

PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE MOVEMENT

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What is PEM?

The Performance Excellence Movement (PEM) newsletter is a visually engaging, online magazine designed to increase public awareness of the application of sport and exercise psychology skills. PEM provides insight into opportunities to apply performance psychology techniques within sport and non-sport domains, and is written and edited by AASP student members.

Current Issue

In our "Committee Corner" section, current PEM committee members Drew Morgan and Jen Ciaccio reflect upon their use of psychological skills within two different populations. Drew discusses his work with incarcerated youth, and Jen shares her experience working with college students. Both accounts serve as great examples of the potential for skills commonly used within sport psychology to transcend the field of athletics.

This issue also includes two professional interviews. In one of the interviews, Jim Thompson, the founder and

CEO of the Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA), discusses the relevance of sport psychology within the PCA and issues within youth sports. In another interview, Dr. Rich Gordin, a sport psychology consultant who has worked with collegiate, professional, and Olympic athletes, reflects on some of the challenges present in sport psychology and provides his perspective on effective consulting.

Finally, we have two articles by students in the field of sport, exercise, and performance psychology. The first article, by Matthew Bird and Matteo Luzzi of Florida State University, provides an overview of and guidelines for the application of externally-focused imagery practice. In the second article, JoonYoung Lee of the University of North Texas shares findings from his study of collegiate athletes' physical self-description and its effects on their overall well-being.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the PEM newsletter and that you gain valuable information from the experiences and findings shared by students and professionals alike!

Interested in contributing to the Fall/Winter 2017 issue of PEM?

Do you have evidence-based consulting/applied experience in sport and exercise psychology from which other students or professionals can benefit? Have you conducted original research in or related to sport and exercise psychology? Do you want to obtain experience in a peer-review process? Consider submitting your work to PEM!

We are always looking for current students who are willing to share their experiences and help others improve their consulting expertise. Please contact current editors Alan Chu (alan.chu@unt.edu) and/or Carra Johnson (cj0011@mix.wvu.edu) if you are interested in submitting an article, and keep an eye out for the Call for Abstracts sent out twice each year. Thank you for your interest in PEM!

COMMITTEE CORNER

Beyond Athletics: Using Sport Psychology to Teach Life Skills

Jen Ciaccio, Temple University

Drew Morgan, John F. Kennedy University

Introduction

Participation in youth athletics does not inherently teach character development and life skills (Coakley, 2011). While sports have the potential to teach important life lessons, without addressing them overtly, we should not assume that these lessons are being learned. Youth athletes within a sport program where the primary objective was character development reported it as socially rewarding, inclusive in nature, and enjoyable (Bean, Whitley, & Gould, 2014). In addition, their involvement in the program kept them on track personally and academically, while also transferring lessons learned from sport into their lives. Thus, research evidence suggests that sport programs should teach character development or life skills in a more obvious or overt manner. The principles of sport and exercise psychology, such as increasing motivation, improving concentration and focus, developing confidence, or reducing anxiety can be applied learning life skills. The following sections chronicle two sport psychology graduate students' applied experience beyond the realm of sports as it pertains to life skills.

Drew's Experience

At the moment I walked into the secured perimeter of Orin Allen Youth Rehabilitation Facility, affectionately nicknamed "Byron Boys Ranch," my heart was pounding as I thought to myself "what have I done?" I imagine the same thoughts and feelings flooded the minds of the juvenile "inmates" as they walked through the doors, signifying the start of their temporary incarceration. The difference was that they were not entering the facility of their own accord like I was. I was there, along with my fellow classmates at John F. Kennedy University's (JFKU) Sport Psychology Department, to teach mental skills in my first sport psychology internship. Passing the guards, my thoughts were racing: am I cut out to do this work? Will they be receptive to what we're trying to do? Are these boys dangerous? Drawing upon the very mental skills I would be teaching this group of young men, I settled myself down and prepared for the day ahead. All of us from JFKU were there on behalf of the Life Enhancement through Athletic Par-

ticipation (LEAP) Program, a subsection of the Sport Psychology Department at JFKU. LEAP creates opportunities for JFKU students to utilize sport psychology techniques in an applied setting with underserved youth through supervised internships and workshops. After a year of reading textbooks, case studies, and research articles, this would be my first experience doing the work of sport psychology.

This internship was set up in a weeklong camp-like experience. Each day we drilled down on a specific

"...their ambition was squashed by feelings of inadequacy that prevented them from 'dreaming big.' They were living out a self-fulfilling prophecy, a destructive cycle perpetrated by low self-esteem and a fixed mindset."

skill such as goal setting, relaxation techniques, imagery, and positive self-talk through a combination of presentations and fun activities followed by debriefs. The various activities we planned were used as a way of challenging the boys and creating dialogue. While the games were fun, the conversations that followed were often deep, heartfelt, and profound. The boys brought up topics such as difficulty in trusting others, some common negative perceptions they face, and the seemingly inescapable environments in which they live. When asked in a workshop on goal setting what they wanted to do with their lives, their negative self-perceptions were glaring. At the young age of 15 up to 18 their ambition was squashed by feelings of inadequacy that prevented them from "dreaming big." They were living out a self-fulfilling prophecy, a destructive cycle perpetrated by low self-esteem and a fixed mindset. Our jobs, as we saw it, was to show them a potential avenue out of that destructive cycle. Through our teaching and guided activities, we could illuminate their strengths and show them techniques to build

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upon their weaknesses. We, as student interns, were not attempting to solve these problems for the boys — that would be disingenuous and frankly, impossible. Our purpose was to impart tools and skills these boys can use to cope with their unyielding environment.



Throughout the week, the boys started to feel more and more comfortable around us, opening up about the difficulties they faced and the reasons they found themselves in their current situation. One boy described having to drive his abusive drunk father home at the age of 15. Conversations ping-ponged back and forth over the loss of someone close to them — a brother, a father, or a cousin. The stories these boys told provided insights into their struggles at home. The destructive environments, in turn, have shaped their thoughts and beliefs into a perpetual cycle of negativity: “I can’t do that” or “I’m not smart enough for that” — were often heard throughout the week. Their negative self-perception and self-talk were slowly diminished day after day through the unrelenting positivity we tried to instill throughout the week.

Although I got into sport psychology hoping to work with athletes, this first internship experience taught me how beneficial the work can be to non-athletes. Utilizing sport psychology mental skills has such wide-ranging application and ability to make lasting changes in those with difficult environments. Just as

a marathon runner might need to draw upon mental skills to stay motivated and focused, why would a 16-year-old in Oakland, California being pressured to join a gang not need the same skills for the same end? These were the thoughts I would reflect on after each day working at Byron.

As the camp experience came to a close, we all became emotional, feeling that our work with these boys had been cut short. We wanted to do more, and we wanted to stay and be sure that they would be able to use the skills we taught them when they returned home — when and where they were truly tested. Whereas it was difficult to say goodbye, satisfaction arised from the fact that they started to see themselves for who they were instead of where they were. Reflecting on that first day, I smiled. I walked in doubting myself, surrounded by negative self-talk, but walked out confident and hopeful about the future on that last day. I smiled because I imagined as those boys walked out, they would have the same feeling.

Jen’s Experience

It’s all about context. The student in my office looks terrified. This is not an uncommon response of someone who has broken our conduct policies and is sitting here the day after fill-in-the-blank (alcohol consumption, drug use, fighting, destruction of property, harassment of another student, etc.). It is one of my jobs, as a college administrator within student affairs, to hold students accountable following a conduct violation through our written protocol, and I do. But another piece of my job isn’t as clear. There is no protocol for it. This piece is when

“Yes, we use [psychological skills] with athletes. We use them with everyone from elite performers to the little ones just learning how to play. Once we know how to train people to use them, we can use them far beyond the sports arena.”

I choose to help the students to figure out how they move forward from here. I have an opportunity in the next 30 minutes with this particular student (and hundreds whom I have and will meet with throughout my future career) to expose them to skills that can help them manage this stressful time and build resiliency. This was sometimes done through a

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conversation, sometimes through an actual exercise, and sometimes through restorative practices that they will complete beyond my office. I teach them skills that hopefully will endure through their time on campus and beyond. This is what I will do. It is what I have always done.

I have used sport psychology mental skills training throughout my entire career, but I did not have the same goal as Drew who translated the same skills athletes use in competition to life skills for youth in the form of activities and trainings. I did not have a sport psychology context or language for what I was doing. Prior to moving into the field of kinesiology, exercise, and sport psychology, I was the college administrator described above, as well as a teacher, a coach, an advisor, and always an educator. My clients have always been 18- to 20-year-olds attempting to navigate the world of college with all of the challenges it entails. Although it wasn't my goal

to assist students in translating sport psychology techniques into enduring life skills (I was sometimes just trying to get them to class), I did, and I am now with this new lens. And what an important lens it is.

Even today, as a teaching assistant in a social psychology class that includes exposure to psychological skills training, I have many students who tell me "I'm not an athlete" or "I haven't ever really been into sports". Perfect! Because what we are talking about transcends sport and exercise. Skills such as managing anxiety, setting goals, using imagery, building self-confidence, dealing with distractions, fostering resilience, learning positive self-talk, and rebounding from mistakes aren't really just about sport and exercise. Yes, we use them with athletes. We use them with everyone from elite performers to the little ones just learning how to play. Once we know how to train people to use them, we can use them far beyond the sports arena. They can be used for my student who made some terrible choices last night and is now on the phone explaining it to her parents. And they can be used with the young boys on the ranch with whom Drew work. They are about how we learn to manage ourselves in a world that is often in flux. They are the tools to living a peak life. Ultimately, they are about adapting these skills to the clients and the context. They can be used anywhere.

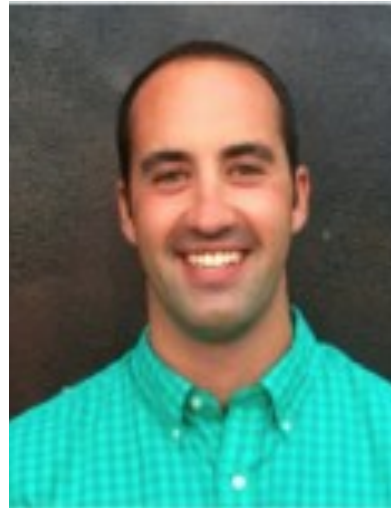
As stated in the introduction, we believe that the principles of sport psychology can be generalized to many different contexts to promote effective learn-

ing of these skills and transfer them to life off the court or field. Even in exploring these two examples, it is clear that these tenets of sport and exercise psychology we are learning during our graduate training, both through our education and in consulting experiences, can be used far beyond the realm of sports as it pertains to life skills.

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PROFESSIONAL INTERVIEW

Towards a Positive Sporting Culture: Interview with Jim Thompson, Founder & CEO of the Positive Coaching Alliance

What inspired the idea of the Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA)?

A combination of things. Early in my career while a teacher aide for a school for emotionally disturbed kids, I got trained in what I call a relentlessly positive approach. A few years later I was a business student at Stanford and my son started playing sports and I started coaching his teams.

The first thing I noticed was how much negativity and how much stress there was around youth sports. Kids were not performing very well because of the pressure and negativity. So I began using a relentlessly positive approach while coaching and it worked wonders. The kids had a good time, we focused on accepting mistakes, and they ended up winning a lot too. The next year, parents asked, “How do I get my kid on your team?” That was the moment when I started thinking that maybe there is something more than me just coaching this one team. I joined the board of a local little league, then a friend and I started a youth basketball program, and at a certain point, it seemed like taking these ideas nationally was a good idea.

How has sport psychology enhanced the PCA program?

We have some of the top sport psychologists involved in Positive Coaching Alliance and we have called on them in developing our content. One experience that was really important was a workshop my wife took when she first started teaching called the “Workshop Way” by a nun named Sister Grace Pilon. It taught teachers how to get the best out of their kindergarten students. One of her ideas was teaching kids that it was part of learning to make mistakes. She created psychological safety in her classroom by showing children that it was okay to make a mistake because you can’t really learn if you are afraid of making mistakes. My wife and I discussed these ideas each day after her class with Sister Grace and I incorporated that into my coaching.

With your recent exposure to the field of sport psychology, do you see yourself working with individuals in the field moving forward with PCA?



Jim Thompson
Founder & CEO,
Positive Coaching
Alliance

Oh yeah, we have such great people involved. Mary Fry from the University of Kansas and I are doing a presentation on combining theory and practice at the upcoming AASP conference in Orlando. Others who have helped PCA include Charlie Maher, the sport psychologist for the Cleveland Indians, Dan Gould, Director of Michigan State’s Institute for the Study of Youth Sports, Ken Ravizza of Cal State Fullerton who is working with the Cubs, Collen Hacker of Pacific Lutheran who worked with US Women’s National Soccer team. We rely on these people for advice and to help develop our program.

It seems that youth sport has been getting a lot of attention lately with specialization and coaching education. What advice would you give someone who wants to coach youth sports?

PCA’s model is the “Double Goal Coach,” whose first goal is to win, and second goal is to teach life lessons. We summarize that with our tag line “Better athletes, better people.” The first thing for a coach to do is to think about his/her purpose in coaching. Is your only purpose to win games? Hopefully that is not just the main focus. If I am a youth coach, and I win a championship, that is great, but helping kids aspire to become what we call “Elevators,” who work to make the sport, their teammates, and themselves better should be the main goal, and that also helps the team to win.

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What are some of the challenges that face youth sport today?

One is that youth sports is skewed towards kids that have money. There is less participation in under-served communities. It is expensive to play sports. How can we create an opportunity so each kid gets a chance to learn from playing youth sports?

Second, the pressure to specialize early is intense. If a kid shows talent, she will be singled out early and some coach will recruit her for his team and then the coach will often want that kid to just focus on that coach's sport. I think helping parents realize that their kid shouldn't specialize in sports too early is a big need and something that PCA promotes.

“...trying to change the culture of a major institution is very hard. There is going to be stress. It important to deal with the stress, instead of getting out of stressful situations.”

A third problem is the influence of entertainment sport culture; the win at all cost mentality. In professional sports you have to entertain fans, and the way you entertain fans is by winning. When the win at all cost mentality trickles down into youth sports it undercuts the ability to create a caring climate and results in a lot of kids dropping out of sports. I also think it makes our society more uncivil.

What do you think is important for coaches to do when handling coach/parent relationships?

PCA encourages coaches to get parents on board as partners. It is important to get parents together before the season and tell them how excited you are to coach their kids this year: “I love this sport and I want your kids to love it, too. The key to success in sports, and in life, is to have a positive attitude even when things go wrong, so I am going to be positive and parents, I need your help. When an official's call goes against us, as it will, I want you to let me handle it and you remain silent. Can you do that?”

We recommend coaches appointing one or two parents as “Culture Keepers” who remind parents to honor the game and to not embarrass their kids or our team. Get your parents to buy in at the begin-

ning of the season, and then reinforce the message throughout the season.

What skills have served you best in overseeing PCA?

Listening beyond anything else. I really want to hear what people have to say. I am often in situations with a colleague, and the person we are with is starting to talk and my colleague starts to say something, and I will say, “No-no, wait!” I want to hear everything that person has to say.

One of the ideas that we put into place is “debate and commit.” I do not want PCA staff to think, “Jim is the CEO, I think he is wrong here, but who I am to mention that?” No, if you are a PCA employee you have a responsibility to respond and say what is on your mind. We want people to speak up and we'll debate it and then we commit.

If you are competing in sport, trying to start a successful business, or doing anything that is difficult, there will be inevitable setbacks, as they say in the 12-Step Movement. It is important to develop perseverance through grit and resiliency. There has to be a commitment in seeing what you are doing through, and recognizing that there are going to be setbacks. It is crucial to be upbeat when things go wrong so you have the chance to create what Barbara Fredrickson of Duke calls “Upward Spirals.”

What advice have you received that has been beneficial in overseeing PCA?

A friend of mine, Leo Linbeck III, helped us start our first PCA Chapter in Houston. Leo said to me, “If you want a stress free life, recognize that you will not have much impact. If you want to have impact, you are going to have stress.” I found that very comforting because trying to change the culture of a major institution is hard. There is going to be stress. It important to deal with the stress rather than just try to avoid stressful situations.

Another great piece of advice came from a friend of mine from North Dakota where I grew up, Greg Tehven. He said, “Perfect is good, done is better.” I tend to be a perfectionist, but perfectionism doesn't make things better. It just delays things. It causes procrastination because you start to realize that you can't be perfect. Then you postpone so you do not have to confront the fact that you are not perfect.

STUDENT ARTICLE

Focus Your Imagery: How to Incorporate an External Focus of Attention into Motor Imagery Interventions

Matthew Bird, Florida State University

Matteo Luzzi, Florida State University

Imagery is considered a core psychological skill of successful athletes. By utilizing this mental attribute, performers can rehearse a specific skill they are going to perform. Furthermore, imagery can be used to optimize levels of arousal, enhance feelings of control and confidence, and visualize goal attainment (Cumming & Williams, 2012). Cognitive specific imagery has been shown to improve motor skill acquisition and refinement when coupled with physical practice (Smith, Wright, & Cantwell, 2008). Despite evidence of effective imagery involving all senses, practitioners and athletes interested in motor skill learning tend to capitalize on motor imagery (MI), which combines visual and kinesthetic images (Cumming & Williams, 2012). In order to enhance the effectiveness of MI, practitioners and athletes can follow the guidelines provided by the Physical, Environment, Task, Timing, Learning, Emotion, and Perspective approach (PETTLEP; Holmes & Collins, 2001). PETTLEP relies on a functional equivalence model, which is a neuropsychological framework based on the similarity in neuronal activity between executed and imagined movements. Consequently, this approach advocates making the imagery experience as similar as possible to the motor skill of interest across the seven components (Holmes & Collins, 2001). Several studies have shown the effectiveness of using the whole model, as well as that of its individual components (for a review, see Wakefield, Smith, Moran, & Holmes, 2013).

“When creating the initial script, emphasize the external focus of attention and how it is experienced by the athlete.”

When attempting to improve a motor skill through imagery, athletes can choose to allocate attention internally (i.e., the bodily movements) or externally (i.e., consequences of the movements in the environment; Wulf, Höß, & Prinz, 1998). For instance, a tennis player who focuses on the elbow position

during a serve would be focusing internally. An external focus can be proximal (i.e., the consequence of the movement on an instrument) or distal (i.e., the trajectory of an object in space). For instance, a



Photo by William Clark

golfer could focus proximally on the club during the swing or distally on the flight and path of the golf ball toward the intended target. A review of the scientific evidence shows that learning motor skills through an external focus of attention facilitates acquisition, automaticity, and retention, and making athletes less susceptible to choking in performing these specific skills (Schücker, Hagemann, & Strauss, 2013; Wulf, 2013). Furthermore, there is initial evidence that a distal external focus may be more beneficial than a proximal one (Wulf, 2013); however, due to complex contextual aspects of some sports and personal preference, a distal external focus may not be viable. Current evidence related to an external focus of attention and performance might be explained using the Constrained Action Hypothesis (Wulf, McNevin, & Shea, 2001). This theory states that an external focus of attention promotes an automatic, unconscious mode of controlling one's movement, allowing performers to execute skills uninterrupted. In contrast, adopting an internal focus of attention places movements under conscious control, where they consequently

become constrained and impede automatic execution (Wulf, 2013).

As both MI and an external focus of attention have been shown to contribute to improved performance, researchers have begun to investigate the effects of combining the two. In one of the only studies broaching this topic, Guillot, Desliens, Rouyer, and Rogowski (2013) found that a group of highly-skilled young tennis players who adopted an external focus of attention when using MI improved tennis serve accuracy and velocity. To help bridge these two lines of research into practice, we use the aforementioned literature and our applied experiences to provide guidelines of how to create and implement an MI script that purposefully directs attention externally.

Applied Guidelines

We have utilized the following guidelines in applied practice when creating an external focus of attention in imagery scripts for professional and amateur athletes from a variety of sports, such as tennis, golf, and water skiing.

Assess the motor imagery ability of the athlete through validated and reliable instruments, such as the Movement Imagery Questionnaire-3 (MIQ-3; Williams et al., 2012) or the Vividness of Movement Imagery Questionnaire-2 (VMIQ-2; Roberts, Callow, Hardy, Markland, & Bringer, 2008). The purpose of assessment is twofold. Firstly, it shows the potential effectiveness of the intervention, because higher imagery ability will more likely make the intervention effective (Martin, Moritz, & Hall, 1999). Secondly, it allows the practitioner to capitalize on the specific imagery abilities on which the athlete scores high (e.g. external imagery, kinesthetic script).

Gather information to personalize the imagery script to suit the athlete's skill level and needs. Achieve this collaboratively through questions aimed at obtaining rich descriptions of the skill, possibly with the aid of video recordings. During this process, obtain information about the proximal and distal external targets of attention.

Once the necessary information has been gathered related to the athlete's imagery ability, skill to be imaged, and preference for a proximal or distal focus of attention, compile a first draft of the imagery script. During this process, we recommend following the five Ws (Who is using the script, When and Where is the script being used, Why is the script be-

ing used, and What will be imaged) posed by Williams, Cooley, Newell, Weibull, and Cumming (2013).

When creating the initial script, emphasize the external focus of attention and how it is experienced by the athlete. An extract from a script when working with a golfer with a proximal focus might include, "notice the solid contact of the ball on the center of the square clubface at impact... as the ball leaves the club, feel the clubhead release on the follow-through..."



Gather feedback from the athlete (in person or remotely) on the technical accuracy of the script and revise if necessary.

Deliver the imagery intervention to the athlete in person to obtain direct feedback on the vividness and accuracy of the elicited imagery. Utilize this information for any final revisions.

Record the audio script and distribute it to the athlete for use.

Devise an imagery training protocol by outlining when, where, and how frequently imagery should take place.

In summary, combining motor imagery with an external focus of attention can lead to more effective learning and refinement of a motor skill. The guidelines we propose are an initial attempt at combining two strong lines of applied research into practice. Our hope is that future research will continue the efforts initiated by Guillot et al. (2013) to further examine and understand how directing focus externally during imagery can influence performance.

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PROFESSIONAL INTERVIEW

Effective Consulting: Interview with Dr. Rich Gordin, Sport Psychology Consultant

How has your education, experiences, and training shaped your consulting philosophy?

My first exposure to applied sport psychology occurred in the late 70s. At that time, there weren't a lot of programs other than kinesiology. I took my doctoral degree through the department of kinesiology with a minor in educational psychology. Luckily, I had that nice combination. I arranged my own coursework during my training to allow myself to understand what now both sides of our field are: kinesiology and psychology. I was fortunate to have training in both areas. In fact, I almost got a second doctoral degree in counseling psychology but I didn't think it was necessary. As far as my training opportunities, I was also lucky to be at an institution where I received the opportunity to work with athletes and coaches.

"I've found in my career that if you are not involving the coaches at least to some degree with your work, it's not reinforced with the athletes on a daily basis."

What are some unique challenges of working as a sport psychology consultant?

I think the most unique challenges, traditionally, are gaining entry. If the entry isn't good, then oftentimes the experience isn't good. It's very important to learn to gain entry in a proper way. Usually that means being "invited" by the athletic department and then doing good work. It used to be that you had to convince people of the importance of applied sport psychology or mental skills training, but now coaches and athletes are at least somewhat familiar with the term "sport psychology." The second challenge might be, once you're into a position, getting the appropriate access to both coaches and athletes so that you can work with both groups rather than exclusively with one. I've found in my career that if you are not involving the coaches at least to some degree with your work, it's not reinforced with the athletes on a daily basis.

How have you overcome these challenges?

I always talk to the coaches, even if I'm working individually with the athletes. While still maintaining confidentiality, I involve the coaches with at least what



Rich Gordin, PhD

Sport Psychology
Consultant

Emeritus Professor,
Utah State University

I'm doing in a general sense, what I can do and can't do, what I am doing and not going to do, and what my plans are and how they fit into their plans as a coach. If you do that, the coach often becomes your ally rather than your enemy.

What changes have you noticed in the field of sport psychology since you started?

Initially, there were very few psychologists that were working in the field of applied sport psychology. That's been a tremendous change, which I think has been positive. Our field now is a hybrid of kinesiology and psychology. We used to fight a lot in the field, territorial fighting, which is becoming less than it used to be. Certainly, I think that's been a positive development in the field: the combination of the kinesiology and psychology has become more amiable. Also, I think that the field has changed in a sense that we have more evidence-based research available. I don't know how many journals there are now, but there's been good work done in research and science to validate what we are doing with athletes and coaches in the applied setting.

How do you evaluate the effectiveness of your work as a consultant?

I evaluate it both formally and informally, which is important. Formal evaluations are done in a number of ways, including feedback instruments that are distributed to your clients, athletes, and/or coaches. Most organizations, at least Olympic organizations, require this type of evaluation at the end of any competitive year that is built into the system. These formal evaluations are very beneficial. Informal evaluations would come from the athletes, coaches, and

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administrators about whether you are doing good work or not. I've found in the field of athletics that people are not shy about letting you know whether you are competent. If you are not doing a good job, I guess the number one thing is you won't be invited back, which is a pretty solid indicator that something went awry. If you are invited back, this is an indication of confidence in you by the organization, athletes, and coaches. You are becoming part of their team. The team approach is the best orientation, while providing a set of tools to put in their toolbox to help them be the very best that they can be.

“I’ve found in the field of athletics that people are not shy about letting you know whether you are competent. If you are not doing a good job, I guess the number one thing is you won’t be invited back, which is a pretty solid indicator that something went awry.”

What advice do you have for early career professionals?

I would say there are two or three things I would advise early career professionals to do. Number one is during your master's or doctoral level training programs, try to get some applied experience under the supervision of someone who is established in the field. This is sometimes difficult to do, but I've found that it's critical to your success later on in your career. Number two would be to attend professional conferences as early as possible, and network with professionals in the field. Go to sessions, learn new things, ask questions, and meet people. The final piece of advice I would give is to make sure you establish a peer group of colleagues that you can rely on for honest and authentic feedback when you need it. For instance, if you have a question about something in your applied work, you can feel free to call one of your colleagues and bounce it off of him or her and get feedback. It is very difficult to practice alone or not have any feedback from others who are doing similar work as you do.

The Role of Physical Self-Description in Collegiate Student-Athletes' Well-Being Compared to Non-Athletes

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Introduction

College students confront diverse stressors, such as high levels of academic, financial, social, and emotional problems; thus, there has been an emphasis on the consideration of college students' well-being (Adlaf, Gliksman, Demers, & Newton-Taylor, 2001; Bayram & Bilgel, 2008). Seligman (2011) de-fines well-being as five elements (PERMA): positive emotion, engagement, relationship, meaning, and accomplishment. Previous studies have indicated that perceptions of their physical capability and appearance can have a positive or a negative influence on their well-being (Martín-Albo, Núñez, Domínguez, León, & Tomás, 2012; Parker, Martin, & Marsh, 2008). For example, negative body image leads to a risk for eating disorder among athletes (Kong & Harris, 2015). However, there is a lack of research investigating the relationship between physical self-description and university student-athletes' well-being. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the effects of student-athletes' physical self-description on their well-being, a population previously unstudied.



Methods

A total of 228 collegiate students (athletes = 49, non-athletes = 179), ages 18-25 ($M_{\text{age}} = 21.19$, $SD = 2.09$ years), of various ethnicities (Caucasian = 97, Hispanic = 79, African-American = 22, Asian = 12, and other ethnicities = 18) completed a validated

questionnaire online consisting of 70 items that used a 6-point Likert-type scale to assess their physical self-description, where 1 = false and 6 = true (PSDQ; Marsh, Richards, Johnson, & Roche, 1994). Participants were asked to describe their appearance, body fat, coordination, endurance, flexibility, health, physical activity, sports competence, strength, global physical, and self-esteem. The following is an example item for appearance scale: "I am attractive for my age." The participants also completed a questionnaire that assessed their well-being, consisting of 16 items on a 11-points Likert-type scale where 0 = not at all and 10 = completely (PERMA; Seligman, 2011). An example statement from the meaning subscale is, "In general, to what extent do you lead a purposeful and meaningful life?"

"...coaches or instructors may emphasize positive physical self-description throughout collegiate student-athletes' training programs in order to promote positive perception among athletes of their physical capabilities and appearance, which ultimately influence their well-being."

Results

Correlation analyses were conducted by athlete and non-athlete groups, respectively, to investigate differences in physical self-description domains with overall well-being scores using Fisher's z transformation. Correlation coefficients ($p < .05$) indicated that overall well-being was positively associated with most components of physical self-description ($r_s = .20$ to $.62$) in both groups except for endurance, health, and sport competence ($p > .05$) in the student-athlete group. However, group differences were only found in the relationships between body fat and well-being ($r_{\text{athlete}} = .617 > r_{\text{non-athlete}} = .333$, Fisher's $z = 2.26$, $p < 0.01$). The results showed that most components of physical self-description had statistically significant influences on the

well-being of both collegiate student-athletes and non-athletes. There were no statistically significant differences between the two groups' overall well-being in the domains of physical self-description except in regard to body fat.

Table 1
Pearson *r* and Fisher's *z* test results for correlation comparisons on overall well-being scores in two groups ($N_{\text{athlete}}=49$, $N_{\text{non-athlete}}=179$).

PSD Variables	Athlete <i>r</i>	Non-athlete <i>r</i>	Fisher's <i>z</i>
Appearance	.597**	.423***	1.43
Body fat	.617***	.333***	2.26**
Coordination	.466***	.391***	0.56
Endurance	.236	.343***	-.71
Flexibility	.325*	.332***	-0.05
Health	.168	.217**	-0.31
Physical Activity	.347*	.196**	0.99
Sport Competence	.087	.260***	-1.08
Strength	.304*	.304***	0
Global Physical	.619***	.467***	1.31
Self-esteem	.530***	.628***	-0.89

Note. PSD = Physical Self-Description, *r* = Pearson correlation
p* < .05, *p* < .01, ****p* < .001

Discussion

The present study examined whether physical self-description domains contribute to collegiate student-athletes' overall well-being comparing to non-athletes. The results indicated that physical self-description plays an important role in the well-being of collegiate student-athletes and non-athletes. The present findings also support the hypothesized relationship between physical self-description and well-being (Leung & Leung, 1992; Martín-Albo et al., 2012). If college students have positive perceptions about their physical ability and appearance, it is likely that they will also have greater well-being.

The present study has practical implications for coaches or instructors. Emphasizing athletes' posi-

tive perception of physical ability and body image could help to enhance their overall well-being. An increase of body image disturbance is a concern in Western societies (Pimenta et al., 2009), and negative perception of body image has negative influences on mental health outcomes, such as anorexia, lowered self-confidence, decreased interpersonal relationships, and depression (Lowery et al., 2005; Shahyad, Pakdaman, & Shokri, 2015). Several studies examining athletes' body image reported that a negative body image among athletes resulted in developing risk factors for eating disorders (Kong & Harris, 2015; Thiemann et al., 2015). Kong and Harris (2015) reported a considerably lower level of body satisfaction and a higher rate of eating disorder symptoms among athletes regardless of the type of sport they played.

The period during college is an important developmental time that has a lifelong effect on individuals' well-being (Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010). Moreover, body satisfaction plays an important role in treating well-being (Grogan, 2016). Thus, coaches or instructors may emphasize positive physical self-description throughout collegiate student-athletes' training programs in order to promote positive perception among athletes of their physical capabilities and appearance, which ultimately influence their well-being. Additionally, because body image is a psychological perception that is significantly affected by social factors (Grogan, 2016), social support or community-based interventions could be effective in helping collegiate student athletes to improve their own body satisfaction.

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8-Year Post-PEM Newsletter Realization and Reflection

In a perfect world, we would all get unlimited playing time, another “at bat,” an extra free-throw, one more serve, or the chance to perform our favorite musical “peace.” Every pool would be the perfect temperature, and the river would be calm for every regatta. No one would get injured, every game would be fair, and no one would walk away from their competition, or performance, feeling bad. I’d be able to include analogies from all performance-related activities in this article, and everyone would have just a little more “fun.”



In 2009, I was given the opportunity to coordinate the Association for Applied Sport Psychology’s (AASP) PEM newsletter, with the help of another student. I was honored and very excited, since sports and exercise have played an important role in my life, and I have had very positive experiences with AASP as an organization. I knew exactly what message I wanted to communicate in the introduction, which I think I did in the last two paragraphs where I speak about Dr. Burt Giges’ presidential address at the 2007 AASP Conference. Recently, I realized that the message I conveyed in the first paragraph was not accurate or consistent with my actual athletic experience. The truth is, I had very positive experiences with all of my coaches, and tended not to be bothered by excited fans. Please don’t misinterpret this statement. I have experienced my own obstacles in sports, and in life. But they definitely were not the fault of my coaches, or fans, who were really just demonstrating their passion for the sport.

The main ideas I wanted to convey were the following: 1) As stated in Burt Giges’ presidential address, AASP has the advantage of having professionals and students from multiple performance-related disciplines as part of the organization. It is so important that we don’t allow our differences to pull us apart, but instead unite us as an organization. Every professional and student has a unique perspective. It will make us much stronger if we work together, are open and honest with each other, try to move past unhelpful biases and judgments, and celebrate our differences. 2) I do believe in appropriate self-disclosure when working with clients. As long as there are healthy boundaries, no intent to harm or cause a significant amount of distress, and the professional remains in compliance with his or her ethics code, and the law.

Please look at my first attempt at writing the introduction as a trip over a hurdle that interfered with my race performance; to be honest it is way more embarrassing than I can communicate in this article. In fact, my experience at the AASP conferences I’ve attended, and with the sport psychology professionals I’ve met throughout my career journey, is very similar to my past sport experiences with teammates and coaches. They have all helped form the part of my identity I’m proud of, and given me the courage to persevere, and strive towards my goals in life. I was tempted to re-write the entire article, but since I am no longer a graduate student or recent graduate, that would not be fair. Instead, I made the necessary changes to communicate the precise message.



* Pictures are from Pixabay or Google websites

Addendum

Lutkenhouse, J. (2009, December). AASP Students Model a Mindful, Multidisciplinary, and Collaborative Approach to Newsletter Writing. *Performance Excellence Movement*, 6(1).

When you are passionate about something, it is common to fight for what you believe in and care about. As sport and exercise psychology professionals we know first hand that a certain amount of competition is healthy and adaptive. However, too much can do more harm than good. I bring this up because I think it applies to AASP as an organization. We are all human beings, who share this common interest and desire to help unique performers achieve excellence. However, many of us have different values, beliefs, experiences, expertise, and/or objectives. We can be very successful as an organization if we are mindful of our own personal biases, and don't allow our emotions and an unhealthy competitive mindset to influence our behavior in ways we are not proud of. Let's use our love for sports or your choice of performance-related activity, and our past to help us soar, not "sore."

One of the amazing things about the Olympics is that it unites athletes from all over the world. Similarly, AASP welcomes professionals and students from multiple disciplines. If we honor each other's opinions, and try to understand different perspectives, we can communicate with one another with a clear centered mind, model good sportsmanship, and help our organization prosper.

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS

As editors of the 2017 PEM Newsletter, we first want to thank the students who have shared their experience in this year's first newsletter. Additionally, we would like to thank all who have made the final product possible. This includes the AASP Executive Board and Student Representatives, former PEM Initiative Leaders, and the professionals in the sport and performance psychology field who so willingly participated in our interviews. The PEM Newsletter would not have been possible without their helpful contributions and support. We would also like to send special thanks to the AASP Student Representatives for giving us the opportunity to serve as PEM editors as well as make changes to the newsletter format from previous years. We decided to increase publication from one to two newsletters this year, in August and December, respectively. The newsletter also completely becomes an online publication this year. This has been a learning experience for us, from the initial planning and recruitment to the process of editing and newsletter design.

We would also like to reinforce the thoughts shared by the past editing teams. The current team of editors also believes that the PEM Newsletter is an excellent student publication that can increase student, practitioner, and public awareness of the applied techniques in sport, exercise, and performance psychology. We also believe that it is crucial for AASP student members to have a venue through which they may publish articles in this field. As PEM editors, we have tried to create a product that achieves these goals and serves the diverse interests in our field. Looking to the future, we invite AASP student members to become more involved in the PEM Newsletter and to help this initiative grow!

Please email any comments, concerns, or questions regarding the newsletter to PEM Committee Co-Chairs Alan Chu and/or Carra Johnson as we continue to improve. Newsletters from previous years are available on the PEM Initiative Website: <http://appliedsportpsych.org/students-center/initiatives/performance-excellence-movement-pem/>

Thank you,
The 2016 AASP PEM Team

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