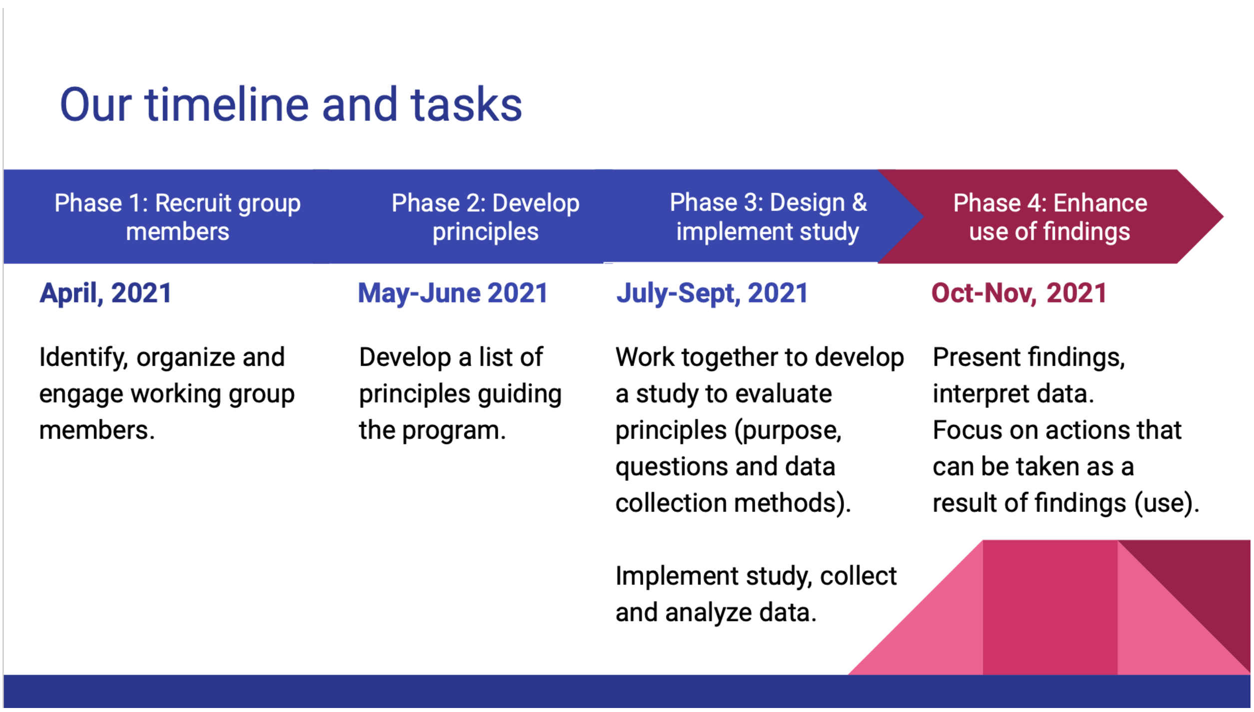

Figure 5.3: Presentation of PFE tasks and anticipated timeline.

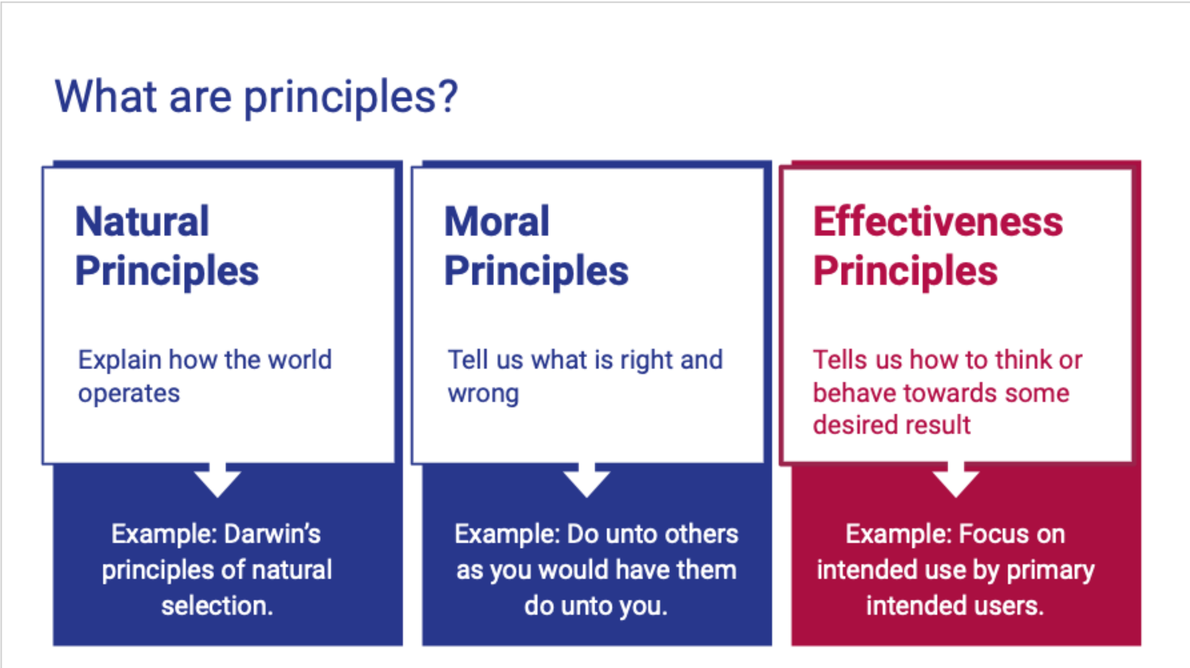

Figure 5.4: Presentation distinguishing effectiveness principles

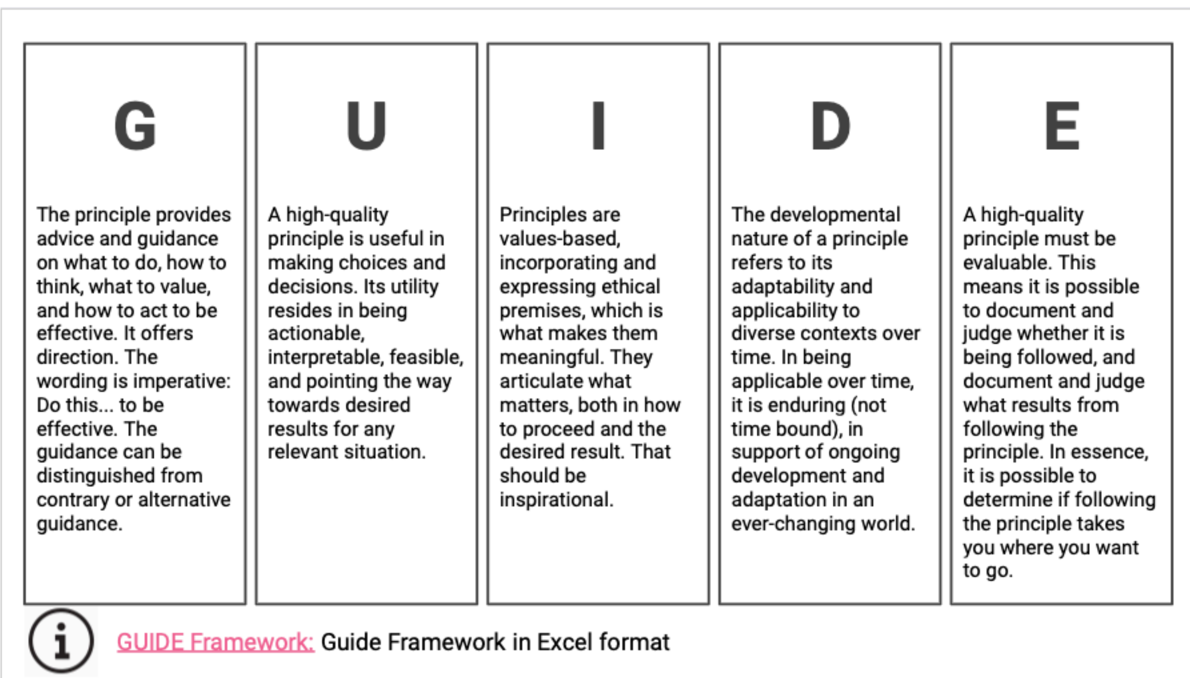

Figure 5.5: Presentation of GUIDE criteria for developing and evaluating principles

We spent the remainder of the first meeting (about 30 minutes) discussing principles currently guiding the program. At this time, the PIUs informed me that they had established several lists principles since the pilot study. I asked them if they would be willing to compile the principles currently in place, so we could review them and decide which ones we wanted to evaluate. After the first meeting, the PIUs used the group reflective journal to compile six lists of principles that were currently guiding the program including: (a) *US Soccer* principles (n=3), (b) coach education strategic principles (n=5), (c) coach education culture principles (n=7), (d) coach assessment principles (n=6), (e) coach feedback principles (n=6), and (f) coaching philosophy principles (n=3). In other words, the PIUs had established 30 principles since the pilot study in 2019.

During the second meeting, I continued to describe principles so PIUs could begin to recognize, select, or develop principles for the evaluation. To accomplish this, I introduced PIUs to opposite principles, which clarify an alternative or contrary to a principle (Patton, 2018c). Then, I explained that principles can be grouped into overarching principles and sub-principles. Overarching principles provide general guidance for effectiveness, while sub-principles provide more specific guidance about how to achieve the overarching principles (Patton, 2018c). For the remainder of the meeting (about 40 minutes), we discussed the six lists of principles currently in place. I informed the PIUs that it would be beyond the scope of this study to evaluate all the principles, and I encouraged them to reduce the number of principles or select one list of principles for the evaluation. The PIUs agreed there were currently too many principles in place, and they wanted to reduce the six lists to one or two lists of overarching and sub-principles. For the last part of the meeting, I asked PIUs to put a decision-making framework in place for our group (Patton, 2018b) (see Figure 5.6). They agreed that a majority rules vote should be used to make group decisions moving forward.

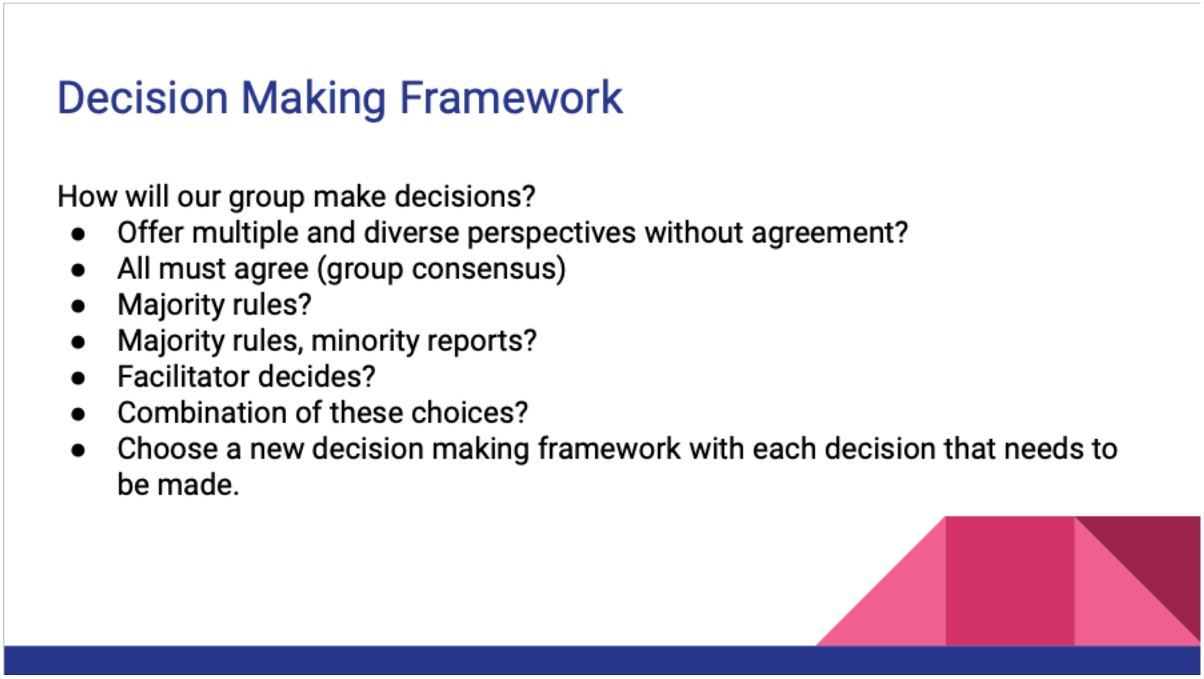

Figure 5.6: Presentation of decision-making framework options

In meetings three through five, we used the GUIDE criteria and our decision-making framework (majority rules) to review the principles in place and develop a condensed list of principles for the evaluation. In our meetings, group members generally agreed that the *US Soccer* principles should be seen as overarching principles. They also agreed there was a need for sub-principles that could guide the coach education department. However, there was less agreement on what the sub-principles should be. As we neared the end of our timeline for this phase of the study, PIUs agreed to allow me to propose a list ten sub-principles based on what I had seen and heard in our meetings and in the group reflective journal. Using our majority rules decision making framework, the group unanimously agreed to accept all ten sub-principles I proposed, but they also expressed the desire to treat them as tentative and developing. Figure 5.7 displays the agreed upon list of overarching principles and sub-principles.

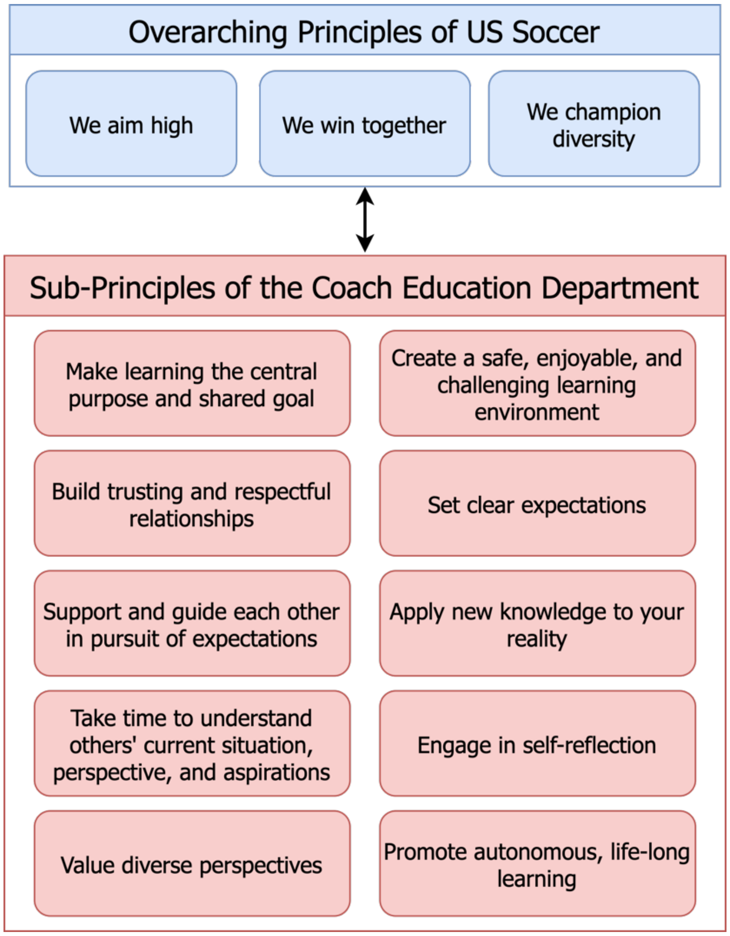

Figure 5.7: Agreed upon overarching principles of *US Soccer* and sub-principles of the coach education department

Phase Three: Design and Implement an Evaluation of Principles, Steps 5-10

With a tentative list of overarching principles and sub-principles in place, I proceeded to Phase Three of the study. The purpose of Phase Three was to work with PIUs to design and implement an evaluation of the principles. According to PIUs the overarching *US Soccer* principles were set in stone, so we decided to focus on designing an evaluation of the sub-principles for the coach education department. This phase of the study was completed through seven virtual meetings that took place over six months. Figure 5.8 displays the PowerPoint slide I used to communicate the overall process of evaluation design (Phase Three) with PIUs.

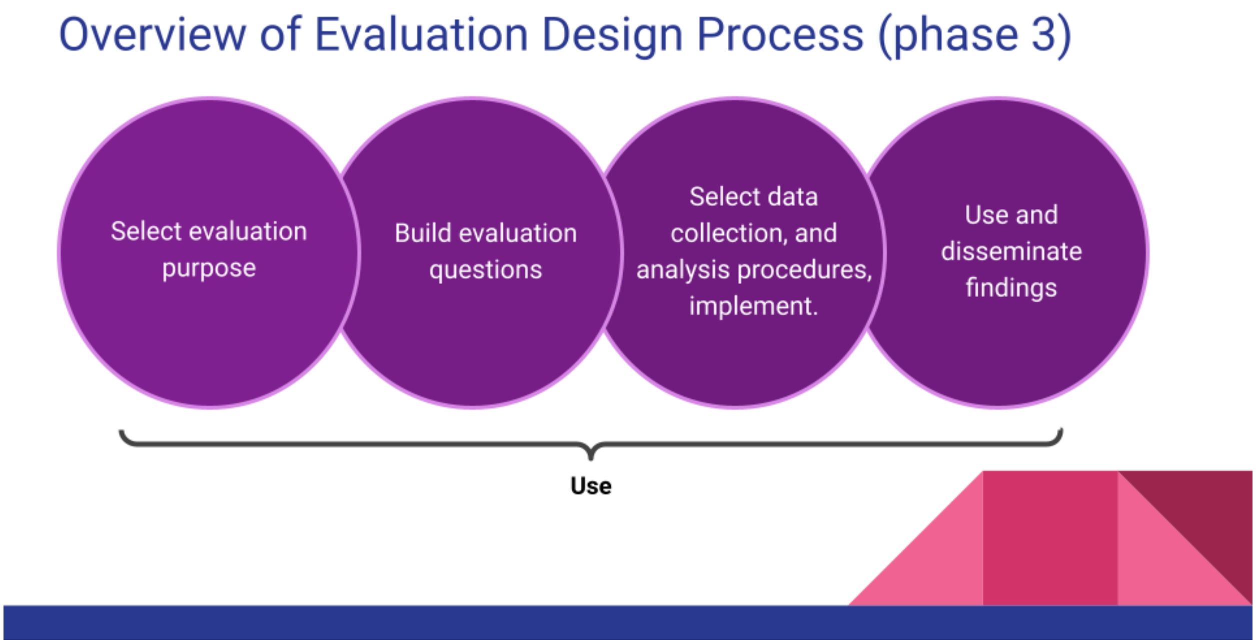

Figure 5.8: Presentation of evaluation design process

Step 5: Establish the PFE Priority Purposes

To begin the process of evaluation design, Patton (2018) recommends the evaluator work with PIUs to clarify the primary purpose of the evaluation. This helps distinguish how the PIUs intended use the evaluation findings. To accomplish this, I reviewed the five purposes of evaluation (see Figure 5.9) (Patton, 2018b), and asked PIUs which purpose(s) they would like to prioritize and why. Each PIUs shared their opinion, and we used our majority rules decision making framework to come to an agreement.

Evaluation Purpose	Example Evaluation Question
Summative: Evaluation is conducted to provide an overall judgement of value, merit or worth of principles to inform a major decision.	Are the principles effective? Should they be kept or dropped altogether? What are the long-term impacts of the principles?
Formative: Evaluation is conducted to improve the program principles.	How can the programs adherences to principles be improved? What are instructor/coach reactions to the principles? How do stakeholders feel the principles could be improved?
Accountability: Evaluation is conducted for oversight and compliance of principles.	Is the program following principles specified by US Soccer? Are resources being allocated as planned to implement the principles? Are the principles being implemented according to plan?
Developmental: Evaluation is conducted to support development and adaptation of principles.	How are principles being applied and adapted across settings/instructors? What principles are emerging with what effects? Are the principles meaningful to instructors/coaches?
Knowledge Generating: Evaluation is conducted to generate generalizable knowledge of principles.	What can be learned about the effectiveness of principles to inform other coach ed programs? How do principles align with research or expert opinion?

Figure 5.9: Presentation of purposes for evaluation. *Note*. Adapted from *Principles-Focused Evaluation*, by Patton, M., 2018. Copyright 2018 by The Guilford Press.

The PIUs agreed that a development purpose was most appropriate given the provisional nature of the sub-principles. In other words, the PIUs wanted to use the evaluation findings to support the development and adaptation of the coach education sub-principles (add, eliminate, or adjust principles). The PIUs also decided that they wanted to use the information from the evaluation to help teach others in the program about the sub-principles. These two forms of use underpinned all our discussions and decisions moving forward.

Step 6: Consider and Build-in Use as Appropriate

In step six of a PFE, the evaluator attends to process use (Patton, 2008; Weiss et al., 2008). Process use includes changes in thinking and behavior that occur among those involved in the evaluation as a result of participating in the evaluation (Patton, 2012). For example, the very process of focusing on principles increases awareness of and engagement with principles beyond what would have occurred without the evaluation (Patton, 2012, 2018c). Additionally, PIUs gain training in evaluation logic and skills as a result of undertaking a PFE. These evaluation skills can be transferred to other aspects of the program to increase organizational learning capacity. In step six, I drew attention to process use by providing examples of process use from other evaluations (Weiss et al., 2008). PIUs expressed an interest in process use and agreed to attend to how they might use their new evaluation skills beyond this evaluation.

Step 7: Develop PFE Questions

After establishing a developmental purpose and anticipated forms of use (change/adapt the list of sub-principles and teach others about the sub-principles), we began developing evaluation questions (Patton, 2018c). To accomplish this, I asked PIUs to independently construct questions about the sub-principles before our next meeting (Patton, 2008, 2018b) (see Figure 5.10). This allowed us to generate options and compare curiosities between group members. All PIUs completed the activity in our group reflective journal.

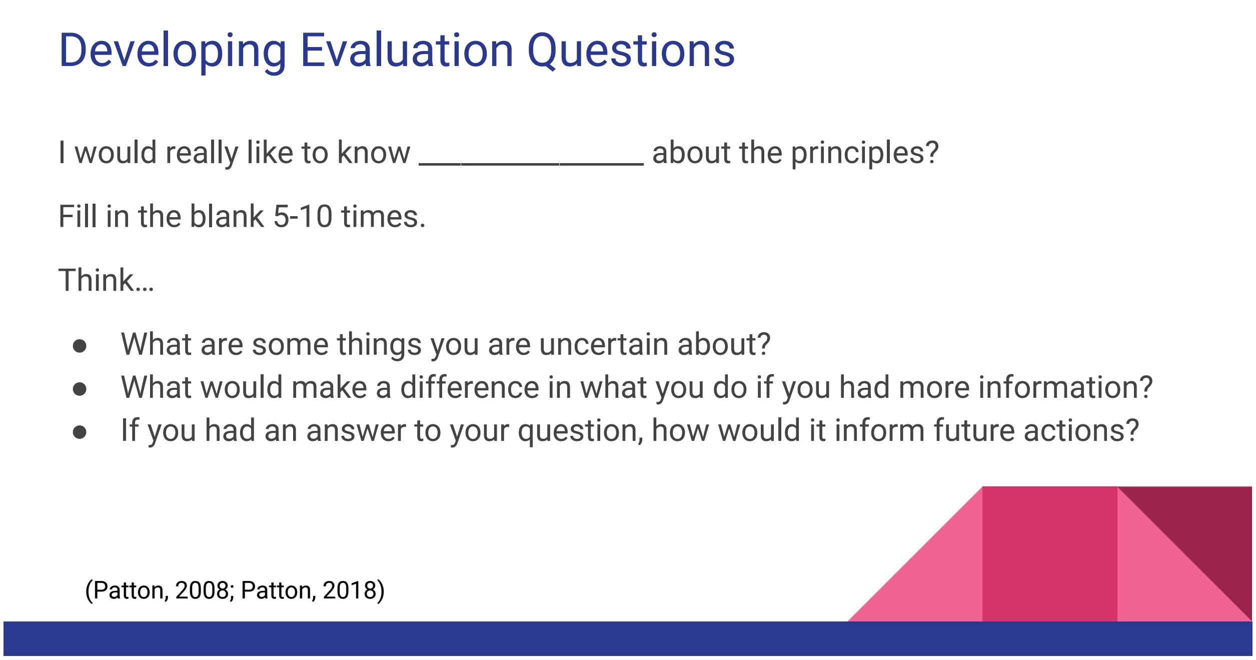

Figure 5.10: Activity for generating evaluation questions

In the next meeting, the PIUs shared their questions. Some examples of the questions they composed were, “What do the principles mean to us?”, “How do we bring the principles to life?”, “Are these principles clear, meaningful, and applicable?”, “Do the principles represent our identity and who we are?”, and “What does it look like to carry out the principles?”. I notified PIUs that our next task was to identify one or two questions the evaluation would focus on. To help them prioritize and refine questions, I prompted them to think about their purpose (developmental) and desired forms of use (develop/adapt the principles and teach others about the principles). PIUs struggled to select and agree upon evaluation questions, but they did express a personal responsibility to first understand what the sub-principles meant to them – this group of five PIUs. This helped focus our PFE questions on PIUs as the participants of the evaluation. With our deadline for this portion of the study fast approaching, I proposed two questions based on what I had heard in our conversations. Using our decision-making framework, all five PIUs voted and accepted the two evaluation questions I proposed:

1. Evaluation Question One: How are sub-principles being applied and adapted by PIUs?
2. Evaluation Questions Two: Which sub-principles are meaningful to PIUs?

Step 8: Negotiate Appropriate Methods to Generate Credible Findings and Intended Use by PIUs

With an agreed upon purpose, forms of use, and evaluation questions in place, I next helped the PIUs consider and select data collection methods. To accomplish this, I composed a menu of three data collection methods for PIUs to select from including: (a) reflective journals, (b) observations, and (c) interviews. All data collection methods presented focused on PIUs as the participants, since they expressed a desire and responsibility to evaluate the sub-principles among their group in previous meetings. The menu of options was also generated based on; (a) the evaluation questions, (b) the timeline for data collection, (c) my training as a researcher and evaluator.

To help PIUs select from the three data collection methods, I presented five criteria (Patton, 2018b) (see Figure 5.11). PIUs were invited to offer additional criteria, but no additions were made.

Next, I described the three data collection methods, along with some strengths and limitations of each method (see Figures 5.12, 5.13, and 5.14). We discussed each method based on the criteria. I also briefly discussed alternative methods (surveys and questionnaires) and participants (coaches, coach educators) for them to consider.

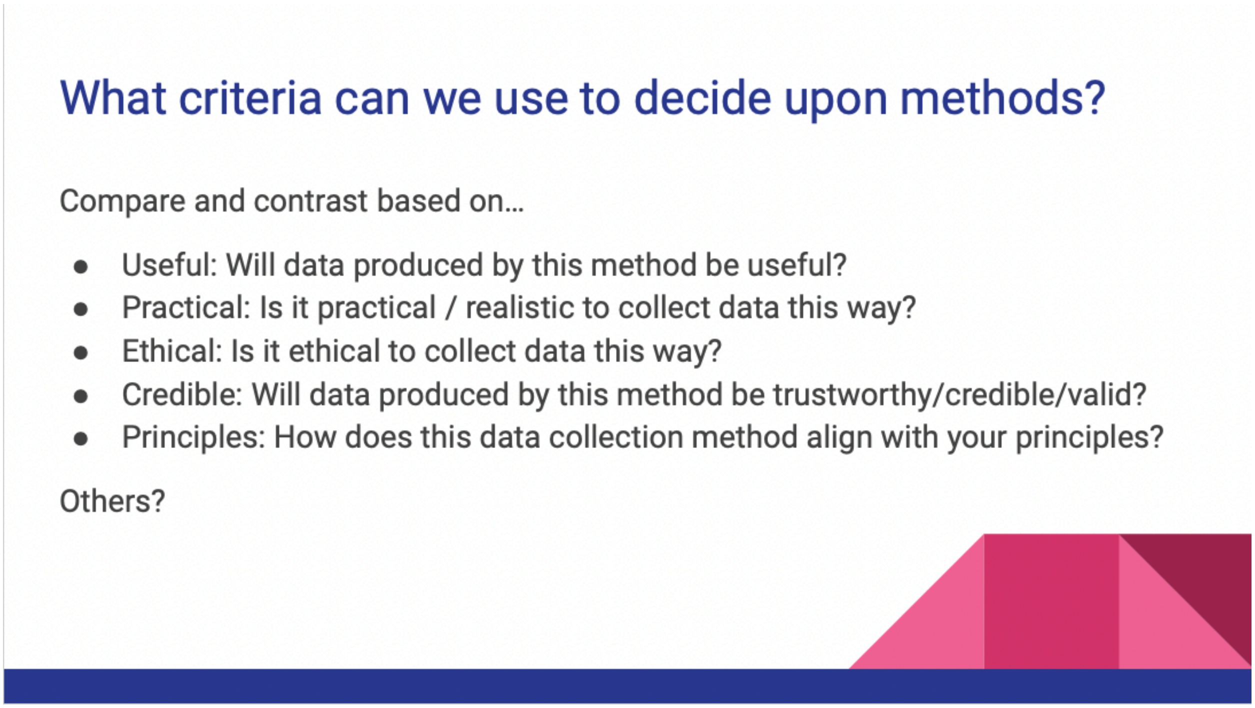

Figure 5.11: Presentation of criteria for selecting data collection methods

Reflective Journal

Description: You will be given a prompt, asking you to reflect on how you apply principles in you role with US Soccer.

Strengths

- Captures principles overtime and in different contexts (admin/instructor).
- Flexible time commitment.
- Aligns with principle of "engage in self-reflection".
- Captures individual interpretations.

Limitations

- Requires time and accountability.
- No guarantee of data quality (richness) and quantity.
- Difficult to capture emerging principles?
- Can be difficult for evaluator to interpret. No probing.

Figure 5.12: Presentation of strengths and weaknesses of reflective journaling

Observation

Description: Evaluator will observe PIUs and take field notes based on principles.

Strengths

- Outsider interpretation
- Consistency across principles application.
- Captures complex contextual features (environment/others).
- Minimal time commitment.
- Could detect emerging principles.

Limitations

- Outsider interpretation (do you really care what I think?)
- Only captures visible behaviors, not thoughts/emotions.
- Behaviors may change as a result of "surveillance"
- I can't be there (virtual).
- Only captures certain contexts/people.

Figure 5.13: Presentation of strengths and weaknesses of observations

Interviews

Description: Evaluator will design an interview guide which asks working group members questions about how they apply principles in their job.

Strengths

- Captures individual interpretations.
- Provides an opportunity to probe for deeper understanding.
- Tailor questions/discussion to the individual.
- Flexible time commitment.

Limitations

- May not be able to recall all situations in the moment.
- Zoom fatigue.
- May be guarded, or report only the "good".
- Time commitment.

Figure 5.14: Presentation of strengths and weaknesses of interviews

After discussing the data collection options, PIUs began to inquire about the design of the evaluation, or the order in which the methods could be carried out. We discussed how different methods could complement one another. After meeting seven, I sent a follow-up email, asking PIUs to; (a) rank the three data collection methods based on the criteria (rank 1 = most useful, practical, ethical, credible, and principled; rank 3 = least useful, practical, ethical, credible, and principled), and (b) specify their preferred design, or order in which the methods should be carried out.

All PIUs responded in our group reflective journal. Three of the five PIUs selected reflective journal followed by interview. One PIU selected observation followed by interview, and the other PIU selected an interview, journal, interview design. Using our decision-making framework (majority rules), the PIUs agreed the journal followed by an interview was the preferred design.

Before proceeding with data collection, Patton (2012) recommends the evaluator work with PIUs to pilot the methods and generate mock data. Working through these scenarios prior to data collection helps set realistic expectation about what the findings will look like and ensures the evaluation will produce information that can be used by PIUs (Patton, 2012). To generate mock data, I asked the PIUs to spend ten minutes reflecting on things they had done that day, and how (or if) the sub-principles were applied in those situations (see Figure 5.15). Two PIUs volunteered to share how they felt the sub-principles had been carried out in their role with *US Soccer*. After they shared their stories, we discussed how their responses could be expanded upon in the follow up interview. I asked PIUs if the information they shared would help answer the evaluation questions and if this mock data would be useful for adapting the list of sub-principles or teaching others about the sub-principles (desired forms of use). All group members agreed the reflective journal followed by an interview would help answer the evaluation questions and produce useful information.

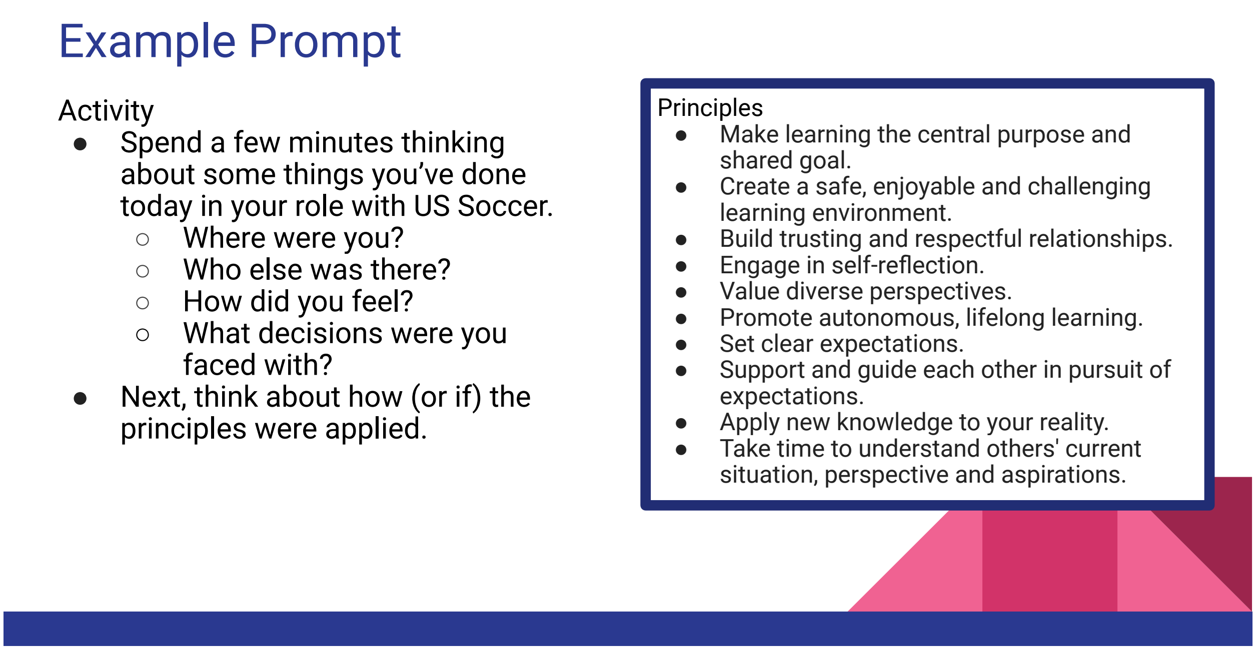

Figure 5.15: Activity used to generate mock data

Because journal-interview methods were not specified in the original IRB or the original consent form, I composed a new participant consent letter to inform PIUs of their rights (see Appendix D). The university did not require submission of a new IRB since the participants remained consistent throughout the evaluation. However, the original IRB was modified to include the new data collection procedures and consent form.

Next, I composed the reflective journal prompt based on journal-interview methodology literature (Day & Thatcher, 2009; Elliott, 1997; Filep et al., 2018; Jacelon & Imperio, 2005; Kenten, 2010). The final journal prompt, which can be found in Appendix E, was broken down into three sections. The first section described the journal purpose, directions, PIU confidentiality and privacy rights, and evaluator contact information. The second section of the journal prompt displayed the ten sub-principles and a series of questions PIUs could use to record and reflect on their daily experiences. Figure 5.16 displays the second section of the journal prompt.

Daily Prompt

- First, think about some things you've done or seen today in your role with US Soccer. These may be regular everyday experiences, or significant, memorable events. Consider the following questions:
    - Where were you?
    - Who else was there?
    - What were you doing?
    - What did you recognize?
    - What physical or emotional reactions did you have when this moment occurred?
- Next, review the list of principles below and think about how (or if) the principles were applied in your daily experiences. Consider:
    - Which principle(s) are represented in your experience?
    - How well this experience demonstrates an application of the principles?
    - If there any experiences where you or someone else failed to apply the principles, or applied a contrary/opposite principle?
    - What circumstances helped you (or others) apply the principles?
    - What circumstances prevented you (or others) from applying the principles?
- Record and reflect on your daily experience using the questions above. You do not need to answer all the questions. You are free to use any format you wish including written logs, video/audio logs, poems, photos, drawings, hyperlinks, or diagrams, for example.
- In your journal entry, please include:
    - The date the journal entry took place.
    - The principles that are expressed in your experience.

Figure 5.16: Second section of journal prompt for PIUs

The third section of the prompt listed four open ended questions that PIUs completed at the end of the two-weeks of journaling. These questions were designed to prepare the PIUs and myself for the follow-up interview. The questions were: (1) Select one or two events from your journal that you feel improved your understanding of the sub-principles. We will discuss these in more depth in the one-on-one follow-up interview, (2) Explain which sub-principles are most meaningful to you, (3) Explain which sub-principles are least meaningful to you (even if they have meaning, but not as much as others), (4) Describe how keeping a journal changed your view of the sub-principles?

Before commencing data collection, I met with PIUs to walk them through the participant consent letter and the reflective journal prompt. We negotiated the specific procedures such as how many journal entries should be required, the format of journal entries, and the timeline for data collection. I shared recommendations from the literature, and PIUs made group decision based on our majority rules decisions making framework. The PIUs agreed to submit a minimum of five entries over a two-week period. They decided journal entries could be composed in a variety of formats including writing, video or audio recordings, poems, photos, drawings, hyperlinks, collages, or diagrams, for example. PIUs agreed that they would upload their journal entries into a private Google Drive folder (one for each PIU), and they could upload entries on a rolling basis, or at all at once at the end of the two week-period. Group members agreed interviews should take place through a video-conferencing software (Zoom) and last approximately one hour. Finally, PIUs helped select a time period that would be ideal for them to keep journal entries and participate in individual interviews (see Figure 5.17). All five PIUs volunteered to participant in journal-interview data collection.

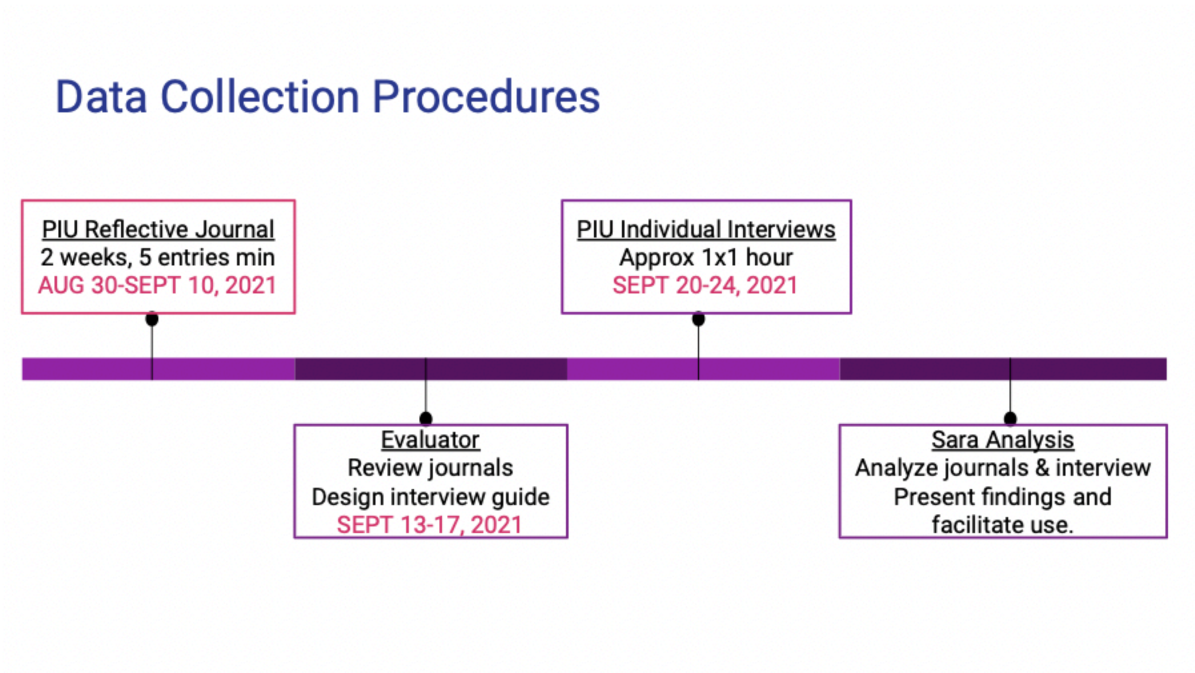

Figure 5.17: Presentation of data collection procedures and timeline

Step 9: Implement Evaluation Design, Data Collection, and Analysis

In step 9, I carried out the agreed upon evaluation design (Patton, 2018c). To begin, PIUs uploaded their journal entries to their private Google Drive folder. I used their journal entries to construct an interview guide for each participant (see Appendix F for an example interview guide). I began the interviews with a casual greeting, then moved into informing the PIUs of their rights. After they agreed to participate, I asked them about their role in the organization and other background information. For example, I asked, "Can you tell me a little about some of the tasks your currently responsible for in your role at US Soccer?" and "Would you say your two-weeks of journaling is a good representation of a typical week in your role at US Soccer?" Next, I asked PIUs to expand upon the events they highlighted in the in their post-journal reflective questions. I asked questions like, "Can you start by give me some background on this situation?" and "How did the principles guide your thinking or behaviors in this experience?" Near the end of the interview, I asked PIUs which sub-principles were most and least meaningful and why, I also asked them if they would make any changes or adaptations to the list of sub-principles and, if so, why. The interviews took place over a video-conferencing platform. We regularly referred to their journal and post-journal reflection questions throughout the interview to recall events and opinions. All five PIUs completed the reflective journals, post-journal reflection questions, and the interview. Table 5.2 provides a summary of the data collected from each PIU.

Table 5.2: Data collected from each participant

Participant (pseudonym)	**Journal Entries**	**Post-journal reflection**	**Interview**
Seely	Five written journal entries (1,619 words)	728 words	57 minutes (10,719 words, or 16 pages of single-spaced text)
Billings	Five written journal entries (1,524 words)	518 words	58 minutes (8,765 words, or 14 pages of single-spaced text)
Polson	Eight written journal entries (1,230 words)	320 words	54 minutes (6,228 words, or 10 pages of single-spaced text)
Dillon	Four written journal entries (723 words)	367 words	50 minutes (7,984 words or 12 pages of single-spaced text)
Cooke	Seven video log journal entries (3-10 minutes each)	468 words	55 minutes (9,735 words or 15 pages of single-spaced text)

Next, I uploaded the data to Nvivo 11 for analysis. Patton (2018c) recommends the evaluator analyze and organize the data in a format that allows PIUs to easily access, interpret, and apply the findings. Initially, I tried using categorical thinking (thematic analysis) to look for examples of each principle in the journals and interviews. For example, I looked for instances when PIUs applied and adapted the principle “set clear expectations”. However, I soon realized the principles were highly interconnected and linked to events, actors, and moments in time. In addition, it was difficult for me to find concrete examples of some principles. To address these challenges, I turned to narrative thinking (Freeman, 2017), which allowed me to create one or two short stories for each participant based on the events and principles they described in their journals and interviews. This was an especially lucrative approach to analysis because the data gathered in the journals and interviews was centered around events that took place in the everyday lives of the PIUs and how they used the principles to navigate these events.

A narrative is "a representation of a causally related series of events" (Richardson, 2000, p. 170). The primary strength of narrative inquiry is its familiarity of its form (Freeman, 2017). Everyday human talk (stories) provides a common language through which researchers and practitioners can engage in dialogue (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), making it an ideal for translating the findings to PIUs. To create the short stories, I looked for "actual connections between things, rather than similarities and differences" (Maxwell & Miller, 2008, p. 462). As I reviewed the data, I challenged myself to see how events or actions connected across time and space. Rather than line-by-line coding, I looked to "establish the names of the actors, the contexts where actions and events occurred, the storylines that connect, the gaps that exist, the tensions that arise, and the tone of the narrator" (Butler-Kisber, 2018, p. 81). I extracted data from the interviews and journals into a word document to create short stories that portrayed the events PIUs described. Outside of a few transition words or sentences, all data expressed in the stories represent statements that were said or written by PIUs.

Patton (2018c) recommends the evaluator keep PIUs up to date on how the data analysis is unfolding. To accomplish this, I sent PIUs a short video (four minutes) to describe narrative analysis and explain why I felt this approach was appropriate for our evaluation questions and forms of use.

In total, seven short stories were created (one or two for each PIU). Each PIU was asked to review their short stories and check for accuracy. Next, they were asked to list the sub-principles they felt were expressed in the stories. This was an important step towards involving them in interpretation of the findings. All PIUs completed a review of their stories and the listing of the sub-principles expressed in the stories. One PIU asked me to make small changes to a couple sentences in a story. These cuts had little impact on the overall story. The seven short stories are presented in the next chapter of this dissertation.

Step 10: Report Findings and Follow-up with PIUs to Assess and Enhance Use.

After PIUs reviewed their personal stories and confirmed they were an accurate representation of the events they described, I compiled all seven short stories into one document, which was shared with all five PIUs. In an email to PIUs, I asked them to review all seven stories and consider how the stories might help us answer the two evaluation questions (How are the sub-principles being applied and adapted by PIUs? Which sub-principles are meaningful to PIUs?). I also asked them to brainstorm actions they might take given their answers to the evaluation questions (Patton, 2018c) (see Figure 5.18). Three of the five PIUs shared their personal interpretations of the stories in relation to evaluation questions and potential forms of use. These interpretations were gathered in our group reflective journal.

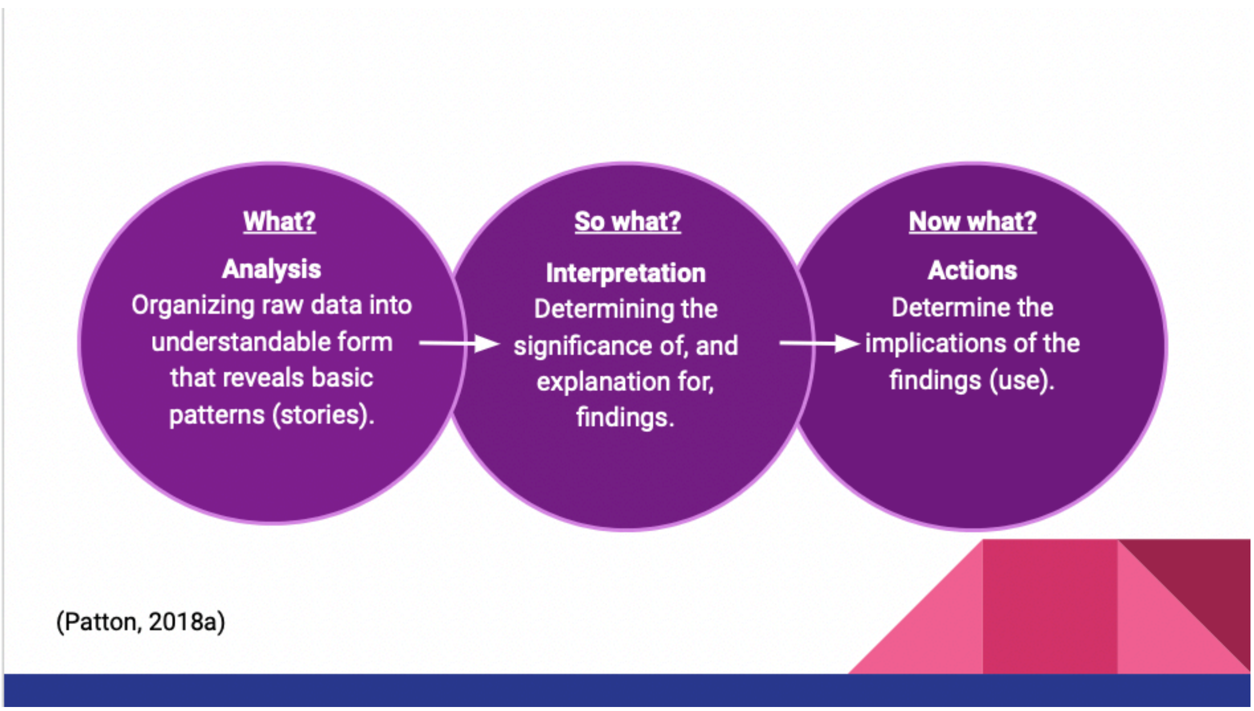

Figure 5.18: Presentation of data interpretation and use process

Next, I hosted three, hour-long virtual meetings with PIUs to discuss the stories in relation to the evaluation questions and enhance use of findings. At this point in the evaluation, there was a decline in engagement from PIUs. Only two of the five PIUs attended the final three meetings. While these members remained committed to the evaluation, they were noticeably hesitant to make decisions without input from other group members. One explanation for the drop-off in participation was the release of the COVID-19 vaccine, which allowed *US Soccer* to begin running coach education courses again. Therefore, PIUs had less time to commit to the evaluation. Nevertheless, I hosted the final three meetings and the two remaining PIUs and myself took time to interpret the data to answer evaluation questions and decide upon forms of use. Our interpretations and forms of use are shared in the next chapter of this dissertation.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the principles-focused evaluation (PFE). I begin by providing the seven short stories that I created and shared with the primary intended users (PIUs). The short stories are based on the events that PIUs captured in their journal entries and later expanded upon in their follow-up interviews. Following the presentation of the stories, I discuss our interpretations in relation to each of the evaluation questions:

1. How are sub-principles being applied and adapted by PIUs?
2. Which sub-principles are meaningful to PIUs?

The chapter concludes by discussing the different forms of use that arose as a result of the evaluation. The findings provided in this chapter were a product of collaborative discussions that took place between the PIUs and I during our last three meetings together (Phase Three, step 10).

Short Stories

This section of the chapter presents the seven short stories I created and shared with PIUs. The short stories are based on the events that PIUs captured in their journal entries and later expanded upon in their follow-up interviews. In total, I created seven short stories (one or two for each PIU). Each story elucidates a single PIUs interpretation, application, and adaptation of the sub-principles given that particular situation or event. Together, the seven stories provide examples of how the principles were applied across a range of settings, tasks, and program stakeholders. Some sub-principles are present in nearly every story, while other sub-principles more obscure and less prevalent across stories.

Each PIU was asked to review their short story, check it for accuracy, and list the sub-principles they felt were expressed in their story. All PIUs completed the review process. The list of sub-principles they provided is available after each short story. In some cases, the sub-principles they listed are clearly expressed and easily identifiable. However, in other cases, it may be more difficult for the reader to find connections between the story and principles listed by the PIU. Nevertheless, an important element of PFE is inclusion of PIUs in the interpretation of data (Patton, 2018c). Therefore, the list of sub-principles the PIU provided is available after each story. Notably, some PIUs used negative signs to denote the sub-principles that were not adhered to in the stories but were still important to guiding their thoughts and behaviors. The stories are told from a first-person point of view. Pseudonyms are used throughout the stories to protect PIU privacy and confidentiality. I begin with two short stories from Seely.

Seely, Story #1: NWSL Player

One thing that I'm heavily involved in is answering what we call Salesforce, or general email support. We get hundreds of emails weekly about courses. I take a pretty big role in trying to respond to those. This week, I was connected with a former NWSL (National Women's Soccer League) player who had taken a course with us in the past. She told me how she wanted to become a coach. She said she was tired of seeing all the controversies and coach abuse cases in the league, and that she really wanted to help make a change by becoming a coach. I felt connected to what she was saying because I've helped facilitate three NWSL courses in the past, and I'm personally committed to helping solve some of these problems taking place in women's soccer. In fact, I have my players association shirt on right now. Overall, I was super excited about being able to set her up for her coaching journey.

After exchanging a few emails, we arranged an introductory call so I could share some information about our coaching education courses. First and foremost, I just wanted to kind of build that relationship with her. It was about listening to what she wanted to do, and then translating that to an educational perspective, answering her questions and letting her know what her educational journey might look like. Ultimately, I wanted to help prepare her for the actual application process and what the expectations are there. I definitely had to say, "Even if you do all these things, you may not get into the course because it's a competitive application process.” It was important for me to just kind of set up those expectations and be clear. I also let her know that I would be here to help her through the next application window if she didn’t get in.

Since that time, we’ve exchanged a couple different emails. I connected her with the Players Association because she had a few questions to see if she could get some financial assistance. I also connected her with the NWSL, to get her some documentation for her playing experience. I think she appreciated that for sure. Now she’s getting ready to apply to the “B” level course. I feel like she came away from the situation excited about her next steps, and I felt like I had fulfilled my duty as an administrator.

Sub-Principles Applied and Adapted:

- Take time to understand others' current situation, perspective, and aspirations.
- Build trusting and respectful relationships.
- Set clear expectations.

Seely, Story #2: Referee Meeting

This afternoon I helped facilitate a webinar for our student coaches who are currently taking the “A” level course. So that's like 120-130 people across all the “A” courses we have going on right now. We usually have guest speakers come in for these meetings. On this day, two members of our referee team in Chicago were presenting some changes to Laws of the Game. They did this presentation last year, and it was a really good presentation - a lot of good interactions.

During the presentation, they were showing some clips and asking for opinions on what the call should have been. Unfortunately, some of the student coaches were making unprofessional comments in the chat, being very negative and derogatory. It's perfectly valid to have your own opinion, but there's also professionalism in how you share your opinion. These people were just being rude. They certainly were not valuing diverse perspectives. These referees have over 30 years of experience at the professional and international level, so they obviously know what they're talking about. It was extremely frustrating to watch those comments come in because these are guests that are taking time out of their day to share their knowledge with us. I felt embarrassed on behalf of our department.

I don't think the presenters saw the comments, but I apologized to them later anyway. Looking back, I wish I would have taken a bigger role in addressing those comments while they were happening because I don't think it created a safe, enjoyable, and challenging learning environment. As soon as one person puts those comments in the chat, people feed off of them. It's honestly a distraction because people just start reading through the negative comments instead of focusing on the presentation. Later, I discussed it with a colleague who was also there. We said it's a shame we would even have to address that, but now we know we obviously have to.

Sub-Principles Applied and Adapted:

- [-] Value diverse perspectives.
- [-] Create a safe, enjoyable, and challenging learning environment.
- Engage in self-reflection.

Billings, Story #3: Presenting the Coach Educator Development Plan

Cooke and I are responsible for developing the new Coach Educator Education and Development Plan. This project is about recruiting and training coach educators. Everyone in the coach education department agrees that we need more educators, we need better educators, and we need a more diverse pool of educators. So, Cooke and I have spent a lot of hours planning out what this educator pathway will look like and how we can create the best possible learning experience.

We met with the rest of the coach education staff in Kansas City this week to present the project and begin planning for the launch of the coach educator courses. In our room, we had three members of the administrative team. It was good to have their perspective because it's good to understand consequences from the administrative side. We see things through our lens as educators, but we have blind spots. They can open those blind spots for us.

The starting point for Cooke and I was to explain how the Coach Educator Plan is going to look. There are multiple steps within the plan, so we laid out those steps to see if there were any questions. Immediately, we noticed there was no clarity about what happens within the different steps. From the administrative side, it was a little bit more of seeing problems and issues. What if this happens? Is this doable? What does this mean for me? I was listening to the feedback, and I took notes about how we could improve the process. These questions were very challenging, because we've gone through a long thought process, spent a lot of hours, and then people started asking questions that are obvious to me, but not for them. Many of the questions were on very small details. There were times when we had to say, “We don’t have all the answers right now.” If I were to put myself in their seat, I can imagine how I might also have a ton of questions that I need answered before I can move on in the project.

Being patient was very challenging in this moment because we want to launch pretty soon. However, I think we managed to allow everyone to share their thoughts - to actually listen to them and respond in a respectful way. We know things are not personal. We all really like each other. If somebody says something it’s not because of the person, it’s because of the project. We have to be critical and ask difficult questions. I really think it was a safe and challenging environment, but it wasn't always enjoyable for me because my understanding was that we would make more progress in those three days. It took us a full day to get past the details.

Reflecting back, I think we could have done better in setting clear expectations. Saying, “This is the aim for the meeting. This is what we want to get out of the meeting. We want to get the main picture across, and we're not going to discuss very small details.” If we were clearer on that at the front end, it might have helped people stay within that and not stray away. Then it's also easier for us to say, “Okay, I'm not going to answer that because that's not connected to what we want to get across today.” I think that could help us.

Sub-Principles Applied and Adapted:

- Value diverse perspectives
- Take time to understand other’s current situation, perspective, and aspirations.
- [-] Create a safe, enjoyable, and challenging learning environment.
- Build trusting and respectful relationships.
- Support and guide each other in pursuit of expectations.
- Engage in self-reflection.
- Set clear expectations.

Polson, Story #4: Keeping a Journal and Reflecting on Principles

For me, keeping a journal helps me to build the next day, to reflect on what I did and make sure it aligns with who I think I am. The principles are very, very important in this because they help me to see if there is a gap between what I believe in and what I really do. There is always a gap, but tomorrow we have an opportunity to be better than today. To keep a journal, I take notes during the day, but I really like to reflect at night after work because I usually have less emotions. When I write things down it helps me to think and process.

The purpose of keeping a journal is to prepare me for the next steps. For example, I was meeting with a colleague, and I could see they were very disapproving of everything and not really open to feedback. I knew I wouldn’t get much from this situation because they were speaking with their emotions. I tried to consider, ‘What’s causing this feeling? Does the situation have another perspective? Can I do anything to make it better?’ I didn’t want to disconnect with the person in front of me, so I started writing things down, collecting information that will help me to engage with this person from a different perspective next time. The principles helped me to pause, step back, and not say something stupid that would destroy our trust.

In every situation we have emotions. The principles help me to be more aware of the consequences behind next steps. So, if I do that, what will happen? If I say that, what will happen? I know I could say something that would create deep, deep scars but, I would regret it. We’ve all done this as a coach. After a game, you are in the dressing room, and you're disappointed, and you say something stupid. Then, just when you’re saying it, ‘Aw shit!’ And then you know it's broken. You can do whatever you want after that, but it's done. So, again, the principles prevent me from making this type of - not mistake. I don't do mistakes, but they help me to make an informed decision based on the situation, not just my emotions.

I don’t think there is a hierarchy to the principles. The situation helps you create an order of importance. At the beginning of this study, I was thinking, ‘Okay, this one should be with this one, or we can combine these two.’ This is easy to say when you’re just looking at the principles without a specific situation, but during the day, when I have these principles close to me, I can see they all have a role to play in different situations. I use all of them in some way throughout the week.

I noticed there was a difference between those of us who kept a journal on the principles and others. We had this solid foundation to guide us during the day. After dinner, we discussed how we were reflecting. At night, we all knew we would be thinking about what happened that day and how we used the principles. We were very much aligned, and I could see we were sharing something special together. When I hear us speaking about the principles, I feel confident because it's not about me. We are guided by the same things and there is something bigger than us. I really believe in that.

Now, the problem is we have some people who are aware of the principles and trying to implement them, and others who are not. Some of this is because not everyone participated in this project, but some of it is because everyone is so busy. We don’t often pause. We just move from one thing to the other without considering why. How can we go beyond this study and create habits? At some point we won't even need to think about the principles, we will just do them. Like on the field, we will pass the ball into space without checking to see if the outside back is running. They will! We will because we have the why beyond the what.

Sub-Principles Applied and Adapted:

- Make learning the central purpose and shared goal.
- Create a safe, enjoyable, and challenging learning environment.
- Build trusting and respectful relationships.
- Engage in self-reflection.
- Value diverse perspectives.
- Promote autonomous, lifelong learning.
- Set clear expectations.
- Support and guide each other in pursuit of expectations.
- Apply new knowledge to your reality.
- Take time to understand others' current situation, perspective, and aspirations.

Dillon, Story #5: Questions, Questions, Questions

This week, all the full-time coach education staff members met up in Kansas City for our first face-to-face staff meetings in months. I was genuinely looking forward to this meeting, as I believed we had a solid plan in place to be productive. During the meeting, I felt a general togetherness from all. It was nice to physically interact again. We all really enjoy working together, and we have a great appreciation for what we do.

For the last two days of meetings, we split into two small groups. Our group was working on the new Coach Educator Plan. It's a really important project. Expectations are high from the staff and leadership to be productive with fewer resources. We have a timeline for this project, so we needed to make some decisions, or at least some concrete action steps. I came into the project not knowing a tremendous amount about it, but my questions really started to formulate while Cooke and Billings were presenting. My questions and reactions were meant to challenge them, but I had a feeling that I was not creating a healthy environment for the people leading the project or the staff in the room. I just kept asking, asking, asking – over and over again because I wasn't getting answers.

I got to the point where I knew my questions weren't being helpful anymore. I felt stuck in asking questions, sharing opinions, but not deciding on a direction, even when I knew we needed to move on. You could say it was a challenging environment, but I don't know if it was safe or enjoyable. You could say there were relationships there, but I don't know if they were always trusting relationships. I felt like there was one perspective, and then there was another perspective, and they just kept going without ever colliding together. I could see Cooke and Billings were not feeling supported. It is quite easy to find fault in a presentation or a project that you are not directly a part of. The work they did was very good and deserved more respect, but still to this day I have some questions to which I don't have answers.

The journal helped me intentionally think about the principles during that week in Kansas City. I had to ask myself, "Okay, did I live out these principles?" As I looked back on the principles and my actions, I realized it would have been better to share some of my thoughts one-on-one with Cooke and Billings. If I'm being reflective, I certainly could have done a better job to prepare for their presentation, maybe ask some questions before the meeting, or have a pre-meeting call to better understand the project. It also would have helped me if their expectations were a little bit clearer. To be fair, they did have expectations, but they weren't clear. It could have been, "This is what we've got to do. We're walking out of here with these things discussed and these things finalized." Then, if we are not hitting those things, we could have taken the opportunity to pause and say, "Hey, we're off track here. We need to get to this point. This is why we're all together." I think that goes for everyone, including myself and my questions. So yeah, I think that was a missed opportunity.

If I'm looking back at the meeting from purely an interaction with colleagues' standpoint, I would say it was a pretty good use of our time. If I'm looking at it from, did I live out the principles, I still need some time to live my day based on the principles. I understand them, I value them, but we are so day to day right now that we just need to get things done. There's just so much going on. People can't always pause and self-reflect, for example. They get overwhelmed and that's not good for anyone's mental health.

Sub-Principles Applied and Adapted:

- [-] Create a safe, enjoyable, and challenging learning environment.
- [-] Build trusting and respectful relationships.
- Engage in self-reflection.
- Value diverse perspectives.
- [-] Set clear expectations.
- [-] Support and guide each other in pursuit of expectations.
- Take time to understand others' current situation, perspective, and aspirations.

Cooke, Story #6: In-person Staff Meeting

About seven months ago, I started working with Billings on the Coach Educator and Education Development Plan. He and I have developed a really good relationship. We've spent so much time with each other that I know what he's thinking, and he knows what I'm thinking. We began the project by talking with experts and reading lots of research on coach educator development. I have lots of experience in this area because I've overseen our other coach educator license the past few years. We put together a very detailed plan; everything from policies and procedures to CEUs. When we got to Kansas City for our in-person staff meeting, we combined with our administrative team. As Billings and I were explaining the project to them, it became apparent that they didn't have a good grasp on things, so there was some catching up to do.

In the Coach Educator Plan there are four phases, and we really only wanted to focus on the educating phase. Well, our administrative team kind of got off track a little bit. They started looking at some of the other phases like professional development and continuing education units. That's why setting clear expectations was something I tried to do for us. I was able to jump in sometimes to try to bring us back. I really felt like we had a lot of patience for them. We took time to explain and re-explain. We really wanted to value their diverse perspective, but my reflection on those meetings was that we wasted energy in our conversations, spinning wheels, talking about things that were not that important. They were asking a lot of *why* questions like, "Why did you do things this way?" I didn't feel like they understood the hundreds of hours of work that we put into it. It's not our role to come in and say, this is the budget, and it's not their role to tell us how to design the learning experience. We need to have these difficult conversations, but it shouldn't be personal. We should make learning the central focus and shared goal.

The principles provided a window through which I could view my own behaviors and actions - to look within first, before blaming others. For instance, if I was really frustrated with someone, the principles gave me a chance to say, "Hey, you know what, I value diverse perspectives. Let's think about how this person is thinking. How can I connect with them and understand where they're coming from?" That window was a step between emotions and behaviors. The principles helped provide a filter to align my behavior with our beliefs.

This was my first in-person staff meeting in over a year and a half. It was good to be back and see everyone. I can honestly say that our team of coach education staff strove to achieve the principles. I saw them trying. I just didn't always see the results. There were times when I could see that we all really believe in this principle, but there were other times when it was like, wow, we clearly missed this one, or we're not aware of it. One thing that I keep coming back to is we’re all just so busy. We go from meeting to meeting to meeting. We get right into things without understanding where we're planning to go. Like, “Let's hop in the car, and let's go on a trip!” If someone asked us, “Where are you going?” We’d say, “Who cares! Let's go!” So, I think we need another principle that addresses self-care and well-being. I just don’t see how we can do our best at the principles if we’re not in a good spot ourselves.

Sub-Principles Applied and Adapted:

- Build trusting and respectful relationships.
- Set clear expectations.
- Value diverse perspectives.
- Take time to understand others' current situation, perspective, and aspirations.
- Make learning the central purpose and shared goal.
- Create a safe, enjoyable, and challenging learning environment.
- Engage in self-reflection.

Cooke, Story #7: Social Media Post

Our US Men’s national team was playing in Nashville tonight. We were down 1-0 at halftime. I begrudgingly went on social media to look for the reaction. I was disappointed to see that some of our licensed coach educators were posting negative comments about the players and coaching staff. It was heartbreaking to be honest. These are people who represent *US Soccer*. They were criticizing the coach and players, calling them practice dummies and cones. It was just really degrading. I can understand how people are frustrated, but they weren’t in the locker-room. They don’t know the context. If you’re saying the types of things that I saw, you’re not making learning the central purpose and shared goal. You could instead talk about how to break down a low block, or how to create changes from wide positions or whatever, but when you’re just criticizing it’s not about learning.

After seeing a lot of these comments, I thought it would be a good time to remind everyone who we are and what we believe in – that what we do is bigger than ourselves. After reflecting and talking with my colleague, I decided to make my own social media post to point out to our coach educators that their words matter. Without calling people out individually, I tried to use my social media platform to help people autocorrect. Sometimes, if a teammate steps out of line, they just need a gentle reminder to come back. No one is perfect, myself especially, but I wanted to remind them that they are influencers. I tried to do that in a way that would build trusting and respectful relationships, while also setting clear expectations.

Sub-Principles Applied and Adapted:

- [-] Take time to understand others' current situation, perspective, and aspirations.
- [-] Make learning the central purpose and shared goal.
- Engage in self-reflection.
- Set clear expectations.
- Support and guide each other in pursuit of expectations.
- Build trusting and respectful relationships.

Evaluation Questions

The PIUs and I reviewed the short stories and used them to help answer the two evaluation questions. Our interpretations occurred over three virtual meetings that I facilitated. Two of the five PIUs attended these three meetings. Our interpretations of the data in relation to each evaluation question is provided below. Data from both the short stories, along with comments that were made from PIUs during our meetings are provided to answer evaluation questions.

Evaluation Question One

Evaluation question one asked, “How are the sub-principles being applied and adapted by PIUs?” The stories themselves provide a detailed answer to this question, but there are a number of characteristics across the stories the PIUs and I noted during our interpretations. First, some PIUs used the sub-principles to evaluate and guide their own behaviors, while others used them to evaluate the behaviors of those around them. For example, in his short story, Billings said, “I think I could have done better in setting clear expectations [during the presentation]” and Cooke claimed, “The principles helped me to look within first, before blaming others.” Dillon, on the other hand, used the principle “set clear expectations” to evaluate the presentation of Cooke and Billings. He said, “It would have helped me if their expectations were a little bit clearer.” There are a number of other examples in the stories that show the principle being applied inward at self and outward at others. Therefore, the sub-principles were applied and adapted by PIUs in these two ways.

The sub-principles were applied by PIUs at different moments in time (before, during, and after an event). Polson’s story of reflecting on the sub-principles demonstrates how principles can be applied pre, during, or post events. When discussing how he used the sub-principles before an event, he stated they help him to “build the next day”, “prepare for next steps” or “engage from a different perspective next time.” Polson’s story also portrayed how the sub-principles can be used during an event. He described a meeting with a colleague who was noticeably emotional and “not open to feedback.” During the meeting, he used the sub-principles to “write things down” and “collect information” to prevent him from “disconnecting with the person in front of him”. Last, Polson used the sub-principles to look back on events that occurred. In his story he stated, “I really like to reflect at night after work because I usually have less emotions.” These examples demonstrate how the sub-principles were used by PIUs before, during, and after events.

A number of PIUs noted the sub-principles served as a “filter” or “window” for their behaviors. For example, Cooke described the sub-principles as a “step between emotions and behaviors.” During one of the interpretation meetings he said:

> When stressful situations came up. The principles helped bring us back onto course. I thought that was really important because the principles provide kind of guardrails for us to come back inside of as things get challenging. We're always so busy. It's a highly stressful environment, it's very challenging. It's very easy to lose emotional intelligence. But I think these principles really helped us be who we say we are.

Similarly, Polson stated the sub-principles helped him to “make an informed decision based on the situation, not just emotions” and prevented him from saying or doing somethings that might create “deep scars” or destroy trust. He went on to say:

> The principles are very, very important because they help me see if there is a gap between what I believe in and what I really do. There is always a gap, but tomorrow we have an opportunity to be better than today.

In this way, the sub-principles regulated the behaviors of PIUs and ensured their behaviors aligned with their beliefs.

Last, PIUs noted the situation helped them determine which sub-principles to apply. In his interview Billings said:

> I noticed that not every principle is always there. It depends on the situation, the conversation, and the context you're in. So, you might have more emphasis on certain principles because of the situation and some you don't even touch on because they're not needed at this point.

Similar comments came from Polson who claimed, “I don’t think there is a hierarchy to the principles. The situation helps you create an order of importance … They all have a role to play in different situations.”, and Cooke who declared, “the principles were not a checklist to be completed, but instead an open list that challenged me to find deeper connections between the moment and the principles.” Essentially, the sub-principles were applied and adapted based on the situation at hand.

In summary, the sub-principles were applied and adapted in a variety of ways across PIUs. First, they used the sub-principles to evaluate their own behaviors and the behaviors of others. Second, they used the sub-principles at different moments in time such as before, during, or after an event. Third, the sub-principles served as a “filer” or “window” through which PIUs regulated their emotions to ensure their actions aligned with their beliefs. Last, PIUs stated the situation helped them determined which sub-principles were important, and that there was no hierarchy to the sub-principles.

Evaluation Question Two

Evaluation question two asked, “Which sub-principles are meaningful to PIUs?” PIUs and I independently reviewed the stories and gathered our interpretations in the group reflective journal. Next, we met virtually to discuss and share our interpretations. Interpretations across myself and PIUs were strikingly similar. They too had arranged the sub-principles from most to least meaningful and there were only a number of small positional changes across our interpretations.

Briefly, my interpretations were based not only on the stories, but also the data PIUs provided in the post-reflective journal questionnaire and the follow-up interview. The post-reflective journal questionnaire asked PIUs to list which principles were most and least meaningful to them. In the follow-up interview, I asked them why they listed certain principles as meaningful and others not. I also asked them if they would make any changes to the original list of ten sub-principles (add, eliminate, combine, or change). I looked for consistencies across PIUs to determine which principles were meaningful or not and why. I presented my interpretations to the PIUs using the PowerPoint slide displayed in Figure 6.1.

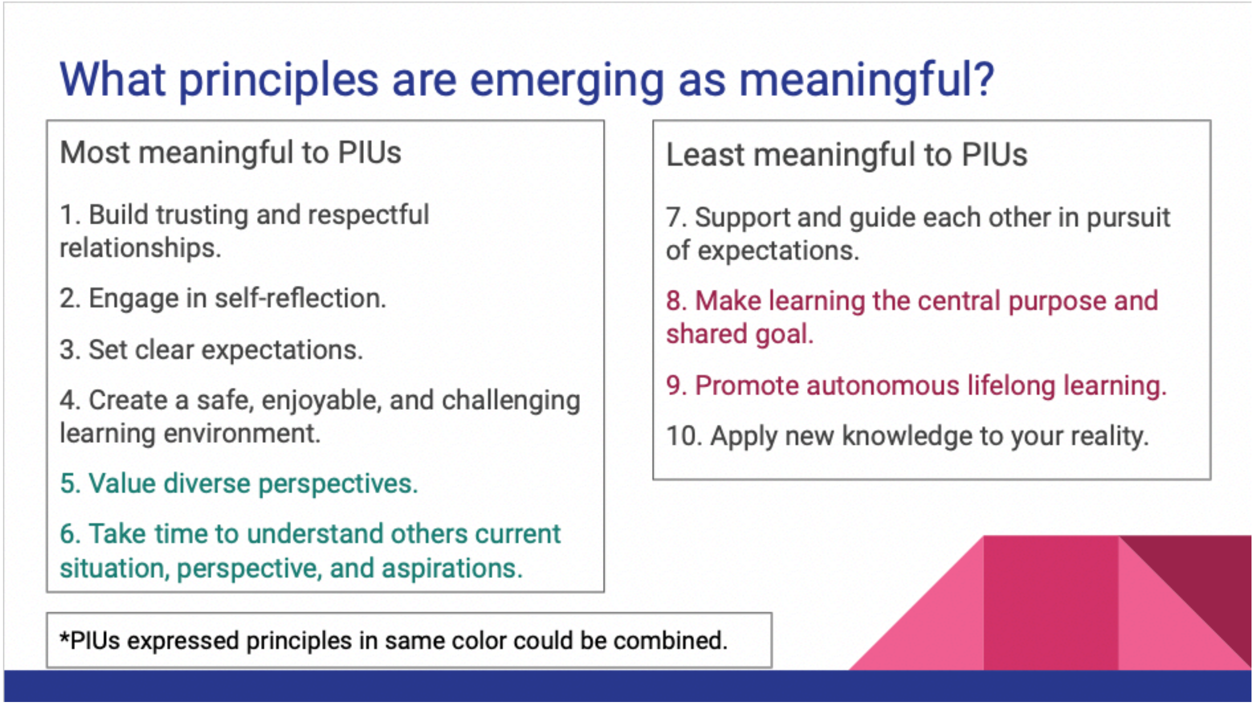

Figure 6.1: Presentation of evaluator interpretations and recommendations. Note. Principles displayed in the same color represent principles that PIUs recommended combining.

The PIUs and I discussed our interpretations and tried to discern what made some principles more meaningful than others. We concluded that one factor that influenced the meaningfulness of a principle to PIUs was whether it re-occurred across stories. PIUs related this to whether the sub-principle could be applied across diverse contexts and tasks. For example, Seely stated the principle "promote autonomous lifelong learning" was less meaningful to her because she did not know how to use it in her role as an administrator. She said, "I can see how this is important for our instructors when they are working with coaches, but I'm not teaching classes, so I don't use this principle often. It just doesn't feel right." Likewise, in his interview Billings stated:

> I can see how to use this principle [promote autonomous lifelong learning] in the context of a course when I'm working with coaches, but I had trouble applying it when I was working with colleagues. Is it really my role and purpose to promote autonomous lifelong learning when I'm on a call with Cooke? I don't think so.

Conversely, a principle was more meaningful to PIUs if it could be applied across contexts, people, and situations. For example, the principle “set clear expectations” was used in a variety of situations and reoccurred across many of the stories. Seely used this principle to inform the NWSL player about the expectations for the course application process. Cooke used this same principle to remind coach educators of their expectations for representing *US Soccer* on social media, and numerous PIUs mentioned this principle when referring to Coach Educator Presentation in Kansas City. In essence, sub-principles were meaningful to PIUs if they met the “D” (developmental) component of the GUIDE criteria which claims sub-principles should be adaptable across diverse contexts and overtime.

The meaningfulness of a principle was also determined by the clarity of guidance it provided. When referring to the principle, “apply new knowledge to your reality” Billings said, “I just couldn’t visualize this principle. When I looked back on my day and asked if I achieved this, I just couldn’t find the answer. I wasn’t sure how to behave.” Dillon expressed a similar sentiment about this principle in his interview when he said:

> I value this principle [apply new knowledge to your reality], but I can’t seem to find a particular moment to apply it … It seems this is something that occurs over a longer period of time, so it’s hard for me to think of a specific example.

During our interpretation meetings, we related these comments back to the GUIDE criteria, and more specifically, the “G” (guiding) and “U” (useful) components, which state a principle should provide clear guidance on what to do, how to think, and how to act (G - guiding), and should be useful, actionable, and interpretable (U - useful). The sub-principles atop the list regularly met these criteria while the others did not.

Related to this, a number of PIUs noted there were sub-principles that provided similar guidance. In other words, they could not distinguish one principle from the other. For example, the sub-principles “value diverse perspectives” and “take time to understand others’ current situation, perspectives, and aspirations" were viewed as similar. Not only were these mentioned as alike by a number of PIUs in the interviews, but PIUs and I also had trouble distinguishing them when we reviewed the stories to compare and contrast these two principles. Therefore, PIUs suggested that these two sub-principles could potentially be combined into one. Therefore, they were meaningful and used across stories, however, they were also repetitive and too similar to each other.

Finally, when reviewing the stories and discussing which sub-principles were most meaningful, PIUs noted there may be a need to add another principle around personal health and well-being. Across many of the stories, PIUs made comments about how busy and overwhelmed they were, and how this actually hindered their ability to adhere to sub-principles. As Dillon put it in his story:

> I still need some time to live my day based on the principles. I understand them, I value them, but we are so day to day right now that we just need to get things done. I don't always have time to self-reflect, for example.

Similarly, Seely said,

> This is something that I'm personally really struggling with right now. Not in the sense that I don't believe in the principles, but I'm so focused on just trying to make it from one day to the next. I wonder if it's even possible for us to adhere to this list of 10 when we're in the thick of things like we are right now.

During our interpretation meeting, Cooke noted the consequences of the fast-paced, high stress environment and the need for an additional principle related to work-life balance:

> One thing that I saw in almost all of the stories was just how busy we are. And you hear everyone talk about it, but we don't ever really pause and acknowledge what that means. It feels like we are constantly pushing the soccer ball up the hill every day. Then we go to sleep, and it rolls back down the hill. Then we wake the next day and push it back up the hill again. I sometimes question if I want to spend the rest of my life doing this … We need to take care of

> ourselves. This is clearly a principle that's missing, and if we don't bring attention to it, ASAP, we're setting ourselves up for major disasters, either as a team or personally … I mean, we're in sport. It's about living healthy and active lifestyles. And if we don't do that ourselves, there's no hope.

Therefore, a principle not included in the original list of ten was meaningful to PIUs.

In summary, the sub-principles most meaningful to PIUs were: (a) build trusting and respectful relationships, (b) engage in self-reflection; (c) set clear expectations, (d) create a safe, enjoyable, and challenging learning environment; (e) value diverse perspectives; and (f) take time to understand others' current situation, perspectives, and aspirations. The sub-principles least meaningful to PIUs were: (a) support and guide each other in pursuit of expectations, (b) make learning the central purpose and shared goal, (c) promote autonomous lifelong learning, and (d) apply new knowledge to your reality. The meaningfulness of a principles was determined by whether it could be applied across people, contexts, and tasks, along with the clarity of guidance a principle provided. Finally, after reading the stories, PIUs determined an additional principle related to mental health and well-being was necessary and meaningful.

Forms of Use

According to Patton (2018c), PFE should result in enhanced use by PIUs. Patton defined two types of use the evaluator should attend to in PFE. The first is *use of evaluation findings,* which concerns how (or if) PIUs used the evaluation findings to make decisions, take actions, or change procedures. The second type of use is *process use* (Patton, 2008; Weiss et al., 2008), which includes changes in thinking and behavior that occur among those involved in the evaluation as a result of participating in the evaluation (Patton, 2012). Both forms of use a discussed below.

Use of Evaluation Findings

While designing the evaluation, PIUs identified two ways they planned to use the evaluation findings. First, they wanted to use the evaluation findings to teach others about the principles. Second, they wanted to use the evaluation findings to change or adapt the list of sub-principles. Each of these forms of use were realized.

After discussion the findings in relation to the evaluation questions, PIUs took actions steps to teach others in the program about the sub-principles. While the group of five PIUs had engaged with the sub-principles throughout the evaluation, the other full-time staff in the organization had not. To teach the other staff about the sub-principles, PIUs invited them to spend one week reflecting on the sub-principles, just as they had done in their journal entries. After the journal reflection period was over, two PIUs sent out a survey to full-time staff members asking them for their feedback on the sub-principles. The survey asked the full-time staff to group the ten sub-principles based on the GUIDE criteria: (a) meets the GUIDE criteria, (b) meets some, but not all, of the GUIDE criteria, or (c) did not meet the GUIDE criteria. PIUs felt it was important to gather feedback from other staff members prior to making any final decisions on which sub-principles to keep, adjust, or eliminate. The survey feedback from the full-time staff was then used in addition to the stories to inform how the original list of ten sub-principles would be adapted or changed.

A number of revisions were made to the original list of ten sub-principles based on the stories, answers to evaluation questions, and survey feedback. Figure 6.2 displays a summary of the changes PIUs made to the original list of ten sub-principles. Figure 6.3 shows the original list of sub-principles alongside the revised list of sub-principles.

Principles left as is…	• Build trusting and respectful relationships. • Engage in self-reflection. • Create a safe, enjoyable, and challenging learning environment. • Promote autonomous lifelong learning.
Principles combined…	• Set clear expectations / Support and guide each other in pursuit of expectations. • Value diverse perspectives / Take time to understand others' current situation, perspectives, and aspirations.
Principles eliminated…	• Apply new knowledge to your reality. • Make learning and central purpose and shared goal.
Principles added…	• Commit to sustained personal well-being and work-life balance.

Figure 6.2: Summary of changes made to original list of sub-principles

Original List of Principles

- Build trusting and respectful relationships.
- Engage in self-reflection.
- Create a safe, enjoyable and challenging learning environment.
- Promote autonomous, lifelong learning.
- Set clear expectations.
- Support and guide each other in pursuit of expectations.
- Value diverse perspectives.
- Take time to understand others' current situation, perspective and aspirations.
- Make learning the central purpose and shared goal.
- Apply new knowledge to your reality.

Revised List of Principles

- Build trusting and respectful relationships.
- Engage in self-reflection.
- Create a safe, enjoyable, and challenging learning environment.
- Promote autonomous lifelong learning.
- Set clear expectations, and support each other in pursuit of expectations.
- Value diverse perspectives by taking time to understand others' current situation and aspirations.
- Commit to sustained personal well-being and work-life balance

Figure 6.3: Comparison of original and revised list of sub-principles

Process Use

Process use includes changes in thinking and behavior that occur among those involved in the evaluation as a result of participating in the evaluation (Patton, 2012). PIUs noted a number of changes that took place individually, and as a group, throughout the PFE process. First, there was an increased sense of comradery between PIU. As Polson put it in his story:

> I noticed there was a difference between those of us who kept a journal on the principles and others. We had this solid foundation to guide us during the day … We were very much aligned, and I could see we were sharing something special together. We are guided by the same things and there is something bigger than us. I really believe in that.

Seely also noted a deep connection to the members of the PIU group during one of our meetings; "I felt proud to be a part of this team. We truly gave our best to live our principles. It's motivating to be a part of a group like this." Cooke noted there was a clear difference between staff members who were a part of the PFE group and those who were not. He went on to say, "We became very deliberate about our interactions with each other."

Second, the process of keeping a journal helped some PIUs feel fulfilled. Cooke stated, "Keeping a journal felt therapeutic. It was cathartic to just have this William James stream of consciousness. It was nice to know there was someone on the other end listening." Seely stated the PFE process helped re-energize her:

> Before this project, I was kind of stuck in the monotony. I never wanted a job where I had to sit in front of a computer all day, but that's what it's been for the past year and a half plus now [due to COVID]. So, for me, I think it kind of re-energized me in a way - like, okay, my role is important.

Third, the very process of focusing on sub-principles increased awareness of, and engagement with, them beyond what would have occurred without the evaluation (Patton, 2012, 2018c). Cooke noted:

> Looking at these principles, reflecting on them each day, I feel like I am beginning to understand them. We've all talked about how just thinking about them brings them to life. The more we reflect on them, the more we practice them, the more we move towards automatic, unconscious competence, so to speak. I think this is where we want to be. We want them to become a part of who we are.

Seely talked about how she wrote the principles out on a piece of paper and put them on the wall behind her desk. She stated, "This process helped keep the principles top of mind. I was really paying attention to them and constantly thinking about which principles my actions aligned with." Likewise, Billings said the journaling process helped him recognize which sub-principles he implemented, and which ones he did not. In our meetings, PIUs also discussed how they intended to share these principles with other program stakeholders in the near future such as part-time coach educators, member organizations, and coach learners, increasing engagement with principles outside of their small group.

Process use also includes training in evaluation logic and skills as a result of undertaking a PFE (Patton, 2012). These evaluation skills can be transferred to other aspects of the program to increase organizational learning capacity. PIUs demonstrated their newfound skills in evaluative thinking through the follow-up journaling activity and survey they conducted with the other staff members in the department. To teach the other staff about the sub-principles, PIUs invited them to spend one week reflecting on the sub-principles, just as they had done in their journal entries. After the journal reflection period was over, two PIUs sent out a survey to full-time staff members asking them for their feedback on the sub-principles. The survey feedback from the full-time staff was then used in addition to the stories to inform how the original list of ten sub-principles would be adapted or changed. Furthermore, PIUs mentioned steps they hope to take moving forward in PFE. For example, with an established list of meaningful sub-principles in place, they discussed they might next pursue an evaluation question related to adherence to the principles. In summary, there was evidence to suggest that PIUs underwent changes in thinking and behavior (process use) as a result of participating in the evaluation and increased their capacity to think evaluatively.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to conduct a principles-focused evaluation (PFE) of a coach education program (CEP). In this chapter, I explore the relevance of the findings. The chapter is presented in five sections. The first section provides an overview of the findings. The second section describes how the study's findings contribute to the existing literature in sport coaching. Lessons learned from the study are shared in the third section, including limitations and considerations for future evaluators. The fourth section presents implications and future directions for research, specifically in relation to *US Soccer*'s CEP. The fifth and final section of the chapter offers concluding thoughts.

Overview of Major Findings

This section provides an overview of the major findings of the evaluation. I begin with the findings related to the two evaluation questions, and end with the findings related to the different forms of use achieved as a result of the evaluation.

Evaluation Question One

Evaluation question one asked, "How are the sub-principles being applied and adapted by primary intended users (PIUs)?" Each story elucidates a single PIUs interpretation, application, and adaptation of the sub-principles given that particular situation or event. Together, the seven stories provide examples of how the principles were applied across a range of settings, tasks, and PIUs. Through our interpretations of the stories, PIU and I noted several ways they applied and adapted the sub-principles (evaluation question one). First, PIUs applied the sub-principles to evaluate their own behaviors and the behaviors of others. Second, the PIUs applied the sub-principles at different moments in time such as before, during, or after an event. Third, the sub-principles served as a “filter” or “window” through which PIUs regulated their emotions to ensure their actions aligned with the beliefs of the organization. Last, PIUs stated there was no hierarchy to the sub-principles, and that the situation helped them determine which sub-principles were important. In summary, the sub-principles were applied and adapted in a variety of ways across PIUs.

Evaluation Question Two

Evaluation question two asked, “Which sub-principles are meaningful to PIUs?” The sub-principles most meaningful to PIUs were: (a) build trusting and respectful relationships, (b) engage in self-reflection; (c) set clear expectations, (d) create a safe, enjoyable, and challenging learning environment; (e) value diverse perspectives; and (f) take time to understand others’ current situation, perspectives, and aspirations. The sub-principles least meaningful to PIUs were: (a) support and guide each other in pursuit of expectations, (b) make learning the central purpose and shared goal, (c) promote autonomous lifelong learning, and (d) apply new knowledge to your reality.

In our interpretation meetings, PIUs and I noted several features that made some sub-principles more meaningful than others. First, sub-principles were meaningful if they could be applied across people, contexts, and tasks. For example, the principle, “set clear expectations” was applied across a variety of situations and people, while the principle “promote autonomous lifelong learning” was deemed inappropriate for use outside of the course context, and thus was applied less often across stories. Second, the clarity of guidance a principle provided also determined how meaningful a sub-principle was to PIUs. When attempting to apply some sub-principles, PIUs stated they were unsure what to do or how to act. These sub-principles were less meaningful to PIUs. Finally, after reading the stories, PIUs determined an additional principle related to mental health and well-being was meaningful to them.

Use of Evaluation Findings

Two forms of use were realized through the evaluation. This first was *use of evaluation findings,* which concerns how (or if) PIUs use the evaluation findings to make decisions, take actions, or change procedures (Patton, 1978). PIUs used the evaluation findings to teach others in the program about the sub-principles and the change or adapt the original list of principles. To teach others in the program about the principles, they asked the other full-time staff in the organization to keep a journal on the original list of sub-principles and provide feedback in a survey. Informed by the stories and survey data, the PIUs decided to retain, combine, eliminate, or add sub-principles to the original list.

Process Use

The second form of use achieved throughout the evaluation was *process use*. Process use includes changes in thinking and behavior that occur among those involved in the evaluation as a result of participating in the evaluation (Patton, 2008, 2012; Weiss et al., 2008). The PIUs underwent a number of changes as a group and individually throughout the evaluation. As a group, PIUs noted they formed a bond and "shared something special together". On an individual level, the PFE process was touted as therapeutic and re-energizing for some PIUs. The evaluation also increased PIUs awareness of, and engagement with the sub-principles beyond what would have occurred without the evaluation (Patton, 2012, 2018c). Last, PIUs obtained new skills in evaluative thinking, which they demonstrated through the follow-up journaling and survey activity they conducted with the other staff members in the department. In summary, both use of evaluation findings and process use were achieved through the evaluation.

Contributions to Sport Coaching Research

Next, I discuss how this study contributes to sport coaching research. I begin by examining novel aspects of the study including the use of an evaluation theory, a focus on use, and a collaborative approach to inquiry. Following this, I share how this study adds to our understanding of the pedagogical practices taking place in CEPs. This section concludes with a commentary on how this study improves our understanding of the individuals who oversee and manage CEPs. Throughout this section I suggest implication for future research on CEPs.

Studying CEPs with Evaluation Theory

Perhaps the most significant contribution this study makes to sport coaching research is the use of an evaluation theory to study a CEP. The word "evaluation" has been commonly used to describe research on CEPs, especially after Gilbert and Trudel first proposed an evaluation strategy for CEPs in 1999 (1999b). However, few scholars have actually relied on the concepts, theories, and literature from the field of evaluation to conduct studies. In fact, of the 103 articles published on CEPs between 2005 and 2015 (Griffo et al., 2019), only a handful referenced evaluation theories (Dohme et al., 2019; Driska, 2015, 2018; Redgate et al., 2020; Stoszkowski & Collins, 2021), and only two evaluation theories have been used to study CEPs (utilization-focused evaluation theory and realist evaluation theory). Consequently, there are a number of evaluation theories yet to be used to investigate CEPs. Like research, evaluation theories span different paradigms and methodologies, which means they can accommodate a range of worldviews held by scholars and practitioners (Mertens & Wilson, 2019). Even within a single paradigm, an array of evaluation theories exists. For example, PFE is but one evaluation theory underpinned by pragmatism. Alternative evaluation theories such as participatory evaluation theory (Cousins et al., 2013; Fetterman, 2001; Fetterman et al., 2014) empowerment evaluation theory (Fetterman, 2001; Fetterman et al., 2014), and the context, input, process, product model (CIPP) (Stufflebeam, 1983, 2013) also approach evaluation through a pragmatic worldview. The application of these evaluation theories is not limited the CEPs. For example, they could be used to investigate referee education programs or sport parent education programs.

Given the recent attention to evaluation at coaching conferences (Global Coach Conference, 2021, United States Center for Coaching Excellence, 2022), and the recent formation of a program evaluation working group by *International Council for Coaching Excellence*, now seems to be a perfect time to capitalize on the theories and other concepts established by the field of evaluation. However, evaluation is both similar to and different from research (Mathison, 2007; Patton, 2018a; Wanzer, 2020). Therefore, scholars and practitioners wishing to embrace evaluation should not only understand evaluation theories, but also the unique history, language, standards, and practice of evaluation. This dissertation makes a modest contribution to this endeavor through the use of PFE theory.

A Focus on Use

In PFE, the goal of the evaluation is enhanced use by PIUs (Patton, 2018c). The topic of use has received significant attention in program evaluation literature (Alkin & King, 2016; Amo & Cousins, 2007; Blanton, 2013; King & Alkin, 2019; Weiss et al., 2008), but has received little to no attention in coaching scholarship. An exhaustive review of the literature reveals two studies that have reported how individuals or organizations have used the information produced by a study. The first was an evaluation conducted by (Driska, 2018) on USA's Swimming CEPs. The evaluation found there was an opportunity to improve the accessibility of course materials on their website and connect coach learners to continuing professional development. However, the study does not go as far as to say whether individuals in the organization actually pursued these changes as a result of the evaluation. The second study, conducted by Milistetd et al. (2021), was a retrospective look back on a collaborative study between a tennis club and a group of researchers. In the study, the two parties worked together to develop learning activities for coaches. While these activities were positively received by the club at the time of the study, the scholars found that one-year later, the innovative activities were no longer in use.

Outside of these two studies, we know little about how, or if, practitioners receive the information coaching scholars produce and the impact that research has on practice. This dissertation is thus one of the first to report on the different forms of use that occurred as a result of the evaluation (use of evaluation findings and process use). This study also highlights steps taken to enhance use, such as the identification of potential forms of use by PIUs prior to constructing evaluation questions and data collection. Nonetheless, there remains significant opportunity for other scholars to focus on use moving forward. A focus on use would encourage scholars to be accountable for the interpretation and application of their research, as opposed to simply the creation to knowledge. This seems not only necessary, but essential, given the prevalence of pseudo-scientific ideas and myths currently present in CEPs (Cushion, 2013; Stodter, 2021) (i.e., learning styles). Unfortunately, attention to use is not inherently built into the publish or perish culture of academia, or the typical structure of a research article. Therefore, scholars have little incentive to examine use outside of their personal values. While it is possible that knowledge translation and application are taking place “behind the scenes”, there remains a need to discuss this process in the literature. In the future, coaching scholars might consider doing more than the typical data grab and go. Instead, they could help translate findings to practitioners, while also considering the impact their research has on the participants and organizations they study. Ideally, this would lead to reports on how and why practitioners use (or misuse) findings which could then bridge the research-practice and scholar-practitioner gap.

Collaborative Inquiry

The collaborative approach to inquiry adopted in this PFE also makes a noteworthy contribution to the sport coaching scholarship. PIUs were not merely subjects or participants in this study but were actively involved in creating and designing the study and interpreting the findings. Previous literature indicates sport coaching scholars have adopted a collaborative approach to inquiry with coaches (e.g., Ahlberg et al., 2008; Clements & Morgan, 2015; Jones et al., 2012; Voldby & Klein-Døssing, 2019), but only a handful of studies have positioned scholars and program designers as co-inquirers (Callary et al., 2011; Driska, 2015, 2018; Werthner et al., 2012). As such, this study is one of the first to demonstrate how research can be undertaken with and by program designers, as opposed to on and for them. Because program designers shape CEPs and interact with thousands of coaches every year, these collaborations have the potential to improve CEPs in both content and delivery. This seems like a fruitful avenue given that CEPs have historically failed to meet the needs of coaches (Cushion et al., 2003; Nelson & Cushion, 2006). As this study demonstrated, practitioners face a range of dilemmas, challenges, and questions. Scholars are nicely situated to assist them in addressing these due to their extensive training in inquiry. However, it should be noted that collaborative inquiry often requires compromise. Scholars wishing to pursue this route must be willing to prioritize the interests and needs of practitioners over their own.

Pedagogical Practice in CEPs

This study also contributes to the field's understanding of the pedagogical practices taking place in CEPs. In the last decade, scholars have noted CEPs are moving away from behaviorist, instructor-centered pedagogy and towards constructivist, learner-centered approaches (Cassidy & Kidman, 2010; Chapman et al., 2020; Ciampolini et al., 2019; Paquette & Trudel, 2018; Trudel et al., 2019). The findings of this dissertation confirm constructivist, learner-centered approaches were favored by *US Soccer*'s CEP. Terms such as "reflection", "autonomous", "relationships", "perspectives", and "support" are embedded within the sub-principles, indicating PIUs valued socially constructed knowledge.

This study illuminates how these preferred ways of knowing (epistemological assumptions) extend beyond the classroom, to interactions that take place between program designers, administrators, coach educators, and researchers. Because this study was developed in collaboration with PIUs, their epistemological assumptions undoubtably permeated every aspect of this evaluation. Different evaluation questions, methods of data collection and analysis, and interpretations would likely have resulted if say, a critical pedagogy was favored by PIUs. Moving forward, scholars should attend not only their own assumptions (North, 2013), but also to the assumptions of the participants or stakeholders they work with. Misalignment between the two parties could present challenges, especially if scholars aim to collaborate and produce information that is valued and used by program stakeholders. In this study, there was general alignment between the PIUs and I, which helped us establish relationships, make decisions, and produce useful information.

CEP Practitioners

The findings from this study add to the field's nascent understanding of the individuals working in CEPs. Until recently, these individuals were virtually absent from the CEP literature (Callary & Gearity, 2019b). Instead, scholars relied solely on the perceptions of coach learners to study CEPs (Campbell & Waller, 2020; McCullick et al., 2009). McCullick et al. (2009) noted the limitations of this approach when they stated, "a reliance on coach perceptions provides a one-sided account of CEPs [and] leaves the field lacking necessary information on how all aspects of a CEP fit together to be effective" (p. 330-331). They called for researchers to "get their hands dirty" (p. 331) and become more involved with national governing bodies (NGBs). In the last five years, scholars have answered these calls by studying coach educators, or the individuals who teach and deliver coaching courses. This research has primarily focused on the classroom context and pedagogical practices employed by coach educators (Callary & Gearity, 2020; Downham & Cushion, 2020; Martin et al., 2019; Partington et al., 2021).

This study's findings extend the understanding beyond coach educators and the classroom context. The PIUs were involved in a number of tasks beyond teaching courses such as curriculum design, coach educator training, application processing, financial planning, community engagement, strategic planning, course instruction, and employee evaluation and hiring. This suggests that we have perhaps oversimplified the role of the coach educator or failed to consider other key stakeholders in CEPs such as administrators. Relatedly, the findings extend our understanding of challenges these individuals encounter beyond the classroom context. For example, the short stories highlight events that occurred during staff meetings, on social media, or while interacting with potential program participants. Finally, the findings also illuminate how these individuals used principles to navigate their everyday lives and workplace challenges.

Lessons Learned

A key component of any PFE includes a reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of the evaluation to extract lessons learned (Patton, 2018c). In this section, I present two salient lessons learned. While these lessons learned are unique to this evaluation, I hope they will contribute to our understanding of PFE, which a relatively new and untested evaluation theory. Scholars wishing to pursue evaluation or other types of collaborative inquiry might also find these lessons helpful.

Lesson One: No PIU Engagement, No PFE

In his textbook, *Principles-Focused Evaluation*, Patton (2018c) emphasized the importance of PIU engagement. Indeed, without engagement from PIUs, I would have been left at a crossroads, guessing which way to turn, but not knowing for sure if I had selected appropriately based on PIUs information needs. Luckily, PIUs were willing to invest their time and energy to develop and evaluate principles. Therefore, I feel it is important to share features of this evaluation that were foundational to PIU engagement.

First, I wholeheartedly believe in the importance of matching PFE with principles-driven programs and principles committed people (Patton, 2018c). The time I spent in the program during the pilot study (step 1) allowed me to see that the PIUs relied on principles to create consistency and culture in the program. Their engagement in the evaluation was sustained by their belief in the importance of principles. Patton (1978) referred to this as the personal factor, or the identification of people who genuinely care about the evaluation and the findings it generates.

A second factor that contributed to PIU engagement was the relationship I developed with the PIUs. Because I had been a part of the CEP for many years prior this evaluation, we had formed a mutual respect and friendship with one another. I do not believe I was seen by PIUs as a stranger who would judge the quality of their work and report potentially harmful findings out to the larger world. Instead, I believe I was viewed as a friend who genuinely wanted to help improve program, even if that meant they would be challenged. While this friendship would sometimes be viewed as “unscientific” in certain worldviews (positivism), I believe our relationship made it easier for PIUs to be vulnerable and open to negative findings. Moreover, my extended time in the program gave me invaluable insights about the program, the PIUs, and the potential long-term effects of the study.

That said, there were times in the evaluation that I worried the PIUs were engaged because they felt they had an obligation to me as a friend, as opposed to an interest in the study. I tried to counter this by constantly reminding PIUs that their participation in the study was voluntary and they could choose to stop at any time. I reassured them that the most important thing to me was not the evaluation, but their interest in the project, along with their mental and physical well-being. Three of the five PIUs did withdraw near the very end of the evaluation (step 10). This decline in engagement was related to the release of the COVID-19 vaccine, which allowed the CEP to begin running courses again. Thus, PIUs had less time to commit to the evaluation. My advice for future evaluators would be to prepare to counter uncontrollable, external factors such as this by bringing on new PIUs or continuing to explore new ways to sustain engagement from existing PIUs (Patton, 1978).

I also believe my facilitation skills contributed to sustained engagement in the evaluation. Evaluators conducting PFE are required to have a special skillset that goes well beyond standard methodological skills. I had to teach, listen, develop relationships, build trust, set deadlines, prepare agendas and presentations, facilitate discussions and activities, help resolve conflicts, assess progress, and make adjustments (Patton, 2018b). Of particular importance to PIU engagement in this case was our group reflective journal. The journal ensured I could collect the thoughts of all PIUs, not just the ones who spoke up during synchronous meetings. Moreover, the journal allowed us to continue to engage in evaluative thinking beyond our synchronous meetings. Because we were able to make progress outside of our meetings, I was able to limit our synchronous meeting times to one hour. I felt this was essential for sustained engagement given the “Zoom fatigue” many were experiencing as a result of the pandemic. Finally, I used *GoogleDocs* to ensure the group reflective journal was accessible to PIUs at all times. This allowed them to engage in evaluative thinking at a time that was convenient for them.

The recording of our synchronous meetings further improved my facilitation skills and PIU engagement. If a PIU was unable to attend a meeting, I could send them the video recording, and ask them to follow up with questions or comments. Moreover, after each meeting, I reviewed and transcribed the videos. This gave me an opportunity to look back on the meeting and note things I had missed during the meeting because I was busy facilitating. This helped me understand points of confusion and prepare for upcoming meetings. In addition, PIUs were aware that I was reviewing the videos, which reassured them that I valued their opinion and input.

I believe the presentation of findings as short stories was also key to sustained engagement by PIUs. The stories provided a common language through which we could engage in dialogue around the evaluation questions. I did not have to spend time translating advanced statistical findings to PIUs. The data was already compiled in a format that was easily accessible to PIUs, which allowed them to be heavily involved in the data interpretation process. Again, their interpretation of the data was valued, which led to sustain engagement after I collected and analyzed the data.

In this study, PIUs were highly engaged throughout the evaluation. However, I believe engagement could be improved further if organizations were willing to financially invest in evaluations. Simply put, we tend to value things that we pay for. When organizations commit economic resources to program evaluations, they signal that they value their own learning and development. In other sectors, it is commonplace for evaluators to be compensated for their time because they have a unique knowledge skillset that enhances program learning and development. Likewise, PIUs could be compensated for the time they commit to evaluation. CEPs may even consider creating a position for an internal evaluator. I believe this would not only improve engagement with evaluations, but it would also enhance the value stakeholders ascribe to the evaluation findings and thus the use of findings. In this study, I did not ask for or expect compensation from the organization.

Lesson Two: Clear Expectations Lead to Progress

Every evaluation contains a long checklist of tasks that must be completed. I found that clear expectations helped PIUs and I build momentum and continue forward progress, even when we ran into roadblocks. Our efficiency as a group was improved by the expectations I set for; (a) the study timeline, (b) the roles and responsibilities of the evaluator and PIUs, and (c) the framework and criteria for group decision-making.

The first expectation that I established for PIUs was the anticipated time commitment. This allowed both PIUs and myself to assess if we could realistically commit to the evaluation given our current circumstances. I also presented a timeline for the main tasks we needed to complete (see Figure 7.1). At the beginning of every meeting, I reviewed the study timeline and tasks and noted our current position. If we started to get behind, I could remind them that the delay in decision making would either result in less time for other tasks in the study, or a longer overall timeline for the study.

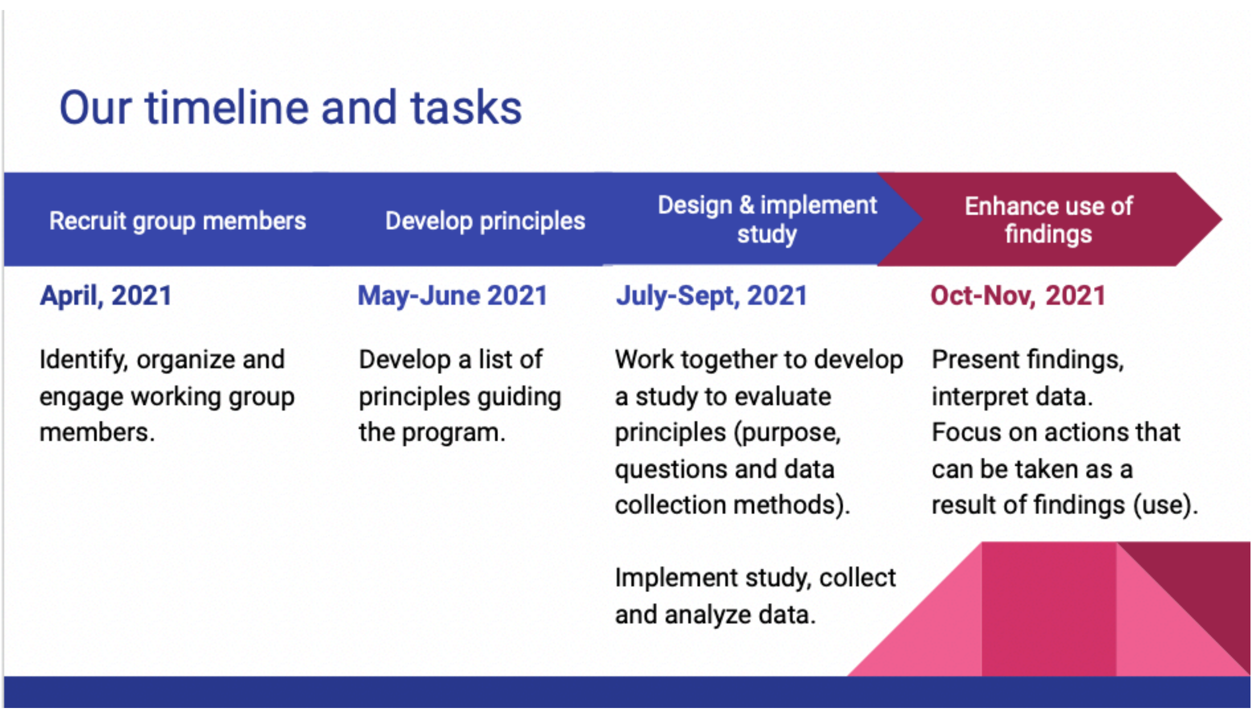

Figure 7.1: Presentation of PFE tasks and timeline.

Developing a timeline in a collaborative approach like this can be challenging due to the many unknown and unpredictable factors inherently present in PFEs. When we began the study, we had no principles, no evaluation questions, no methods of data collection, and no predetermined forms of use. Therefore, I essentially had to guess how long each phase of the study would take. Regularly adjustments and negotiations took place throughout the study based on PIU needs. The study ended up taking three months longer than predicted, primarily due to the extended amount of time it took to develop principles and to help PIUs decide how to put the findings to use.

Enhancing use of the findings could conceivable be a long-term project in itself. This made it difficult for me to determine when the study was complete. Future evaluators should account for the added time it will take to translate findings and facilitate use of findings. I believe it would be beneficial to establish a deadline or cues that would indicate it is a good time to step away. Nevertheless, the established timeline served as our map. We could see where we had gone, where we needed to go next, and if we were going to arrive at our destination on time.

The second important expectation that I established for PIUs was related to our roles and responsibilities (see Figure 7.2) (Patton, 2018b, 2018c). In our first meeting together, I made it clear that I would be serving as a guide and facilitator that would give them options to choose from. They would be responsible for selecting options based on their knowledge, opinions, and values. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities helped set the tone for how we interacted with one another throughout the evaluation. PIUs understood what was expected of them, and I asked them to hold me accountable for my responsibilities.

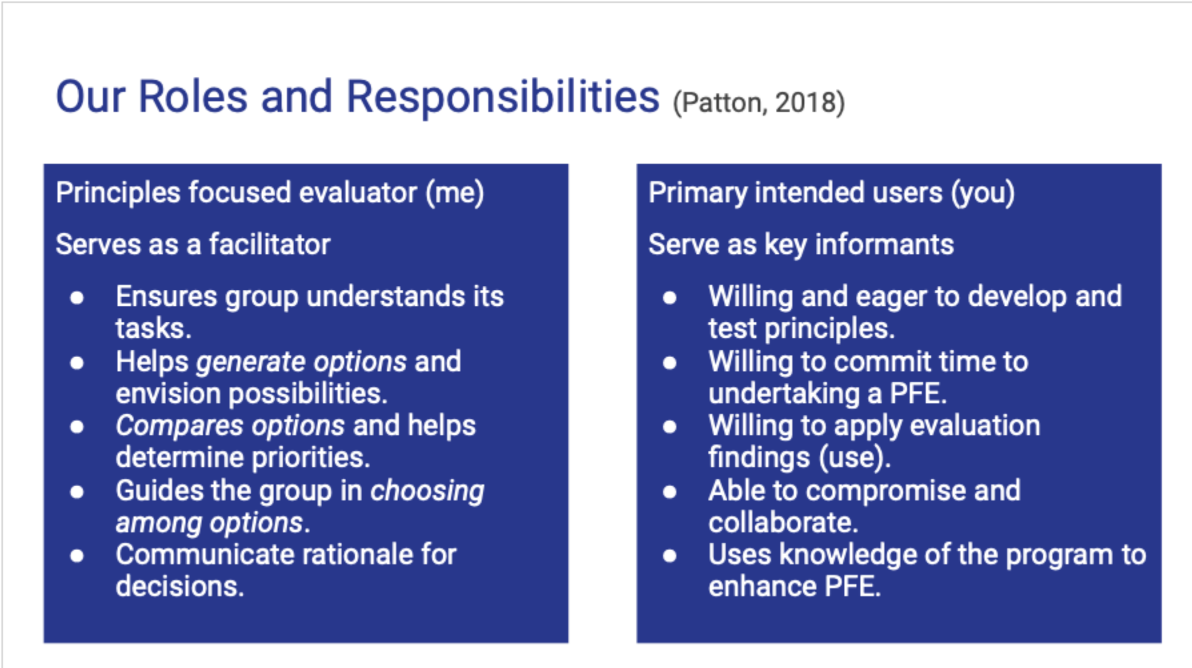

Figure 7.2: Presentation of evaluator and PIUs roles and responsibilities

Each of the tasks we completed throughout the evaluation relied on PIUs ability to make decisions. I found that PIUs were usually willing to express their individual opinions (generate options), but at times, they struggled to come to a consensus (choose options). As the facilitator, and as a doctoral student on a timeline, it was my role to ensure efficiency in this process. The implementation of our decision-making framework served as a turning point for progress in this area (Patton, 2018b, 2018c).

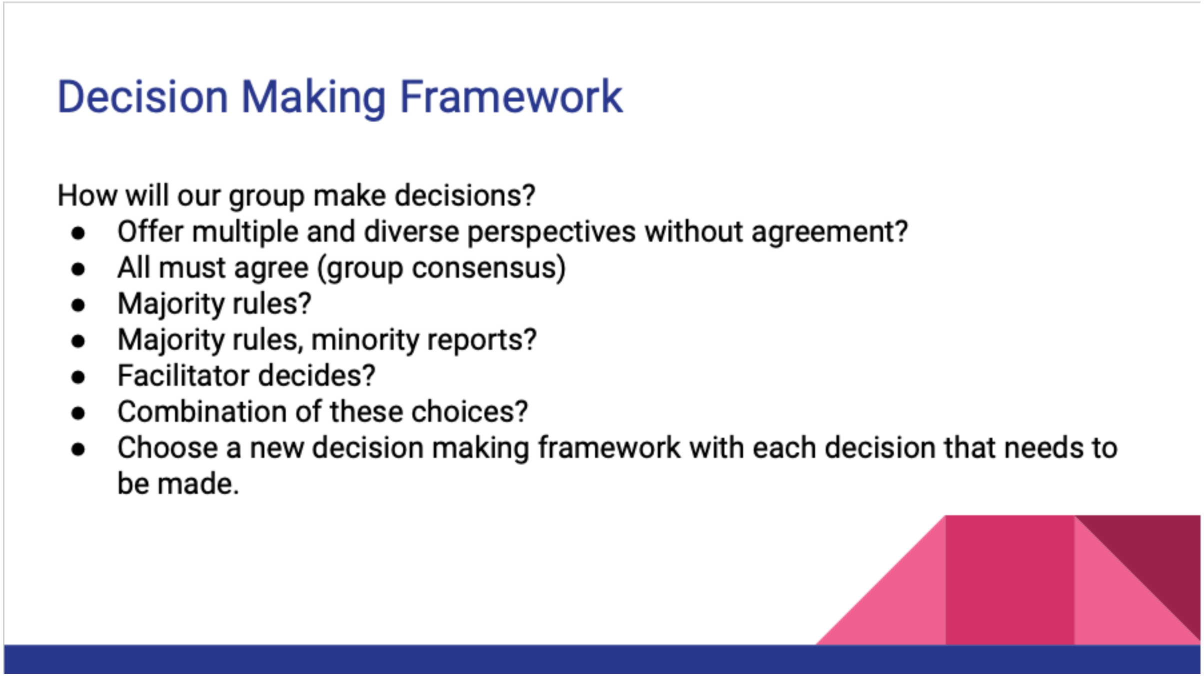

Figure 7.3: Presentation of decision-making framework options

When presented with decision making options, all PIUs agreed that a majority rules vote should be used to make group decisions (see Figure 7.3). After this was established, I started to see a consistent flow and structure to our work together. Typically, I would present PIUs with a decision that needed to be made, they would generate options independently in our group reflective journal, and then we would come back together to discuss individual options and vote. I reviewed the decision-making framework with PIUs throughout the project and asked them if they wanted to adjust based on upcoming decisions, but each time they opted to stick with the majority rules vote.

There was only one occasion where I found the majority rules vote to be troublesome. This was in Phase One of the study, when PIUs were asked to develop a list of principles guiding the program. Unbeknownst to me, PIUs had established six lists of principles (30 principles total) after the pilot study I had conducted a year earlier. Understandably then, they were hesitated to commit to one list of principles for the evaluation. As we became further behind in the project timeline, I proposed that I would come up with a list of sub-principles based on what I had seen and heard from everyone. They could then vote on whether to accept the list or offer changes. While this approach did incorporate the majority rules vote, I questioned whether I was overstepping my bounds by essentially developing and selecting principles for them. However, in the next phase of the study, PIUs decided to conduct the evaluation for a developmental purpose, which meant the evaluation would be used to develop, adapt, and change the original list of principles I had proposed. This reduced the stakes of the list I had proposed which was a nice conciliation. Overall, I found it challenging to push PIUs to make decisions (stay on track) without over-injecting my values into the evaluation. I tried to ensure they always had the last say before we committed to a decision.

The second breakthrough for group decision making process was inclusion of criteria upon which decisions would be made. As Patton (2020) said, “It’s all about criteria … Determining if something is good or bad, successful or unsuccessful, works or doesn’t work requires criteria” (p. 581). This study was no exception. Early on in the evaluation, I asked PIUs to make decision, but did not provide them with criteria upon which those decisions should be made. This resulted in us talking past one another instead of with one another. When I integrated criteria into our decision-making process, or opened it up to PIUs to establish criteria, our communication improved. For example, when I asked PIUs select data collection methods for the study, I offered five criteria upon which they should base their decision (see Figure 7.4). Likewise, the GUIDE criteria helped us develop and select principles in Phase One of the study. Overall, this helped ensure all PIUs were generating and selecting options based on the same criteria.

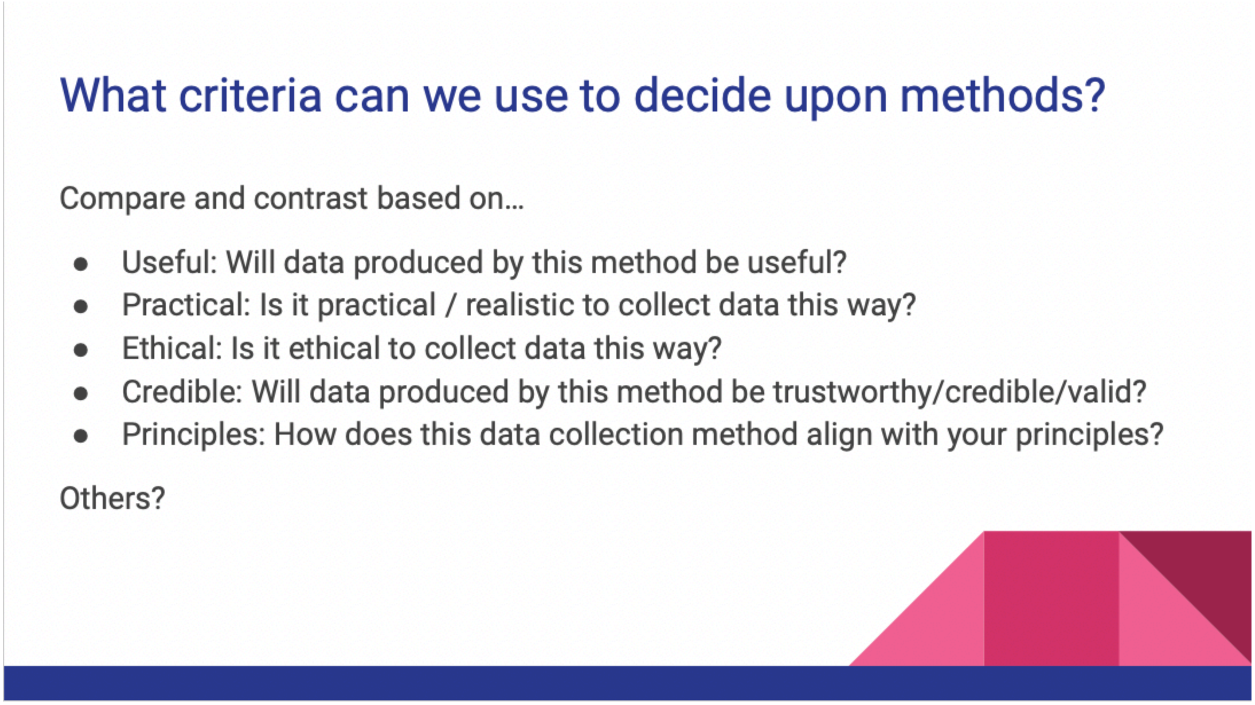

Figure 7.4: Presentation of criteria for selecting data collection methods

Overall, PIUs and I had a basic understanding of our time commitment, roles and responsibilities, and standards for decisions making. I recommend any future PFE evaluator consider implementing these same expectations to ensure the many tasks related to PFE can be completed in a reasonable timeline.

Implications and Future Directions for *US Soccer's* CEP

A main outcome of this evaluation was an evidenced-based list of principles guiding the CEP. Although the findings indicate the updated list of principles are meaningful and can be used across a variety of people, tasks, and contexts, it is yet to be seen if they become integrated in the program on a larger scale. In other words, there are a number of unanswered questions related to how, of if, the principles will be used by the organization in the next 1-3 years. Therefore, future evaluations of this CEP might ask: (a) How have the principles changed overtime and why? (b) How does the program disseminate principles to other stakeholders in the organization such as coach educators, coaches, and other executive staff at *US Soccer*? (c) What are the perceptions of the principles across stakeholder groups? (d) Are the principles being adhered to? (e) If adhered to, do the principles lead to desired results (Patton, 2018c)? (f) How can adherence to principles be improved? These are just few examples of questions the organization could pursue in future evaluations. Undoubtably, the principles will either rise to the forefront of decision making, or they will fade into the background and become just another list. Therefore, it may also be worth considering why this organization does or does not continue to rely on the principles established in this study.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this dissertation, pragmatism was the paradigm or worldview underpinning the study. Pragmatism is meant to open up new lines of inquiry and various forms of data collection both quantitative and qualitative. However, as the study went on, I realized scholars practitioners are 'trapped' in certain ways of knowing, which can make it difficult for them to see new lines of inquiry. In this way, lines of inquiry and action are always limited by the paradigm shifts researchers and practitioners can make.

Conclusion

This dissertation responds to the long-standing calls for evaluations of CEPs (Cushion et al., 2010; Gilbert & Trudel, 1999b; Lyle, 2007). The purpose of the study was to conduct a PFE of a CEP. More specifically, the study addressed the following evaluation questions: (1) How are principles being applied and adapted by the PIUs? (2) Which principles are meaningful to PIUs? The findings demonstrated that some of the principles could be applied and adapted across a range of settings, tasks, and PIUs, while other could not. The study also determined that some principles were more meaningful than others and expressed why that was. The PIUs used these findings to make changes to the original list of principles, and to teach others in the program about the principles. Moreover, PIUs gained skills in evaluative thinking as a result of participating in the evaluation. In conclusion, PIUs valued their participation in the evaluation and used the information to improve the program. CEP practitioners should seek out evaluators if they wish to improve program effectiveness and inform program decisions.

Coaching scholars should prepare to answer these calls by familiarizing themselves with the concepts and theories established in the field of evaluation.

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APPENDIX A

EVALUATOR SELF-ASSESSMENT

Knowledge and experience in program evaluation

- Strengths
  - Completed graduate level coursework specific to the field of program evaluation.
  - Completed graduate level coursework in qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research methods.
  - Member of the American Evaluation Association.
  - Knowledge of Joint Committee Program Evaluation Standards and Guiding Principles for Evaluators.
  - Ongoing professional development through workshops and conferences.
  - Experience developing and implementing evaluations for large grants. One year as a research associate at the Impact Evaluation Unit at the University of Georgia.
- Limitations
  - Limited experience conducting evaluations.
  - Limited experience with quantitative data collection and analysis.

Knowledge and experience with principles-focused evaluation (PFE)

- Strengths
  - Understanding of the niche of PFE within the large landscape of evaluation theories.
  - Knowledge of PFE
    - Attended PFE workshops hosted by Michael Patton, founder of PFE.
    - Personal communication with Michael Patton.
    - Knowledge of utilization-focused evaluation, the theory that underpins PFE.
    - Review of previously conducted PFE projects.
- Limitations
  - Limited experience conducting PFE evaluations.

Substantive knowledge of the program

- Strengths
  - Involvement in the program through a variety of roles (coach participant, coach educator, research partner)
  - Involvement in the program over an extended period (seven years).
  - Trust and credibility with primary intended users.
  - Insights of program operations, challenges, and goals.
- Limitations
  - Involvement in the program has been minimal over the last 4-5 months.
  - Largely unaware of new challenges presented by the current pandemic.
  - Need to balance my role as an insider and outsider.

APPENDIX B

EXTERNAL SITE AUTHORIAZATION FORM

United States Soccer Federation
1801 South Prairie Avenue
Chicago, IL 60616

January 25, 2021

University of Georgia
Office of Human Research Protections
310 East Campus Road
Athens, GA 30602

Dear University of Georgia Institutional Review Board:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that the *United States Soccer Federation* coach education department gives Dr. Bryan McCullick and Sara Campbell permission to conduct the research titled, "A Principles-Focused Evaluation of a Coach Education Program".

We have agreed to collaborate with Dr. McCullick and Sara to design an evaluation of the teaching methods taking place in our coach education program. Sara has informed us of the study procedures which will be carried out virtually from the winter of 2021 to the fall of 2021. We understand:

- *US Soccer* staff will assist with selecting a study design and data collection methods for Sara to carry out. *US Soccer* Staff will inform prospective participants about the research and provide them with contact information. *US Soccer* Staff will assist with interpretation of non-identifiable data.
- *US Soccer* staff will not be involved in the consent process with participants or answer questions about the study. *US Soccer* Staff will not interact with participants to obtain data (interviews/focus groups, observations, and administration of surveys or questionnaires). *US Soccer* Staff will not be involved in the analysis of private, identifiable information.
- Sara will obtain consent from participants and answer questions about the study. Sara will carry out the study design and data collection procedures. Sara will analyze identifiable information.

We notified our staff that their participation in this project is voluntary and will have not affect their employment or employee evaluations. Although the specific data collection methods cannot be pre-defined, we are open to allowing Sara to carry out a range of methods agreed upon in the design including, but not limited to:

- Interviews or focus groups with teachers or students.
- Virtual observations of coaching courses.
- Administration of surveys or questionnaires to teachers or students.
- Collection of artifacts (i.e., documents) related to the teaching methods used on our courses.

Dr. McCullick, Sara, and the University of Georgia understand that they cannot use any U.S. Soccer Federation trademarks or other intellectual property without permission, and they also will not disclose any identifiable information. We look forward to working with Dr. McCullick and Sara on this project. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require further information from our organization.

Sincerely,

[Names revoked for participant privacy]

APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

EXEMPT DETERMINATION

April 5, 2021

Dear Bryan McCullick:

On 4/5/2021, the Human Subjects Office reviewed the following submission:

Title of Study:	A Principles-Focused Evaluation of a Coach Education Program
Investigator:	Bryan McCullick
Co-Investigator:	Sara Campbell
IRB ID:	PROJECT00003560
Funding:	None
Review Category:	FLEX - Exempt 7

We have determined that the proposed research is Exempt. The research activities may now begin.

NOTE: This approval is for the US Soccer staff only. The Study Team will notify the IRB and submit the Recruitment Material(s), Consent Form/Letter, and any Data Collection Materials for the Coaches (Program Students) and Coach Educators (Program Teachers) before any research activities may begin for these participant groups.

Since this study was determined to be Exempt, please be aware that not all future modifications will require review by the IRB. For more information, please see Appendix C of the Exempt Research Policy. As noted in Section C.2, you can simply notify us of modifications that will not require review via the "Add Public Comment" activity.

A progress report will be requested prior to 4/5/2026. Before or within 30 days of the progress report due date, please submit a progress report or study closure request. Submit a progress report by navigating to the active study and selecting Progress Report. The study may be closed by selecting Create Version and choosing Close Study as the submission purpose.

In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

Benilda P. Pooser, Ph.D., CIM
Director, Clinical Research Compliance

APPENDIX D

CONSENT FORMS

Primary Intended User Consent Form

Dear Participant,

We are conducting a study to evaluate the teaching methods used in *US Soccer* coach education courses. We are inviting you to participate in the study because you play a key role in the development or delivery of these courses. Before you decide to participate in the study, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done, and what will be involved. The information below is designed to inform you of the study procedures so you can decide whether to be involved or not. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. This process is called "informed consent".

Purpose
The purpose of the study is to evaluate the teaching methods of *US Soccer* coach education courses. The study aims to generate information that is both credible and useful to *US Soccer* coach education staff. To ensure information is useful, we would like you to be involved in the study design.

Study Procedures and Time Commitment
If you agree to take part in this study, you will be invited to participate in meetings with Sara Campbell, the lead researcher on this project, and other coach education staff members. The meetings will take place over a video-conferencing platform (e.g., Zoom). The meetings will take place in the spring and summer of 2021. We estimate there will be 7-10 virtual meetings approximately 2-3 weeks apart. Each meeting and will last between 30 minutes to 1 hour and 30 minutes. Participation in all meetings is encouraged but not required to participate in the study.

Before each meeting, we will ask for your permission to record the video and audio for each meeting. In addition, we will ask for your permission to export chat records and other documents produced during the meetings. These artifacts will help us reflect on the facilitation of the meetings and plan for future meetings.

Confidentiality of Records
Some of the data collected for this study includes direct identifiers (e.g., name). Your privacy and confidentiality will be maintained in the following ways.

- Data will be stored in a password protected file and will only be accessible to the research team.
- Researchers will not release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent unless required by law.
- This research involves the transmission of data over the Internet. Every reasonable effort has been taken to ensure the effective use of available technology; however, confidentiality during online communication cannot be guaranteed.

Risks and Benefits
We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research. Through this project we hope to generate information about the teaching methods at *US Soccer* that can inform and improve coaching courses at *US Soccer*.

Taking Part is Voluntary
Participation is voluntary. You can refuse to take part or stop at any time without penalty. Your decision to participate will have not affect your employment or employee evaluations.

Participant Rights
The main researcher conducting this study is Sara Campbell, a research assistant and PhD study at the University of Georgia. If you have any question, you may contact Sara at sara.campbell@uga.edu or her supervisor, Dr. Bryan McCullick, at bamccull@uga.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 706-542-3199 or by email at IRB@uga.edu.

If you agree to participate in this research study, please sign below:

____________________	____________________	__________
Name of Researcher	Signature	Date
____________________	____________________	__________
Name of Participant	Signature	Date

Journal, Interview Consent Letter

Dear Participant,

My name is Sara Campbell, and I am a student in the Kinesiology Department at the University of Georgia under the supervision of Dr. Bryan McCullick. I am inviting you to take part in a research study.

We are conducting a study to evaluate the principles guiding the coach education program at *US Soccer*. We are inviting you to participate in the study because you play a key role in the program design and delivery.

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to complete a daily reflective journal for two weeks, followed by one interview approximately one hour in length. The daily reflective journal can be completed in the format of your choosing (e.g., written, video/audio log, drawing, diagram etc.). We estimate the journal entries will take between 10-20 minutes per day, but times may vary depending on the amount and type of information you wish to share. After you complete the journal entries, an interview will take place over a video-conferencing platform (e.g., Zoom) during a time that is convenient for you. Before the interview, we will inform you that the interview will be recorded (video and audio). Both the journal and the interview will be used for analysis and publication.

Participation is voluntary. You can refuse to take part or stop at any time without penalty. Your decision to participate will not affect your employment or employee evaluations with *US Soccer*.

We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research. Through this project we hope to generate information about how the principles are being applied and adapted and which principles are meaningful.

Some of the data collected for this study includes direct identifiers (e.g., name). Your privacy and confidentiality will be maintained in the following ways.

- Data will be stored in a password protected file and will only be accessible to the research team.
- Researchers will not release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent unless required by law.
- This research involves the transmission of data over the Internet. Every reasonable effort has been taken to ensure the effective use of available technology; however, confidentiality during online communication cannot be guaranteed.
- Information from this research will be used for the purposes of this research only and will not be used in future studies or shared with other researchers outside of this specific project.

The main researcher conducting this study is Sara Campbell, a research assistant and PhD student at the University of Georgia. If you have any questions, you may contact Sara at sara.campbell@uga.edu or her supervisor, Dr. Bryan McCullick, at bamccull@uga.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 706-542-3199 or by email at IRB@uga.edu.

Please keep this letter for your records.

Sincerely,

Sara Campbell, MS, CSCS
University of Georgia
Department of Kinesiology

APPENDIX E

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL DIRECTIONS AND PROMPT

Guidelines for Reflective Journal

Purpose: The purpose of this reflective journal is to capture the daily events that occur within your role at *US Soccer*, and to document how you feel these events represent the principles we established together. Through this journal, I hope we can generate information about how the principles are being applied and adapted, as well as which principles are meaningful to you. This information, along with data collected from interviews, can be used to support the development of the principles and to teach others about the principles.

Directions:

1. Document your daily experiences and personal reflections for *two weeks* (August 30-September 10). You may compose entries throughout the day, or at a specified time each day, whichever is most convenient for you. Try to compose entries as close as possible to the time an event occurred so you can recall rich details of the experience. There is no predetermined format or length for entries, but I do ask that you attempt to complete *a minimum of 5 entries total* (you can complete more than five entries).
2. To compose your journal entries, review the prompt below and compose your response in any format you wish including, written logs (handwritten or typed), video/audio logs, poems, photos, drawings, hyperlinks, collages, or diagrams, for example.
3. After you complete all your journal entries, answer the post journal reflection questions on the last page of this document.
4. Finally, upload your: (a) daily journal entries and (b) post journal reflective questions to your private Google Drive Folder *by Monday September 13 at midnight EST*. You may upload your entries on a rolling basis, or in their entirety at the end of the two week period. If you prefer to upload your journal entries to Sara in another way (email, phone) you may do so.

Confidentiality and privacy: Any identifiable information you provide in the journal about yourself, or others will be removed to ensure your privacy and confidentiality. In addition, you will have the opportunity to clarify details about your entries in a follow-up interview with the evaluator.

Questions and contact information: If you have any questions or concerns you may contact Sara Campbell, the lead evaluator on this study at sara.campbell@uga.edu.

Thank you for your time and participation in this project. Please continue to the next page to view the prompt and principles for your first journal entry.

-Sara Campbell

Reflective Journal Prompt

Daily Prompt

- First, think about some things you've done or seen today in your role with *US Soccer*. These may be regular everyday experiences, or significant, memorable events. Consider the following questions:
  - Where were you?
  - Who else was there?
  - What were you doing?
  - What did you recognize?
  - What physical or emotional reactions did you have when this moment occurred?
- Next, review the list of principles below and think about how (or if) the principles were applied in your daily experiences. Consider:
  - Which principle(s) are represented in your experience?
  - How well this experience demonstrates an application of the principles?
  - If there any experiences where you or someone else failed to apply the principles, or applied a contrary/opposite principle?
  - What circumstances helped you (or others) apply the principles?
  - What circumstances prevented you (or others) from applying the principles?
- Record and reflect on your daily experience using the questions above. You do not need to answer all the questions. You are free to use any format you wish including written logs, video/audio logs, poems, photos, drawings, hyperlinks, or diagrams, for example.
- In your journal entry, please include:
  - The date the journal entry took place.
  - The principles that are expressed in your experience.

Coach Education Principles (in no particular order)

- Make learning the central purpose and shared goal.
- Create a safe, enjoyable and challenging learning environment.
- Build trusting and respectful relationships.
- Engage in self-reflection.
- Value diverse perspectives.
- Promote autonomous, lifelong learning.
- Set clear expectations.
- Support and guide each other in pursuit of expectations.
- Apply new knowledge to your reality.
- Take time to understand others' current situation, perspective, and aspirations.

*These sub-principles provide specific guidance about how the coach education department effectively carries out the three board overarching principles of *US Soccer*.

Post Journal Reflection Questions and Interview Preparation

Directions: After you've completed the journal, review the entries and answer the following questions.

1) Select one or two events from your journal that you feel improved your understanding of the principles. We will discuss these in more depth in the one-on-one follow-up interview.

Event one: Include the date of the event and a brief description (1-5 sentences or you can copy paste)

Event two: Include the date of the event and a brief description (1-5 sentences or you can copy paste)

2) Explain which principles are most meaningful to you?

3) Explain which principles are least meaningful to you (even if they have meaning, but not as much as others)?

4) Describe how keeping a journal changed your view of the principles?

APPENDIX F

EXAMPLE INTERVIEW GUIDE

Greetings

- How are you doing?
- Thank you for taking the time to complete the journal and participant in this interview.
- I just want to confirm that you are available to talk until ____ your time. We won't go past that time unless you'd like to tell me more.
- Today, I'd like to hear more about the experiences you shared in your reflective journal. I'm not here to judge whether you or others are following the principles, we are here to understand how the principles are being applied and adapted and which principles are meaningful to you.
- A reminder that your participation in the interview is voluntary, and we can stop at any time.
- Any identifiable information you provide about yourself, or others will be removed to ensure privacy and confidentiality.
- Also, I will send you the video and transcript from our interview after it's over, so you can review it and let me know if you would like me to remove any of your statements.
- Do you have any questions for me before I start recording?

Background

- Can you tell me a little about some of the tasks your currently responsible for in your role at *US Soccer*?
- Would you say your two weeks of journaling is a good representation of a typical week in your role at *US Soccer*?
    - How so?

Journal Events

- In your post-journal reflection questions, I asked you select one or two events that demonstrate an application of the principles (or a lack of). The first event you highlighted was your conversation with the NWSL player.
    - Can you start by giving me some background on this situation?
        - Where were you?
        - Who was there with you?
        - What were you trying to accomplish?
    - What challenges were you faced with in this situation?
    - *How did the principles guide your thinking or behaviors during this experience?*
        - Were you consciously thinking about the principles in this moment?
    - What would you have done differently?
    - How did the principles help you accomplish what you were trying to?
    - Have there been any changes or advancements on this situation since it occurred?

- The other event you highlighted in your post-journal reflection questions, was the webinar with the referee department.
    - Can you start by giving me some background on this situation?
        - Where were you?
        - Who was there with you?
        - What were you trying to accomplish?
    - What challenges were you faced with in this situation?
    - *How did the principles guide your thinking or behaviors during this experience?*
        - Were you consciously thinking about the principles in this moment?
        - What did you feel you needed from others in this situation?
    - What would you have done differently?
    - How did the principles help you accomplish what you were trying to?
    - Have there been any changes or advancements on this situation since it occurred?
- Are there any other events from your journal entries you'd like to tell me more about?

Changes/Adaptations to Principles

- Are there any changes you would make to the principles now that you've been able to practice applying them?
    - Are there any principles you would eliminate? Why?
    - Are there any principles you would add?
    - Are there any principles you would combine? Why?
    - Would you change the wording of any of the principles? Why?

APPENDIX G

PRINCIPLES OF PRINCIPLES FOCUSED EVALUATION

Every evaluation theory contains assumptions about how an evaluation should be carried out. In PFE, fidelity is ensured when the evaluator attends to the eight principles of PFE (Patton, 2018c). Table G1 describes how the eight principles of PFE were embedded into this evaluation.

Table G1: Application of the eight principles of PFE

Principles of PFE	Application
Matching: Conduct PFE on principles-driven initiatives with principles-committed people.	In step one of the evaluation, I spent five-months in the program interviewing the full-time staff, observing courses, analyzing course documents, and participating in staff meeting to determine if the appropriate conditions were in place for a PFE. This allowed me to determine that this CEP and the people within it were well matched for a PFE.
Distinctions matter: Distinguish types of principles: natural, moral, and effectiveness; distinguish principles from values, beliefs, lessons, rules, and proverbs.	In step four of the evaluation, I distinguished effectiveness principles from natural principles and moral principles (Patton, 2018c) (see Figure 5.4). To further clarify what principles are, I differentiated principles from rules, goals, and values.
Quality: Address explicitly how the quality of principles is assessed. Support development of effectiveness principles that meet the GUIDE criteria; they guide; are useful; inspire; support developmental adaptations; and are evaluable.	In step four of the evaluation, I introduced the PIUs to the GUIDE criteria (Figure 5.5), which we used to develop and review principles to ensure they were of high-quality (Patton, 2018c).
Evaluation rigor: Systematically inquire into and evaluate effectiveness principles for both implementation (are they followed?) and results (what difference does it make?).	Evaluation questions one (how are the principles being applied and adapted by PIUs?) assessed adherence to the sub-principles, and evaluation question two (Which sub-principles are meaningful to PIUs?) determined what difference this adherence made to PIUs. In this evaluation, if a principle was not adhered to, it could still be positioned as meaningful if they used that principle to determine effectiveness.

Utilization-focused: Focus on intended use by intended users from beginning to end, facilitating the evaluation process to ensure utility and actual use.	Use underpinned this evaluation from beginning to end. For example, when I introduced PFE to the PIUs, I explained I explained that the theory was designed to produce information that would be useful to them. Moreover, when we initially designed the sub-principles in step 4, we established use as a key feature of a high-quality principle. In addition, in step five we determined how the evaluation findings could be used by PIUs (evaluation purpose). Likewise, anytime we came across challenges or had to make difficult decisions, we asked what would help us achieve the forms of use we had pre-determined. Process use was also attended to throughout the evaluation. Finally, I took time to work with PIUs to enhance use of findings.
Beyond rhetoric: Support using principles comprehensively; use them or lose them; don't let them become just a list; apply them across functions and tasks.	This evaluation focused on how (or if) the PIUs used the sub-principles we established. Principles that were not used across people, contexts, and tasks were deemed less meaningful and were thus discarded or revised.
Interconnections: The eight principles of PFE are an interdependent, interconnected whole (not a pick and choose list). Fidelity involves addressing all eight principles of PFE.	The eight principles of PFE were all addressed throughout the evaluation process. This table makes that process transparent to readers and evaluators.
Learning: Reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the PFE process and results to learn and improve; engage in principles focused reflective practice. Extract and apply lessons learned.	The lessons learned provided at end of Chapter 7 contribute to our understanding of PFE, which is a relatively new and untested evaluation theory. Scholars wishing to pursue evaluation or other types of collaborative inquiry might also find these lessons helpful.