

Part 1 Sport and Performance Psychology

COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL

1 Introduction

STEWART COTTERILL, NEIL WESTON, AND GAVIN BRESLIN



INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK

The field of sport and exercise psychology has grown significantly over the last 20 years in line with a notable increase in the number of applied sport and exercise psychology practitioners globally. This growth has, in turn, driven the formalization and enhancement of sport and exercise psychologist training and qualification routes. While there is diversity in the approaches adopted in different countries and across different continents, the ultimate aim is the same, to enhance the quality of the service that we, as sport and exercise psychologists, offer to our clients and organizations.

While these developments are important for the field of sport and exercise psychology, less emphasis has been placed on sharing sport and exercise psychology practitioner experiences. In particular, it is evident that there has been a lack of discussion and dissemination of the different approaches to practice that sport and exercise psychologists have employed to meet the needs of their clients. As a consequence, in our experience trainee sport and exercise psychologists have historically not been exposed enough at a developmental level to the range of possible approaches that might be available to them. This is however changing and a number of education providers are now providing more comprehensive educational programmes for those students/practitioners interested in a career as a sport and/or exercise psychologist.

There has also recently been an encouraging increase in the volume of applied sport and exercise psychology books and peer-reviewed academic journal articles. However the detail as to the interventions employed by the practitioners and the evidence base to justify them, is still insufficient. Hence the present book seeks to overcome these limitations and provide a broad range of sport and exercise case studies covering a range of diverse approaches to practice, and crucially articulating the evidence base underpinning these approaches.

The book is designed to achieve a number of outcomes. First, it provides trainee and qualified practitioners alike with an opportunity to read a wide range of case studies detailing client initial assessment, intervention selection and implementation, as well as the consultant's reflection and evaluation of their experiences. Second, the book seeks to provide readers with an evidence-based approach to the consultancy experience through initial assessment and intervention to evaluation. Third, the book aims to provide a broad range of practitioner approaches to assessing and addressing key performance issues evident in the modern day sport and exercise environments. Finally, authors in each chapter recommend further reading for exploration if the reader is keen to develop a greater understanding of a particular approach or technique.

This book is designed to be a contemporary text, with each chapter integrating both research and applied practice in developing a coherent understanding of current knowledge, future research directions and applied implications within the field. In particular, the text explores issues pertinent to the trainee/applied practitioner/supervisor within the field, and through the use of expert commentary explores potential solutions to many of these key issues.

The specific aims of this book are to:

- Present a range of case studies examining how sport psychology practitioners initially assess the needs of their client(s), in addition to how they approach an intervention to improve the client's situation.
- Provide an evidence-based approach to solving client problems while also allowing practitioners the scope to discuss and reflect upon alternative creative strategies that could have informed their interventions.
- Provide practitioners with a contemporary knowledge base in a range of sport and exercise discipline areas in addition to future research suggestions and applied implications.

- Explore issues pertinent to the applied practitioner/supervisor within the field and through the use of expert commentary explore potential solutions to many of these key issues.

THE NATURE OF APPLIED WORK IN SPORT AND EXERCISE PSYCHOLOGY

Applied practice within the domain of sport and exercise psychology is both diverse and eclectic in its nature. Indeed, the broad range of case studies presented in this book serves to reinforce this view. The domain for the applied practitioner ranges from working with individual athletes, coaches, and patients to teams, clubs, public health organizations, and broader settings. Coupled with this, practitioners can work with current or future Olympic champions, professional athletes, talented young performers, individuals and groups seeking to make healthier life choices, influence public-policy decisions, and to facilitate recovery and adaptation following serious health conditions such as strokes, cancer, and diabetes; and mental health issues such as depression and anxiety disorders. Indeed, the breadth of the field of sport and exercise psychology is truly astounding. Such a range of potential applications of psychology across the sport and exercise field raises questions about whether this can be covered in a single training/development programme. This is though beyond the focus of the current text. This book seeks to explore and highlight the diversity of applied practice facing current sport and exercise psychology practitioners, sharing a range of approaches and crucially their underpinning theoretical and empirical basis.

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

The book is comprised of 25 chapters, arranged in four parts: Part I, Sport and Performance Psychology; Part II, Coaching Psychology; Part III, Motor Learning and Control; and Part IV, Psychology of Physical Activity and Exercise. Each chapter is designed to offer the reader an in-depth understanding of the particular case study and approach adopted. Also specific learning outcomes are articulated, and a number of key areas to consider when reading the chapter. Each chapter then presents an overview of the client and the issue before outlining the needs analysis process that guided the decisions regarding the interventions adopted. The framework underpinning the intervention and the associated processes are explained before the authors reflect upon the effectiveness of the approaches adopted. Finally, avenues for further exploration and reading are described to develop a greater understanding of the approaches and interventions presented in the chapter. It is important to state at this point that some of the chapters are real experiences that the clients have given their consent to be published, and some are hypothetical case studies. The chapters are supported by online resources including 'Talking Heads' videos from the authors, sample essays, questions, and further weblinks.

Sport and Performance Psychology

This part of the book explores a range of interventions where the presenting problems are sport and performance focused. In particular, Part I explores psychological factors including managing interpersonal relationships, confidence, concentration and rumination, stress management, personality

and group functioning, injury rehabilitation, supporting athletes through career transitions; and the provision of psychological support during major events.

Coaching Psychology

This second part of the book focuses explicitly on the coach, and the potential psychological challenges coaches face. In particular, this part of the book focuses on case studies examining the coach's stress and coping experience, impression management in coach/athlete interactions, creating successful coach/athlete relationships, and nurturing mental toughness through autonomous supportive coaching.

Motor Learning and Control

This part of the book explores motor learning and control and the use of these approaches in applied practice. Specifically, this part of the book explores the cognitive processes involved in the development of motor skills in practice, the development of visual anticipation skills, and the development of perception and action through an ecological-based approach.

Psychology of Physical Activity and Exercise

This final part of the book considers the use of physical activity and exercise as a medium through which a range of health and wellbeing outcomes can be achieved. Specifically, this part of the book explores the challenges of physical activity promotion on a population level, the relationship between exercise and wellbeing, the links between physical activity, self-esteem, and self-concept, intellectual disability and exercise, exercise and body image, exercise dependence, physical activity in children, physical activity and the environment around us, and exercise use in cancer care.

Taking all these chapters collectively, we hope you will enjoy the read and in so doing get a real feeling for the diverse nature of the applied field of sport and exercise psychology. It has been our pleasure working with the authors of each chapter to bring the reader an international, contemporary, informative and diverse textbook.

Stewart, Neil, and Gavin