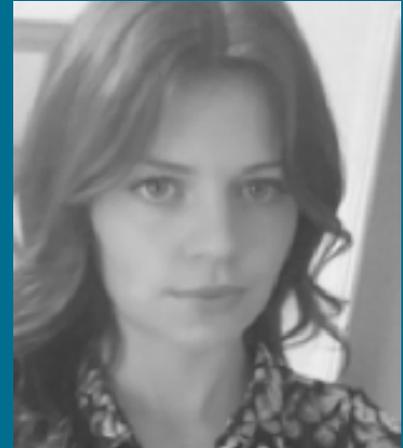


Q&A with Dr Laura Gale

**from the Cluster for Research into
Coaching (CRiC) at Manchester
Metropolitan University**



Conducted by Dr Lisa Whitaker
UK Coaching

COULD YOU TELL ME A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF?

I am a Lecturer in Sports Coaching in the Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU). My research addresses the everyday working realities of community sport coaches, with particular attention given to the personal, emotional and socio-political features of practice. I work with local authorities and private community coaching providers in the east and west of England. Prior to becoming involved in research, I completed an undergraduate degree

in sports coaching and performance, followed by a PhD in understanding community coaches' experiences of everyday coaching practice at the University of Hull. My most recent work includes: (1) surviving austerity in community sport; (2) exploring trust and distrust in community sports coaching; (3) mentoring in community sports coaching and (4) the interplay between emotion, identity and workplace relations in community sports coaching.

SO, WHAT IS THE CLUSTER FOR RESEARCH INTO COACHING (CRIC)?

The CRiC draws on the expertise of MMU academics working in coaching pedagogy, coach education, the sociology of coaching, and performance analysis coaching to stimulate and support a sports coaching community. The cluster aims to generate critical approaches to coaching to establish a repository for the outcomes of coaching research, and to provide opportunities and encouragement to early career and

postgraduate researchers. A significant focus of the CRiC's work is to support and advise coaching practitioners and coaching associations in all sports and related activities. In addition, CRiC organises a biannual coaching conference in conjunction with Cardiff Metropolitan University and the University of Worcester.

WHAT ARE THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CRIC?

The CRiC was established in late 2012 in order to encourage, enable and disseminate research into sports coaching among academics, practitioners and policy agencies.

Our key objectives are to:

- generate a broad community of researchers interested in sports coaching
- encourage novel and, where appropriate, critical approaches to sports coaching research
- engage with, and support, coaching practitioners, coaching associations and policy agencies from all sports and related activities
- provide opportunities and encouragement to early career and postgraduate researchers in the field of sports coaching
- publish high-quality research and publications that are impactful and accessible to a variety of audiences.

WHO IS PART OF THE CRIC AND WHAT RESEARCH TOPICS ARE A PARTICULAR FOCUS?

There are five core members of the CRiC (see below) and the current overarching research areas of the group cover:

- professionalism and politics
- elite coach education and mentoring
- the coach as a community practitioner.



TEAM MEMBERS

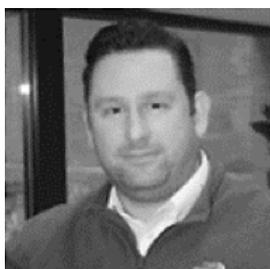
Dr Bill Taylor



Dr Bill Taylor is a Senior Lecturer in Sports Coaching at MMU. His research interests are varied and include: the conceptualisation and critical deconstruction of professionalism in sports coaching; the professional learning

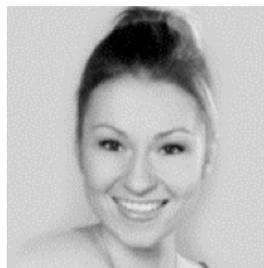
of coaching practitioners; coaching in the 'risk society' and the growth of defences practices; and the use of critical sociology to examine coaching practice and coach education. His sporting links include UK Coaching, the English Football Association, England Hockey, British Canoeing, British Judo, Sports Council, English Institute of Sport and Sport England. Bill was a co-editor of *Moral Panic in Physical Education and Coaching*. His most recent work explores elite hockey players' experiences of video-based coaching and elite sports coach mentoring programmes.

Dr Ryan Groom



Dr Ryan Groom is a Senior Lecturer in Sports Coaching and Programme Leader for the MA/MSc Exercise and Sports degrees at MMU. He is also a lead tutor on the MA Coaching Studies degree. As a practitioner, he has over 10 years' experience working in elite football, analysing team and individual player performance. He has staffed 42 full England international matches, over 100 English Premier League games, 30 UEFA Cup matches and two League Cup finals. Ryan has worked on a number of funded research grants in sports coaching, including projects for Sport England (Volunteering Insight), the English Football Association (Quality Assurance in Coach Education), Canoe England (Workforce Audit), and the English Institute of Sport (Performance Analysis in Elite Sport). Ryan is co-editor of Research Methods in Sports Coaching and Learning in Sports Coaching. He has published widely on learning, education, mentoring, performance analysis and organisational change in sports coaching.

Petra Kolić



Petra Kolić is an early career researcher, currently completing her PhD study on the experiences of coaches, coach educators and coach education managers within elite coach education on the UKCC Coach Level 4 award. For the purpose of this project, she has collaborated with UK Coaching, British Canoeing and British Judo. Her passion for sport stems from her career as a youth elite figure skater and coach. In her research, she aims to understand how stakeholders (eg coach and athlete, coach and coach educator) act and interact, how they think and feel about these processes, and why they do so in certain ways. She draws on ethnography as a qualitative methodology that allows her to conduct longitudinal research in coaching environments, and explore participant perspectives from formal and informal encounters that include observations, interviews and naturally occurring conversations.



Alexandra Consterdine

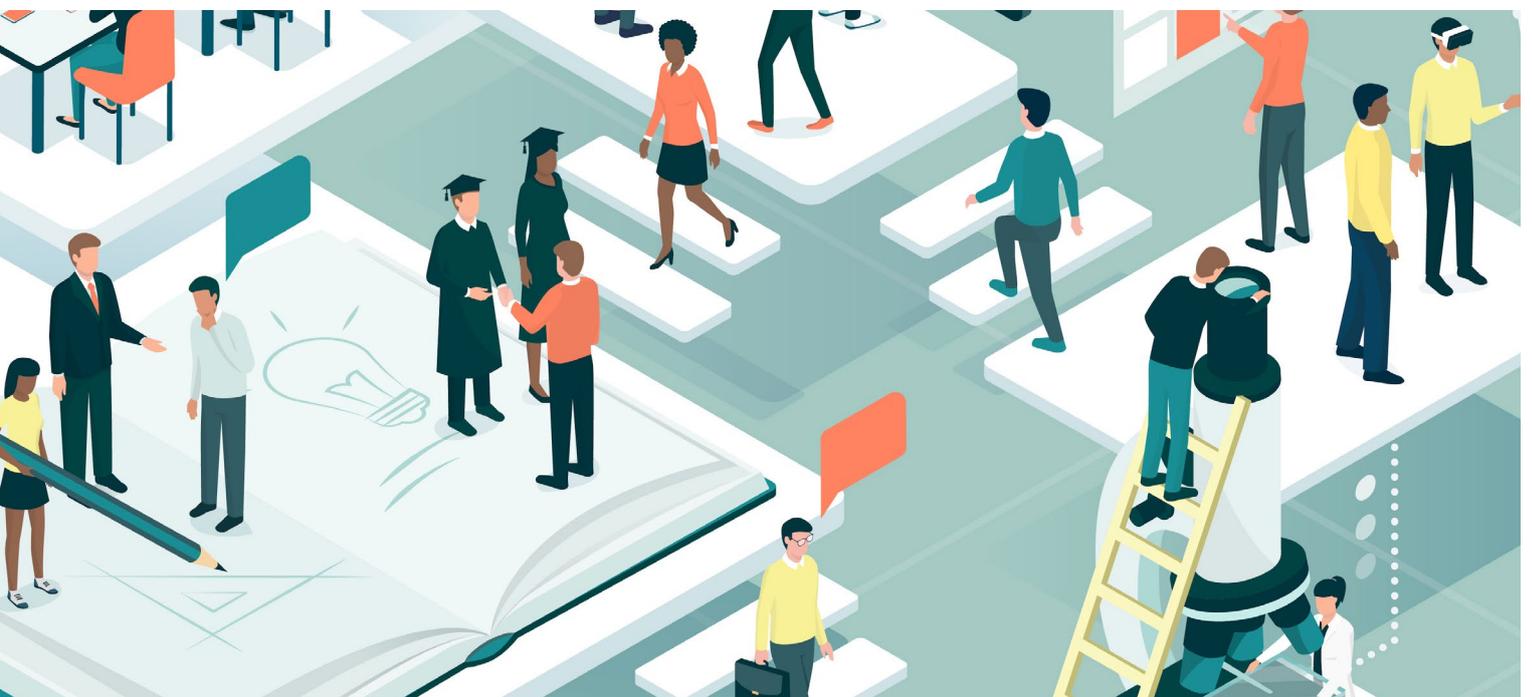


Alexandra Consterdine has lectured for 15 years in a variety of further education institutions within the UK, teaching across a range of sport science courses. In 2014, she completed an MSc in Exercise and Sport at MMU, graduating with a distinction, and then spent two years lecturing at MMU as an Associate Lecturer within the Department of Exercise and Sport Science. Currently, she holds a GTA position at MMU and is three years into a PhD project on the sociological exploration of power in high-performance sports. As a CRiC research student member, she has actively presented at various national and international conferences and her published research papers include the micro-politics of coaching.

Ian Britton



Ian Britton's PhD focused on investigating how video-based performance analysis feedback is used by coaching teams within an elite team sports environment. In particular, the work adopted an ethnographic approach to study the interactions and behaviours that occurred, during video-based feedback sessions, between different members of the coaching team and also the coaching team and the athletes. This work was only made possible due to the network of sports that utilise the English Institute of Sport (EIS), to help support their high-performance programmes and elite athletes. It was through the EIS that he was able to provide performance analysis support to teams and gain access to the video-based feedback sessions, to collect data for his PhD study.



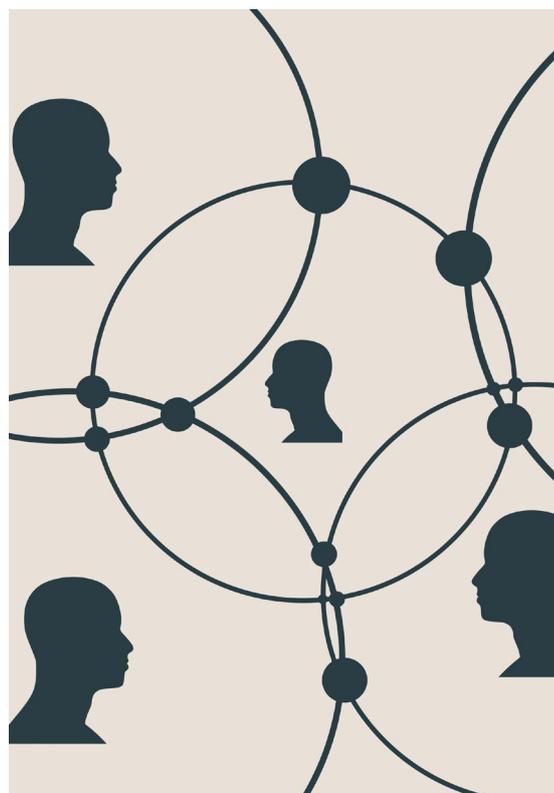
WHAT ARE THE KEY SUCCESSES OF THE CRIC GROUP?

Conferences: the CRiC has successfully held four international conferences (the fifth happening in 2019) and held the first CRiC Coaching in the Community Conference in April 2018.

Publications: CRiC researchers publish world-leading and internationally renowned research, assessed through the Research Excellence Framework (REF) within the areas of sports coaching practice, sports coach education, the history of sports coaching, child protection and the use of video-based feedback in sports coaching. They have published books and special editions for journals. In addition, we have a member of CRiC on the editorial board for Sports Coaching Review.

Funding: The group has attracted research council funding.

Members of CRiC are also still active practitioners in the field.



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LAURA, YOU ORGANISED THE FIRST COACHING IN THE COMMUNITY CONFERENCE EARLIER THIS YEAR IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CRIC. HOW DID YOU THINK IT WENT?

Yes, on Wednesday 25 April 2018, MMU (Cheshire Campus) and Buckinghamshire New University hosted the first Coaching in the Community Conference in partnership with the CRiC. Organised by Dr Ben Ives and myself, this event built on a strong history of conferences previously delivered by the CRiC. We were very happy with the event and received positive feedback from the delegates. For us, the day provided an important and much-needed platform for academics, coach educators, policy makers and practitioners to come together to share and debate research, critical experiences and expertise, in relation to the development of community sports coaching. Particular attention was paid to exploring:

- the everyday realities of community coaching practice
- coach education and mentoring
- developing community coaching practice.

The significance of these discussions were grounded in the generation of new and original knowledge, in relation to the experiences and development of community sports coaches, who are increasingly being used to deliver schemes to achieve a variety of sporting and non-sporting policy priorities. To follow the research and discussions from the day, follow us on Twitter [@CRiC_2018](https://twitter.com/CRiC_2018) and [@mmucric](https://twitter.com/mmucric)

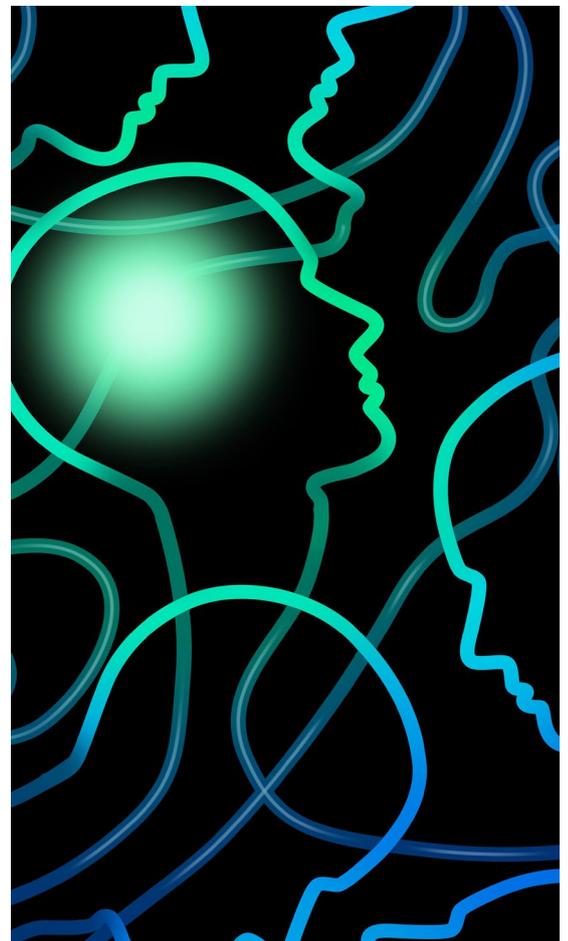
WHAT WERE THE KEY THINGS TO TAKE FROM THE CONFERENCE? DO YOU THINK IT STIMULATED FURTHER INTEREST IN THE AREA?

Coaching in the Community is playing an increasingly important role. Community coaches have been tasked with doing more than focusing on sport development alone. Instead, they are also charged with using sport and leisure activities to deliver social policy outcomes (eg reducing crime, developing pro-social behaviour, overcoming social isolation and exclusion, rebuilding communities, developing healthy lifestyles, and raising educational aspirations and attainment) by working with target populations (eg disaffected youth, unemployed, disabled). The importance of coaches engaging under-represented groups in the community has received significant attention in recent public Sport England reports. It was fantastic to hear about the research that is specifically trying to explore and understand those realities of practice for community sports coaches

who are trying to deliver various different schemes on the ground level. The day was a great success, with a strong community feel. The presenters and delegates shared some rich insights into the current landscape of community sports coaching; in particular, illuminating the (micro)political, emotional, uncertain and contested dimensions of working life in community coaching contexts. We felt as though we were able to expand our knowledge together and hopefully, by doing that, we can further grow and stimulate the interest and research into community sports coaching.

ARE THERE ANY PLANS TO RUN FUTURE CONFERENCES?

There are plans to run two future events. Dr Ben Ives and I have plans to build on the success of the day through both a follow-up conference in 2019 at Buckinghamshire New University, and the development of an edited book into community sports coaching due for publication early next year. The CRiC also has a biannual conference that is held in conjunction with Sports Coaching Review to be hosted by the University of Worcester in 2019.



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