What Does it Mean to Teach Riding?

A Snapshot of Contemporary Practices in England and Western Australia

Susan Jane Maw


This dissertation is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Murdoch University, Perth, Western, Australia, 2012.
I declare that this dissertation is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not been previously submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

Due account has been made in the text to all other material used.

The thesis is fewer than 100,000 words.

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Abstract

Equestrian pursuits now largely focus on competitive riding, with the focus of most riders’ being, on competing at some level. As a result teaching riding has changed from an instructional approach to a coaching model, with the associated language and paradigms being adopted. This study was undertaken to understand how these changes are being implemented by equestrian teachers working within six syllabi (the two used in England and Australia for formal accreditation and the four alternative syllabi that were used by my participants to supplement their formal qualifications). Qualitative methodology was used and data gathered through observations of a single, or multiple lessons, and the recording of an open-ended interview with each participant (based around six key questions). Forty-one participants, all involved in coaching equestrianism in England and Western Australia, were involved. The focus of participants’ teaching practice was three disciplines: dressage, show jumping and horse trials (eventing). Participants held the first, second and third levels of mainstream accreditation to teach equestrianism and some were elite riders who coached. It was found that some participants also followed an alternative teaching practice to augment the mainstream accreditations and therefore, these syllabi also became part of the study. Research began by considering the theories that underpinned the six syllabi and consideration of the historical perspective of equestrianism to reveal that changes are taking place in the accreditation of teaching riding, with teachers adopting a coaching style. Further, participants developed personal curricula based upon their own riding skills and on replication of how they were taught. While the data indicated that it was widely believed that a good rider does not necessarily make a good teacher the accreditation bodies, who create the syllabi, assume that to be the case and offer teachers little support or information on teaching and learning theories. This means that the riding teacher is often reliant on their riding skills rather than on their theoretical understanding to inform their teaching practice, which can result in an impoverished riding curriculum.
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My Early Beginnings

This dissertation is grounded in my praxis as a qualified Riding Instructor, Hatha Yoga Teacher and Tertiary Graduate with several education qualifications (Grad. Dip. Ed.; M. Ed.). In a nutshell the thesis is about teaching riding: how it is taught, why it is taught, why we do it the way it is now practised and the results of this practice.

I began riding at a very early age at the local riding schools where, in retrospect, the teaching was pretty poor. I can still remember my father running up and down the back lane with me on a pony trying to craft the rising trot. My father had learned to ride in the military during his war years in India and was passing on his skills, encouraging me to grip with my knees as I bounced around on the pony. At the age of ten he bought me my own pony and in hindsight I now know that this pony and my father were my first riding teachers. Both parent and pony not only taught me to ride, but instilled patience, confidence, selflessness and the pleasure and pain of equestrianism.

At the age of fifteen life decisions needed to be made and horses were still very much part of my life. It was a friend who gave me that eureka moment when she told me about training programmes to become a qualified riding teacher. I obtained the necessary scholastic qualifications and began what has been a lifetime occupation. The accreditation was with the British system which had derived from the military concept; albeit by the time of my training this aspect was diminishing, I still remember retired military personnel teaching me through the instructions and one way dialogue of commands.¹

¹ Interestingly certain teaching formats are still used, for example, drills for formation riding (quadrilles and pas de deux in Pony Club competitions).
The riding theories I learned were an amalgamation of the traditional methods derived through the European lineages, which I formulated more fully after my qualification when I worked in Germany, Austria and Italy. Returning to England I undertook the next accreditation and became a British Horse Society Intermediate Instructor (BHSII) and began my competing career culminating in riding at Advanced Horse Trials (Eventing at three star level), whilst also working in the horse racing industry, and riding on the hunting field. Thus my pedagogy was based on traditional theories within a multidisciplinary practice which followed a decision made at a very early age.

I cannot explain what makes me want to be outside in all the extremes of weather, for little monetary reward, or risk my life for the rush of adrenalin that jumping fences at speed gives, but it is what I continue to do despite trying alternatives. Although I have changed direction I always come back to teaching and riding horses, thus my desire to undertake this project. When considering a PhD subject the consensus of opinion from my peers was to work on a subject I was passionate about. Therefore, it was a logical decision to research a subject I have been totally immersed and embedded in (Moustakas, 1990). From the position of total immersion it is not always easy to see clearly what established practice is. Although I have been teaching riding for years, and have many friends and colleagues in the industry, I have not considered how I, or they, teach riding. Therefore, I began to unpack what it means to teach riding as a coach and instructor.

I am aware how my riding teaching has evolved through experience within my craft. The better rider I became, the higher competition level I was able to achieve, and this informed my teaching. Juxtaposed are theories derived from my background in tertiary education, which also enhance my practice. However, others teaching horse riding will have different experiences, and also different accreditations. When I began teaching in Western Australia I became aware that my title had changed from that of a riding instructor to that of coach.

In England the qualification accredits riding teachers as instructors, whilst in Australia the qualification to teach riding accredits riding teachers as coaches and in Europe equestrians are known as trainers. Although there is a difference in the
terminology neither can be totally associated with horses per se, and if the outcome is teaching horse riding why does the accreditation not imply this? If I taught English I would be an English teacher and yet neither accreditation allocates the title of teacher. Why the title is different, and what difference the title makes to the way riding is taught is the basis for the thesis. A comparative study between the syllabus of the British Horse Society, which awarded me my accreditation as an Intermediate Instructor, and the Equestrian Federation of Australia will ensue.

**Thesis Structure**

**Chapter 1**

Following from my introduction the first chapter outlines the framework for the thesis. I begin by outlining the importance of the thesis and the reason for the study. I then introduce the reader to the research questions that will be explored in the thesis. The questions are:

- What difference to the practice does the title of accreditation make and how does it manifest?
- As the syllabus and accreditation is drawn into the coaching paradigms how does this change the dynamic of the riding lesson?
- What impact does competition have on the riding lesson?
- If competition is a main focus in the riding lesson does the rider’s expectation of the teacher change?
- Does the teacher become responsible in developing a horse that can perform?
- What is the role of a personal curriculum when teaching riding?
- What is the influence of lineage on practice?
- What role does the language have and has it changed in response to the changes?
If the rider has less accountability their riding skills are deemed less important to them, and therefore the riding lesson becomes the horsing lesson that de Kunffy (2002, 2003) discusses. So are riding lessons horsing lessons? The research will consider the change that is taking place in England in relation to the introduction of the coaching syllabus and will compare it to the existing coaching syllabus that has been in place in Western Australia since the national accreditation system was introduced in 1980s. The literature section outlines the need for the use of lay literature and how these texts will be used and why. To complement the literature published by distinguished riders, academic literature from the educational sector will be used to offer a theoretical understanding of teaching practices within the equestrian environment. At the end of the literature section I clarify how I use the term pedagogy: as a way of loosely describing the styles of instructing, teaching and coaching within the equestrian environment. This is not a thesis about pedagogy, as a deeply theoretical construct, although the links between teaching styles and various educational pedagogical theories is made. My interest, as indicated by my title, is whether the apparent change in pedagogical approach (from instruction to coaching) evident in the accreditation syllabi, makes a difference as to how riding is taught. The qualitative method I use to explore the topic is outlined towards the end of this chapter. Qualitative research allows for a people-oriented enquiry and the research will use recorded interviews that have open-ended questions, observations of the riding lesson to discuss the practice. The data will be analysed following Patton (2002) in which the transcripts will be checked and cross-checked to discover patterns and themes.

Chapter 2

To begin to answer the question of whether or not the title given to equestrians who teach riding matters, I will provide an historical context for riding education using historical texts to understand past practices, against which present accreditation practices can be positioned. It is important to consider the history of the horse, its training and how equestrian pedagogy evolved. The second chapter will offer a brief history of the physiological changes as the result of breeding of the horse, the training processes it has endured and some of the influential riding masters associated with modern equestrianism. Identification of some of the influential riding
teachers will be taken from Gianoli (1969), and is included in the thesis to identify the theories which influence present day practice. The historical perspective discusses how the horse was initially used for military purposes and how the military influenced riding instruction. It moves to the present day use of the horse, which is predominantly within the sporting arena. The chapter will allow the reader to understand the legacies that influence modern equestrianism.

Chapter 3

The six syllabi (the two used in England and Australia for formal accreditation and the four alternative syllabi that were used by my participants to supplement their formal qualifications) will each be discussed individually with regard to the aims they are trying to achieve. A discussion of the content will be considered and an evaluation and comparisons will then be made.

The chapter brings pedagogy into the present day by considering the syllabi in place in England and Western Australia. Analysis of the syllabi will help to understand the difference between the two, how they inform practice from which the title coach or instructor is given and consider the pedagogical theory that informs the practice. Whilst undertaking the field research I became aware that some of the participants were following a syllabus other than the one for which they were accredited. Gaps in the mainstream syllabus were cited as a reason for creating other syllabi however the new syllabi have the potential to create different philosophies. The chapter will consider the mainstream system and four alternative syllabi that were identified. The alternative syllabi derived from the participants who, whilst holding the mainstream accreditations, also chose to study in areas that specialise in specific aspects of equestrian teaching. Therefore syllabi from equestrian science will be considered as well as three models of equestrian biomechanics. From the military beginnings, discussed in the second chapter, the research considers the changes that have taken the pedagogy from its origins to present day practices and how they are reflected in the different syllabi. The implication of the horses’ role within the coaching paradigm will be discussed to review how riding involves three brains those of the rider, the coach and the horse. The impact of the horse makes
equestrianism exceptional amongst sports and this aspect will be reviewed with regard to the coaching model that informs the syllabi.

Chapter 4

The chapter will further consider the concepts of coaching and instructing pedagogies and how they inform actual practice. I will discuss both systems in more detail as well as the alternative approaches to consider how the pedagogical theory might be adapted and classified within the equestrian context. The chapter will explore how the horse can change the pedagogical context of the syllabi and how this may then affect practice. This is then followed with an outline of a generic riding lesson to consider how instruction and coaching paradigms can be used. Following the discussion I offer a theory proposing that the alternative syllabi could easily be incorporated into the mainstream syllabi and demonstrate this using a personal experiment. I argue that using aspects from the alternative syllabi in conjunction with the mainstream syllabi may augment practice.

Chapter 5

The chapter introduces the participants and then reviews the interviews. I begin by introducing the participants and the method undertaken to recruit the people helping the enquiry. Following this, the chapter reviews the discussions that took place during the recorded interviews. I begin this process by considering their views on the syllabi they are accredited to teach and the changes being made to them. I then consider their understanding of instruction and coaching and other issues arising from the open ended questioning process. The final part of the review is a discussion of the six key questions that all the participants were asked. An analysis of the data reviews the patterns that emerged to conclude the chapter.

Chapter 6

The sixth chapter takes the research out into riding arenas and discusses the observed riding lessons. Exploration of the data considers the effectiveness of the syllabi in practice with analysis from the field research to review the participants’
implementation of the syllabi in their lessons. For example, safety in the lesson and planning the lesson are mainstream syllabi expectations, and therefore how and if these are used in practice will be considered. The language used in the lessons is also analysed to evaluate how it has been affected by changing pedagogy. As in the previous chapter, the participants’ views are used as the primary data with which to discover patterns of teaching practice. Perspectives of a small sample group are also evaluated as a separate case study to augment the data. The chapter concludes with the summary of the overriding themes that have emerged.

Conclusion

The final chapter closes the thesis by reviewing the results and their relation to the general world of equestrianism. I review how through this research a particular depiction of pedagogy has emerged. Recommendations are offered with regard to how the research can be taken forward, and how the research augments existing research. The thesis offers suggestions for how formal equestrian teacher accreditation can be enhanced.
Chapter 1
Research Objectives, the Thesis Framework

Importance of the Thesis

This thesis is concerned with equestrian pedagogy and how the riding teacher creates a personal curriculum for each student/horse combination. Although equestrianism has features that distinguish it from other sports it is being impacted by teaching practices developed in other sporting contexts. Equestrian subjects are an emerging field with much of the research coming from veterinarian faculties, where the focus is on the horse, and the subject of equestrian pedagogy has received little exploration. Moreover, there have been recent changes to the equestrian syllabi, in which teaching riding is being located within a broader sports coaching model, and the extent of the impact of these changes on equestrian teaching has yet to be studied. The thesis intends to fill these gaps. The research has been designed to explore two different teaching models: one that is currently in place in Western Australia, where the coaching model has been in place for over thirty years, and the English system, where the move for equestrian teaching to embrace the broader sports coaching paradigms is more recent. This has created a need to understand how equestrian teachers were taught, how they are now taught, and what effect the accreditation has on modern teaching practice. For example if the riding teacher is accredited as a coach the implication is that their practice is based around the coaching concept of competition. If competition is the driving force of the riding lesson then there is a possibility that riding skills can be affected and horse welfare compromised.

Clarification of terminology

I have supplied a glossary of terms at the end of the thesis. However, to avoid confusion I feel there is a requirement to initially outline how I use some of the various key terms. The research aims to clarify equestrian pedagogy in terms of changing practice, and the title awarded the teacher of equitation, and the impact this has on their practice. To avoid misunderstanding let me begin with an observation
about how use the word “pedagogy”. Pedagogy can be a deeply theoretical construct, but I am using the word in its looser meaning to talk about the style of equestrian coaching: the style of equestrian instructing, the style of equestrian teaching, and ways of learning within the equestrian environment, in order to ask does it make a difference as to how riding is taught?

For the purpose of the thesis I shall identify the person who gives the riding lesson as a “teacher.” I have chosen to do this based on the arguments put forward by Wenger (1998). Wenger argues that teaching needs to be opportunistic (to capture the moment). In the riding lesson the horse creates the opportunities for teaching through its responses and reactions the teacher then draws on their riding knowledge to make the most of the opportunity the horse has created. Martens (1997) argues that good coaching is good teaching and therefore teaching can be considered within a coaching context. The teaching style therefore, is based on a style of pedagogy that uses multiple techniques and theories in which to create learning. The idea of teacher as coach is not a new idea, and derives from the notion that the coach supports players, and coaches as teachers must help players develop foundational knowledge and skill (Wilson and Peterson, 2006).

Teachers take on different roles: at times the teacher must sometimes tell the student what to do and at other times inquire and listen to the student. The boundaries are blurred and therefore, for the purpose of the thesis the term teacher is used to encompass all pedagogical styles unless I specifically make a point about one style or refer to the accreditation. When I refer to teaching I mean teaching riding skills. To gain a full teaching accreditation the candidate must pass three elements of the syllabus: riding, horse-management and teaching. So the teacher is able to help the student/rider with the management of their horse by offering advice, with regard to feeding, exercise and tack they think is suitable. Although this is also a form of teaching, and is often undertaken during the riding lesson, for most of the time the teacher is teaching riding skills and this is specifically where my focus lies.

If and when I use the term “instructor” it is to identify the pedagogical or teaching style as a one-way dialogue between the holder of knowledge and the receiver of that knowledge. For example, “Do this to achieve this, to learn or develop
a skill”. Although the methods of instruction can differ the concept is the same. The theory underpinning instruction is ‘learning by experience’ as discussed by Kolb (1984). For example, the rider is told to do something, they then follow the instructions and learn from the experience - they do it, they then consider/reflect on the outcome and thus learning occurs.

“Coaching,” by contrast, is defined as the use of open ended questions and discussions and follow the constructivist method developed by Vygotsky (1926) in which problems are solved through the use of scaffolding. For example, the rider will be asked to give their views unprompted by the coach and a discussion will take place offering reasons and explanations.

To avoid confusion, it is important to remember that all the accredited teachers in this case study are themselves riders who must pass the riding component of the syllabus as well as the teaching components. Throughout the thesis, I refer to “the rider” in the latter context that is as the person being taught in a lesson. If the teacher is being assessed for their riding, then I refer to them then as the candidate.

Accreditation is undertaken through assessments and therefore, when I discuss the assessment process I am referring to the candidate being assessed for an accreditation. I am aware that during the riding lesson the teacher is assessing the rider and or the horse, and the rider is assessing the horse, however the aspects of the lesson are not my focus in this thesis.

Historically equestrian teaching has been shaped by its origin within the military. However, this dominance is now being challenged by the sports coaching model. As the use of the horse declined in the military, due to the introduction of motorised vehicles, there was less need for military riding instructors, who subsequently took advantage of the rise in the horse’s role as a pleasure horse. Military personal began competing, and teaching horse riding to the general populace, and some opened riding establishments, to meet the demand that was being created after World War II. The popularity of horse riding for leisure and competition created a rise in equestrian sports which changed the reason for riding, and for some equestrians competing became their primary aim. Both civilians and
military personnel competed in the same classes. An example of this was in the show jumping arenas where the two Italian D’Inzeo brothers rode competitively from the 1950s to the early 1970s in their military uniforms thus indicating the transition from the military to the competition environment.

After the Second World War, sport became characterised by an emphasis on competition and success. The rise in competitive riding, like all other sports, became synonymous with achievements and triumphalism (Lyle, 2005). When sport, at all levels, becomes more competitive, it in turn attracts commercialisation and increased pressure to succeed (Lyle, 2005). In equestrianism this has the capacity to change the dynamics of the riding lessons, and coaching – which was initially peer to peer lessons, at the elite level of competition – has become the language for the general riding lesson. The riding lesson has changed to suit rider goals, which for many is success in competition. The epitome of success (within the sport) is international success at the Olympic Games.

Government bodies in Australia began to intervene when equestrian sporting failures were demonstrated on the world stage at the Olympic Games. The level of coaching became a concern in Australia following poor results at the Montreal Olympic Games in 1976. It was considered that there was a need to establish consistency in coaching methods and in Australia an accreditation system for equitation coaching, that also offered a career pathway, was introduced. The accreditation system made use of the coaching methods of all sports, adapting them to suit the needs of equestrianism. In this way equestrianism became incorporated into the Australian national sports coaching structure, the aim of which was to create a coaching standard from which to create better elite athletes. It was thought that standardising sports coaching would raise the levels of coaching and build capacity for competition at all levels culminating with an improvement at the elite level.

The British government also decided to advance sport as a competitive and leisure activity through education programmes and careers in coaching (Lincoln, 2008). The Coaching Task Force that was set up by the British Government in 2002 and 2004 identified a need to develop consistent coaching across all sports, mostly because there was a lack of formal coaching qualifications (Lincoln, 2008). The
British study covered 31 sports, but not specifically equestrian sports, which had had an accreditation programme and career pathway since the 1920s. For over 90 years the British Horse Society has developed a training and accreditation system creating a career pathway within the equestrian industry. However the more recent interest and initiatives undertaken by the government also led to a coaching syllabus and coaching accreditations being implemented for equitation. Although the British Horse Society is still responsible for the syllabus is has undergone changes to conform to the government’s agenda. How these changes are impacting on equestrian teaching practice forms part of this study.

In this thesis the systems in place in Western Australia have been compared to those in England. Through observations of teaching practice and discussions with the equestrian teachers, I am in a position to identify how horse riding is being taught in both locations and to understand the extent to which the emphasis on coaching has impacted on the practice of riding teaching. Comparison between the established coaching accreditation, as used in Western Australia, and that of the previous English system (based on the older military model), has allowed for an understanding of the differences between the two. Similarly, a close examination of the more recent changes to the English system, reveals the expectation of accrediting bodies as to how the English equestrians are now expected to teach riding, as coaches.

Research Questions

The term coach has ramifications even in Western Australia where riding teachers have always been accredited as coaches. Coaching originally described the mentoring of elite riders at the top levels of competition, but by creating a coaching syllabus the associated concepts have filtered down to all levels irrespective of expertise. When considering coaching at the elite level the coach is able to facilitate learning by discussing with the rider what they are observing and the rider is then able to make changes due to their high skill level. Therefore the role of the coach is primarily as eyes on the ground rather than teacher. The majority of riders having lessons are not at the elite level, and therefore it is necessary that the teacher’s expertise is higher than that of the rider in order for them to create further skill development by teaching (Coombs 1991). Coaching at different levels requires a
different relationship for example the relationship between coach and elite rider differs from the rider who is being coached at the lower skill level. The relationship between the coach and a young adult will differ from that of two Olympic riders working together. It is these relationships that will determine if the terminology that is gaining traction within the industry is just a name or a change in approach. In other words, is the coach coaching?

The title given to those accredited is the manifestation of change. The syllabus and accreditation, allocates a title and the title implies some difference, however, equestrianism differs from any other sport in that it has three minds working in the lesson: the teacher, the rider and the horse. The thesis has considered the impact the riding lesson has on the horse in particular when it comes to competition riding. The pressure to compete can lead to short-cuts being taken in the training of the horse, thus impacting on its welfare. Incorrect training of the horse means that riding skills are not learnt, and those that are learnt are not likely to be correct or effective.

Competition places pressure on the horse to perform. The rider’s expectation of the teacher is to develop a horse that can perform, therefore the question arises as to who is the competitor the rider or the horse? Tinning (2010) argues that often in sports the athlete considers their bodies as a machine. If the horse is the competitor then it is possible that it is the horse that is considered in this way, thus gadgets and short-cuts are accepted as a means of training. If the responsibility for success is on the horse what is the role of the rider? If the rider has less accountability their riding skills are deemed less important to them, and therefore the riding lesson becomes the horsing lesson that de Kunffy (2002, 2003) discusses.

Coaching paradigms suggest that the coach is required to adapt to the clients’ needs – two minds come together through discourse, questions, clarification, listening and sharing (Lincoln, 2008). However, there is also another mind to consider that of the horse. Coaching is concerned with leading and motivating riders. However, Bacon and Voss (2012) argue that what happens is that the client simply follows the coach’s directions as opposed to engaging in individualised learning, which is the expectation of the coaching concept. The thesis has considered if by
adopting the coaching model riders become independent learners once the two-way
dialogue has been developed or if the role of the horse impacts on this process.
Unlike a ball, that if hit in the same way will react the same way, the horse is
different every time it is ridden. How the horse performs in the riding lesson is not
necessarily going to be replicated at competition. Pressure therefore is on the coach
to ensure that the horse performs well in the lesson – to satisfy the rider/client – and
at competition. This often means that role of the coach goes from the riding lesson to
the competition, where they help the rider prior to them going into the arena.
Therefore, the rider is following the coaches’ directions, as argued by Boss and Voss
(2012), and independent learning, which is part of the coaching philosophy, is not
being developed. How adapting to the client’s needs impacts on the horse and puts
pressure on the teacher to create successful competition riders and horses, has
become part of the thesis.

The syllabi are directional in that they ask for the teacher to be able to
demonstrate their skills; they do not offer a curriculum for the teacher to follow to do
this. Therefore the question arises how does the equestrian gain their teaching skills?
To gain full accreditation as a riding teacher the student has to be able to ride beyond
the level they are teaching, this indicates that the better the rider the better the teacher
but that does not take into account the teaching skills needed to pass on knowledge.
The thesis will explore how the rider learns to teach by considering what is the
influence of lineage on practice?

Research Context: Learning Theories

There are other areas of interest that are explored in the thesis and they have
arisen from personal observation, from experience as a rider and teacher of riding,
and from working in the higher education sector. The coaching model has taken
learning theories, developed for general educational contexts and transposed them
into the equestrian setting. Examples could be cognitive theory where the rider gains
skills through a social context as described by Wenger (1998), or constructivist
theory where riders construct their learning from their experiences. Behaviourist
theory can be considered for the teaching and learning of both horse and rider.
Therefore, understanding the theories and implementing them into teaching practice
has the capacity to create better teaching skills within the riding lesson and from these better riders.

Concepts taken from learning theories have been introduced in the equestrian coaching syllabi. The theories are not explicit in the syllabus in other words the teacher can be practising without understanding how the rider learns and how the horse learns. It can be argued that understanding theory is not necessary when teaching skills and the Equestrian Federation Australia (EFA) states that there is recognition that coaches are not educated and developed through theoretical training, but more by doing and performing (www.equestrian.org.au). However, there are theoretical concepts used in education that are in place in the syllabus: for example, goal setting, dialogue and reflecting on practice. The coaching syllabi require written examples in the form of log books/diaries/written lesson plans to be part of the accreditation process. Whether this is of importance to the practitioner and how it works in practice is explored.

As stated above aspects of learning theories are now part of the equestrian syllabi in both Western Australia and England, encouraging the teacher to reflect upon their lessons. The theory of constructing learning from experience and reflection was identified by Kolb (1984) who theorised that learning is cyclical, based on the phases of experience, reflection, abstraction and active testing. This cyclical leaning method can be considered part of learning to ride and of teaching riding. The equestrian gains experience firstly by riding the horse. They then apply their experience to teach others to ride. During this, as process issues arise, the teacher can reflect upon their own experiences as a rider in relation to the issue they are observing. In other words a transformation of their experience allows them to teach. Therefore, reflection takes place during the lesson as issues arise, and reflection, both during and after the lesson gives rise to modification of an existing concept which they then use in the lesson as active testing. The thesis considers how these paradigms work in practice from a theoretical and intuitive stance.

Constructivist theory as described by Kolb et al. (2000) can be used when considering the different educating models used in the riding lesson. Initially riders need to acquire new skills, thus instruction is required to create concrete learning
Instruction is not fashionable in the context of a paying client because it vests power and authority in the teacher. However, it does have value as a method of learning skills. Wenger (1998) considers that instructions are not the cause of learning but instructions create the context in which learning can take place, thus instruction can be considered an important part of the lesson.

The role of language is an important factor as identified by Vygotsky (1926) who argues that with correct guidance learning can be achieved from what is known, the basis of knowledge, to what is not known, and then to what is known. The process of teaching what is not known is undertaken using instructions. Instruction is used to teach the mechanics for the skill so that an imitation can occur (Bransford, 2000). What is learned is then put into practice as the rider adapts the instructions and learns what to do next from the feel they are getting from the horse. The rider can then reflect on what is happening following the response from the horse. From the feedback riders are getting from the horse as they experience riding, they can then give feedback to the teacher, who can interpret the response and reflect on their own prior and new knowledge, and offer advice whilst the rider is still in a safe environment. It is hoped the process will then lead to the rider becoming self-directed (Potrac and Cassidy, in Jones, 2006), and work on their own. Therefore following the instruction a two way dialogue can ensue between the rider and the teacher to further develop understanding from which the rider can start to become self-directed.

Instruction can be part of the coaching dialogue. However, the primary aim of coaching is to create a self-efficacy for the rider by for example, asking questions of the rider’s questions as opposed to always giving the answer. Structuring the lessons to scaffold skills helps develop the rider’s self-discovery, a process that takes place as soon as a rider sits on a horse. The process of self-discovery can be empowering for the rider as they begin to believe in their riding capabilities. Bandura (1989) argues that the more a person believes in their capabilities the greater persistence they will have to achieve the desired results. If the desired results are competition riding then often the rider needs to be reminded of their abilities when things go wrong. The coaching model allows this to occur through the two-way conversation, because dialogue is engaging. As the student becomes more engaged in their learning
they tend to be more committed which in turn can lead to the process for self-
discovery (Bacon and Voss, 2012).

Equestrianism is not always an isolated learning experience and the insights
of social learning theories can also be transposed into the equestrian environment.
Kolb (1984) identified that some people learn better in a social setting. Riding school
lessons, riding/pony clubs, workshops and clinics all offer a social setting within the
equestrian environment. Gaining accreditation and studying with others creates a
community of practice in which the group solve problems through discussion of what
was happening and why (Wenger, 2002). Communities of practice are also seen
when riders meet at competitions. Competitors walk jumping courses together and
discuss issues that arise. After the competition they often discuss how the horse went
and often give suggestions to help. Therefore community of practices occur when
rider come together informally at both competitions and during equestrian workshops
and clinics.

The equestrian coaching syllabi have introduced constructivist theory to help
riders and teachers develop riding and teaching skills. Although riding is skill based
learning occurs through thought processes, and some of the thoughts can come from
physical activity. The rider can construct meaning from the sensory input they are
getting from the horse, and from the horse the riders learn. Following the
construction of meaning the rider is then able to construct systems of meaning in
which they can then teach others what they have learnt from the horse. Therefore my
interpretation of how learning theories can be used to help riders would be that how
one learns when riding can create reflection, which in turns creates future learning,
thus the rider is constructing learning from which to create teaching practice.

Learning theories can also be appropriated when considering how the horse
learns. McGreevy and McLean (2010) argue that the horse learns through the process
of reward and punishment, thus indicating behaviourist theory is being employed,
and I discuss this issue further in the thesis. The theory of behaviourism however,
can also be considered when examining the competitive aspect of the riding lesson.
In other sports competition can be the incentive to increase the skills of athletes.
However, equestrian competitions are based upon the horse’s performance and their
skills. Although it is generally true that the better the rider, the better the horse’s performance, it need not always be the case. For example, in the discipline of show-jumping the rider’s role in presenting the horse correctly for him/her to jump the fence is the objective, however the horse can often jump the fence irrespective of the rider’s input. Conversely he can also be blamed for the fence falling. Likewise in the discipline of dressage it is the horse that is judged and marked, not the rider’s ability to produce a horse to attain good marks. This indicates that the pressure to perform is on the horse and less so on the rider, and yet it is the rider who gains the reward. Therefore, when the objective of riding is competition, then success at the competition and whatever that means for the individual, is not necessarily dependent on creating a higher level of riding skills. Poor riding skills have the ability to compromise horse welfare whenever the rider’s ability to time their aids (signals and cues) is incorrect. Incorrect application of the aids from the rider to the horse means that the reward of releasing the aid has the ability to become a punishment. How competition impacts on horse welfare and riding skills is considered in the thesis as is the way in which riders understand and implement behaviourist theory in the form of reward and punishment when riding and teaching riding.

Practice can be informed by practice as well as by theory. The syllabi are directional; they ask that certain skills are shown at assessment but do not offer a curriculum as to how those skills are acquired. Therefore, the framework that is given in the syllabi can be interpreted differently and the thesis explores these differences. I consider how different teachers transferred their skills between teacher, pupil and the horse to create their personal curriculum and style. Prior to accreditation equestrian skills were, and still are, passed from teacher to pupil verbally and or through observation of practice (Gianoli, 1969). Riders chose teachers because of their riding ability, and even though many riders are accredited as teachers, it is the teacher’s riding ability, seen as success at competitions, that tend to draw others to them for lessons. Riding teachers, past and present, create theories concerned with how to train and ride the horse. McGreevy and McLean (2010) implement the theories of Baucher (1796-1873) and his methods were developed from previous masters. I explore this process and use the term lineage to describe how teaching practice is passed from teacher to teacher. The influence the teacher has on practice is explored to show how learning through copying others is part of
the learning to teach process. Lineage of practice is occurring through the teacher developing a personal curriculum based upon those who teach them. Bandura (1997) argues that this style of learning can be problematic because those learning are doing so by mimicking, and that simply following others can lead to a weak reproduction or incorrect practice which is then passed on to others. Simply following is also limiting in that it may restrict the copier from expanding their knowledge further.

Restrictions of practice also occur when the rider and teacher only work in one discipline. The equestrian skills I consider in the thesis comprised of working the horse on the flat, which comes under the heading of dressage, and jumping, which is show jumping and cross country jumping. For the horse and rider to have a rounded education I believe they should have skills in both flat work and jumping and use these skills to further enhance the individual discipline they work under. For example, the flat work will improve the jumping horse - and - rider combination. Competition riders tend to specialise within one discipline this is not necessarily conducive to developing skills or producing high performance horses. The study considers riding teachers who ride in one or all of the three disciplines: dressage, show jumping and eventing (horse trials) to understand if specialising in the one discipline is better practice than an overall understanding of all three disciplines.

Comparison between the two syllabi allow for the topic of specialisation to develop further. For example the British qualification is general, which means that those accredited within this system are qualified to give lessons that include flat work and jumping from the first to third level. Riders and horses who do both (jump and go on the flat) are developing skills that are complementing each other: a horse and rider that have good flat work are better equipped to jump. However, if the British syllabus becomes a coaching syllabus there is a possibility that the qualification structure may also change toward the Western Australian model, which focuses on a single riding method.

The West Australian syllabus focuses on one riding method – the German method – and then encourages further specialisation through the accreditation process. After the second level of teaching the coach can specialise in one
Although specialisation can deepen the learning and skills by condensing them into the one area of expertise in equestrianism I believe there is a need for a multidisciplinary approach. As an example a coach who has only show jumped could lack the skills of riding the horse on the flat, which will impact on the way they jump considering there is a lot of flat riding to be undertaken between each jump. Understanding how the horse moves on the flat and being able to influence how the horse is working between the fences is important for the horse and rider to jump a clear round. Therefore by comparing the two syllabi, observing practice and discussing the issue with the participants, an understanding of the positive and negative characteristics of both models are considered.

Equestrians have been learning to ride and teaching horse riding without theoretical knowledge for many years. Bacon and Voss (2012) argue that learning and teaching can be a process of mimicking what is said and done and how it is said and done. Prior to accreditation equestrian teaching practice created a lineage of practice where riding masters created a following of future riding masters who continued to implement their equestrian theories. Now that the accreditation process is in place, I am interested to examine how this process works. Do teachers learn through copying and creating a lineage of practice, or do the syllabus and recommended texts create a sufficient learning guide?

The Literature

The thesis has drawn on three areas of literature: the syllabi themselves and the literature recommended by them, other equestrian lay literature that is commonly read by all equestrians as well as those working toward accreditation; and the more academic educational literature that informs teaching practice. Using this diverse literature has allowed me to explain how the syllabus, and the theories that are being introduced, impact on practice. The thesis is concerned with how we teach riding. Although riding has been taught for hundreds of years the research literature on teaching riding is not extensive. However, there is a lay literature that is associated with the syllabus, and associated with people giving instruction on how you learn to

\[2\] During the research there was discussion that specialisation could be as early as the first accreditation level.
ride and train the horse, and this lay literature is an important resource for this topic. The lay literature is not of uniform quality, and there are better texts and poorer texts in the same way that there are better teachers and poorer teachers of riding. There are authors of lay literature who are far more reflective of the experience of learning to ride and their work is qualitatively different to the “how to ride a horse” style of text. The literature that is most useful is where the writer reflects on teaching in relation to equitation, because as fashions and approaches change this is reflected in such texts. Equestrian texts can be used to give a foundation from which to build knowledge and substantiate existing knowledge, therefore a sample of lay equestrian literature is necessarily for the thesis.

An example of a writer who addresses a lay audience is Gianoloi (1969), who considers the change in horses and horsemanship through the various civilisations and ages and his work is supported by other equestrian authors. From these texts an understanding of how fashions shape equestrianism is obtained. Charles de Kunffy (2002, 2003) outlines how fashions can change the dynamic of the riding lesson despite the horse still being a horse and the rider still being the rider. De Kunffy has an enormous depth of practical knowledge about the equestrian environment and draws on this expertise when he argues that riding lessons have become horseing lessons, a development which he views as detrimental to the horse and rider. Lincoln (2008) discussed equestrian teaching from a coaching perspective thus showing the change in fashion between her text and the traditional manuals being used by the equestrian bodies. Von Dietze (1999) discusses equestrianism from a physiotherapist’s and (German) riding instructor’s understanding. She states that there is a big discrepancy between training the horse and training the rider, and her text focuses on the correct riding seat using her knowledge of the human anatomy. She argues that movement is a deficiency in today’s world, in other words there is a lack of human exercise from which one can understand one’s own body. If riders do not understand their own bodies they are then unable to understand their bodies whilst on a moving animal. If as the texts indicate riding lessons are focusing more on the horse and not the rider then the rider will not learn about their bodies and the implications their own bodies have for the horse. Lack of understanding of one’s body can then have implications for horse welfare. Von Dietze (1999) focuses on movement of the rider and horse and what is often occurring with or without
She considers the traditional riding posture, and her book aims at combining traditional teaching with physiological knowledge.

The British Horse Society recommends Alison Lincoln’s text *Equine Sports Coaching* (2008), which endeavours to bridge the gap between the traditional equestrian texts and that of sports coaching. She follows an academic style indicative of her qualification as a Bachelor of Science in Equine Sports Coaching, and bases her book upon coaching practices used in other sports. The format of the book transitions between an academic style in which she offers coaching theories, whilst keeping to the equestrian format of using pictures, thus making it an ideal text for coaching. It is an English text that the British Horse Society recommends to complement their more traditional texts whilst they are transitioning between the previous model and the new coaching style. However in Western Australia where the accreditation has always been based on coaching, their recommended text is a more traditional instructional style of text, the German Equestrian Federation official handbook *The Principles of Riding*.

Lincoln (2008), McGreevy and McLean (2010) and von Dietze (1999) have produced texts from an academic perspective and are starting to bridge the gap between the traditional manuals previously seen and texts that offer research and theory to support the issues. However, that is not to demean the literature that is written and published by distinguished riders as these texts can offer important insight into the reflections of teaching and learning practices and how fashions change. Therefore, these texts and the traditional learning to ride texts recommended by the accreditation bodies are used to explore how the literature influences the riding lesson.

As equestrianism evolves the traditional methods are being challenged. Equestrian teaching is becoming part of the broader based coaching philosophy which introduces theory into the practice. Academic literature from education and based on educational theories, although not related to equestrianism, has aspects that are of value in understanding how skills are taught and learned. The academic literature has been used in order to understand some of the theoretical underpinnings of coaching, instructing and teaching.
The coaching syllabus is based upon the Competency Based Education and Training (CBE/T) model of teaching and learning: a model that draws on multiple educational theories. One example would be reflection as discussed above using the Kolb (1984) learning cycle. Schon (1987) and Kottkamp (1990) also have a framework which I consider with regard to how reflection can be transposed from the educational environment into the equestrian setting. The learning process relies on crucial reflective practice in which the learner considers their experience, from which they learn. This theory draws on Schon’s (1987) concepts of reflection in action and reflection on action, later described by Kottkamp (1990) as reflection online and offline. Schon (1987) uses “reflection on action” to consider after the event reflection, when full attention can be given to how it worked. This is described by Kottkamp (1990) as “offline”. Reflecting in action for Schon (1987) is described as online for Kottkamp (1990) but both are stating that reflection is occurring in situ, a process that is part of the riding lesson. All riding lessons require both on and offline (reflection in action and reflection on action) therefore these educational theories are relevant to equestrian teaching.

The purpose of the coaching syllabi are to gain accreditation. The CBE/T model uses the concept of continuous assessment, which has replaced the final exam previously in place. Continuous assessments, by accredited assessors, are deemed to be better for supporting learning in that assessments can be considered to be formative (Freeman and Lewis, 2002). During the assessment process the prospective coach is given guidance and feedback which can be used to further empower the learner (Harris et al., 1995).

Continuous assessment is the method of choice by which to ascertain the standard of the coach as they work toward accreditation. Continuous assessment is used to monitor their learning and skills progress. However, Boud and Falchikov (2005) argue that students will focus on doing well in assessments rather than engaging with the wider syllabus, in other words they will only learn what they have to learn and this has the capacity to create lower order learning as opposed to encouraging higher cognitive activity. Therefore, the question of whether continuous assessments are a more effective method of assessing is considered by discussing the experiences of both assessors and those assessed.
Another issue with continuous assessments throughout the course is the ongoing expense for the prospective coach. Equestrianism is based upon the progression of the rider, the horse, and horse and rider; therefore it requires continuous assessments of all three areas. For example, levels assessments are required to evaluate how the candidate rides the horse, other assessments are needed to understand their horse management skills and finally assessments are compulsory to assess their teaching skills. Therefore, they are paying to be assessed in three separate areas to gain the single accreditation. Often the candidate has to travel to be assessed thus time as well as expenses are incurred. The candidate may have to also pay for the venue if for example they are expected to demonstrate jumping skills over cross country fences. They may have to hire a horse that has the necessary training therefore the continuous assessment model for equitation accreditation is costly in both time and money for the candidates.

The assessment can be viewed as a goal; the candidate works toward the assessment with the goal to pass. However, goals can be considered more broadly, as part of the coaching model. Goal setting appears in theories about motivation and is connected with the concept of self-regulation and self-efficacy. In the equestrian setting, goals are set for the horse, the rider and horse and rider. Goals for the horse have been outlined in the traditional framework of training exercises as outlined in *The Principles of Riding*, the recommended text used in the West Australian syllabus. The purpose for setting goals for the rider is twofold: they can be to improve riding skills or involve working with the horse toward an outcome. Theoretically, setting goals is considered to help motivation: if an outline of the goals is given at the initial stages of learning, this alleviates the uncertainty of the learning process (Harris et al., 2001). The coaching model has introduced goal setting by suggesting that when organising and planning the lesson the coach should gather information gained from previous experience, either their own or from previous lessons they have watched, so they can set goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound (Lincoln, 2008). The coach can collaborate with the rider to ‘establish and clarify purpose and goals and develop a plan of action to achieve them’ as described by Zeus and Skiffington, (2002, p. 3) when they consider goals in the educational environment.
The coaching model has affected how feedback is given and understood in the riding lesson. Feedback is more complex in equestrianism due to there being three areas where feedback is obtained: from the horse, from the rider and from the teacher. An instruction is given by the teacher to the rider and the horse gives a response, which is a form of feedback. The rider will assess the feedback through what is termed “feel” and Race (2005) considers this to be learning through doing. However, the teacher can only assume what is being felt by the rider, and will make their judgement as to how to proceed from this interpretation. Verbal feedback is therefore necessary between the rider and teacher to corroborate what the teacher is seeing and interpreting based on what the rider is feeling. The coaching model is sometimes referred to as the sandwich approach (Harris et al., 2001) due to the particular style of commentary used in coaching. It begins with positive feedback (what the learner is doing well), then corrective feedback, (actions for improvement) and finally more positive feedback. This is the approach encouraged by the Australian Sports Commission (www.austport.gov.au). Within mainstream education, feedback provides reinforcement and enhances skills development.

Blakey and Day (2012) argue that feedback from the coach should inform and inspire, and to accomplish such feedback the coach may have to challenge the client. The authors maintain that effective feedback is a balance of support and challenge, support meaning empathy, but challenge meaning pushing and possibly confronting those being coached. Often the coach is unwilling to do this for fear of damaging the relationship they have with their client, and when the coach is reliant on the client for income the nature of feedback becomes fundamental. How the feedback is given by the participants has been considered in the observations of the riding lessons to understand if the rider is being challenged from a sympathetic approach and if so if it informs and inspires the riders during the riding lesson.

The coaching syllabus is creating changes to the language that is being used in the riding lesson. By observing practice and through discussions with participants in the study, the language that is used in the lesson is explored. Language in the riding lesson can be considered with regard to feedback and how it is given and by examining the dialogue between the rider, teacher and the interaction of the horse. Coaching is undertaken largely through conversation in which the dialogue becomes
an avenue for the process of discovery. The role of the dialogue is to engage the client in becoming more committed to the results and the solutions they helped create (Bacon and Voss, 2010). Therefore, the language creates a process of collaborative learning which should help avoid damaging assumptions that can be made by the coach, especially when what the coach thinks they are teaching may not be what the student is learning. However, some learning will have taken place (Zull, 2002). To avoid incorrect practice it is therefore necessary to be able to discuss what is taking place, which in turn should create good horse welfare if the rider is riding it correctly and progress their riding skills.

Through observation, an account of different learning styles and preferences in teaching and learning can be considered, which then creates a learning environment (Biggs, 1989). Biggs (1989) states that the teacher must define their intent and be aware of the learning needs of students; in the equestrian lesson the learning needs are of both horse and rider therefore the teacher needs to be aware of these in order to be able to choose what activities to teach. The syllabi are comprised of a set of guidelines that ask the teacher to be able to teach riding skills to their students. They do not indicate how these skills should be taught. Therefore, the teacher has to create a personal curriculum, what Freire (1970) describes as constructing his or her own universe. The riding teacher has to choose their activities by assessing the student’s actual learning outcomes to see how well they match what is intended for the lesson (Biggs, 1989).

**Methodological Approach**

A qualitative approach was considered the most appropriate methodology to use in order to try to answer the question what does it mean to teach riding? Following the approach described in Patton (2002), qualitative methodology also allows for the researcher’s personal experience and knowledge to have place in the research: for the possibility that they may be an insider and a more objective outsider in the research process. A qualitative approach offers the chance to create deep, rich and meaningful data by expanding on an answer to consider the why’s, when’s and how’s as opposed to a simple yes or no.
A qualitative approach to research has been used to answer the questions posed. Qualitative research allows for an empirical study to consider practice at grassroots level and this is what the thesis is about. Although not an auto-ethnographic study per se, my personal knowledge, gained through accreditation as a riding instructor and my experience as a competitive rider, has informed the thesis. I believe that this is an aspect that is especially important when interpreting the data to understand the subtleties and nuances as they arise (Hammersley, 2008). As an insider I am able to have an understanding of the data as it emerges, which allows me to expand the discussions at the time. It also helps later during the data analysis when person knowledge can help with the identification of patterns and themes (Ryan and Bernard, 2003; Aronson, 1994). Of course acknowledging that the researcher inevitably brings to the research their pre-existing knowledge, opinions and bias also carries with it a responsibility to their part to not allow their perspective to over-shadow or over-rule the views expressed by their participants. Researchers need to be very aware and at all times represent with integrity the view expressed by their informants. My personal expertise has been augmented with a people-oriented enquiry to create data from observations and discussions from which to review the equestrian syllabi, which are endeavouring to professionalise practice through accreditation. The comparative study has followed a holistic design as outlined by Moustakas (1990) and Patton (2002). A holistic design implies that more than one means of aggregating data from the individual case studies can be implemented and this was the process I used. Data has been gathered through interviews with individual participants, based upon open questions, and this has been supplemented by observations of riding lessons.

Much of the literature that surrounds equestrianism, especially when considering how riding is taught, are texts from non-academic sources. Equestrianism has been written by practitioners deemed to be experts in their field, as will be discussed in the following chapter, therefore there is a plethora of informative literature available to assist in understanding how horse riding is being taught and how it has been taught.
Bitsch (2005, p. 76) points to areas where qualitative approaches can be an effective research method: to “describe and interpret new or not well-researched topics”, and to “create research directed at future issues”. The topic of how horse riding is taught from an evaluation of learning theories is not well researched, and aspects that arise from the research have the potential to create further research both qualitative and quantitative.

The value of the study is in part because of its timing. As British system is currently being transposed into the coaching model there is a unique window of opportunity to explore the process. The countries chosen to underpin the research were not a random choice. They offer a means to create a cross-country comparison of the syllabi of the British Horse Society (BHS) and the Equestrian Federation Australia (EFA). The reason for comparing the syllabi in both areas, England and Western Australia is to understand why after years of producing equestrian instructors England is adopting a coaching model for accreditation. Therefore, the research is undertaken in England and Western Australia because of the changes to the syllabi. However, there are other reasons for choosing the two areas: both have a syllabus that is in English, therefore, limiting the risk of misunderstanding on my part; I am familiar with both systems, and they are accessible for data generation. The origins of the syllabus differ, which offer the potential for a comparative study to ensue. The British system evolved from a consideration of creating better horse and rider welfare underpinned through the riding school system whereas the Western Australian syllabus always had a coaching paradigm thus comparison can be made.

Data Collection

A qualitative approach, as described by Patton (2002), offers the researcher a choice of methods to collect data, and the most appropriate methods for the research were observations and interviews. To understand how riding is taught is best achieved through watching riding lessons being taught, and interviewing those

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3 The riding school systems in West Australia and England have a syllabus that offer approved texts relating to teaching riding and an accreditation system although some participants were involved in the riding school industry they also held the BHS and EFA qualifications which are the primary requirements for the study.
teaching them. However, as an accredited equestrian I had to be sensitive to the way that my preferred teaching practice could unconsciously influence the research design, especially in relation to the questions asked. To alleviate this problem, interviews used open-ended questions to explore the core research issues with the participants (Patton, 2002). Open-ended questioning allows the subject more freedom to respond as they think and allows each answer to generate the next question until that topic has been thoroughly explored. The challenge with this type of interview technique is to get participants to express themselves as openly and fully as possible (Willig, 2003) however, if achieved it has the potential of leading to unsolicited data and therefore, deepening the research (Chesebro and Borisoff, 2005).

Using the texts I was able to create a questionnaire comprising of key conversation starting questions that was given to the participants prior to the interview. The key questions have been formulated using different types of questions to gain maximum discussion around the participants’ experiences as a rider and riding teacher. Following Patton’s (2002) directives I first discussed background information and demographic details. The interview questions covered the subject’s past learning experiences before shifting focus to the present to discuss their teaching experience and behaviour. Patton (2002) suggests that participants are invited to offer opinion and values, feelings and emotions, and these aspects became part of the interview.

Interview

The interviews were undertaken to elicit the participants’ viewpoints an in that context I was constantly aware of my subjective responses to what they were saying (Ratner, 2002). I was constantly aware of my relationship with the participants and how relationship dynamics affected responses to the questions therefore, I was particularly keen to allow the data to lead the investigation (Willig, 2013). Willig, (2013) suggests that each researcher deals with the issue differently and I chose to acknowledge my position to the participants at the start of the interview which were undertaken at a place time and date of convenience for the participant.
The participant was sent a transcript of the six key questions on which the study was based. The interview has been used to provide rich first hand material to understand what is occurring in the riding lessons, and was undertaken in a setting that was relaxed (Burns, 2002; Patton, 2002; Harris et al., 1995). Questions were asked, not in the original order as per the interview schedule, because the interview was allowed to progress from the answers given by each participant. Therefore, the open ended questioning has informed each subsequent question. When aspects arose in the early interviews that I considered to be relevant, they were also added to the forthcoming interviews to provide depth to the data.

The interviews enabled me to go deeper into equestrian pedagogy. I was able to consider what was said as well as what was not said, thus unpacking what the teachers thought they did and what they actually did. My approach was flexible and therefore some interviews took place prior to the observations others afterwards. I do not consider this to impact on the answers given. After the interview a transcript was made, and sent to each participant within a week of the interview. Participants made changes if they wished, for clarification of the data. Having received the final consent I was able to use the interview in the thesis.

The observation

The participants were aware of my observations yet provided valuable data to understand whether what the participant said they did in interview was practised, and how it was translated in practice. Inevitably during the observations I was analysing while observing. However having ridden and taught equestrianism for many years and being widely read in the subject, I was able to use an insider’s perspective, as suggested by Moustakas (1990), to make informed judgements. All judgements made during my observations were then reflected upon as I reconsidered sensitively, critically and analytically what was said and undertaken in the riding lesson. I am confident that my experience and expertise allowed me to analyse the data fairly and objectively. For example, I was able to differentiate between riding and horsing.

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4 The questions are in Appendix ii.
5 Three Western Australian participants withdrew having received their written transcript because they were concerned that their anonymity may be compromised by the answers they gave.
lessons by being attentive to the language being used in the lesson: the difference between advising the rider that the horse needs more impulsion as opposed to telling the rider to use more leg to create impulsion, clearly illustrates the difference between a “horsing” and a “riding” lesson. The focus tends to be on the horse when the lesson is geared toward competitive riding. Therefore, using my level of expertise as a rider, equestrian and educationalist I was able to use observations in conjunction with the interviews to create an analysis of what is happening in the equestrian environment in England and Western Australia.

The observation of teaching practice was undertaken at a venue and time to suit the participants. Allowing the participants the choice meant some of the interviews were prior and others were post the observations. However, as I commented above, I do not consider that this made any difference to the data. The participants were aware of my observing the lessons but were not conversant with the check list I was using, so were not aware of the elements of practice I was interested in. For this reason, I suggest that what I observed offers a fair indication of practice at the time.

Observation in the field forms an aspect of the qualitative method of data collection and provides rich first hand material about events occurring in the natural setting (Burns, 2002; Patton, 2002; Harris et al., 1995). Observations are considered useful because they are ‘not dependent on the subjects’ ability or willingness to report their behaviour’ (Wimmer and Dominic, 2005, p. 122). In other words the participants are not trying to impress me and therefore what I observe can be considered as representative of practice.

I recorded what I observed using a check list,\(^6\) which was devised using three sources: the assessors check lists (which they use when assessing students), the syllabus (for example safety issues, the enjoyment factor) and the literature, in particular de Kunffy’s (2002, 2003) statement regarding the focus of the lesson with regard to the horse. I ticked the boxes and made comments so that later I was able to reflect on the lessons to understand if they were horse or rider focused. By using the

\(^6\) The check list for the data collection is given in Appendix i.
three sources I was able to create aspects that are relevant to the research questions and thesis. Patton (2002) suggests that personal expertise is deemed an important part of the enquiry to understand the phenomenon and therefore, my personal knowledge was applied to assess the lessons.

Participants

The participants\(^7\) were initially sourced from my network of colleagues in the industry. However, this is limiting and can introduce bias. Therefore the majority of participants were recruited from the equestrian training bodies’ coaching lists (available on their websites), through advertisements in equestrian outlets, and through a snowballing technique in which participants recommended others to approach (Patton, 2002). Participants were sourced until no new data was being given. When data saturation was reached the total number of participants was 41. Both genders are represented in the study and the age of the participants ranged between 20 and 80 years of age. Therefore, the data was collected from a wide ranging continuum of equestrians for the research.

The participants are qualified through the accreditation system being researched. They range from people with qualifications at the first teaching level to internationally competitive riders who coach thus adding depth to the research by creating a broad and diverse mix. Elite riders who teach riding (irrespective of their qualifications status) are included in the study because they are considered by the equestrian bodies to be experts in the given field. Participants include assessors within the accreditation systems, and 19 of the total number of participants were also coaches of other participants, which allows me to explore continuity of practice. All the participants were given a code for identification to maintain anonymity.

Data was collected from equestrians in England and Western Australia, who have accreditations from one or more of the syllabi under review at levels ranging from the first coaching/instructing qualification to elite practitioners. In both locations the syllabi are devised by an elected committee of equestrians (some of

\(^7\) A breakdown of the participants is given in Appendix iii.
whom were participants) as opposed to a syllabus developed by an individual. The committee members hold voluntary positions and do not directly gain from their position on the board, and the syllabi are developed through the literature and personal experiences. Likewise, the alternative syllabi are also generated through the literature and personal experience of the founder. When the participants adopted an alternative syllabus to the mainstream I researched these also through the literature and when possible by interviewing the founders. If the syllabus in question is other than either of the two mainstream syllabi I refer to it as an alternative syllabus.

The study has been conducted in accordance with the requirements of Murdoch Universities Research Ethics Office. Each participant was contacted personally either face to face, by email or phone, requesting their agreement to be part of the study. On agreement the participants were sent an information letter about the research being undertaken and that the programme has met with Murdoch University’s ethical guidelines and assuring that participants their anonymity. Prior to the interview I outlined the process to be taken and emphasised that the participants can freely withdraw from the research at any time. Also prior to the interview and/or the observation of their teaching practice the participants were asked to sign a declaration form (from Murdoch University) agreeing to be part of the research. This means they agreed to a recorded interview using open ended questioning.

Analysis of the Data

The term triangulation is used to describe the method used to analyse the data. Patton (2002) describes triangulation as the researcher standing at the intersections of two junctions with a view along both directions. Using a triangulated approach to the data analysis allowed for a diverse way of looking at the data and in doing so patterns and themes emerged.

To generate patterns and themes from the data the participants are coded for anonymity and to create comparative categories based around their accreditation and their level of expertise (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). I gave all the participants a code which I used to identify their accreditation level or levels, their elite status, and the
syllabus or syllabi they trained with. I numbered the participants 1-18 from Western Australia, numbers 19-41 from England, with the levels shown as 1-3, or A for an alternative syllabus and E for elite riders. The method used to analyse the data was inductive and from the inductive method patterns and themes emerged (Patton, 2002). The purpose of using an inductive approach was to condense the extensive data into a summary of findings and establish clear links to the research objectives. Emerging themes or categories developed from the summary of findings which allowed me to develop a theory that equestrian teaching can be categorised into three areas.

Analysis for patterns and themes is undertaken through comparing and contrasting individual responses and those of subject categories (Patton, 2002). Comparison between categories means the reading and re-reading the data and asking what is this about? how does this fit or differ from other transcripts? It is through the constant comparing and contrasting between different categories, seeking the similarities or differences and moving between the categories searching for information, that the patterns are allowed to emerge (Ryan and Bernard 2003). Data collection, analysis and interpretation continue until no new information was found (Patton, 2002).

The constant looking at the data reveals variation and regularity, which can then become patterns (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Patterns are created once a concept has been identified and more characteristics have been considered, for example: is the concept based upon an issue that always happens or only on certain occasions and if so when/where/how? Is what is happening different/similar to others in the research? Repetition is the easiest way of identifying concepts and later patterns and themes therefore, checking and cross-checking repeatedly (more than twice) is a necessary part of the process (Ryan and Bernard, 2003).

I started looking for concepts, patterns and themes by reading and re-reading across the transcripts looking at the answers that were given to each of the six key questions in turn. Similar responses were then colour coded enabling an analysis of the interview segments based on similarities and differences. During the interview I also used answers that were given to create subsequent questions, which became part
of the interview for other participants; these were also identified for comparisons by colour coding. The condensed data was then cross referenced between the different accreditation levels and finally a cross case comparison was used between the two areas of study, England and Western Australia.

I observed the participants taking at least one lesson, although multiple lessons were also used when participants offered me observations at a workshop. The observations indicated how the participants used the theories they gained from the syllabus from which they were trained. With the observation checklist I also used the inductive analysis to condense the raw data. I counted and logged the ticks for each section. I highlighted aspects in the notes that linked the data to the data in the transcripts to identify the extent to which what was said matched what was practised. The multiple interpretations of the raw data were condensed into each level of accreditation and group and these were ‘crossed with one another’ moving backwards and forwards (Patton, 2002, p. 468).

I also employed deductive analysis to understand if riding lessons are horsing lessons as suggested in the literature. The deductive method allows for a theory to be tested as opposed to creating a theory from the data. Therefore through deduction I was able to consider the lessons both at the time, and later, by reading the observation check lists. I was able to systematically include a wide variety of teaching methods that showed patterns indicating that there was not a dominant theme, but three themes. I could deduce that some lessons were horsing lessons, others were rider focused lessons and the remainder lessons that worked on a partnership between horse and rider. I was also able to understand how the participant's teaching style exemplified aspects of the coaching and instructing models.

Data analysis was complicated due to a blurring of the qualifications. Eleven of the participants held more than one accreditation and five held a teaching qualification as well as being elite riders. This meant that when viewing the data it was not immediately evident which syllabus influenced practice, or, if the rider was elite, if it did at all. Therefore continuing revision and refinement of each category had to take place in order to understand teaching practice from which a tentative
hypothesis could be made with regard to how the lessons were being taught as discussed above.


The limitations

The research findings result from multiple interpretations that I made and therefore they are shaped by my assumptions and experiences. In order for the findings to be of use I had to make decisions about what was more important and less important in the data. The provision of segments of transcripts in the thesis will further the reader’s understanding as to how the themes emerged.

The observations offer a snap-shot of what is happening at the moment the lesson is being observed. It is acknowledged, that subsequent lessons may differ. When I was given the opportunity to observe the longer workshops and clinics the difference in teaching style was noticed between each lesson. Therefore for further research observations of multiple lessons by the same participant may inform how the practical riding lesson is adjusted as they teach a different rider, or a different horse. However, the research I undertook served my purposes in allowing me to understand the extent to which people manifest the how they teach riding. For example, if the participant felt anxious about the observation this was considered as evidence of their assumption that there was a proper way in which the lesson should be conducted. Thus, rather than teaching with confidence and showing their skills and the knowledge they have obtained, they felt judged against the standard set by their accreditation. Therefore, there is a possibility that the establishment of formal coaching syllabi leads to an assumption on the part of riding teachers that there is a theory (or framework) that has to be learned, and that has to be observed to have been learned.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the foundation for the study and justified the reason for the research. I have introduced the research problem the questions that drive the research and research design that was used. Questions have been posed and the methodology that was employed to work toward the answers has been briefly
outlined. From the question raised by de Kunffy (2002, 2003) as to whether riding lessons are becoming horsing lessons I can offer a working hypothesis that when the syllabus is based around competition, which places the onus to perform on the horse, the riding lesson becomes the horsing lesson. The premise was tested with the observations and interviews. Having established this, the thesis can proceed to the next chapter and move onto discuss the evolution of equestrianism.
Chapter Two
Evolution of Equestrianism

To understand how equestrianism has evolved into the culture it now is I need to review its past. How the horse has been bred and manipulated over the centuries to produce horses suitable for the modern era will start the enquiry. The horses that are ridden today have come from a long line of specifically bred and hybridised horses to become the animals required by the modern rider. A chronological review will discuss how horses have evolved from the four ancient types to create horses for warfare, science and art and later the modern sports horse used in competition today. The different uses for the horse have resulted in a variety of specially bred breeds and types, being developed. In the present day, domesticated horses numbering over a million can be found in each of the countries at the focus of this study (United Kingdom and Australia), the majority of which are used for sport and leisure. The chapter will consider the way in which horses have been selectively bred and hybridised to create different types for specific needs throughout history. The information will be obtained from literature that has been written for general distribution (lay literature) by well-respected authors and equestrians. The authors have international standing as riders and authors, the texts are extensive and referenced. The information taken from their accounts will illustrate how particular types of horses, in the modern era, are connected to the rider’s requirements for competition, thus linking horse breeding to the equestrian coaching paradigm.

Following from the development of the horse there will be discussion on how it has been trained and by whom. The Riding Masters, known as trainers (Coombs, 1991), still have influence on present day practice. For example Francois Baucher (1796 –1873) advocated that the rider use one aid (leg or hand) at a time, which is the concept put forward by the proponents of Equitation Science; the jumping position that is taught to riders today came from Federico Caprilli (1868–1907). Therefore understanding previous pedagogy will offer an explanation of current practice and the development of the syllabi that are in place.
The Riding Masters created a lineage, that is to say, students who followed their techniques and theories taught them in turn to their students. Lineages are still part of the equestrian teaching process, how one teaches or coaches is inseparable from what is being taught and crucially how one learns (Lusted, 1986). Nineteen of the total number of participants in the study were also coaches of other participants, suggesting that the traditional method of transfer of knowledge through the student/teacher relationship and how this impacts on the syllabus is important. Further exploration of the student/teacher relationship will be provided further when considering the participants and observing their teaching in chapter 6.

The overriding influence on the development of the horse and teaching people to ride was the military. In the United Kingdom the military influenced equestrianism strongly. Retired military personnel opened riding schools and taught riding; some were in fact involved in developing the British Horse Society (BHS) (www.bhs.co.uk). They would have been influential in developing the riding syllabus and examining candidates working toward BHS accreditation. Although the military influence has lessened over time, in chapter five some of the participants discuss their experiences of receiving riding lessons from retired military personnel and how this influenced their practice.

**Evolution of the Horse**

The modern horse originated in North America, and gave rise to a multiplicity of branches (Harbury, 2004; Budiansky, 1998; Bennett, 1980; Dent, 1974). From these four types of horse wandered into Europe in ‘two main waves’ (Dent, 1974, p. 8). The first two types were horses that came during the cold climatic era and one group, which did not have the capacity to grow, evolved into the modern native ponies that are often used as riding ponies for children today. The

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8 This is a brief overview in which to give grounding for present day practice and is by no means a full description of the evolution of the horse and its uses.

9 Although called horse the size of these animals was that of a pony.
second cold climate horse evolved into the solid and heavy ‘cold blooded’ horses such as the Shire and Clydesdale, which were used for transport, agriculture and in war (Dent, 1974). These were later bred with the introduced horses brought to England with the Norman invasion, as seen on the Bayeux Tapestry (Dent, 1974), which ‘looked like a modern Dales Pony’ (Coombs, 1991, p. 8). The bulky horses brought by William the Conqueror and his army was a superior war horse, the Destrier. These were ‘nearly always stallions’ (Coombs, 1991, p. 8) and were to become an ancestor of the Medieval draught horse needed once the knight gained full armour.

The second wave of horses, which were taller and more slender, crossed into Asia and the plains of North Africa and these horses founded the Oriental breeds, whose influence changed the way the horse has been used throughout the centuries. The blood lines of the racing thoroughbred can be traced back to three Arabian stallions: the Byreley Turk foaled in 1680 who produced the foundation stock of the English thoroughbred; the Darley Arabian, foaled in 1700 and brought to England by Thomas Darley in 1704; and the Godolphin Barb (originally named El Sham) foaled in 1724 and exported as a gift from the Yemeni Sultan of Morocco to Louis XV of France (Weatherbys Group, 2008; Thoroughbred Heritage; Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2008; Baker in Owen, 1979; Gianoli, 1969).

It was the horse of Asia and Europe that was hybridised to what is referred to as the ‘warmblooded’ horse (Baker, in Owen, 1979), which was a mix of the heavier cold blooded horses and the oriental hotter blooded animals to create the general purpose horses an example being the Cleveland Bay one of England’s oldest breeds. Found in the Cleveland area of the north east of England the heavier pack horses were bred with the Barb horses docking at Whitby to create a versatile quality

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10 It is accepted that all horses are ‘warmblooded’ not literally ‘cold blooded.’ This term is used for the slow cumbersome draught type horses.

11 The Turk, Turkmen or Turkoman was an Oriental horse from Turmenistan a country in Central Asia (Fraser and Manolson, 1979, and the online Turkmenistan Information Center).

12 The Barb was native to Morocco and Algeria, originally crossed with Spanish horses giving rise to the Andalusian. They first came to England in 1662 when Charles II took over Tangier (Fraser and Manolson, 1979).

13 Warmblooded horses are considered all horses that are not Thoroughbred or Arabians (or the above) breeds.
horse (Stephenson, 1999; Fraser and Manolson, 1979). These and similar breeds in Europe were the ancestors of the horses used in the sporting arenas of modern times.

The concept of breeding specifically for use in sport is not a modern concept. Early transcripts and records of the Greeks and Romans reveal the history of the horse in competition. The Greeks used the horse for sport, in which racing both chariot and astride were part of the ancient Olympics. Horse racing under saddle was introduced in the LIV Olympics held in 564 B.C.E. (Gianoli, 1969). Homer describes the racing of horses in Greece in the *Iliad* (Coombs, 1991). However; it is thought by scholars that it was the Romans who understood the requirement to breed quality horses. The Romans bred horses specifically for use in hippodromes of the Roman Empire (Gianoli, 1969). The Romans were formidable horse breeders importing horses for stud from all over their empire. They took advantage of the two types of horses being used in Britain at the time of invasion: one of them was the small, easy-gaited horse similar to the Hobbies of Ireland, the other ‘The Great Horse’ (Taylor, 1966, p. 76) for example the Shire horse. Evidence of the Romans use of the large type of horse is taken from coins showing a horse of draft type. These large horses would have been taken back to their studs and cross bred to allow substance and height to the smaller hot blooded Arab types (Taylor, 1996). However, with the fall of the Roman Empire, controlled breeding was abandoned for many years.

Breeding horses for pleasure began to flourish again during the late fourteenth century. In England the focus was on horse racing and hunting, whilst in Europe the horses of the Renaissance became a focus for art, science and philosophy (Raber and Tucker, 2005). As well as horse racing High School Dressage is synonymous with the period and one person who straddled both disciplines of horsemanship was William Cavendish, the first Duke of Newcastle (1592 – 1676). This wealthy aristocrat brought the art of dressage, or *haute école*, from Europe and in doing so imported the horses of choice for the discipline of high school equestrianism. Cavendish, and his European colleagues, favoured the Spanish (Iberian) horse for High School Dressage and created a demand for such animals (Belasik, 2004, 2001; Gianoli, 1967), thus the Andalusian horses from Spain were considered the ‘equine elite’ (Baker, in Owen, 1979, p. 38) of this period.
The Andalusian was used to hybridise native breeds along with the horses from the Orient, thus creating horses for a specific use. It was the elegance of these Spanish horses that deemed them to be the mount of kings, as depicted in many art works seen from this period. It is also thought that the Andalusian was cross bred with native ponies (of which there are nine breeds) to create larger more agile animals (Baker, in Owen, 1979). This ancient breed, well known in Spain and Italy, is the foundation of many recognised breeds and said to have influenced the Cleveland Bay in Britain and also the thoroughbred. In Europe the Spanish horse is now known as the Lipizzaner\textsuperscript{14} whose ancestor was the superior war horse, the Destrier. The Lipizzaner’s physicality enables it to perform the intricate dressage movements still seen in the performances given by the Spanish Riding School based in Vienna (Podhajsky, 1967).

Whilst the members of the social elite bred and used the horse for leisure, the majority of horses were still being used for work and in the military environment. As warfare changed the requirements for the mounts also changed, creating a demand for the cross bred horse. The change in demand meant breeders across Europe changed their breeding stock to accommodate the cavalry’s requirements and produce a multipurpose horse. Neither the short, stocky and powerful Andalusian nor the highly strung lightweight thoroughbred was of use but by mixing heavy and lighter horses a more ‘rectangular’ style of horse (Belasik, 2004, p. 3) was hybridised and absorbed into the cavalry. During times of battle the demand far outweighed the supply until the advent of mechanisation, which began replacing the horse on the battle fields. However, the horse was used in some military capacity up to the Second World War after which the need for horses diminished. As the demand for horses lessened in the military it grew in other aspects of daily life, one of which was as a coach horse.

The carriage horse needed to adapt its capacity for speed and elegance to that of pulling (Dent, 1974), and although some horses were used for riding and driving many earned their keep pulling carriages, which for the many years was the popular mode of transport. Whether they were being driven on farms, in the cities or down

\textsuperscript{14} From the Imperial Stud in Lipizza founded in 1580, stallions were imported from Spain to create the breed now known as the Lipizzaner (Podhajsky, 1967).
the mines the work for these horses was hard, as depicted in the classic tale *Black Beauty* (Sewell, n.d.). The horse is an expensive commodity and therefore it needed to earn its living. However, life was hard and the average age of a horse ‘in a mail-coach team [was] reckoned at three years’ (Dent, 1974, p. 42). It is estimated that by the ‘end of Queen Victoria’s reign there were about four million horses in Great Britain’ (Dent, 1974, p. 243). In fact it might be said that motorisation was the redeemer for the horse, as carriages were slowly replaced by automation and the hard life of the working horse became easier.

**The Modern Sports Horse**

The rise of motorised vehicles allowed the working horse to be used for sport and leisure. This in turn gave rise to the breeding of horses for the sporting and leisure industries that has led to the horses popular for riding today. Although not a new concept, as discussed above, sporting demands changed the types of horses required. The German breeders began to fulfil the needs of the modern sporting equestrian by producing horses which were strong athletic and more trainable, because they are obedient and submissive (Gianoli, 1967). These horses are warmblood horses. Germany’s most successful warmblood horse is the Hanoverian, whose history can be traced back to that of a military war horse. The present day competition animal has helped Germany become one of the more successful countries in equitation in all of the three disciplines: dressage, show jumping and eventing. The success of the German warmblood horse gave rise to more countries developing their native breeds crossing them with the thoroughbred to produced specific types (also warmbloods) that have become known as Sports Horses.

The Sports Horse can be any type of horse deemed suitable to perform in the chosen disciplines. There are registered breeds of warmblood horses specifically bred to produce the modern sports horse. The global market has resulted in lineages of cross bred horses being bred for the purpose of sport and leisure internationally because of the versatility, conformation and temperament, which allows them to be good dressage and jumping horses. Every country produces their own warmblood horses and can be a member of the World Breeding Federation for Sport Horses which is committed to grading schemes (www.sportshorsegb.co.uk) to maintain the
required standards. Similar to previous eras where the type of horse required was due to the specific needs of humans, the modern sports horse also has to meet specific desires based around success in the sporting arena. This has led certain types of horses being deemed more suitable than other. When elite riders are successful on certain horses those types of become most popular.

The breed of the horse that is popular with competitive equestrians of all levels is the one that wins competitions, thus creating a trickle-down effect. Lower level riders can be influenced by success at the elite level and therefore perceive the need for a specific type of horse for a given purpose. For example the German warmblood, in favour for many years, is now being replaced by the Dutch warmblood due to the success of certain Olympic riders on these types of horse. Research indicates that fashion does and always has dictated how horses are bred and used, making it difficult for the competition horses whose breeding is not in vogue (Skelton, 2000; Podhajsky, 1997). For example, the short striding Andalusian, popular for *haute école* in the Renaissance period, is no longer the horse of choice for the dressage rider because it does not produce the exuberant paces now required.

As leisure riding changes so too do the horses required and dressage riding now requires the extravagant moving warmblood horse which is successful at high level dressage. The fact that the majority of riders (who are not at an elite level) are unable to ride the extravagant movement that has been bred into the horses does not deter the less skilled rider from buying this type of horse. It is perceived by modern riders that to compete successfully in dressage competitions the rider must ride a warmblood type of horse. Consequently the popularity of a certain type of horse has led to a fashion in which riders, who consider dressage riding, must have a certain type to horse to do so. This mindset is contrary to the guidelines of dressage, which state that a horse/rider combination should be judged on their training processes. However, because more and more extravagant movements are seen they are becoming the norm in the dressage arenas. With the use of artificial insemination horses can be produced around the world and with an estimate of between 600,000 and 1.2 million horses predominantly used for leisure and sport today in the United Kingdom (www.defra.gov.uk) and similar numbers in Australia (www.rirdc.gov.au) the demand for both the sport and leisure horse is likely to continue.
Horses in Australia

Australia does not have a horse that is native only introduced species. Colonists brought horses with them for use in the country, and they were crucial to the development and expansion of the colonies. Prior to the technique of transporting frozen sperm across the globe, horses were exported to the colonies to be used as breeding stock. Baker (in Owen, 1979) writes that the first stallion was brought with three mares to Australia on the first fleet in 1787. These horses came from South Africa and Baker (in Owen, 1979) considers that they had Spanish blood lines. He states that the first pure bred English thoroughbred stallion was imported in 1799, but it was mostly the horses needed for work that were imported. Horses continued to be brought into the country, and by 1820 there were 4,000 imported horses. By 1830 studs were beginning to breed the horses that were fundamental to the growth and development of the new land of Australia. Horses were needed for clearing the land as well as for transport. In 1870 the coaching company Cobb and Co. were using 6,000 horses a day to pull their fleet of vehicles and by 1918 it was officially estimated that there were 2.5 million horses and a human population of 5 million (Baker, in Owen, 1979; Australia Government).

Working horses were not the only horses to be brought into and bred in Australia. One of the riding horses synonymous with Australia is the Waler because of its subsequent use in service in the military. It was a popular type of riding horse known for a fast walk and easy canter and therefore the Walers were useful mounts. They withstood hardship and didn’t suffer sore backs like many of the British mounts. The Waler is a cross breed of horse with a significant amount of Arab and thoroughbred in its bloodlines, and the Timor pony, which was brought to Australia in the 1800s and used by the early explorers (Baker, in Owen, 1979). There are many stories of their heroic deeds during the wars in which they were involved, which possibly helped their popularity as export commodities to other parts of the British Empire for use in the military. Horses from Australia were exported to India, Africa, S.E. and E. Asia and between 1861 and 1931 the total value of exports over this period for these horses was 8,171,278 pounds sterling.
Initially bred in New South Wales these horses were predominantly used as remounts for the British Army in India, then in the Second Boer War and later by soldiers of the Australian Light Horse in W.W.I., where 121,324 horses went overseas but none returned! (www.walerhorse.com). Fortunately the breed did not suffer too greatly and today Waler horses are used as recreational horses as well as stock horses with studs all around Australia. In 1940 a Waler created a record when jumping clear 2.5 metres (Gianoli, 1996), thus their adoption into the sporting arena.

The other horse synonymous with Australia is the Brumby, the wild horse, whose numbers are estimated to be around 300,000 (www.rirdc.gov.au). The Brumby is a wild horse derived of mixed breeding whose descendants either escaped or were set free by the early pioneers and left to fend for themselves. Their ancestors could be from a number of sources for example Capers, a breed originally from South Africa; Timor Ponies from Indonesia; British breeds of pony and horse including Thoroughbreds; and Arabs (Dobbie, McKBerman, and Braysher, 1993). The descendants of these animals are now wild and roam in the Eastern states of Australia. An increase in numbers has seen them regularly mustered and slaughtered for meat, or if they are lucky, domesticated as stock and ridden horses (Carter, 2009). Perhaps the thinking that they are ‘untameable or of any use in domestic circumstances’ (Gianoli, 1969, p. 412), has led to this natural resource having little impact on the domestic leisure market.

**Training the Horse**

*Early training for war*

To ride the horse the rider needs to be able to control the horse as well as be able to sit on its back, however this process developed through time. The rider needs to be able to sit fully supported, and it is through the saddle that this is possible. The saddle is thought to derive from a blanket thrown over the horse’s back and held in
place, initially, with a tie around the chest that was later replaced by a girth\textsuperscript{15} around the body of the horse (Gianoli, 1969). From the simple cloth came the saddle, which became extensively decorated and embellished, whilst serving its purpose of protecting the horse’s back as well as allowing the rider security on its back. Research is unspecific as to what date or by whom the saddle was first used, but it is thought the most likely contributors were Scythians, Sarmatians, or the Hiung-nu. These people were considered most likely because of their advanced use of the horse and knowledge at the time (Gianoli, 1969). Whenever or whoever first considered some form or equipment to sit on the horse ensured that riding would continue to develop to the present day. The saddle was introduced into Europe from the East in the first century C.E. and created a support for the rider at the front and rear of their torso (White, 1962).

It was the Chinese who developed the rudimentary saddle design into a more comfortable piece of equipment on which men would sit astride and women would sit sideways. Both front and side facing riding was possible on these early saddles because at this point riders did not have the use of the stirrup. This essential piece of equipment, both for military progress and present day use, can be traced back to the second century C.E. in India ‘as shown in the reliefs at Muttra’ (Gianoli, 1969, p. 22). Chinese literature also records the use of the stirrup in 477 C.E. (White, 1962) from where it spread and was adapted to fit the footwear of the different cultures in its progression through countries and ages to suit the purpose of those using it. The stirrup is a simple piece of equipment but when used with the saddle it changed the way the horse could be ridden and opened up a whole new form of equestrianism.

It could be said that the saddle was the primary piece of equipment without which the evolution of riding would not have developed to what we know it today. However it was the stirrup that connected to the saddle first developed around the time of Charlemagne (747 – 814), that gave the rider stability and therefore an alternative to the chariot for the western knights. The saddle and later the stirrup changed warfare and also how the horse could be used by those who could afford to ride them. Stability in the saddle, allowed by the stirrup, meant riders could transfer

\textsuperscript{15} The girth is the strap which in present times holds the saddle in place by going under the horse’s stomach and being tied on both sides of the saddle.
the energy previously needed to stay on the horse into fighting. Then the power and ability of the horse came to the fore (White, 1962).

Military leaders used the horse to conquer lands and colonise, and some of the earlier colonisers were the Romans. The Romans understood it was a requirement to not only breed quality horses but to train them (Gianoli, 1969) a concept that has continued to this day. Part of any training process is reliant on equipment and it is considered the Romans were the first to use the curb bit16, as opposed to the snaffle types used by the early Britons (Taylor, 1996). The curb bit, still in use today, could be attributed as an influential piece of equestrian equipment. Without the curb bit dressage or haute école would not be the same as we know it today.

Another influential aspect of modern riding that the Romans introduced was the concept of using the horse competitively, and building riding academies or hippodromes for equestrian competitions to take place. Chariot races, and races for saddled horses, which might also include the jockey performing acrobatics as the horse galloped to the finish, were part of the entertainment. Horses would be racing with their ‘tails done up in a knot, the mane ornamented with bows and beads’ (Gianoli, 1969, p. 42) similar to the turnout of horses competing today.

The Roman’s bred finer breeds of horses and used them for their Chariots and fast riding. It was the Normans with their smaller horses, the Destrier, that trained horses, to trample the enemy underfoot. This is evidenced on the Bayeux Tapestry (1066)17 in which horses are shown with their front feet shod with shoes containing ‘protruding stud like nails’ (Dent, 1974, p. 24). The horses were trained to then use the shoes to ‘bear down the enemy’ thus ‘the horse is now a weapon’ (Dent, 1974, p. 24).18 The horse continued to be used as a weapon culminating in it being taught to

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16 Although Taylor (1966) argues that it is not a true curb with the leverage action associated with this type of bit known today. See glossary for explanation of a bit.

17 The Bayeux Tapestry is an embroidered cloth explaining the Norman invasion at the battle of Hastings in 1066 and hangs in Bayeux, Normandy, France.

18 The concept of protruding nails on the horse’s shoes was later used for carriage horses that needed the extra purchase on the modern road surfaces. The concept is also used in the form of studs for competition to help the horse’s footing on adverse surfaces.
bite and kick on command (Gianoli, 1969), a precursor for the *haute école* movements later developed in the Renaissance.

During the Middle Ages from the 5th to the 15th century Shire and Clydesdale horses, as discussed above, were required to carry riders weighed down with the heavy defensive armour. When not in battle the horses were trained for tournaments (Dent, 1974). Although equitation during this period was ‘unsophisticated,’ early evidence of tournament riding is suggestive of competition (Gianoli, 1969, p. 95). Medieval tournaments were a popular sporting activity. Despite their slowness, due to the knights’ straight legs and long stirrups, and the type of horses they rode, that ‘ambled’ and ‘rarely galloped,’ (Gianoli, 1995, p. 88) the tournament was a popular event. The knights who rode in the tournaments were ‘deemed professional athletes’ and would ride from castle to castle, ‘picking up purses for his skill’ (Gianoli, 1995, p. 88) using the movements the horses needed on the battle fields. Despite the concept of the horse only moving forward the Medieval horses could be trained to produce ‘turns, pirouettes, quick half turns … [although this] was usually performed at the amble, the gait adopted during the medieval period’ (Gianoli, 1995, p. 88). The knights of this time were perhaps the first professional equestrians; they competed for money amongst the pomp and ceremony of the occasion, thus suggesting an analogy to present day competition riders.

Although the Medieval rider’s style and skills were different to present riding, the riding technique still relied on a well-trained obedient horse and gear that allowed the rider to perform their skills. Essential gear was a saddle that allowed for little movement to keep the rider secure whilst wielding a heavy sword, and a bridle that allowed maximum control whilst doing so. The ‘bit’ they used would allow maximum control of the horse (White, 1962, pp. 7-9).19 The bit, which is deemed to originate from rope or twine, evolved into a metallic device that works in the horse’s mouth through submission to pain coming from the reins and the rider’s hand. Although the large horses were not agile or fast they did need to respond quickly to

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19 The bits used were curbs introduced by the Romans with long side pieces (shanks).
the ill balanced weighty rider, thus the need for a bit to produce an immediate response.\textsuperscript{20}

Retrospectively the bits of these eras can be viewed as unethical, however White (1962) argues that for the bit to be painful the rider would need to have contact with the horse’s mouth (via the reins) and this was not necessarily the way they rode. During an archaeological dig the BBC’s Time Team (Ereira, 2005) found a well preserved horse’s bit (curb style) from the Norman era. A replica of the bit was made to fit a larger adult horse of the Medieval period and it was observed that it was similar to ones used in present day polo stables in Uruguay and Chile. Gail Brownrigg (a horse-bit expert brought into the programme) concluded that ‘the early Medieval bit was not an instrument of torture, but a well-designed piece of military equipment admirably suited to its purpose … clearly designed for one-handed riding, [a] joint in the long cheek pieces allowed them to rotate as the reins were pulled, giving a warning before any pressure was put on its mouth’ (Brownrigg, in Ereira, 2005). This warning that the horse received was around 90 degrees of rotation before the horse felt the pressure. Therefore, the fighting knight would have very little contact with the horse’s mouth and when it did there would be sufficient warning to the horse to react prior to feeling pain. In fact the knight may well have used the reins more on the neck in a similar way to the western cowboy or the polo players of today. Gianoli (1969, p. 95) supports this theory arguing the knight would ride with one hand that required a grip ‘firm enough to control the horse and his [sic] movement, [but] was not supposed to act in any way that might neutralize its natural impulsion’. The riders’ lives would be dependent on the horses’ continuing forward movement, albeit slow, and the arguments put forward would support this premise. It is unrealistic to consider that riders, and riding masters of this period, would put lives at risk due to ineffective riding and training.

The bits used became more elaborate in their design, culminating in ornate and often bizarre pieces of equipment during the Renaissance period (Taylor, 1966). Coombs (1991, p.74) argues that more horses are ‘tormented and ultimately ruined … through being badly ridden with inappropriate bits’ (Coombs, 1991, p. 74). Many

\textsuperscript{20}The training of the horse will be discussed more fully later in the thesis, when reviewing modern riding practice.
of these bits had their foundations in the Renaissance era. This era, from the 14th to the 17th century, was not only responsible for elaborate designs of bits but was also when the many of the traditional methods in use today were established.

The Renaissance period saw a resurgence of the horse and changed the way it had been considered and used. Although still used in warfare, it also became a focus for art, science and philosophy (Raber and Tucker, 2005). The science focused on the biomechanics of horse and rider using the technology available. Royal patrons became involved in breeding programmes designed to create horses for different purposes and interests. Equestrians studied the way the horse moved and how the rider’s position influenced this. During this period the royalty and the wealthy aristocrats became patrons of horsemanship and the elite and powerful nobility sponsored the riding masters in the art and science of *haute école*.

The origins of the Renaissance period can be linked to the Greek riding master Xenophon (380–400 B.C.E.) although much of what he taught had been forgotten until a general resurgence of the classics and all things classical (Gianoli, 1969). During this period the battlefield was replaced with the riding school horse and the horse being considered for art and science. Riding became something that was studied and written about in texts that are still considered influential today.

It was the Byzantines who first used the concept of riding schools as a method of teaching and learning to ride and train the horse (Gianoli, 1969), but it was not until the Renaissance period that this style of enclosed riding began to flourish. During this period the Italians started the first riding academy of Naples, and later Ferrara, from which the fashionable nobility of Europe went to learn the art of riding. Equestrianism was in these institutions a ‘passionate, rigorous study – mathematically and physiologically supported – of the horse and rider as a dual entity at the various gaits, both natural and artificial’ (Gianoli, 1991, p.103). Pillars to restrain the horse were used with other gadgets such as ‘long whips, sharp spurs and severe curbs’ to produce the ‘flexion and constant collection’ (Coombs, 1991, p. 13) required in equestrianism at this time. The bits used were ornate to the point of absurdity and their harshness was brutal. Disks and studs on the bits and nosebands
(Taylor, 1966) pressed into the horses flesh to gain maximum control. Although riding masters for example Cavendish, can be acknowledged for introducing kinder versions he still maintained that the ‘horse must know you are the master; that is, he must fear you’ (Taylor, 1966, p. 92). Despite the improvement of the breeds of horse and the general refinement the arts contributed to the way in which the horse was trained, the methods of the riding academies did not consider the horse’s welfare as would be expected to day (Gianoli, 1991). The classicist Xenophon wrote that the horse should be ridden in a natural environment. However during this era the training was undertaken in arenas a concept that is still employed by some riders today.

The aim of riding the horse was to produce artistry and so the horse became a vehicle to show grace and refinement by performing movements that showed the rider’s skill and deftness (Gianoli, 1991). How this was achieved was through the rider and during this era the rider’s position was studied to see how the use of the seat and balance worked in conjunction with the reaction of the horse and its response. Studying both horse and rider gave produced riding masters who created a lineage, often resulting in competitiveness between those who were in and out of fashion.

The horses that are depicted in the art of this period indicate they were small stocky animals with some blood to give them lightness and agility as well as the strength needed to perform the complex movements being created. As horses became stronger, the need for control developed two fold (Taylor, 1966), firstly in the use of the bit in the horse’s mouth, and secondly by means of the band around the nose. The technique was developed by inflicting pain on the horse thus inducing a quicker response. Bits would have ‘claws or spikes’ (Taylor, 1966, p. 89), which when the reins were pulled would dig into the outer side of the horse’s mouth. Spikes were also adopted on the noseband, which was fitted low and impeded the horses

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21 The severity of the bit is determined by two aspects of construction: the length of the bottom curb and the relation between the length of the cheek part of the bit both above and below the mouthpiece; the larger the ratio the more forgiving. Another point to consider is if the cheek pieces appear straight from the ring joining it to the rein (at the bottom) and the top rings that join it to the bridle. It is better to have an angle (an imaginary line drawn from one ring to the other) (personal knowledge).

22 The term blood in this instance refers to the horse having either Arabian or Thoroughbred in its breeding.
breathing (Taylor, 1966) indicating that the elegance was established at the expense of the horse’s welfare.

When warfare changed, the role of the horse and rider also needed to change. Gaspard de Saunier (1663–1748) states the sound of musket fire frightened the horse to such a point they could barely be made to go onto the battle fields, being too ‘dazed and stupefied’ (in Gianoli, 1967, p. 118). As such a change in tactics was needed resulting in the French cavalry galloping their horses ‘at the charge.’ The horse continued to be trained for military use until after the Second World War when motorisation replaced them.

The following section will retrace the training of the horse through the influential Riding Masters. The discussion will introduce the concept of lineage and how different theories have developed to become present day practices as discussed at the end of the chapter.

### Influential Teachers from the Classical Riding Academies and their Lineage

**Xenophon (380–400 B.C.E.)**

Xenophon was the first riding teacher to transpose his theories into a text, the *Art of Horsemanship*, which is still referred to today. Xenophon was an aristocrat in the Greek military (at the time of Socrates) and his text has established a fundamental set of principles from which others were to follow. Narrated as a comprehensive and unique ‘how-to-guide for riders [in] a very extensive step-by-step account on every aspect of horsemanship’ (Trippett, 1974, p. 52), it is a ‘compendium of advice and counsel for his children and friends’ Gianoli (1969, p. 29). It is clearly written with advice on all aspects of horsemanship using a format and terminology used today and ‘any horse expert who has studied this book … cannot fail to be impressed by the preciseness of his explanations and by his insight into the feelings of the horse’ (Podhasjky, 1967, pp. 17–18). He shows an attitude
towards the horse based on ‘kindness, patience and sympathetic understanding of their natural tendency to take fright in unusual situations’ (Coombs, 1991, p. 4), an approach now being used by equitation scientists. Xenophon was an educated man who studied horse psychology from which to develop his pedagogy (Coombs, 1991).

The book can be seen as a foundation for modern equestrian theories as well as an outline for other texts to follow. The book is divided into different areas of equestrianism and the section of interest for the thesis is VII. In this area of the book Xenophon instructs the rider. He advises that initially the novice should learn on a well-trained horse and he explains the rider’s position in modern riding terms. For example, the analogy of the chair seat23 is also depicted (Swift, 2006; Prockl, 2005; Von Dietz, 1999). Interestingly he states riding should be done with a contact on the reins as opposed to the norm of the period which indicates a loose swinging rein (Gianoli, 1969) thus setting up a dichotomy of styles. He continues to give clear descriptions of the position of the rider’s hands which takes into consideration the horse’s physicality as well as how to modify their hand position when jumping ditches. His emphasis on the rider’s flexibility and suppleness is fundamental to the approach advocated in riding lessons today.

After riding a schooled horse Xenophon continues to instruct how to ride a less than ideal horse in section IX, thus progressing the rider’s education. He advocates quietness and patience throughout, stating that if the horse moves more quickly than the rider wishes they ‘must not suddenly wrench him, but quietly and gently bring the bit to bear upon him, coaxing him rather than compelling him … [and] keep a quiet seat … taking pains to minimise the annoyance’ of the horse through their (the riders’) own characteristics (Xenophon, translated by Dakyns, 2008). Through the insistence on patience and correctness this multipurpose text instructs the rider through many aspects of horsemanship. The text implies that too much school-based equestrianism was of no practical use. Xenophon is encouraging the rider to be in the natural environment to learn how to ride and train the horse in preparation for where they will ultimately be expected to perform.

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23 The chair seat is when the riding sits on the horse as if in a chair with the upper body slumped and the legs forward of the torso.
Over the centuries Xenophon’s text and theories were forgotten by the riding masters until the early sixteenth century (Podhasjky, 1967). During this period warfare had evolved to require a horse capable of quick movements; tight turns were needed under full control which could only be achieved from a collect pace\textsuperscript{24} (Podhasjky, 1967). During this time there was a move to combine the medieval combat riding with the Greek classical principles based around the writings of Xenophon. In Naples (Southern Italy) a nobleman Giovanni Battista Pignatelli opened a riding academy where horses and riders were trained to produce the high school movements. A pupil from this school, Frederico Grisone, produced his own text, which he based around Xenophon’s work although Grisone’s *Ordini de Cavalcare* (*The Rules for Riding, 1561*), however Gianoli (1969) states that his methods lost much of the original methodology based around kindness. Whether this was due to the poor interpretation or not, Grisone’s methods were based on domination over the horse with the overuse of strong bits and large spurs, thus bullying the horse into a rounded posture synonymous with this period.

Also from the Pignatelli School in Naples was the French rider Antoine de Pluvinel (1555-1620). He was sent to Italy at the age of 10 to study under the tutelage of Pitnatelli (www.cadrenoir.co.uk). He adopted a different approach, which was more in line with the teachings of Xenophon, in that he prescribed that the rider practise patience, praise and understanding of the horse’s character (Podhajsky, 1967). His teaching encouraged that the horse should be considered as a sensitive and intelligent being whose psychology should not be ignored, and that the rider should adopt discrete aids (www.cadrenoir.co.uk).

Pluvinel insisted that each horse should have its own designed bit, to fit the conformation of its mouth, the idea being that this would lessen the pain (Taylor, 1966). Another consideration for the horse’s welfare was the use of pillars in training. The idea of these was to create neck flexion and suppleness in the hindquarters (Gianoli, 1967) without the rider on the horse’s back. The horse would be tied to the pillars from the cavesson noseband using firstly one pillar in conjunction with the reins and then both pillars depending on what movements were

\textsuperscript{24} Collection changes the pace of the horse from a flattened forward movement to one of elevation.
being achieved. Pluvinel states the ‘prudent and judicious horseman [can] observe what his horse is capable of … when he is not under the influence of any man’ (Pluvinel 1629, in Gianoli, 1967, p. 111).

The literature indicates that Pluvinel was a knowledgeable equestrian whose techniques considered the horse’s welfare during this era by seeing it as an intellectual partner. He became the riding instructor to the young King Louis XIII (1589-1610) and other noblemen. His text *Instruction du Roy en l’Exercice de Monter a Cheval anege du Roi* (Instruction for the King Riding the Horse, 1623 published posthumously) the narrative undertakes a conversation between himself, as the author and teacher, and the King, the student. This is an interesting text when considering its implications for present day instructional books and the modern riding lesson.

The class system and etiquette required at the time makes me think that it is unlikely Pluvinel would have been in a position to question the King’s ability to ride, and as such his inferences were made through the third party, that of the horse. In this way instruction given to the rider (the King) are masked in terminology that indicated teaching/training the horse, not questioning the king’s abilities. The text could well be the first in which the horse is being taught as opposed to the rider, a style that would be followed to the present day. The text also indicates collaboration between rider, trainer and the horse similar to modern riding and coaching/teaching methods.

*William Cavendish, the first Duke of Newcastle (1592–1676)*

William Cavendish, the first Duke of Newcastle was the only influential early master of classical riding in England. He produced two texts *La Methode et Invention Nouvelle de Dresser les Chevaux*, translated from French to English and published in 1657, and later an English book *A New Method and Extraordinary Invention to Dress Horses* in 1667. These texts are rare and valuable, with illustrations typical of equestrian riding of the day. In the text Cavendish gives instructions on proper riding
stating ‘You must in all Airs 25 follow the strength, spirit, and disposition of the horse, and do nothing against nature; for art is but to set nature in order, and nothing else’ (www.baumanraareboooks.com). His influence has not been totally unrecognised. Modern equestrian William Steinkraus 26 states that the text is reputed to be a work ‘esteemed by countless generations of horsemen and revered by such masters as La Guérinière, Comte d’Aure and Steinbrecht, and a landmark of equestrianism’ (www.baumanraareboooks.com). This statement contradicts Podhajsky (1978) who argues that Cavendish was not influential, he was deemed to use cruel methods and thus his theories did not have longevity because they were superseded by those better, for example de la Guérinière.

Cavendish did not rely on royal patronage; he was a powerful and influential figure and as such he was not beholden to a sponsor. He was exposed to the European culture during his period in exile where, as Sevens (2008) argues, he invented the shoulder-in. During his period in exile he spent time discussing science and philosophy with Descartes (Raber, in Raber and Tucker, 2005) who became his ‘patron and friend’ (LeGuin, in Raber and Tucker, 2005, p. 181). When he returned to England he used his wealth and influences to promote his methods of horsemanship which incorporated a philosophical and scientific approach. He built an indoor riding school at Bolsover Castle (one of his homes), where he was able to practise his horsemanship. He also advocated kind training methods (Stevens 2008). Although this is disputed by Podhajsky (1967) who argues his methods were based on cruelty, there is no evidence to support this premise (Raber, 2005; Coombs, 1991; Gianoli, 1967; Taylor, 1966).

Podhajsky’s critique may be due to Cavendish’s criticism of the use of the two pillars for training purposes. Podhajsky was the director of the Spanish Riding School where pillars are an integral part of the schooling of the horses. Cavendish’s observations led him to believe the pillars only worked for certain types of horse, the heavier breeds, which he was moving away from. He favoured lighter and less

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25 Capitalisation from the original.
26 William (Bill) Steinkraus is an elite American show jumper.
submissive types of horses, and used the walls of the school to restrain them in preference to the pillars (Gianoli, 1967).

François Robichon de la Guérinière (1688–1751)

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the French were putting in place their own theories taken from the riding master Antoine de Pluvinel (1555-1620). One of France’s greatest riding masters François Robichon de la Guérinière (1688–1751) came from this lineage of equestrians and he helped strengthen the French methods through his ‘revolutionary book on riding of all times’ (Podhajski, 1978, p. 18) the Ecole de Cavalerie, (School of Horsemanship 1733). The text is in three parts, consisting of stable management, training the horse and rider and treating illness, a format still popular today.

De la Guérinière’s methods changed the way the horse was ridden, he was ‘thoroughly academic’ (Gianoli, 1967, p. 117) and required his students to be thinking riders, riding each horse as an individual (Podhajski, 1978). He integrated de Pluvinel’s theories and took them ‘several stages further’ (Coombs, 1991, p. 16). His aim was to produce a quiet, supple and obedient riding horse, ‘by systematic work’ (Podhajski, 1978, p. 22). He also introduced a flat saddle, still in use at Saumur (Gianoli, 1967) that allowed for changes in the riding position. It alleviated the forked seat and an over use of the spur by shortening the rider’s stirrups. The alteration of stirrup length allowed the rider to be in a position in which to create a balanced seat obtained from a relaxed, free and subtle position in which the lower leg would be around the horse’s body as opposed to swinging below the belly line often seen in art works from this period.

In the Ecole de Cavalerie de la Guérinière advocates the rider should work with the nature of the horse and as such create a ‘foundation of sound principles’

27 De la Guérinière methods and writings are still ‘applied unaltered at the Spanish Riding School and may be seen there in daily use’ (Podhajsky, 1967, p. 19).
28 Saumur is the French Riding Academy of the Cadre Noir, one of the existing traditional riding schools.
29 The forked seat described in von Dietze (1999) is when the rider takes their weight forward onto the pubic bone and off the sitting bones, inner thighs become tense and the lower leg swings backwards.
The text predominantly deals with training the horse, but he does make a case for the quality of the rider’s seat by arguing that a balanced rider will have a lighter hand on the reins which should then be used harmoniously with the leg. He is in agreement with Xenophon in advocating prudent and sparing use of chastisement, and also like his predecessor he admonishes riders who do not have an understanding of how the horse moves, arguing that without this knowledge they cannot ride correctly.

Antoine d’Aure, (1799–1863)

After the French revolution Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821) established eleven riding schools in order to keep some standards in the training of military horses and riders (Gianoli, 1967). D’Aure brought a different style to the academy. He adopted the ideas of d’Augergne who had tried them over a century earlier without success, but now d’Aure considered these ideas suited to the needs of the military at this later period. Riding and warfare now required the rider and horse to move forward in their paces as opposed to the collection previously used (Gianoloï, 1967), therefore d’Aure included jumping and riding quickly across country as part of the training regime. His theory was a ‘horseman’s talent lies in knowing how to employ his own action in proportion to the horse's potential and capability’ (Gianoloi, 1967, p.121).

In the text30 Traite d’ Equitation he suggests the instructor be particularly attentive during the first lessons to position the arms and legs of the rider which, if they become stiff, will create a ‘reflex action leading to a stiff back and too heavy a pull on the horse’s mouth’ (d’Aure, in Gianoli, 1967, p. 122). He continues to give instruction to the novice rider and although his terminology is not in use today his written instruction is clear and understandable and his theories are sound. For example, he states any changes to the riders’ position will only come with time and practice, and teachers should use their ‘intuition and intelligence’ because one cannot teach riding as a given set of principles (d’Aure, in Gianoli, 1967). D’Aure encouraged riding outside the restriction of the ménage often across country and over

30 Parts of the d’Aure text is found in Gianoli (1967, pp. 121–123). It is the only source I have been able to find in English.
obstacles, and he often taught through practical demonstrations stating ‘Watch me and imitate me’ (d’Aure, in Gianoli, 1967, p. 121), a teaching method encouraged in the modern curriculum.

D’Aure’s type of teaching was revolutionary as prior to this freer style riders were being taught how to achieve movements through the application of a set formula of aids many of which are still in practice (Gianoli, 1967). D’Aure understood that when riding, especially cross country, the rider cannot always be the dominant partner. By allowing the horse to be multifaceted, rather than restricting it to one discipline, he created a less forceful form of riding (Gianoli, 1967): a principle putting him at odds with his contemporaries.

Francois Baucher (1796 –1873)

Unfortunately for the horse d’Aure’s methods were too controversial for the time and the next master of horse Francois Baucher introduced his own theories deemed to advance equitation (Baucher 1991; Gianoli, 1967). They were ‘logical and reasonable’ (Gianoli, 1967, p. 123) and worked on respecting the horse’s ‘natural equilibrium’ (Gianoli, 1967, p. 124).

However, Baucher’s appointment as the riding master was not without problems. Possibly the first riding master not of the nobility, but from ‘humble origins’ (Gianoli, 1967, p. 121) he made his living through equestrianism not financial inheritance. When the work in the riding academies was limited he turned to the circus to gain an income (Baucher, 1991; Gianoli, 1967; Coombs, 1991) and this alongside his lower status put into question his ability as a rider/trainer/teacher at the time. Modern texts attribute much of his success to the talents of his pupils as opposed to his teaching of them (Coombs, 1991). Baucher’s ability to ride and implement his methods was praiseworthy: however, his ability to articulate was questionable and his texts ‘incomprehensible’ (Coombs, 1991, p. 18). His instructions to the rider in the text, School of Horsemanship, part of which is

31 Although I used a primary source for information on Baucher he wrote extensively and some of the information is not within the text I read, therefore I have used the secondary source for some of the information relevant to the study.
reproduced in Gianoli (1967) and Ritter (1998) do not give a clearly narrated instruction and as such would be difficult to carry out. He does give the rider instruction on their position with theories based around the rider’s ‘seat, the bend, and the principles covering work in the classical school manner’ (Gianoli, 1967, p. 124).

He was a prolific writer and his theories changed over time. In his text *New Method of Horsemanship* he states that he has a new method on how to develop a good seat in 46 days of riding for an hour twice a day. He simplifies his delivery stating ‘one word replaces all [the] instructions’ (Baucher, 1800, p. 19) given loudly by his predecessors. The exercises are with the horse stationary and in motion with the rider repeating the drills given by the instructor. Many of the exercises he gives are familiar and some are in use today.

The texts were translated into German and he undertook a tour of equestrian establishments to generate acceptance of his theories, which were not always well received (Ritter, 1998). The tradition of de la Guérinière was firmly in place in Germany (Podhajsky, 1978), and as such Baucher was dismissed as improper and incorrect. Although Germany dismissed his theories (at this time) he did eventually find support there and in the meantime France supported them, thus creating a rift between the two equestrian nations. Baucher’s techniques spread through books and travel and as such his teachings spread to Russia and America. The English nobleman Henry William Herbert published a book on equitation in America called *Hints to Horse-Keepers* (1865) in which he dedicates a chapter to Baucher’s methods. Herbert’s narrative instructions are clear to follow and a visual representation of the rider applying the aids to the horse is given. Herbert asserts riders should be taught to totally dominate the horse who should ‘not be allowed to do anything of his own will’ (p. 249).
James Fillis (1834-1913), A pupil of Baucher, the Englishman James Fillis (1834-1913) continued to develop these theories in Russia Fillis learned to ride and taught riding in France and later went to the Russian Cavalry School in 1897 (Coombs, 1991). Like his teacher he also performed with the circus, again creating derision amongst equestrians who accused him of teaching horses unnatural movements. Modern science argues that nothing we do on horseback is natural for the horse (McGreevy and McLean, 2010; Budiansky, 1998), therefore arguing that making it go in one way as opposed to another can be construed as politically or personality motivated, not necessarily following the horses natural movement. For example lateral movements are considered dressage whilst cantering backwards is considered show and performance. Fillis ‘invented’ other types of movements (Fillis, 1902, p. 322) as well as teaching the horse to canter backwards; a movement no longer used; he is also responsible for the Spanish Walk, a gait that is still used by some as a way to free the horse’s shoulders.

Fillis (1902) was inspired to write his text Breaking and Riding because one of his pupils thought that his oral explanations were ‘apt’ (Fillis, 1902, vii). However, when reading his text as an aid to teaching it becomes clear that the explanations are given with an assumption of knowledge by the reader. The gaps in the information would not allow an uneducated rider to follow them to any success. The words or instructions oversimplify what is being asked and insufficient explanations do not clarify sufficiently the theories for instructions to be transferred into riding practice. Authors may circumvent this problem with preface in the texts to explain that riding is a practical skill, and the reader cannot learn without the practice. For example Fillis (1902, p. vii) spent ‘sixty years’ in equestrianism where his readers have not, and as such much of what is said has come from his intuitive

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32 Baucher’s theory of legs without hands, hands without legs is referred to by Tom Roberts (1992) and is part of the Learning Theory purported by Andrew McLean at the present time.

33 Fillis claims that Baucher either did not know or did not know how to explain this movement (backward canter) but it is obvious that Baucher was working on this movement although without the success that Fillis claims to have with more than one horse.

34 This movement is still performed in some circles but it is not a movement that is considered classical (Podhajsky, 1967).
knowledge as a rider. When the texts assume the reader to have certain knowledge and skills misunderstandings can occur especially when riding is taken to the broader populace. Although the movements Fillis created did not transpose into modern equestrianism, he did leave a legacy for modern riders. For example the means of holding the reins of a double bridle and his invention of the stirrup iron are both in use today. However, it is the method of training the horse, through reward and punishment that both Fillis and Baucher advocate, which are of interest to the thesis. For example, Fillis describes giving a pat on the neck and releasing the reins and speaking in a soothing voice immediately the horse has done what has been asked. This describes an intrinsic understanding of the theory that will later be described as behaviourism.

Riding academies proliferated throughout Europe during the seventeen and eighteen hundreds. From their inception in Northern Italy it was the French who predominated for many years. However, Germany also began to develop a style in academies outside the military establishments for example the Hanover equestrian school was aligned to the University of Gottingen in 1734 (Gianoli, 1967, p. 144), which indicates the importance of equestrianism in that country at this time. As the French riding schools became more diverse the German system continued with the classical methods (Gianoli, 1967). German riders for example Louis Seeger (1798 – 1865), who was an opponent of Baucher’s methods, followed de la Guérinière’s. Seeger trained in the first private riding school in Berlin and was one of the first in a line of German equestrians. A pupil of his was Gustav Steinbrecht (1808-1885) who in 1849 became the director of the Seegerhof where he began his notes for his text the Gymnasium of the Horse, a text that formed the basis of German equestrian success. His theory to ‘ride your horse forward and set it up straight’ (Steinbrecht, 1995: Coombs, 1991) is in line with modern teaching. Conversely another German equestrian Ernest Friedrich Steiger (1798-1865), another influential rider, followed Baucher’s method thus indicating the different methods and juxtapositions of equitation throughout the eras irrespective of nationalities.

It was General Alexis Francois l’Hotte (1825–1904) from the classic riding school of Saumur (France) who brought the methods of the above masters together (L’Hotte, 1998). Combining d’Aure’s riding outside the ménage and Baucher’s
methods inside he established his own doctrine. L’Hotte’s standing order was, ‘Keep calm and go straight ahead’ (Gianoli, 1967, p. 127) also stating the rider should be satisfied with a little progress from the horse each day; in other words he advised patience, a principle advocated in many of the texts. He also introduced the posting trot\(^{35}\) or the English rising trot as opposed to the usual sitting posture adopted in the classical riding schools, thus taking classical equestrianism forward as it adapted to the needs of the era in which faster more forward riding in an outside environment was being undertaken (L’Hotte, 1998).

*Federico Caprilli (1868–1907)*

The concept of riding the horse forward to encompass the galloping charge and open riding meant that by the end of the nineteenth century classical riding academies were developing alternative methods to the pure dressage previously seen in the schools. Classical riding was reduced to a few schools, for example the Spanish Riding School in Vienna which continued its loyalty to de la Guérinière disregarding any innovations (Coombs, 1991). Others began to introduce riding out of the school (ménage) to ride across country and jumping, thus bringing equestrianism back to that described by Xenophon, where riders were expected to cross ditches and other obstacles. Coombs (1991) argues it was the extension of the riding master taking the instruction out of the school that led to the change in identity of the teacher, who was to become known as the trainer. They also began to take their teaching/training to a wider audience through the published material of their theories and methods.

The new style of riding was able to develop further due to the Italian rider Federico Caprilli’s (1868-1907) revolutionary jumping style. Although he did not publish a book he did publish articles in an Italian cavalry journal *Revista di Cavalleria* in 1901, one of which was *Per L’EQUITAZIONE DI CAMPAGNA (Principles of Cross Country Riding)*, in which he introduced the forward seat for jumping, (that is used today (Gianoli, 1967). The change in rider position allowed jumping to be more accessible, and as such opened the way for competitive riding (Gianoli, 1967).

\(^{35}\) The posting trot or rising trot is when the rider is seen to go up and down to the rise and fall of the horse’s pace.
Caprilli’s radical adaptation of the dressage seat into the jumping seat took five years to develop (Gianoli, 1967). He used the process of watching the horse move and adopted the modern technology of the photograph in which to test his theories. The position he proposed, when adopted, would relieve the horse of pain and discomfort.

Caprilli, a cavalry rider and later teacher, recognised the need for military riders and horses to be able to ride over any type of terrain. However, when watching the way the riders did this he realised the lifespan for the working horse was limited, due to poor riding technique. The way the rider jumped and the way the horse jumped were incompatible and as such the strain on the horse’s joints would lead to a shorter working life of the horse. He watched horses jumping without riders, which enabled him to devise a revolutionary jumping style, still used in horse jumping today. He realised it was necessary to ‘bring the crotch down, which led to the “heels-down” style which gives firmness to the lower leg and in turn the lower body as well as allowing flexibility of the upper back’ (Gianoli, 1967, p. 158) through a shorter stirrup and acute bend at the knee joint. However it took him over five years to have his theories recognised (Gianoli, 1967). At the same time that Caprilli was working on his jumping technique the adoption of the snaffle bit, which is deemed a softer option than the harsher curbs, was becoming more commonplace, and this helped his theories of unrestricted forward movement (Gianoli, 1967).

Caprilli, like Xenophon, wrote for the military rider and instructor who needed to get men and animals from point a, to point b quickly and easily whilst maintaining the welfare of the horse. His papers give instruction to the rider how to jump and ride the horse across country, which is based around ensuring freedom of the horse from interference of the rider. Whilst at the same time he gives direction to the instructors stating ‘riders are made through practice and natural progression and the instructor should seek to lessen his difficulties not add to them.’ Again the theme of practice and progression is asserted. His concern was that if the rider was not instructed correctly, stiffness could occur, and if it did it should be corrected ‘no matter what form it takes or in what part of the rider’s body’ (Gianoli, 1967, p. 163). The forward position he proposed alleviated stiffness in riders because they worked with the horse across country and in doing so freed the horse to move forward with less restriction from the rider.
Although I cannot agree with Caprilli’s statement, that dressage and jumping are two opposing disciplines (Gianoli, 1967), I believe it is informed by the style of *haute école* his Italian predecessors used. Harsh restrictive methods were employed thus countering his theories of unrestricted forward movement. Unfortunately when reading Gianoli’s (1967) text it can leave the reader to assume that no preparation is required on the flat to help the horse jump, thus disregarding the need for gymnastic preparation required to get the horse physically attuned to jumping (Gianoli, 1967). However, his methods were successful for him as a rider and the German riders who followed his methods also have great success (Gianoli, 1967)

The British were slow to embrace Caprilli’s jumping style possibly due to the lack of success for those who tried it (Gianoli, 1967) and therefore it was a number of years before it became popular with British riders who preferred to use an *ad hoc* approach to jumping, especially in the fox hunting field. Therefore, when they developed Steeplechasing (thoroughbred racing over fences) in the beginning of the nineteenth century they rode in an unbalanced and uncomfortable manner (Coombs, 1991) similar to the way they hunted. There was no system of training to do otherwise and as such riding relied on intuition and practice. Riders would pull the horse’s mouth and lean back with their legs pushed forward to remain seated over the fence; a stance often depicted in the art of this period. The result would be the horse would often land on all four legs with or without the rider. Adams (1805 in Coombs, 1991, p. 42) wrote the stirrup must be shorter and the rider should incline forward to ‘relieve yourself from that friction and heat which the bottom would receive,’ thus trying to induce the Caprilli jumping position. However, even though this was sound advice there was reluctance to change to the forward seat which was deemed suitable only for those in show jumping circles and not for the ‘casual rider’ (Coombs, 1991, p. 21).

Caprilli’s style of riding over fences across country was disseminated throughout Europe and into Britain through the lineage created by the students of Caprilli. Invited cavalry officers (from other countries) went to the Italian academies and experienced the new technique of riding and adopted it in their teaching. Although the British *en masse* resisted the different technique some were keen to use it and at the start of the twentieth century Colonial Geoffrey Brooke from the British
Cavalry School went to Italy and studied the forward seat (Coombs, 1991). As equestrianism in the military declined, riding masters whose skills were no longer needed in the military environment took advantage of the new trend of equestrianism and began to teach outside the confines of the arena. They began to source their livelihoods away from the military environment, and the popularity of riding over fences in a more effective riding position was a way in which to broaden their clientele. As they extended their teaching to jumping fences they began ‘achieving distinction as trainers rather than just teachers’ (Coombs, 1991, p. 21).

At the turn of the nineteenth century automation began replacing the horse both in the military and in daily life (Coombs, 1991) thus changing the demographic of the horse rider. Industrialisation created wealth and perceived status for the middle classes who began to participate in areas previously the domain of the nobility. Women were also taking a more active role in society, part of which was their involvement in equestrianism. The medium of the horse allows for equality in the sporting arenas where women could compete equally with men, thus the change in the cohort and popularity of riding for sport and pleasure also changed equestrianism from traditionally a male dominated environment to being more egalitarian.

The twentieth century introduced a shift in equestrianism also coming out of Europe. Although still heavily influenced by the military riders the adoption of disciplines other than dressage began to flow into the sporting arenas. Initially the sporting competitions were based around the military with riders competing in military attire (Gianoli, 1967), but the popularity of equestrianism grew into the wider populace. As populations became generally wealthier and leisure time increased equestrianism began to follow the sporting and competitive aspects although as well as continuing the traditions from the styles and lines discussed.

Equestrians are taught to ride the horse to make it compliant to their desires. In the ninetieth century Gustav Steinbrecht (1808-1885) argued in his text *The Gymnasium of the Horse* (1995) that when training the horse the exercises should not be hurried, and should follow one another so that the ‘preceding exercise always

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36 The equestrian events in the Olympics were popularised after the First World War and were referred to as The Military, now known as the Three Day Event (Gianoli 1967).
constitutes a secure basis for the next’ and failure to follow this rule will ‘always exert payment late on’ (McLean, 2007). In the twentieth century Haungk developed the German training scale. It evolved from the teachings of the Italian master Caprilli, the French master de la Guérinière, the traditions of the school of Hanover School and the teachings of the German masters von Weyrother, Seegar, Seidler and Steinbrecht (McLean, 2007). The German training scale is a progressive training scale for the horse that requires the following steps:

1. Rhythm,
2. Looseness,
3. Contact and acceptance of the bit,
4. Impulsion,
5. Straightness, and
6. Collection.

Seidler (1837, p. 301 in Ritter 2006) agrees with Steinbrecht (1995) when he states that ‘in order to accomplish the correct education of the horse with certainty, it is necessary to follow the training schedule step by step’. This scale is now the foundation of training dressage horses and it has had a major significance in the practical and theoretical development of horse training. Once the scale was finalised and adopted, in the early twentieth century, the Germans experienced unparalleled Olympic success in dressage and jumping, and a major part of the success can be attributed to their systematic approach to training, thus creating a method that is now followed globally (McLean, 2007).

Initially schooling the horse in what is known as collection predominated, due to the extra load of the fully armoured rider putting more weight onto the horse’s naturally encumbered forehand. Training the horse to lower its hindquarters and bring its hind feet closer together allowed for better forward thrust (McGreevy and McLean 2010). However, it can be argued that riding academies during the Renaissance were an indulgence of the higher classes, rather than for any military enhancements. William Cavendish, the first Duke of Newcastle, argued that much of what was achieved in the schools was academic and of no use on the battlefield. Newcastle argued that whilst in battle the rider did not have the time to perform the
intricate movements and as such they were only of use in the riding school environment (in Gianoli, 1967).

The movements the horse was required to perform were purported to be for assisting the rider during battle. However, many cannot be ascribed to movements that are of practical use and some cannot be considered to be part of the horse’s natural movement, for example the backward canter. Therefore the motive to produce more elaborate movements could be due to the competitive market the riding masters were in. They had to prove themselves through their theories and techniques, each one trying to better their predecessors in order to maintain their livelihood. They were able to pass on their knowledge initially orally and later through published texts where the trainer (author) could describe their training methods and techniques to create the desired movements. In this way theories were formed that continue to be followed, for example the theories of Baucher still influence modern equestrianism. The mantra ascribed to Baucher, ‘no leg no hand no hand no leg’ is a technique of riding that has continued amongst French students of Baucher. It was made popular by Decarpentry (1878-1956) in his text *Academic Equitation* and as such his riding style represented, and still does, the difference between the German and French schools of equitation. However Baucher’s methods described the positioning of the horse’s head in *derniers enseignements*, which was later used by Paul Splinzer (1853-1920) and is now being used (although argued incorrectly) to produce what is known as the (controversial) *Rollkur* or hyperflexion.

*Alois Podhajsky (1898–1973)*

Possibly the most influential writer of classical riding in the modern era is Alois Podhajsky. His texts on Classical Equitation, in particular *The Complete Training of Horse and Rider* (1978), are standard text books for many classical dressage trainers and riders. It is the above text that was and still is recommended to prospective riding teachers through the British Horse Society’s (BHS) curriculum. The text is devoted mostly to training the horse but it does focus one chapter on the

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*Rollkur*, is a position in which the horse’s head is over-flexed i.e. hyperflexed (Cornille, 2010), see glossary.
rider but states the difficulty in separating the rider from horse whilst teaching. Although I agree with the premise that training starts with the ‘teaching of the correct seat, which is the basic requirement for any kind of riding’ (Podhajsky, 1978, p.210), his description is confusing. He likens the rider’s seat to a triangle comprising of the two sitting bones and the coccyx. Anyone who has inadvertently sat on their coccyx is aware this is not an area that takes weight, and it is no wonder modern authors, for example Von Dietze (1999), state differently. She argues the seat is comprised of the two sitting bones and the pubic bone. There are other discrepancies when Podhajsky (1978) refers to bracing the small of the back, again contradictive of Von Dietze (1999) and Wanless (2008) who discuss the use of the abdominal muscles, an aspect not considered in the Podhajsky (1978) text. However, like many equestrian texts both old and contemporary, this text is more concerned with training the horse and assumes the rider has the ability to do so.

The Riding Masters their texts and lineages have given a foundation for the modern equestrian. Knowing how the horse and rider have evolved can lead to an understanding of present day practices. History has shown how the Riding Masters’ philosophies created theories and practices that generated rifts with regard to how the horse should be ridden and trained. Arguments continue as to the best practice for riding and training the horse and some of the beliefs and values have their foundations in history, which will be discussed below.

The Legacy of the Riding and Training

The objective of training the horse originated in taking the rider to war. When the horse was the primary transport riders needed to learn their skills quickly and this could be achieved through drills and instruction to the riders. Group lessons still resonate with the drill movements that were developed in the military environment. Once equestrianism became both art and science the movements became intricate and Cavendish, argued that much of what was achieved in the schools was academic and of no use on the battlefield. He stated that whilst in battle the rider did not have the time to perform the intricate movements and as such they were only of use in the riding school environment (in Gianoli, 1967). The intricate movements required
more skill from the horse and rider making it more of an art form, however to achieve the desired results both horse and rider needed to attain a high level of skills.

The downside of equestrianism is the time needed for both horse and rider to attain skills. The time required can lead to riders not taking the time needed and turning to gadgets and or taking short cuts to achieve their results. Although this can be considered a modern problem, Gianoli (1967, p. 201) claims that as early as the Renaissance, trainers were complaining that their pupils were looking for ‘showy results by doing something spectacular’ rather than spending time perfecting the basics. Coombs (1991, p. 126) also argues riders/trainers in the late 1800s and early 1900s were likely to ‘hurry the preliminary dressage training, and in some cases ignore it … and undoubtedly take short-cuts’ in order to teach the horse the movements in the quickest time possible. The desire to gain quick results therefore is not necessarily a new mindset but a legacy of previous equestrians.

Quick results can be attained through the use of gadgets. History shows how gadgets have always been used to train the horse. Whether the gadgets are pillars or spiked nosebands the aim is the same; to disempower the horse, and make it more responsive to the rider’s wishes. When there is competition, whether it is between the riding masters who wish to impress their sponsor, or between sporting equestrians with their sponsors, the pressure on the rider, and those teaching them can lead to improper practice. Competition can be synonymous with achievements and triumphalism (Lyle, 2005) and as discussed previously equestrian skills can, and do, take a long time to acquire, both for the horse and the rider, and pressure to achieve and triumph may lead to incorrect practice being used to achieve quick results.

In England the snaffle bit, that is now commonly used, was replaced by the curb style bit from Europe, which became a necessary piece of equipment for haute école movements. Pictures depict horses with a rounded head and neck (outline) synonymous with dressage today. The shape derives from the concept of the horse being in self-carriage, which basically means the horse is balanced both physically and mentally and it is able to maintain its own rhythm, tempo, stride and straightness in a relaxed manner needed in all disciplines. Self-carriage is achieved through the horse’s weight being carried on its hind quarters which in turn means it shortens in
its neck and drops the head downwards. The engagement of the back legs then allows the horse to move forward with lightness, due to it being in self-carriage, which takes many hours of correct training (Boldt, 1978). To the uninitiated it is the shape of the head and neck that is what is noticed as being showy or pretty and therefore this is the picture that is aspired to. Unfortunately the head and neck position can be achieved in isolation, thus producing what is termed a false outline when the head is in position without the other properties required for self-carriage being in place. To attain the goal of correct self-carriage takes many years and a high skill level therefore shortcuts have been devised to create roundness to the horse’s shape. Although the outcomes gadgets achieve are painful to the horse as well as showing incorrect practice they are and have always been part of the training/riding process.

Horses with a false roundness, due to forcing, are predominantly the norm despite modern science arguing against it (Hamblin, 2012; McLean, 2007; Harman, 2002). The false roundness is due to the lack of understanding of the implications and skills needed to attain this frame; it is also due to novice riders being in a hurry to look like the elite riders. Unfortunately the popularity of the warmblood horse, for dressage, has to some extent exacerbated the problem because the warmblood horse has the image of being docile and more amenable to competition.38 The breeding has maximised the warmbloods’ attributes so that the modern sports horses now have extravagant forward movements that are deemed requirements of the dressage arena. If the inherited concept of roundness is considered desirable by contemporary riders, they need to adopt correct training, patience and time.

The roundness of the horse’s head and neck was created in part with the action of the baroque curb. This type of bit was popular when haute école was in vogue. Horse gear has always been fashion led and the elaborate curb has now been replaced by the: double bridle,39 the pelham,40 and the gag41 specifically the Dutch.

38 These breeds of horses have a different temperament as well as physicality to the Andalusians (who were the original horses performing the moves).

39 The double bridle has two bits and therefore two reins: the snaffle bit whose action is to raise the head and a curb bit to lower and round thus producing the correct outline.

40 The Pelham is a single curb bit that has the option of a higher ring on the shank giving the effect of the snaffle bit.
gag,\textsuperscript{42} which is at present a popular bit. Fashions of riding tack are often initiated and/or endorsed by elite riders. If an elite rider chooses to use a certain article of equipment, for whatever their reason, it will soon be marketed and bought. This means that tack is being used by a populace ignorant of the theory or intent behind its use, and only concerned with the results it may give. Good marketing can fail to state aspects that may be detrimental to the sales of the product despite adversely affecting the horse’s welfare. Rider endorsement for dubious training additions has also added to the plethora of gadgets that are now available and being used by riders ignorant of the ill-effects for the horse due to their aims being to get the horse’s head down.

Initially the horse’s head was kept down with martingales needed to counter the horse’s natural response to pain.\textsuperscript{43} The rider creates pain in the horse’s mouth, due to the metal bit, through their hands on the reins. The horse’s reaction is to raise its head and run away. This results in a loss of control as well as the hollowing in the back that is created by the raised head carriage. It is believed it was the early Egyptian horsemen who countered this problem with a rudimentary running martingale\textsuperscript{44} to stop the horse raising its head and running out of control (Taylor, 1966, pp. 18–19). The martingale is commonplace as a training aid today, some forms of which are acceptable in jumping competitions. During the middle of the twentieth century the standing martingale\textsuperscript{45} was a gadget of choice but it has been replaced with the more popular running martingale and likewise the Market

\textsuperscript{41} The gag bit has a mouthpiece similar to a snaffle and a rein from this ring but with the leverage action not from the curb chain under the chin but from the rein attached to the lower rings.

\textsuperscript{42} Also known as Continental/Three-Ring/Four-ring.

\textsuperscript{43} The horse raises its head and runs away from pain usually felt in its mouth due to the rider’s hands via the bit.

\textsuperscript{44} Martingale of this type is known as a running martingale in which the reins run through rings that are attached to a strap which in turn is attached to the horse’s girth the idea being that they stop the horse’s head getting above the point of loss of control.

\textsuperscript{45} The standing martingale had an attachment to fix a strap from the horse’s girth to the noseband to put pressure on this area to keep the head in place, whereas the running martingale has rings that slide up and down each rein and as such work on the horse’s mouth to keep the head down.
Harborough or the German martingale has been superseded by the popularity of the draw rein or running rein as a training aid.

The draw rein was said to be utilised by Cavendish during the Renaissance period, however the results he achieved were criticised due to incorrect bend and flexion resulting in the horse being behind the bit, which is often evidenced today. The device is a popular gadget to retain the horse’s head and neck in a rounded position, which is now typically deeper than that seen in previous generations.

The deep style of riding is following the fashion firstly created by the type of horses used for dressage. It was almost always stallions that were and still are ridden and their muscular development may have resulted in the rounded outline being more natural for them and as such has become the norm. Elite riders who ride these horses and achieve the success by employing the deep round style and technique in their training have created a precedent for all riders of dressage. Unfortunately the draw rein is the gadget of choice for those unable or unwilling to spend the time to create a correct head carriage, thus the draw rein is used, and encouraged to be used, for riders who do not have sufficient feel of how the horse should work correctly and are unaware of the implication for the horse’s welfare. Von Ziegener (in Hodges, 2005) considers draw reins are used due to the inadequacies of the trainer to teach correct riding techniques, and that use of the draw rein should not be encouraged to be used simply because the trainer uses one.

All equestrian disciplines can, and do, use gadgets and short cuts. Within the show jumping arena the difference between success and failure depends on the horse jumping without faults around the course of jumps. To make the horse jump higher (without knocking down the poles and creating penalties) rapping the horse’s legs...

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46 The Market Harborough clips onto rings that are placed at the bit end of the rein and as such can be changed for greater leverage.

47 The draw rein is a rein that loops from the girth through the bit and is held as a rein. It has a powerful leverage action pulling the horse’s head and neck down. To approximate the feeling of the draw rein, put your chin tightly into your throat and note what muscles are required to hold this position remembering that the horse is held in this outline. Now stand upright and lean forward slightly and extend the head downward and let the chin drop naturally. In this position the back, abdominal, neck and shoulder muscles are all engaged and work together as opposed to the disconnection of the head to body in the forced position.
(with a pole) as they jumped was a training method. Rapping was undertaken at home and also used as part of the warming up process prior to going into the jumping arena. Professionals known as Polers could be paid to rap the horse’s legs (front or hind depending on the request of the rider), skilfully so they did not hurt the horse but fool it into thinking it had hit the fence thus inducing it to try harder next time (Coombs, 1991). Rapping is now banned at competitions, possibly due to the equestrian bodies becoming more aware of health and safety issues for horse and rider. However, short cuts are still used in the form of gadgets. For example the running martingale is an accepted gadget in the competition arena, and draw reins are a training aid.

History has left us with a legacy of good and bad practice. Influences from the past are still shaping riders at all skill levels. The change from the barbaric bits of Europe’s past mirrored the change in horse types and in England the preference for hunting across country and racing thoroughbred horses led to a resurgence of the snaffle bit (Taylor, 1966), which has been in fashion since. The lighter faster horse was restricted by the bits of ménage and when hunting foxes and racing horses received royal patronage from Charles II their popularity increased. The English did not embrace the European desire for *haute école* but the legacy from this style is still present. As the popularity for dressage and a horse with a rounded outline continues so do the issues that continue to split equestrians.

**In Summary**

Once the horse was ridden its evolution was no longer a natural process but one derived through mankind’s needs. The needs have changed over the decades but until the invention of the combustion engine the horse was predominantly used for military purpose. Juxtaposed with the military working horse were the horses that were ridden under the guise of artistic and scientific development. Horses were bred to perform intricate movements however in England the breeding programmes had different objectives. Whilst the aristocrats in Europe were devoting their equestrian pursuits to the riding arena in England they were on the racetrack. The use of the horse for sport and leisure continued to the present day although the use of the horse for sport is not a new concept.
The Romans and Greeks used the horse in their sporting arenas and bred horses for specific purposes, and these horses can be considered the forerunner of the modern sports horse. Horses have always been used for specific disciplines and traditionally riders rode different horses for their different needs. Similarly, certain types of horse are now being used for specialist sporting activities (Owen, 1979) to gain advantage in the competition arena. The search for the perfect horse needed to gain accolades often results in short cuts and gadgets being used to achieve the desired effect.

Training methods have evolved and theories prescribed, but whether they have the effects as intended is questionable. However what is agreed upon is that training the horse and rider takes many years. To get past the time required gadgets can be used to create short cuts in the training process. Gadgets in effect force the horse to comply with the rider’s wishes irrespective of inadequate riding and training or the limited physical ability of the horse to perform. The notion of creating a horse for a purpose as quickly and easily as possible is not a new concept. D’Aure argued that his riding academy was ‘an industrial establishment receiving men of all ages and types desirous of becoming horsemen in twenty lessons’ (Gianoli, 1967, p. 201) and Gianoli stated in 1967 that ‘people want to master [riding] quickly [to] get showy results [and] do something spectacular’ (p. 201).

Equestrianism has evolved through a long process, however much is still the same. If the modern rider learns to ride in one of the training establishments today they, like their predecessors, will spend many hours under supervision from different teachers and horses, chosen specifically to help them attain skills (Podhajsky, 1978). The role of the horse can simultaneously be that of the teacher and student (Blanchard, 2008, Podhjasky, 1997) and this concept makes the riding lesson unique. An experienced horse becomes the tutor for the rider, who interprets the instruction from the teacher to the horse, which then interprets the instructions from the rider, thus creating a communion between the two (de Kunffy, 2002; Podhjasky, 1997). The horse controls what the rider learns (Podhjasky, 1997) by ‘subjecting their riders to firsthand experiences’ (de Kunffy, 2002, p. 5). How this affects riding teaching will be considered throughout the thesis.
To this point equestrian teaching has been through linage and patronage without any formal teaching or training system in place. The following chapter will continue to look back in order to understand present practice by reviewing the development of the riding syllabus that shape modern teaching practice.
Chapter Three
Contemporary Practice in Equestrian Teacher Training

The previous chapter discussed the history of equestrianism and now I discuss modern practices some of which are the legacy of past times. Learning equestrian skills developed through a riding school style underpinned by the military environment. To create riders quickly drills and riding exercises were used and some of these are still apparent within the English system. The link to the riding schools is not apparent in the West Australian syllabus, which derives from the broader coaching model that has been adapted for equestrian skills. Although the final goal of both syllabi is to achieve proficient equestrian skills, the route is dissimilar due to the different syllabi and as I will argue their foundations.

All riding teachers are riders, and therefore the term equestrian encompasses both teacher and rider, who is also the trainer of the horse. I will discuss current accreditation systems and the syllabi that are part of the equestrian environment in England and Western Australia. Accreditation is not, and has never been, a requirement to teach horse riding. However after the Second World War it was deemed necessary to standardise teaching practice, which led to the formation of a syllabus and qualification structure for the United Kingdom. I will discuss the mainstream syllabi in the two areas of study, Western Australia and England and discuss the theories and influences that underpin the syllabi. I will discuss the alternative syllabi that became apparent during the research. Some of the participants were found to be augmenting their mainstream accreditation using other syllabi, and these alternative approaches became part of the study.

The Mainstream Syllabi: The British System

In 1947 the British Horse Society (BHS) established a charitable organisation by combining two equine institutions later to have patronage of Her Majesty The Queen. The organisation was to become the primary route for gaining qualifications
to teach horse riding in Britain and in the former colonies. Due to increasing administration difficulties the BHS was later amalgamated into the British Equestrian Federation (BEF), which itself was formed in 1972 through a merger with the British Show Jumping Society. Thus the new body (the BEF) which is the United Kingdom’s national governing equestrian body is grounded in competition riding with affiliation to the *Fédération Equestre Internationale* (FEI).\(^{48}\) It is financed through government funding to encourage equestrian sports through training and coaching programmes at levels up to Olympic and elite athlete development (www.bef.co.uk). Changes have been and continue to be made to the teacher training syllabus taking it away from the military instructional format to a sporting paradigm of coaching.

Due to the popularity of riding and in recognition of substandard teaching practices (Coombs, 1991) in 1961 the British Horse Society started a system of approving riding schools. The approval process created a form of jurisdiction to control or regulate the welfare of both horse and rider whilst also creating a platform for potential riding instructors (www.bhs.org.uk). Instructors followed a career path based around the accreditations that enabled them to practice as instructors both within the riding school environment and on a freelance basis. The shift from the military environment led to riding establishments becoming privately owned and managed, which increased the role of women in equestrianism. As well as the retired military personnel opening riding establishments, women also became proprietors and they had the opportunity to undertake qualifications to develop their career path (Raynor, 1974; Peck, 2000), in what is now a predominantly female occupation.\(^{49}\) Although accreditation has never been a prerequisite for teaching equestrian pursuits, it is clearly a benefit for reassuring a new clientele that they are paying for qualified teaching. The syllabus attained through the riding school system was standardised at four levels, beginning with the British Horse Society Assistant Instructors Certificate (BHSAI), followed by the British Horse Society Intermediate Instructors Certificate

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\(^{48}\) *Fédération Equestre Internationale* (FEI) was established in 1921 to regulate international equestrian events.

\(^{49}\) The research in England and Western Australia supports this predominance of female activity; out of the forty interviewees only nine are men, eight of which have ridden to an elite level.
(BHSII),\textsuperscript{50} the British Horse Society Instructors Certificate (BHSI) and finally the Fellowship.\textsuperscript{51}

**Changes in the British System**

For many years the BHS was the principal accreditation system, however changing times and the shifting expectations of the cohort of riders has led to the amalgamation of the BHS into the encompassing British Equestrian Federation (BEF). The BEF is the national governing body for horse sports in the United Kingdom. It receives government funding for equestrian sports some of which goes to the United Kingdom Coaching Certificate (UKCC) (www.bef.co.uk). As one of the thirty one sports included in the coaching framework, it is envisaged the role of the coach in equestrianism will be elevated in status through increased public recognition (Jones, et al., 2008; Bales, 2007). This will be achieved by reaching the key goals outlined in the eleven year plan designed to transform the coaching system by 2016 (Jones, et al., 2008; Bales, 2007). The broad coaching framework will allow for coaches to be diverse in their teaching style whilst at the same time having a core base consistent with the role of a coach not necessarily from the specific discipline being coached (Jones, et al., 2008). The research indicates that future riding teaching will receive accreditation through this system though at present it is running in parallel with the BHS syllabus. This means existing BHS qualifications, like my own, can be UKCC endorsed through taking part in training days.

Part of the UKCC’s approach is to create a Long Term Rider Development (LTRD) programme this was introduced in 2005 at the start of a ten year training programme which was introduced to develop elite riders (Lincoln, 2002). This programme signalled a difference in the teaching style from the military, resulting in a move toward a coaching dialogue, which is deemed to encourage skill attainment. The attainment of skills is achieved through positive encouragement rather than by using the negative criticism formerly associated with a military instructional narrative. Accreditation through the Rider Development and Coaching syllabus

\textsuperscript{50} The BHSII was introduced in 1976 to bridge the gap between the BHAI and the BHSI.

\textsuperscript{51} The Fellowship was originally an awarded accreditation but is now an assessed accreditation.
follows the vision of the broader based coaching accreditation levels whose main focus is to increase and improve the skill base and competitiveness of United Kingdom (UK) equestrian sports. In 2006, the Federation published its first Long-Term Athlete Development Framework (LTAD). This is a programme developed to improve equestrian athletes’ performance both in leisure and competition. In 2000 equestrian qualifications were recognised by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, which meant BHS qualifications could be linked to the National Qualifications Framework. Committees now oversee the various bodies of the society, for example the Equestrian Qualifications of Great Britain Limited (EQL), the Coaching Qualifications Advisory Committee and the Training and Education Advisory Committee, which oversees the education of future teachers of equestrianism.

The move from a niche market into the broader educational programme has created opportunities for higher education institutions to embrace equestrianism as a tertiary qualification. Equestrian colleges, whose foundations were in agricultural or horticultural subjects, later added equestrian courses to their programmes. Those colleges or universities that do not have sufficient facilities, use local riding schools to support their syllabus, in which a teaching qualification via the BHS system augments their overall diploma or degree. For example, undergraduate courses can be in Equine Studies; BSc (Hons) in Equine Business Management and the student can also take their BHSAI or higher should they wish.52 Thus the BHS has some influence in the equestrian teaching in that they still have the only teaching syllabus in use and all the assessors are BHS qualified. However, the broader paradigm of coaching is impacting on teaching methods and the overall equestrian concept. The amalgamation of equestrianism into higher education indicates changes are taking place to accommodate the modern equestrian student.

The changes in the British system means there are now three possible accreditation systems, although the BHS still manages the underlying qualification. BHS qualified instructors can add to their qualification and gain the UKCC accreditation through courses and workshops. The BEF draw their coaches from

52 Information obtained through the field research to be discussed at a later point in the thesis.
those who have high attainment at competitions, and riders who have ridden at a high level are automatically added to the list of BEF coaches. The BHS syllabus is also used at universities and colleges who offer teaching qualifications as part of their degree programmes. Therefore at the time of writing it can be argued the BHS is still the main accreditation system in England and therefore, it is the one the research will focus on.

The BHS offers centres for students to receive their training, but as a flexible mode of learning is offered students can learn anywhere as long as they pass the final assessments and hence it is not obligatory for candidates to receive their training at these centres. Although not obligatory, there is understanding of the benefit of training under supervision. For example, if the student learns in a ‘Where to Train’ centre, 250 hours are required, whereas if at a ‘BHS Approved Centre’ then 350 hours are compulsory. However, if the candidate is ‘Freelance’ then they have to complete 500 hours of practical teaching, 25 per cent of which can be undertaken as stable management lectures (www.bhs.org.uk). Part of these hours will include ‘two formal independently assessed coaching sessions’ with approved assessors (www.bhs.org.uk). It is assumed by the accreditation body that the unsupervised, freelance teacher will improve through longer hours of practical teaching. However, I would argue this could be problematic in that it may habituate poor teaching. If the teaching of the component in question has not been formally assessed then any problems will not be exposed and as such students may develop inappropriate pedagogies.

Assessment of the students’ teaching begins with their presentation of a completed template of the lesson plan they have prepared. The lesson plans are part of the portfolio they are expected to develop during the training. The plan will outline four ongoing riding lessons in which they must show an understanding of how to ensure progression in the class, and indicate that their knowledge of safety and equestrian sport is adequate. The second part of the portfolio is a practical evaluation of their riding classes. These are assessed to evaluate personal practice from which ‘a personal action plan relating to your coaching practice for the future’ can be undertaken. The candidate information states that once the portfolio is complete it is expected the candidate will be able to:
The students are also expected to give an oral presentation to their peers. The students now have prior knowledge of the subjects they will be asked to present. Previously, examinees were given a topic during the exam itself. It was therefore assumed they would have a sound knowledge of many subjects and could then converse with their peers on the subject for a set period of time. The guidance notes list the topics for the oral presentation, which are as follows:

- The Importance of Self-reflection …
- Phases of a coaching programme …
- Obtaining and using feedback …
- Managing a coaching programme (supporting and monitoring) …
- How to empower participants …
- Physical and mental preparation for a session …
- Motivation – what it is and how to use it …
- Rider injuries not related to falls …
- Positive reinforcement …
- Mentoring …

(www.bhs.org.uk, pp. 11-19).

The list is suggestive of a general coaching syllabus, and not one specific to equestrianism. For example the importance of reflection is typical of a coaching paradigm.
The Mainstream Syllabi: The Western Australian System

As stated the research also reviewed equestrian teaching in Australia, specifically the accreditation system in place in Western Australia. Prior to the main training system for equestrian teaching being introduced, prospective equestrian teachers would travel to the United Kingdom to become accredited within the system. However following poor results by Australian riders at the Montreal Olympic Games (1951) a sports coaching system was introduced emulating that was in place in Canada - the success of the Canadian teams was attributed to their implementation of a training scheme.\(^{53}\) Therefore, after poor results on the medal podium the formation of the Equestrian Federation of Australia (EFA) was put in place to oversee equestrianism within the sporting arena. The EFA were later to amalgamate with the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS)\(^{54}\) in 1983 to become part of the overall Australian Sports Commission (www.equestrian.org.au), thus aligning Australian equestrian teaching to the coaching model and sporting paradigm.

Within the Australian system equestrian coaches attain accreditation from levels I – III\(^{55}\) all of which correspond to the Australian Government Guidelines in the National Consortium for Academics and Sports (NCAS) adapted to suit equestrianism (www.equestrian.org.au). The accreditation scheme is state oriented with the different states of Australia\(^{56}\) each nominating a committee to oversee teacher training. Representatives from the various states can then become part of the national training board which is responsible for the whole country. The national office is based in Sydney and it is here that course content is reviewed and further development of the training courses are considered by the committee.

\(^{53}\) It is interesting to note here that at the time of writing the United Kingdom are preparing for the 2012 Olympics in London, which may have bearing on the training schemes being introduced in England.

\(^{54}\) The NCAS was formed in 1978 in Australia.

\(^{55}\) It is worth noting here that in Australia the National Consortium for Academics and Sports (NCAS) coaching qualification has a Level 1 accreditation for equestrian coaching at Pony Club as well as the Level 1 for coaching through the Equestrian Federation Australia (EFA) system. These are not the same, and the thesis is only concerned with the latter.

\(^{56}\) The research for the thesis was undertaken in Western Australia.
There are no training centres in Western Australia (WA) such as those available for students in England therefore the potential riding coach works independently.\textsuperscript{57} The lack of riding establishments also means once the teacher is qualified, their career path and source of income are predominantly supported through teaching privately as freelance coaches, as is the case for many English equestrian coaches. Although there is a low-level horse management programme within the Tertiary and Further Education (TAFE)\textsuperscript{58} system and within some high schools that are incorporating equestrian skills into their teaching programmes, students in Western Australia do not have the opportunity to study equestrianism at university.

Accreditation is through ongoing assessment which the trainees have to organise and pay for in addition to the overall fee for the course. Trainees are also expected to attend workshops and clinics, which again is another expense. Initially these comprised of three, five day workshops per year encompassing both practical and theoretical training. In this way the trainee teacher would learn the theoretical aspects of how to teach a given aspect and then later in the day practically apply it to their riding lessons given to their colleagues. This meant the trainee was being coached how to teach any given area of the syllabus in the way it would be acceptable for the final examination. After the workshops they would practice their teaching which would then be assessed at the next five days intensive training, and by the last course if the students had reached the required standard of teaching they would sit their examination on the last day of the workshop. However, to come in line with the National Training Scheme the concept of the three workshops changed and single day workshops are now delivered throughout the year for all levels of accreditation\textsuperscript{59}. The loss of the clinics and workshops means trainee teachers rely more on the assessment process to learn their skills. For example, the trainee can contact the assessor and have a riding lesson from them on the subject they are expected to be assessed on. This is so they can understand the subject and the

\textsuperscript{57} Trainees in England can also obtain accreditation through independent study if they prefer.

\textsuperscript{58} TAFE’s are the vocational tertiary educational institutions in Australia.

\textsuperscript{59} A survey undertaken by the EFA in 2010 found that the respondents, all of whom were accredited coaches, claimed that one of the most effective aspects of the education programme were the workshops (www.efanational.com).
expectations of that assessor. Thus the onus of learning and of funding their education is placed upon the student and the limited access to peer and collaborative learning.

If coaching is to be considered a communal process, as stated in the *Beginning Coaching General Principals* (www.equestrian.org.au), then the only way in which the EFA system fulfils this expectation is through the workshops and clinics otherwise the candidate is alone in their learning. By simply belonging to an organisation or having a common interest does not define a community of practice (Wenger, 1998, in Jones, 2006). The organisations need to create a sense of community, which will motivate trainees to reach their intended goals and stimulate life-long learning. Commonalities agreed upon by the OECD countries for life-long learning include the concept of both informal and formal learning (Watson, 2003). The aspect of life-long learning and that of self-motivation can be a consideration of the equestrian syllabi. The education community is trying to create these skills, to be practised throughout life (Burns, 2002).

In Western Australian accreditation to teach riding is through the Equestrian Federation Australia (EFA) that has adapted an equestrian course in line with the NCAS coaching accreditation scheme for all sports coaching. In the absence of recognised training establishments the programme is self-guided. The candidates work to their own time-lines and are expected to source their own information, coaches, workshops, demonstrations and organise the dates for their assessments. The change from the original three, five day clinics a year to three single day workshops means the trainee teachers rely more on preparing for the assessment process to learn their skills. This means the student can be taught the syllabus and be assessed by one person. For example the trainee can contact an assessor and ask them to teach them how to teach a specific aspect from the syllabus, after which they can be assessed on the process. In this way they are following the language and methods of the assessor to enhance their chance of a successful outcome.

The assessment process allows for little interpretation or personal experience to be used because the trainee is replicating the assessor’s curriculum and also because their teaching is following one set text. Accreditation in Western Australia is
based around a German text (The German Principles of Riding) and it is an expectation that teaching is in line with the principles in the text. By following this text the system is working along traditional guidelines and theories. However, there is contradiction in the different paradigms. The coaching paradigm indicates flexibility and the adaptation of multiple techniques, whereas if the students are only following the German system it may lead to inflexibility of a teaching style by suggesting there is only one way in which to achieve results.

The main educational concept behind the training is encouraging life-long learning through continual development and training. This is achieved by providing a process of accreditation based around recognised concepts developed by the equestrian sporting community (www.equestrian.org.au). To stay in line with the NCAS coaching requirements the curriculum must contain three coaching principles described in the procedures for EFA candidates (2008):

- ‘General and sport specific principles of coaching and human performance;
- Practical coaching – Skills, techniques and strategies specific to the sport;
- Coaching Practice – Practice of coaching before, during or after the course.’

(www.equestrian.org.au, p.6)

The principles are covered in the initial workshops and it is expected they will become part of the pedagogy the coaches adopt. For those already accredited the post-graduate training is limited however; accredited coaches are expected to attend bi-yearly clinics/workshops in which to revisit the basic coaching principles, but whether these are then applied in the practice will become evident later in the thesis following the observations and interviews.

Following the first level of accreditation, which is a general level, candidates are able to specialise in one discipline and thus become, for example, dressage.

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60 At the beginning of the research (2009/10) there was a final examination, however this has now been taken away for some levels of accreditation and the qualification is taken from the ongoing assessments.
coaches. From this point the qualification is matched to the teacher’s riding ability. For example, to achieve the level three in Western Australia, one of the key expectations is that the trainee has ridden at a very high level of international competition before they can be considered as a candidate. However, they still have to begin their teaching accreditation at the lowest level, which is contradictory of the syllabus. For example an Olympic rider wishing to become accredited does not automatically go into the system at the highest level, but must follow the training pathways from the beginning. Thus an international elite rider could be expected to be teaching students how to do something as basic as a rising trot. Adopting this principle acknowledges that although the rider is a skilled equestrian they may not necessarily have the skill base to teach their skills to others.

As stated previously the Australian accreditation at the second level differs from the English by dint of specialisation. It consists of seven core units for the general and eventing accreditations, and six core units for the show-jumping and dressage accreditations. The Australian syllabus covers the biomechanics of the horse’s paces and movements as well as the physiology, psychology and fitness of the rider. Units 1–3 are the same for all disciplines, which are concerned with structure of the governing body, safety, the coaching environment and lunging the rider. The candidate’s knowledge of the rider’s anatomy, as well as better understanding of how to improve the rider’s position, is gained through practical experience of lunging the rider. The value of lunging a rider can be for teaching a new rider at the beginning of their training, so they can achieve balance and stability and thus avoid being injurious to the horse’s mouth. De Kunffy (2003, p. 56) states even ‘outstanding’ riders should occasionally be lunged in order to make adjustments to their positions, and as such it is a valuable skill for teachers to learn and one they can use in their practice to enhance the skill of riders at all levels. However, ‘teaching riders on the lunge takes a certain specialized knowledge’ (de Kunffy, 2003, p. 71), which is acquired throughout the teaching levels in both the Western Australian and English syllabi. Both systems require this component in their assessments, corroborating the benefit of this skill. As well as understanding the rider’s position and faults seen through the practice of lunging, during the assessment

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61 These aspects were not in evidence in the British syllabus at the time of writing.
the trainee coach may be asked to be aware of rider position and how to use exercises to help.

It appears that the Western Australian syllabus is closely aligned to the British system; however one difference is it is based upon one equestrian theory, the German. Modern equestrianism is derived from many theories and restricting learning to only one is likely to result in creating specialisation and limiting knowledge.

**Influences Underpinning the Mainstream Syllabi**

**Competency Based Education and Training (CBE/T)**

I began the chapter by relating changes that are taking place with the British systems to create a coaching syllabus similar to that used in Western Australia. The research indicates similarities between the coaching accreditation, in place in Western Australia and Competency Based Education and Training (CBE/T) (Harris et al., 2001). This will now be discussed to understand the extent to which equestrianism is founded on these principles of education.

Competency Based Education and Training (CBE/T) systems are commonplace in vocational education and training (VET) in Australia. The introduction of this approach to accreditation will bring equestrianism into the broader mainstream educational models and move it away from an isolated accreditation system. Precursors of Competency Based Education and Training (CBE/T) came into practice in 1920s with vocational education in the United States of America. Following World War II through to the 1970s money was directed into curriculum development and vocational educational programmes, thus giving economic support for the CBE/T system (Harris et al., 2001). The United Kingdom was slow to adopt the method in mainstream educational programmes, considering it to be ‘too task orientated’ (Harris et al., 2001, p. 43). They resisted until, during the 1980s, the Thatcher government introduced the National Vocational Qualification
(NVQ), which also encompassed basic levels of equestrianism. It was during the late 1980s early 1990s that Australia began to reflect the trend taken by many other countries (Harris et al., 2001) and adopted the competency based system into vocational education and training. The CBE/T approach to learning allows the students to attain accreditation within different learning environments for example British universities and Agricultural Colleges.

Teaching is a separate component in both syllabi, and there are aspects of the CBE/T system within each. One example would be the importance of ‘mastery learning’ which is achieved by the student learning at their own pace (Harris et al., 2001, p. 38). Coaches have to be self-motivated to seek out information and arrange their assessments. Although the ‘criterion-reference testing’ (Harris et al., 2001, p. 39) of learning is deemed a more appropriate means of testing skills than the previous subjective method of testing through the final exam, in order to ensure the candidate has competent skills rigorous assessments must be in place. As well as the boxes being ticked on the assessor’s file to indicate competency levels have been achieved, discussions need to take place to assure the assessor that understanding has been reached.

During the assessment process the transferral of knowledge from one situation to another (Burns, 2002) is assumed. Previous learned experiences are expected to be transferred into a new situation (Burns, 2002). For example, the candidate may be able ride a certain movement, however whether they can transfer their riding knowledge to teaching this movement is not a necessarily an accurate assumption. To fully transfer skills feedback is required (Burns, 2002) between the candidates, their pupils and the assessors. The dialogue enables the candidate to discuss past knowledge in relation to what they are seeing and hearing during the assessment process.

Feedback in the equestrian environment differs to that of other sports. In equestrianism the performance of the horse can mask competencies of the rider and

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62 Some schools now offer equestrian subjects and the Curriculum Council of Western Australia have endorsed the Pony Club accreditation which allows students in years 10–12 to use this as part of the senior secondary certificate.
so the feedback that the coach is getting is one of competency. Assumptions can be made by the teacher that the rider’s skills are higher than they are when the rider is riding a well-schooled horse. This means that a less competent rider on a brilliant horse (for a period of time dependent upon the horse) will perform as well as the competent rider on a substandard horse who performs reasonably well. Therefore the visual feedback needs to be substantiated with verbal questions and answers to evaluate the skill base of the rider.

However, it can be argued the CBE/T assessment strategy is being used to some extent successfully in equestrian teacher training as part of the National Consortium for Academics and Sports (NCAS) system. This group has introduced new skills for the riding teacher, to enhance their practice skills, and tasks are broken into small tasks which the candidate can work through at their own pace. The trainee teacher is no longer subjected to the final examination but has continuous assessments throughout their training which can still be considered a ‘quantitative teaching and learning,’ process (Biggs and Moore, 1993, pp. 24–25) in which the student has to exhibit what they have learned from which assumptions about their competence are then made. This is not an issue if the environment in which the assessments take place is designed to optimise learning (Biggs, 2005), in other words the assessor and candidate can discuss the issues. Ongoing assessments must be well defined in order for the candidate to understand the learning outcomes in a topic by topic basis (Biggs, 2005) and their links to the theories. This can be helped if the candidate reflects on each topic after they have taught it to understand how the theories worked in practice.

**Educational Theories**

Certain educational theories are seen to inform the syllabi in both Western Australia and England. For example reflective practice, goal setting and how feedback is given. Therefore I will discuss how they fit into equestrian teaching.
Reflective practice

The use of reflection is one way to learn through experience. The teacher gives direction and considers the results asking themselves what happened, why did it happen and how can it happen more effectively (Pavlovich, 1995). Reflection can be done *in situ*, immediately considering the horse’s response to the rider’s aids, or, as both syllabi require in the form of documented reflections. As part of the accreditation process the practice of reflecting on the lessons is required. Trainees are encouraged to keep some form of documentation either in the form of a diary, video analysis, a self-evaluation questionnaire or as feedback from mentors, parents, participants or other coaches to establish reflective practice in their teaching by cataloguing examples. The process - following the Schon (1987) framework of using reflective practice - has become a popular procedure in education *per se* as well as within the coaching syllabus. Introduced into the education system by John Dewey (Cassidy, et al., 2009) critical reflection requires an open mindedness in which the teacher can consider the many options available to them. To do this requires vigilance in order for it to not become ‘common place’ (Cassidy, et al., 2009, p. 17) especially when the process may impact on personal beliefs and challenge skills. The learning process relies on crucial reflective practice in which the candidate considers their experience, from which they learn. It can be achieved in two ways offline and online as distinguished by Kottkamp (1990). This theory draws on Schon’s (1987) reflection in action and reflection on action. Schon (1987) would use reflection on action to consider later the actions of the theories when full attention can be given to how they worked, this is described by Kottkamp as offline. Online for Kottkamp is when reflection is occurring *en situ* in that the teacher is critically analysing their actions during the riding lesson or reflecting in action (Schon, 1987).

All riding lessons require both on and offline reflection-in-action and reflection on action (Schon, 1987). Quick and immediate decisions are required and these are made from previous experiences. For example if the instruction is seen not to work in that it does not get the desired response then an alternative needs to be given. The horse learns through the rider’s responses at any given time, and the teacher has to be able to respond immediately to ensure the rider gives the correct response. The teacher and rider can then discuss what happened and later the teacher
reflects on why the response was as it was and how changing their approach changed the response. The concept of reflection will be discussed with the participants in chapter six to understand how they use the theory in their practice.

Reflection is a prescribed aspect of the syllabi requirements however it is in the main reflection on action (Schon, 1987) or offline (Kottkamp, 1990). Prospective coaches catalogue their reflections, which may be considered a time consuming process (Burns, 2000) especially when ‘people actively construct knowledge for themselves’ (Biggs and Moore, 1993, p. 22) through the reflection in action (Schon, 1987) online (Kottkamp, 1990).

For reflection to be of benefit as a teaching tool, the person reflecting has to be open to evaluation of their teaching practice and be prepared to make changes if required (Cassidy, et al., 2009). ‘It’s the way you come to look at things as much as what you are looking at’ (Biggs and Moore, 1993, p. 22) that counts. Therefore it is the role of the assessor/coach to show the value of reflective techniques as part of the process of enhancing knowledge (Cassidy, et al., 2004). Reflection allows for an internal dialogue that can help the teacher to relate to pupils (Pavlovich, 1995), and to augment the conscious decision making. Through reflection, future decisions may be made from intuition, by listening to the ‘inner voice,’ or by the teacher researching alternatives, thus creating a teacher who attempts to bring about their own improvement (Parker, 1997, p. 39). Learning takes place when the static theories can be evaluated from having or not having achieved what has been intended in practice. This in turn will help the future teacher to make an ‘accurate application’ of the theory into practise. However, this means the teacher/student refers back to his/her own interpretations, which may not necessarily be the only ones possible. Therefore, the only way reflection is beneficial is if the teacher is able to reflect and create future goals for themselves and their clients from both their own interpretations and considering others’ interpretation.

**Goal setting**

Traditionally equestrians would set goals as to how they wished the horse to work, for example the German Training Scale which offers a training programme
with goals that the horse and rider work toward (Belton, 2000). The West Australian participants would be aware of these goals having followed *The Principles of Riding* as part of their accreditation. The coaching model now offers another set of goals that are based around competition, and how this affects equestrian pedagogy is discussed throughout the thesis.

Setting goals is an important part of the coaching paradigm and therefore it is part of both equestrian syllabi. Psychological aspects have been introduced in the equestrian teaching syllabi (in West Australia, for consideration in England) to enhance the coaching process, part of which is setting goals. Goal setting is considered to help motivation: if an outline of the goals for each aspect of the training is given at the initial stages of learning, this alleviates the uncertainty of the learning process (Harris et al., 2001). When organising and planning the lesson the coach should gather information gained from previous experience, either their own or from previous lessons they have watched, so they can set goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound (Lincoln, 2008). Within traditional equestrianism there are established goals that riders should be working towards for example, ‘improving their equestrian skills’ (de Kunffy, 2003, p. vii), using the options for achieving this aim. The teacher can collaborate with the rider to ‘establish and clarify purpose and goals and develop a plan of action to achieve them’ (Zeus and Skiffington, 2002, p. 3). Part of this can result in establishing new skills in which the rider can begin the process of ‘reinventing oneself’ (Zeus and Skiffington, 2002, p. 3).

In the coaching paradigm of the NCAS system the main goal is to be successful in competition and as such there is the chance the focal point of the riding lesson will be the performance of the horse and not rider improvement. The aim of coaching is to develop and encourage ‘personal best’ (Zeus and Skiffington, 2002, p. 4) as well as to promote lifelong learning (Lincoln, 2002). Lifelong learning can be achieved through the tiered accreditation levels to create an upward pathway. Once the candidate has experienced success, they are motivated to continue working towards the next level (Dickson, 2001), be it in the competitive arena or the accreditation system.
Feedback

Developing pedagogy in equestrianism involves evaluating the feedback from both the human and animal perspectives. For the above theories to work in the practical lesson, the teacher needs to understand how to work with clients and give them feedback to enhance skills. Feedback needs to be immediate and positive. The coaching model is based upon educational practices, sometimes referred to as the sandwich approach (Harris et al., 2001) due to the style of commentary. It begins with positive feedback (what they are doing well), then corrective feedback, (actions for improvement) and finally more positive feedback, an approach that is encouraged by the Australian Sports Commission (www.austport.gov.au). Within mainstream education, feedback provides reinforcement and enhances skills development. However, what is being done incorrectly also has to be commented upon; therefore there are times when the feedback is stating aspects that require improvement – negative feedback.

Equestrianism is a learned skill based upon feel; therefore any feedback the rider receives should be immediate, to be in conjunction with what they are feeling. In this way the rider is learning from the experience using behavioural learning theories that focus on the ‘consequences of action’ (Jones, et al., 2008, p. 4). The student ought to learn how to do something new or better than previously, therefore saying ‘don’t do this/that’ is not conducive to their learning (Knox-Thompson and Dickens, 1989, p. 43; Peel, 2005). Even when there has been little progress it is better to start with what worked and then continue with what did not and why (Burns, 2002). The tone in which the feedback is given can turn negative feedback into criticism especially if the tone is sarcastic or angry, which demotivates the learner rather than enhancing the learning (Burns, 2002). Often it is the manner in which feedback is given that is important. Negative statements do not have to be negatively given, but can offer constructive feedback that helps the student learn effectively (Burns, 2005). Feedback needs to be clear and understood by the student as to what it is they are trying to achieve so they can also ‘monitor their own practice’ (Burns, 2000, p. 123) when the coach is not there. Feedback must be given immediately both to the horse via the rider and to the rider via the teacher. Leaving too long to give a response will be detrimental to the learning process and therefore
long explanations can be left until later in the lesson when there is a rest/reward for the horse and rider.

Feedback, as well as being instant should, have short explanations in order for the rider and horse to respond. Too much feedback from the teacher to the rider, when they are thinking about, or applying previous advice, is not effective. Therefore, the nature of the response to the rider should be considered i.e. reflection in action (Schon, 1987). Teachers have to be made aware of times in the lesson when verbal feedback is not required because the rider is receiving feedback from the horse. All teachers are riders and therefore they are aware of this process taking place. Discussion can then take place at a more appropriate time between rider and teacher after the rider has learned through doing (Race, 2005). Following the discussion of the practical application of the instructions the teacher attains information through feedback from the student and can clarify misunderstandings that may have arisen. Feedback also allows the student to understand why there is a reason to make changes. However, for the feedback to be fully effective the rider has to want to make changes following the directions given (Race, 2005). The feedback is the most important aspect to the learning process for the rider, teacher and horse within the riding lesson, and the appropriate timing of the feedback is imperative. It is through the feedback process that skills are reinforced and advanced and within the equestrian triangle feedback is being given by all three participants through both verbal and body language, with learning taking place through reflection on correct and incorrect practice as both rider and teacher make sense of the riding process. The methods used in the modern syllabi are derived from theories used in educational practice to create a teaching approach that is the same or similar to that found in other educational models and used by other teachers. Therefore, coaching uses pedagogy based on behavioural learning theories, which focuses on the consequences of actions; social learning theory, in which individuals model their behaviour on others; and constructivist theory, where the learner discovers for themselves (Jones, et al., 2008).
Alternative Syllabi

Having concluded that pedagogy is not reliant on one particular theory about teaching and learning I will now focus on aspects of equestrian pedagogy deemed lacking in the main training bodies’ syllabi. Alternative syllabi are relevant with regard to the question of horsing lessons, raised by Charles de Kunffy (2002, 2003) where he argues that when the lessons are horse focused there is little attention paid to rider faults. I became familiar with other syllabi whilst obtaining participants for the research. I became aware that some of them had chosen to study alternative equestrian syllabi. For them it was not the method of teaching that was problematic but the content of, or lack of content within the mainstream syllabi. The following section of the chapter will consider two styles of alternative syllabi using four alternative accreditation systems. Three are based primarily around the rider and their position (rider biomechanics), which will be discussed first, and the other, which focuses on the horse’s welfare in the lesson (equitation science/learning theory), will follow.

I stated earlier in the thesis that the German approach adopted in Western Australia was rather narrow, which may have bearing on the need for the West Australian participants to seek an alternative syllabus. Those who have devised the alternative syllabi, and those who teach them, consider there is something missing in the main syllabi. Although the alternative syllabi may help to fill the perceived gaps they are liable to also created gaps if they are studied in isolation of other practice. One set of views on how to teach/coach often disregarding other approaches, therefore although the German model may not contain all that is required it has been developed by a group of practitioners and therefore is based on information taken from a number of sources.

The term biomechanics in the mainstream syllabi deals with the horse and the way it moves. However biomechanics in the alternative systems is rider focused, concentrating on the body, position and movement of the rider. The alternative pedagogy of biomechanics has a primary focus on the rider’s control of their body when centred over the horse’s centre of gravity: the ‘optimal pathway for
communication and cooperation between the horse and rider’ (Apatow, 2000, p.1). The theory is taken from an understanding of the ideal postural alignment and flexibility of the rider, which can be gained through specific exercises such as those used in yoga that help the alignment, and develop balance, strength and muscle control (Apatow 2000). With the use of the props and hands-on techniques the teacher can position the rider’s alignment or introduce new aspects for the rider to learn (Wanless, 2008; Prockle, 2005; Apatow, 2000), which in turn will allow the rider to develop a correct approach to riding and produce a horse deemed to be going correctly.

**Rider Biomechanics**

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*Colleen Kelly*

The first alternative system to be discussed using the term biomechanics in relation to the rider is that developed by Colleen Kelly. She has combined her careers as an exercise physiologist working in rehabilitation gymnasiums and eight years in the research department of the University of New South Wales at the Cornea and Contact Lens Research Unit with riding and judging dressage. Australian Colleen Kelly now spends her time extensively travelling (predominantly in America). She conducts lecture tours, clinics and workshops in which she educates riders and teachers in the theories of rider biomechanics (www.colleenkelly.net). As well as face to face teaching she takes full advantage of modern technology and has developed an extensive website in which she outlines her theories and promotes her accreditation qualification.

The Kelly website offers the accreditation course and also lessons by correspondence using video footage that can be posted to her, from which she sends the rider a ‘programme of exercises, tips, tricks and ideas … all designed personally’(www.colleenkelly.net). She sets out instructions on how to film and what areas to focus on in the video, stating it may only take one lesson online to fix ‘most major issues’ (www.colleenkelly.net). The website offers help and explanations and the tips she gives to recognise asymmetry in the body are useful in addressing the recognisable issues without going into too much depth. Trainee teachers of the
method can become registered with the International Society of Rider Biomechanics (ISRB) of which Kelly and two colleagues are Fellows (www.isrbonline.org). The ISRB also has an accreditation scheme from level zero to level three and as such I suggest that by taking these levels the student receives the same standard of accreditation as Kelly is offering. Kelly’s theories are based around competitive dressage riding and the expectations outlined in the Official FEI Rules and legalities that underpin international (competitive) dressage riding. When teaching she will quote a rule from the book to justify her comments, for example when instructing riders to drop their heels she might say ‘it is now an FEI rule that your heels must be down, or the judge must mark you down’ (www.colleenkellyriderbiomechanics.com). Although the website is generous in the information given there is nothing new being said. The training days do not appear to be specifically rider focused and it is debatable whether the instruction to riders to ‘stick their girly girls out’ (as heard in one lesson) is appropriate language to be used in a teaching environment.

Centered Riding Founder Sally Swift (1913–2009)

Sally Swift developed one of the first systems that introduced biomechanics of the rider as a format for the riding lesson. The founder of Centered Riding (CR) Sally Swift (2006) has written texts to outline her theories which are rider focused and offer exercises and metaphors to help the rider’s position. Swift bases her theories for riders and teachers on Tai Chi and The Alexander Technique as guides to help new teachers hone their art and skills. Centered Riding offers a different way of considering rider issues based around ‘centering the body in which to achieve perfect body balance and an inner awareness of both [the rider] and [the] horse’

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63 The American spelling Centered as used in the text will be used when discussing Swift’s techniques.
64 Swift’s texts are part of the BHS’s recommended readings.
65 Rider biomechanics.
66 The Alexander Technique is a technique devised from personal experiences of Fredrick Matthias Alexander (1869-1955) in the early 20th century. It is reliant on the teacher using light hand positioning to guide the student toward better habits in posture and movement. Note as with Tai Chi, my personal experience of these practices is limited. However I have attended classes in both disciplines.
(Swift, 2006, p.1). She offers an holistic approach based upon the Eastern disciplines in which the mind, body and the breath are used.

The holistic approach to training is for the rider to go inward to achieve physical prowess, often associated with Oriental martial arts. The athlete is in the present and directs their body’s energies (often referred to as ki, chi, or prana depending on the practice) through a disciplined approach (Leonard, 2001). The focus is on the body’s centre as the energy centre from which the energy goes up and down the spine. It is a process of using muscles whilst at the same time relaxing others, blocking movement through tension and tightness, often used in yoga (Maw, 2008). The technique can be used in riding due to ‘the pelvis being the foundation of the riding seat’ (Swift, 2006, p. 33) if the rider is able to train his or her body correctly. To do this the rider does not necessarily have to have a fit body (Swift, 2006). Although other scholars consider the physical fitness of the rider is an essential component (Lincoln, 2008; Mortimer, 2003; Belton, 2001), Swift’s view is that the rider needs to go inward to understand how their body is working.

Accreditation for Centered Riding is undertaken at three levels based upon the procedures set down by Swift with brand specific texts and instructor courses consisting of full seven day clinics. To attend the courses the trainee has to hold a current first aid certificate and be able to ride in walk, trot and canter. It is therefore considered they will gain the necessary skills through the attendance at the clinic and/or through prior knowledge as a student of a qualified CR coach. In other words a CR teacher can recommend their students for accreditation. Once qualified, in order to maintain the qualification there is a requirement of attending two yearly updates as well as having a full (paid) membership. The low level of riding skills needed for entry into the system suggest that the training programme is sufficient to produce the necessary teaching skills and that it is not necessarily good riding skills

67 The teacher training does not favour any particular discipline i.e. dressage show jumping etc. and the requirements needed to enrol as a potential teacher do not necessitate a high standard of riding.

68 Requirements to maintain accreditation are the same as the NCAS system. Note that the BHS do not have such requirements.
that are required to produce good teachers. This is an interesting outcome and one that will be discussed more fully later in the thesis.

*Ride With Your Mind, founder Mary Wanless (BSc Physics and BSc applied sports coaching)*

The final biomechanics syllabus has similarities to Swift’s whose fundamental role is to enable riders to achieve the best riding skills through a focus on their bodies. Mary Wanless’ *Ride With Your Mind (RWYM)* is an accreditation and teaching system based upon theories gained through her experiences as a rider and teacher (she has a BHIS qualification) and her scientific background. She argues equestrianism is problematic because to a large degree teaching is based upon an assumption of knowledge between teacher and rider and as such riding skills are lost or not developed (Wanless, 2008). Her premise is that many teachers teach with the specific understanding, knowledge and skill level that they themselves hold. This can then lead to an assumption their students also hold this knowledge or skill, which may or may not be a true evaluation (www.mary-wanless.com). Wanless (2008) also believes that better riders ride with implicit knowledge (Swift, 2006; De Kunffy, 2003), but they cannot put this knowledge into words because physical skills and verbal descriptions come from different parts of the brain; this results in a dislocation between expertise and explanation.

Wanless (2008) teaches riders at all levels of expertise to organise their mind and body in the same way as an elite rider would. Her theories work through teaching the rider to be aware of their own body using imagined techniques and biomechanics taken from Alexander and Feldenkrais with elements of neurolinguistic programming, *T’ai Chi*, massage, dance and kinesiology. Using the concepts of ancient disciplines, for example the components of relaxation, diaphragmatic breathing and body awareness as essential to the practice, similar to

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69 Information on this pedagogy can be obtained from the website (www.centeredriding.org).

70 Feldenkrais is based upon the experiences of Moshe Feldenkrais (1904-1984) in the early 20th Century. The technique is to improve health through a body and mind experience. The teacher uses a hands on approach in which to elicit self-discovery of the mechanics and sensations of the body. As with the previous disciplines I have limited experience in this technique although I have undertaken classes.
Hatha Yoga (Lincoln, 2008; Maw, 2000) along with modern knowledge, she is able to enhance rider skills through core fitness, required for good posture, and thus correct riding. In a similar style to Swift (2006), Wanless (2008) acknowledges that talented riders do not necessarily realise what they are doing, and as such find it hard to transfer their knowledge.

Breathing techniques are part of the riding process, in which the breath is used following influences from other disciplines. It can be argued that people do not breathe correctly (Maw, 2008) especially when nervous or stressed, and deep breathing can assist relaxation and increase abdominal activation, thus strengthening the rider’s core muscle groups. Wanless (2008, pp. 59-62), has termed this to ‘bear down’, in which she is intending the rider breathes deeply out with each breath and in doing so contacts the upper and lower abdominals, a technique used in Hatha Yoga practice (Maw 2008).

Wanless (2008) argues information is being lost in the translation from teacher to student through an assumption that skills and knowledge are universal in the equestrian world. The concept of tacit knowledge, as argued by Polanyi (1967, p. 4), states ‘we cannot know more than we can tell’ and as such the need for a two way dialogue between teacher and student is necessary to understand how knowledge is being interpreted, whether it is using dialogue of specifics (equestrian parlance) or broader terminology such as through the use of metaphor. Tacit knowledge draws on conceptual and sensory information and images to be used to make sense of something (Polanyi, 1967). It is Wanless’ aim to create a method of teaching equestrianism that gives riders who do not have a natural ability the necessary information to emulate elite riders thus, allowing them to develop their skills to their best ability. Changes can be made by drawing on the familiar to introduce new concepts (Polanyi, 1967) in the form of metaphor, which will be a way forward for some riders but which conversely can be off-putting for riders familiar with the traditional equestrian discourse.

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71 Her definition of bearing down is a similar technique used by opera singers and wind instrument musicians.
The primary focus for this method of riding and teaching is for riders to understand how their bodies work in order to understand how to make them work when riding. The teachers use hands on the riders to adjust their position at the start of the lesson, thus giving them the correct position at the outset. After the corrections and alignments the rider’s position is the primary focus of the lesson, which is undertaken using a certain amount of metaphorical language. The practice of using an idea that is perhaps more familiar to the student, rather than terms specific to equestrianism, is not new in education. According to the National Research Council (2000) metaphors are an effective and important educational strategy if they are based upon something familiar to the student, as they are then able to enhance learning and retention. The metaphor is replacing one word/phrase with another, which is possibly more readily available to the student as a memory enhancer for use at a later date. It is thought that the use of metaphors is more successful when they have some relation to the concept being taught (Low and Cameron, 1999).

To learn the system Wanless holds clinics in which clients either ride their own horse or use one of her school horses and/or a mechanical simulator in which lessons are focused on the rider position, thus creating a horse that is using itself more correctly. There are two theories regarding who is the most influential of the horse/rider partnership when considering the rider’s position. Some equestrians believe the horse influences the rider’s position, and others the rider’s position influences the horse. Wanless believes the latter, and her syllabus works toward creating a correct riding position to achieve a central balanced rider who has control of their body. The rider in control of their position will then allow the horse to move and work with less interference from the rider. Accreditation within the system is at four levels, all of which indicate the prerequisites of an ‘astute eye and good communication skills’, whilst maintaining a flexible approach in order to be able to ‘work with the difficult horse and rider’ (www.mary-wanless.com). The level of accreditation advances with the teachers’ knowledge of riding and teaching.

As well as a knowledge of her teaching methods, to attain the higher levels of accreditation the teacher’s skills must include ‘competitive success’ in their riding as well as training in Eastern martial arts of equivalent disciplines. Evidence of having attended training courses in communication skills is also part of the expectations and

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for the highest level the trainee has to hold a degree in Applied Sports Coaching or similar (www.mary-wanless.com). Thus there is a large commitment required for the student to undergo accreditation within the system both as a rider and a riding teacher.

Wanless (2010) states in her approach that ‘coaches are given a large amount of freedom in the way they interpret the fundamental principles’ (www.mary-wanless.com/coaches). However, I would argue that with the set vocabulary, principles and theories there is little room for freedom. This is especially true when the ‘coach’s work should be recognisable within the theory that is presented in books and videotapes’ (www.mary-wanless.com/coaches) made by Mary Wanless. Conversely she later argues there is no need for coaches to ‘re-invent the wheel.’ However, I could argue this is precisely what they are doing by changing the traditional language of equestrianism. Conversely the creation of the teaching vocabulary does mean that the coaches are taught how to teach, an aspect overlooked in the other accreditation systems. The aim of the syllabus is to create riders and teachers who are familiar with the terminology and are able to then use this to create a better rider.

**The Discourse through Metaphor as used by Wanless and Swift**

Wanless has created a discourse that is far more influential on the curriculum and pedagogy of the coaches training under her system. This language will be discussed later in the thesis when interview data and observations of teaching practice are analysed. Wanless argues it may not only be equestrian theories that are confusing, but also the narrative associated with the lesson. Equestrian language, both in the literature and in its practical application can be problematic and lead to assumptions and misinterpretations (Waness, 2008). It is the possibility of these issues occurring in the riding lesson that has led her to base the method she uses upon a new vocabulary. She claims her expressions can give riders a better understanding of how to position their bodies on the horse, the premise being they then begin to ride in a way similar to elite riders who often ride intrinsically (Wanless 2008; Swift, 2006). However, current riders introduced to this pedagogy
have to learn a new language to describe what has been stated conventionally, which for some could add to the confusion Wanless is trying to overcome.

The teaching techniques used in the method may appeal to some riders whilst alienating others because of the different discourse and terminology. Interestingly both Wanless and Swift recognised that great riders do not question how they do something due to their natural balance and coordination which enables their bodies to respond to their requests (Wanless, 2008; Swift, 2006; de Kunffy, 2003). Therefore, for these riders to teach what they are doing is often difficult because their innate understanding is not easily describable, they just know how to do it. However, the majority of riders do not have the natural ability (Swift, 2006; Wanless 2008). Wanless (2008) believes it is the riders’ intrinsic knowledge that helps their skill development and this can lead to assumptions being made by those teaching. If the riding teacher makes assumptions as to their pupil’s knowledge it will impact on further skill development. Wanless (2001) argues riding in dressage competitions, for example, can lead to an assumption, by teachers, that the ‘obstacles faced by the aspiring rider have already been overcome’ (www.mary-wanless.com).

For a rider who has been taught conventionally, confusion could occur with the term ‘bearing down’ as discussed in the breathing practice; because for them it can mean sitting down into the saddle more deeply. However, Wanless has another analogy to describe this fault as falling into the ‘man-trap’ (www.mary-wanless.com), to mean the rider is pressing too hard on the horses’ back and creating it to hollow away from the pressure. The whole RWYM system is based upon analogies to explain a vocabulary (equestrian) which some may argue is an unnecessary process when there is already an equestrian vocabulary which is already being interpreted by riding teachers to explain to their students how to ride.

Traditionally, riders would teach riding after achieving a certain level of expertise and as argued (Wanless, 2008; Swift, 2006; de Kunffy, 2003), such expert riders are not necessarily the best people to be teaching. RWYM accreditation\textsuperscript{72} gives the coaches many ‘tools in their toolbox,’ (a common term adopted in the discourse)

\textsuperscript{72} The accreditation information was taken from the website.
to enable the teachers to teach effectively and not just ‘go through the motions’ of giving commands and moving the horse around the school’ (www.mary-wanless.com/coaches). This can be an issue if teachers do not have sufficient knowledge or the ability to transfer their knowledge to the rider. Therefore giving the teachers sufficient ‘tools’ in the syllabus can enhance rider skills, which in turn allows for better horse welfare. It can be argued that problems between the rider and the teacher are due to the interpretation of traditional practice, and on this basis a two-way dialogue that is more understandable to the modern rider is commendable. However, for an alternative to become part of the mainstream narrative the discourse has to be understood and accepted by conventional riders and the systems in place.

As stated, the mainstream training systems do discuss the rider position, although de Kunffy (2002, 2003) argues the contemporary riding lesson has become a horning lesson, thus emphasising a need for more focus on the rider. The thesis will later review this aspect more fully through a consideration of the coaching syllabi and paradigms in which to understand if the riding lesson is being focused on the way the horse is performing in preparation for competition (de Kunffy; 2002, 2003), and if in doing so the rider’s position is being neglected. This will indicate if there is a gap or not in the riding lesson, and if so, if this is due to a disparity in the syllabi and if alternative theories that focus on the rider fills the gap.

Having considered the rider I will now discuss the alternative syllabus that focuses on the horse and how it learns. To teach horse riding it is important those practising understand this aspect in their lesson therefore the theory should inform pedagogy.

**Equitation Science or Learning Theory**

*Dr Andrew McLean BSc, PhD, DipEd* 73

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73 During the research AEBC, Andrew McLean’s registered practice created an award system for Equitation Science which has been included from 2012 (taken from the website www.aebc.com.au). Note that the participants interviewed for the thesis did not hold any part of the qualifications at the time of interview/observation.
The final alternative syllabus, Learning Theory, focuses on the way things are learned, and although this can be applied equally to humans and horses the accreditation focuses on the way the horse learns. The aim of Equitation Science is to scientifically evaluate the impact of human interactions with the horse for consideration of its welfare. The theory encompasses the way the horse is ridden (riding means training the horse); therefore the way the rider is taught is part of the process. The methodology is taught through clinics conducted globally by the founders as well as within the Australian Equine Behaviour Centre (AEBC) run by Andrew McLean and his wife and staff. Although Andrew McLean states he is offering nothing new and much of what he says has been said previously, he argues there is a current lack of science in equitation and this contributes to ‘undesirable equine behaviours with human-related causes’ (McLean, 2010, p.vii). Therefore, he unpacks what the rider has been taught and gives an explanation of the horse’s response based on a behaviourist approach.

The syllabus offers a home-based, self-paced study with accreditation that can be achieved online and by attending clinics at their centre. Accreditation is based upon the psychology known as learning theory (www.aebc.com.au/theabctrainingsystem). It aims for a scientific approach to training the horse/rider and offers awards in equitation science with levels from 1–5. The first level has four modules which are self-paced with a suggestion of 100 hours of study required. The second award is given after attending a two-week intensive at the clinic. The third level is an associate diploma requiring a two-week intensive at the centre that has assessments ‘embedded throughout’ (www.aebc.com.au/theabctrainingsystem). The fourth level is the diploma, which it is suggested will take two years to complete. The candidate’s complete portfolio is aimed to demonstrate the development of ‘a depth of knowledge and understanding, evaluation and reflection’ (www.aebc.com.au/training system). The student will receive ongoing online support, access to current research and economic incentives based around the centre and programme. The Fellowship in Equitation Science is the

74 The extent to which riding lessons are horse focused and the influence the system has on teaching practices will be discussed later in the thesis.
75 Andrew McLean is one of the main protagonists of this principle.
76 Accreditation information was taken from the website.
final (5th) level and it is expected that students undertake their own research focused around ethical training practice to improve equine behaviour and welfare and improve the understanding of human-equine interactions (www.aebc.com.au/theabctrainingsystem). To complete all the awards is expensive in time and cost and therefore requires a high level of commitment by the students.

The alternative teaching style is not concerned with rider position but with how the horse responds to the rider both on and off the horse using its natural responses of flight/fight. Using behavioural theories (operant conditioning) to explain how the reaction of the horse is due to human interaction, students can explain why the horse is running away due to it following its natural flight response when the rider is pulling it in the mouth and causing pain (McGreevy and McLean (2010). McGreevy and McLean argue the horse is responding naturally, although in a manner that is opposite to the rider’s wishes. Wanless (2008) would argue the rider’s actions make the horse go faster, by them pushing with their seat whilst pulling with their hands. De Kunffy’s (2003) explanation is the thesis would be too much impulsion (horse running) and the antithesis is it is due to incorrect riding, poor implementation of negative reinforcement, incorrect tack, lack of body control or poor position. These elements together will create the synthesis which is a tense and confused horse rushing above the bit.

Equitation Science has also changed certain aspects of the equitation language. Although it does not use metaphor it exposes anthropomorphism that often directs the narrative in the mainstream systems. For example the traditional term for communicating with the horse when riding is an aid. De Kunffy (2002) describes aids as helping the horse understand the rider’s wishes. In Equitation Science it is argued that aid has its ‘origin derived from the French verb ‘aider’, meaning ‘to help.’ This infers ‘the notion of the ‘benevolent’ horse, the horse that is a willing partner’ (McGreevy and McLean, 2010, p. 4). As the concept of the horse as a willing partner is deemed anthropomorphic, the word aid has been changed to mean either signal or cue. So again an existing rider is being exposed to a change in the dialogue and new terminology, which may or may not be problematic. The system

77 De Kunffy uses the term thesis and antithesis to describe his theory, therefore it is his wording not mine that is used.
prefers the term cue or signal, which is a generic term, in place of aid. Riders without prior knowledge of terminology will accept the change but riders who for many years have considered communication with the horse as being by means of aids may not see the need for change.

Learning Theory can be used in all kinds of learning situations, particularly those that are skill based (Skinner, 1971), and therefore it is easily transferable into the equestrian environment. The alternative teaching is about the horse and how the horse responds to the rider, both mounted and unmounted, using behaviourist theories (operant conditioning) to explain how the reaction of the horse is due to human interaction. McGreevy and McLean argue how horses have historically been ridden and trained intrinsically using a behaviourist approach. One example would be operant conditioning, a component of which is negative reinforcers. Horses are ridden with this principle in place in order to create favourable outcomes for the rider. For example, removing pressure on the horse after a response is negative reinforcement: the rider is removing an unfavourable aspect for the horse, thus the response is strengthened. An example of this principle can be with the use of the riding aids using the leg and hands. When the leg is applied to the horse’s sides and the horse moves forward or sideways (dependent on the rider’s wishes) that aid is taken immediately away, thus creating the principle that when the horse reacts to the rider’s wishes the unpleasantness is removed. Repetition then creates a pattern of behaviour: rider uses leg, horse moves, rider stops using leg, horse is rewarded for the movement. McGreevy and McLean explain how incorrect riding creates confusion in horses and as such they do not reach their potential, which for some can have a catastrophic outcome, and cite current teaching practice, which is outcome driven as opposed to focusing on creating good technique, as a possible instigator for these issues.

They also supplement their theories and arguments by advocating the use of modern technology. For example pressure-seeking devices that can be put onto the reins to indicate the amount of pressure the horse is exposed to in their mouths through the rider’s hand aid. Also understanding how the pressure from the seated rider is distributed on the horse’s back by using electrodes on the saddle cloths.78

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78 The use of technology to understand more fully what the horse is exposed to was witnessed whilst attending 3 equestrian conferences.
Ongoing research is undertaken to elucidate the role of negative reinforcement and habituation\(^{79}\) during the riding and training process, which impacts on the horse’s welfare (McGreevy and McLean, 2010).

The principles of Equitation Science are:

1. **The Pressure Principle:** The removal of physical pressure or discomfort reinforces (rewards) *whatever* behaviour precedes the moment of removal (i.e. leg(s) rein(s), spurs, whip-tap, head collar).

2. **Pavlov's Principle:** Relaxation and attentiveness can only occur if the horse responds to predictable signals that do not invade the pain threshold. Thus, training the horse to respond unconditionally to *light* aids in hand and under saddle is essential.

3. **The Exclusivity Principle:** Each response should be trained and elicited *separately* (don't pull on the reins (stop) and kick with the legs (go) at the same time).

4. **The Shaping Principle:** Responses should be progressively improved, step-by-step, learned response by learned response, toward the final outcome.

5. **The Proportional Principle:** Increasing pressures of aids should correspond with increasing levels of response i.e. a small leg aid should result in a smaller go reaction, while a bigger aid should produce a stronger go response.

6. **The Self Carriage Principle:** The horse must travel in-hand and under saddle *free* of any constant rein or leg pressure, otherwise he will switch off to them.

7. **The Fear Principle:** Fear is quickly learned, not easily forgotten and is strongly associated with the movement of the horse's legs. It is important to learn to identify the range of fear responses in horses and to diminish them to avoid the horse experiencing them.

8. **The Mentality Principle:** Appreciating the similarities and differences in mental ability between horses and humans is crucial to effective and humane training. (www.aebc.com.au/articles).

\(^{79}\) Habituation is the waning of a response to a repeated stimulus as a result of frequent exposure to the stimulus (McGreevy and McLean, 2010).
All learning theories are derived from the context to which they are applied and will be ever changing (Biggs, 1994), as has been indicated in the discussions above. In this way theories that have been amalgamated into equestrianism are not necessarily stating anything new but allowing riders to reflect their practice. It can be argued there is a need for theoretical knowledge as well as practical skills (Belton, 2000; Klimke, 1985) from which to create correct procedure. Conversely over theorising or ‘toying with “new or “innovative” riding methods and “techniques”’ (de Kunffy, 2002, p. ix) can be a waste of time due to the ‘millions of riders who explored them centuries before’. However, ‘students who understand riding theory will always excel in practice’ (de Kunffy, 2002, p. xi), which is the belief of McGreevy and McLean whose objectives are to explain the theories inherent in the traditional approach.

The first principle described above states signals should be elicited singly and any set of signals should still be separated and elicited consecutively (Decarpentry, 2001) The author’s point here is that in scientific terms this then produces neural pathways in response to the rider’s aids to the horse, and as such it is important that timing and use of hands, legs and body are correct and light, and failure adopt the technique is a punishment for the horse a theory supported by McGreevy and McLean (2010). Therefore they consider that riders who adopt the principles of Equitation Science are scientifically upholding what traditional practice has stated. For example when riders were/are told they should have a neutral contact with the horse, through the reins and legs (de Kunffy, 2003; Boldt, 1978; Podhajsky, 1978) from which to add pressure through light and correctly well timed on/off light signals thus creating a two-way communication with the horse. The legs create the energy and the hands fine-tune and direct the energy in the desired movement while maintaining contact with the horse throughout.

Other classical masters for example de la Guérinière (1688-1751) stated Descente de main et descente de jambe (interpreted to mean relax the hands and relax the legs), and later Baucher (1796 -1873) expanded on the theory by saying make yourself understood and let it happen, which was later to be interpreted by Steinbrecht (1808-1885) in his text The Gymnasium of the Horse (1995) to mean let
the horse go free, or in other words hands without legs and legs without hands as proposed by Decarpentry (2001).

To describe Pavlov’s principles in regard to training the horse is a less than accurate interpretation of some aspects of associative learning. Associative learning is produced through classical conditioning (Budiansky, 1997), much of which has been produced through painful experimentation. Therefore it is not necessarily essential that light aides are used when training however it is desirable, although many horses are able to learn by associating less than light aids from the rider.

The training of the horse is fundamentally for it to accept and respond to the rider’s wishes often over its natural response, which is referred to as habituation (McGreevy and McLean, 2010). I have argued in the second chapter how some horses have been/are used for specific disciplines due to their physical and temperamental attributes. The authors argue that what was/is considered good temperament is in fact habituation. Certain horses are more easily habituated to certain requirements than others. Over-habituation can lead to adverse responses in that the horse can be deemed to be hard-mouthed or dead-sided due to incorrect riding technique. It is therefore necessary to be aware of the signals the horse is giving in response to the rider. Conditioning can also elicit change in motivation by creating demotivation with horses becoming less responsive to the riders’ aids when they are incorrectly given.

It could be argued that the Exclusivity Principle (3) is seeking correct traditional riding in which the timing of the aids is paramount to achieving the two-way conversation between horse and rider through ‘reinforcement of the correct responses’ (de Kunffy, 2003, p. 33). Failure to achieve this in modern riding is due to the basics of the classical French riding theories not being adhered to at any skill level, possibly because the riding teachers are unaware of theories embedded into the equestrian discourse. If, as in Western Australia, riding teachers are only being exposed to the German theories, then the possibility for correct reinforcement to take place can be non-existent. De Kunffy (2003, pp. 24-30) refers to Hegel’s (1770-1831) dialectics of thesis and antithesis to explain the theory of rider and horse. He states an action creates a thesis which provokes an antithesis or reaction, the two then
contest to form a solution. However, the solution is not static and as such an antithesis develops; in other words, nothing is permanent.

The lack of understanding of the learning principles underpinning equestrianism was highlighted in a survey undertaken by Warren-Smith and McGreevy in 2006, who conducted a national survey of Australian riding teachers to assess their knowledge of learning theory. The results were published in a peer reviewed journal. The results indicated ‘that coaches lack a correct understanding of positive and negative reinforcement as they apply to horse training’ (Warren-Smith and McGreevy, 2008, p.154). They therefore concluded ‘given that qualified coaches play a significant role in the dissemination of information on training practices, this highlights the need for improved education of equestrian coaches’ (Warren-Smith and McGreevy, 2008, p.154). It can be considered that the term education is to mean introducing learning theory to the EFA syllabus to ‘enhance the welfare of horses through reduced behavioural conflict and improve training outcomes’ (Warren-Smith and McGreevy, 2008, p.154).

McLean’s theories are based upon B.F. Skinner’s theories of operant conditioning. However the theoretical terminology can be ambiguous and not helpful for the conformity of practice due to a lack of understanding of the language. This could explain the results in the survey by Warren-Smith and McGreevy (2008) and may not necessarily indicate whether the riders/coaches are or not using the techniques of negative reinforcement, which is the foundation of McLean’s syllabus. There is a danger of creating confusion and misinterpretation of the theories, especially when new language and terminology are introduced as seen with the examples of the alternative syllabi discussed here.

It can be considered that a well-schooled horse will have good self-carriage, which is the sixth principle of Equitation Science. However the sixth principle is required due to the emphasis that is placed on the horse’s head and neck position in competitive riding. It can be argued that many modern riders are not riding following

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80 I was sent the raw date of the survey from Paul McGreevy for help with this research.
81 Anthrozoös. 21 (2): 153-162
classical principles and are not learning to ride on those well-schooled horses from which they might learn how to use light and invisible aids with which to communicate. The classical master who can be considered as introducing the concept of the position of the horse’s head is Baucher (1796-1873) in his text *The Man and His Method* (1991) where he defined *le ramener* as placing the head of the horse in a perpendicular position. The position of the horse’s head has now become a paramount in modern riding. However it is often achieved incorrectly and is the result of the rider not applying correct aids but taking a quick option of usually applying unrelenting pressure of the rider’s rein aids (hands) or using a gadget to achieve the same effect. The often too deep and round positioning of the horse’s head means the horse is reliant on the rider for direction because of a blind spot the horse has when its head is lowered into this posture; it is therefore literally working blind (Harman, 2002). Recent research also claims when the horse’s head and neck are in this position its breathing is affected (Hamblin, 2012). The position required does offer an attitude of subservience in which the horse is more passive to the rider’s aids (because of the disadvantages in doing otherwise) and therefore it is favoured despite the adverse effect on the horse’s welfare.

McLean’s seventh principle deals with the horse’s natural response to fear that of flight or fight. The fear principle is based upon the argument that once the horse has escaped the object of fear it has confirmed the flight response, and therefore it is likely to repeat this response. He argues that riders at all levels get this wrong due to the misunderstanding of rhythm (McLean, 2007). Misunderstanding of the fear principle can be due to anthropomorphic ramifications, for example a horse that is bold when jumping, may be considered as loving to jump. However this trained response may be due to fear caused by pain. McLean argues that riders in all disciplines need to understand rhythm and argues that the ‘horse’s legs should not be quick.’ This was understood by ‘great masters’ but has been neglected by contemporary riders (McLean, 2007). McLean considers that the way in which to influence the fear response is to control the horse’s legs. This can be achieved with groundwork and later when ridden by ‘complete control over the horse’s mobility’ (McLean, 2007, para 14). However if the rider misunderstands the concept of mobility and tries to slow or stop a horse that is overly stressed, anxious and tense, then the flight response is no longer available to the horse who may turn to their fight
response and buck and or rear. Although McLean’s theory is sound, it is dependent
upon correctly identifying and treating fearful behaviour shown by the horse, and
often this can be subtle. Therefore for many riders this is a skill that needs to be
taught.

The Mentality Principle, which involves appreciating the similarities and
differences in mental ability between horses and humans aligns to the concept of
anthropomorphism. Therefore the eighth principle considers the modern riding horse
and its relationship with people. With the horse no longer being an animal of labour
(with modern machinery taking the place of the horse as an animal of work) it has
become a means for pleasure. Recreational riding has created an industry in which
horse equipment is plentiful with everything from horse toys to stop the horse getting
bored to a plethora of styles of rugs and equipment available thus creating an
anthropomorphic view of the horse. Often the horse is seen and described as having
the emotions and characteristics of humans (McGreevy and McLean, 2010), an
example of which is during modern lessons the teacher can often be heard telling the
rider how naughty the horse is being, whereas in the traditional riding lesson the rider
would take responsibility for their horse’s actions and, if something went wrong, the
rider would be asked what they had or not done to invite the response from the horse.
McGreevy and McLean (2010) argue that every response of the ridden horse is due
to correct or incorrect use of punishers and reinforcers, and not human-like emotions
and values. Stating this is not denying the horse has a brain, and therefore, it does
offer horse-like responses to human activities. However, to link the horse’s response
to human qualities is not scientifically proven and as such can be considered
unrealistic and inappropriate.

Anthropomorphic interpretations have been used to popularise what has been
termed Natural Horsemanship, which is another alternative training method that has
found a gap in the equestrian market. Brought to the fore by Monty Roberts (1935- ),
otherwise known as the horse whisperer (a term Roberts does not consider
appropriate), and Pat Parelli, these methods have found a following in some circles
despite McGreevy and McLean (2010) arguing that they do not stand up to scientific
rigour.
Both Parelli’s and Roberts’s equitation training originate in America where the cowboy tradition is in place, a tradition which involves complete domination by the man/men through total submission of the horse gained from its fear responses (Roberts, 1997). The technique is used in order to produce a quick outcome, which is to ride the horse (Roberts, 1997). It can be argued that his popularity is due to the publicity he has achieved that focuses on the rough training and negating traditional humane technique (McGreevy and McLean, 2010). Roberts and Parellis do have a skill that enables them to work in the way they do, they have what is commonly referred to as ‘good horse sense’ and they are able to understand patterns in horse behaviour in order to produce certain desired effects. Many traditional equestrians may well have also had this horse sense for example the riding master Francois Baucher (1796-1873) who Gianoli (1969) argues could have been the forerunner of natural equitation. Baucher understood that the horse’s conformation created resistance when it was asked to perform certain movements, and that such resistance is therefore due to a physical state, which will not become a personality trait unless the horse is badly schooled (Baucher, 1991). It is interesting that Roberts, and others of his associates, work with horses that have been damaged and are offering a horse friendly way to train which evolved from the negative impressions he had of traditional American breaking techniques.

Learning and Teaching within Equestrianism

Different modes of learning can be seen to be embedded into the equestrian syllabi discussed above. For example, an experiential learning cycle, described by Kolb et al., (2000), is one model that can be used to show how horse riding can fit into a cyclical concept. Most riders and teachers of riding can adapt and modify their personal styles within such a framework. For example, when new skills are required the rider is instructed through explicit teaching. When used within an experimental learning cycle the rider can adapt the instructions in order to feel and think about what is happening based on the response of the horse. They can then interpret the response and reflect on prior knowledge to develop new knowledge. Observation of other riders and further experiences will also create a process of reflection from which to actively test the concepts whilst riding (Kolb, et al., 2000). Through observation, an account of different learning styles and preferences in teaching and
learning can be considered. There are those who ponder and consider (reflection); those who wish to research further through observation and or reading about riding for example; and finally those who will experiment at home.

Teaching equestrianism in the modern era has had to change from its original more transmissive format to encompass differences in the modern learner and teacher. People coming into riding teaching have changed over time. They are now less accepting of being shouted at as per the military method of teaching; they are from diverse backgrounds, some of which may not be aligned to equestrianism; many riders are beginning or coming back to riding at a later age; and some research the sport prior to and as part of their learning process. Learning within equestrianism can be considered as following these stages. Initially riders need to acquire new skills thus instruction is required to create concrete learning (Kolb, et al., 2000). Initially with equestrianism this is achieved singularly on the lunge line due to the rider’s limited understanding or skill. What they learn is then put into practice as the rider adapts the instructions and learns from the feel they are getting, and thinks about what is happening after the response from the horse. From the feedback riders are getting from the horse as they experience riding, they can then give feedback to the teacher, who can interpret the response and reflect on their own prior and new knowledge and offer advice whilst the rider is still in a safe environment. It is hoped the process will then lead to the rider becoming self-directed (Potrac and Cassidy, in Jones, 2006), known within the education paradigm as scaffolding.\textsuperscript{82} Self-direction is the optimal stage of riding, which means the rider is able to work at home and/or at competitions on their own. Guidance, if required, can be that of the ‘eyes on the ground’ (Lincoln, 2002), and the coach in the private lessons giving limited instruction but offering guidance, thus coaching.

**Sociocultural Approaches/Social Constructivist Theories in Equestrianism**

Social pedagogy has found favour within the education environment (Smith, 2009) and aspects from it can be seen in the equestrian coaching syllabi. For example the understandings of individual problems, using group work and creating a happy

\textsuperscript{82} Scaffolding relates to the level of support being given. The more skilled the rider, the less need for guidance to the point that the coach is eyes on the ground rather than the instructor of skills.
environment are aspects of social pedagogy and the ability to organise, observe, analyse, adapt, communicate and improve performance (www.ausport.gov.au) are part of the coaching syllabi.

To organise, the teacher has to set up a learning environment in which the horse and rider will do certain things, which in turn will create learning (Biggs, 1989). Therefore, the teacher should be aware of how they construct their universe of meaning (Freire, 1970); in other words the teacher must define their intent (Biggs, 1989) and be aware of the ‘learning needs’ of both horse and rider (Freire, 1970) in order to be able to choose what activities to teach (Biggs, 1989). The teacher can choose their activities, or create their curriculum, by assessing the student’s actual learning outcomes to see how well they match what is intended for the lesson (Biggs, 1989).

From these observations the teacher can analyse prior knowledge and abilities, values and expectations of learning, which Biggs (1989) calls ‘presage’. After the lesson they can then assess the student’s actual learning outcomes and see how well they match what was intended for the lesson (Biggs, 1989). Reflecting in this way may lead the teacher to adapt their plan, or style, to suit the necessities of the rider, which can at times require them to not only take on a role as equestrian teacher but also take on aspects of a psychologist (www.equestrian.org.au) due to the environment they have created or is required.

Dialogue plays a large role in creating an environment conducive to learning within the socio-cultural perspective. It is through analysis and dialogue that the teacher can be made aware of intrinsic skills that can be adapted and developed to form deeper understanding, which will then empower the rider. For deeper understanding to take place the student must be assisted by another, for example the teacher, who defines their intended learning outcomes (ILOs) at the start of the lesson (Biggs, 1989). The teacher needs to ‘break down the barrier between teacher and what is taught’ (Freire, 1970). They will have to ‘speak the same language as the learners’ (Freire, 1970). From a two-way dialogue the student can learn through a more active involvement in their learning. The way the coaching syllabi have been constructed indicates the expectation that the learner will learn from making their
own meaning from given situations; in other words, they learn through the activities they perform (Jones, et al., 2008; Biggs, 2007) so they can work without the teacher in their home environment.

Through encouraging the student to explore and learn from their experiences a final position will be arrived at (Biggs, 1989) which will be improved performance. The process begins with instruction from a knowledgeable source for the problem at hand. As information is internalised by the student the knowledge learnt can then be used to work through the next problem (Potrac and Cassidy, in Jones, 2006) thus creating an independent student. The process required to create a deeper learning intent is reflection and a multidisciplinary approach, as opposed to surface learning where information is regurgitated in a rote technique (Biggs, 1989). As skilled practitioners, riders often perform tasks unthinkingly often without consideration or deep thought and analysis, which may be due to their reliance on intrinsic knowledge. However, intrinsic knowledge cannot be assumed in all riders. Therefore, if the teacher wishes to create higher deeper they have to discuss what is felt by the rider, and cannot assume they (the rider) is feeling what they (the teacher) feels when undertaking the same tasks. It is the constant involvement by the teacher and interaction between the rider, horse and teacher that will produce the goals of the equestrian syllabi, which is to create better riding and teaching practice.

The equestrian training syllabi also encourage teachers to use a constructivist teaching method, a concept developed from Piaget’s theories (Burns, 2002) in which the learner plays an active part in assimilating knowledge through a two-way dialogue. The discourse will lead to a scaffolding method of teaching in which the teacher lessens their help, thus the rider takes responsibility. The role of the coach is to reflect and analyse their curriculum planning and instructional methods to suit their students to enable them to be in a position to relinquish their need of the coach.

I have argued how the equestrian syllabi are undergoing changes that in turn will shape individual teachers curriculum and pedagogy. The general coaching principles have taken theories from education to enhance teaching and learning practice, using a CBE/T style of teaching. In doing this a coaching model has been created that has a sound theoretical basis, and that enhances the existing equestrian
theories, for example the German equestrian theory. This in turn has allowed equestrianism to be included in the national sporting accreditation framework in both Australia and Britain within specialist sports colleges and schools (Penney, in Jones, 2006). However, equestrian teaching is not limited to the mainstream training systems. Whilst undertaking the research I became aware that certain alternative syllabi were also informing teaching practices. Participants who had identified gaps in the mainstream syllabi had turned to a number of alternative equestrian syllabi to gain further knowledge. Perceived gaps in the syllabi were in the areas of rider position (biomechanics) and the correct knowledge of how the horse learns (learning theory). Since both aspects are relevant in the riding lesson and will underpin pedagogy, the alternative syllabi will now be discussed.

Strengths and weaknesses of the systems

The British Horse Society has a military legacy, which has created a syllabus intended to be undertaken within a riding school environment. Student coaches/teachers learning in these establishments will improve their teaching skills by giving riding lessons to the general public wishing to learn to ride or ride more effectively. In other words they are learning in real life settings teaching a group of riders or riders in a one on one lesson.

The student coaches/teachers are also learning through collaboration with their peers and colleagues. Collaborative learning in education has been well researched and is deemed to be an effective learning technique in which to create critical thinking and analysis (Gokhale, 1995). Learning in groups allows a sharing of ideas and in doing so creates a broader understanding of one’s own position and that of others. Through discussion and watching the potential riding teacher can learn, reflect and discuss with the group. The BHS instructor is available to transmit information immediately it is sought by the students and they can stimulate thinking by leading the discussion into areas of learning (Gokhale, 1995). Through discussions the students learn different methods and theories. Thus the BHS syllabus allows students to gain information and knowledge from a variety of sources ideas and theories.
Conversely the students studying the syllabi that do not have the riding school environments are learning in isolation. Isolated practice may result in lack of motivation and frustration (Croft, et al., 2010). Isolated practice limits learning in that the student may only be aware of the syllabus and texts linked to it and as such can create a narrow focus. Studying outside an establishment offers flexibility of what and when skills are learnt and these skills are assessed through a continual development process. The flexible approach allows students who may have constraints for example distance, family ties, transport issues the chance to study (Croft, et al., 2010). Workshops and clinics are the point of contact for these students in which to discuss issues with their colleagues and coaches. During the workshops teaching skills are enhanced through teaching each other with an assumption that the student will enhance their teaching/coaching skills in a real life environment outside the workshops.

Having evaluated the syllabi a comparison will be made with regard to the aims they are trying to achieve by reviewing the content within each syllabus and the pedagogy they are hoping to produce through the accreditation.

**Comparison of the Syllabi**

The basis for comparing the syllabi in both areas, England and Western Australia is to understand why after years of producing instructors (or parts thereof) England is adopting a coaching accreditation method. Originally the aim of the thesis was to compare and contrast the two main training bodies syllabus, however as the participants in the study adopted an alternative syllabus these also have been included.

Each syllabus has levels of accreditation based upon attainment of skills. However, the incentive for teachers to progress through the accreditation levels is unclear. Accreditation to teach horse riding is not a legal requirement and therefore, the type of qualification the level of attainment and how they are achieved comes down to personal choice. The syllabi are directional leaving those teaching the skills to decide for themselves what is useful and what is not, thus developing their own curriculum.
What the syllabi are attempting is to professionalise equestrianism and aligning them to the broader sports coaching levels enhances the professionalisation. Jones, et al., (2008) and Bales (2007) claim that if all sports adopt the same or similar concepts when coaching then it will have the effect of raising the status of the sports coach. It can be argued that the aims of all the syllabi are to create a market for the requirement of the modern rider.

**Aims**

The aim of the syllabus in England is to modernise and professionalise its approach by transferring the syllabus from instructional concept to that of producing coaches. The coaching paradigms and philosophies bring equestrianism into a broader sporting concept, which is more suited to the modern rider. By adopting coaching paradigms it allows the BHS syllabus to be employed in higher education facilities such as universities and colleges. Adopting a coaching model aligns equestrian skills to competitions, thus producing riders capable of competing and coaches able to coach for competition riding.

Each accreditation level is a three stage process that includes the candidate attaining a standard of riding and horse-management and then completing a coaching portfolio and being assessed on the completed tasks. The coaching emphasis is on competing: for example the BHS Intermediate Teaching Test Equitation Theory requires that the candidate can summarise the relevant rules with regard to the Dress/Tack and eligibility to compete in a competitive Horse Trials, to Pre-Novice level and Dressage, to elementary level (bhs.org.uk).

The aim of the Western Australian syllabus is to create a strong foundation from the German philosophy, which is based upon Steinbrecht (1995) who developed his skills through the German riding school system which was influenced in turn by de la Gueriniere. Riding and teaching skills taken from the German philosophy, which in turn was influenced by the French methods are then augmented with the coaching paradigms and philosophies used in the broader sports coaching framework.
The aim of the biomechanics Kelly syllabus appears to be to produce riders who fully understand and work with the rules of dressage. The interpretations of the rules are then applied to the rider and how they are riding the horse.

The biomechanics Wanless syllabus: considers that all riders should be capable of riding to their best ability, which is not always the case when lessons are given. She believes that her syllabus allows those accredited within the system are able to facilitate riders to achieve their best.

The biomechanics Swift syllabus aims to create riders who are aware of their riding position and effect it has on the horse. The narrative will appeal to some teachers whilst alienating others as will the hands on positioning the rider approach.

The aim of the McLean syllabus is: to increase the knowledge of how the horse learns. The approach is based the behaviourist approach developed through psychology. Aspects have been used to encompass equestrianism, however McLean’s Learning Theory specifically relates to associative learning and behaviourist approach. It does not indicate other theories of learning or approaches to learning without which it is offering a narrow approach to teaching.

**In Summary**

I have considered both mainstream syllabi and four others that offer an alternative accreditation, which may be required due to perceived gaps in the mainstream. By selecting from a range of available syllabi enables the development of a personal curriculum that allows the teacher to formulate the syllabus to suit the requirements of their students not only at the time of teaching but also with a view to the next lesson and beyond (Harris et al., 2001). The syllabi in mainstream equestrianism provide a list of objectives without any direction as to how these should be interpreted, and therefore a personal curriculum is an essential tool to enable knowledge transference (Duncan-Andrade, 2010). I would argue that the mainstream syllabi need interpretation by riding teachers for them to be practically applied. They do not give direction as to how to teach nor do they suggest what language needs to be used for specific purposes. It has been shown that the
alternative syllabi consider language as an important part in teaching riding. The particular discourse used can create both understanding and misunderstanding, and without direction regarding how to teach the riding teacher has to create a personal curriculum. If the syllabus is reliant on individual interpretations then gaps in what is taught can be the result, therefore alternative syllabi can be used to augment the mainstream.

Teaching equestrianism should be fluid, using discourse associated both with coaching and with instructing, to teach riders and train horses the traditional equestrian theories inherited. As new syllabi are introduced they should enhance existing practice and in doing so strengthen pedagogy by furthering the knowledge of those who are teaching. Kolb (1984) argues against over applying theory to develop a practical skill. However, with the push for equestrian teaching to be located within a coaching paradigm there is a need for theory to be taught from a reliable base (Cassidy, et al., 2009), thus I can argue there is a place within the mainstream theories to adopt practices that are informed by Learning Theory per se for an understanding of how both the horse and rider learn. The mainstream syllabi do consider the importance of the rider position by prescribing units where positional faults of the rider are addressed. However, what should be considered part of the lesson, that is teaching the rider how to ride the horse with view to their position as they ride, is now being considered part of a separate syllabus thus fragmenting equestrianism into specialised subjects. I will consider this further in the following chapters, with regard to pedagogy and skill attainment.
Chapter Four
The Evolving Role of Equestrianism

The previous chapter considered the different syllabi developed by the bodies that offer accreditation to teach equestrian teaching. It has been discussed that although the British system is working toward a coaching model, the syllabi reviewed indicate little difference between the expectations of the British accreditation and the Australian. However, the change has led to a lack of clarity regarding pedagogical approaches, which I have referred to as teaching/coaching/instructing: terms that are used interchangeably in the syllabi. In the following chapter I will re-iterate key features of a coaching model as opposed to an instructional approach to understand the changes that are taking place to align a coaching style for teaching equestrianism with many other aspects of current educational practice (Kimsey-House et al., 2011), for example in the workplace. This chapter will begin the discussion of how coaching is evolving, and can continue to evolve within the equestrian paradigm, and will explore the implications of this evolution for equestrian pedagogy. Following the discussion I will describe a generic riding lesson, for those readers who are not familiar with the riding lesson. Rather than draw from my own practice as a riding teacher, I have used as a basis for this description of a riding lesson a public video of a lesson given by an elite rider (Bartle, 2008), and supplemented this with the guidance provided in several lay texts, some recommended by the syllabi and others relating to the research (Wanless, 2010; McGreevy and McLean, 2010; Lincoln, 2008; Xenophon, 2008; Swift, 2006; Prockl, 2005; De Kunffy, 2003, 2002, 1992; Decarpentry, 2010; Mortimer, 2003; Belton, 2001, 2000; Knowles, 1999; Knox-Thompson, 1994, 1990; Podhajsky, 1978; Klimke, 1985;) The use of the texts and the video to describe the riding lesson is one way to deal with reflexivity in the research however, at the end of the chapter I will offer ideas for developing an alternative syllabus using an example from my personal practice to augment the generic account. I will use these to analyse the expectations of the syllabi, and discuss how aspects from them may be applied in practice.
The main syllabi in England and Western Australia are a group of directives about curriculum content that do not direct the coach how to teach. The Western Australian system is based upon the texts from the German National Equestrian Federation, whilst the English system is more open in the expectations of the instructors/coaches\(^{83}\) not being reliant on one text. The syllabi only give directives toward producing an accomplished rider at the specific level at each qualification. Therefore how the coach interprets the directives from the syllabi and teaches/coaches/instructs the riders is by developing a personal curriculum. In contrast the alternative syllabi are more directive in that they offer a discourse for teaching practice. The alternative syllabi are more focused on how the lesson is taught, with specifics embedded into the discourse as discussed in the previous chapter.

**Review of the Syllabi**

Reviewing the syllabi indicates that there is little difference between the expectations of and directions to the prospective riding teacher in the British and Australian syllabi now that British accreditation bodies are working toward promoting the coaching model. For example in the oral presentations for the BHSII there are indications of a coaching pedagogy when the candidate is asked to discuss the following topics:

- The Importance of Self-reflection …
- Phases of a coaching programme …
- Obtaining and using feedback …
- Managing a coaching programme (supporting and monitoring) …
- How to empower participants …
- Physical and mental preparation for a session …
- Motivation – what it is and how to use it …
- Rider injuries not related to falls …
- Positive reinforcement … (www.bhs.osrg.uk Guidance Notes pp. 11-19)

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\(^{83}\) The term instructor and coach are used simultaneously to indicate the qualification is still instructor however the syllabus is more in line with coaching.
The above list of topics taken from the British syllabus can be compared with the Australian Governments Institute of Sport General Principles (www.ausport.gov.au), in which the same issues are covered. The Australian principles also consider ‘enthusiasm’ (p. 8) as a quality recognised as a good coaching aptitude. In the Equestrian Qualifications GB Ltd Syllabus and Guidelines for Candidates Preparing for the BHS Intermediate Teaching Test, candidates are told they should ‘communicate in an enthusiastic and motivating manner’ (pp. 4, 5, 6, 7), as well as show good organisation in their lessons (p. 14), again aspects of the Australian coaching syllabus. Therefore, it can be understood that the two syllabi are expecting similar practices. This indicates that the British accreditation is achieved through a coaching syllabus:

- To help equestrianism to ‘fulfil its full potential as a sport, as a valuable active recreation activity.’
- To help equestrian athletes ‘improve their performance whether in a competitive or leisure environment.’
- To provide ‘talented young riders the best opportunity to maximise their competitive potential.’
- To ‘develop, nurture and inspire riders to become successful competitors.’

(www.bef.co.uk BEF Brochure pp. 10, 13).

Although coaching can be competition oriented, due to the sporting context associated with competition, the outlines also indicate an emphasis on a general improvement of skills.

The Equestrian Federation of Australia’s (EFA) concepts are in line with the National Coaching Accreditation System (NCAS). This body provides educational training to encourage the process of life-long learning of athletes through continual development and training. Therefore, the EFA has had to provide a qualification based around recognised areas established by the NCAS, and adapt them for the equestrian sporting community (www.equestrian.org.au). In order to stay in line with
the NCAS coaching requirements the syllabus must contain three coaching principles:

- ‘Coaching Principles – General and sport specific principles of coaching and human performance,
- Practical Coaching – Skills, techniques and strategies specific to the sport,
- Coaching Practice – Practice of coaching before, during or after the course.’

(www.equestrian.org.au Procedures for EFA Candidates, 2008, p.6)

The equestrian coaching syllabi allow an amalgamation of the dialogues, typical of teaching, instruction and coaching (www.bef.co.uk). In the Level 1 General Accreditation for the Australian Syllabus it indicates the candidate may inter-change their style between teaching and coaching. In making these changes it signifies a modification between one of authority to one of facilitator (Harris et al., 2001). For example, the unit coded 2b. 2, asks the candidates to ‘teach/coach’ or to ‘adapt coaching style and content to facilitate’, whilst in unit coded 4 part A the guidance suggests the candidate ‘teach the upright seat,’ but then returns to ‘teach/coach’ (www.equestrian.org.au). This is indicting that there is flexibility in how the candidate imparts knowledge.

Equestrian teaching is complex and some of the complexities will now be considered by looking at the discourse that is used in order to understand the extent to which the riding teacher is, in practice, expected to be a coach or instructor, as their accreditation suggests. For example my own qualification is that of an instructor, however when I am giving riding lessons only a part of each lesson is instructed. The syllabi encourage different styles, represented by different discourses, to be used in the riding lessons and therefore the discourse plays a part in shaping the teaching practice. It is not only what is being taught, but the teaching process and the language used, that indicates if the teacher is instructing or coaching their riders. What is taught, when and why is the teacher’s personal curriculum. This is dependent

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84 As explained in the introduction.
on how the teacher plans to suit the needs of their students, not only at the time of
teaching, but also with a view to the next lesson and beyond (Harris et al., 1995). The
curriculum allows the teacher to formulate the syllabus around the skills and desires
of the students, thus the personal curriculum shapes pedagogy (Duncan-Andrade,
2010). Part of the personal curriculum is the language embedded in the practice.
What is said, and how it is said, is derived by copying other (Bacon and Voss, 2012).
Therefore the influence of the system is perpetuated through the lineage between
student and teacher. Although the British system no longer has a military connection,
much of what is said, and how it is said, derives from this background.

**Instructional Elements in the Riding Lesson**

The British Horse Society (BHS) derives from a military setting and those
accredited in the system are termed ‘instructors’, even though this is no longer
indicative of the style of teaching that is being required from the syllabus. However,
at the first level of accreditation candidates teaching groups of riders are still found
to be instructing. Drills and exercises are used in group teaching in which general
skills are enhanced through practice. In the past this hierarchical environment meant
the discourse was one-way, with instructions being shouted to the students and skills
being attained often through bullying tactics. For example to stop a slouching rider a
riding whip or stick would be placed behind the rider’s back and held in place by
looping the arms over and holding it in place with the bent inner elbow, which has
the desired effect of creating an upright position. However this practice also creates
rigidity in the rider’s back and arms (Knowles, 1999), which in turn impacts on the
horse and its welfare, an issue that will be discussed later in the chapter.

Instruction became the dominant teaching practice in equestrianism due to the
retired military riding instructors teaching civilian riders and taking their practice
into the civilian population. As a result the above method of using the prop as a quick
fix approach, to give the rider the feel of the correct position, became part of
equestrian pedagogy. Now, after the first level of accreditation, the English trainee
instructor is encouraged to adopt a more holistic approach to their teaching, thus in
line with the coaching methods. To correct positional faults they may ask their
students to ‘take a deep breath [and] let the top of the pelvis come forward’
(Knowles, 1999, p. 6), thus allowing the shoulders to come back. Therefore the BHS syllabus, although in the Society’s terminology is accrediting instructors, provides evidence that the practice has adapted to the modern rider using a coaching syllabus.

An instructor can be defined as one who gives instruction of a practical skill. They instruct the mechanics for the skill so that an imitation can occur (Bransford, 2000). The term has patriarchal implications, which is understandable due to the foundation of riding instruction discussed previously. Men taught riding, often through a military structure in a society divided by social class. The instructor was ‘the expert; transmitter of knowledge; authoritative; [who] clearly directs the learning process’ (Burns, 2002 p. 226). This cognitive approach (Burns, 2002), in which riders are all expected to react in the same way, as with the military training, is no longer how education is conducted. Cognitive theories have enlightened the way the instructions are given and they are not necessarily authoritarian. Instruction nevertheless remains a necessary part of the riding environment to teach skills at all levels, after which a more self-directed approach can follow.

Once the knowledge is embedded through instruction, the teacher and student can draw on that information to enhance or re-establish skills. Throughout the process of instruction the instructors themselves are also in a position of learning as they reflect on the instructions they give and the responses and results they achieve (Zeus and Skiffington, 2000). Instructions can change to suit the moment. For example if the traditional instruction given to riders to push the heels down does not have the desired effect changing it to ‘lift the toe’ might (von Dietze, 1999). Both are instructing the rider to do something, who as a result learns a skill that allows them to feel what is or is not correct.

Riding is a skill-based sport in which feeling one’s own body working together with the horse’s body are the most important aspects. The rider has to feel what they are doing as well as the horse is doing to establish and gain equestrian skills. For the rider to develop what is known as ‘feel’, they have to be taught the skills, after which they can discuss what they feel, how they feel and the instructor

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85 Instructor not instructress.
can then suggest why they feel aspects of the acquired skill. Although the instructor will ‘tell the rider what to do’ (Lincoln, 2008, pp. 3-6) it is deemed potentially inflexible and hierarchical when communication comes solely from the ‘top down’ (Burns, 2002, p. 12) as opposed to communication that prioritises discussion and flexibility. However, decentralising the chain of command to the extent of allowing the rider to dictate the curriculum can influence the skill base of the rider, which may also jeopardise the welfare of the horse.

Instructions are required for riders to not only learn the basics but for the correct application of more complex movements, for example the Half Pass. The way skills are taught is dependent on the curriculum of the teacher (Duncan-Andrade, 2010) who develops their own ‘strategies and solutions’ (Zeus and Skiffington, 2002, p. 5). These can come through training (the syllabus) or personal experience. How the knowledge is then transferred is dependent on interpretation, assumption and discourse (Wanless, 2008). The welfare of the horse is dependent on correct application of aids given to it from the rider, and therefore correct and explicit instruction from the teacher to the rider is an important aspect of the lesson.

Instruction is required if riders are to continue to develop at every level. There are certain aspects of riding that are not negotiable, for example sitting correctly on the horse, which is why it is an important factor in all the syllabi. Correct riding and teaching of riding is derived from inherited knowledge following tried and tested methods, therefore what has not worked has been discarded leaving behind that which does (de Kunffy 2002). Riding the horse by implementing correct practice is safe, and therefore many instructions are given to uphold the safety of both horse and rider. Initially the rider might be instructed to shorten their reins because they will lose control of the horse if they do not. In this situation there is a need for immediate action to be taken by the rider. As the rider progresses the instruction to shorten the reins may be given so that they are able to execute a movement more effectively, thus the immediate response will achieve better results. Therefore there are certain aspects in the riding lesson which are not negotiable, for example if the rider is in danger of losing control or if the intention is to facilitate precision learning.
Instructions should be given clearly and simply. Giving too much information at any one time is not helpful for learning (Resnick, 1989). Riders are able to acquire skills more readily when less, but correct, information is given (Knowles, 1999). Once the instruction is given successful learners will elaborate and further develop their skills whilst ‘weaker learners do not engage’ further and require repetition from which to learn (Resnick, 1989, p. 8). Repetition is the way in which riding skills are developed both for the rider and the horse’s training regime, which in both instances revolves around replication. Instruction, therefore will enhance the skills of both the more able rider and those who require more time to develop their skill base through continual practice and replication of new skills.

Although the concept of instructional learning implies a surface approach to learning, because it is reliant on reproducing rather than creating a deeper learning (Candy, 1991), there is still a place for it. As a result of receiving clear and timely instruction the rider can self-monitor and self-manage their learning through an autodidactic process (Candy, 1991), and may not always require a dialogue of open ended questions with the teacher. Instruction does not necessarily mean a lack of engagement and a control of information and knowledge (Cassidy, et al., 2009) if it is used in conjunction with coaching. Modern day equestrian teaching is through instruction, not given in a dictatorial manner but followed by discussion (de Kunffy, 2002) which offers direction for learning new or adapting skills. It can therefore be argued instruction is a necessary component of the lesson and that it is important to see the riding teacher as an instructor who is ‘an authority and in authority’ (Jones and Wallace, in Jones, 2006, p. 75).

**Coaching Elements in the Riding Lesson**

The explicit aim of coaching sports is to create better competitors at all levels. The issues with equestrianism is who is the competitor the rider or the horse? Tinning (2010) argues that often in sports the athlete considers their bodies as a machine. If the horse is the competitor then it is possible that it is the horse that is considered in this way, and if that is the case what is the role of the rider? For many

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86 The term coach will be used in this section as described by the syllabi.
people riding is not a natural skill. To acquire the necessary skills to ride the horse, instruction and teaching is required before coaching can take place. The information needed to acquire skills is transferred from a knowledgeable source (the teacher) to one requiring that knowledge (the pupil/rider). The coaching syllabi allow for instructions to be given whilst also offering a dialogue from the pupil; in other words it creates teaching opportunities through questions from the pupil for clarification. Thus, the knowledge transference is predominantly a one way process, to a certain level although the teacher must not regard themselves as the only knowledge base (Burns, 2002) and be open to learning from the feedback they get be it visual, from the horse, or spoken, from the rider.

Coaching is deemed to hold much promise however it has been found that there is a serious need to improve what it currently delivers (Bacon and Voss, 2012). In other sports coaching often requires the need to adapt to the clients’ needs - two minds come together through discourse, questions, clarification, listening and sharing; but what happens when there are three minds in the equation? In equestrian coaching three minds need consideration and although the coaching syllabi are ideally suited to the equestrian environment the horse’s input has also to be part of the teaching and learning of skills.

Teaching through the coaching syllabus encourages the rider and teacher to think and discuss their actions, thus impacting on the decisions they make in which to create deeper learning (Burns, 2002). For example following the direction given, the feedback the rider obtains from the horse can be discussed; this will influence the next course of action taken by teacher and rider. Therefore, the coaching concept also requires the coach or teacher to be the learner. Reflection on the new information, consideration and discussion with the pupils allows them to make an informed decision. The dual discourse means that coaching and or teaching is undertaken from a position of equality, thus changing the role from the one originating in the military settings.

The syllabi referred to throughout this dissertation are devised for coaches based upon riding and/or competitive prowess. Each level of teaching is aligned to a riding, and competing level. For example the Candidate Guide 2006 states:
‘The EFA recognise that coaches are not educated and developed through theoretical training but more so by doing and performing. The blending of these experiences is paramount for the coach to effectively service the need of the learners and to introduce them into equestrian sport pursuits’.

(www.equestrian.org.au)

The statement implies that the more successful the rider the better teacher they will be, and secondly it is indicating the close tie the coaching syllabus has to competition riding. To attain accreditation to teach, the candidate has to be riding at a given level. It is then assumed that the skills learned through riding will be transferrable so others can attain similar success through the coaching process. Burns (2002) argues that for meaningful learning to take place the learner needs to be personally involved in the learning. In equestrianism this is happening in the riding lesson. Riders and coaches are personally involved through the practice of riding the horse, therefore competition is an addition to that purposeful learning. The coach has to understand what the rider is experiencing to focus their coaching toward helping them improve, they are able to do this because they also ride and have experience competing.

The coach uses their knowledge and experience to interpret the syllabi and what the rider is experiencing or feeling following their directions and the horse’s response. Equestrianism is based upon feel, which is a personal experience, and therefore for skill levels to be improved the coach needs to know what the rider is feeling not what they think they should be feeling. This is achieved through the dialogue, which is based upon open ended questions and answers. For example questions asking how, why and what is happening with be asked with the emphasis on improvement of the skills already in place (Cassidy, Jones and Potrac, 2009). Although coaching is mostly undertaken on site, it can also be undertaken without the coach being present, for example on the phone or through modern technology, videos and books (Cassidy, Jones and Potrac, 2009), thus indicating that coaching is not the same as teaching or instructing, both of which have to give immediate
feedback. This suggests that coaching is better suited to riders with a higher skill level.

The coach facilitates learning by developing skills (Bransford, 2000) and ‘encourages self-awareness,’ (Lincoln, 2008, pp. 4-5), however this is achieved through instruction and teaching. For the equestrian, self-awareness can mean they are mindful of their riding position and its effect on the horse; they are aware of how they influence the horse through their actions, both intentional and unintentional; and they are becoming sufficiently skilled to practise their skills without the presence of the coach. This interpretation can be considered for all coaches irrespective of their accreditation level. The coach can also be considered as ‘eyes on the ground’ (Lincoln, 2008, pp. 4-5), at the higher level of riding. Personal experience of this situation means that I agree with Lincoln (2008) and also Coombs (1991) who argues that once the rider has reached high competition levels, then the coach can be of a lesser standard as a rider. Coombs’ (1991, p.195) perspective on the coach at the lower levels is more in line with the requirements of the coaching syllabi when he states that they ‘must be able to ride more capably than the pupils they instruct, because they must give convincing demonstration of the knowledge they impart’ (Coombs, 1991, p. 195). He clarifies his points by arguing that after a certain level of expertise the riding teacher can teach ‘by the way of coaching.’ This is implying that at the lower levels the rider is taught, at the higher they are coached.

De Kunffy argues the coaching model can create too much discussion in the lesson and that the rider’s goals can create a role reversal in which the rider takes control of the lesson format. This then makes the rider an ‘expert’ (de Kunffy, 2002, p. 24) without the knowledge. If the assumption is correct then it may mean the criteria for choosing a coach are not necessarily based on the coach’s expertise as a teacher, but on their ability to please the rider. This can mean the weekly, hour-long lesson creates teaching practices of ‘tolerance of equitation faults’ (de Kunffy, 2002, p. 24). If the assumption is correct then it means that the lessons are not improving skills, which is not intention of the syllabi. The rider controlling the lesson can also lead to the coach being persuaded to base the lesson around areas beyond the rider’s levels of competency, therefore it is the riders who are ‘often to blame for receiving inappropriate instruction’ (de Kunffy, 2002, pp. 24–25).
If the coach is creating a lesson, or allowing the lesson, to be competition focused, as required by the syllabi, then the riding lesson will be geared at improving competition riding (Lincoln, 2008). This means that riders may not wish to spend the time developing their own skills, for example correcting positional faults, but might prefer to focus on correcting the horse’s issues and may not see the association between the two. Thus the need for the coach’s curriculum, at all levels, to be inclusive of attaining skills for both rider and horse.

Further blurring of the terminology in equestrianism is seen with the term trainer. The EFA use the German texts (www.equestrian.org.au) as a specific manual for riding and coaching. Like many equestrian texts they are aimed at the rider; giving directions as to how to achieve certain skills. These texts used the word training to mean teaching, for example ‘[o]nce the rider is secure enough in the saddle when riding in the school, training the light seat … can be introduced’ (Belton, 2001). Training can be more broadly interpreted as an acquisition of skills and competencies at any level and discipline. Burns (2002, p. 95) argues that ‘study, training and education are almost pejorative terms for most people’. Although the trainer need not be horse focused, often he or she are. The term trainer is often considered in relation to the horse, for example it has long been associated with the horse racing environment, and training therefore can be described as horse specific. Coombs (1991) argues it was the extension of the riding master taking the instruction out of the school that led to the change in identity of the teacher, to become known as the trainer. This relates to the definition in the recommended coaching text for the EFA The Principles of Riding 87 (2001, p.13) in which it states ‘instructors are also known as trainers,’ a legacy of its early European tradition.

It has been argued that coaching is a better way to encourage learning to take place. However this intention is being undermined by the competitive aspect of the coaching paradigm. The majority of riders who have lessons on their own horse aim to improve their competition riding (Lincoln, 2008) and this can be problematic when considering that competition can be synonymous with achievements and

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87 Much of this text is derived from the nineteenth century text by a German cavalry officer Waldemar Seunig (Prockl, 2002), which has led to the description of trainer as an instructor.
triumphalism as described by Lyle (2005). The rider’s focus on competition influences what is taught, not how it is taught. For example, traditional thinking is that the rider’s position is paramount to the way the horse is going and as such any positional faults need to be improved (de Kunffy, 2003), whereas the modern rider may wish to forgo their own improvement in favour of the improvement of the horse for competition (Knowles, 1999).

The focus on competing can also lead to specialisation in a specific discipline and the loss of skills in other areas. In the past riders learnt their riding skills both on the flat and over fences resulting in many elite riders competing at Olympic levels in more than one discipline (Gianoli, 1969): evidence of the high skill base gained through this approach. Coaching in other sports is singular, for example a tennis coach coaches one sport, tennis. However, equestrianism is multifaceted; it has many disciplines in the same sport. The skills required for each discipline are complementary and should not be viewed as separate. The syllabus in Western Australia is creating a loss of skills through early specialisation. Specialising early in the coaching career is based upon the riding disciplines the coach competes in, thus the coaching pedagogy is being undermined by competition.

Pedagogy, by which I mean the ways that riding teachers practice as teachers, is formed by taking the directives of the syllabus and creating a personal curriculum from the information. How it is taught (the delivery), whether it be through instruction, coaching, teaching or training, is a personal choice often based upon the level of rider and what is happening in the riding lesson. Therefore, it can be argued the coach should use a balanced approach and not rely on one pedagogical style (Coffield, et al., 2004, in Cushion, 2005), as directed by the syllabi.
Having discussed how equestrianism has evolved I will now consider the practicalities of the syllabi by offering a generic riding lesson to indicate current practice. Using my personal experience as a riding instructor/coach and the lay literature, some of which is from the recommended readings of the syllabi, I will suggest the process of teaching riding and discuss the problems that may occur. The generic riding lesson will also outline how I later interpret the observation lessons.

Initially the rider’s goal is to stay on the horse and therefore the best method in which to introduce riding is to be taught on a lunge line (de Kunffy, 2003). The rider’s control of their body, centred over the horse’s centre of gravity is the ‘optimal pathway for communication and cooperation between the horse and rider’ (Apatow, 2000, p.1) and often this is begun by lunging the rider. The lunging method is chosen because it introduces the new riders to riding without them having to control the horse while at the same time trying to stay on its back. To teach riders at this stage it is mostly through instructions to attain skills, and is often undertaken by trainee teachers based in the riding school industry. They will use specific exercises for skill attainment, which they may have used whilst enhancing their own riding at the equestrian centre.

The rider, being put on the lunge, is to begin the process of acquiring an independent riding seat, and as they progress they are shown how to apply the aids. Aids are the rider’s signals or cues to the horse from their lower legs, hands and seat, which are used to communicate the rider’s wishes to the horse. Whilst on the lunge the rider is also strengthening their riding muscles and learning to coordinate hands and legs without disturbance to their position or balance. The teaching style mostly used at this stage will be instructional. Although a two-way communication between rider and teacher is essential, the low level of the rider’s skill base requires instruction as to how to gain further skills. For example, the instruction ‘shorten your reins’ is given when the teacher can see the rein length is changing the rider’s arm

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88 Spelling taken from the German text.
89 Refer to glossary.
position. The position is incorrect but also it affects the controlling of the horse. If the rider continues with their arms in the wrong position there is a risk to their safety as well as creating an incorrect feel as to where their arms should be.

Once the rider has developed sufficient skills ideally they should ride a horse that is a school-master or a well-trained horse (Belton, 2000); the requirement being that the horse knows more than the rider. The horse will continue to teach the rider, preferably under instruction by the teacher in a group setting. Group lessons allow the rider to gain a skill base without the pressure of a one-to-one class. They will watch others performing the activities they are asked to do, and by reflecting on what they see and experiencing what they feel from the horse they will gradually develop further. In addition, because of the social aspect of the class lesson some riders may experience a sense of competitiveness between themselves and their peers, whilst others will be encouraged to gain skills through peer persuasion. The teacher will reflect on the skill level of the group of riders and add new challenges in each lesson, thus achieving short and long-term goals for the riders.

Teaching at this stage will be a mixture of instruction and coaching. Instructions will be used to give discipline to the lesson, for example through the use of school movements. These are specific tasks to be performed at the given markers, for example a twenty metre circle at the letter B. Continued instructions will also help the rider maintain a correct position, whilst providing direction on the correct application of the aids needed at any given time. Therefore instruction will assist the learner to establish basic skills and begin to initiate further skill development as the rider progresses. Further instructions will be used if the rider’s safety is in question in order to get a quick response. The method of teaching using instructions continues at every riding level when teaching new skills. However, as the rider obtains more knowledge, a coaching style of teaching can follow. For example if the rider’s reins are deemed by the teacher to be long rather than giving an instruction to shorten them they may ask ‘do you feel that your reins could be shorter?’ more indicative of the coaching narrative. The change in the discourse allows the rider to consider the

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90 The walls or outer areas of the riding arena usually have letters around the perimeter to replicate a dressage arena. These markers can then be used for specific movements to give discipline to the exercises.
option with regard to what they are feeling in their own bodies and how this is affecting their communication with the horse. However, if the teacher sees the rider is losing control of the horse due to their reins being too long they will instruct them to shorten them and then discuss this once the situation has been averted. This is a continual process and not governed by the rider’s ability.

Often a rider can be conditioned into sitting in a certain position that is encumbering their development at a particular stage in their riding (Wanless, 2008) and as such requires both instruction and coaching styles to help them progress. All riders irrespective of their skill level require lessons to correct faults that occur during their riding (Prockl, 2005; Belton, 2000a). In tennis the way one holds the racquet, for example, will or will not have the desired effect when each time the ball is hit. However, with the horse its input is always present. One can ride a certain movement in a correct way and the response of the horse as a living thinking entity can change the dynamic of the response. Therefore, it is paramount the rider has a correct position and gives clear aids to the horse after being given clear instructions.

After a few years the rider may wish to begin to specialise in a given discipline at which time they go back to the private lessons to enhance their skills (de Kunffy, 2002). As such there are different expectations of a riding lesson to be considered, one of which is the goals of the rider both short and long term. The goals are set by the rider and discussions at each lesson are geared around how the teacher will address the short term goals and how these impact on the longer goals. The goals may change as the lessons progress, and the teacher needs to be flexible in their evaluations and approach, thus the role of the teacher changes as the lesson becomes more student focused.

The texts and riding syllabi state, prior to any riding lesson the riding teacher will have some idea in their mind as to the goals they hope to achieve in the period, they will have a prepared plan for the lesson. The coaching requirements in the syllabi state the goals should be attainable and if the lesson is continued from past lessons then the goals will be in line with previous and future goals. However, the teacher should also be flexible and have a willingness to change should they have to do so. This will require the teacher to have a good knowledge base gained from
experience and high skill levels (Belton, 2001) to draw from and make the necessary changes especially when having to accommodate a pupil who is new. They will have to make quick evaluations in order to plan, or adjust, the lesson plan dependent on the assessment.

Prior to the start of any lesson the teacher assesses the area for safety of the horse and rider, which may improve simply by closing the gate once the rider has entered or moving obstacles. Once pleasantries have been undertaken in which the teacher asks the rider about their progress to date, the rider undertakes the first part of the lesson the warming up or riding in. All lessons contain a warming up phase; Prockl (2005) argues ideally the first 10–15 minutes of the warm up and final minutes of the cool down could be achieved without the riding teacher. From an economic stance this is sound advice, however the initial period is valuable for the teacher to assess the horse and rider, and evaluate their plans for the lesson. These plans may change during the lesson due to the feedback from the rider and the horse, but it gives the teacher an initial starting point to work from.

The warm up period is an important aspect of the lesson for the rider as well as for the horse and teacher. The rider should use this time to become ‘flexible and loosen any tension and stiffness in the body’ (Prockl, 2005, p. 116) and should use their time to focus on themselves (Swift, 2001). They can achieve this during the first ten minutes in which the horse is walked (Prockl, 2005). Whilst the horse is walking round the rider should focus on loosening ‘the hip and shoulder joints, [and] arms and legs; check the upright posture of the spinal column and in particular your neck and the shoulders. Swing in the rhythm of the horse’s walk and start to harmonise your movements’ (Prockl, 2005 p. 116). The rider should also tune into the horse by determining which leg is on the ground through the use of the seat.

Exercises can be used both on the horse and off. For example mounted exercises can be those around loosening joints, for example riding without stirrups and circling the foot thus losing the ankle joint (Bucklin, 2004; Bayley and Davis, 1996). Riders often find these exercise fun as well as enhancing their position (Knox-

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91 Working in or warming up is when the horse and rider warm up their muscles by suppling and completing exercises to create obedience and flexibility in readiness for the lesson.
Thompson and Dickens, 1990). Exercises unmounted can also be used to stretch and strengthen muscles and open joints. For example lying on the floor and putting the soles of the feet together and sliding them towards the torso then allowing the knees to drop outwards, will stretch into the adductor muscles (von Dietze, 1994) However, after reaching a certain standard, riders are seldom asked to perform these, or other exercises, during the lesson or in between the riding lessons, although they continue to have benefit at every level of expertise (de Kunffy, 2003).

One of the issues that all teachers face is how to understand the student’s knowledge and skill base in order to plan the lesson. As stated previously this is often undertaken during the warm up where the teacher watches the rider and horse work in. The teacher often draws on inferences based on what they see. For example the rider’s age may belie their knowledge and ability; the horse’s input will affect how the rider uses their skills, and also preconceived ideas due to the reputation of the horse and or rider may be a factor. However, what the rider knows and what the teacher observes are not necessarily the same (Pellegrino and Chudowsky, 2001). This then becomes a problem resulting in misunderstanding by the rider through supposition of the teacher. Often during assessment the teacher supposes that because the rider understands one aspect, they will be able to progress, but in order to do so they have to have had the foundations skills needed to take them to this stage and this may not be correct.

There are certain basic skills that the rider is expected to know when they are riding at a certain level. For example a rider competing at novice eventing standards would be expected to know about riding on the correct diagonal pair of legs when the horse is trotting in the arena. Other basic skills for the rider would be: allowing the weight to go down to the heel to keep the heels down; keeping an imaginary line from the ear through the hip to the heel; keeping an imaginary line from the rider’s elbow to wrist/hand and down the straight rein to the horse’s mouth; looking straight ahead between the horse’s ears; and sitting in balance, for example if the horse is taken from under the rider they would land on their feet. Therefore during the warm up period the teacher is assessing the basics as well as how the horse is working. During this stage the teacher is able to use open ended questioning in order to ascertain a better understanding of the skill base of the horse and rider (Pellegrino
and Chudowsky, 2001). During the discussion the teacher can ascertain knowledge of the rider and the ability of the horse, in order to plan goals for the lesson. Explanations, and if needs be, a demonstration can be given in which the teacher or a pupil demonstrates what has been explained.

Once the working-in is complete the rider and teacher discuss the lesson plan. Christopher Bartle’s (2008) description of a riding lesson is one of teamwork. He believes the lesson is fundamentally geared to creating a good partnership between the rider and the horse. The partnership is made possible through teamwork between the horse, rider and the teacher. Bartle (2008) outlines the three areas of responsibility: the teacher, the rider and the horse. After the initial learning to ride stages it is the rider who has the main role in all the lessons; they make the decisions, they decide what their aim is for the class, whilst the lesson is in progress they decide (rightly or wrongly) what they want of the horse. It is then the horse’s responsibility to perform to the rider’s wishes (Bartle, 2008). The role of the teacher is to help the rider achieve their goals, which should be established at the outset of the lesson. This is accomplished through clear communication to the rider so they in turn can give unmistakable communication to the horse.

However, I cannot agree totally with Bartle’s concept of responsibility. Although the rider’s wishes should to be considered, their aims/goals need to be realistic and this aspect may require discussion and a compromise reached between the rider and the coach. Failure to do so can lead to skills being lost and the disempowerment of the coach whose skills are being sought. Also I do not believe the horse has any responsibility in the lesson. It is the responsibility of the rider, who is also the trainer of the horse, and of the teacher to make sure their training is sufficiently adequate so the horse will perform to the rider’s wishes. It cannot be considered they will be the horse’s wishes and the suggestion is anthropocentric. Expecting the horse to have a responsibility in performing activities that are not part of its natural behaviour is inappropriate (McGreevy and McLean, 2010). The horse

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92 Christopher Bartle was awarded an Hon. Fellowship with the BHS (2001), He is the German three day event coach and the highest placed British dressage rider at any Olympic games (L.A.1984).

93 The lesson that is rider focused as discussed by Bartle is for those teaching at a higher level of accreditation and in this way does not comply with a syllabus at the lower levels that ask for a written lesson plan.
will never have responsibility for people’s wishes, who are predominantly concerned with controlling the horse. The anthropomorphic aspect of equestrianism is one reason for creating an alternative approach to coaching this sport, which cannot be compared to developing skills using an inanimate object.

The teacher invites questions and a general discussion ensues around the short and long term goals. Based on this feedback the main aspect of the lesson can commence. Prockl (2005) advises that the main period of the lesson should be limited to no longer than half an hour, with intervals of relaxation, due to the physical and mental intensity required from the horse and rider. These rest periods can be used for discussion and clarification between teacher and pupil and should not be wasted. Clarification can also be given by the teacher by riding the horse to demonstrate the theoretical concepts and clarify his/her wishes, after which the rider is asked to practise while the instructions are still clear in their minds (Knox–Thompson and Dickens, 1990). Thus the working phase of the lesson should be flexible and take into consideration what has happened during the warm up, whilst considering the rider’s short and long term goals.

No lesson should finish abruptly but should have a period of cooling off in which the horse is relaxed through stretching down (Prockl, 2005). A cooling down period for the rider is also important (Rainer (1997) they may also want to stretch and loosen any stiffness from their limbs by taking their feet out of the stirrups and stretching their legs. However, this is the time in which teacher and pupil can reflect on the lesson and consider what worked and what did not and what has been achieved, with implications for long termed goals. They can discuss future plans and the teacher can suggest areas the rider can work on before the next lesson. Prockl (2005) argues the cool down could be achieved without the riding teacher and this is true. However, the final period is valuable for the teacher to assess the horse and rider and discuss what worked and what did not with the rider, and evaluate and plan for the next session.

Most riding lessons are hourly periods more for financial reasons rather than because it is the best duration for horse and rider (de Kunffy, 2003). McLean (2007) argues a horse’s physical and mental capacity is twenty minutes, and the rider’s may
be around the same time. Therefore it is important the lesson includes times of rest and reflection. If they are not factored into the lesson plan then horse and rider fatigue will impair progress. With the riding lesson being geared to the clock the teacher is obliged to fill the hour, which can result in over extension of both the horse’s and rider’s mental and physical abilities (Prockl, 2005). Periods of rest should also be used as a reward to the horse (McGreevy and McLean, 2010). Rest periods can be the time when questions and discussion between teacher and pupil can occur to establish and enhance knowledge. When the horse has worked well and there is still time on the clock this time can also be used to allow the horse to relax and discussions outside the lesson can take place, again to enhance knowledge.

Anything that is going to be taught in the lesson should previously have been either ridden or taught by the teacher so they are able to ascertain how it works for them before asking pupils to perform the instructions (Knowles, 1999). They can then use reflection to consider what has happened. During the lesson the teacher has to be ‘actively listening’ (Smith, 2001, in Lincoln, 2008, p. 21) to both the rider and the horse so they can give explanations clearly and precisely in a two way conversation between teacher and rider (Prockl, 2005; Knowles, 1999; Knox–Thompson and Dickens, 1990). Verbal engagement is an important facet of the lesson to avoid misunderstanding and therefore, the teacher needs to be aware of the words and phrases they use, the effect they have and to have the flexibility to change should it be required.

The syllabi are vague as to when and which style should be employed, for example ‘teach and coach the seat and aids to ride and train figures and movements’ as taken from the EFA syllabi level two unit 4.3. The objective of the syllabi is that those with lower levels of teaching accreditation will have students who are less experienced riders and therefore instructing and teaching will be the style used within the lessons. As the teacher progresses and they gain higher accreditation their pupils will be more experienced and therefore the coaching style will also be used. Thus the first teaching stages are instructor-driven to provide basic skills and safety, the following stages are then a mix of instruction, teaching and coaching.
In summary I believe that the lessons should:

- indicate improvement of both horse and rider at the end of the lesson
- indicate knowledge of the theories behind comments being made by the teacher
- involve the teacher in watching, listening and making concise comments
- indicate the flexibility of the teacher to make changes when necessary
- demonstrate that the teacher is approachable and willing to discuss and ask the rider
- be evidence of a multidisciplinary approach
- be on the side of the horse at all times.

**Supporting the Premise: Testing the Theory**

The focus in this chapter has been the mainstream syllabi. However I have earlier indicated other syllabi were being used to enhance knowledge and inform practice. Research into the mainstream syllabi and the alternative practices has led me to consider that aspects of the alternative systems that use scientific theories to support practice should be considered as part of the mainstream approach to teaching riding. For example behaviourism is a theory concerning how the horse learns, and it can also be used to understand how the rider learns. Therefore, I believe relevant theories need to be understood if effective equestrian teaching is to take place. The syllabi ask for teaching skills to be shown at assessment days but the trainee has to develop their own curriculum to perform the tasks being assessed. The trainee teachers learn from those who teach them and from their own experience as riders, however this scenario can be limiting (Kimsey-House et al., 2011). To impact on better performance there is a need for ‘optimizing potential’ (Kimsey-House et al., 2011, pp. x-xi) and this can be achieved if the teacher understands the underlying theories of how both horse and rider learn.

An example I can offer comes from my own experience as a rider and teacher in which I was able to use positive reinforcement for training the horse with a
student. The student’s horse would quickly spin round and run home, with or without the rider, when being taken out on her own. I decided firstly the mare should be ridden out with another horse for company and follow another’s lead (McGreevy and McLean, 2010) thus drawing on horse psychology (Budiansky, 1997) or separation anxiety (McGreevy and McLean, 2010, pp. 251-257). Placing my mare on the preferred turning side of the horse we rode down the track where the previous problems had occurred. After going a little distance successfully we would stop and allow the horses to eat grass, thus rewarding good behaviour or adopting positive reinforcement. We continued to work in this way – going so far, stopping and grazing, rewarding as we progressed along the ride. The process was successfully continued with my mare at the side, behind and at the front of the other mare until finally she was able to remain out on her own.

The second example used a similar technique to create favourable behaviour with a student’s horse that reared regularly when ridden. Again I chose to use the track94 rather than the arena to help with forward movement and to ride with the horse and student. The young horse would rear for no discernible reason at the front, side or behind my horse whilst walking along the ride. Unlike the first example where the mare displayed signs of running home following her social instinct of herd behaviour (McGreevy and McLean, 2010; Budiansky, 1997), this horse appeared to be reasonably independent. His rearing was due to his unwillingness to go forward and therefore for this horse the use of positive reinforcement was applied at designated places each time we rode out. If the horse reared we ignored the behaviour and continued the ride, when he progressed without rearing we would stop at given intervals and allow the horses to eat grass. By working in this way I hoped that he would focus on working to the set points where he would be rewarded.

In both instances the use of positive reinforcement with patience and consistency changed the behaviour of both horses.95 At no time were the horses punished (knowingly) for their poor behaviour, but rewarded for their good

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94 The area where I ride is surrounded by surfaced tracks for bush walking and cycling as well as horse riding.

95 In both instances the horse’s gear, backs, teeth and feeding and exercise regimes were checked as part of the process.
performances. By adopting these methods and employing the theory, what was bad and dangerous behaviour that could have progressed was averted.

Learning Styles

The focus has predominantly been on how the horse learns, however riders have also have different learning styles. To teach one needs to understand how learning occurs and this aspect is not considered in any depth in the syllabi. The plasticity of the brain means riders are able to change and develop new skills (Cottrell, 2008). The syllabi are requiring coaches to develop teaching/coaching skills in which to pass their equestrian knowledge to others. However the syllabi do not reflect teaching styles or learning intelligences of the rider. Wanless and Swift’s method of teaching through metaphor can help some learning styles but not all whilst the remaining syllabi rely on verbal instruction.

Riding lessons have the potential to develop both active and reflective learners dependent on how the teacher plans the lesson. The teacher needs to understand if the rider prefers to try things out and then discuss what has happened, or discuss how to implement their skills and then try things out (Felder and Soloman 2011). For the active learner information is retained better if they do something with it (Felder and Soloman, 2011). The reflective learner needs to have periods in the lesson in which to discuss what has happened and why and they learn through these periodical reviews (Felder and Soloman, 2011).

Accreditation for the BHS syllabus requires the potential instructors to give a group lesson. Studying in groups helps visual learners. Vygotsky (1978) argues that intelligence can be considered as a social phenomenon, and when learning is undertaken in a group lesson learning can be enhanced through visual and verbal connections. By watching others visual learners can make sense of what is being taught through verbal instruction (Felder and Soloman, 2010). Riders who have individual lessons may need a demonstration by the coach riding their horse to fully understand; similarly they may need visual cues or diagrams in the arena to help navigate dressage movements.
During the riding lesson different styles of what Gardner (2011) refers to as intelligences can be drawn used and developed. Gardner’s multiple intelligences (2011) of linguistic, logical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal make up the learning styles of the rider. Although these styles can be considered individual learning traits they can be combined as discussed above with regard to visual and linguistic aspects of the lesson (Felder and Soloman, 2010).

Wanless and Swift use metaphor to help riders draw on previous information to make sense of new information, which allows them to make connections from their experiences to the riding experience. They have created a syllabus that is reliant on the teacher creating links through verbal cues (Felder and Soloman, 2011). Sensing learners like connections between what they are learning and what they have learned previously, however many equestrian skills are attained through intuition and Wanless (2008) identifies that many riders have gained their skills intuitively. Her syllabus encourages intuitive learning to be discussed in which to create deeper learning and understanding.

The syllabi encourage continual development through their accreditation stages. Coaches holding the Australian qualification are expected to attend bi-yearly workshops. Interpersonal and intrapersonal skills can be developed through workshops and clinics (Gardner, 2011). Observing others in a different context to the one that the coach is familiar with can generate abstract thinking (Cottrell, 2008). Communication about things in the abstract requires an experience between the teacher and the pupil in other words finding something in common between the two. All coaches/teachers are riders and therefore the experiences being taught and learned are common to both.

There is a requirement of flexibility in teaching/coaching in which to develop learns that are both typical and uncharacteristic. The syllabi are limited in developing teaching/coaching styles due to the lack of educational theory. Lombardo (1999) argues that it is imperative that sport remains within educational systems. The university and colleges are offering equestrian subjects as part of their programmes. However, by following the BHS syllabus educational theories associated with
teaching are not included in the course. The syllabi focus on how to teach a rider to ride the horse with little regard as to how the rider will learn how to ride.

In Summary

There is a need for riding teachers to understand the theories behind their practice. Horses and some riders learn through the behaviourist approach (Burns, 2002). The Western Australian syllabi do consider the psychology of the rider but not the horse. The theories behind equestrianism should be understood and they are not (Warren-Smith and McGreevy, 2006). Lincoln (2008) discusses how the rider learns and therefore this aspect should be more focal in the British syllabus. The syllabi indicate that they evolve and change and this could be a change they embrace. The coaching method is also changing and will continue to evolve. This has occurred in the British system which over time has changed to a method of training now used in many areas (Kimsey-House et al., 2011). The coaching model needs to consider how these changes may help the equestrian environment. The requirements of the syllabi should optimise ‘potential for both individual achievement and for high-performing’ (Kimsey-House et al., 2011, pp. x-xi) of riders and teachers. It can be argued that a narrow approach does not fulfil these requirements, which has resulted in alternatives being proposed and used by the some of the participants in this research.
Chapter Five
The Interviews

The chapter will commence by introducing the participants who took part in the study and by explaining the coding system that will be used to identify them in the presentation of the findings. The participants’ voices will then be the focus, with a discussion regarding the Western Australian syllabus, which is a coaching syllabus and a model the British system is moving toward. This will be followed by discussion with the English participants to present their views on the changes that are underway and on the overall accreditation system on offer. I will then review what the participants thought the difference was between coaching and instructing and other key issues that arose from the open-ended questions. Finally, I will discuss the answers to the six key questions. The chapter will conclude with a content analysis to consider the patterns that have emerged from the interviews.

The Participants

The participants were forty-one riding teachers from the disciplines of show jumping, dressage and event/horse trials riding from both England and Western Australia. Participants were selected to provide variation across the equestrian disciplines and were initially selected from the first, second and third levels of accredited coaching categories for riding teachers used by equestrian training bodies in England and Western Australia. Several strategies were used to recruit participants for the study. Some participants were recruited from equestrian bodies’ website lists of accredited coaches/instructors and others from leaflets advertising riding lessons posted in feed merchants. In addition to the accredited teachers, elite riders who teach riding (irrespective of their qualifications status) were included in the study because they are considered by the equestrian bodies to be experts in the given field as described by Sarantakos (1998). Several additional participants were included, some of whom had mainstream accreditation and taught from another syllabus, and

96 Elite in this instance are riders who have ridden competitively at international events and who are now equestrian coaches.
others who taught without accreditation through the main training systems. The latter were deemed relevant to the enquiry for the perspectives they could bring. Participants were selected from Western Australia and England to create a cross-country comparison. Each participant was contacted personally either face to face, by email or by phone, requesting their agreement to be part of the study.

New participants were sought until data saturation was reached, i.e. when no new data was being uncovered. In total forty-one participants, of both genders and ranging in age from 20-80 and from England and Western Australia, were the participants on the study. Of the total number of participants, 19 were also teachers of other participants, and this aspect allowed me to evaluate continuity of practice by considering both the teachers and their teachers. All the level two participants in Western Australia and level three participants in England were also assessors for the main training bodies. This deepened the analysis of the syllabi by considering differing perspectives. Obtaining data from the many perspectives is an important aspect when considering the effectiveness of the syllabi in practice, and in relation to personal curriculum and pedagogy, which will be discussed below.

**Coaching Categories**

The participants’ coaching categories were determined in accordance with their country’s accreditation levels, and the equivalent accreditation level between the two countries was established by referring to the International Group of Equestrian Qualifications (www.bhs.org.uk). Many of the participants augmented their initial qualification with other qualifications, whilst others used strategies from other syllabi to supplement their teaching. This led to a blurring of categories, which will be discussed below. Elite riders, who may or and may not have had teaching qualifications but were teaching based on their experience, were also participants in the study.

The participants were categorised for identification as follows:

- The first number in the code is the level of accreditation, i.e. 1, 2, 3.
- The second number in the code is the participant’s identification number.
Participants with alternative practice will have A after their accreditation number and identification number. For example 1:3:A. This indicates first level accreditation, number three participant, and following an alternative syllabus.

Elite participants may have a formal qualification below their riding skill level and they will be identified with E, for example E:12:1. This indicates an elite rider, number twelve participant with a first level accreditation.

Participants who have accreditation in both syllabi, the British and the Australian, are identified with the accreditation from the placed of practice as the first number, for example 2:6:1. This indicates that the participant holds a second accreditation level, they are number six participant with a first level accreditation from England.

Two participants were not qualified and therefore the prefix NQ is used before the participation number.

The participants were observed teaching a variety of riders with a range of ages from young to mature adults. All the riders were above the basic level of competency. The horses ranged from young novice horses to mature educated mounts, therefore a wide range of riding abilities was observed.

The remainder of the chapter will report the participants’ responses to the questions. Their views on the main training body’s syllabus and system in place in which to gain accreditation will also be discussed.

The Western Australian System

Rigidity within the Western Australian systems seems to be problematic for the trainees but not necessarily for those assessing them. Five participants used an

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97 The elite status prior to their teaching has been used since the qualification _per se_ is irrelevant to their teaching and riding level.

98 The code uses numbers for the levels of accreditation in the mainstream syllabi only. Therefore two accreditation numbers indicate accreditation in both England and Western Australia.
alternative practice because they considered there were gaps in the syllabus with regard to rider position. Others did not agree with the Germanic theory that underpins the syllabus and therefore another theory underpinned their teaching practice. Rigidity was deemed to be in place when they were not allowed to use these alternative styles in their assessments. The participants said the assessors ‘go by the book and show little flexibility toward people who offer different ways of learning and different ways of communicating what works’ (1:2:A). The lack of flexibility was justified by the assessors as ‘having to have a standard’ (2:7) by those assessing. Once that standard was reached and the trainees graduate, it was accepted they would ‘naturally go [their own] way’ (2:7).

Further issues, problematic with the Western Australian system (and with the coaching syllabus in England), include the requirement to compile the portfolios, which ‘don’t really fit into most people’s equestrian lives’ (E:12:1). ‘Who’s got time to sit down and do four lesson plans?’ (1:2:A). The idea of plans was not considered effective because teaching is undertaken ‘in the moment’ (1:1:A). All the teachers stated that in effect they ‘watch and see what the rider needs to work on and you know what to do as the lesson progresses’. Although they agreed with the concept that it was ‘supposed to improve the way people teach’ (1:1:A), the time taken to implement the paper work within a busy work schedule and the effectiveness of pre-planning in a practical setting was an issue. The process may be appropriate for inexperienced trainees to gain experience of time management and implementing teaching skills, but for the higher accreditation levels consisting of trainees who are already teaching it was suggested that a verbal plan should suffice and then be observed to be taking place in practice. I discussed this further with participants from both areas and I was told ‘the teacher should be able to assess riders and horses’ (3:31) and implement change when required within the lesson.

The syllabus in Western Australia was considered to be an overly theoretical syllabus which is ideal for those who ‘have good scholastic skills, they seem to travel along very well and people that don’t tend to avoid the next step’ (E:12:1). Dependency on scholastic abilities is then seen as limiting skilful practitioners from progressing through the levels and having a sound career pathway because of a lack of educational skills or the time to fulfil the requirements. Those already within the
industry relying on the income from riding teaching ‘can’t give up the weekend’s income to attend courses and workshops’ (1:1:A).

Conversely it was argued by an assessor in the Western Australian system ‘the work required and the time it takes to get the high level required to pass is very much like a university degree, and that takes time and effort to get. This is no different, so when you have got the qualification it is something worth having. If you want something you have to be committed’ (2:6:1). The viewpoint is suggesting equestrianism is more scholastic than skill based. However, the scholastic requirements for accreditation are paper work, for example the lesson plans and log books, not theoretical understanding. Research undertaken into the understanding of equestrian theory, that underpins the training of the horse (and therefore the teaching of the rider), was not understood by qualified equestrian coaches in Australia.

Illustration of this lack of understanding was demonstrated in an audit undertaken by Drs Warren-Smith and McGreevy in 2006. They distributed a 20-page survey to all coaches registered with the National Coaches Accreditation Scheme in Australia to understand how equestrian theory was understood. Out of the 206 respondents, only 2.8 per cent correctly explained theory in response to positive reinforcement; 11.9 per cent correctly explained theory of negative reinforcement and 5.4 per cent correctly explained theory regarding punishment (Warren-Smith and McGreevy, 2006). It is worth noting that when interpreting the findings of the survey that the terms investigated were not likely to have been incorporated in the syllabus based on the German training system. The terminology is specific to associative learning theory and therefore the lack of comprehension of those particular terms is not surprising.

The data from the interviews suggest that while there is not the commitment to the accreditation on the part of participants in this study, there is commitment to the equestrian industry. All the participants were totally committed to the horse and the work that is involved with equestrianism. Some moved into teaching riding because - ‘I enjoy teaching. I really do like teaching. I like imparting knowledge’ (1:4), but the underlying motive is the love of the horse.
The British Systems

One aspect which was recurring (in England) was the change to the British system of accreditation taking it toward a coaching model. Discussing this with the participants allowed me to view the change through the eyes of those affected by the process. The British Horse Society’s (BHS) existing qualification of instructor is being encompassed into the coaching model through the United Kingdom Coaching Certificate (UKCC) accreditation and the British Equestrian Federation (BEF)’s elite coaching group. Although a work in progress at the time of writing there was no effective accreditation syllabus and the interviewees who were on the BEF’s list of coaches were those who had competed or still are competing at a high level of expertise rather than attaining qualifications. These coaches are assessed purely on their riding and not teaching ability, thus the concept that a good rider is by definition a good coach is apparent in this coaching model. Conversely the UKCC system is designed to enable sports coaching to be recognised by the tertiary education system.

Holders of the BHS qualification are asked to augment the old qualification with the coaching accreditation. It can be considered this is a furthering of knowledge. However the participants considered it as something you ‘just bolt onto your qualification’ (3:30). So for instance ‘I have a BHSI and I will have UKCC level three, which basically is just the coaching accreditation’ (3:30). Participants consider this requirement ‘really frustrating because you can already have a British Eventing accreditation, British Dressage accreditation, British Show Jumping accreditation so why do you need to do that [the UKCC] as well?’ (3:30). It is seen as a generic coaching qualification that bolts onto your other’ where the ‘other’ is deemed adequate. It is as if ‘they looked at the syllabus and decided that it didn’t have enough – the old syllabus – didn’t have enough psychology in it and coaching riders and looking after riders’ nutrition and all that sort of thing, and goal setting and reflection’ (3:31). ‘So you go and you sit through the course, which is actually quite interesting’ (3:28), ‘but it’s kind of things that you’ve picked up along the way really’ (3:31). Despite the negativity toward the UKCC coaching qualification I was told, by an assessor within the BHS system, the coaching syllabus being introduced.
'has helped the teaching. Has definitely improved [the teaching] since the coaching model came in, no two ways about it’ (3:28).

The added qualification is not held in high regard by the participants who had been accredited in the previous system, possibly because of the low skill level of those holding the qualification without having undergone the former accreditation system. For example, I was told how at one assessment day a rider in the demonstration lesson had serious positional faults, which were not addressed. The interviewee was quite concerned about this and posed the question at the end of the demonstration ‘at what level would this rider fail the accreditation with this positional fault?’ and was told ‘it should be addressed at the first level and certainly by the second’ (E:27:3). The rider/teacher in question had a level three accreditation and was working toward level four. Perceived diminution of riding skills may be why the accreditation is failing to gain support amongst those who already have good equestrian skills. However the new qualification may deter higher accreditation within the BHS system. When I asked a participant if they considered working toward the next level the response was they had not. I was given reasons and then told ‘besides they all do these coaching certs now the UKCC’s’ (2:25), which suggests there could be a conflict when considering which direction, if any, an equestrian career may take.

In England there is flexibility as to which style of teaching or which theory is used to teach horse riding. The BHS, unlike the Western Australian system, is not reliant on any one method, although it was referred to as the ‘BHS way’ (A:40; A:36). As discussed previously the syllabus is going through change and the participants discussed how their accredited syllabus was changing toward the coaching model. Participants who were adding the UKCC accreditation to their existing BHS qualification had to attend clinics in which they took part in a ‘coaching scenario where you coach somebody, which is actually quite tricky’ (3:30). The trickiness was due to the language of coaching which asks for open ended questions ‘when if you just told them how to do something it would be so much easier for them [the riders]’ (3:31). However, ‘you’re not allowed to teach them at all you’re only allowed to coach them, you can’t actually tell them how to do something you’ve got to try and encourage them to tell you how they’re going to do
something and then hope it works’ (3:30). It can be deemed this participant considered coaching to mean the questioning approach used in the lessons; asking open questions not telling or giving instruction. Thus the difference between how they teach and how they would coach is in the form of language not necessarily the vocabulary they would use.

**The University and Colleges Systems in England**

Equestrian colleges were originally agricultural or horticultural colleges that later, during the 1980s, added equestrian courses to their programmes. Some, for example Bishop Burton in Yorkshire, are also BHS approved riding schools and examination centres which train riding and teaching. They are also open to the public for riding lessons (www.bishopburton.ac.uk). Colleges were also being amalgamated into the university systems in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and therefore they can now offer degree courses. For example Warwickshire College is aligned to Coventry University, which enables Warwick to offer courses in equestrianism. Warwick offers Equitation Coaching Sports Science in which there are teaching modules in Equine and Human Sports Science. Although the prospectus states that these modules are for those who have ‘a strong interest in sports science; particularly in horse and rider performance,’ the riding and teaching module for this degree is an elective (www.warwickshire.ac.uk). Universities and colleges that do not have suitable facilities use local riding schools to support the practical side of the syllabus. The qualifications received are National Diplomas or undergraduate degrees with the riding and teaching units based upon the BHS syllabus and assessed by BHS assessors.

Eleven of the participants were assessors, and some of their assessments were undertaken at establishments such as those discussed above.99 They all agreed the colleges have not yet ‘got the system right’. In their opinion it is only the ‘students

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99 These participants undertake compulsory workshops every two years to remain official evaluators and so their information was current.
who go into the colleges as good riders who will come out well’ (E:35:3)\(^\text{100}\). The reason stated was the lack of practical experience the trainees have. Equestrianism is a practical skill and ‘not theory’ (1:39) there is ‘only so much that can be learned in the classroom’ (3:28). Lack of practical experience was considered problematic. I was told about a group of students at a college who had started their course in ‘October/November ...it was their first week in the stable yard in February ...you get one week in the stable yard ...one or two riding lessons a week then note taking. Well how can you claim to be an equine science person even if you do pass?’ (E:35:3) Those people who are teaching are ‘the products of the environment’ (3:28) and may not necessarily be aware of the practicalities involved or required by industry or else they have to comply. A participant discussed how when they started teaching at college ‘I would teach up to 21 hours ... and have a lot of yard duties, then it got cut to 12 which meant I had to do in 12 hours what I did in 21’ (1:39).

When assessing the trainees’ teaching it was apparent to the assessors interviewed that the students ‘had learned the lesson plan but could not assess the pupils they were teaching’ (3:31), thus the theory of teaching was not working in practice. The assessors argued ‘although they would always come down on the student’s side’ (3:28) they would all ‘try different approaches to elicit correct information from them’ (3:31), not wishing to fail them. The concept of not failing students raised concerns with participants stating that the system was too lenient, and assessors no longer had the capacity to fail candidates. ‘I just worry sometimes a little bit about keeping the standard or lowering it so that nobody can fail - they’ve all got to be given a chance’ (E:11). If they appeared too harsh they would not be considered, ‘they simply get somebody else next time’ (3:31). The lowering of standards was a lament by the participants from both countries and at every level. ‘Like any education system you only have to meet the minimum requirement’s (2:7). When I suggested the standard may be too high (in Western Australia) I was told ‘there’s such a big standard yes but hopefully one meets the minimum requirements, because that’s all we can guarantee is the minimum requirements. If however, the majority are passing at this minimum, scraping a pass ....’ (2:7). It was suggested

\(^{100}\) The participants in the research who were college trained had previous riding experience and as such did gain accreditation and discussed their training as a positive experience. All were teaching riding.
that standards at universities are being lowered ‘for those unable to reach that minimum’ (39:1) because the trainees do not have personal experience of the industry having ‘never worked in it’ (E:27:3).

One area of concern was that standards are lower in colleges and universities compared with the BHS system, which is a national standard. The universities set their own levels for accreditation. It was suggested that a student is able to obtain ‘the final degree but only having ridden/taught to level 2 NVQ standard’ (1:39). The BHS assessor can only assess the standard they are being asked to assess not the final accreditation. Therefore, a candidate can obtain a degree with a minimum teaching and riding standard and then go into industry with the degree, which may be considered of a higher standing than it actually is. ‘People think, ‘gosh’ she’s got a degree’ and they don’t realise she can’t put a headcollar on’ (3:31). It was considered the systems in the colleges and universities no longer stood up to ‘independent rigour, because they are becoming overly driven by retention’ (1:39) and this does not necessarily produce the best students.

Lower standards, as described by the participants, could be attributed to the Health and Safety rules, which in the horse industry can be problematic. For example, the hours the students are allowed to work at college are not conducive to taking care of horses that can require twenty-four hour vigilance. Participants stated the students were unaware of the long and often unsociable hours they would be expected to work when employed. Often students ‘didn’t turn up because they had forgotten that they worked on weekends’ (1:39) or students complained at ‘having to go to another show’ (3:31) when working in a competition yard. One participant, who employed college graduates, argued they were unable to ‘muck out the boxes before breakfast’ (E:27:3); another stated they ‘were unable to organise bringing in the horses from the field in a safe manner’ (3:31). Students coming from the universities and colleges are viewed as having ‘lots of certificates that no one

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101 The system was described to me further. The BHS level for degree status is the BHSI, the third level. Note the first level of the BHS system the BHSAI is the National Vocational Qualification level 3, therefore level two NVQ is well below the requirement for degree status in the BHS system, yet it is being offered as a high enough standard to complete the equestrian degree.

102 Usually in all working yards the horses are inspected regularly every day, with the last inspection prior to going to bed.
knows what they are for’ (3:31) ‘and lots of bits of paper that are worthless to industry’ (1:39).

There are not many colleges in England that offer public riding lessons. The discussion surrounding low level of practical skills relates to a misunderstanding on the part of the participants of what higher education qualifications are based on. Although the BHS syllabus is offered as an accompanying accreditation generally it is academic skills that are assessed at the colleges. It is a possible failure of communication between the colleges and the BHS assessors that has resulted in the negative perceptions. However, the comments are valid and a possible revision of the higher education courses to include more practical skills would provide a more comprehensive syllabus underpinned by a wider theoretical coverage.

**Coaching and Instructing**

I did not ask every participant whether they would describe themselves as a coach or instructor, however some participants spoke unprompted about what coaching meant to them. I was told ‘I think coaching asks awareness questions, I think coaching really has to come more from the rider than the coach’ (A:41). ‘When I am coaching, the rider usually knows the aids and the directions and has a medium level of experience. We are usually improving the paces and the movements. When I am teaching I am giving much more direction and a lot more how to e.g. the aids for turning, canter etc. and teaching the aids for the movements’ (2:8). Coaching was not always considered to be the same thing as teaching. ‘You can’t actually tell them how to do something, you’ve got to try and encourage them to tell you how they’re going to do something and then hope it works’ (3:30).

I asked the participants what they called themselves: coach, teacher or instructor: and what the name meant with regard to their teaching practice. No one called themselves instructors, however they would refer to others as such. For example ‘they can go to the instructor down the road’ (E:19:1). ‘One of the instructors suggested … ’ (E:22:1). I’m called a coach; if you coach you teach a skill
what do instructors do?’ (2:8) It was explained to me that the one-way discourse was ‘like drill. One international coach I went to just said again and again and again, more this more that, no why or how. That’s how we were [but] I want to know the why behind it’ (2:8).

To teach, and teaching were the terms the participants referred to the most in both areas, at all levels, with the words teach and coach being used interchangeably. ‘If you want to be a coach you have to be able to talk about it properly and be able to teach it correctly’ (2:6:1) and ‘so you were coaching them how to teach it’ (E:11:1). The word teacher was used the most by the participants. ‘I teach people, I teach this girl …’ (2:25). In England the term coach was only used if I had used the word in the question. ‘Once you get to BHSI level or Intermediate level if you’re good at what you do, if you’re good as a coach then you’ll be able to teach whatever’ (3:30). In Western Australia the term coach was used throughout by the participants. When I asked about this I was told ‘lower levels teach, higher levels coach’ (1:21).

Although the term trainer is often considered with regard to the horse some participants also discussed the training of people. ‘People I train I train well, the people I train are going to get it and they are going to teach it well’ (A:29:3). Combined with teacher and coach the term trainer was also part of the dialogue, for example when I asked, how would you describe yourself? One participant explained at length, ‘I wouldn’t term myself a coach I’m not a fan of the term coach. I’m a trainer because I do teach the rider, help people achieve new skills and put the polish on skills and improve their abilities. To me that’s the teaching. And yes I use questioning and yes I think it’s a very important psychological relationship between the two of you etc. The trust, the confidence, being aware of their feelings, opinions and it’s all in one big round thing. But for me the name the term coach sadly means to me all this question/answer; we don’t teach we jolly them along and only look at the positives. I’m sorry they’ve come to me and paid money so that I can help them with what isn’t as good as it should be to identify it and help them – sometimes they’re not quite sure what isn’t quite right and why they’re not getting this mark in the dressage test and I help them identify it and because I’m a teacher I help them improve their skills. You can question till the blooming cows come home but if they haven’t got the basic skills and knowledge and the vocabulary to tell you, how on
earth are they going to get better? For example, ‘ride shoulder in’. If they’ve never seen shoulder in, never felt shoulder in, ridden shoulder in and you say, ‘Go and ride shoulder in. How did it feel’? What a stupid question’ (3:30). When I asked a participant about their future in equestrianism I was told ‘teaching is going to be my main thing or certainly helping coaching, maybe coaching, maybe I’ll go down that route and be an accredited trainer’ (A:36). When I asked an elite participant what their description was of themselves I was told that it ‘depends on which language. A trainer in Germany, in the English speaking world it is a coach, in Italian [it] says instructor. But it doesn’t make any difference. All the same, all the same’ (E:15).

The main thing is ‘we’ve got to make them thirsty for knowledge about the horse and the reasons why. How. What at the end of it’ (3:28) and this can be achieved through a combination of instruction, coaching teaching and training as the syllabi suggest.

Other Issues Arising from the Syllabi

Both the Australian and British training syllabi have areas that are problematic for the participants, which for some led to seeking knowledge through an alternative syllabus. The alternative syllabi were all regarded highly and the seven participants who were involved with them found them most satisfactory. Those who found fault with the riding aspect of the main accreditation system considered their alternative syllabus to be sufficient for them to address the faults and continue to teach in the style of accreditation. Those teaching the McLean method did require some form of teaching knowledge to be in place in order to adapt their teaching to his theories. The issues raised negatively were that the systems were at times ‘overly scientific’ (A:41) the texts and language could be ‘be hard to understand’ (2:10:A). A further problem was how ‘they are continually developing and changing’ (A:41) making it hard to keep up with new ideas.

The alternative approach was not always considered favourably by those who did not follow these syllabi because the style of teaching can lead to ‘the progress
they [the teachers] make with their riders is sooo slow because they take sooo long doing all the exercise that lead to improving it, relaxation, the focusing etcetera, but it doesn’t seem to get the rider any further forward (E:35:3). Conversely, a participant practising the alternative style considers a slow approach a good thing when discussing the nervous rider. Once ‘you have an understanding of what they [the rider] are or aren’t capable of, then you would take them so slowly that you would get them to have no stirrups – it might take you six months but eventually they would have no stirrups’ (1:2:A).

Although the teachers had ridden for many years and the syllabi are encouraging the teachers to be life-long learners, the data suggests career enhancement through higher accreditation was not a consideration for the majority of participants. Those who had a career teaching equestrianism were doing so without any thought of attaining higher accreditation, with only five participants in the process of gaining higher accreditation during the data collection period. In both areas participants stated the written syllabus they had trained under was not used once they had gained the accreditation and as such it was a ‘learned process for the exam’ (2:26). Others argued the accreditation would not gain them more clients, and the things they had to learn were not of value. For example, a participant discussed attending a (higher) accreditation workshop where they were discussing drugs, ‘and I thought, do we need to know this? And so I said, ‘Are we going to administer these drugs?’ and they said no. Well I’ll ask my vet what it does. You don’t need to know every drug on the planet if you’re not going to be able to give it them. Speak to the person who specialises in it’ (2:25).

It can be argued these issues are possibly the reason for a disproportionate number of level one coaches in Australia compared to the other two levels, and a minimal desire to move upward (www.equestrian.org.au). Participants who did want to move higher in the system stated it was because gaining a higher level of assessment enabled them to become assessors themselves and then they were able to ‘assess their own students rather than them having go and pay elsewhere’ (2:9). This style of assessing can be seen as being in line with an apprenticeship model with ongoing assessment process. This participant argued that when coaches were also assessors they ‘are better placed to assess their own students because they knew their
skills in relation to the syllabus. I did it because I have clients who were level 1 material and it cost them an absolute fortune to get things signed off, things that I could sign off’. The candidate can choose the assessor however having to obtain ‘four signatures for a complete booklet’ should alleviate any bias in the system.

Not gaining higher accreditation did not mean the participants did not continue in their equestrian education. All the participants received riding lessons and this created transference of knowledge in their teaching practice. What was learned and practised in the lesson, could be later used in their teaching, and it was stated the most effective learning process was through ‘watching others’ (2:25) ‘either at workshops’ (2:24) ‘or better riders’ (A:41). The participants I spoke with in both England and Western Australia agreed workshops were a good learning model. Western Australian participants stated often they had to organise their own.

Whatever the syllabus, there will be problems for some, and it can be argued that any education is of value and certain skills will have been gained from the courses. With the coaching model being adopted aspects that previously have not been considered specific to equestrianism, for example human psychology and human nutrition, are now part of the syllabus. I asked the relevance of offering these topics and I was told that ‘a little knowledge is better than none, especially for teachers who live in the country miles away from other help’ (2:7). Both the British and Australian syllabi are undergoing continual change and topics more related to other sports are being introduced. Leslie Law discusses in the text Shear Gold (2005) that elite riders are given talks on the dietary needs of a sportsperson. However riders often ride many horses at competitions, which means they are riding all day, and therefore this dietary information is of little use to them. If the rider is going cross country for example, they will not eat prior to riding so the dietary needs of riders cannot be compared to other athletes who probably only compete once a day, riders are often competing all day.

Both the British and Australian syllabi are undergoing continual change and part of this change is encompassing topics into the syllabi that were not previously

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103 This correlates with research data from the EFA that showed that the most effective learning process were the workshops.
offered. These subjects help bring equestrianism into the broader coaching style, and in England this is taking teaching riding away from tried and tested methods. However, I was told that the accreditation was not as highly regarded as previously and employers ask ‘where have you competed or who have you worked for?’ (E:35) as a preference to what the accreditation do you hold? Perhaps this is an indication that change may be required.

**Interviews: Addressing the Key Question**

*The first question*

To begin with I asked the participants to tell me about their backgrounds as riders and talk about where their career had taken them. The first part of the question was deemed important to relax the participant and start the discourse; however it also indicated how long the teachers had been involved in equestrianism thus indirectly considering life-long learning, an aspect of the syllabi. ‘I began riding as a child at the local riding school (2:26), where I would work all weekend for a ride’ (2:8), were typical starting points for the participants. Thirty-nine of the forty-one participants rode as children, thus for these participants equestrianism has been a life-time involvement. The two remaining participants learnt as adults, and continue to do so.

Participants in England had the opportunity to begin their riding career at a riding school. Eleven, like me, ‘began riding as a child at the local riding school’ (2:26), often staying for the chance of a ride on a pony perhaps to or from the fields. The Western Australian participants differed in this. Of those who had been children in Western Australia, three learned to ride at a riding school, while the others ‘had a pony and learnt to ride through the Pony Club system’ (NQ:16). The experience with riding at the Pony Club was not confined to Western Australia. English participants told me they also were active Pony Club riders. ‘We bought our first horse; it had to be a horse unfortunately because my mum wanted to ride it as well. I was only 11 years old at Pony Club on a huge horse, not the best way but it was great fun. And I competed a lot, all the way through. I competed everything, showing, cross country,
you name it I had a go at absolutely everything’ (2:21). ‘I was doing Pony Club stuff and all other activities through the Pony Club on various ponies that we had. Very successfully, I mean we did all the dressage, show jumping, horse trials in the teams regularly’ (E:27:3). Twelve participants rode at Pony Club and went onto teach within the system.

The accreditation system

The second part of the question indicates the extent to which the accreditation system is considered as a progressive career move. How the participants began their teaching careers varied: for the eight volunteer riding school helpers it was a natural progression to gain teaching qualifications and teach professionally; for the nineteen competition riders it is a way in which to supplement their competitions; and for the fifteen people who enjoyed working with horses teaching riding is a way in which they can do this. For some, teaching riding is often a part time occupation that ‘fits in with family’ (1:2:A) and is not considered a career path, whilst others made a conscious career decision to become riding teachers.

Of those in England, five had reached the higher level of accreditation. ‘I did my AI as a working pupil and then stayed there as an instructor ... basically I stayed there ... it was a very career oriented environment so I did my other qualifications’ to the third level of the accreditation system (3:30). Conversely others stated that ‘my accreditation got me started but then my competition record took over’ (1:19). Accreditation was considered important by some, one of whom stated ‘I always think that people should get qualified if you like to always think it’s something you can fall back on. You can always do riding school or equestrian centre but from teaching the sort of people I teach now probably not, and I think nowadays people are going – they don’t need to be qualified or don’t seem to be qualified to teach at all. I know [an elite rider] is but the likes of [the elite rider] would get lessons [clients] regardless whether he was qualified or not, because of what he does’ (2:25).

Sometimes the answer to this part of the question considered career not in terms of accreditation but as careers in riding that followed from Pony Club.

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104 Some of the participants fall into more than one category, for example volunteer riding school helpers also compete and teaching supplements their competition.
competitions. Two participants gained their accreditation through the College system. ‘Whilst I was there I didn’t enjoy the teaching part of it... it was half business and half horse management. And then they just worked you to your BHS qualifications sort of alongside that. And the teaching was not the area that I enjoyed doing. ... I was still competing a lot then and that was the main thing’ (1:20).

In Western Australia the teaching career path, through accreditation, is restrictive. Even though the participants would have taken higher teaching accreditations they were limited because ‘you have to jump at three star level, I'm not going to do that’ (2:6:1). Four participants felt they had reached the highest level of teaching because they could not or did not wish to ride and compete at the level required for the third level qualification. Conversely three of those interviewed who had ridden and competed at the highest levels had restricted themselves to a lower level accreditation because they considered that ‘it’s just not worth it. It’s time consuming and it’s I think unnecessary...I realise there are some parts that coaches have to do, but regards to the paper work .... took the first and that’s sufficient’ (E:12). So what made them teach riding? – ‘I like it! You have got to love imparting knowledge, you’ve got to love the horses’ (2:8).

Although not all the participants had begun riding at riding schools in England105 46 per cent of the participants had ridden at riding schools at some time in their career, and this introduction to equestrianism impacted on their teaching profession. Participants would have a weekly lesson and help with the lead rein classes leading the riders round, which led to their decision to become a riding teacher. Thus many of the interviewees started their teaching careers progressing from the one-on-one lead rein riders to teaching the low level children’s classes. These interviewees stated no one taught them how to teach, they ‘picked it up as they went along’ (2:26) or were ‘doing what he (their teacher) does’ (NQ:38), thus teaching was learnt by imitation. Following accreditation many returned to the riding school environment to continue to learn their trade of teaching equestrianism. Thus riding schools were an environment in which they would formulate their career path. The riding schools would develop a strong foundation and good basic skills in riding

105 These two percentages, riding schools and pony clubs, did not include the two elite teachers who were European.
and general horse management. Peer learning and mentoring were an adjunct to the formal lessons for those who immersed themselves in the environment.

The Pony Club also impacted on early riding and early teaching because ‘children are a good starting point because they don’t know if you are right or wrong and will not question. So if you do go wrong then you can put it right without the error being noticed’ (3:31). Twenty-seven of the participants currently teach or have taught at Pony Clubs in England and Western Australia ‘to give something back to the sport’ (1:4)

**Experiences of being taught to ride**

I asked the participants what were their experiences of being taught to ride. ‘He [or she] used to shout at us typical sergeant major’ (2:9) ‘yes I remember being shouted at’ (E:11:1). Although this style of teaching can be considered a military concept, and one more typical of past practices, the data suggests participants of all ages, and both genders, had experienced being shouted at, as part of the learning to ride process. Those who had experienced this teaching style were more easily able to understand how they did not want to teach based on their bad experiences. Even when they ‘didn’t know how I wanted to teach, I knew how I didn’t’ (A:36) because ‘I don’t like to be shouted at and so I won’t shout’ (1:21; 1:5:A:1). Other examples of what was considered poor teaching practice was when teachers would be ‘sitting and shouting’ (2:24; 2:10:A; 1:17; 2:25), or taking lessons whilst ‘talking on the phone’ (A:41; E:35:3; 3:28). Shouting is reminiscent of the military style of teaching with the instructor shouting out directions, however the data suggests that the practice did not cease with the demise of military personnel teaching equestrianism.

Incorrect teaching practice impacted on how participants wished not to teach, however I wanted to know where the inspiration for teaching derived. I questioned them further to discover that their teaching was influenced by their admiration of other teachers. Those teachers who were also students of other participants described how their teachers ‘can get more from my student than I can’ (2:25; 1:2:A). They knew ‘what to say and how to say things and would approach a problem in a way they hadn’t thought of’ (2:10:A; A:41). However, when I asked the participants if
good riders make good teachers no one agreed, and yet ‘if you get a good rider who is also a good teacher you have a perfect combination’ (E:33:2). Their answers were supported with examples of having had lessons with famous riders, and having been disappointed with the experience.

Linking teaching to the syllabus

To link teaching and learning to the syllabus and training I asked the participants what they could remember about being trained to teach riding. The younger participants, whose experience was still fresh in their minds, said ‘I just learnt what was needed to pass the exam’ (1:20; 2:26;1:2:A). They all had previous teaching experience prior to accreditation and therefore the experiences of training for the accreditation through the mainstream syllabi were described as ‘going through the motions’ (3:31). Students in England ‘were drilled for the exam which was based upon a set time-frame’ (2:26) for the lower levels of accreditation and so they were ‘only covering the points to get the exam’ (1:20; 1:21; 1:2:A; 1:3:A; 1:1:A; 2:26). They were taught how to ‘move people around similar to directing traffic’ (3:28; 3:31; 2:6:1:1).

The data is suggesting an inseparable association between riding and teaching riding. All those teaching riding were themselves riders, and agreed that their riding influenced their teaching. They would ‘experiment on myself’ to verify teaching practices (E:35:3). Some did this through experimentation ‘playing around with props and trying out things’ (E:35:3) whilst others would reflect on what or why things were happening and then they would say to themselves ‘I remember a horse that did that, now what did I do? (36:A; 1:20) and then teach their pupils from their experience, indicating that the horse is part of both the teaching and learning process as argued by Podhajsky (1997).

Twelve of those teaching riding did so because they ‘enjoyed teaching people to ride, and enjoyed helping people and seeing them progress’ (1:21). Two stated that ‘if I didn’t ride, I wouldn’t teach’ (1:20; 2:24). I probed further into this answer and discovered that it was not because riding enhanced teaching practice but rather that it was because riding was the primary focus for these participants and teaching a
means to gain an income and continue riding, not a vocation in itself. Three participants pointed out that for them ‘it is easier to teach the horse than the rider’ (1:20; 2:24; 2:23). This may be because they were not taught how to teach the rider when training to teach riding, or not being enthusiastic about teaching itself, but passionate about the horse.

Competition also influences riding and teaching practice. The data indicates that 78 per cent of the participants came through the Pony Club system and therefore they were introduced to competing early in their career. Therefore, for these participants competition is an important factor in equestrianism, and this follows through to their teaching. Three participants said ‘if I didn’t compete I wouldn’t ride’ (3:31; 2:24; 2:6:1) ... I couldn’t see myself hacking\(^{106}\) around the lanes’ (3:31). I was also told ‘if I didn’t ride I wouldn’t teach riding’ (2:24) ‘because I think you need to have an idea of what it feels like’ (E:19:1). Riding is based upon what the rider feels from the horse, when they are riding. The teacher also has to be aware of this so they can consider the rider’s interpretation of the feeling they are getting to inform the lesson. Similarly, competing ‘gives you an insight more into the mind of the competitor’ and if you are teaching competition riders then this can help (2:25).

What makes a good riding lesson?

Answers to the second part of the question, what constitutes a good lesson, revealed participants’ priorities in teaching. I had not considered the duality of this question until I was asked ‘do you mean one I give or one I have myself?’ (1:20; 1:21; 3:30; 1:17). The confusion was interesting in that it revealed a separation between teaching a lesson and riding in a lesson, and therefore I asked them to explain both, and continued to do so with the later interviews.

A good lesson the participants received was not necessarily the same as the good lessons they gave. ‘I would say if I was riding in a lesson I would like to feel like I’ve been really pushed and I don’t mind being tired and don’t mind being out of breath and I like to have sort of thought ‘I didn’t know the horse could go like that’ I

\(^{106}\) In England hacking is the term used for riding out in the country/roads and tracks as opposed to in Western Australia where hacking is an equestrian showing class.
think that’s quite good. I don’t like one if I feel I’ve just been wandering about and haven’t really done a lot’. ‘Then when I’m giving a lesson I like it if I think there’s definitely been an improvement - either in that one lesson or just over time - that you can look back and think ‘that is going so much better’ (1:20). Although this participant did not think they could be as demanding on their clients as their teachers were on them they did want the horse to have improved at the end of the lesson. Therefore their teaching style was horse focused. Similarly, I was told ‘when I’m having a lesson it’s if the horse goes well ... ‘but I think from teaching it’s how happy the rider is’ (3:30). ‘I think a good lesson is a lesson where you come away with something that is going to help you work your horse on your own’ (2:26). ‘I like when it people come back to me and say they’ve been working during the week. When I feel like I haven’t really achieved a very good lesson is when people come back to me and say ‘I can’t do it when you’re not there’’ (2.26). The participant is following a scaffolding approach to their teaching, however, the rider in question may not have reached the required skill development for replication to take place. Thus the need for understanding the theories behind teaching practices.

What is learned in the lesson can also be used to help teaching, I was told ‘I concentrate and I listen and I take it all in, so I feel now if I teach someone I can see quite quickly what the issues are or I feel if I get on the horse I can feel what the issues are and I can sort them out and I think that’s come from him because he’s got such a good eye with them’ (NQ:38). The participant was creating pedagogy through the lineage of their teacher. ‘I don’t like that thing when you come out of a lesson thinking ‘well I can do that when the persons’ on the ground but I can’t do that at home.’ This experience was described as ‘horrible’ and therefore their teaching was informed from this experience ‘I like to explain everything’ (1:21).

A positive feeling and one of enjoyment was also indicative of a good lesson. ‘I think if you come away positive you feel like you’ve learnt something and have an improvement’ (E:22:1). ‘Coming out on a high’ (2:24). ‘I hate teaching a lesson thinking I’m bored because god if I’m bored you must be bored stiff’ (2:24). ‘For me as an elite competitor I need to go away feeling positive but I need to just have enough there to kick myself about because if you stop kicking you stop being elite. I hope that when they go away that I have made my explanations sufficiently clear that
I have given them enough visual clues that they can go away and go ‘Oh yes if that bit of its body looks like that it must be right’, because feeling clues are not enough’ (E:13).

Other lessons were people focused, and these participants said they appreciated having a lesson when the teacher was ‘tuned into the riders and knowing what it is they need at that time. I think there are lots of different versions of that [what makes a good lesson they give] and what you get some days is not going to necessarily be a good lesson on other days’ (1:2:A). ‘A good lesson for me is if you have somebody who is really engaged that you have empowered the rider to be able to all of a sudden think I’m not just sitting up here not knowing what I am doing but that I can effectively do something, I like to be the same when I give a lesson’ (1:3:A).

Good lessons differed. What was good for one was not necessarily going to be good for another. ‘Clients often just wanting to chat’ (2:6:1:1); ‘if they’ve had a hard day at work they don’t really want to come and work again so we spend a lot of time talking’ (2:26); so for these riders the social aspect of the lesson was important. I was told ‘in the lesson you have to be a jack of all trades’ (3:28) by more than one participant. Teachers needed to ‘balance the aspects. It’s not just the riding that you are teaching every lesson is training the horse, in a positive and not so positive way. Yes so every lesson has to have the horse’s interest’ (1:1:A).

A good lesson should ‘build very much on what we have done last month and that has built on what we did the month before. And I generally have a theme for the month and focus for the month’ (1:1:A).

A good lesson from the assessor’s viewpoint was one where there is ‘flexibility’ (2:7); ‘I don’t mind if they change their mind half way through we all change our minds at some point; when I’m teaching people about teaching I say ‘fine indoor school, fine outdoor arena – middle of a field, hillside, bad weather, hard ground’ they’ve got to be able to in their discussion period be adaptable because you don’t always have the perfect scenario’ (3:28). ‘A good lesson should be regarding assessment; that the student assesses the rider/horse combination’ (3:31).
One participant stated ‘I didn’t realise until later how good his lessons were. He taught me all the basics’ (E:12:1) thus indicating a good riding lesson is ‘more than just stringing a group of words together well’ (A:29:3); it is a complex issue, as the research is indicating.

Has the teaching changed?

I am aware of how my pedagogy has changed with age and experience. These changes have been brought about through higher levels of riding expertise and competing, and through exposure to tertiary educational practices and the theories embedded in learning. Therefore I was interested to understand how others thought their teaching had changed and why and how. Many of the older participants thought they had ‘become more mellow’ (E:11:1). ‘I don’t shout as much as I did’ (2:25). All the older participants ‘were more patient’ (2:7) ‘and more tolerant’ (3:31) ‘less bossy’ (E:35:3). Both older and younger participants knew they should give ‘positive feedback’ (A:36). I asked them to discuss this further and I was told ‘negative teaching doesn’t make positive riding’ (3:28). The consensus of opinion was ‘you can’t shout at people like we were shouted at. People won’t accept that now, they don’t want it and they don’t learn from it’ (E:11:1). The concept of teaching through explanation and questioning was understood, however there were those who had pupils who found this style of giving feedback condescending. In one case the participant was told, ‘I know what I’m doing right. I’m here to know what I’m doing wrong and how to put it right’ (3:31).

The younger participants changed when they became more confident in their teaching skills. ‘When I first started I was quite nervous’ (1:17; 1:20; E:22:1;1:21; 2:23). The feeling of nervousness could have been due to their age. As three participants told me ‘I was alright teaching kids but I still felt nervous teaching adults’ (1:20). However once accredited a participant related how she could think to herself, ‘I have this qualification therefore I do know what I’m saying is right’ (1:21), which helped with her confidence. However, the qualification may not always help gain confidence in the lessons if the students are not cooperative. A mature participant told me of an incident in which a younger teacher (who is also a participant in this research) ‘was having a lot of problems with the big kids who were
being quite naughty with her. I suppose it’s because I am that bit older and I have never really had that trouble’ (1:4). So perhaps age rather than knowledge is a key factor for gaining confidence?

Participants were more resigned to the differences in the client and their expectations, especially when the riders come who are considered ‘lazy’ or ‘slack’ (2:23; 1:20; A:39; E:22:1). Teachers who work hard to attain high riding standards find this concept difficult to understand when they are trying to teach others riding. I was given the scenario where the participant told the client ‘there are no straight lines on a circle, and their reply was ‘oh well I just got slack’. The participant added ‘in the past I would yell at them, but now I take a step back. I used to tell them to get their bloody arse in gear, but now I rephrase’ (2:8) or as another stated when encountering similar behaviour, ‘shrug and take the money’ (3:31).

Although they all agreed their teaching had changed many were quick to add their ethics had not. For example they were not prepared to compromise on their teaching/training methods ‘if the horse or rider is not ready to do a certain jump or movement yet then I won’t do it with them’ (1:5:A:1). This was said by many other participants during the interviews. They stated if clients did not like their terms ‘if they want to then they can go somewhere else’ (2:25). However, what constitutes ethical practice for some is not necessarily the same for others. When asked if they would put gadgets on the horse to achieve the expectations (such as a rounded outline) 78 per cent said they would (and some observation lessons had gadgets for example draw-reins being used in them).

Another factor for change was the health and safety expectations and the perception of legal ramifications. The issue came up many times in the conversations firstly with regard to accreditation. Western Australian participants were very conscious of the need for insurance cover and the accreditation body gave them cheap cover. In England insurance was not as important an issue but teachers were aware of safe teaching practices although these sometimes came at the expense of skill attainment. For example ‘you can’t make them do it if they don’t want to, you can’t force them’ (E:11:1), ‘I used to have them jumping down lanes without stirrups and reins, can’t do that now’ (2:24). It is often difficult for the teachers when dealing
with the parents who had been taught in this way. As one participant said ‘the father wants his kids to ride bare back and fall off and I can see where he’s coming from but I just can’t do it’ (1:1:A).

The parents often watch the lessons and therefore can be critical of what or how their children are being taught. ‘You have to have them on side you can’t afford to antagonise them and there are ones that are difficult – on Sunday there were two ladies (mothers) and these women were telling the kids what to do whilst they were in the lesson’ (1:4). Watching parents can also change the way the lesson is undertaken when the rider does not wish to do something they turn to their parent ‘Mum tell her, tell her I always ride with my reins like this, tell her, she wants me to shorten my reins’ (3:31). However, the discerning parent can be the ‘eyes on the ground’ (Lincoln, 2008, pp. 4-5) to help with practice at home. ‘I’ll always consider the relationship between the rider and their parent and ask them (the rider) if it’s OK to get their mum to help with their riding at home’ (E:13:1) and in this way what is taught in the lesson can be practised for the following lessons.

How goal setting is implemented into the riding lesson

Practising at home can help the rider and teacher fulfil goals and expectations in the lessons. The syllabi wish to create a teaching practice that uses long and short-term goals and so I asked the participant what their goals were when teaching and to discuss goal setting as part of their personal curricula. All the coaches understood the concepts of goals. ‘I would say very much so that you have in your mind the one main one thing that you want to do in that lesson’ (1:20). I was told ‘I try to help them so that they can achieve their goals’ (2:26). All the participants told me goals ‘have to be flexible. Goals change as well. Long-term goals become medium-term goals as the rider progresses and then I give them a bigger long-term goal (2:36). The discussion concerned with goals allowed me to understand who set them and I was told, ‘we kind of do it between us really because sometimes they understand more about what they’re trying to achieve as to what height they want to jump and where they want to go with it than I do, so yes I would say between us’ (2:23).
The answer was not the same for everyone interviewed. The teachers would also set the goals in their minds because ‘often my goals are higher than they think they can achieve, but they do’, (3:28). ‘If I had told them the goals at the start of the lesson they would say ‘I can’t do that’. Often they are not aware of their capabilities’ (2:26). How the goals work ‘is a balance of what the real goals are in this particular session and how it fits into the long term’ (2:10:A). A similar statement was made by seven of the participants. Goals were part of the lessons regardless of the accreditation levels of the teachers. ‘I ask them what do you want to do, what do you want to achieve from this today? I ask them all that’ (2:6:1:1). Goals were sometimes set to suit their clients’ personalities rather than abilities. This may be due to the riders being less ambitious or less confident of their abilities: the observation ‘my goals will often be higher than they would ask for themselves’ (3:28) was made on more than one occasion. Often the goals are not mentioned to the students ‘because it would freak them out if I told them what I was expecting’ (2:23). ‘Some might say I just want to be able to get my heels down others may say they want to be part of the elite squad and I have that in my students and I say that’s great’ (2:10:A).

The recognition of the value of short-term or ‘tiny goals’ (2:23; 1:21) was widely understood. Initially asking ‘is it big steps or little steps they want to take’? (2:23) is particularly useful when teaching the nervous rider. ‘I’ve said to people ‘tacking up your horse can be your goal, then walking round and deciding you don’t want to ride that’s fine but at least you tacked it up’, so they’ve achieved a short-term goal (1:21). ‘Sometimes the goals are simply improving on what we’ve done: working on what we’ve done that week and coming back the next week to have improved that’ (1:1:A). ‘You have got to make people aware of the fact, and what you think, but you also have to be aware of what their goals are and then try and work within them’ (A:41). ‘I don’t say right let’s do your long-term goals, let’s do your short-term goals, I don’t ever tackle it head on like that’ (2:23). The research indicates that setting goals is a flexible practice in the riding lessons.

Many of the goals for the lessons are based around competitions and dependent on ‘what competitions are coming up’ (2:6:1:1). Participants stated if ‘people are working towards something specific like a particular dressage test or a jumping a particular type of course or they’re heading towards something then we
work towards that’ (E:32:1). This was often worked out at the beginning of the lesson when the participants stated they asked the client ‘why are you coming for riding lessons?’ (E:27:3) and then set the goals accordingly. I was told ‘there’s no point having you desirous to make this horse/rider combination work well when the horse is an old dobbin and the rider wants to talk’ (E:35:3), and ‘not everyone wants to ride at the Olympics’ (E:13:1).

On the whole goals are set for the lessons through discussion between teacher and rider. Goal setting can be part of the reflection process, which is another focus of the syllabi. Participants said ‘I will try and think about what happened and what needs to be done to improve’ (A:36). ‘But it doesn’t always happen because sometimes it depends on what’s happening on that day’ (3:30). ‘Sometimes it’s completely different, it wasn’t what I expected, the horse isn’t what I expected or the rider had had a really bad day at work and actually I need to just de-stress the rider’ (2:26).

The student’s goals tend to drive the individual lessons, and the horse causes adjustments to the goals of the student and teacher, but in the longer term it is often competition that is the goal. If the rider’s goal is a competition then the teacher has to consider if they (the rider and the horse) are to the standard required to take part and if not how to achieve this goal. Competitions set a deadline for skills to be achieved. This can put pressure on the teacher to produce the requirements for the competition in the lessons, possibly taking short-cuts in skill attainment to appease the rider. I was told that ‘although my teaching has changed my ethics haven’t’ (E:32:1). So I asked them if at any time ethics had been compromised by the rider’s goals. ‘Well the numbers of people that come to me for lessons will have tried other coaches usually but one thing’s for sure, no matter what I try to teach them or how I try to teach them at the end of the week they are going to go to the show or the one day event’ (E:12:1). ‘I try to be honest with people ....hopefully my advice is sound ... you can influence some people and other people you can’t so you just work with them and try to modify them or tell them to go somewhere else’ (2:7). Another participant told the client ‘I can’t guarantee I can fix that. I’ll help you but I can’t guarantee that you can go to a level that you can go out and compete in dressage’ (1:5:A:1). Another explained, ‘it’s a continual battle with some of them especially the
teenagers. This child says ‘well I really want to go out and do it [a novice/higher dressage test] but there’s no point in me just going out and doing prelim.’ So the participant compromised and said ‘I can understand that but can you be mature enough, as a teenager, to go to that judge before you start and say ‘I have only just started doing sitting trot on this horse. If I feel his back starting to tighten up I will go into rising trot. Please don’t ring the bell and eliminate me let me finish my test and eliminate me at the end.’ Are you mature enough to do that? She said ‘OK’. She went and she never did that she went and did the whole test in sitting’ (2:10:A), which was the very reason why the participant had advised against her competing at this level. Competition for some people is about socialising with their friends and not necessarily competing in the way their teachers compete, thus there are different goals and expectations.

The participants indicated goal setting for the lessons and reflection on the lesson were part of their pedagogy; however, the evidence suggests that it is not achieved using the syllabi directives i.e. writing them down. The theory of goal setting and reflection of outcomes was not fully understood. However, the evidence suggests that setting goals and reflection are an intrinsic part of the teaching practice of the participants in this research.

No further data was obtained through the final question, which was asking the participants if they wanted to discuss anything more

Open Ended Questions and Answers

Clients’ Willingness to Learn

The majority of the participant’s clientele are casual/hobby riders and the lessons and the competitions become ‘part of the weekly routine’ (2:26). The client is receiving lessons as a ‘weekly habit,’ they will ‘come to the lesson as a matter of course, they have swimming lessons on Tuesday and riding lessons on Friday’

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107 Prelim is the basic dressage level.
Unlike other hobbies and sports, equestrianism has the horse, which requires daily care, and the rider, who needs to ride more than once a week to enhance skills. The data suggests many riders only ride three or four times a week outside lessons, and therefore the pupils are not necessarily working their horse as prescribed by the teacher between the lessons, which in turn can become problematic for future lessons. The teacher can either chose to continually address the same issues (that have not been worked on outside the lesson) and perhaps at the risk of losing the client because they feel they are not progressing quickly enough toward their goals, or take the decision to ignore problems for a few lessons with the intention of addressing them later. This problem was highlighted when I discussed aspects of the observation lesson with participants and was told, ‘ah yes that is a problem she/he does know about it but there are only so many times you can tell her/him so I suppose I now just ignore it’ (2:7; 2:26).

The increase in new riders entering the sport is in part due to older riders either returning or taking up riding for the first time. These riders come with perceived ideas, which may or may not enhance their skills. For example, older riders taking up a new hobby will possibly have undertaken some research thus resulting in the teachers being told ‘how I should be riding’ (1:20) when they can barely ride themselves. Older riders also may have ‘expectations of being able to ride in a given period or over a certain number of lessons in the same way that they learn to do other things’ (3:31).

As discussed, riding is skill based. However the new rider is coming to be taught with theoretical knowledge gained through popular media and on the Internet. It is not uncommon to learn through lay literature, as shown by this memory. ‘I would ride with the open book on the fence reading how to do things then having a go’ (2:8). The use of literature as a teaching medium is an expectation of the syllabi, which provide set readings and recommended reading lists, and this participant used texts to improve her skills prior to accreditation. However, now ‘they (the clients) can be watching me ride and start telling me what I’m doing wrong’ (3:31) ‘and this is someone who can’t even do a proper rising trot’ (1:20). The knowledge without the skill to implement that knowledge can be problematic when trying to teach the rider. Although a two way dialogue has been considered essential in the teaching and
learning of equestrianism this discourse is not always positive and can be viewed as disruptive. Younger riders would use questions to be obstreperous and to disempower the teacher through continual questions. ‘Why should I?’ (NQ:16) ‘What for?’ (1:4) ‘Why are we doing this again we did this last week?’ (3:31) In this way questions are not being used to garner information but to disempower the coach and find a reason not to work as directed. The participants stated they themselves would never have used this type of behaviour with their coaches. Some said they had the support of the parents to deal with poor behaviour and often they would have more control of the children than the parents. However, many parents sided with their children in which case I was told ‘what can you do?’ (3:31).

The syllabus encourages dialogue, but it is not always conducive to learning and lessons can become chat sessions as opposed to riding lessons. This is where the teacher has to be the ‘jack of all trades’ (3:28), switching between listening and teaching. Participants discussed situations where the client ‘often just wants to chat’ (2:26; E:11; 2:7). When asked how they dealt with this they said they ‘would answer a few questions from the rider, then I would tell them to get on with whatever it was I had asked them to do’ (2:26). It was not necessarily considered problematic. ‘I was able to cope with the rider because I had a certain amount of authority in the lesson and so they did as they were told’ (2:26). ‘I know this is how she learns and that’s fine’ (2:26).

I asked the participants why they thought their riders wanted to chat. Some said it was due to lack of riding fitness, in which case they chatted to have a rest. The majority of the clientele are casual/hobby riders, and therefore they are ‘riding three or four times a week’ (2:7), which can mean it is insufficient for them to achieve a suitable level of riding fitness. The participants, on the other hand, were more likely to ride three or four horses a day if not more. ‘I have seven horses of my own and six for [an owner]’ (E:22:1) all of which will be exercised six days a week.

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108 I interpret disruptive questioning as a means to disrupt the learning process.
The literature argues how riders need to be physically fit to ride (Mortimer, 2003). However some participants described their students as unfit,\textsuperscript{109} saying some were under the misconception ‘riding would help them achieve fitness’, which is not the case. Riding, like any sport, requires a certain level of fitness in order to participate, and although riding can increase muscle tone this must be supplemented with other exercises. Participants described clients who were unable to ‘keep off the horses’ backs whilst cantering around a jumping course’ (E:13:1) thus impacting on the horse’s welfare and indicating this basic skill required for jumping is missing.

The welfare of the horse and skill levels are impacted when the rider considers the way to success is through the ability to purchase equipment or good horses rather than through the ability to ride. Riders can now buy much more equipment, although they may be ill-informed as to how to use it. I was told that riders consider that ‘money will buy them talent’ (E:22:1; 2:10:A) when they buy ‘an expensive horse on which to compete’ (2:9; A:41). These riders were considered the ‘spoilt brats’ (2:7), and the majority of teachers had encountered them. The following type of scenario was described on more than one occasion to exemplify this aspect. ‘The rider would come to lessons on expensive horses and ride as a passenger, the horse would soon become aware that the rider was unable to ride it and misbehave, the rider would then blame the horse and the horse would eventually be sold’ or put on more gadgets to induce performance. Although this is an unacceptable attitude from the perspective of many participants, all of whom argue ‘I would never blame the horse for things going wrong, it is always down to me’ the high turn-over of horses is not a new phenomenon. Whereas in the past it has been at the higher levels of equestrianism, now it is becoming apparent at all levels thus impacting on the stress and welfare of the horse (McGreevy and McLean 2010).

\textit{Specialisation}

An important area which impacts on both teachers and riders is early specialisation within a discipline. When discussing specialisation of riding practice with the participants it was considered that it is ‘happening too early’ (3:28). Only

\textsuperscript{109} Note unfit was to mean overweight.
three participants had a mixed lesson in which the riders rode both on the flat and over jumps in the same lesson. Although the teachers stated they would ‘take anyone who wanted to learn’ (E:35:3), the clientele was predominantly from within the current discipline the teacher was riding in. For example event riders attracted event riders and even for teachers who had a broad teaching base, either through accreditation or having ridden at other disciplines, it was the current and or most successful competitive levels that created the client base. Clients were obtained through word of mouth. ‘My accreditation got me started but then my competition record took over’ (E:19:1), thus perpetuating specialisation at all levels of expertise. The BHS participants were accredited through a multi-disciplined approach in which they were assessed teaching both jumping and flat work and their specialisation came later through their success as competitive riders. These teachers’ response is ‘I think that people should be able to teach anything and that dressage horses should be able to go out for a ride or pop over a pole or fence’ (E:35:3).

The Western Australian accreditation system is based around the teacher having competed to the standard equal to the qualification, thus suggesting if a teacher does not have the experience of a particular competitive standard as a rider, then they are less able to teach it. However the system is also based around specialisation after the first level of accreditation, thus encouraging specialising early in their teaching. I was told ‘people are tending to specialise earlier themselves in what they do and therefore I guess we’re mirroring the market’ (2:7). This is problematic. There is a need for a teacher to understand flat work in order to teach jumping, as I was told ‘there is an awful lot of flat ground between the jumps’ (E:13:1). Participants who have evented will naturally teach the three disciplines involved in the sport. Event riders will go to specialised teachers, for example a show jumping coach said ‘I specialise in teaching jumping riders but I would say that 90% of the people I teach are event riders. They have a reasonable understanding of flat work’ (E:12:1). However the participant did not specialise as a jump rider until after they had learned to ‘ride at all the disciplines’. Flat work for jumpers is important but jumping is also important for riders on the flat. Even confined to a dressage arena, a horse can leap into the air, and the rider needs to be able to deal with the situation. Learning to jump will help them stay calm and cope.
‘We did it all, we did everything’ was a typical response when participants were asked if they had specialised early in their riding careers. If the teacher specialises later in their career they have the knowledge of teaching and riding in other disciplines, which can help inform their teaching practice. Specialisation in an area does not necessarily lead to better teaching. It can create intensity in the teaching practice; I was told ‘she would dictate every single move you made so you ended up doing what she said rather than thinking about what you were doing and sometime you would get out the next day and think ‘what on earth was I doing yesterday?’ (E:19:1). Thirteen of the elite participants were able to teach (and had ridden in) disciplines other than the one they specialised in as riders. Some taught in more than one discipline. ‘The majority of people I teach now I would do half an hour flat and half an hour jumping ... There are a few teachers who do this but they are an exception’ (E:19:1).

Specialisation at too early a stage can inhibit skill attainment. For example, dressage is deemed to take place in a dressage arena and as such the participants described how many of their clients ‘only ride in the dressage arenas a lot of them never ride outside an arena’ (3:30). ‘For some it’s very difficult because of where they live’ (E:11) they do not have access to safe riding outside their properties ‘and some of them just don’t want it’ (E:11). Riders should be able to cope with all ground surfaces. However, one participant described how at a show jumping competition many in the lower height classes withdrew ‘because they had to jump on grass whereas the advanced elite riders jumped on it without any bother’ (2:25). Therefore it appears that skills are being lost due to the environments the riders are exposed to. Riders are competing under a false sense of skill levels and when they are exposed to differences they do not have the skills to adapt.

I asked participants whether they thought that people are specialising too much. One interesting response was, ‘No I think they are generalising too much’ (E:19:1). I asked what they meant by this and was told riders were ‘not working on their individual phases sufficiently. If they go off and if they go off and compete in an event [horse trial] as opposed to going off and doing a dressage test or show-jumping etc. I mean how many cross country courses did we have to school round 20 years ago? [very few] and they are there now [the cross country courses are available for
riders to hire and school round]. The opportunities are there’ (E:19:1) for riders to work on each phase of the horse trials. The participant argued there is a need for a multi-disciplined approach, and this can still be achieved through competitions but using one to enhance the other.

*Competition Embedded in the Lesson*

Problems occur when the rider wishes to take the horse to a competition. Managing horses who have limited exposure to environments outside home may be problematic when they are taken from it. There is often the expectation that it will behave as it did at home (McGreevy and McLean, 2010). When this does not happen riders often blame the horse. Anthropomorphism may be a contributing factor, for example when young children are introduced to ways of explaining behaviour by phrases such as, isn’t he a naughty boy? or oh what a bad pony, thus putting the onus for behaviour on the horse. Participants did not agree with some of their students’ attitudes. This was not necessarily a generational issue, because the participants were sometimes of the same generation as those they were speaking against. For example, young coaches described incidents where riders, who were the same or of a similar age to them, blamed their horses when things went wrong. This was something they (the participant) would never do.

Attributing cause for failure in the competition to the horse gives the rider a greater sense of authority (Weiner, 1986) and in doing so the rider does not take the blame for the failure. Blaming the horse is an anthropomorphic behaviour (as discussed previously), and the teacher should not relinquish their responsibilities by allowing the rider to continue to think about horses in this way (regardless of age or ability) in the riding lessons. The relationship between the competition and the horse can create a causal effect in which the rider attributes blame to the horse when things go wrong, and claims success when things are right (Weiner, 1986). During an informal conversation with Charles de Kunffy about his term the ‘horsing lessons’, he stated how riders who were overly emotional on completion of a good dressage test were attributing the success to themselves, whereas he, and the Olympic riders interviewed, all attributed their successes to the horses and failures to themselves.
The practice of transferring blame and attributing success to oneself was referred to as the ‘look at me’ (3:31; E:34) syndrome in which the participants described the riders at competitions who were more concerned about ‘what other people were thinking than riding the horse’ (E:19:1; E:34). The interviewees stated that for many of their clients part of the concept of competition is being seen to be ‘out and about’ (E:19:1) or ‘talking about competing’ (2:7), and for many of these riders this is the concept that is important rather than the result. This then may mean the rider is less competitive or more accepting of achieving less in their performance. A rider’s focus on ‘the clothes they wear and the gear they have’ (E:35:3) can take precedence over how they ride the horse. Designer labels and horse equipment, which are promoted by elite riders, create the ‘mini me’ (2:8) prototype that higher-level participants used to describe their following. This can be seen at competitions with people who are associated with a certain rider wearing a team jacket or a brand name associated with a certain rider.

Many of the casual riders\(^\text{110}\) compete, and the success in competition is down to their level of skills. Riders coming for lessons ‘without knowing the basic skills’ (E:19:1; 3:28) and yet expecting to compete at a level higher than their riding skills was a recurring concern. Although I argued this is why they are having lessons, to get better skills, it was stated many students ‘don’t want to learn to ride but learn to compete’ (3:31; 2:10:A; A:17:1). They don’t want to know about how to ride ‘they want to learn by magic’ (1:1:A; 1:21). Therefore the teachers considered the lack of skills was not due to the teaching but the rider’s attitude.

The casual rider’s attitude to competition was also discussed and the participants suggested that although many riders do compete, they are not necessarily competitive. Participants discussed the riders who are happy to stay at the same relatively low levels rather than work towards higher grades, and this makes it ‘difficult sometimes; you get professional prelim riders and professional novice riders, been doing it forever’ (1:21). The reason for this issue is because riders ‘don’t want to go unaffiliated, they want to say ‘oh I’m affiliated’’ (1:21), although their skills would be better suited to the unaffiliated levels.

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\(^{110}\) Riders who are not professional competitors are known as casual riders.
The teachers who compete themselves tend to push the concept of competition and have a high expectation of the outcomes. They can be surprised at the rider’s low level of expectation: on meeting a rider who had been eliminated the teacher offered her sympathy to be told, ‘oh I’m pleased really I got to number five this year; last year I was eliminated at number three’ (3:31). Although the rider’s expectations were less than the teacher’s, the rider had reached a self-determined goal and therefore was content.

However, lack of success can also be attributed to the teacher, resulting in the client seeking another. Often it is new input from another teacher that will address or re-address outstanding issues and this can help with skill attainment, however it can also be problematic if the rider is continually changing teachers. The participants described the issue as ‘coach hopping,’ where riders changed teachers when things went wrong or if an elite rider/coach was in the area. Although some elite participants stated that students could be intimidated by their success and might consider they were below the standards required to have a lesson from them. The data suggests students go to elite riders for lessons regardless of their own level of expertise. The observation lessons of all the elite riders/coaches indicated they were teaching well below their level of riding expertise and I would agree with a participants who argued their client ‘went to an elite coach because of their reputation as a competitive rider when in fact they could still learn a lot from someone teaching at the first level of accreditation’ (A:17:1; 3:30).

If the rider is not up to the standard to attend the course, yet still goes, then there can be an assumption of knowledge/skills by the coach taking the lesson. They will have expectations of the rider’s abilities and will have planned their lessons accordingly. This can then lead to confusion for the rider whose skills are not at the expected level. This then puts the onus on their regular teacher to explain the difference between what had been said by the elite coach, and what they were being taught by their regular teacher. I was told how one participant had to explain ‘aspects of the lesson that their clients had not or had incorrectly understood’ (A:17:1). The participants stated that what did work well was when their student had a lesson from the participants own teacher. They could watch their client being taught and therefore discuss issues with both the teacher and the student. They could learn new techniques
and different ways to enhance learning. The participants described the experience as really helpful. ‘They just said do this like this, and what I had been trying to get them to do for ages just worked’ (1:2:A). ‘It’s great to see how much better they are riding and although what they (the elite coach) are saying I [also] say. The, say it differently and get a better result’ (2:10:A; A:41). ‘I would never have thought of explaining it like that’ (A:40). ‘I would never have asked them to do that’ (2:25). ‘They (the elite coach) seemed to know when to push and ask for more’ (1:2:A). Although the client is often a regular student (and some interviewees stated they had had clients for many years), aspects of their riding can be overlooked and it takes an outside view to see issues as discussed above.

**Content Analysis**

A qualitative approach following Patton’s (2002) process of inductive analysis was used when reviewing the interviews. Analysis of the transcripts was undertaken to establish convergence of the information to generate patterns and themes. Reviewing the semi-structured interviews, consideration to the words that were used was then extended to analyse latent meanings by using my reasoning abilities (Patton, 2002). It is from the interpretations from the interview transcripts that patterns began to emerge and these will be discussed below.

**Patterns** to be considered were: All the participants were passionate about the horse. Twelve taught riding because they wanted to impart knowledge, however it was the horse that drew them to this decision. Therefore, teaching horse riding can be considered to be driven by the relationship of the riding teacher to the horse.

All the participants agreed good riders do not necessarily make the best teachers. However they stated they would choose a teacher, or were chosen to teach based upon their riding (competition) record rather than their teaching ability. The West Australian syllabus is focused on the teacher achieving competition status which reinforces the idea that competition is deemed an important factor in equestrian pedagogy.
The participants (in England) who were mostly unfavourably disposed toward the new teaching system were those at the third level of accreditation.

Watching others teach was considered a valuable experience in which to gain knowledge and teaching skills. Thus Bandura’s theory of observation as a learning technique was apparent (Bandura, 1977). This was particularly pertinent when a higher-level teacher was taking the participant’s own pupils. The participant could then replicate the teacher’s practices so that it became their own behaviour. The training bodies also use the theory of observation and replication by providing workshops. Therefore it can be considered watching and duplicating practice is a process that enhances the development of sound pedagogy.

The participants all understood the need to set goals. They stated that whilst goals are important they also need to be flexible. A flexible approach and goal setting are both objectives of the syllabi and therefore using them in the personal curriculum informs pedagogy.

The names to describe teaching practice in equestrianism were understood in different ways. Instruction was thought by the majority of participants as someone shouting and screaming, whilst coaching was not necessarily teaching. However, the pattern that emerged was those taking a riding lesson considered themselves as riding teachers.

A final pattern was that obtaining accreditation to teach was not considered important as a career path for many. This aspect became apparent with elite riders holding lower level teaching accreditation although their riding expertise impacts on the teaching practice to enable them to teach at a higher level than the qualification indicates, thus the lack of incentive to attain higher qualifications.

The chapter has introduced the participants and their views on equestrian pedagogy through the recorded interviews. From the forty one participants thirty seven were observed teaching, and the following chapter will review the riding lesson in practice from these participants. The interviews and observations will allow
for the patterns and also themes to emerge which will be indicative of the different approaches to equestrian pedagogy.
Chapter Six

Inquiry by Observation of the Riding Lessons

The chapter will discuss the observed riding lessons to understand the effectiveness of the syllabi in a practical environment. From the forty one participants thirty seven were observed teaching and twelve participants invited me to observe more than one lesson. The lessons ranged in duration from thirty minutes to an hour in duration with some working on the flat and others over fences. An analysis of the observation will create an understanding of how the syllabi are used in practice and begin to uncover emerging patterns and themes. The process will consider aspects that are syllabi directives, for example the initial opening of the lesson and the implementation of a lesson plan, to understand how the syllabi are being interpreted. Further analysis will discuss the language used in the lesson with regard to whether participants are instructing, teaching or coaching, to begin the process of pedagogy analysis. Following this I will consider other aspects that have been observed in the lessons. These can be compared to what was said during the interviews to review if what is said is also done. The practice of a small sample group of participants will be reviewed to augment the overall data. The sample group has been formed based on the accreditation system, and in this way the data patterns will be identified through a cross syllabus enquiry. The small group will be used to augment the overall patterns and highlight themes that have emerged from all the data.

The checklist items for collating the data were in part taken from the assessors’ sheets when the issues being assessed were also of concern with the thesis. The BHS syllabus states the candidate should be enthusiastic and motivational and have effective communication skills (www.bhs.org.uk). The West Australian trainees are expected to use a questioning and answering technique (www.equestrian.org.au, 2006). Therefore I included a box in which to identify the type of feedback to pupils, covering both syllabi requirements. When the interview took place after the observation I was able to discuss issues with the participants, therefore in these cases I will cross reference the data with the interview transcripts and the observations.
The West Australian General Assessment Guide (2006) for the first level of accreditation states the lesson should ‘provide the rider with an understanding of how to train the horse when alone’ (www.equestrian.org.au, 2006, n.p.). The BHS information package the Candidate Coach Report asks trainees to ‘outline future opportunities’ (www.bhs.org.uk. n.d.n.p.), thus suggesting a scaffolding approach in which the teacher gives sufficient knowledge for the rider to ride at home (which means train the horse) using correct practices when they are not having guidance. The knowledge the rider obtains is through the feedback they receive, and the ways that knowledge and feedback is transferred during the lessons will be discussed to understand if a scaffolding approach is in practice.

I was interested to observe the extent to which competition is influential in the lesson because (as I have argued throughout) the coaching paradigms are based around sport and competing. I was also interested in how often the horse was the focus of the lesson from which I would be able to explore the extent to which de Kunffy’s statement is an accurate description of the riding lessons observed. The focus on the horse will also allow me to consider the aspects of Equitation Science through an analysis of how the rider is being taught to ride the horse. Participants’ use of alternative curricula also led me to include how often the rider is mentioned in the teaching practice, and these findings will also be discussed in the chapter.

**How Aspects of the Syllabi are Addressed in the Observed Lessons**

*Initial Opening – Outline of the Lesson*

At the first two levels of the accreditation the mainstream syllabi require an outline of the lesson plan to be written and given to the assessors. The teachers are then expected to outline their plan to the students prior to the lesson. From the thirty seven participants teaching riding, five were observed to outline the lesson. These participants were two elite riders, another participant who had accreditation from the college system and two others who had the first level accreditation but were working
with an alternative syllabus. Their clients were told ‘I have a plan A and a Plan B today we are going to try depending on how he’s going’ (E: 35:3) and ‘today we are going to …’ (A:36; 1:1:A; 1:3; E:13:1) and outlined the lesson. Ten participants opened the lesson by asking how the horse was going, whilst five did not open the lesson at all. Eight participants asked about the last or next competition and seven about what the rider wanted to do in the lesson. The remainder discussed other issues with their client, for example a new bit being used on the horse, and two participants asked what I wanted to see.

The syllabi state that the planning for the lessons should indicate continuity and the plans should show progress through the different levels of difficulty for the horse and/or rider (www.bhs.org.au). The West Australian trainees are expected to be able to show good time management skills and keep the tasks progressing (www.equestrian.org.au, 2006). In order for this to occur there needs to be planning and this is problematic if the lesson is planned prior to the outset of the lesson. Riders can come for a lesson on a different horse to the one the teacher plans. One student was heard say ‘I thought I’d ride her today because …’ (3:30) and one teacher told me prior to the start of the lesson ‘I thought I was taking her for a flat work lesson and now she tells me she wants to jump’ (17:1). The teacher’s time is valuable and therefore the concept of planning the lesson prior to the start of the lesson is not always useful, especially when their teaching skills enable them to plan during the warming up phase of the lesson, as was observed.

Observations indicate the concept of outlining the lesson plan prior to undertaking it, as required in the syllabi, is not necessarily done in a practical setting. However, this does not mean the teachers did not plan what they were going to teach. Organisation and planning of the lesson was often done during the warm up phase of horse and rider, hence there was evidence of planning in all the lessons. This included how the exercises were used to develop and build skills. Based on the observations, how the teacher opens their lessons is indicative of a curriculum style irrespective of accreditation level or the syllabus being followed. This aspect became relevant later in my analysis when considering patterns and themes.
Reflection and Flexibility

The British curriculum asks candidates to continually self-assess and analyse in order to adapt their coaching programme to ‘ensure both horse and rider perform at their best’ (www.bhs.org.uk/syllabus. pp. 4, 5, 7, 13). This indicates the teacher has to consider what they are asking in the lesson and reflect on the outcomes. The reflection used in the lesson was ‘reflection in action (Burns, 2002, p. 328). The teacher observed the results of their actions, through the practice of the horse and rider, and then reflected on the outcomes, which influenced their next direction. They could continue with the exercise they were using relying on repetition to create improvement ‘come again’ (E:12:1; E:13:1) ‘do/try that again’ (1:2:A; 2:26), or change the exercise ‘no that’s not working let’s go back and …’ (A:36). The latter example suggests the teacher suggested an easier exercise and then built back to where things had gone wrong later in the lesson. Another example of making changes after assessment of the results was when a horse had become tense and anxious with what was being asked and the rider was asked to ‘take him out of the arena, take him for a trot around the field’ (E:35:3). This allowed both the horse and rider to relax and de-stress.

Reflection and a flexible approach creates a duality of learning, the teacher also becomes the learner. They learn from their actions by reflecting on the result, which shapes their immediate and future responses. ‘I remember a horse who did this and so I knew if I did that it would probably work’ (1:20; A:36). Flexibility in the lesson requires the teacher to have sufficient knowledge to be able to assess and change upon reflection, and the majority indicated this aspect successfully. All the lessons indicated flexibility and reflection. The teachers considered what was occurring and made changes as and when they were required. What the teachers reflected on was based upon their curriculum, for example some reflected on how the horse was working and ways to make changes to create a better outcome for the horse and rider in the lesson, whilst others considered how the horse was working with regard to the next competition. There were also those who reflected on how their client was riding and considered ways of improving their positional skills and abilities. Therefore, the directive of the syllabi that ask for the rider’s position to be a factor was observed in these lessons.
Organisation of the Lessons

The duration of the lesson varied from thirty minutes to three quarters of an hour and or an hour. The accreditation assessment for the West Australian syllabus is that the lesson is 40-50 minutes whereas the English syllabus requires a lesson of 20-30 minutes. Irrespective of the time allowed the lessons were well-structured and well organised, whether they were undertaken as a flat lesson or over fences. The structure of the lessons indicated improvement for the rider and or horse with a progressive approach. Easier exercises for the horse and rider were used to work toward more the more difficult tasks, which were undertaken toward the close of the lesson, thus the lessons finished positively.

The lessons were organised with a warm-up period where the teacher assessed their client and discussed things that had occurred outside the lesson, and expectations for the lesson. Exercises were then used to build on expertise with the horse/rider resting periods being used to discuss aspects of the lesson and plan the progress. The resting periods were predominantly teacher initiated; however, some teachers did ask the rider ‘do you want a break now?’ (2:10:A). There were lessons with few rest periods where the horse and rider worked for the majority of the time, only discussing the outcomes at the end. Whether the horse and rider finished the lesson hot and sweating or not, all the riders observed indicated they were happy with the lesson.

The transference of knowledge

The nature of the feedback indicated the different occasions when teaching, coaching and instruction were taking place in the lesson and where it was aimed, for example the rider position or the horse movement. Instruction, in the form of a two way dialogue between the rider and the teacher, was observed in all the lessons. Discussions took place whilst the riders worked and more extensive feedback given at rest periods. Three participants gave feedback at the end of the lesson and suggested work to be done at home (E:11; A:14; 3:11:E). Five participants used feedback suggesting the influence of the theory of training the horse through negative reinforcement, and although this was an expectation of those following the
Equitation Science methods two participants who were grouped as elite did not mention this. The observations therefore suggest that these high level riders did not necessarily understand the theory of how the horse learns despite their riding achievements.

In order to give feedback the teacher has to be able to see what is happening, therefore the position they take in the arena is a factor. All the participants moved at some stage, none was totally static. Twenty chose to take a central position in the arena with four standing at the edge of the arena. Seven\textsuperscript{111} sat and six were very mobile and were constantly moving. The position of the teacher is important to enable them to view all aspects of the rider’s position. If the teacher adopts a static position there are instances when they are unable to see the results of their instructions. For example unless the teacher stands behind the rider, perhaps as they ride down the long side of the arena, they are not able to notice if the rider is collapsing to one side, or what position the outside leg has adopted. Mirrors around the arena can help with this but only a small portion of the arena is covered and the majority of arenas did not have mirrors.

*Feedback To and From the Horse*

The most extensive feedback given to the riders was from the horse. Questions regarding what the rider felt, did you feel that, were constant throughout all the lessons. It was agreed by those I asked that feel could be taught and this is why it was a predominant question asked in all the lessons. What and how the rider feels makes the horse the primary source for giving feedback. I was told ‘*being able to make progress in some little way whether it’s that feeling, which to me is really important. That with the feedback and the talking that you start to get feedback that indicates to you that the rider is developing that understanding of one thing*’ (1:3:A).

Riding is skill based, and the purpose of the riding lesson is to attain skills. These are achieved through the rider feeling what is considered correct practice and this requires the reactions from the horse to be considered. While ‘*there are some*’

\textsuperscript{111} Three of the seated participants were teaching clinics and were teaching for a number of hours in succession. One had sustained an injury and did tell me that usually she moved around the arena more.
horses who are very easy with their feedback’ (E:35:3) all will give some. Throughout the lessons the teacher could be heard saying ‘good boy/girl, yes good, well done’ when the horse responded to the rider’s wishes. In this way the feedback to the rider is through the response from the teacher corresponding with what they feel from the horse. For example, a rider was told ‘I don’t know why he has to go round in medium trot all the time’ (E:1:19) The teacher is telling the rider, albeit indirectly, that the trot was not a correct working trot, which was expected, whilst also indicating what the trot rhythm actually was (medium). The teacher then helped the rider achieve a trot rhythm that was more correct. This rider was then able to adjust the trot and was told ‘yes that’s better, good’ (E:1:19).

Another participant was heard to say ‘yes that was good, did you tell her that?’ (3:28). Understanding the need to give the horse reward for correct work with a pat or soft voice was apparent in all the lessons. Two higher level teachers (one from England and the other from Western Australia), who were not involved with the Equation Science method (McGreevy and McLean, 2010), indicated an understanding of using one aid at a time, ‘remember hand no leg, leg no hand’ (11:3). However, negative reinforcement, which is the way the horse learns to respond correctly following the correct application of pressure and release from the rider, was not observed.

The theory of negative reinforcement was incorrectly given in lessons by those not following the theory. Poor timing of the aids, incorrect position of the rider and gadgets not allowing for release to be implemented, even if it is understood, was observed as a widespread practice. Many told the rider to allow (the hand) although the timing of the aid was often incorrect. Reward for good work, by using a relaxation period immediately after good work, was not observed, and therefore, the data substantiates previous research by concluding the theory is not fully understood or used correctly in the teaching practice.

All the participants in the study stated they would, or did demonstrate on the horse at some time in the lessons, while the student watched and then attempted to replicate. Using the horse indicates the participant’s demonstrating is an example of transference of knowledge as described previously using the theory proposed by
Bandura. It can be argued that watching and replicating is a form of rote teaching (Burns, 2002), however it allows the rider to see what is expected and to begin the process of understanding from which deeper learning may occur. If the rider is a visual learner then being able to see what the teacher is doing will help with the explanations they give. Following the explanations will then allow the rider to feel the response from the horse and then be able to continue to ride in this way after the lesson.

If the teacher rides the horse they will get a feel of what the horse is doing which will help with the understanding of what the rider may be feeling. Often what the teacher is seeing is not what the rider is feeling: by riding the horse they can then feel and plan how best to teach the rider. Many of the participants said they had ridden the horse I was observing. Other participants had sufficient knowledge to be able to ‘ride the horse from the ground’ without actually needing to get on it because they ‘know what it will be like to ride it and exactly what response it will give when the rider rides in a certain way, and so what the rider is feeling’ (E:15; E:32:1). When riding the horse in the lesson the teacher may also be teaching the horse, after which it is then able use a learned response to subsequently give feedback to the rider, who then knows what feels correct. By creating correct feel during the lesson it is hoped that the same can be replicated when the student is riding outside the lesson.

**Feedback to the Rider**

In the same way that correct timing of the feedback is important to the horse, it is also important for the rider if learning is to take place. Praise should be given for the smallest of improvements (Burns, 2002) but if over enthusiasm for praise blurs the meaning of the feedback, it is ineffective. This is especially true when praise and correction are juxtaposed. For example feedback from a lesson was ‘yes very good, yes, good, not much quarters in ...’ (1:21). The feedback in this instance signified nothing to the rider, because of the timing of the comments which did not indicate which part was good and which part was not. Thus the feedback in this instance did not improve the exercise; the rider was left with little understanding of the movement, or how to improve the areas that were not correct, and more importantly had gained no feel from which to reflect upon for future riding. The rider should
understand what particular aspect was a good job, or which part of the exercise was good. It is written extensively in the lay literature that riding a horse is all about timing the aids, and therefore the feedback that was required in this instance was instruction: the rider should have been told that the movement was deteriorating exactly when the quarters were going in, and immediately how to correct the mistake. In this way the rider would feel when things were wrong, what they did to correct it and finally how it felt when it was correct. Thus specific points of instruction during the exercise would have enhanced learning.

One participant did give visual feedback by drawing on the ground the movement they wanted for the dressage test. I asked her about this in the interview and she told me ‘I’m a visual learner and find it better to understand. If I can see it [but] if I don’t draw it for the kids and try to explain it they have no idea so I draw it in the sand’ (NQ:16). Three participants, whose focus was on biomechanics of the rider, used videos to augment their explanation; two used the video in the lesson as well as for a discussion aid later. Visual feedback was also used through reference to the horse’s anatomy to indicate correctness during the lesson. The rider was asked to look at the horse’s neck muscles so they could say to themselves ‘oh yes if that bit of its body looks like that it must be right’ (E:13:1). When I discussed this in the interview I was told that it was ‘because feeling clues are not enough. Because it takes so long for a feel to become established whereas if you can say to them ‘see this muscle in the horse’s neck? If that muscle is that shape this is what your horse is doing and so they can glance down and go ‘oh that muscle’s there this is good’ (E:13:1). The use of visual feedback indicates understanding of different learning styles.

A scaffolding approach would indicate the feedback is leading toward self-direction (Harris et al., 1995), an expectation of the mainstream syllabi. Discussions with the teachers at the higher level of accreditation indicated some were aware of the need for scaffolding, stating their aim was ‘to teach them so that they could do it without me’ (3:28) and to ‘be able to do it at home when I’m not there’ (1:5:A:1). I was told the ‘aim was to say less in the lesson’ (3:30) and this was observed with the more experienced (higher accredited) teachers. In four of the observation lessons the teachers were asked by their pupils if they would be at a certain competition and if
they could ‘help me work in’ (NQ:38). I discussed this with a participant (not one of the four examples in the observations) who said ‘if [the teacher] warmed me up before a competition it was always ten times better’ (E:19:1). If the teacher is ‘over intense’ and ‘dictates every single move’ the rider makes then this can lead to the rider ‘doing what they say rather than thinking about what you are doing’ and next day the rider thinks ‘what on earth was I doing yesterday?’112 (E:19:1)

Participants all gave positive feedback to reinforce behaviour. However, for positive feedback to work in the initial learning process, according to Burns (2002) it needs to be meaningful. Meaning is arbitrary and whether the feedback was meaningful for the pupils is unknown (without discussion with them). The data suggests feedback could be considered through the teachers accreditations, for example it was observed those who were qualified at the first two accreditation levels (not including elite riders in this group) were more inclined to give feedback that was:

- Over enthusiastic and use conflicting instructions
- Over burdening the riders with complexity
- Focussing on the obvious problems.

The style in which feedback was reciprocal between rider and teacher was most evident in those using the alternative syllabi. Words and phrases outlined in the texts (from the primary source) were used when teaching. It was not only the alternative syllabi that led to replication. It was also evident in teaching practice when watching participants teaching and then watching other participants who are pupils of these participants also teaching. For example words and phrases used by the higher accredited teacher or elite rider were being used by their students (also participants) when they were they were observed teaching. When I discussed this the higher level teachers were aware they were creating ‘mini mes’ (2:8) and their students said they ‘can hear myself saying things that [he] says to me, but I quite like that’. Not only was the language similar but the style of teaching also flowed down.

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112 This is a participant discussing another participant from the study – a teacher responding to their teacher.
Thus the pedagogy and personal curriculum of the teacher was reflected in how their pupils practised. Sometimes this was successful, in that the interpretation maintained the concepts whilst applying them into different circumstances, but not always.

All the lessons were conducted using a mix of instruction and coaching as a means of transferring knowledge. However in many lessons instructions were given quickly and there was often insufficient time for the rider to act upon the directions before they were given more. Not only did the rider have insufficient time to respond, the horse’s response was not considered because the teacher had no time to assess the response before the next instruction was given. During the interview participants said they were aware ‘they said too much’ (1:20). I would argue the abundance of feedback was due to their enthusiasm. However it also indicates a lack of awareness of how learning occurs. Therefore, if they were aware of how the rider and horse learn it was not necessarily being shown in this lesson.

The BHS syllabus asks the trainee to have enthusiasm and be motivational but it is unclear how this can be tested. What the teacher considers to be motivating the rider may not. However they can assess how the rider has understood what they have been working on in the lesson at the end. All the syllabi expectations are for a discussion between the pupil and teacher at the end of the lesson. This aspect was not conducted as per the syllabi requirements, which states ‘outlining progress achievements and development’ (www.bhs.org.au, n.d. n.p.), giving a ‘lesson summary’, and ‘questioning the rider to assess their understanding of the skills they have learnt’ (www.equestrian.org.au, 2006, n.p). If the teacher in the above example had discussed this perhaps the rider would have achieved clarity. Discussion did take place at the end of all the lessons. However, without discussing this with the pupils it is unclear if the questions and answers created further clarity about what was learned.

Safety

Safe practice is fundamental in all the syllabi and each stresses the importance of lessons being conducted in a safe environment using safe practice. Four of the lessons, ranging through the accreditations, could be questioned with regard to safety issues. For example, arena gates being left open, cups without poles
being left on jump stands and dogs running around the arena were all observed. Rider safety could have been improved for some riders if their stirrups were shorter, whilst others would have benefitted from riding without stirrups or going on the lunge to improve balance and position. However, there is juxtaposition between what is considered safe practice and the requirements of teaching riding skills. I discussed the issue of safety and skill attainment with the participants during the interviews.

Six of the observed lessons involved more than one rider. Safety in group lessons requires the teacher to be mindful of distances between each rider and how exercises affect each member of the group. Only one lesson was ‘at times chaotic’ (my observation notes) whilst the others managed the group safely by using individual exercises while the others watched (in theory) and rested. Comments were made if the riders were ‘getting too close’ (1:1:A).

Some of the riders came into the arena mounted, while others were helped to mount either by parents or the teacher. Two participants checked the gear before the start of the lesson and others told me at interview they expect the rider to do this at ‘this level to know how to put the gear on their horse’ (2:6:1:1:1). Five participants checked the rider’s girth at some point in the lesson, despite all the riders being reasonably competent to assess their own girths for tightness. Safety could be observed in the majority of the lessons through the personal curriculum of the teacher in which they timed the exercises to suit the situation. Exercises were devised following assessment of the horse and riders, for example one participant worked very slowly because the horse ‘is rather tense today ... and needs a bit of time to settle’ (3:30). The teacher dealt with another tense horse in the lesson by telling the rider ‘you know when to ask [for canter]’ (E:35:3) because the rider knew the horse better than they did. At other observations a rider was told to ‘watch the cows in the next field’ (2:2:A), while conversely in another lesson horses in the adjoining field were ignored by the teacher when they stood close to the arena and often had their heads over the arena rails.

What is or is not done in the lesson is at the teacher’s discretion. ‘I wouldn’t push anyone to do anything that I didn’t think I knew that they could do. I’m a firm believer of that. You can judge. I can judge what someone can do or a horse can do
and child because I will equally stop the small child jumping too big when they’re saying ‘I can do this, I can jump this’ because they get too confident and I know that it’s not going to work. I would rather everyone went away feeling confident not having gone too far and going back’ (2:24). I always say to them now are we all right to canter? and at C*\textsuperscript{113} level where they have to take their stirrups away ‘are we all happy to?’ and if they say ‘no’ then I’ll say ‘well you leave your stirrups while we do this.’ Then at the end I usually say to them ‘now would you like to have a turn at it or would you like to leave it at that or go home and have a practice at it where you feel you are safe, or put a strap around the neck to hold onto’ (1:4).

Riding without stirrups is part of the practice that allows the rider to develop their balance and have a better feel of their position. I was told how ‘people’s balance is definitely not as good as it used to be because you can’t – well you could ride without stirrups’ (E:22:1). Riding without stirrups can generate confidence however it also exposes the rider’s inabilities, for example when they rock forward or slide to one side. Riding without stirrups allows the rider to develop what is known as a deep seat, from which they attain better feel from the horse. However I was told ‘it’s really hateful you know to have to think twice before you take stirrups away from kids’ (E:11).

One of the observed lessons opened with the riders walking around the indoor school with their feet out of the stirrups to ‘stretch and relax your legs’ (1:1:A). One participant jumped the rider without stirrups but the rider’s heightened tension during the exercise made the horse tense so they were told to ‘take him out of the arena and we’ll work in the flat work area’ (1:5). Another rider was asked to ‘take your stirrups away’ (2:6:1:1) after the working in period in which the teacher could assess if it was safe to do so. Another said ‘for me they have to have done their time without stirrups’ (2:8).

I discussed riding without stirrups with each of the participants in the interviews and their responses varied. When I asked whether riding without stirrups impacted on skills I was told ‘yes definitely’ (3:30). The participant explained, ‘the

\textsuperscript{113} C* is a Pony Club accreditation for junior riders that indicates a certain level of competence.
BHS would be irresponsible if they didn’t promote that [safety] but I think that a lot of people who aren’t in the BHS think that’s what it’s all about ‘oh you can’t do anything because it’s unsafe’. And I think that’s a big problem. It goes back to the dressage riders who won’t jump. It’s the same thing (changing the system to suit the dressage riders because they won’t jump). It’s all about safety but it doesn’t actually produce riders’ (3.30). Even though riding without stirrups was considered to be necessary it is the teacher who has to decide if the circumstances are safe enough to allow pupils to do this or not. Another participant stated ‘by the time they are your students and they are one on one then you have an understanding of what they are or are not capable of. Then you would take them so slowly that [in the end] you would get them to have no stirrups – it might take you six months but eventually they would have no stirrups. And that’s you taking them down that journey’ (1:2:A).

Eleven of the lessons observed included jumping at some stage. The safety component in the jumping lessons was observed (with one exception in a lesson given by an elite rider) through a gradual progression taking the horse and rider toward more complex or higher jumps from initial low jumps and simple jumping exercises. During a cross country lesson the rider was told to ‘watch the shadows with that jump’ (E:22:1) as the sun became lower. All the riders were considered with regard to the jumps. They were asked if they were ‘alright for you?’ (E:12). I discussed this with a participant and was told they were more conscious of safety ‘than I ever was. I’ll not push people beyond their comfort zone as I used to. I say go on do that, and if they say put it down I’ll put it down’ (2:25).

Safety was often cited as the reason for not teaching certain exercises they themselves had done as pupils, which were deemed to develop skills. Specific exercises they had been given when learning to ride would not be used because they could be considered unsafe practice even though they had taught them previously. For example when discussing the Pony Club I was told ‘we used to do things where they were jumping without reins, without stirrups, without saddles, backwards, you know and you can’t now... however there is some compromise in they did do without reins, but they kept their stirrups, whereas before you had to do it without both’ (2:23). I asked what the participant thought about this and was told ‘it is sad because they don’t have that confidence and when you take the stirrups away or you take the
reins away they have a panic attack’. When I asked another participant about jumping without reins and stirrups I was also told they are ‘not allowed to, not allowed to do that at all. The riders themselves have lost the bravado that we all grew up with’ (2:6:1). ‘They’re not as brave as they were (E:19:1). I asked if this made them more cautious in their teaching and was told ‘yes I think I’m probably a little bit more cautious. I don’t know I think people have changed. I don’t know why. I don’t get many [name of a rider] but surely when we were younger there were more kids like that [name of a rider]. Well we were like that’ (E:19:1). Even a younger participant stated that ‘it’s very rare that you would make people jump without stirrups or without reins’ (1:11:E). ‘A coach would be a pretty brave man to do what those coaches used to do in those days …the first full day we rode without stirrups. …then you did dressage and all your jumping without stirrups, now today if anyone fell off … today you couldn’t do it so there was a lot of that type of thing. Jumping down jumping lanes with no stirrups no reins and things like that, all that stuff. Cantering round bull rings, jumping fences in bull rings without stirrups and holding the mane, basically forcing you to sit in a balanced position’ (E:12:1).

It appears that safety is considered differently ‘sometimes they still do things like that [jumping without stirrups and reins] but I wouldn’t do things like that in the Pony Club rally. I wouldn’t make them jump without their stirrups and things. [Name of a teacher] will still make them he’ll still get them doing things like that but I don’t think I would dare. But I would make [name of her son] do that if he was on his own. But you just think if they fell off they’d [the parents] think ‘well I don’t know what the instructor thought they were doing making you do that’ (1:20). Another participant described how she had been taught to ride. ‘We used to ride without stirrups for the whole hour with no stirrups. We weren’t allowed stirrups we did the whole lesson with no stirrups … I don’t risk it, I won’t risk it for myself I won’t risk that for my family or anyone … But yes we used to take stirrups off the kids and jump grids. We used to train with a cross country grid – fixed; no reins no stirrups. You see you couldn’t do that now. Crazy. And that’s why the kids aren’t getting the same skills, they’re not. It’s a dangerous sport and you’re not going to change that. You’re not going to make it any safer, in fact you make it more dangerous if you don’t train the kids in the right way. But we can’t … you can’t do it. I used to take the stirrups off kids and get them going round….’ (A:41). I was told ‘we did it as a part of the
lesson. You warmed your horse up and you did 5-10 minutes without your stirrups with every lesson that you did. We had it done to us and we still do it. Unless they have a reason not to, then I can take all of their stirrups away and they don’t even think about it. They are quite happy’ (E:11).

Riding is a risky sport and safety is dependent on the rider training the horse to be safe and the teacher has a responsibility to generate safe riding. Safety was cited by the teacher when I asked why the horse was being ridden in draw reins. I was told ‘the horse can explode and take off with her’ (E32:1). Despite the lesson being conducted in a fully enclosed indoor school the teacher considered it a safe option irrespective of the welfare of the horse.

*Personal skills employed into the teaching practice*

I was interested to observe how much personal riding skills and experience were used in teaching. I found in many of the lessons the teachers at each level were able to give help because they themselves had experience of similar situations. Participants told me later how they could ‘remember a horse that did that’ (A:36; 1:20) and would then use their own experience to help the pupil. I heard them give information on how to ride certain dressage movements or jump a fence that could only have come from personal experience. Three of the participants had schooled the horses for their clients and therefore they could help them using the knowledge they had gained when training the horse. Others used their knowledge as competitive riders to give inside information as to how to ride certain fences or movements. For example ‘yes that’s the Osberton trot’ (E:32:1),114 which indicates the teacher was aware what trot was needed for that competition either because they rode or judged. They used their personal skill to help the rider. Also pupils were told that ‘when I ride this I do …’ (1:20; 1:21) or ‘if you do that there the judge can’t see you doing it’ (2:25). The format of the Australian syllabus indicates that personal knowledge is important. I was told the requirements of the syllabus has changed because it was age restrictive. ‘If you decide at a later age to become a coach you can’t because it is too late to be going around jumping high fences two and three star that kind of thing.

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114 Osberton being the place in which the rider was competing.
But what they have changed now is that you don’t have to have competed at but you have to show it [the skill] at that level. So you can borrow a horse and go and show it at the level. But you still have to go and gallop around big two star jumps out in the paddock’ (2:6:1). Whether this knowledge is a necessary requirement for good teaching is uncertain. The participants all stated a good rider did not necessarily make a good teacher, however personal observations showed that the higher the standard of rider, with some accreditation training, the better the teacher.

The influence of competition on the lesson

How competition impacts on the lesson is important for understanding the role of the coaching syllabi in which one of the functions of the coach is to generate skills to compete. I ticked and commented each time competition was mentioned in the lesson by either the student or teacher. Competition was a driving factor for many students. Everyone observed teaching, and who I interviewed, mentioned their involvement in competing at some stage, and 80 per cent of the lessons were planned around competition. This ranged from an initial opening of ‘how did he go at the last week’ (A:17) ‘when’s the next outing?’ (2:6:1:1) to the whole lesson being conducted around a dressage test and other aspects of preparation for a competition, for example practising coming down the centre line and halting with the teacher telling the rider to ‘look up to the judge’ (1:4).

Of the sixteen lessons observed in Western Australia only two did not contain any aspect of competition at all and although one teacher did not have competition as an influencing factor it was mentioned to clarify their disagreement about the treatment that horses go through to compete. In the English group, five of the lessons had no component of competition in them; however this may have been a function of the lessons observed. Interviewing the teachers four of them did mention competition as a focus for other clients. ‘Definitely, I have quite a few people approach me at competitions who say ‘do you train people will you take me on?’ (NQ:38)\(^{115}\) and ‘the main competition people that I teach’ (A:36). During the conversation around the standard of competition riding I was told ‘I would love to get to more of those riders’

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\(^{115}\) This participant did not hold a qualifciation i.e. NQ.
(A:41) with regard to improving their positions. When discussing goals with another participant the response was ‘the goals would be more competition’ (E:19:1).

The observed lessons and discussions indicated the competition factor is driven by the rider. However the teacher also needs to be compliant with this underlying aspect and base the lesson around competing. When discussing this aspect I was told ‘I always thought that the more competitive somebody was the better they learnt but I don’t think that’s really true. Sometimes it can become the be all and end all and it’s the only thing they focus on and they kind of miss out on the in-between, which goes back to our saying the basics aren’t there anymore’ (E:19:1).

The client may seek out the teacher for lessons because of their success as competition riders, and in the lessons the teacher’s expertise can be used to help generate skills; however it does not guarantee the teacher will be good at transferring their knowledge. The teacher needs to have good teaching skills and competition augments these skills. Some participants suggested I watched more than one lesson and therefore I was able to notice how they changed their teaching practice to suit the rider. For example one teacher focused the lesson on competition with a client who was working toward a competition goal, but changed the focus with another client. Therefore I was able to observe different practice that related to the expectations of the rider.

Pedagogy is constructed from the personal curriculum, as well as from a prescribed syllabus. The syllabi do not take this into account, and all lessons indicated a pedagogical approach that at some point in the lessons was directed at creating a partnership between the horse and rider. During the observations I noted where the focus for the lesson was and how the skills were taught to indicate the teacher’s personal curriculum. For example if the horse’s trot was slow the comment from a teacher whose focus was horse based may be to tell the rider to ride him forward more, whereas if the teacher whose focus was on the rider when using the same example may instruct the rider to use more lower leg. An analysis, undertaken by counting the ticks in the boxes, revealed sixteen of the lessons indicated a balanced mixture of rider and horse correction, with twelve giving prominence for instruction related to the horse and eight focusing more on the rider.
The Focus of the Lesson: The Horse

Twelve of the participants were observed giving a horse focused lesson. Horse focused lessons were not discipline or gender specific, and were observed at all levels of accreditation. This style of lesson was seen when the feedback was to predominantly use the horse as the focal point of instruction to the rider. An example would be when giving praise as observed the teacher saying ‘good boy’ (1:21), when the rider was a girl. Other indications would be when the teacher tells the rider ‘he’s got to’ (NQ:38) (E:19:1) or ‘don’t be at him all the time’ (2:24) or ‘right leg, she needs not to lie on it’ (3:28), thus instructing the rider with relation to the horse. In two of the lessons the teachers walked round and held the horse’s head down in what is perceived correct position for a dressage test.

The horse focused riding lessons place the teacher in the role as the trainer in that their concern is training the horse. It was argued by participants that the focus on the horse was because it was their (the teacher’s) interest and passion. The concept behind these lessons was; if they (the teacher) could get the horse going correctly, then it would be easier for the rider to become correct (a theory opposite to those who give rider focused lessons). One pupil was told ‘for forty five minutes you have to be in control of your body, why does the horse have to take your responsibility?’ (2:8)

The horse focused lessons worked when teaching was at the higher levels of accreditation or the teacher was an elite rider because they had the knowledge to understand what the problems with the horse were, and to fix them via the rider. I was told during interview that they ‘rode the horse from the ground’ (E:32:1). This style also worked well when the rider’s position needed little correction, thus giving the rider the feel of the correctness of the horse’s movements. However, this approach to the lesson did not work when the level of the teacher and standard of rider was lower. For example on one occasion when the horse’s response was not as expected there was a pause in the dialogue and the rider was left for a period without any instruction, and without sufficient knowledge they were not able to correct the problems.
At the lower and mid-levels of expertise the teachers were more comfortable teaching the horse than the rider. Often rider problems went uncorrected or unnoticed and when the riders’ positions were mentioned it was the obvious faults that were pointed to as opposed to the deeper problems. The syllabi have rider positional topics and therefore, the participant would have been assessed on this issue. Therefore, the bias toward teaching the horse is a choice of teaching style; however specialising in this way is problematic when riding skills are an issue.

The Focus of the Lesson: The Rider

Eight participants observed gave lessons which were predominantly rider focused. Four of these lessons were from the participants who were following the alternative paradigms relating to (rider) biomechanics, the other four were a second level, a first level, an elite and college graduate. At the start of the lessons the riders were halted and the teacher physically put them into the correct position after which their positions were constantly being addressed, thus they are following the syllabus. The learning was not dynamic but static learning; in which the horse could be considered a conduit for skill attainment similar to that of the machine horse. The theory in these lessons is the rider influences the horse. Therefore, the rider position has to be correct in order for the horse to be able to perform in a variety of, and viable, conditions.

Rider focused lessons that I observed often followed the alternative syllabi and therefore the language used followed the lineage from which it was derived. Although the teachers had put their own mark on the language by changing terms and phrases, it was predominantly language that used metaphors derived by the originator of the syllabus. It was explained to me that the students were not new to the metaphorical language, and as such there was no need for lengthy explanations for their understanding of the terminology (although I was often bemused by some of it and needed to refer to the texts after the lessons). For example, ‘watch your left board’ and ‘bear down’ (A:41).

Teaching by following the alternative syllabi of Wanless and Swift resulted in the teacher micromanaging the rider. However, unlike other lessons where the
instructions were too numerous for the rider to evaluate and act upon what was said, these styles did allow time for the rider to address the comments physically and verbally. A two way conversation was used throughout with questions and answers, questions and questioning thus avoiding misconceptions and assumptions for example ‘did you notice how? … Can you tell me what/how? (A:41; 2:10:A)

The style of the lesson meant progress was slow, thus the observation supported the comment discussed previously by a participant when considering alternative syllabi. However, there was an improvement in the rider and this could be seen in the horse’s response. I also thought at times the language was condescending, and this could be problematic in creating enthusiasm for this type of lesson with established riders. When interviewing the participants I was told that not everything the originators prescribed worked for them and they created their own curricula around the concepts taking what worked for them and ignoring or limiting aspects in the lesson that did not.

Six of the lessons focused on physically altering the rider’s position, four of which were following the biomechanics style of teaching. Two teachers (not using a biomechanics syllabus) used exercises to improve aspects of the rider’s posture during the lesson. However it was the directions to the riders that prevailed in this style of lesson. Many riders were told to soften various parts of their body for example ‘the elbow’ (1:3) or ‘hands’ (1:20). Teachers moved around to check positions from different areas of the arenas and the riders were given instruction with regard to their position throughout the lesson ‘lift the upper body’ (E:32:1) and ‘relax the shoulders’ (3:30). I asked a participant how much time they spent on the rider in the lesson and was told ‘probably to be honest not enough. Tend to try and get the result with the horse but the rider has to do with the horse but probably should do more. Depends if they’ve got reasonable seat and reasonable feel then you can do more than if a rider is stiff as a board, then you have to do something. It’s developing the feel at the end of the day; if they feel it’s right they can do something about it. It’s when they can’t feel what it’s like then you have to go back to more basics’ (2:25). The participants were all aware of their teaching focus. ‘I teach my lessons very much on the horse and not the person’ (E:19:1).
The focus of the lessons was not based on the level of accreditation of the teacher and the skill level of the rider. The highly accredited teachers did not necessarily teach the most skilful riders and therefore I can conclude that the focus on the horse or rider was teacher led as opposed to rider led.

**The Focus of the Lesson: Partnership**

Although all the teachers had the concept of creating a partnership between horse and rider in their lessons some focused more equally between working on the horse’s movement and the rider’s position. Sixteen of the lessons observed could be classed as partnership focused in that there was a balanced mix of teaching of riding skills and instructions to create a horse working toward the rider’s goals. These sixteen lessons were the most effective in transposing the concepts of the syllabi into practice.

In these lessons the rider was typically encouraged to think, reflect and discuss. The lesson would open by asking the rider ‘what do you want to work on today?’ (3:28; 2:6:1; 3:30), after which the goals would inform the curriculum and be part of the teacher’s lesson plan. The rider’s position and the movement of the horse were both commented upon and at the end of the lesson the rider would be more stretched (mentally and physically) with the horse also having worked but without force. The teacher allowed the rider time to undertake the instructions, reflect and feel the horse’s response with phrases such as ‘I’ll leave it to you to decide’ (3:30; E:35:3) thus adopting a coaching discourse and giving the rider the responsibility. Thus coaching was evident and this created learning that could be transposed to further practice outside the lesson. The lessons developed feel through discussion. The horse’s response to the rider’s aids, and body position were discussed and conversely their response to the horse’s response was also discussed.

As stated previously all the lessons had aspects of creating a partnership between the rider and the horse through rider position and horse movement and correlation between the two. Riders were told to ‘allow the hands to …’ (1:4) or ‘let him out’ (E:35:3), alerting the rider to how they are riding. ‘Under release there’ (E:12:1) was a comment to a rider jumping. One rider was told they had ‘got the
horse going well now you’ve got to look up and bend your elbow’ (2:25) thus the focus went from the work on the horse back to the rider.

Instructing, Coaching or Teaching

Accreditation is being politicised through the terminology that is associated with the title given to riding teachers. The term instructor and coach are terms that are associated with the person as opposed to their teaching style, which changes through the riding lesson. As discussed previously I define instructing, coaching and teaching as follows. For coaching open ended questions/discussions are used as opposed to the rider being given a command, which is instructional without any explanation as to the reason for the instruction. Giving reasons and explanations for the instruction is teaching. The choice of studying the two mainstream syllabi, one of which accredits instructors the other coaches has allowed me to study if there is a difference and the research indicates there is not. Both accredited coaches and accredited instructors taught and shifted between a coaching, teaching and instructing style and narrative.

Four of the lessons were coaching lessons involving questions and getting the rider to self-direct. Three of these were using the Ride With Your Mind syllabus and the other was a show-jumping lesson with two teenage girls who competed. The coach was an elite rider at the third level of accreditation in the British system.

No lesson was totally instructional, although instructions were given throughout. These could be in regard to directions ‘at B turn left’ (1:4) or ‘come down the centre line then …’ (1:2:A). There was a mixture of questioning (coaching) and direct instructions (instructing) in the lessons irrespective of level and syllabus. However teachers seemed not to wish to sound as if they were instructing which resulted in asking riders to ‘try and’ (A:36) or using rhetorical questions, for example ‘can you shorten your reins?’ (1:20) Another form of masking the instructions was by the teacher personalising the request for example many would say ‘I think you should’ or more specifically ‘I would’ (3:30; 2:10:A), again giving an instruction but with a realisation it should not be considered dictatorial.
The observations revealed the discourse used was irrespective of the syllabi and the level of rider. This indicated that the difference between the West Australian coach and the English instructor was both insignificant and unidentifiable. Therefore, the use of language cannot be considered to be related to the qualification and syllabus. However the concept of coaching for some has led to a vagueness in the language used in the riding lesson.

The Language: the Assumption of Knowledge and the Impact on Skills

Communication is the main instrument of teaching, and it is the essence of riding. The words used and how they are said will either create or inhibit understanding. Feel, if not intrinsic, can be a taught skill\textsuperscript{116} (Wanless, 2008). However to achieve this it is imperative to avoid assumptions. If the rider is to learn correct procedure, their cognition and skills should be at the same level as the language being used for teaching.

During the observations many of the riders were able to follow the instructions, but although some questioned and discussed issues for clarity many followed instructions without question (Wanless, 2008). It is therefore imperative the teacher explains their meaning and does not assume knowledge. In two separate observed lessons the riders (who were children) were told the pony was not ‘up in the back’ (NQ:16) or the horse was not ‘over the back’ (E:13:1). Neither rider questioned what was meant by these advanced statements. I would argue even if this had been explained previously the age and skill level of the rider and the complexity of the term would require continual reinforcement for understanding. Neither rider had sufficient feel or the correct horse/pony to feel and interpret the meaning on their own. However there was no explanation or corroboration of understanding asked for. This does not advance self-directed learning because the rider is not able to continue their learning independently at home or in a different setting (Candy, 1991).

\textsuperscript{116} Some riders have more feel than others and some will struggle to obtain what is natural for those deemed talented. However, they can be taught to feel.
Like many other subjects and disciplines equestrianism has its own language. For example, the word ‘push’ has a common usage but when used in equestrianism the meaning is to make the horse go, or get the rider to ride more strongly to create more impulsion from the horse. The teachers would use this common phrase in equestrianism telling the rider to ‘push him on [or] forward’ (E:32:1; 2:25; 2:6:1:1:1; 1:20), ‘push the bit up into his mouth’ (1:20), to insinuate the use of the leg with the assumption the rider would interpret the instruction as such. Without directions as to what was required with the instruction the rider would sit down heavily on the horse, with the conception of driving it forward with a heavy seat and body. This was especially seen prior to jumping the fence. The rider adopting this practice is hollowing their back to sit down deeper onto the horse’s back and driving the horse onto its forehand (Wanless, 2008). If they do this whilst at the same time pulling back on the reins, as observed in certain jumping lessons, the horse is receiving conflicting aids (McGreevy and McLean, 2010). Therefore, the instruction and lack of correction indicates the assumption of riders’ knowledge was incorrect, and the learning theories (McGreevy and McLean, 2010) of negative reinforcement are not understood by the teacher.

Other phrases that were used frequently by the participants were: ‘soften the hands’ (1:20), ‘hands really soft’ (1:1:A), ‘soften the left rein’ (17:1) thus assuming the rider will interpret this to mean relax. Riders were also asked to ‘quieten your hand’ (2:3:A) ‘keep the right hand quiet’ (2:7) and again the correct interpretation was assumed. The instructions given were in relation to incorrect riding, which required change. However, there were instances when the instruction could be interpreted incorrectly resulting in incorrect riding practice similar to the above example. Riders who were told to ‘try to relax’ (2:7; E:13:1; E:12:1) needed further explanation as to how, why and what areas of their bodies the instruction was being directed to. It is difficult to relax muscles whilst riding (von Dietze 1999) because of the involuntary movements created by the absorptions of the horse’s motion, therefore riders need to be made aware of their musculature on the horse. Even awareness of the body cannot always ensure an appropriate response to poor directions, for example an instruction in a lesson observed by the participant with the teacher asking the child to ‘draw your seat bones together’ (E:27:3), is a physical impossibility, both on or off the horse. Although elite riders do seem to be relaxed,
they are in fact using firm muscles to maintain the correct position (Wanless, 2008) and therefore being told to relax required further discussion.

‘Ride the horse more forward’ (2:B:25) is an example of a common term heard in many of the lessons, which is another example of the assumption that meaning is clear. Forward can be interpreted as the direction the horse goes in, but that is not what is meant. Even if the rider understands they are being asked to make the horse go more the word forward does not indicate how, for example, with impulsion, more energy, further reach, length of stride, or their tempo (Geary, 2010). By telling the rider the horse must go forward is reliant on their interpretation of what aspect of the pace is lacking. The observations showed that the interpretation was incorrectly translated in many lessons, resulting in unbalanced and tense horses running onto their forehands, unfortunately without corrections being given. Therefore, I can argue there was a lack of understanding of equestrian biomechanics and the correct interpretation of rhythm and impulsion at all levels of accreditation. This evidence suggests that the German theory was not correctly used, which is problematic when considering it is the theory that underpins the coaching syllabi.

The most misunderstood term used in all the lessons, and one often left to the rider’s interpretation, is ‘rounder’. The term is understood by many riders to mean getting the horse to bring their heads down and in toward their chest, thus rounding is seen in the neck. A lack of explanation as to why or how this was to be done led frequently to horses developing a false outline. Correct roundness delivers supple elastic strides and convex top line. The opposite is short, stiff strides and tight, hollow frame (Geary, 2010) and this was mostly seen in the lessons. Instruction from the teachers in many of the lessons were heard asking the rider to ‘make him/her round’ (NQ:16) or ‘the horse needs to be rounder’117, (E:33:2) or they would simply say ‘rounder’ (2:6). Even when the horse and rider complied the riders were not made aware that what they were feeling was incorrect and therefore, it can be assumed that their (both teacher and rider) interpretation of roundness was not correctly understood. Replication of what was taught in the lesson will continue to

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117 This term was given in too many lessons to specify any one particular teacher, but it was more common to those who taught the horse – a theme that will be discussed in the next chapter.
produce incorrect riding and training through this incorrect feel and flawed understanding. The issue was problematic at all levels of teaching and riding.

Many of the lessons observed were at a level in which the horse was working at a stage in its training where it was on its forehand. If the rider insists that the horse takes on the appearance of one that is at a higher stage of training, by creating a shorter rounder outline of its head and neck, the horse is working outside its physical ability at this time. Therefore the demands of the rider can only be achieved through force which involves the rider pulling the horses head in. What is actually happening is the rider is producing what is called a false frame. Unfortunately the false frame was seen all too often, with many riders going around in a false frame thinking the horse is on the bit. I have heard teachers (not in the observations) telling the riders that their horse is ugly when it is not in a rounded frame, thus a reason for poor practice. When I discussed this with one of my own students I was told they wanted the horse to go in this manner because ‘it looks pretty’. When the rider does not have the skill, time or patience to achieve the correct frame from the horse then they often turn to short-cuts to obtain this round effect. Short cuts can be in the form of gadgets, an aspect that will be discussed later. However gadgets were observed being used in the lessons.

Incorrect practice can also be taught through misunderstanding and/or poor communication. For many years I rode with overly long stirrups, having assumed this was the process of developing a deep seat. A rider I admired rode with what, in retrospect, were overly long stirrups, but as a teenager I copied this technique in the misapprehension that I would obtain a deep seat. At some point (again under the guise of deepening my seat) I was also taught to allow the joints of the leg to move to absorb the horse’s movements. This direction may have been due to tightness or stiffening, however it resulted in the release of the knee on and off the saddle thus opening and closing at the knee and hip joint with the weight going to the back rather

118 On the forehand means that the horse is carrying an inappropriate proportion of its weight on its forequarter, a posture that runs counter to impulsion, collection and self-carriage, which is the aim of the dressage rider.

119 On the bit is when there is a desired self-maintained position of the horse’s head and neck at all paces and movements, naturally achieved through correct training. The horse is accepting the contact (the bit) and aids from the rider in a calm relaxed and balanced manner in which it is relocating weight onto the hindquarters. See the glossary for more explanation of both terms.
than the point of the knee. The practice of gripping with the knees changed sometime in the 1970s (Wanless, 2008), and the change produced riders with an open or off the knee style, still seen in many riders today\textsuperscript{120} many of whom go uncorrected. Pluvinel taught that the heels turned towards the outside, what is termed the classical position (www.cadrenoir.co.uk), which has the effect of bringing the knee inward. Belton (2001) in the \textit{Principles of Riding} states that the rider’s knee and thigh should rest flat against the saddle, and de Kunffy (2003) states that if the knee is turned out it pinches the seat bones tightly together which is contrary to the correct wide distribution of the seat bones on either side of the saddle’s spine. Incorrect practice is due to the style being adopted as a riding technique and then it being passed onto other riders either through copying or incorrect teaching practice.

When I analysed the data from the observation check list to ascertain patterns and themes, the similarities and differences between the participants was difficult to attain based on the accreditation levels due to the blurring of qualifications. Some participants held more than one qualification, or followed an alternative syllabus, therefore making it impossible to establish which aspects of the lesson were generated by which training system. Similarly, elite riders who held a lower level of accreditation to their riding expertise were also problematic when considering their teaching practice. It was difficult to separate whether it was the syllabus that had influenced teaching or the high level of riding. Other aspects may impact on teaching practice, for example the participants who worked in other contexts. I asked a participant who also taught primary school if their teaching impacted on their equestrian teaching and was told ‘\textit{absolutely, and planning. Your planning of course. When we first went into Pony Club we had to plan all our lessons and then do it. Where now I just go out and have a look and think what am I going to do this time and I’ll see where they are up to and then I just go on and build on what I have got or go backwards and build them up to where I want them – using a skill from teaching I guess}’ (1:4). Another participant was involved in ‘\textit{sports counselling, which I now find my coaching integrates areas from all of them}’ (17:1), thus the interaction between disciplines will also impact on teaching practice.

\textsuperscript{120} Many of the riders being observed had this open knee style and none was correct.
From the forty one participants there were three pairings I was able evaluate using a cross syllabus analysis. The pairs are from the first and second levels and elite riders who also have the first level of accreditation. Although not intentional each pair is the same gender, thus despite the sample group being small, cross referencing the syllabi was undertaken to evaluate emerging patterns and themes. The analysis from the data in the first table has been used to understand if the lesson is conducted through a teaching, coaching or instruction model, and if the lesson is horse or rider focused. The data was taken where there were definite similarities and differences, which mean these tables do not always include the same issues, thus the components differ at each level. The second table is to indicate how the main aspects of the syllabus are interpreted by these participants and these tables do use the same components.

The observation results in the table below are with participants who have the first level of accreditation. The English participant was an active competitor and the West Australian participant had competed and now mentored younger competitors but no longer competed. An explanation of the data in the tables will follow to discuss similarities and differences found.

**Observations taken from the checklist**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>England</th>
<th>Western Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rider: young adult</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rider: young adult</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition focused lesson</td>
<td>Skills based lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected rider throughout</td>
<td>Corrected rider throughout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praised the horse</td>
<td>Praised the rider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less flexible – rider tired</td>
<td>Flexible when things went wrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lots of discussion – questions answers</td>
<td>Lots of discussion – questions/answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less repetition but used</td>
<td>Use of repetition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEACHING</strong></td>
<td><strong>TEACHING</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Observation results of the first level of accreditation
The two lessons had a period of warming up for the horse and rider. The English rider discussed what they (the rider) wanted to focus on in the lesson, whereas the West Australian rider was directed by the teacher because they were not competing and working on skill attainment. This would suggest that the English lesson was rider oriented and the West Australian teacher oriented.

Safety could be considered an issue with the English lesson due to horses in the next field. However, the lesson was conducted at a home venue for the rider and therefore the impact was minimal.

How the lesson was planned around the short term goals was in evidence in the two lessons. The teacher in the lesson in England was asked, on arrival, if they could work on the flat and work toward the up and coming competition. The goals, therefore were short term for the lesson and longer term for the competition and the teacher had to plan the lesson around the rider’s goals irrespective of any previous plan or goals they may have considered. In Western Australia the teacher planned the lesson around the skills they were working toward. Goals were achieved in the
lesson through exercises devised, which in turn helped longer term riding goals being achieved.

- The Western Australian lesson indicated flexibility when the horse became anxious and this made the rider nervous. This was noticed through a change in the lesson plan. Flexibility was not observed in the English lesson even when the rider became tired due to the extensive sitting trot. The teacher continued to work on this aspect in preparation for the competition, where the rider would have to sit to the trot. This could indicate the importance of the goal in this lesson.

- The lessons were organised around the short term goals. Exercises were used to build skills. For example in Western Australia the lesson was multidisciplinary with flat work and pole work leading to small jumps. In England the flat work lesson used exercises that built to higher exercises, although I am unsure if the final outcome was achieved. The rider was asked to work at a level which in my opinion was beyond their cognitive level. For example when working to a shoulder-in because the rider did not understand the basic principles of straightness the exercise was poorly executed.

- Both lessons used instruction as part of the lesson, there was little coaching but teaching was evident. Both gave corrections and discussions following the exercises being ridden. Questions were asked and answers given throughout both lessons thus the dialogue followed a two way conversation throughout.

- The teachers used their personal skills differently. For example the English participant was able to advise the rider how to achieve a better canter transition through encouraging them to ride longer trot strides. The West Australian participant used the concept of a clock face on the arena (that did not have dressage markers) ‘turn down at 12pm’ using
knowledge that has been attained through years of experience teaching younger riders.

- There was a period of cooling down prior to the close of the lesson in both lessons in which the participants discussed the lesson with the riders. The West Australian participant discussed in detail what had been learnt and why.

- In both lessons the riders were relaxed in asking questions and discussing outcomes. Although the West Australian lesson was working on riding skills there were elements of the lesson that discussed competition. The rider in the English lesson was practising for a competition and therefore the focus on skill attainment in the two lessons was both directly and indirectly competition oriented, thus the skills were working toward the rider competing.

The following tables will now consider a cross syllabus comparison at the second level of accreditation. As stated previously the first table will consider general similarities and differences indicated by the data and the second table will consider the role of the syllabus in practice.

The table below are of the observations from the second level of accreditation. Both participants regularly competed. An explanation of the data in the tables will follow to discuss similarities and differences found.
Observations taken from the checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>England</th>
<th>Western Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rider: young adult</td>
<td>Rider: adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition focused lesson</td>
<td>Competition focused lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging</td>
<td>‘I like what’s happening’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rider and Horse throughout</td>
<td>Rider 1st ½ lesson horse 2nd ½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved around the arena</td>
<td>Moved around the arena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused on outline of horse</td>
<td>Less focus on outline more on how it moved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal skills used</td>
<td>Personal skills used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEACHING</strong></td>
<td><strong>TEACHING</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 Observation results of the second level of accreditation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syllabus</th>
<th>England</th>
<th>Western Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warm up</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>rider instigated</td>
<td>rider instigated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>2 way</td>
<td>2 way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal skills</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>rider</td>
<td>rider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cool down</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of what was learnt</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 Observations of use of syllabus directives for level two

- The two lessons had a period of warming up for the horse and rider. The riders in both lessons wanted to work on dressage for the weekend competition. The English rider had brought the test they wanted to practice.
• Safety was not an issue in either lesson. Gates were closed, the arena surfaces level and although the spectators sat in the arena they were not impacting on the lesson and had easy access to escape danger if required.

• Planning and short term goals for the lessons were decided on site, based around the request from the riders. In England the rider and horse were worked together with comments for both throughout with the focus on the way the horse needed to perform for competition. Finally certain aspects of the dressage test were trialled with the latter part of the lesson putting the whole test together. When the rider rode the test issues arising were repeated. In Western Australia the focus began with the rider position and then moved onto the horse to consider how it was going with a view to future competitions.

• The West Australian teacher indicated flexibility and tact when the rider became annoyed at her inabilities to undertake the directions. Flexibility in the English lesson was observed when the rider was asked to ride through the test. All the work achieved in the lesson was lost due to the rider’s nerves. This was a surprise to the teacher (who had only taught the rider twice before) and therefore they had to deal with this new situation. Thus a psychological approach was used in both lessons with regards to helping the riders.

• The lessons were organised around the short term goals. Exercises were used to build skills to help the riders achieve their mid-term goal of the weekend’s competition. The short term goals were attainable although they required self-discipline from the riders to overcome their emotions. The lessons finished with positive aspects for the rider to take away with them.

• Both were the same in that they used instruction for skill attainment, although there was also evidence of coaching when the participants asked the rider to self-evaluate. However both lessons were teaching the rider.
• The teachers used their personal skills in the lessons. For example in the English lesson the participant (who is also a dressage judge) was able to tell the rider how to ride the test, in Western Australia the rider was told to ‘think of leg yield’ when riding the circle.

• There was a period of cooling down prior to the close of the lesson in which the participants discussed the lesson with the riders.

• Both riders indicated they had enjoyed the lesson and they said they were more confident about riding in the weekend’s competition.

Comparisons will now be made between the elite riders, who also coach, and who have obtained a first level accreditation from the areas in which they teach. The accreditation was taken prior to their high status riding and therefore it is uncertain how effective the syllabus is in their teaching practice. During the interview I asked the participants their views on the syllabus. I asked them if there was any one person who had influenced them. These questions were in order to ascertain the influences on their teaching practice outside their riding and competing abilities.

The first table will consider the general similarities and differences detected from the data analysis. The second table will use the syllabus directives to highlight similarities and differences in teaching practice to understand how influential the syllabus may be for elite riders when they teach.
Observations taken from the checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>England Rider: adult</th>
<th>Western Australia Rider: young adults (2 in the lesson)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competition focused lesson</td>
<td>Competition focused lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepted gear on horse no comment</td>
<td>Discussion of gear on horse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited cool down</td>
<td>Limited cool down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rides horse from the ground</td>
<td>Rider horse from the ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal skills evident</td>
<td>Personal skills evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction and explanation more one way</td>
<td>Lots of discussion/explanation though mostly one way – perhaps due to the rider’s shyness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction teaching and coaching all evidenced in the one lesson</td>
<td>Instruction teaching and coaching all evidenced in the one lesson</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 Observation results of the elite riders with the first level of accreditation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syllabus</th>
<th>England</th>
<th>Western Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warm up</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>teacher instigated</td>
<td>rider instigated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>one way</td>
<td>two way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal skills</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>rider</td>
<td>rider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cool down</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of what was learnt</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 Observations of use of syllabus directives by elite riders
• The two lessons had a period of warming up for the horse and rider in which the participant discussed what they wanted to work on in the lesson.

• Safety was not an issue in the West Australian lesson (which was jumping) and the use of gadgets on the horse was acceptable to the English participant citing rider safety as the reason for using them.

• Planning and short term goals for the lessons were decided on site. The teacher in the lesson in England planned around the competition that was a longer goal for the rider and the West Australian participant had set out jumps that were adapted to suit the riders. Prior to jumping the riders (there were two) worked on the flat using exercises to help the horse’s athleticism needed to jump.

• Flexibility was observed in England when watching more than one lesson. This showed that the participant was able to seamlessly change their focus and teaching style dependent on the client. If an exercise did not work then changes were made to the exercise so that it did. In Western Australia flexibility was observed in the way in which the participant worked the horses and riders. The teacher chose the exercise to suit the needs of the riders if the rider did not wish to jump a fence then a flexible approach was shown so that the rider was able to accomplish the task with a lower fence. In both the lessons the riders were working toward an up and coming competition.

• The lessons were organised around the short term goals. Exercises were used to build skills. For example in Western Australia the lesson was focused on a weekend jumping competition and therefore the short term goal in the lesson was to jump the course of fences. In England the flat work lesson used exercises that built to more difficult exercises for the horse and rider as a preparation for the longer term goal. The lessons were organised well around the time given for the class.
In England the lesson was instructional and the participant rode the horse from the ground. I was told ‘I can see what the rider is going to do and what the horse is going to do in response before either of them does it... I know exactly what reaction the horse is going to give them when they do that’ (E:32:1). Instructions were given to the rider about their position and how to ride the horse. The dialogue was predominantly one way whilst working the horse and rider, and discussions took place during the relaxation periods. Both horse and rider worked hard in the time of the lesson. In Western Australia the lesson also had aspects of instruction and teaching. Whilst working the discourse was one way or non-existent whilst jumping was in progress, with discussion during periods of relaxation. The teachers used their personal riding knowledge and personal skills throughout. In other words aspects of the lesson had come from their riding and knowledge from competing.

Riders walked on a long rein for a short period at the end of the lesson and discussed aspects of the lesson in relation to the competitions they were working toward.

In the lessons the riders were relaxed in asking questions and discussing outcomes. The riders left the lesson smiling.

From the observations, there is little difference between the practices in either area. Aspects of the syllabus are evident as part of the lessons. However, whether this is due to the effectiveness of the syllabus, participants’ experience or due to riding and competing is undetermined because differences were observed in the levels of accreditation. To try to understand the effectiveness of the syllabus, observations of two participants who did not have any teaching accreditation are discussed below. Similarities and differences are considered in the first table and the second table shows how non-accredited teachers use aspects that are now part of the coaching syllabi.
Observations taken from the checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>England</th>
<th>Western Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Horse focused lesson</td>
<td>Horse focused lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small corrections to rider</td>
<td>Correction to rider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No flexibility shown</td>
<td>Flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One way discourse with small amount of two way</td>
<td>One way discourse with explanations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition used</td>
<td>Discussing and using alternative approaches for explanations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flat work lesson</td>
<td>Lesson based around competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSTRUCTING with some teaching</td>
<td>TEACHING using instruction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 Observations of use of syllabus directives for non-accredited teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syllabus</th>
<th>England</th>
<th>Western Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warm up</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>certain issues</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>teacher instigated</td>
<td>rider instigated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>not shown</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>questionable</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>mostly one way occasional two way</td>
<td>good feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal skills</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>none discussed</td>
<td>rider re competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cool down</td>
<td>limited</td>
<td>yes good cool down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of the lesson</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 Observation results of participants without accreditation

- The lessons had a period of warming up for the horse and rider. The English lesson was focused on the horse and participant driven. In the West Australian lesson the rider worked toward a dressage test and practised the movements for the test. At the end of the lesson the rider worked through the test a few times.
• Safety was an issue in the English lesson which had the gate open throughout. There were no safety issues with the West Australian lesson. The rider was gear checked prior to the start and safe practice was maintained throughout.

• Planning and short term goals for the lessons were decided on site. In the English lesson little planning was observed. The lesson lacked structure in that the exercises did not seem to be related or used toward a higher aim. The West Australian lesson was planned around the dressage test. The participant had a copy of the test and used it as a framework to plan the lesson.

• Flexibility was not observed in the English lesson. However, when the rider did not understand the movements or the explanations clarifying them the West Australian participant used other teaching methods, for example drawing in the sand. At other times a different exercise was used, thus indicating a flexible approach to the lesson.

• The English lesson was organised around the time for the lesson without a clear directive of beginning middle and end regarding attainment of skills. The West Australian lesson was organised around the dressage preparation using exercises for the horse and rider to help them feel what will be required for the competition.

• The English lesson was instructional but the rider was asked questions for example ‘did you feel that?’ However too much instruction was given without the rider being given time to act and reflect. The West Australian lesson was also instructional based although with explanations and questioning for clarification. Repetition was used but the rider was given further explanations as they repeated the movements.

• Both participants used their personal skills throughout. For example the West Australian participant explained to the rider what the judge would be looking for using personal experiences to explain procedure. The
English participant gave information they had gained from receiving lessons themselves, often using words and phrases used by their teacher.

- The West Australian lesson had a good cool down period where the participant and rider discussed aspects of the lesson (the test) and the forthcoming competition. The English lesson had a brief cool down period in the arena but a longer walk back to the yard allowed the horse to relax.

- The riders told me (in the stables) they were happy with the lessons they had received and the outcomes they had achieved.

Similar to the lessons given by the accredited teachers, the observations of non-accredited teachers observed indicated that aspects of the syllabi were in place and other aspects that might have informed the lessons were not. This suggests certain aspects of the riding lesson are used irrespective of prior training to teach riding. The data indicates there is a replication of teaching practice, which impacts on the personal curriculum evidenced through cross referencing the teachers and those teaching. The non- accredited participants have themselves had lessons from accredited participants also involved in the research. An analysis of the data has indicated that patterns and themes have emerged from the observations and these will now be discussed.

**Patterns and Themes**

A qualitative approach following Patton’s (2002) process of inductive analysis and reviewing data for convergence of information to generate patterns and themes was undertaken. Data was gathered through observation and review of single and multiple riding lessons, using a check list and placing ticks in each box and brief notes to record practice. Semi-structured interviews, based round six key questions, were recorded with participants involved in coaching equestrianism. The open ended questioning avoided limiting the data as each answer was used to develop the next question. As they were developed these questions were subsequently given to the
next participants, thus seeking out similarities and differences and identifying patterns.

From the data gathered in the interviews and the observations, patterns have been discovered that have been used to create themes one of which is the importance of standards. There was a pattern in the participants’ discussion of standards in the qualifications. Participants considered certain aspects of the accreditation were, in their opinion, lowering standards. Establishments were also cited as lowering the standard of accreditation, for example the tertiary system, which appears to be lowering the teaching standards by limiting opportunities for practice, and practice that is only undertaken through teaching one’s peers. The accreditation which is attained indicates a higher level of competency than is seen in practice. This suggests that equestrian teaching should aim at maintaining and heightening standards through the systems in place.

Learning is more likely to take place in a relaxed and enjoyable environment (Burns, 2000; Harris et al., 1995). Some participants were observed to use humour to make the lessons more enjoyable, albeit in four it was through sarcasm, but this was well received. Enjoyment of the lesson raises the probability that clients will return, which creates continuation of practice and therefore it is in the best interest of the teacher and the pupil to ensure their client enjoys the lesson. I judged enjoyment in the lesson to be a two way process; both the student’s enjoyment and the coach’s. I can state all the lessons I observed were enjoyed by the riders and teachers.

Instructional language was used in all the observed lessons at some point. However the language of instruction has changed. For example rather than using a controlling expressions ‘you must, you have’ … they have been replaced with ‘you may want to’, or ‘you can try to’ (Jones, 2006, p. 74), phrases that were heard in the observed lessons. However, the feedback also involved a two way dialogue. This was present in all the lessons observed. Therefore, it can be argued language has changed to suit the present time, and positive feedback is now part of communication in the riding lesson.
An aspect that influenced pedagogy was the issue of safety. The participants cited safety as a reason for not teaching exercises that had been taught to them even though they may be deemed to be skill enhancing. This means that teaching practice can be restricted, which can be considered problematic if the skills that are needed to develop rider’s potential are not part of the lesson.

‘Reflection in action’ (Burns, 2002, p. 328) is how equestrian teaching understands reflection, and all the lessons used this method throughout. From the reflections the participants indicated a flexible approach to their teaching. The participants I observed indicated flexibility in the riding lesson they were giving.

There was a contrast between how the teachers consider the concept of force in the lessons. Many stated that they could not or would not force the rider to do anything they did not wish to do, and yet they were complicit in forcing the horse to adopt a specific positioning of its head and neck. Forcing the horse into an outline through gadgets was observed in many lessons, and also teachers holding the horse’s head in an outline. Another contrast was between participants who allowed the rider to chat and those who did not. However, one dichotomy became apparent during the interviews when discussing teaching practice. Some participants stated that they treated their clients as they wished to be treated in a lesson, whilst other participants told me that what they considered a good lesson for them to ride in was not how they would teach. This suggests a contrast between what they thought was a good riding lesson for them as riders and a good riding lesson for their clients as riders.

Patterns in teaching styles emerged suggesting similarities between teachers, thus indicating lineages that are sustained through practice. This was apparent when participants and their teachers who were also participants were observed teaching. The style of teaching, and the language used to teach, indicates a replication of the teacher’s by pupil. Lineage through practice was also observed with the participants who held a BHS qualification.

Riding teachers specialise either through the accreditation and the syllabus they follow, or as the observation suggests, through their experience in competition and riding expertise. This means that they tend to teach the discipline in which they
compete. As well as specialising in this way the observed lessons have shown that based on personal decision making the curriculum falls into four naturally occurring lesson types: competition focused, rider focused, horse focused and partnership focused.

All the participants were dedicated to equestrianism. Commitment to the horse industry was obvious due to the time the participants had been involved with horses in some form or other. Commitment and dedication took many forms but the underpinning motive was the love for the horse. Secondary to that was the desire to compete and the wish to impart knowledge through teaching. Conversely there was less dedication and commitment to the main accreditation systems in place.

Although most of the teaching was undertaken through private practice, socialisation with likeminded people was considered an important aspect of equestrianism. Initially the social group was in the learning environments of the riding schools or though the Pony Club systems. It is through these initial socialising establishments that initial learning about teaching practice takes place. Later, socialising is through involvement with workshops and clinics and by watching and discussing practice with peers and colleagues. Competitions also create socialisation with other competitors and through competitions teaching practice can be enhanced.

In Summary

The data suggest there are patterns that can be considered to be present in the teaching practice of the participants observed. The observations have led to an understanding of how certain aspects of the syllabi are adopted. For example: professionalism is shown by the teacher’s manner and dress; time-management skills were observed, and the lesson plans created progress within the time allocated for each lesson. The syllabi were also evident in the personal curricula and pedagogy and this was also apparent in the participants who used the alternative models, where the narrative taken from their chosen syllabus was replicated. This in turn created a continuity of practice of what was taught when and how.
However there were particular characteristics that began to unfold in the lessons that were taught by participants holding a BHS accreditation. For example, the particular character of the BHS model was evident in that I was able to ascertain that one participant was a BHS qualified teacher, even though they had been teaching in Western Australia in the West Australian system for many years. There was a style apparent even when the participant had gained the qualification many years ago, or they had attained another qualification it was discernible to me. Therefore, I can state there is a BHS style, which could be considered a lineage passed from one teacher to another through replication of practice. Although there are exceptions, I would suggest that the BHS teacher gives an impression of a professional and confident teacher who has the respect of their students. Their tone of voice is usually alludes to a person of authority, however there is humour and fun in the lessons, which are well organised. The riders are expected to work in the lessons and develop a sympathetic approach to the horse at all times.

Although all the participants suggested the idea that ‘a good rider does not necessarily make a good coach’ the research indicates the better the rider the better the coach. Irrespective of age and accreditation the data indicates that the participants use their riding expertise when teaching. Therefore, it can be posited that the better those skills i.e. the better the rider, the more knowledge the teacher will have to transfer to their students. However, this is dependent on the teacher’s ability to transfer their knowledge to the rider. The data from the observations indicates that a two way discourse was evident in all the lessons. Therefore, through discussion and clarification, to avoid assumption and misunderstanding, riding expertise can be transferred to the pupil. Thus a good rider (or a high level accreditation) combined with a two way dialogue when teaching, has a high probability of creating a good teacher.
Conclusion

The aim of the research was to consider what is currently happening with equestrian teaching practices in the British Horse Society and the Equestrian Federation of Australia. Although the two main syllabi were initially chosen for study, when other syllabi were found to be in use (by the participants) they also became part of the research. A comparative study to understand what is currently happening in equestrian teaching created a cross country comparison and an understanding of equestrian teaching practice in the two areas. The equestrian syllabi, are endeavouring to professionalise practice through accreditation, and the study has helped with understanding if or not it is successful in this endeavour.

A qualitative approach following Patton’s (2002) process of inductive analysis and reviewing data for convergence of information to generate patterns and themes was undertaken. Data was gathered through reviewing lay literature and the observation of single and multiple riding lessons, using a tick box and brief notes to record practice. Semi-structured interviews, based round six key questions, were conducted with participants involved in coaching equestrianism to enhance the data. The open ended questioning avoided limitation to the data as each answer was used to create the next question. As questions were developed they were subsequently given to the following participants, thus enabling a focus on similarities and differences. Following the interview the participants were sent a copy of the transcript to make changes if required. When they were satisfied that the copy was a true representation of what was said they agreed to allow their interview data to be included in the research.

Participants were sourced from colleagues and friends, after which they were recruited from the equestrian training bodies’ coaching lists, available on their websites, through advertisements in equestrian outlets, and was a snowballing effect, as described by Patton (2002), in which participants recommended others. In total forty one participants of both genders, aged from 20-80 and with accreditation level ranging from the first teaching level to international riders who coached, participated.
on the study. Participants included assessors within the accreditation systems, and 19 per cent of the total number of participants were also teachers of other participants, and this allowed me to explore continuity of practice. The participants’ coaching categories were determined in accordance with their country’s accreditation levels, and the equivalent accreditation level between the two countries was established by referring to the International Group of Equestrian Qualifications (www.bhs.org.uk).

The focus of the study was within the disciplines of dressage, show-jumping and horse trials, and new participants were sought until data saturation was reached. Data was analysed by following Patton’s (2002) process of inductive analysis and reviewing for convergence of information to generate patterns and themes. Ongoing discussions with the research supervisors about the data and the analysis addressed the possible influence of the researcher’s knowledge of the area of research when presenting the findings.

There are limitations with any research project and the primary example for this study was the blurring of qualifications, which made comparisons difficult, but not impossible. I was unaware at the outset that participants augmented their initial qualification with other qualifications, or were using strategies from other syllabi, and that elite riders sometimes had teaching qualifications albeit below their riding ability. This created a conundrum when analysing data due to the blurring of the qualifications. It could not be assumed that the teaching was influenced by any one syllabus, if the participant had been exposed to others, or if it was the syllabus or riding, that influenced the teaching of the elite riders. Also I could not ignore the participants outside influences such as other occupations and education, which can also affect their teaching practice. If I were starting the research again, or should the research be continued, it would be worth considering participants who only had a single accreditation and followed the one training style. This would allow for a clearer analysis of the differences and similarities between teaching styles and methods employed.

There also needs to be consideration of the possibility that the lessons that were observed would be different from those that were not. The observations were likened to taking exams, and therefore, the teaching practice observed may have been
influenced by the knowledge that observations were taking place. Observing multiple lessons may be the way forward for the research, were it to be continued, because participants became more relaxed the more familiar they became with my presence.

I am aware that restriction of the research sites limits understanding to those two areas, which may or may not be representative of a larger group. However, it does offer initial insights into the research in this subject.

The study began with a literature review of lay literature, some of which came from the recommended readings for the syllabi, and academic texts, which explored a range of issues associated with the riding lesson. De Kunffy (2002, 2003) pointed to riding lessons that he considered were becoming horsing lessons; Wanless (2008) argued that there was an assumption of knowledge when teaching riding; and Warren-Smith and McGreevy’s (2006; 2008) research indicated a lack of knowledge of the theories underpinning how the horse learns. These concerns were then included in the study.

The review of the literature, which is discussed in the second chapter, outlines how equestrian pedagogy was created through the continuation of practice, which I refer to as lineages. The data indicates that in the modern era this aspect is still apparent. Participants in England and those in Western Australia who had the British qualification taught in a style that was recognisable, thus refuting the claim of participants who stated there was no BHS way whilst confirming the claim that there is. This style of teaching has been achieved through the continuity of practice that occurs when the student adopts the style of the teacher. The data from the observations and interviews, discussed in chapters five and six, confirms this. The language used and the style of teaching was similar to that of their riding teacher, thus indicating continuity of practice.

Further review of the history of equestrianism indicated that equestrian teaching initially derived from the military environment, which became the foundation for the modern riding lesson prior to the coaching syllabi being introduced. Theories that have been taken from the French and later German riding masters influence present practice. Although originating from the same source, the
German method is a different approach to that of the Baroque masters. However, the theory is the same: to create a horse and rider partnership (de Kunffy, 1992). When the Germans became leaders in equestrian sports, their riding methods, and horses specifically bred to compete, became the popular choice in both England and Western Australia. However, the German style was created to suit their horses and riders, who follow a prescribed training system, and the research indicates that this does not necessarily transfer across borders.

In Western Australia the German training method is embedded into the teaching syllabus. This is discussed in chapter three. Although there are now warm blood horses being ridden in Western Australia, teachers were, and are still, presented with riders riding thoroughbred horses. Therefore the theory, as it was intended, is not necessarily going to work in the same way with a thoroughbred horse bred for its speed rather than athletic strength, and its temperament which is prone to a higher level of nervousness. Furthermore the Australian rider does not have a tradition of a disciplined approach to riding, whereas the German rider may understand it takes years to produce the competition horse. For the Australian rider this may be a new concept. The modern Western Australian rider was described by two participants as the ‘microwave generation,’ to mean that they expect things to happen quickly, which does not necessarily indicate an awareness of the patience required to implement correct theoretical practice.

In England the approach to teaching is from a broader stance, in that the recommended texts are not specific to the practice. However, the German theory was apparent in many of the riding lessons observed and discussed in the sixth chapter. The focus of riders in both locations since the twentieth century has been on competition as a main reason for riding. School movements, transitions and a forward moving horse form part of the riding lessons. Therefore, in both areas being researched teachers are adapting their lessons based upon the German concepts. However, as discussed previously, the mindset of the rider and teacher in England does not always accommodate to the correct application of the German theories. Thus, similar to Western Australia, in England the theory is either not understood or incorrectly translated. This became apparent when observing gadgets being used in the lessons and when discussing the aspect of short cuts and gadgets in the
interviews, as outlined in chapter five. The use of gadgets also leads to consideration that the theory behind how the horse learns is either not understood, or ignored by the majority of the participants in the study. This was not an unexpected finding and corroborates the research undertaken previously by Warren-Smith and McGreevy (2006, 2008).

The syllabi in both areas are lacking in a theoretical approach. However by adopting the coaching model equestrianism can be considered part of sports science and as such become a topic that can be studied at university and collegiate level. This suggests that theory would be expected to become part of the learning process. Although this is commendable, the data revealed and discussed in chapter three, indicates that teaching equestrianism is an addition to the final qualification, as opposed to being the focus of the qualification itself. The teaching syllabus used in the collegiate systems is that of the BHS. Those participants who have been involved in assessing the student teachers (at the college and universities) revealed during the interviews, outlined in chapter five, that they did not think the courses were producing quality postgraduates capable of working in the equestrian industry unless they had prior knowledge before enrolling. Therefore, the balance between theory and practice needs to be considered for the BHS syllabus to be workable in this environment.

A review of the syllabi (in chapter three) indicated that there is little difference between the expectations and directions of the British and Australian syllabi now that both are coaching syllabi following the Competency Based Education and Training (CBET) model. The data showed that many aspects of the educational theories embedded into the syllabus were being adopted as teaching practice. The discourse used to teach riding has changed with the introduction of the coaching syllabus as discussed. The dialogue encouraged when teaching is that of coaching, which allows for instruction, teaching and coaching to take place. I defined these differences as follows. Instruction is a one way dialogue, in which the person taking the lesson is the holder of knowledge. Teaching is dominated by the person taking the lesson, as they are the holder of knowledge. However there is an understanding that learning is a two way process and although initially it can be a one way dialogue there is the opportunity for a two way interchange to take place.
Teaching therefore allows both the rider and the teacher to learn from each other. Teaching gives the rider the skills to continue to work away from the lesson, so when they come back to the lessons the teacher can use a coaching style. Coaching gives the rider the responsibility to choose how to and when to use their skills. Although coaching is considered the method for helping the riders of a higher standard, if a coaching syllabus is to be effective all methods should be used in every riding lesson dependent on the situation. The data indicates that the majority of the participants gave riding lessons from a teaching perspective.

The participants following the mainstream syllabi also specialised through a natural teaching process based upon personal choice, which could mean following an alternative syllabus, competing and having riding prowess. Information gained in these ways is then transferred through a curriculum devised by the teacher. The curriculum, for the purpose of the thesis, is the interaction between the pupil and the teacher via the horse, and how and what knowledge is transmitted. I have called this interaction a personal curriculum. The data revealed unexpected findings indicating that personal preferences for interacting with either the rider or the horse were informing the lessons irrespective of the syllabi, accreditation and riding experience.

The data showed that the riding teachers can be grouped based upon the focus of their lessons. For the purpose of the thesis this focus is considered specialising in that the teachers’ focal point is specific, i.e. they are specialising on one area. It is not indicating a level of expertise within this area. There were those who were horse focused, those who were rider focused and or those who were competition focused, whilst others were working toward a partnership between horse and rider. Therefore, the personal curriculum (the interaction between pupil and teacher via the horse) is based on a personal preference for how the knowledge is transmitted and how the tasks are taught within the specialised area. If, as the data suggests, teachers are focused on certain aspects as opposed to training an holistic approach then it can be argued that they need to be exposed to new (to them) theories and different methods of teaching to augment their teaching practice and expand their personal curriculum. Without the knowledge of other ways to teach, the rider is not being taught, coached or instructed to maximise their potential, thus skills are lost. The participants pointed to this problem in chapter five. Therefore, although the coaching model of teaching
can be considered a better method in that it offers teaching skills through instruction, teaching and coaching, thus creating deeper learning, if the focus in the lesson is predominantly on competing, from a narrowly focused curriculum, then learning outcomes are compromised.

Teaching from the coaching syllabi is based upon skills, and the syllabi have developed from the concept that to teach the skill one has to be able to do it. Therefore, it is the riding skills that are prioritised and not teaching skills, or the theories underpinning equestrianism. The teaching component of the syllabi is based on teaching riding skills, not on an understanding of how the horse or rider learns these skills. The change in the syllabus to the coaching model has introduced coaching theories into equestrianism. These are now twofold: general theory, which is an amalgamation of traditional theories, based on riding, and coaching theories. It is imperative the teacher understands the theories that underpin their practice (de Kunffy, 2003). To ensure effective teaching is taking place these theories need to be understood and used in practice, and the data suggest that this is not necessarily happening in a skills based syllabus. While the data indicated that it was widely believed that a good rider does not necessarily make a good teacher the accreditation bodies, which create the syllabi, assume that to be the case, and offer teachers little support or information on teaching and learning theories. This means that the riding teacher is reliant on their riding skills rather than their theoretical understanding of learning to inform their teaching practice, which can result in an impoverished riding curriculum.

The coaching syllabi have their foundations in competition and the focus on competing underpinned many lessons, irrespective of teaching style. The data indicates that competition can be viewed in two ways: those who are currently competing, to mean they are trying to win competitions and those whose goal is to compete in the future. Whichever, the tendency is for riders to seek teachers based upon their riding expertise. This then means that for many participants the mainstream syllabi are a foundation for initially learning how to teach, in that they offer a framework for intrinsic practice, after which the riders’ competing record takes over. Clients come for lessons because of the teacher’s riding prowess, and not necessarily because they are good teachers or for the qualification they hold. It is
riding and competing that informs teaching practice. It is through replication of riding practice that creates the personal curriculum and informs pedagogy. Therefore teachers who successfully compete do not necessarily consider higher accreditation as career advancement, and it can be argued that an accreditation system where teachers are unwilling to progress upwardly is not effective in practice. Although it was expected that the findings would indicate the importance of competition for both riders and teachers it was found that further specialisation is occurring based on competition prowess. Teaching practice is often based upon the teacher’s competition riding record and this tends to lead to teaching becoming specialised and based upon the given discipline in which the teacher competes. This was not unexpected with syllabi that are grounded in competition riding.

The syllabi do not state how skills should be taught, therefore the choice of what and how to teach skills to the rider, comes through knowledge gained through riding, competing and being taught, which then informs the teaching practice. The likes and dislikes are then reflected in what is taught, which means personal choice or a personal curriculum, impacts the riding lesson and, which in turn can lead to aspects that should be known not being taught. This aspect was discussed in chapter five when participants claimed that riders were coming to lessons without the basics skills expected to be in place when riding at the standard the clients were competing at.

Finally the study indicates that the accreditation systems did not fully promote teaching horse riding as a career, rather than as an add-on to riding. Accreditation can be considered a starting point for teaching, with little incentive to gain higher qualifications. If the riding teacher is not continuing toward higher accreditation then once the teacher graduates the accredited bodies do not have any influence on how the teacher is teaching. Even though the coach/instructor holds the training body’s qualification, its title and benefits that go with it, it does not mean they practice within their guidelines. Coaching is a key resource for enhancing potential. However if teachers such as the participants in this study are not progressing in their careers then the potential of both riders and teachers is not necessarily going to be fulfilled.
The cross-cultural dimension of the study has global implications; aspects from the study are pertinent to all sports and sport coaching. The findings have the potential to contribute to the development of more effective syllabi. The study has identified areas that could be improved particularly with regard to creating more emphasis on teaching and how to teach. The interviews report what is believed to be known and the subsequent analysis provides important findings on which to base future development and improvements in the syllabi.

Summary: Implications, Relevance and Significance

The thesis asks the question, how is horse riding taught? To begin to answer the question I needed to understand what the difference is between an equestrian coach and an equestrian instructor, now that accreditation bodies are explicitly adopting a coaching style syllabus in order to professionalise equestrian teaching practice. After extensive research it was found that the changed focus of the accreditation syllabi made little difference to the riding lesson, which was predominantly taught based on how riding had been taught. In other words the participants taught in a manner and style similar to the way they had been themselves taught to ride.

The research indicates that the way teaching develops is through imitating the practice of others and adopting their theories as explanations for that practice. Lineage of practice is as influential today as it was prior to the introduction of formal accreditation processes, and it has the potential to undermine the syllabus developed by the accrediting bodies. It was found that the equestrian syllabi are reliant on the interpretation of the intended outcomes by the teacher, thus giving the potential for interpretations drawn from an imitation of past practice rather than an application of newly learned theory. The syllabi do not offer a curriculum and therefore the teachers create their own informed by how they were taught, their experience of teaching and how they compete. Teaching as taught is a recognised way to develop skills, however, it also has the potential to create a continuation of poor practice, which is an area of concern. It was found that the teachers developed their skills
through competition riding and having riding lessons to help them compete, which has the potential to limit their knowledge to a specialised area.

Specialisation was found to be naturally occurring thus strengthening the argument for an awareness of different teaching styles and methods. By creating a community of practice, either through the accreditation bodies, or informally between colleagues, there is the potential to share and generate knowledge. The coaching syllabi have the ability to create good practice, for both recreational riding and for competitive riding. However, the focus on competition has led to practices that are not successful in fully developing rider skills, and to practice that may be injurious to the horse. Including learning theory about how the horse and rider learn into the syllabus would offer knowledge to help horse welfare and generate riding skills. Added to that a community of practice would allow teachers to come together to raise awareness, discuss issues and develop new practices.

The research found that competition riding had a large influence on how riding is taught. Since the beginning of the twentieth century equestrianism has been focused on competition as a main reason for riding horses. The research indicates that most riders’ focus was on competing at some level and at some time in their riding career. It is through competition that an evaluation of training can be undertaken; it is considered that there is no other means for demonstrating skills, especially at elite levels, without competing. However, the problem is that competition has created a shift of attainment, from the rider’s riding, to the horse’s performance, and this deflects attention from the riding and riding skills. By shifting away from the riding skills it has opened up the possibility of the horse being at fault (McGreevy and McLean, 2010). Although competition can be a motivator it can also lead to an unethical stance toward the horse, thus competition can lead to an eroding of values in the riding lesson (Duncan-Andrade, 2010). When this occurs there is a higher probability that gadgets will be used to enhance performance. In doing this riders and teachers are designing a horse to perform in spite of the rider’s riding abilities.

Overlaying the ethical issue created by competition, is the change from the language of instruction to that language of coaching. This comes about in part due to
the shift of horse riding as a sport, and partly because of the expectation of the clients in a competitive market. The impact of the use of the coaching language has the ability to reinforce the focus on the horse by weakening the language of instruction, which foregrounds what the rider is doing. If the rider is not made aware that what they are doing is incorrect then they may consider that the horse is incorrect. The language used to give feedback was not fully understood, and the research indicates that more emphasis should be placed on teaching and learning as a skill, rather on automatically accepting that if one can ride then one can teach. By placing more emphasis on the teaching component of the qualification, riding teachers would learn how to teach, understand the theories behind teaching, and the history of their practice and ultimately benefit equestrianism for all involved.

When teaching horse riding is considered secondary to riding and competing, and when teaching practice is based upon imitating others, then the role of the accreditation is jeopardised, and there is little incentive for the equestrian to continue to develop teaching skills by gaining higher qualifications. This may be because the syllabi follows the doctrine that if one can ride then one can teach, and therefore, the higher the riding skills (based on competition success) the less the need to gain higher accreditation. The implication then is for the equestrian to gain the first qualification and go no further. If, as the research suggests this is the pattern then equestrianism is being taught as it always has, through lineage of practice.

The aim of the coaching syllabi is to create teaching practice that encourages the rider to be self-reflective and aware: to take responsibility for how the horse responds and to be sensitive about developing their own skills to get a better response from the horse. The coaching syllabi have the ability to create good practice, for both recreational riding and for competitive riding. However, the focus on competition has led to practices that are not successful in fully developing skills and practice that is injurious to the horse. I believe that more emphasis needs to be placed on teaching and learning as a skill, rather on automatically accepting that if one can ride then one can teach. By placing more emphasis on the teaching component of the qualification, riding teachers would learn how to teach, understand the theories behind teaching, and the history of their practice and ultimately benefit equestrianism for all involved.
Glossary of terms used in the thesis

Many of the glossary terms and definitions offered below were presented at the First International Equitation Science Symposium as a collaboration by Natalie Waran, Amanda Warren-Smith and Debbie Goodwin. They are now being used as part of the ‘Fairest and Best’ initiative for the Pony Club Australia collaboration between Paul McGreevy, Petra Buckley, James Meyer, Finola McConaghy and Jane Maw.

Above the bit: An aversive reaction in which the horse is attempting to escape the rider’s aids through: quickening its pace shortening its stride, shortening and raising its head and neck, hollowing and bracing the back.

Accepting the bit: The way a horse responds to the bit in particular and to cues in general. During locomotion and transitions, the horse’s mouth remains closed, soft in the jaw and with relaxed lips. A horse that accepts the bit does not shorten or lengthen its neck or alter its head position during travelling and transitions. Accepting the bit is generally accompanied by relaxation of the neck and body.

Activity: The rhythmical speed of movement of the horse’s legs within any gait. See Tempo.

Aids: These are the means of communicating the rider’s wishes to the horse. They come under two areas: natural and unnatural. Natural aids are those of the rider’s voice, seat, leg and hand, unnatural are anything used to enhance these, whip, spur, or gadgets, such as martingales, draw reins, which ‘force’ the horse to comply.

Balanced seat: The position of a mounted rider that requires the minimum of muscular effort to remain in the saddle and which interferes least with the horse’s movements and equilibrium. It is generally understood that the balanced seat allows delivery of the cues in the most effective manner. The rider has equal weight on both seat bones and feet. See Independent seat.
**Basic position of the rider for an independent riding seat:** The rider is in balance; they are able to support their upper body with the core muscles and as such are independent of the reins and stirrups to keep them on the horse. The weight is going down to the heel and as such they are able to maintain the imaginary lines: shoulder to hip to heal, elbow to wrist horse’s mouth in all three paces: walk, trot and canter.

**Behind the bit:** A head and neck posture that is generally described as an evasion and which involves the horse persistently drawing its nose toward its chest, sometimes allowing the reins to become slack. This occurs in training because of mistakes made in negative reinforcement or due to the use of restraining devices (such as draw reins) that force the neck to be shortened. In this situation the horse gives two different and independent responses to one signal (i.e., slowing or dorsoventral flexion) and thus frequently develops conflict behaviour. This posture thwarts the development of impulsion.

**Behind the vertical:** The appearance of a horse with a shortened neck posture. As a result, it positions its nasal planum behind the vertical line (the horse’s chin becomes closer to its chest). Such a horse is generally heavy in the feel of the reins or has no contact during locomotion and transitions and, when this occurs, its stop/slow/step-back response is diminished. As the horse offers two independent responses (shortening neck or slowing) to one signal, it often exhibits conflict behaviours.

**Bit:** Bits are the part of the horses’ bridle usually made from a metallic substance that goes into its mouth and works on the pressure and or pain on the parts of the mouth thus creating control for the rider. Bits rest on the bars of the mouth – that area which is devoid of teeth. There are hundreds of types of bit but they can be considered as two types for the purpose of the thesis. The snaffle types – these are direct pressure bits that have a nut cracker action by movement from a central join and circular rings at the ends from which the reins are attached. The other group are the leverage bits these are also known as curb bits. These have a straight mouthpiece and adjoining shank where reins attach. The length of the curb dictates the amount of leverage and harshness. The theory of bitting is subjective and often led by fashion. Whatever the bit, good training is essential for the best results.
**Broken neck (over-bent):** The appearance of the neck of a horse in which there is (usually) a sudden change in angle (a break in the curve) in the vicinity of the third cervical vertebra. This is usually a result of persistent use of side reins that are too short, especially during early training, or draw reins that cause the neck to be too flexed and the nasal planum to be behind the vertical. It is believed that there is degeneration of the vertebrae and/or ligaments at the third cervical vertebra. Horses with broken necks generally exhibit conflict behaviours and tend to flex their necks to light rein pressure rather than give the stop/slow/step-back response.

**Coach:** Goal focused educator using a two way process of communication to improve existing skills.

**Collection:** The progressive development of increased carrying power in the hindquarters of the horse. The resultant transfer of weight from the forequarters to the hindquarters allows the poll and withers to be carried higher, the hindquarters to drop slightly and the hindfeet to step further forward and to carry more bodyweight with higher and shorter steps. This confers more power to the hindquarters, enabling the horse to perform more collected movements. In classical equitation, collection develops from repeated gait and stride length transitions that occur in three beats of the rhythm. The combined effect of the transitions and the inertia of the animal is that over time the horse’s physique changes. The propulsion of the body is then in a more upward and forward direction giving greater cadence to the strides and increased lightness of the forehand. Collection can occur in the walk, trot or canter. So, for example, in a collected canter, the strides are shorter and the horse’s frame is short and compressed. *See also* False collection.

**Contact:** The connection of the rider’s hands to the horse’s mouth, of the legs to the horse’s sides, and of the seat to the horse’s back via the saddle. The topic of contact with both hand and leg generates considerable confusion related to the pressure that the horse should endure if the contact is deemed to be correct. In classical equitation, contact to the rein and rider’s leg involves a light pressure (approximately 200g) to the horse’s lips/tongue and body, respectively. Although a light contact is the aim, there are brief moments (seconds or parts of a second) when contact may need to be stronger, particularly at the start of training, or in re-training, to overcome resistances.
from the horse. Many contemporary horse trainers insist that the contact should be much heavier than a light connection. This view may cause progressive habituation leading to learned helplessness to the rein and leg signals as a result of incorrect negative reinforcement and/or simultaneous application of the cues. Contact may therefore need to be the focus of discussion and debate.

**Deep Seat:** This is a dual term in which a saddle can be described as having a deep seat but in the thesis it is referred to the rider sitting centrally in balance and communicating with the horse through their seat. A rider sitting deeply is safe in that they can follow the horse’s movements in harmony without gripping with the legs, or hanging with the reins. It is considered to be ‘adhesive, balanced [and one that] correctly partner the horse’s movements’ (de Kunffy, 2003, p. 71).

**Deep and round (rollkür):** is hyperflexion. A modern tendency to train the horse to carry its head low and its cervical vertebrae maximally flexed (chin closer to the chest) in the belief that the hindquarters are engaged and that the activity and power of the hindlegs is improved. To critics, the deep and round technique is seen as a form of false collection and it may also have welfare implications.

**Dressage:** Is taken from the French word ‘to dress that was to train a horse’ (Barrett, 1986, p.24), which in modern terminology has been interpreted as the training or schooling of a horse in certain movements on the flat as opposed to over fences.

**Engagement/engaging the hocks (tarsal joints):** Where the horse brings its hindfeet underneath its body so that proportionally more weight is placed on the hindlegs. Classically, this process is trained over time with concomitant physique changes; however, in contemporary training, it is sometimes produced by riders forcing the horse to shorten and raise its head and neck with rein pressure while simultaneously applying leg/forward pressure. Deep and round is frequently used as a precursor to this technique termed false collection. It should be clear that engagement is not the same as collection, but is a precursor to it.

**Evading the bit:** Oral behaviours (such as moving the tongue aborally) and neck postures (such as dorsoventral flexion) that enable horses to reduce the discomfort
caused by bits or the extent to which riders can apply and maintain pressure. In training, these result from errors in negative reinforcement.

**Evasions and resistances:** Descriptive terms for conflict behaviours where evasions are similar to resistances, except that evasions refer to the more severe and violent behaviours. These terms arose because of the horse’s natural tendency to avoid pressure/pain by learning through negative reinforcement to perform any attempted behaviour that results in lessening of pressure/pain. The problem with these terms is that they imply malevolent and calculated behaviour on the part of the horse whereas, in fact, these behaviours are more likely to be the result of errors in negative reinforcement.

**Eventing:** This is the term to describe the discipline also known as horse trials in which the rider/horse competes in a dressage test, showjumping course and across country jumping.

**Extension/extended strides:** The longest stride within the rhythm of the particular gait. In equitation, extended paces arise only from collected paces. These strides involve straightened limbs at the end of the swing phase of the stride that allow the horse to cover as much ground as possible with each stride. For the average horse, in the extended walk and trot, the hindtrack should land approximately 20 to 30cm in front of the foretracks and in extended canter the hindtracks land about 2m in front of the foretracks.

**False collection:** Forcing a horse into an apparently collected outline through the simultaneous actions of the rein and leg or with the use of gadgets and pulleys rather than the progressive development of collection over time through training. False collection frequently results in conflict behaviour because concurrent stop and go signals cause confusion and pain.

**Flexion:**

a) Longitudinal: The dorsoventral lowering, lengthening and relaxing of the horse’s neck and back. In reality this is not a flexion but an extension and should be redefined as longitudinal extension. This is the most fundamental quality of being on
the bit. Longitudinal flexion should not be confused with ‘longitudinal bend’. (See Impulsion).

b) Lateral: The lateral bending of the atlanto-occipital junction and including the first three cervical vertebrae of the horse’s neck. This is primarily a shaped quality of correct turning and in the well-trained horse is thus involved whenever the turn, circles or the turn-position is required, such as in lateral movements. The extent of lateral flexion negatively correlates with the size of the circle. As lateral flexion is a shaped quality of the turn response, counter-flexing can result in conflict behaviour. Lateral flexion is a secondary precursor of being on the bit. Lateral flexion should not be confused with ‘lateral bend’. (See Bend).

c) Dorsoventral, vertical or direct: The dorsoventral flexion of the horse’s cervical vertebrae so that the nasal plane is almost perpendicular to the ground (the nasal plane may be up to 6 degrees in front of the vertical). For a horse to be showing vertical flexion it must be relaxed, straight, pushing forward from behind with its hocks underneath it, relaxed in its jaw and showing longitudinal flexion (Wallace, 1993). This is a precursor of the horse being on the bit. Dorsoventral flexion may be seen as a result of correct longitudinal flexion.

**Feel:** Is an essential part of riding in which the rider feels how the horse is working (moving) through their seat and hands.

**Flying change:** A horse can canter either to the left or right and often has a preference. A flying change is when it changes from one direction (set of legs) to the other whilst all the legs are suspended. This is the fourth beat of the canter when no legs are on the ground.

**Forehand (forequarters):** Those parts of the horse that lie in front of the rider (i.e., the head, neck, shoulders, withers and forelegs).

**Gadgets:** Anything that forces the horse to comply by tying it down in some way that is a discomfort to the horse, for example side reins, draw reins/running reins, standing/running martingale or market harbour, crank/dropped/ grackle type nosebands, Chambon or Pessoa to name a few items readily available in the market place.
**Go:** The acceleration response in horse-training that provides forward motion. The go response is trained via negative reinforcement using the rider’s legs under-saddle and using anterior lead-rein pressure when working a horse in-hand. Through classical conditioning, these responses are converted first to light versions of the leg or lead-rein and then to the cues of seat, position and, perhaps, voice.

**Habituation:** The waning of a response to a repeated stimulus as a result of frequent exposure (not fatigue).

**Half-halt:** A subtle, sequential application of the seat, leg and rein cue that is separated in time by one beat of the rhythm of the gait. The half-halt is intended to increase the attention and balance of the ridden horse.

**Halt:** When the horse is stationary and, in dressage, this means that the horse needs to be standing with its weight evenly distributed, in other words, standing square.

**Haute école:** Is classical dressage and as such is the highest form of training/schooling in which the horse has to perform elaborate and complex movements.

**Hollow back:** The horse is contracting the vertebral column so that the head comes up and the neck and back are concaved. This is not a desired effect (McGreevy and McLean 2010).

**Hollow:** Undesirable contraction of the vertebral column, so that the head comes up and the neck and back become slightly concave. The strides of the horse generally become faster and shorter (‘choppy’). Habitual hollowness is usually a result of incorrect negative reinforcement and is frequently associated with conflict behaviours. Because of its reported association with activation of the Hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis (HPA), hollowness should be further researched.

**Impulsion:** The response of a horse that is correctly trained in its go/stop responses so that it moves forward energetically with a self-maintained rhythm, straightness
and outline when signalled to do so. Impulsion is an early expression of the progressive development of collection, in which the animal progressively carries more weight on its hindquarters. Three types of impulsion have been described: 1. **Instinctive:** i.e., the inherited tendency to have more or less impulsion; 2. **Mechanical:** develops from Instinctive Impulsion and improves with work and gymnastic training; 3. **Transmitted:** that given to the horse by the rider in collecting the horse (Winnett, 1993). True impulsion, in which the horse conveys itself calmly under a light rein and without constant pressure from the rider, is distinct from states of general excitement in which the horse pulls at the bit and requires forceful restraint to be controlled.

**In-hand:** In a routine of schooling in-hand, the trainer works from the ground rather than from the saddle, positioned beside and/or behind the horse and controlling it with rein, voice and schooling whip. In-hand work allows the horse to acquire signal response entities of go and stop as a prelude to foundation training, or during retraining, or when training advanced movements.

**Independent riding seat:** Is when the rider does not rely on the reins and stirrups to stay on the horse.

**Instructor:** Educating through instruction for immediate tasks, one way communication with the instructor being the holder of knowledge.

**Jog:**

a) A slow, short-striding trot, usually associated with heightened arousal and involving short choppy steps and constant tendencies to accelerate as the horse is attempting to flee the aversive situation. Habitual jogging can be associated with conflict behaviours and result in diminished responses to the slow/stop/step-back signals (McLean, 2005).

b) In harness-racing the term given to the exercise conducted on non-hopple days. (Hobble = restraint, hopple = harness).

c) A slow trot used mainly in Western pursuits.
**Lateral movements:** Any of the schooling exercises (such as leg-yield, shoulder-in, travers, renvers and half-pass) that involve the horse having longitudinal bend and travelling with the forelegs and hindlegs on two, three or four different tracks with the aim of improving its engagement and collection.

**Leaning on the bit:** A sign of habituation to bit pressure, which manifests with the horse persistently pressuring the rein(s) as though relying on the rider to support the weight of its head. This arises through incorrect negative reinforcement and can be associated with conflict behaviours and learned helplessness.

**Learned helplessness:** A state in which an animal has learned not to respond to pressure or pain. Arises from inappropriate application of negative reinforcement, which results in the horse not being able to obtain release from aversive stimuli. If this continues over a period of time, the horse will no longer make responses that were once appropriate. Learned helplessness has the following characteristics: a disinclination to trial behavioural responses to pressure; lowered levels of aggression; dullness; loss of appetite; physiological and immunological changes.

**Leg-yield:** The simplest of lateral movements in which the horse moves both forward and sideways from the rider’s single leg signal. Leg-yield is usually trained before more complex lateral manoeuvres. In leg-yield, the horse is almost straight, except for slight lateral flexion away from the direction of travel.

**Lightness:** A desirable quality that reflects self-carriage and the horse’s self-maintenance of rhythm, straightness and outline. Lightness involves the bringing into action by the rider and the use by the horse of only those muscles necessary for the intended movement. Activity in any other muscle groups can create resistance and thus detract from the lightness.

**Long and low:** Training the horse to go with its poll extended and lowered and its neck slightly dorsoventrally flexed while attempting to achieve more activity and impulsion. See also hyperflexion (also known as rollkür, deep-and-round and long-deep-and-round).
**Longitudinal flexion:** A posture under-saddle that results from well-trained basic responses where the neck is lengthened, and the poll is carried at the level of the withers. In correct dressage training, it is the first prerequisite of a rounded outline. The lengthening of the neck suggests that a more correct term would be cervical extension.

**Long-reining:** A method of schooling the horse using two reins, each attached to the horse’s bit and returning to the handler, who moves behind and/or beside the horse, as if driving it without being attached to any vehicle or load. Long-reining is sometimes used as a prelude to foundation training, retraining or in the training of advanced movements.

**Lugging, pulling:** A term, mostly used in horse-racing, that refers to a straightness problem where the horse drifts sideways, particularly at the gallop. In doing so, the horse becomes heavy on the rein on the side away from which it is drifting. A horse that habitually lugs does so as a result of incorrect negative reinforcement, because the rider holds the heavy rein tighter as he attempts to maintain a straight line; in other words, the horse is failing to respond to the turn cue.

**Lunging:** (spelling from the German official handbook) an alternative spelling can be longe as used in the literature – is exercising the horse on a single rein approximately 7metres long. A person stands in the centre of a circle and the horse moves around taking direction from the voice. When lunging a rider on the horse this means that they do not have to control the horse (the central person does this) and so they can focus on their position.

**Medium walk/trot/canter:** Stride length between that for the working and extended versions of those gaits. For example, in the medium canter, the stride length is between the working canter and extended canter.

**Napping, propping:** When a horse fails to respond appropriately to the rider’s signals, as in refusing to go forward, running sideways, spinning or running backwards. This conflict behaviour could also result in attempts at rearing.
**Natural:** Often known as natural horsemanship uses the theory of working with the horse using their natural instincts to build a relationship/partnership between horse and rider. One of the best known components of this theory is the American Monty Roberts.

**Natural cues:** The body, seat, hands (reins), legs, weight and voice, as used to signal to the horse. Some of these cues are acquired via negative reinforcement (e.g., leg and rein responses), while others are acquired by classical conditioning (e.g., weight and voice cues). The distinction, therefore, is not based on learning theory.

**Natural horsemanship:** A relatively modern system of horse-training that originated in Western training. It is based on an interpretation of the natural ethogram (free-roaming feral horses) of the horse. Natural horsemanship focuses on concepts of dominance/submission, respect and leadership, which are currently controversial and may be at odds with learning theory.

**Natural outline:** Where the horse under-saddle or in-hand carries its head and neck freely without any force from the rider or handler (McLean and McLean, 2008).

**Negative punishment:** The *removal* of a reinforcing stimulus (which makes a particular response less likely in the future).

**Negative reinforcement:** The *subtraction* of something aversive (such as pressure) to reward the desired response and thus lower the motivational drive (Skinner, 1953).

**Obedience:** In traditional horsemanship, compliance to the cues. Perhaps a more objective definition is the horse’s immediate initiation of the required response to a light cue (McLean, 2003).

**Off the bit:** The horse does not have contact or connection to the rider’s hands through the reins. This is usually referred to as being above the bit or behind the bit (i.e., there is a lack of at least one of the three prerequisites for on the bit).
On the bit or Roundness: Is a desired self-maintained position of the horse’s head and neck at all paces and movements naturally achieved through correct training. The horse carries its head and neck in which the poll (cervical vertebrae and atlanto-occipital joint) is the highest point of the neck and the face of the horse is vertical. The horse is accepting the contact (the bit) and aids from the rider in a calm relaxed and balanced manner in which it is relocating weight onto the hindquarters. However, a vertical nose does not mean that the horse is on the bit (McGreevy and McLean, 2010) and often there is a misconception of correctness. Riders seek their goal by pulling the horse’s head in creating and accepting a high arched neck and head tucked in toward the chest as such a false roundness.

On the forehand: An undesirable form of locomotion that involves the horse carrying an inappropriate proportion of its weight on its forequarter, a posture that runs counter to impulsion, collection and self-carriage. Usually seen in young or poorly schooled horses where the withers appear lower than the croup of the horse during locomotion.

Outline (US shape, frame): An aspect of the horse’s posture that refers to the curvature of the vertebral column and so encompasses the degree of flexion of the neck and poll and the associated flexion of the lumbosacral region. According to the ideals of equitation, the nasal planum should be no more than 12 degrees in front of the vertical at the walk and 6 degrees in other gaits and never behind the vertical, because such a departure results in loss of self-carriage and lightness. The back should be soft and relaxed and give the impression of being raised.

Over-bent (broken-neck): Where the horse assumes a posture in which its nasal planum is described as being behind the vertical. Usually caused by faults in negative reinforcement, such as unrelenting pressure from the rider’s hands on the bit.

Overface: Undertaking a task during riding or training that is beyond the horse’s capacity or experience (where the trainer demands unachievable increments during shaping).
**Over-shadowing:** The effect of two signals of different intensity being applied together, such that only the most intense will result in a learned response (Hull, 1943).

**Pedagogy:** The philosophy, theory and practice of teaching.

**Position:** The rider’s position in the thesis refers to their physical sitting position on the horse.

**Positive punishment:** The *addition* of an aversive stimulus (which makes a particular response less likely in the future).

**Positive reinforcement:** The *addition* of a pleasant stimulus (a reinforcer) to reward the desired response and thus make this response more likely in the future (Skinner, 1953; McLean, 2003).

**Primary (unconditioned) reinforcer:** A resource or stimulus that the animal is attracted to and that can serve to strengthen instrumental responding.

**Pulling:** Reflects the resistance of a horse to bit pressure; this is seen when a horse pulls the reins and shows no deceleration.

**Punishment:** The presentation of an aversive stimulus that decreases the likelihood of a response or, in the case of negative punishment, the *removal* of a reinforcing stimulus. Punishment is often used incorrectly in horse-training (i.e., when not immediately contingent with the offending response). Incorrect use of punishment can lower an animal’s motivation to trial new responses, desensitise the animal to the punishing stimulus and create fearful associations (Mills, 1998).

**Rapping, touch up:** Inappropriate strategy used to sensitise the legs in an attempt to improve jumping performance in the horse; various irritant substances are applied to the anterior aspects of the third metacarpal or cannon of the forelimbs such that the horse will try harder to avoid hitting a fence when jumping.
**Rearing:** A sudden postural change in a horse so that it stands only on its hindlegs. Rearing is both an innate anti-predator manoeuvre and an intraspecific social behaviour, usually between stallions or colts. Habitual rearing in horses usually accompanies other conflict behaviours.

**Refusal:** A conflict behaviour that is typically associated with the approach to jumping an obstacle during which the horse suddenly stops. A precursor to or a form of napping.

**Rein back:** A series of steps backwards with the legs in diagonal pairs. It is initially trained by the decelerating effects of the reins and later cued via classical conditioning by leg position of the rider.

**Reinforcer:** An environmental change that increases the likelihood that an animal will make a particular response, i.e., the *addition* of a reward (positive reinforcer), or *removal* of an aversive stimulus (negative reinforcer).

**Response:** A reaction to a stimulus.

**Rhythm:** The beat of the legs within a particular gait. In ideal equitation, rhythm is trained to be self-maintained.

**Rolkür:** *See* Deep and round.

**Round:** Synonymous with on the bit.

**Running (away):** A hyper-reactive state in the horse characterised by acceleration and, usually, heaviness in the reins. The horse is exhibiting conflict behaviour and attempting to flee the aversive situation. Such states are usually the result of incorrect negative reinforcement and can be associated with conflict behaviour. *See* Rushing.

**Rushing:** Seen in a horse that is not under the stimulus control of the cues to slow, usually in relation to approaching a jumping obstacle. Often anthropomorphically interpreted as ‘keenness’.
School:
a) An enclosed area, either covered or open, in which a horse may be trained or exercised.
b) To train a horse for whatever purpose it may be required.

School Master: Description given to usually an older horse who is well trained to a certain level and will perform the tasks willingly thus teaching the rider through an obedient attitude.

Seat: The rider’s seat consists of sitting on the two seat bones and the crotch, which is the lowest part of the pubic bone. Variations on the rider’s seat are the chair seat where the pelvis is tilted forward, the forked seat which involves the opposite pelvis action. The rider works towards what is called a deep seat.

Secondary reinforcement: Making a response more likely in the future by using a stimulus that has acquired reinforcing properties on the basis of its relationship to a primary (unconditioned) reinforcer.

Self-carriage: The way in which an educated horse deports itself. Due to the obtrusive and aversive potential of rein and leg pressures, it is important that the horse travels in-hand and under-saddle free of any constant rein or leg pressure for fear of habituation and/or conflict behaviour. Self-carriage refers to the self-maintenance of rhythm, tempo, direction, straightness and outline.

Shape, frame (US): See Outline.

Shying: The sudden hyper-reactive sideways leaping of the horse either from an aversive object it encounters or as an expression of conflict behaviour that has arisen due to unresolved problems in negative reinforcement (e.g., when the contact is too strong). A shy begins with the horse turning away its forequarters followed by an acceleration response. Shying is frequently associated with other conflict behaviours and may be followed by bucking.
**Soft mouth:** Sensitive mouth, responsive to bit pressure.

**Spinning:** A sudden change in direction, akin to shying in origin and expression; it has associations with conflict behaviour.

**Spooky:** Shys or baulks readily/frequently.

**Step:** The single complete movement of raising one foot and putting it down in another spot, as in walking, used in equitation parlance to describe the nature of the movement in an individual horse and often erroneously based on observation of the forelimbs only.

**Step-back:** See Stop/slow/step-back.

**Stop/slow/step-back:** The decelerating response in the trained horse that results in it ceasing or decreasing its forward movement in-hand and under-saddle. The stop response is most commonly trained by negative reinforcement, using the bit in the horse’s mouth, stimulated by the reins in the rider’s hands. Classical conditioning converts the stop response to light cues and then to the bracing of the seat. Decelerating involves activation and emphasis of different musculature from that involved in forward motion. These muscles are isolated by the step-back response. Therefore, it is not surprising that training the step-back trains the stop response. Slowing the horse can occur through shortening the stride or slowing the activity or tempo of the legs.

**Straightness:** A fundamentally desirable trait in equitation such that the hindlegs move into the line of the foretracks on lines and circles and the longitudinal axis of the vertebral column is straight. Straightness is necessary in order to achieve maximal biomechanical and motor efficiency in the horse and consequently considered a tenet of basic training. When horses are not straight, they tend to drift toward the convex side. Thus crookedness may be seen as a symptom; the deeper problem is that the horse is not following the rider’s (or handler’s) intended line.
**Stress (acute and chronic):** Stress, in its acute form, is a short-term dysfunction of the signal-response relationship presenting variously as raised tension levels, agonistic behaviours, redirected aggression and displacement activities. Chronic stress manifests as raised corticosteroid levels, physiological disturbances, gastric pathology, repetition and ritualisation of original conflict behaviours, redirected, ambivalent and displacement behaviours, development of stereotypes and injurious behaviours, such as self-mutilation and increased aggression (Wiepkema, 1987; Moberg and Mench, 2000).

**Stride:**

a) The set of changes occurring during a single complete locomotory cycle that includes the stance phase and the swing phase of a limb, from the one landing of a particular foot to the next.

b) Used in jumping to describe a rider’s appreciation of the number of whole steps a horse takes between obstacles.

c) Medium walk/trot/canter: A descriptive term for strides that are longer than at working paces (see working trot/canter), but not as long as extended paces. Medium strides are therefore part of the development of longer strides in equitation. For the average horse in medium walk and trot, the hindtracks should land approximately 10 to 20cm in front of the foretracks, whereas in medium canter the hindtracks land approximately 1.5m in front of the foretracks.

**Stubborn:** A horse that appears unwilling to respond to cues, probably due to lack of motivation or habituation to signals as a result of incorrect negative reinforcement.

**Swing, swinging the hindquarters:** The lumbar musculature is described as swinging during collected movements. The hindquarters may move laterally and be said to swing out during lateral movements. Swinging out is also a term used to describe hindquarters that move laterally but not under stimulus control. This may indicate that the forelegs are not under the stimulus control of the reins. Thus the forequarters also show deviations of line (McLean and McLean, 2008).

**Tack:** Is the common term used for the saddle and bridle and any other accruements needed to ride the horse.
**Teacher:** Disseminates knowledge in order to follow a syllabus using traditional theories as a base in the lesson.

**Teeth grinding:** In the absence of dental or other health disorders, grinding the teeth is a response to unresolved stressors encountered during training, or a product of general management. It may be associated with incorrect negative reinforcement of the stop/slow/step-back response.

**Tempi Changes:** These are multiple flying changes- see flying change.

**Tempo:** The timing or rhythm of the horse’s strides.

**Tension:** In equitation, hyper-reactivity and, presumably, heightened HPA axis activity. Tense horses are frequently hollow and show various behavioural indicators of stress.

**Tilting nose:** A posture adopted by some horses during locomotion under-saddle such that the nose tilts to one side. It results from incorrect negative reinforcement, principally during the training of the turn response (no release for the correct response or pressuring for the turn when the inside leg is on the ground and unable to respond) but also in the training of the stop response (no release and contact too tight).

**Tracking up:** During locomotion, the horse’s hindhooves land in the prints left by the ipsilateral (same side of the body) forefeet.

**Trailing hindquarters:** In equitation, the action of the hindlegs such that, at the moment of thrust, the hindhooves are not underneath the hocks but behind them. The horse is said to out behind and is usually also hollow. This prevents the horse from attaining impulsion and collection.

**Training scale:** A progressive order of training particular qualities of responses through the process of shaping. Shaping programmes merit further research.
**Transition:** The change from one gait type to another, or from one stride length to another. A transition can be between gaits, within a gait or from one tempo to another as well as into and out of the halt.

**Turn:** A change in line of locomotion by the horse. The turn is initiated by the forequarters with the hindfeet following the foretracks. Turning occurs through shifting the inside leg slightly to the side, decelerating it on contact with the ground, and accelerating the opposite foreleg in contact with the ground. The turn is trained by negative reinforcement using the stimulus of the single rein, which classically conditions to the light rein cue and then to cues of associated changes of the rider’s position at the initiation of the turn. The turn cue should be applied when the turning leg is beginning to go forward.

**Under-saddle:** The situations in which horses are be ridden, rather than led or driven.

**Working trot/canter:** A term that refers to the normal stride length within the gaits. In the working trot, the stride length is where the hindfeet land into the foretracks.
Appendix i

Data collection from the observation lessons used a clip board and checklist (below). Relevant boxes were ticked as and when there was referral to the issue (this could lead to a multiple number of ticks). Notes were also taken for clarity of the issues that arose. The tick box derived from an amalgamation of points taken from the accreditors assessing coaching. The purpose for the research was to understand if:

1.) The focus of the lesson is on the rider, the horse or on a partnership.
2.) The language being used in the riding lesson with regards to the changes that are taking place within the equestrian bodies from instruction to coaching.
3.) How influential competition is on the objective of the riding lesson.
4.) The relevance of the syllabus and theories in the practical setting.
5.) To understand if there is a need for change in the way riding is being taught and if so how it can work in the current systems.

My observation checklist for field research

Observation check list

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time start</th>
<th>end</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aspects of the curriculum</strong></td>
<td>Ticks for yes</td>
<td>Comments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial opening – outline of the lesson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Language – coaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language – instructing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often is the pupil involved in the instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often is the horse involved in the instruction</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Blank</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often is competition referred to by teacher?</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often is competition referred to by rider?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of planning and goal setting for lessons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment factor for teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment factor for rider</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of reflective practice</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility of the teacher in the lesson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often are the teacher’s personal skills used?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the lesson fulfilled the opening aims?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson structure – organised/time management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback to pupils</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of teaching skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall impression</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix ii

Questions for the participants to be discussed

Interview schedule - Open ended interview based around the questions:

1) To begin with can you tell me about your background as a rider and where your career has taken you?

2) What was and is your experience of being taught to ride?

3) What do you remember about your experiences training to teach riding?

4) So now let’s talk some more about your relationship between riding and teaching. Consider what you think are the key elements of a good riding lesson.

5) Looking back, do you think your riding instruction has changed over time and if so how?

6) What are your goals when teaching?

7) Anything else you would like to say that may be important to the research?
Appendix iii

There were 37 observed participants teaching in both England and Western Australia. The following tables represent the participant’s style of teaching, their qualifications, and background information.

Table 1. A total of 18 participants in England and Western Australia at the lower levels of teaching. Some of whom had accreditation with the established bodies others did not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4 Following the coaching criteria and rider position</th>
<th>4 Following a teaching principles both horse and rider involvement</th>
<th>10 Following an instructional stance and horse focused</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 college educated and qualification but not in riding instruction</td>
<td>2 educationalists in other disciplines other than equestrianism</td>
<td>1 involved in education though without riding qualification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 qualified in an alternative paradigm at a high level but without BHS or NCAS teaching qualification.</td>
<td>1 BHSAI with complimenting qualification and an elite rider</td>
<td>1 college qualification BHSAI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 qualified as a BHSAI and complimenting qualification</td>
<td>1 alternative paradigm with university undergrad</td>
<td>4 elite riders, 2 holding BHSAI, 2 NCAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 qualified as a BHSAI</td>
<td>1 BHSAI and Level 1 and alternative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Level 1 with alternative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 without riding qualification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this group 4 BHSAI teachers were elite riders and 2 NCAS level 1 were elite riders.
Table 2. A total of 10 participants at the mid-level of accreditation in England and Western Australia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>Following the coaching criteria and rider position</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Following a teaching principles both horse and rider involvement</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Following an instructional stance and horse focused</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 BHS worked outside equestrianism in a scientific industry</td>
<td>1 BHS elite rider working in equestrian</td>
<td>1 BHS college trained and riding establishment worked outside industry for a time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 NCAS always worked in equestrian industry throughout</td>
<td>2 BHS always worked in equestrian industry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 NCAS and alternative pedagogy</td>
<td>1 NCAS with BHSAI worked in industry throughout.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 NCAS working in education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 NCAS working in the industry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this group 1 BHSII was an elite rider, and 1 level NCAS level 2 was an elite rider.
Table 3. A total of 6 participants at the higher level of accreditation in England and Western Australia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2</th>
<th>Following the coaching criteria and rider position</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Following a teaching principles both horse and rider involvement</th>
<th>Following an instructional stance and horse focused</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 BHS elite rider worked in equestrianism throughout</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 BHS worked in equestrian industry throughout</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 BHS with alternative pedagogy</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 NCAS with BHSAI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A total of 2 BHSI teachers were also elite riders

Table 4. A total of 3 participants at the elite level of riding/teaching in England and Western Australia without accreditation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Following the coaching criteria and rider position</th>
<th>Following a teaching principles both horse and rider involvement</th>
<th>Following an instructional stance and horse focused</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 elite coach and rider</td>
<td>1 elite teacher alternative pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 elite rider</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this group 1 was an elite rider, 2 were elite (to mean international) coaches, 1 was both elite rider and coach
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