PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE PORTFOLIO

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Liverpool John Moores University for the degree of DSportExPsy Professional Doctorate

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Abstract

This thesis demonstrates the development of a neophyte sport psychology practitioner's journey through a professional doctorate. In particular, the thesis provides a reflective demonstration of enhanced competence in ethical practice, consultancy, dissemination and research.

Three applied consultancy case studies and reflective diary entries highlight the challenges faced as a trainee sport psychology practitioner, with a particular focus on the development of a professional philosophy. In particular, a lack of self-awareness regarding personal values and beliefs and often incongruently delivering practitioner-led sessions, with an emphasis on 'needing to offer something meaningful for clients'. Following a period of self-examination (Simons & Andersen, 1995) and discovery (Corlett, 1966) the author began to develop a more congruent philosophy of practice, focused on a client-led, counselling based approach. The author also demonstrates anxiety related to competence, particularly during the early stages of development; this is in line with contemporary practitioner development research (e.g., Tod, Andersen & Marchant, 2009).

Two empirical papers and a systematic review were also conducted. The author often adopted the position of practitioner-researcher when conducting research. The challenges associated with such positions are discussed, such as challenges to identity (Champ, 2019). Finally, a dissemination case study and reflections highlight the delivery of psychoeducational sessions to a variety of populations. Through this, the author's pedagogical approach develops from an authoritarian, traditional lecture-based approach (Girgin & Stevens, 2005), to a more collaborative learning experience, placing the learner at the centre of the process (Postareff & Lindblom-Ylanne, 2008).

Declaration

I wish to confirm that there are no known conflicts of interest associated with the publication of this professional doctorate.

I can confirm that no portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or institute of learning.

Acknowledgements

I would not have been able to complete this professional doctorate without the contributions and support from so many people. Without your continued support and guidance, I would not be where I am today, and for that, I express my thanks.

I would like to thank my amazing family; in particular, my mum, the strongest woman I know, your resilience is a trait that I utilised throughout my studies. My grandparents, Mike and Barbara, were always a vital source of strength. Thanks, must also go to my dad and stepmother Tony and Viv, siblings Anna, Caitlin, Matty, and Grandparents, Jimmy and Pat, thank you all for your support.

Thank you to my incredible girlfriend, Jules, without her patience, encouragement, love, and support, none of this would have been possible. Your selfless acts allowed me to dedicate so much time towards my studies and practice, for that I am incredibly thankful. I would also like to thank her supportive parents Ian and Carolyn, both of you helped me in so many ways, and for that, I am genuinely grateful.

I would like to express my sincerest thanks to my supervisor Dr. Rob Morris, you offered incredible advice and support throughout my studies and made this a delightful experience. Similarly, thank you to Dr. Martin Eubank for challenging me and creating a supportive environment that allowed me to develop.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the participants, coaches, athletes, parents, and support staff that I have worked with over this programme. You all contributed towards my development as a researcher and practitioner and made this an enjoyable journey for me.

Conferences and Research

McGreary, M., Eubank, M. R., Morris, R., & Whitehead, A. E. (2020). Thinking Aloud: Stress and Coping in Junior Cricket Batsmen during Challenge and Threat States. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*. https://doi.org/10.1177/0031512520938911

McGreary, M., Eubank, M. R., & Morris, R. (under review). Retrospective and concurrent perspectives of the transition into professional female football within the United Kingdom.

McGreary, M., Whitehead, A. E., Eubank, M. R., & Morris, R. (under review). Think Aloud in Sport and Exercise – A systematic review.

McGreary, M., Eubank, M. R., & Morris, R. (2018). Breaking into the first team: Investigating the transition experiences of professional female soccer players. Division of Sport and Exercise Psychology Annual Conference.

McGreary, M., (2019). Experiences in academia and enrolment onto a professional doctorate. PSYPAG student-led conference.

Professional Doctorate in Sport and Exercise Psychology

Practice Logbook (Consultancy)

Consultancy					
Client details	**Location**	**Date(s)**	**Nature of the activity**	**Contact Hours**	**Placement Host details (if applicable)**
Liverpool Ladies FC	Select Security Stadium	03/06/17	Consultancy: Observing match versus Manchester City. Observation sheet created.	6	Liverpool Ladies 1st Team
Cheshire County Cricket Club	Home	05/06/17	Designing worksheet for use by players. Informing what Sport psychology is and how it can help to enhance performance.	3.5	Cheshire County Cricket Club Emerging Player Programme (EPP)
Living Well Taking Control	Blundelsands	05/06/17	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Bludelsands	12/06/17	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	4	Living Well Taking Control

Cheshire County Cricket Club	Rode Park	13/06/17	The first session with the Emerging Player Programme (EPP). Informal chats with players/ staff introducing myself.	3.5	Cheshire County Emerging Player Programme. (EPP)
Living Well Taking Control	Blundelsands	19/06/17	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Cheshire County Cricket Club	Kingsley Cricket Club	19/06/17	Introducing the concept of replicating match pressures in a training environment. Working alongside coaches to implement.	3.5	Cheshire County Emerging Player Programme. (EPP)
Living Well Taking Control	Southport	22/06/17	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Blundelsands	26/06/17	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Cheshire County Cricket Club	Kingsley Cricket Club	26/06/17	Working alongside coaches delivering pressure training scenarios based on evidence investigating	3.5	Cheshire County Emerging Player Programme. (EPP)

			developing mental toughness in cricketers.		
Living Well Taking Control	Southport	29/06/17	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	30/03/17	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Blundlesands	03/06/17	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	07/07/17	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Liverpool Ladies FC	Home	10/07/17	Developing a psychology programme to be delivered to the 1st team for the upcoming pre-season and 2017-18 football season.	8	Liverpool Ladies FC
Liverpool Ladies FC	Home	11/07/17	Development of a psychology programme to be delivered to the 1st team for the upcoming pre-	8	Liverpool Ladies FC

			season and 2017-18 football season.		
Liverpool Ladies FC	Home	12/07/17	Development of a psychology programme to be delivered to the 1st team for the upcoming pre-season and 2017-18 football season.	8	Liverpool Ladies FC
Liverpool Ladies FC	Home	13/07/17	Development of a psychology programme to be delivered to the 1st team for the upcoming pre-season and 2017-18 football season.	8	Liverpool Ladies FC
Liverpool Ladies FC	Home	14/07/17	Development of a psychology programme to be delivered to the 1st team for the upcoming pre-season and 2017-18 football season.	8	Liverpool Ladies FC
Living Well Taking Control	St Helens	18/07/17	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings. X2	8	Living Well Taking Control
	Home	19/07/17	Developing psychological training programme for winter pre-season EPP	8	Cheshire Cricket Boards

Cheshire Cricket Board			training. Researching previous models and integrating them to meet the needs of the squad.		
Cheshire Cricket Board	Home	20/07/17	Developing psychological training programme for winter pre-season EPP training. Synthesising research into a formal programme design to be presented to lead coach for feedback. See attached draft plan.	8	Cheshire Cricket Board
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	21/07/17	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Blundlesands	24/07/17	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Liverpool Football Club	Select Security Stadium	27/07/17	Meeting with 1st team manager and assistant manager to discuss psychological support programme for 2017/18 season	4	Widnes, Select security stadium.

Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	28/07/17	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Liverpool Football Club	Select Security Stadium	31/07/17	Follow up meeting with 1st team manager and general manager to discuss the implementation of a psychological support programme for 17/18 season	4	Widnes, Select security stadium.
Liverpool Football Club	Select Security Stadium		Player meetings & training.	6	Widnes, Select security stadium.
Living Well Taking Control.	Maghull	16/08/17	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	18/08/17	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Cheshire Cricket Board	Home	11/09/17	Finalising MST programme for cricket age groups, confirming dates with sessions.	6	Living Well Taking Control
Cheshire Cricket Board	Home	12/09/17	Finalising MST programme for cricket age groups, confirming dates with sessions.	6	Living Well Taking Control

Cheshire Cricket Board	Northwich	13/09//17	Meeting with performance director to sign off on programme and make any final changes.	4	Living Well Taking Control.
Liverpool Ladies FC	Select Security Stadium	20/09/17	Player meetings & training session.	6	Living Well Taking Control
Liverpool Ladies FC	Select Security Stadium	22/09/17	Matchday.	5	Liverpool Ladies FC
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	22/09/17	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Liverpool Ladies FC	Select Security Stadium	27/09/17	Player meetings and training session.	6	Liverpool Ladies FC
Liverpool Ladies FC	Select Security Stadium	29/09/17	Matchday.	5	Liverpool Ladies FC
LWTC	Bootle	18/09/17	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	4	Living Well Taking Control.
LWTC	Bootle	25/09/17	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	4	Living Well Taking Control.

Liverpool Ladies FC	Select Security Stadium	03/10/17	Training session & player meetings.	8	Liverpool Ladies FC
Liverpool Ladies FC	Select Security Stadium	05/10/17	Training session & player meetings & research interview.	8	Liverpool Ladies FC
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	06/10/17	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Southport	04/10/17	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	09/10/17	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Liverpool Ladies FC	Select Security Stadium	10/10/17	Training session & player meetings & research interview.	8	Liverpool Ladies FC
Liverpool Ladies FC	Select Security Stadium	14/10/17	Training session & player meetings & research interview.	8	Liverpool Ladies FC
Living Well Taking Control	Southport	12/10/17	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	13/10/17	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	4	Living Well Taking Control

Practice Logbook (Consultancy)

Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	16/10/17	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Southport	17/10/17	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Reaseheath training complex	18/10/17	Meeting with the head of science and medicine to discuss potential psychology programme.	2	Crewe Alexandra FC
Liverpool Ladies FC	LJMU	19/10/17	Player meetings & consultation sessions.	4	Liverpool Ladies FC
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	20/10/17	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	23/10/17	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Cheshire Cricket Board.	Cheshire	24/10/17	Introduction to sport psychology & psychological profiling workshop.	4	Cheshire Cricket Board.
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	24/10/17	Academy Psychologist – player meetings, designing/ delivering, observations.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Manchester University	Manchester	26/10/17	Observing and assisting supervisor in delivering	5	Manchester University

			sport psychology sessions to University teams.		
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	25/10/17	Behaviour change workshop. X2	6	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	27/10/17	Behaviour change workshop. X2	6	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	30/10/17	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	01/11/17	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexander FC	Crewe	2/11/17	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	9	Crewe Alexander FC
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	3/11/17	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	6/11/17	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexander FC	Crewe	7/11/17	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	9	Crewe Alexander FC

Cheshire County Cricket	Stockport	7/11/17	Psychological support – Delivering workshops to EPP squads	3	Cheshire County Cricket
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	08/11/17	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexander FC	Crewe	09/11/17	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education	9	Crewe Alexander FC
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	10/11/17	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	13/11/17	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexander FC	Crewe	14/11/17	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education	9	Crewe Alexander FC
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle/ Maghull	15/11/17	Behaviour change workshop x2	8	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexander FC	Crewe	16/11/17	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education	11	Crewe Alexander FC
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	17/11/17	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control

Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	20/11/17	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexander FC	Crewe	21/11/17	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education	9	Crewe Alexander FC
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	22/11/17	Behaviour change workshop. X2	8	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexander FC	Crewe	23/11/17	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education	6	Crewe Alexander FC
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	24/11/17	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	27/11/17	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexander FC	Crewe	28/11/17	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education	9	Crewe Alexander FC
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle/Maghull	29/11/17	Behaviour change workshop.	8	Living Well Taking Control

Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	01/12/17	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	04/12/17	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	05/12/17	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Maghull	06/12/17	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	07/12/17	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	08/12/17	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	13/12/17	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	9	Crewe Alexandra FC
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	14/12/17	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	9	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	15/12/17	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control

Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	18/12/17	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	19/12/17	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	9	Crewe Alexandra FC
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	20/12/17	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	5	Crewe Alexandra FC
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	21/12/17	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	9	Crewe Alexandra FC
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	02/01/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Maghull	03/01/18	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	04/01/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	08/01/18	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	St Helens	09/01/18	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control

Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	10/01/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	11/01/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	9	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	12/01/18	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	15/01/18	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	St Helens	16/01/18	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	17/01/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	9	Crewe Alexandra FC
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	18/01/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	8	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	19/01/18	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	22/01/18	Behaviour change workshop x2	8	Living Well Taking Control

Living Well Taking Control	Southport	23/01/18	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	24/01/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	9	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	26/01/18	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	29/01/18	Behaviour change workshop. X2	8	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Southport	30/01/18	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	31/01/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	9	Crewe Alexandra FC
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	01/02/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	02/02/18	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	05/02/18	Behaviour change workshop. X2	8	Living Well Taking Control

Living Well Taking Control	Southport	06/02/18	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	St Helens	07/02/18	Behaviour change workshop.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	08/02/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	9	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	09/02/18	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	12/02/18	Behaviour change workshop. X2	8	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Southport	13/02/18	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	14/02/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	8	Crewe Alexandra FC
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	15/02/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	9	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	16/02/18	Behaviour change workshop x2	8	Living Well Taking Control

Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	19/02/18	Behaviour change workshop. X2	8	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Southport	20/02/18	Behaviour change workshop	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Bootle	21/02/18	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	23/02/18	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	26/02/18	Behaviour change workshop. X2	8	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Southport	27/02/18	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	28/02/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	01/03/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Crewe Alexandra FC	Bootle	02/03/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education	10	Crewe Alexandra FC

Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	05/03/18	Behaviour change workshop. X2	8	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Southport	06/03/18	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	07/03/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	08/03/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	09/03/18	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	12/03/18	Behaviour change workshop. X2	8	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Southport	13/03/18	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	14/03/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	8	Crewe Alexandra FC
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	15/03/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	9	Crewe Alexandra FC

Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	16/03/18	Behaviour change workshop x2	8	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	19/03/18	Behaviour change workshop. X2	8	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Southport	20/03/18	Behaviour change workshop	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	22/03/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	4	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	23/03/18	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	26/03/18	Behaviour change workshop. X2	8	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Southport	27/03/18	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	28/02/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	02/04/18	Behaviour change workshop. X2	8	Living Well Taking Control

Living Well Taking Control	Southport	03/04/18	Behaviour change workshop. X2	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	04/04/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	05/04/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	8	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	06/04/18	Behaviour change workshop. X2	8	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	09/04/18	Behaviour change workshop. X2	8	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	10/04/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	25/04/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	26/04/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	27/04/10	Behaviour change workshop. X2	8	Living Well Taking Control

Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	30/04/18	Behaviour change workshop. X2	8	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	01/05/18	Behaviour change workshop. X2	8	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	02/05/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	03/05/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	04/05/18	Behaviour change workshop. X2	8	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	07/05/18	Behaviour change workshop. X2	8	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	08/05/18	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	09/04/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	10/05/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC

Living Well Taking Control	Crewe	11/05/18	Behaviour change workshop. X2	8	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	14/05/18	Behaviour change workshop. X2	8	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Southport	15/05/10	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	16/05/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	17/05/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	18/05/18	Behaviour change workshop. X2	8	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	21/05/18	Behaviour change workshop. X2	8	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Southport	22/05/18	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	23/05/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC

Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	24/05/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Crewe	25/05/18	Behaviour change workshop. X2	8	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	28/05/18	Behaviour change workshop. X2	8	Living Well Taking Control
Living Well Taking Control	Bootle	29/05/18	Behaviour change workshop.	4	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	30/05/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	31/05/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	01/06/18	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	8	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	07/06/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	08/06/18	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	8	Living Well Taking Control

Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	14/06/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	15/06/18	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	8	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	21/06/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	22/06/18	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	8	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	28/06/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	29/06/18	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	8	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	05/07/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	06/07/18	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	8	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	12/07/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC

Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	13/07/18	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	6	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	19/07/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	20/07/18	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	6	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	26/07/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	27/07/18	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	6	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	02/08/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	03/08/18	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	6	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	09/08/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	10/08/18	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	6	Living Well Taking Control

Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	16/08/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	17/08/18	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	6	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	23/08/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	24/08/18	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	6	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	30/08/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	31/08/18	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	6	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	06/09/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	07/09/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	14/09/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC

Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	21/09/18	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	6	Living Well Taking Control
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	20/09/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	27/09/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	28/09/18	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	6	Living Well Taking Control
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	01/10/18	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Centre – North Lindsey College
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	04/10/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	05/10/18	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	6	Living Well Taking Control
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	08/10/18	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Centre – North Lindsey College
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	11/10/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC

Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	12/10/18	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	6	Living Well Taking Control
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	15/10/18	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Centre – North Lindsey College
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	18/10/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	19/10/18	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	6	Living Well Taking Control
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	22/10/18	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Centre – North Lindsey College
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	25/10/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	26/10/18	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	6	Living Well Taking Control
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	29/10/18	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Centre – North Lindsey College
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	01/11/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	02/11/18	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	6	Living Well Taking Control

Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	05/11/18	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Centre – North Lindsey College
Cheshire County Cricket Board	Stockport	06/11/18	3 x Workshops to U12/U14/U16 cricketers.	5	Cheshire County Cricket Board
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	08/11/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	09/11/18	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	6	Living Well Taking Control
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	12/11/18	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Centre – North Lindsey College
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	15/11/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	16/11/18	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	6	Living Well Taking Control
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	19/11/18	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Centre – North Lindsey College
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	22/11/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC

Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	23/11/18	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	6	Living Well Taking Control
Cheshire County Cricket Board	Stockport	25/11/18	3 x Workshops to U12/U14/U16 cricketers.	5	Cheshire County Cricket Board
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	26/11/18	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Centre – North Lindsey College
Crewe Alexandra FC	Crewe	29/11/18	Psychological support – 1:1, workshops, coach education.	10	Crewe Alexandra FC
Living Well Taking Control	Crosby	30/11/18	Behaviour change workshops & Individual meetings.	6	Living Well Taking Control
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	03/12/18	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Centre – North Lindsey College
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	10/12/18	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Centre – North Lindsey College
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	17/12/18	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Centre – North Lindsey College
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	07/01/19	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Centre – North Lindsey College
Cheshire County Cricket Board	Stockport	13/01/19	1-2-1 player meetings	4	Cheshire County Cricket Board

Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	14/01/19	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Centre – North Lindsey College
Private Client	Congleton	17/01/19	1-2-1 meeting with a private client.	2	Private client
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	21/01/19	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Centre – North Lindsey College
Private Client	Congleton	24/01/19	1-2-1 meeting with a private client.	2	Private client
Cheshire County Cricket Board	Stockport	27/01/19	1-2-1 player meetings	4	Cheshire County Cricket Board
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	28/01/19	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Centre – North Lindsey College
Private Client	Congleton	31/01/19	1-2-1 meeting with a private client.	2	Private client
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	07/02/19	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Centre – North Lindsey College
Private Client	Congleton	07/02/19	1-2-1 meeting with a private client.	2	Private client
Cheshire County Cricket Board	Stockport	10/02/19	1-2-1 player meetings	4	Cheshire County Cricket Board
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	14/02/19	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Centre – North Lindsey College

Cheshire County Cricket Board	Stockport	17/02/19	1-2-1 player meetings	4	Cheshire County Cricket Board
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	21/02/19	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Centre – North Lindsey College
Private Client	Congleton	21/02/19	1-2-1 meeting with a private client.	2	Private client
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	28/02/19	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Centre – North Lindsey College
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	07/03/19	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Centre – North Lindsey College
Private Client	Congleton	08/03/19	The final session with a private client. 1-2-1 meeting.	2	Private client
Private client	Liverpool	09/03/19	Initial meeting with individual client	2	Private client
Cheshire County Cricket Board	Stockport	10/03/19	1-2-1 player meetings	4	Cheshire County Cricket Board
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	14/03/19	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Centre – North Lindsey College
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	21/03/19	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Centre – North Lindsey College

Practice Logbook (Consultancy)

Cheshire County Cricket Board	Stockport	24/03/19	1-2-1 player meetings	4	Cheshire County Cricket Board
Private client	Liverpool	23/03/19	Meeting with dad and son regarding the breakdown in the relationship.	2	Private client
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	28/03/19	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Centre – North Lindsey College
Cheshire County Cricket Board	Stockport	31/03/19	1-2-1 player meetings	3	Cheshire County Cricket Board
Cheshire County Cricket Board	Stockport	02/04/19	EPP squad psychology support	4	Cheshire County Cricket Board
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	11/04/19	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Centre – North Lindsey College
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	25/04/19	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Centre – North Lindsey College
Private client	Liverpool	24/06/19	Follow up meeting discussing clients progress.	2	Private client
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	12/09/19	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Campus North Lincolnshire (Formerly North Lindsey)

Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	19/09/19	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Campus North Lincolnshire (Formerly North Lindsey)
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	26/09/19	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Campus North Lincolnshire (Formerly North Lindsey)
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	03/10/19	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Campus North Lincolnshire (Formerly North Lindsey)
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	10/10/19	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Campus North Lincolnshire (Formerly North Lindsey)
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	17/10/19	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Campus North Lincolnshire (Formerly North Lindsey)
Aspire netball	North Lincolnshire	21/10/19	External consultancy workshops– Psychology education workshop x 3	6	University Campus North Lincolnshire
Scunthorpe United FC	Scunthorpe	24/10/19	Psychology workshop to U18s.	2	University Campus North Lincolnshire (Formerly North Lindsey)

Professional Standards (incl. CPD)

Client details	Location	Date(s)	Nature of the activity	Contact Hours	Placement Host details (if applicable)
Liverpool John Moores University	Tom Reiley Building	08/06/17	Plan of training development. Placement information development.	6	
Liverpool John Moores University	Tom Reiley Building	15/06/17	Ethics and reflection.	6	
Liverpool John Moores University	Tom Reiley Building	01/06/17	Introduction to training course and enrolment.	6	
	Home Based	28/06/17	Wider Reading - Monthly	4	
Liverpool John Moores University	Tom Reiley Building	05/07/17	Philosophical underpinnings and models of approach in consultancy; Consultancy Case Studies.	6	
Liverpool John Moores University	Tom Reiley Building	06/07/17	The consultancy process; The practicalities of Teaching and Training.	6	

	Home Based	28/07/17	Wider Reading - Monthly	4	
Liverpool John Moores University	Tom Reiley Building	10/08/17	Intake needs analysis and case formulation in consultancy	6	
Liverpool John Moores University	Tom Reiley Building	17/08/17	Choosing intervention in consultancy (10-12); Planning intervention in Consultancy (2-4)	6	
Dr Robert Morris	Off Campus	10/08/17	Supervisor meeting, discussing research proposal and ethics application to be submitted for review.	2	
	Home Based	28/08/17	Wider Reading - Monthly	4	
Liverpool John Moores University	Tom Reiley Building	14/09/17	Attend LJMU session delivered by students presenting a variety of interventions and techniques in a sport setting.	6	
Liverpool John Moores University	Tom Reiley Building	28/09/17	Sport & Health psych day.	6	

Supervisor meeting	LJMU	14/09/17	Supervisor meeting, discussing consultancy work and research.	1	
Supervisor meeting	LJMU	20/09/17	Supervisor meeting, discussing consultancy work and research.	1	
Supervisor meeting	LJMU	26/09/17	Supervisor meeting	1	
	Home Based	28/09/17	Wider Reading - Monthly	4	
Liverpool John Moores University	Tom Reiley Building	26/10/17	Sport Psych ProfDoc Day	6	
Supervisor meeting	LJMU	13/10/17	Supervisor meeting, discussing consultancy work and research.	2	
Supervisor meeting	LJMU	02/10/17	Supervisor meeting, discussing consultancy work and research.	1	
TASS	Manchester University	26/10/17	Observing supervisor delivering sport psych sessions	4	
	Home Based	28/10/17	Wider Reading - Monthly	4	
Liverpool John	Tom Reiley Building	23/11/17	Sport Psych ProfDoc Day	6	

Moores University					
Supervisor meeting	LJMU	13/11/17	Supervisor meeting, discussing consultancy work and research.	2	
Supervisor meeting	LJMU	02/11/17	Supervisor meeting, discussing consultancy work and research.	1	
	Home Based	28/11/17	Wider Reading - Monthly	4	
Liverpool John Moores University	Tom Reiley Building	07/12/17	Sport Psych ProfDoc Day	6	
Supervisor meeting	LJMU	15/12/17	Supervisor meeting, discussing consultancy work and research.	2	
DSEP Conference	Glasgow	11/12/17	DSEP annual conference	8	
DSEP Conference	Glasgow	12/12/17	DSEP annual conference	8	
	Home Based	28/11/17	Wider Reading - Monthly	4	
Liverpool John Moores University	Tom Reiley Building	25/01/18	Sport Psych ProfDoc Day	6	

Supervisor meeting	LJMU	25/01/18	Supervisor meeting, discussing consultancy work and research.	2	
	Home Based	28/01/18	Wider Reading - Monthly	4	
Liverpool John Moores University	Tom Reiley Building	22/02/18	Sport Psych ProfDoc Day	6	
Supervisor meeting	LJMU	22/02/18	Supervisor meeting, discussing consultancy work and research.	2	
	Home Based	28/02/18	Wider Reading - Monthly	4	
Liverpool John Moores University	Tom Reiley Building	22/03/18	Sport Psych ProfDoc Day	6	
Supervisor meeting	LJMU	29/03/18	Supervisor meeting, discussing consultancy work and research.	2	
	Home Based	28/03/18	Wider Reading - Monthly	4	
Liverpool John Moores University	Tom Reiley Building	19/04/18	Sport Psych ProfDoc Day	6	
Supervisor meeting	LJMU	20/04/18	Supervisor meeting, discussing consultancy work and research.	2	

	Home Based	28/04/18	Wider Reading - Monthly	4	
Liverpool John Moores University	Tom Reiley Building	17/05/18	Sport Psych ProfDoc Day	6	
Supervisor meeting	LJMU	17/05/18	Supervisor meeting, discussing consultancy work and research.	2	
	Home Based	28/05/18	Wider Reading - Monthly	4	
Liverpool John Moores University	Tom Reiley Building	28/06/18	Sport Psych ProfDoc Day	6	
Supervisor meeting	LJMU	21/06/18	Supervisor meeting, discussing consultancy work and research.	2	
	Home Based	28/06/18	Wider Reading - Monthly	4	
Supervisor meeting	Tom Reiley Building	27/07/18	Supervisor meeting	2	
	Home Based	28/07/18	Wider Reading - Monthly	4	
Supervisor meeting	Tom Reiley Building	15/08/18	Supervisor meeting	2	
	Home Based	28/08/18	Wider Reading - Monthly	4	
University Centre	North Lindsey College	03/09/18	CPD Teacher Training Events	6	
University Centre	North Lindsey College	04/09/18	CPD Teacher Training Events	6	

University Centre	North Lindsey College	05/09/18	CPD Teacher Training Events	6	
University Centre	North Lindsey College	06/09/18	CPD Teacher Training Events	6	
University Centre	North Lindsey College	10/09/18	CPD Teacher Training Events	6	
Liverpool John Moores University	Tom Reiley Building	27/09/18	Sport Psych ProfDoc Day	6	
	Home Based	28/09/18	Wider Reading - Monthly	4	
Supervisor meeting	Skype	03/10/18	Supervisor meeting	2	
	Home Based	31/10/18	Wider Reading - Monthly	4	
Supervisor meeting	Skype	05/11/18	Supervisor meeting	2	
Liverpool John Moores University	Tom Reiley Building	29/11/18	Sport Psych ProfDoc Day	6	
	Home Based	31/11/18	Wider Reading - Monthly	4	
Supervisor meeting	Skype	03/12/18	Supervisor meeting	2	
DSEP conference	Belfast	03/12/18	Annual DSEP conference (poster presentation)	8	
DSEP conference	Belfast	04/12/18	Annual DSEP conference	8	

University Centre	North Lindsey College	21/12/18	CPD Teacher Training Events – Mental Health awareness	8	
Supervisor meeting	Skype	07/01/19	Supervisor meeting	2	
	Home Based	31/01/19	Wider Reading - Monthly	4	
Liverpool John Moores University	Tom Reiley Building	31/01/19	Sport Psych ProfDoc Day	6	
	Home Based	28/02/19	Wider Reading - Monthly	4	
Liverpool John Moores University	Tom Reiley Building	28/02/19	Sport Psych ProfDoc Day	6	
Supervisor observation	North Lindsey College	14/03/19	Supervisor observing the delivery of lectures to L5 students and provided feedback.	6	
Liverpool John Moores University	Tom Reiley Building	25/03/19	Sport Psych ProfDoc Day	6	
Liverpool John Moores University	Tom Reiley Building	25/04/19	Sport Psych ProfDoc Day	6	

Supervisor meeting	Skype	01/05/19	Supervisor meeting	2	
Liverpool John Moores University	Tom Reiley Building	26/06/19	PsyPag conference – Attending a conference and presenting a 1-hour workshop to attendees.	6	
Liverpool John Moores University	Tom Reiley Building	27/06/19	Sport Psych ProfDoc Day	6	
	Home Based	28/06/19	Wider Reading - Monthly	4	
Supervisor meeting	Skype	02/06/19	Supervisor meeting	2	
	Home Based	31/07/19	Wider Reading - Monthly	4	
Supervisor meeting	Skype	25/07/19	Supervisor meeting	2	
Liverpool John Moores University	Tom Reiley Building	14/08/19	Sport Psych ProfDoc Day	6	
	Home Based	30/08/19	Wider Reading - Monthly	4	
Supervisor meeting	Skype	10/09/19	Supervisor meeting	0.5	
	Home Based	30/09/19	Wider Reading - Monthly	4	
Supervisor meeting	Phone call	15/10/19	Supervisor meeting	0.5	
	Home Based	31/10/19	Wider Reading - Monthly	4	

Research

Date(s)	Nature of the activity	Contact Hours
04/07/17	Ethics application empirical study 1	8
15/07/17	Ethics application empirical study 1	8
25/07/17	Ethics application empirical study 1	2
07/08/17	Ethics application empirical study 1	4
08/08/17	Research empirical study 1 – Data collection	4
09/08/17	Research empirical study 1 – Data collection	4
21/08/17	Empirical study 1 - Intro/lit review	6

22/08/17	Empirical study 1 - Intro/lit review	6
19/09/17	Empirical study 1 - Intro/lit review	4
20/09/17	Empirical study 1 - Intro/lit review	4
12/10/17	Empirical study 1 - Intro/lit review	4
13/10/17	Empirical study 1 - Intro/lit review	4
19/10/17	Empirical study 1 – Transcriptions	4
20/10/17	Empirical study 1 – Transcriptions	4
25/10/17	Empirical study 1 - Intro/lit review	4
30/10/17	Empirical study 1 - Methodology	4
01/11/17	Empirical study 1 – Methodology	4

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Practice Logbook (Research)

08/11/17	Empirical study 1 – Methodology	4
15/11/17	Empirical study 1 – Results	4
22/11/17	Empirical study 1 – Results	4
29/11/17	Empirical study 1 – Results	4
27/11/17	MSc Thesis publishable amendments	4
01/12/17	Empirical study 1 – Results	6
04/12/17	Empirical study 1 – Discussion	6
08/12/17	Empirical study 1 – Discussion	6
18/12/17	Empirical study 1 – Discussion	2

Practice Logbook (Research)

09/01/18	Empirical study 1 – Amendments	6
16/01/18	Empirical study 1 – Amendments	6
23/01/18	Empirical study 1 – Amendments	6
09/02/18	Empirical study 1 – Amendments	4
15/02/18	Empirical study 1 – Amendments	4
01/03/18	Case Study 1 – LWTC	4
02/03/18	Case Study 1 – LWTC	4
05/03/18	Case Study 1 – LWTC	4
06/03/18	Case Study 1 – LWTC	4

Practice Logbook (Research)

01/04/18	Case Study 1 – LWTC	4
02/04/18	Case Study 1 – LWTC	4
10/04/18	MSc Thesis publishable amendments	4
11/04/18	MSc Thesis publishable amendments	4
08/05/18	LWTC case study	4
09/05/18	LWTC case study	4
10/05/18	LWTC case study	4
30/05/18	Systematic review meeting	2
08/06/18	Case Study 2 – Cricket	4

09/06/18	Case Study 2 – Cricket	4
10/06/18	Case Study 2 – Cricket	4
28/06/18	Systematic review meeting	2
16/07/18	Case Study 2 – Cricket	3
17/07/18	Case Study 2 – Cricket	3
18/07/18	Case Study 2 – Cricket	3
02/08/18	Case Study 2 – Cricket	3
03/08/18	Case Study 2 – Cricket	3
18/08/18	Case Study 2 – Cricket	3

27/09/18	Teaching Case Study	4
28/09/18	Teaching Case Study	4
19/10/18	Systematic review meeting - Think Aloud methodology.	2
22/10/18	Systematic review – Sourcing research papers.	6
25/10/18	Systematic review – Sourcing research papers.	4
26/10/18	Systematic review – Sourcing research papers.	4
01/11/18	Systematic review – Sourcing research papers.	4
02/11/18	Systematic review – Sourcing research papers.	4
08/11/18	Systematic review – Sourcing research papers.	4

Practice Logbook (Research)

09/11/18	Systematic review – Sourcing research papers.	4
15/11/18	Systematic review – Introduction	4
16/11/18	Systematic review – Introduction	4
22/11/18	Systematic review – Introduction	4
23/11/18	Systematic review – Methodology	4
29/11/18	Systematic review – Methodology	4
30/11/18	Systematic review – Methodology	4
06/12/18	Systematic review – Paper analysis	4
07/12/18	Systematic review – Paper analysis	4

13/12/18	Systematic review – Results write up	4
14/12/18	Systematic review – Results write up	4
20/12/18	Systematic review – Results write up	4
21/12/18	Systematic review – Results write up	4
04/01/19	Systematic review – Discussion write up	4
07/01/19	Systematic review – Discussion write up	4
11/01/19	Systematic review – Discussion write up	4
14/01/19	Systematic review – Discussion write up	4
18/01/19	Empirical study 2 – Ethics application	4

21/01/19	Empirical study 2 – Ethics application	4
25/01/19	Empirical study 2 – Ethics application	4
28/01/19	Empirical study 2 – Ethics application	4
01/02/19	Systematic review – Amendments	4
04/02/19	Systematic review – Amendments	4
08/02/19	Systematic review – Amendments	4
11/02/19	Systematic review – Amendments	4
15/02/19	Empirical study 2 – Intro/ lit review	4
18/02/19	Empirical study 2 – Intro/ lit review	4

22/02/19	Empirical study 2 – Intro/ lit review	4
25/02/19	Empirical study 2 – Intro/ lit review	4
04/03/19	Empirical study 2 – Methodology	4
08/03/19	Empirical study 2 – Methodology	4
11/03/19	Empirical study 2 – Methodology	4
15/03/19	Empirical study 2 – Methodology	4
18/03/19	Empirical study 2 – Transcriptions	4
22/03/19	Empirical study 2 – Transcriptions	4
25/03/19	Empirical study 2 – Transcriptions	4

29/03/19	Empirical study 2 – Transcriptions	4
02/05/19	Systematic review – Amendments	4
06/05/19	Systematic review – Amendments	4
10/05/19	Systematic review – Amendments	4
13/05/19	Systematic review – Amendments	4
17/05/19	Systematic review – Amendments	4
20/05/19	Systematic review – Amendments	4
24/05/19	Empirical study 2 – Data analysis	4
27/05/19	Empirical study 2 – Data analysis	4

31/05/19	Empirical study 2 – Data analysis	4
06/06/19	Empirical study 2 – Results	4
07/06/19	Empirical study 2 – Results	4
13/06/19	Empirical study 2 – Results	4
14/06/19	Empirical study 2 – Discussion	4
20/06/19	Empirical study 2 – Discussion	4
21/06/19	Empirical study 2 – Discussion	4
27/06/19	Empirical study 2 – Discussion	4
28/06/19	Empirical study 2 – Amendments	4

18/07/19	Empirical study 2 – Amendments	4
19/07/19	Empirical study 2 – Amendments	4
26/07/19	Empirical study 2 – Amendments	4
27/07/19	Empirical study 2 – Amendments	4
01/08/19	Case study 3 – Counselling footballer	4
02/08/19	Case study 3 – Counselling footballer	4
08/08/19	Case study 3 – Counselling footballer	4
09/08/19	Case study 3 – Counselling footballer	4
15/08/19	Case study 3 – Counselling footballer	4

16/08/19	Case study 3 – Counselling footballer	4
22/08/19	Case study 3 – Counselling footballer	4
23/08/19	Case study 3 – Counselling footballer	4
29/08/19	Case study 3 – Counselling footballer	4
30/08/19	Case study 3 – Counselling footballer	4
05/09/19	Teaching Case study	4
06/09/19	Teaching Case study	4
12/09/19	Teaching Case study	4
13/09/19	Teaching Case study	4

19/09/19	Teaching Case study	4
20/09/19	Teaching Diary	4
27/09/19	Teaching Diary	4
28/09/19	Teaching Diary	4
03/10/19	Teaching Diary	4
04/10/19	Teaching Diary	4
10/10/19	Research Commentary	4
11/10/19	Research Commentary	4
17/10/19	Research Commentary	4

18/10/19	Research Commentary	4
24/10/19	Reflective Practice Commentary	4
25/10/19	Reflective Practice Commentary	4
31/10/19	Reflective Practice Commentary	4
01/11/19	Reflective Practice Commentary	4
07/11/19	Reflective Practice Commentary	4
08/11/19	Reflective Practice Commentary	4
14/11/19	Reflective Practice Commentary	2
15/11/19	Reflective Practice Commentary	2
21/11/19	Reflective Practice Commentary	2

22/11/19	Reflective Practice Commentary	2
28/11/19	Reflective Practice Commentary	2
29/11/19	Reflective Practice Commentary	2

Practice Logbook (Dissemination)

Dissemination					
Client details	**Location**	**Date(s)**	**Nature of the activity**	**Contact Hours**	**Placement Host details (if applicable)**
LJMU	Tom Reily Building	12/09/17	Presentation, disseminating info on REBT intervention techniques in a sporting context. Prep & Design	6	
LJMU	Tom Reily Building	13/09/17	Presentation, disseminating info on REBT intervention techniques in a sporting context. Delivery.	6	
Calday Grange Grammar School	Calday Grange Grammar School	19/09/17	Guest Lecturer. Attribution theory A-Level Students.	8	Calday Grange Grammar School
Calday Grange Grammar School	Calday Grange Grammar School	02/10/17	Guest Lecturer memory models A-Level Students.	8	Calday Grange Grammar School
LJMU	LJMU	26/10/17	Growth Mind-set ProfDoc presentation.	1	

Cheshire Cricket	Stockport	24/10/17	Intro to sport Psych workshop x2	2	Cheshire Cricket Board
Crewe Alex FC	Crewe	27/11/17	Coach education workshop	2	Cheshire Cricket Board
Crewe Alex FC	Crewe	29/11/17	Coach education workshop	2	Cheshire Cricket Board
Cheshire Cricket Board	South Cheshire	18/01/18	Psychology Workshops	3	Cheshire Cricket Board
Cheshire Cricket Board	South Cheshire	25/01/18	Psychology Workshops	3	Cheshire Cricket Board
Cheshire Cricket Board	South Cheshire	08/02/18	Psychological Workshops.	3	Cheshire Cricket Board
Cheshire Cricket Board	South Cheshire	09/02/18	Psychology workshop.	3	Cheshire Cricket Board
Cheshire Cricket Board	South Cheshire	15/02/18	Psychology Workshops	3	Cheshire Cricket Board

Practice Logbook (Dissemination)

Cheshire Cricket Board	South Cheshire	22/02/18	Psychology Workshops	3	Cheshire Cricket Board
Cheshire Cricket Board	South Cheshire	01/03/18	Psychological workshops	3	Cheshire Cricket Board
Cheshire Cricket Board	South Cheshire	07/03/18	Psychological Workshops.	3	Cheshire Cricket Board
Cheshire Cricket Board	South Cheshire	15/03/18	Psychology Workshops	3	Cheshire Cricket Board
Cheshire Cricket Board	South Cheshire	22/02/18	Psychology Workshops	3	Cheshire Cricket Board
Cheshire Cricket Board	South Cheshire	29/03/18	Psychological workshops	3	Cheshire Cricket Board
Bolton University		09/09/17	Lecture on applied practice	2	Bolton University
Cheshire Cricket Board	South Cheshire	05/04/18	Psychological Workshops.	4	Cheshire Cricket Board

Liverpool John Moores University	LJMU	28/06/18	ProfDoc Presentation	1	
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	04/06/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	05/06/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	06/06/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	11/06/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey	North Lindsey College	12/06/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre

University Centre					
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	13/06/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	18/06/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	19/06/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	20/06/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	25/06/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey	North Lindsey College	26/06/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre

University Centre					
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	27/06/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	02/07/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	03/07/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	04/07/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	09/07/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey	North Lindsey College	10/07/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre

University Centre					
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	11/07/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	16/07/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	17/07/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	18/07/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	23/07/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey	North Lindsey College	24/07/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre

University Centre					
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	25/07/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	30/07/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	31/07/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	01/08/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	02/08/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey	North Lindsey College	20/08/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre

University Centre					
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	21/08/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	22/08/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	23/08/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	27/08/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	28/08/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre

North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	29/08/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	11/09/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
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North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	13/09/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	17/09/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	18/09/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre

North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	19/09/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	24/09/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
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North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	01/10/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
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North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	03/10/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
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North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	09/10/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
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North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	15/10/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	16/10/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre

North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	17/10/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	22/10/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
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North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	30/10/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre

North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	31/10/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	05/11/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	06/11/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	07/11/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	12/11/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
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North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	14/11/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	19/11/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
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North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	26/11/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	27/11/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre

North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	28/11/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
DSEP Conference	Belfast	03/12/18	Presenting empirical paper 1 (transitions in women football) paper at DSEP annual conference	2	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	05/12/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	10/12/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	11/12/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	12/12/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre

North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	17/12/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	18/12/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	19/12/18	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	08/01/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	09/01/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
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North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	24/01/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre

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North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	30/01/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	31/01/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	05/02/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	06/02/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	07/02/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre

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North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	14/02/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	19/02/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
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North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	28/02/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	05/03/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	06/03/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
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North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	14/03/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	19/03/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	20/03/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
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North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	26/03/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	27/03/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	28/03/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	23/04/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	24/04/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	25/05/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre

North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	30/05/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	01/05/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	02/05/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	07/05/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	08/05/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	09/05/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre

North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	14/05/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	15/05/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	16/05/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	21/05/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	22/05/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	23/05/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre

North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	28/05/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	29/05/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	30/05/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	04/06/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	05/06/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	06/06/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre

North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	11/06/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	12/06/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	13/06/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	18/06/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	19/06/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	20/06/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre

North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	24/06/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	25/06/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
Liverpool John Moores University	PsyPag	26/06/19	Conference presentation	1	PsyPag
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	22/07/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	23/07/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	24/07/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre

North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	29/07/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	30/07/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	31/07/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	05/08/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	06/08/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	07/08/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre

Practice Logbook (Dissemination)

North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	08/08/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	12/08/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	13/08/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	14/08/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	15/08/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	16/08/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre

North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	19/08/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	20/08/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	21/08/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
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North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	26/08/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	27/08/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre

North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	28/08/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	29/08/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
North Lindsey University Centre	North Lindsey College	30/08/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	North Lindsey University Centre
University Campus North Lincolnshire (formerly North Lindsey UC)	UCNL	02/09/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	03/09/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL

University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	04/09/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	05/09/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	09/09/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	10/09/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	11/09/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	12/09/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL

University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	13/09/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	16/09/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	17/09/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	18/09/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	19/09/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	23/09/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL

University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	24/09/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	25/09/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	26/09/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	27/09/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	30/09/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	01/10/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL

University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	02/10/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	03/10/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	07/10/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	08/10/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	09/10/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	10/10/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL

Professional Doctorate in Sport and Exercise Psychology

Practice Logbook (Dissemination)

University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	11/10/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	14/10/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	15/10/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	16/10/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	17/10/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	18/10/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL

University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	21/10/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	22/10/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	23/10/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	24/10/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	28/10/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	29/10/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL

University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	30/10/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	31/10/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	04/11/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	05/11/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	06/11/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	07/11/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL

University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	08/11/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	11/11/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	12/11/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
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University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	25/11/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	26/11/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL

University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	27/11/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL
University Campus North Lincolnshire	UCNL	28/11/19	Lecturing/Marking/Lesson plans/Student meetings	8	UCNL

Reflection Sheet 1 (Learning Outcome 1) - Ethics

Date	Summary of Activity	Reflection
08/08/17	Maintaining confidentiality in a professional football club.	**Description:** I was working as an intern at a professional female football club, competing in the women's super league. I had approached the 1st team manager before joining to offer my services, to which he agreed. We agreed on what services I would be offering; these were primarily individual player support and working closely with the manager to aid their development. I brought up the issue of confidentiality, and how, with my approach, I maintain confidentiality with players unless they agree to share information. He initially agreed to this but stated that if I felt it was an issue that he could help with, then I was to try and persuade the player to let me inform the manager. **Feeling:** I was conflicted at the notion of having to 'persuade' a player to allow me to inform the manager regarding potential challenges. While I agreed, if it is an issue he can help with, then we can look to work together to support the athlete, I would rather the athlete not feel pressured into agreeing to share their information. At the same time, this was a massive opportunity for me, and I was working with the first-team of a professional football club, the manager

		had brought me in. Therefore, I wanted to maintain positive relationships with him, and he could just as quickly remove me from the organisation. Pain and Harwood (2004) identified problems integrating with the coaching staff as a pertinent issue concerning barriers to sport psychology delivery. I was torn between my professional integrity of wanting to respect the confidentiality of each athlete, and my desire to fit in and integrate with the coaching staff. **Evaluation:** I felt I was able to manage the initial situation well. I thought I was able to keep the coach on side by tentatively accepting his suggestion while also maintaining my professional integrity. I knew I would not breach confidentiality unless the athlete had clearly said they would be happy for me to do so. Similarly, if it were an issue the manager could support, I would suggest this as an option to the athlete but respect their decision if they did not want to. I think within this situation, I was happy with the outcome. I maintained professional integrity, and the manager left satisfied that he would be informed of issues that involved him. **Analysis:** I was torn between blindly agreeing to the mangers demands to keep him happy and keep me in the position

		and maintaining my professional code of ethics. Such is the rarity of working within professional football as a trainee, and I did not want to lose this opportunity. I found myself questioning who my client is in this situation? The player or the manager? Anderson (2005) highlighted how sport psychologists often find themselves managing several ‘masters.’ The desire to be congruent, be admired and find the right balance was overwhelming. However, by being exposed to these high-performance environments more frequently, I feel I will better manage the cocktail of emotions that they entail. **Conclusion:** To conclude, it appears the dichotomy of wanting to maintain confidentiality, and please those in charge is a shared experience. While I felt I was effectively able to manage the challenges associated with such a dichotomy, I certainly felt uncomfortable and anxious regarding what to do. Undoubtedly in my career, I anticipate facing situations that further challenge my resolve at maintaining confidentiality vs maintaining key relationships. At this first instance, I feel satisfied with maintaining both and feel I can move forward with this understanding. **Action Plan:** For further progression, ensuring I reflect on critical moments such as these will allow me to understand how I

		thought, felt, and reacted in these pressured situations. By understanding my reactions, I will be able to facilitate the likelihood of making the right decisions ethically. However, fundamentally, I feel remaining true to both moral and ethical principles will serve me well.
01/09/17	Transference and countertransference with a female footballer.	**Description:** I was working within a football club and had started working with an athlete on an individual basis for a few weeks. She was experiencing challenges related to both performance and wellbeing, with the transition affecting both her professional and personal lives. During our second intervention-based session, she broke into tears, describing feeling a failure and struggling with the demands placed of the transition. For example, she was facing difficulties transitioning from part-time to full-time, junior to senior, and moving into higher education. **Feelings:** My reaction to her crying was one of panic, I was thinking "did I say something wrong". Similarly, I was thinking "I hope nobody walks past now, that would look bad if somebody saw her crying". This event was my first experience of having a client cry. I had no idea if this was a good thing, a bad thing, normal or abnormal. I just wanted it to stop. I felt so uncomfortable I was fidgeting around in my seat, trying to think of ways to make the

		situation less awkward for me. Despite my feelings of discomfort, I tried to display a calm exterior. Alongside these feelings of panic, I also experienced a strong emotional attachment to the athlete. I found myself becoming quite protective of the athlete, wanting to help her and make sure she was okay. **Evaluation:** While every inch of me wanted to stop her from crying, I remembered a word of advice from a lecturer. They had described how, during their first instance of an athlete crying how they offered tissues as a way of stopping the athlete from crying. It was later on when they reflected on how the crying may have been therapeutic to the client, releasing emotions, and by trying to help them to stop out of their discomfort, they have been doing the client a disservice. With these words ringing in my ears, despite my feelings of discomfort, I created an environment for the athlete to feel comfortable crying, and I merely facilitated this process. I felt this was beneficial to the athlete, they had been harboring some emotional baggage, and this was the breaking point. By allowing her to have the space to release her emotions, she described feeling much better. Similarly, I see her crying as a positive in the sense that she felt comfortable to do so. I devote a lot of time trying to build relationships with clients, so they feel comfortable

		and safe to discuss their issues. Therefore, by crying, I see that as a sign, she felt comfortable and safe during our session to do so. **Analysis:** Reflecting on my feelings of developing an emotional attachment with the athlete, I felt I experienced countertransference. Countertransference is when the practitioner may experience intense emotions towards a client, which may evoke from a previous relationship (Winstone & Gervis, 2006). I am an older brother to younger sisters, one of which was the same age as the athlete I was working with. It could be suggested than upon seeing her distressed, my protective older brother instincts recognised this, and as such, I adopted that role. My initial reaction of panic and discomfort was not pleasant, and despite trying to maintain a calm exterior, I am sure a few signs of my discomfort would have 'leaked.' For example, fidgeting in my chair, while feelings of discomfort are typical, with experience, I hope to manage these feelings better. **Conclusion:** To conclude, my initial reaction I feel came about as a result of shock, it was something I was no expected, and there were very few warning signs prior to her crying. However, I feel for a first experience; I was able to manage

		my emotions. By allowing myself to experience strong emotions when she cried, which I feel evoked from my previous relationships as an older brother, I blurred the lines between my professional and personal identity. Therefore, to ensure ethical and safe practice, I must continue to reflect on future incidents of transference and countertransference (Rowan & Jacobs, 2002). **Action plan:** Ensuring my developing, I must continue to reflect on incidents such as these to understand my reactions. Specific to this example, recognising the signs of when I may be experiencing countertransference will be a crucial prerequisite of preventing it from occurring.
15/07/18	Maintaining confidentiality in team sports	**Description:** I was working within a male academy football club, delivering psychological support to primarily PDP footballers. I usually delivered a workshop to the under 18 squad every fortnight, discussing a variety of topics. This one particular session, we were discussing managing anxiety. The session was structured to follow a personal disclosure mutual sharing (PDMS), which stems from counselling and cognitive behavioural therapy settings and represents a conscious verbal presentation of specific situations or issues to gain resolution through interpersonal interaction (Holt & Dunn, 2006). Following

		the session, one player made a comment, which they referred to as 'banter' to another player regarding something he said in the meeting. While the player laughed it off, it did raise an important point of confidentiality in group work. **Feelings:** Before the session, I was anxious about delivering this type of session. A PDMS format requires participants to share experiences in a group setting. Therefore, I considered 'what if' situations, such as if a player discussed an issue in the grey area leading towards a mental health disorder. While the session itself ran smoothly, the incident following the meeting resulted in me feeling a mixture of emotions. Primarily, I was annoyed at the player for the breach of confidentiality. However, I began to feel disappointed in myself, and I had not clearly stated the terms of group confidentiality, i.e., everything discussed in this room stays in this room. Therefore, my initial anger and disappointment towards the athlete for breaching confidentiality shifted inwardly towards me for failing to state the terms, although they were implied. **Evaluation:** While the session was successful, there were many good stories shared and discussions that took place. Similarly, I

		found the group to be open and engaging, which helped calm some of my initial anxieties. Despite the positives, by preventing to disclose the terms of group confidentiality fully, I felt I neglected to protect members of the group. I did refer to confidentiality but felt this should've been much clearer. While it did not impact on the session itself, I did impact the confidentiality of players following the session, which may affect how comfortable they are opening in the future. **Analysis:** Anderson (2005) highlighted how, when working with groups or teams, confidentiality becomes somewhat problematic. Similarly, he suggested how there is limited control regarding what athletes discuss outside of the team sessions. Within the context of this reflection, I had no control over what the players did following the session. However, I do feel I could have set mutually agreed ground rules; this way, the players would then have to break these rules at least to breach confidentiality. This workshop was my first significant experience of delivering a group-based workshop whereby disclosure of sensitive information may occur. Therefore, I feel this was an example of inexperience. **Conclusion:**

		To conclude, I feel the amalgamation of the tricky waters regarding confidentiality in groups, my lack of experience, and my failure to set confidentiality ground rules resulted in the breach of confidentiality post-session. While I was disappointed in my inability to prevent this, there is only a finite number of methods I could have done to minimise the risks. **Action plan:** To minimise the likelihood of such events occurring in the future, setting mutually agreed ground rules at the start of each session is an area I will look to address. For example, Anderson (2005) suggests starting the session by suggesting everybody should feel comfortable and come to an agreement whereby information discussed in the session stays there. I think by doing so, I am offering the best opportunity to maintain confidentiality within group settings.
15/08/18	A young footballer, with a fear of death.	**Description:** A parent had approached one of the coaches expressing concern regarding her son. He had not been wanting to attend training for some time and had been just generally upset in broader life. The player was 12 years old, and the coach arranged for a meeting with me, the parent, and the child. After conducting the standard formalities, I asked the main question, “so why is it you are upset and don’t

		want to train.” He was a little shy and at this stage, still trying to figure me out. His mum filled the space by saying “well it is a little strange, he has a stomach pain, which we’ve been the doctors for and had all sorts of tests which have all come back clear, but he googled his symptoms and saw the word cancer, which he is now scared he has”. I asked further follow-up questions regarding types of tests conducted, what the doctor has advised, and so on. The session finished with the athlete in quite a positive mood, and we had a couple of jokes about not googling symptoms anymore and seeking a doctor’s advice for the issue. He went out to train with his teammates, and the parent reported that she had noticed improvements in his mood during the following weeks. There was no intervention delivered. I listened to the issue and asked follow up questions. I was in no position to offer advice on his condition, or whether it was severe or not and made that abundantly clear. The medical experts and tests had cleared the athlete, so all I could do was try to help the athlete recognise that their diagnosis is more appropriate than that of a quick google search. **Feelings:** Initially, I had approached this situation quite relaxed; I thought it would be an issue ‘traditional’ to that of a sport psychologist working in an academy environment, and

		one I had dealt with previously. I was confident, relaxed, and positive; I could have an impact. The discussion left me feeling completely blindsided. I found myself thinking, “what the hell do I do here.” My feelings were primarily that of shock. My initial response was “right okay,” followed by a prolonged period of silence while I frantically tried to find the right words to say. Working within my boundaries of competence, I was in no position to offer any medical suggestions. Similarly, I found myself questioning whether this issue was more clinical. I asked further questions regarding the problems and queried why the athlete opted to believe the advice of google over that of multiple medical professionals. With his age, he merely smiled and shrugged his shoulders. **Evaluation:** I think my closed mindset entering the session was a hindrance in terms of my reaction. I assumed this was another typical issue, generally related to an athlete feeling shy about getting involved with training or something similar. This is how the coach had informed me anyway. However, it was something that I had not remotely anticipated. A young footballer, googling his symptoms, thinking they had cancer and may die, which was making him upset and not want to train. Seldom do

		you read of such issues in contemporary sport psychology research. Despite my lack of preparedness, I still felt I managed to handle this ethically challenging situation. I worked within the boundaries of my competence. I listened and asked questions and did not go beyond the limits of my competence. **Analysis:** Making sense of this experience, I feel it has allowed me to recognise the many complex issues that I can face as a sport psychologist. I won't always be working with an anxious athlete or a striker lacking in confidence. Sometimes I will experience events that are new to me. Within this situation, I must manage the initial response of panic and shock and maintain a good ethical practice. Within this unexpected example, forgetting ethical guidelines could have occurred. Particularly given the situation, a young child, upset, despite medical advice suggesting they were fine. I felt it would have been unethical for me to say, “oh, you will be fine” after all, how would I know? I only had the information from a 30-minute session. Instead, I opted to try and allow the athlete to reach their conclusion. This was our only session, the parent-reported the athlete was much improved and willing to training again, so I questioned whether this was just a case of unloading some emotional

		baggage and being slightly challenged regarding irrational thoughts. **Conclusion:** To conclude, this example has highlighted the need to be prepared for situations that will challenge me ethically. That there was only one session suggests to me that it was not indeed an issue of a clinical nature – instead, a child who was just worried. Arguably, by discussing his feelings out loud in the presence of others, he was able to recognise his irrational thoughts. I was able to work within my ethical boundaries of competence by not going beyond that with which I was comfortable and entering into another field of expertise. **Action Plan:** To ensure continued ethical practice, reflecting on this example with my supervisor to provide further clarity on how best to manage this situation. While I feel I was ethical in terms of handling this situation, clarity on this would enhance my confidence to handle similar situations in the future.
20/07/18	Working with an athlete displaying anxiety.	**Description:** This reflection relates to my experiences of working with a footballer aged 15 years old. He is an active playing member of the football academy, where I was acting as the lead psychologist. The reflections relate to the ethical

		issues that arose when working with the athlete and how I managed to overcome them following the BPS code of ethics and conduct (2018). Some of the significant ethical issues that were considered when working with this athlete are 1) My competence 2) Mental health issues that arose during the consultancy process and 3) Issues of confidentiality. **Feelings:** I was approached to work with this athlete and given a brief of what the coach believed to be the presenting issues. As the consultancy sessions progressed, it was apparent the athlete was suffering from a mental health disorder. Sport Psychologists often meet various ethical dilemmas for which there are no real prescribed clear rules of behaviour (Weinberg & Gould, 2011). I felt a mixture of emotions, I had developed a relationship with the athlete, so I felt empathy towards him as he was struggling with functioning in daily life, I also felt as if I was out of my depth. I felt an overwhelming sense of anxiety and self-doubt regarding my ability to help this athlete. This was my first experience dealing with an athlete who was expressing symptoms of a mental health disorder, and I was worried I would do more damage than good by being his only source of psychological support. After referring him to see a clinical psychologist, we saw

		some real signs of progress. After seeing him make progress with the clinical psychologist, I felt relief, firstly for him, and seeing him return. But also, his progress with the clinical psychologist reaffirmed that I made the right decision to refer. I often felt conflicted, however, with regards to confidentiality. The football club employed me, but I was working with the athlete who was also employed by the club. Due to the sensitivity of the information disclosed, being bound by both the professional code of ethics and conduct and my professional philosophy, I was not able to share information with the coaching staff at the club. Often, this lack of sharing put a strain on my relationship with the coaches as they wanted answers as to why their athlete wasn’t training or competing. Confidentiality, however, is a crucial component for successful outcomes with clients (Stapleton et al., 2010). I felt uncomfortable around specific coaching staff at the academy. I tended to avoid them as much as possible as I didn’t want to be in a situation where I was confronted and asked for updates on the athlete. **Evaluation:** I felt I was consistent with both the values and beliefs of my professional philosophy and the code of ethics and conduct, which acts as a framework for my professional

		practice. Consistently referring to both my philosophy and ethical guidelines coupled with regular support from my supervisor, I felt meant the decisions I made concerning the ethical dilemmas that arose throughout the consultancy were informed and in my opinion, the right choices. **Analysis:** Key role one refers to the ability to develop, implement, and maintain personal and professional standards and ethical practice. Arguably, I was suitably qualified to work with the athlete through his mental health issues, given my background in mainstream psychology, and had an ‘expert’ knowledge of the sporting culture and context in which the athlete spent a large part of their life. However, the BPS code of conduct states a psychologist should not work outside their area of knowledge, skill, training, and expertise. With more experience, this may have been a case I felt competent enough to deal with; however, upon reflection, I think I made the right decision to refer to a clinical psychologist. Dealing with the issues of confidentiality was more challenging, I felt. While the parents were aware of discussions during meetings with the athlete, staff at the club were only given minimal information concerning the issues he was experiencing. This approach was at the request of the

		athlete. He didn’t want to be seen as different or ‘weird’ by the coaching staff or players. This level of confidentiality often caused some minor conflict between myself and coaching staff as they wanted to know when ‘their’ player was available again. I had to trust in the relationship I had built with the coaching staff and hoped they trusted and respected the position I was in, although at times, I don’t feel this was always the case. **Conclusion:** Drawing from my first experience dealing with an athlete suffering from mental health is firstly, to seek support and guidance from peers. I used my supervisor, but it could be colleagues or psychologists from different professions, e.g., clinical/counselling. Speaking with my supervisor and colleagues helped alleviate much of the burden, I was feeling when working with the athlete. There were times when I felt alone at the football club, so being able to turn to others outside of the football club and seek support and guidance allowed me to manage some of the challenges I experienced. Another critical conclusion I can make is to always refer to the BPS code of ethics and conduct to ensure that any decision I make is within the guidelines that they propose. I found relating to this extremely useful when working with this athlete as

		it reassured me that both legally and ethically, I was acting within my professional boundaries. **Action Plan:** After reflection and discussions with my supervisor, I feel developing relationships with clinical and counselling psychologists would be a positive step moving forward. These relationships would offer a direct line of referral to experts who I would be able to seek guidance and advice from if similar issues present themselves in the future. Having that level of support might also mean me not having to refer athletes on, but instead, I could use their advice and guidance to support the athletes. Also, ensuring I am continually developing around mental health. I feel to ensure I am more comfortable and better equipped to deal with issues of this nature, undertaking courses/attending conferences that address these issues would be of benefit to me.
20/06/19	Conflicting roles and unusual circumstances – competing against a client.	**Description:** This reflection presents an unusual circumstance, where my roles caused inner conflict. I had been providing support to a cricket board’s talent development programme for well over a year. This role requires me to work with the top identified players most likely to succeed in professional cricket – so the cricket board can best utilise their limited resources. The age range varies,

		but generally, players range from 14-17 years of age. As a competitive cricket player myself, I play within this counties league structure for a local club. I was playing in a competitive match, and on the opposition team was a player I had been providing some support for the talent development programme. He was a 16-year-old bowler struggling with managing the pressure of competing within a 1st team environment. The match was an evening T20 cup competition, with a few hundred spectators, which from our consultations he said makes him extra nervous. Before the game, I found myself thinking I wonder if we directly compete against each other, I am a batsman, and he is a bowler, there is a good chance. I then thought, well I know he will be nervous, do I use this to my advantage? I felt my competitive side battling with my ethical and moral principles. We did end up directly competing against one another. **Feelings:** I found myself extremely conflicted here, on the one hand, I am a serious competitor, I play to win, and I have some information about one of their players I could use to my advantage. On the other hand, ethically, from a practitioner perspective, it would very wrong to use that information against him for personal gain. I knew he would potentially struggle if I tried to 'score

		aggressively’ against him. I was battling these emotions, trying to find justifications for both arguments. This is the real world, competitive sport, and I am not here as his psychologist I am here as his opposition. Similarly, the psychologist was thinking, play normally, I don’t need to take advantage of this situation. I experienced a great deal of anxiety. This event is not something I had trained for or had even heard of happening. I felt alone, with no professional advice to turn to, no research to consult. I had to make a decision based on my professional opinion. **Evaluation:** The outcome was I decided to try and put the issue to the back of my mind and play the game as it occurred. I approached the player during the warm-up, as I am sure he must have felt an awkwardness as well, to have a chat about the game and wish him good luck. I felt this did alleviate some of my anxieties as it temporarily broke down the competitive barrier and relaxed me (and I imagine him as well). During our direct competition, we shared a couple of jokes, which again reduced feelings of tension on both parts. During the game, it did not feel like I was competing against a client, but rather just a member of the opposition. **Analysis:**

		I think this conflict of emotions was a perfectly reasonable response to what I imagine is a rare scenario in sport psychology. Naturally, as an athlete, you compete to win and to try and be successful. Similarly, as a psychologist, depending on your philosophy of practice, you aim to help people improve performance and wellbeing. Seldom do you find these two roles clashing. Upon writing this, I have not been able to find any writings on competing against your client. Of course, I could have used his confidential information to gain a competitive advantage, and while I didn’t (not consciously), the guidelines are vague when referring to this. We discuss maintaining confidentiality, not sharing information unless the athlete has agreed. In this situation, I felt the athlete did not know when they were sharing their information to Mike, the psychologist; they would also be sharing information to a potential competitor (Mike, the cricketer). By using such information in a competitive situation, in an unorthodox way, I felt I was breaching confidentiality. **Conclusion:** To conclude, I feel this reflection represents a unique experience, and further highlights the often tricky ethical waters sport psychologist have to navigate. Stapleton et al. (2010) suggested the ethical challenges sport

		psychologists may be numerous due to the varied services we offer and nontraditional settings in which we operate. I feel this example perfectly highlights this. While this example resulted in a positive outcome which was nothing more than a healthy and competitive match played, I think the need for future practitioners to consider such circumstances and reflect on how they would react. **Action Plan:** For future consultancy work where there is the potential to compete against a client, making it clear that this may happen. Similarly, clarifying my stance on maintaining confidentiality and highlighting how any information discussed during sessions will not leave the session. I think by doing so, I am ensuring the athlete and myself feel comfortable and limits any future unnecessary awkwardness.

Reflection Sheet 2 (Learning Outcome 2) - Consultancy

Date	Summary of Activity	Reflection
07/07/17	Reflections of modules 1-3 of NDPP. (CASE STUDY 1)	**Description:** I was delivering the NHS national diabetes prevention programme to one of my first groups. The programme lasts for 12 months and consists of six weekly sessions followed by six review sessions spread out more sporadically. The first three modules involve introducing the programme, risks associated with Type 2 Diabetes, behaviour change, and how to encourage it and finally healthy eating. The group size was relatively small, consisting of six people, most of whom were female with one male participant. The average age of the group was approximately 70 years old. Each session lasted for about 90 minutes. **Feelings:** I felt anxious starting this group, with it being one of my first groups and one of the early programmes offered in the area, I felt under pressure to ensure the service was a success. Likewise, I doubted my ability, am I even at a stage where I can deliver a session? I had received some training, but it was limited. I was dreading standing up, and I could see myself fumbling over my words, looking

		an idiot and then that’s it, I would have ‘lost’ the group for the next seven weeks. I was confident in my delivery style, having had previous experience of delivering group sessions. Although module 3, which focussed on healthy eating, I was most anxious for, due to my belief that I only possessed a basic understanding of nutrition. Facing problematic questions had me worried I would be exposed as a fraud. The first two modules I felt confident on delivering, however, as these sessions I used to build relationships with the group and for the group to form relationships with each other, which I felt would be critical to the long-term success of this programme. **Evaluation:** The main aims for the first two modules were to build relationships and encourage group sharing, and I felt they went exceptionally well. I thought by the end of module 2, the group had started to come together and trust me as well each other. Being critical, there were more confident members of the group who were more comfortable speaking. I tended to latch onto these individuals and perhaps directed questions at them rather than the whole group as I knew that addressing questions towards them would start up a discussion. As a result of this, I maybe neglected the voices of some other members of the groups who were less confident about

		speaking up but still may have had something they wanted to share. Module three focussed on healthy eating, I felt less confident delivering this module. I found this reflected in my delivery style, my approach to delivery is to have sessions client or group led and for group members to share experiences and for the members to help and support each other when making changes. This process often involves the group talking a lot more than me, and my role is merely to keep people on track and provide a space for relative discussions. However, during this session, I was very authoritative and found myself lecturing the group. Often I referred to my notes and as a result, found the group not to be as engaging and disinterested for large parts of the session as I had moved away from my traditional approach and beliefs about how to promote behaviour change. **Analysis:** I found that when I felt uncomfortable (e.g. when I was delivering something I thought I lacked expert knowledge in), I reverted to what was familiar (authoritarian), rather than what was effective and impactful for the group. I was worried I would be viewed as incompetent by the group and lose the respect and the relationships that were beginning to form would break down. Previous research has found neophyte

		practitioners have a strong desire to prove themselves as competent and be fixed in their delivery (Todd, Anderson & Marchant, 2009). It was interesting to see how I differed my style based on my perceptions of myself and how I felt in that situation, rather than act as a facilitator to the group I served as a dictator. **Conclusion:** Reflecting on these sessions has allowed me to see how, when comfortable and confident I am congruent with my beliefs and values regarding behaviour change and how important it is for the relationship to be built and provide a space for the group to interact, share and learn. It was also clear to me that when I didn't feel confident or competent, I reverted to an approach that is not congruent with my beliefs or values. It was clear my thoughts and feelings affected my delivery style and out of both fear of looking incompetent, and my desire to be viewed as competent resulted in me changing my approach for that session. **Action Plan:** To improve delivering sessions, I am uncomfortable with I can better understand my thoughts and feelings towards these sessions. I can begin to accept that I may be faced with difficult questions that I won't have the answers too, but by accepting that and being authentic, I feel

		relationships with groups will not suffer. Sharing information with other members of my team, such as nutritionists will also enhance my knowledge base and my feelings of competence.
18/08/17	Reflections of modules 4-6 of NDPP. (CASE STUDY 1)	**Description:** I was delivering modules 4, 5 and 6 of the NHS National Diabetes Prevention Programme. These sessions were weeks 4 and 5 of the initial 7-week session section of the programme. Content for these sessions included increasing knowledge around food labels, portion sizes, overcoming barriers to healthy living and beginning to increase exercise and physical activity levels. The group size was still six members with the same demographics as in the previous reflection. Each session lasted for approximately 90 minutes. **Feelings:** I felt more relaxed delivering these sessions, given as a group we were four weeks into the programme we were now more comfortable with each other as social barriers had slowly been overcome. Therefore, I felt my initial insecurities of trying to show my competence to the group for areas I felt incompetent in was no longer as strong. Module four and five's content involved food labels and portion sizes; another area I would say was

		one of my weaker areas, knowledge-wise. While, I still was experiencing anxiety related to feeling incompetent, and a fear of being asked difficult questions, I had better planned the session to ensure I would remain congruent with my approach and values. I had integrated into the session group activities that were informative and interactive. I aimed to encourage group discussions and then based on these discussions facilitate change rather than enforce it as I had done in the healthy module eating module. As a result of this planning, I felt more confident in delivering this session. Module six involved exercise and physical activity and discussing the benefits of both and how as a group, they could begin increasing the amount of time they spend engaging in both and how it would benefit them. This is one of my most robust modules. I felt extremely confident approaching this session. This was evident to the group; there were a lot more questions asked, potentially because they sensed I was more forthcoming on this topic. I felt this confidence manifested itself in my delivery as with this confidence I thought I was more passionate in my delivery and actively engaged and encouraged group discussions which I think made me more impactful as a practitioner. **Evaluation:**

		I felt I was more impactful on the session I felt less confident delivering compared to the healthy eating module of which I was equally less confident due to being able to reflect on that experience and learn from it. By understanding, I can still be impactful and effective as a practitioner despite not being an ‘expert’ meant I could be more congruent with my beliefs and values. By being aware of my thoughts and feelings and undertaking better planning before a lesson I was able to remain consistent with my values and approach style which for me as a practitioner meant I was calmer and most importantly more impactful for the group. I found my confidence towards delivering an exercise and physical activity session manifested itself in my delivery. My passion for helping and supporting the group improve their exercise, and physical activity adherence became apparent to the group. This further strengthened our relationship as I was showing some of the critical skills required to build effective relationships such as empathy and unconditional positive regard (Poczwardowsk et al., 2004). **Analysis:** I found and began to understand the value and importance of investing in relationships and how the relationships with the client, or in this case, the client

		group, is fundamental to effective service delivery. Understanding and emphasising the importance of practitioner-client relationships and the working alliance is echoed in much of the neophyte practitioner sport, exercise and counselling research (Tod & Andersen, 2005; Horvath & Bedi, 2002). I found that having a good working relationship with the group meant I could challenge some of their beliefs without them feeling threatened and begin to promote positive behaviour change. I thought that the strong relationship I had developed with the group meant I was more impactful and effective as a practitioner. **Conclusion:** Reflecting on these sessions allowed me to see my progress from the first few weeks of the programme. By better understanding how I reacted in a situation where I was uncomfortable and unsure and therefore developing better coping strategies to manage these anxieties better in the future so that they do not interfere with my delivery style, impact and effectiveness as a practitioner. I also see the value in investing in creating and developing relationships with each of the group's members and creating an opportunity for the group to build relationships with each other. By spending time creating and nursing these relationships, it has meant that

		I have created a space where discussions and shared experiences can occur, and people can challenge and support each other in the pursuit of positive behaviour change. **Action Plan:** To continue developing, I feel nursing and developing a relationship with the group is fundamental. At the same time, I believe the relationship is healthy, and it should always be continually developed by implementing critical skills such as empathy building, rapport, showing unconditional positive regard and active listening.
08/09/17	Reflections of modules 7-9 of NDPP. (CASE STUDY 1)	**Description:** I was delivering modules 7, 8 and 9 of the NHS National Diabetes Prevention Programme. These sessions were weeks 6 and 7 of the initial 7-week session section of the programme. Content for these sessions included overcoming barriers related to physical activity and exercise, overcoming obstacles to behaviour change, understanding habits and how to break them, mental wellbeing and stress management. The group size was still six members with the same demographics as in the previous reflection. Each session lasted for approximately 90 minutes. **Feelings:**

		The final few taught sessions were much more ‘psychology’ focussed, helping people to understand how and why they form habits and how they may begin to create new, healthier habits as well as discussing mental wellbeing and how it links with Type 2 diabetes. I felt worried about delivering the mental wellbeing session, despite feeling confident in my knowledge of the subject I was apprehensive about the response I would receive to talking about mental health and wellbeing, topics which to some people are taboo. I was challenged with wanting to deliver a session that was informative, semi-structured yet not an uncomfortable session for the group to take part in and therefore shut down entirely and not engages. The challenge faced made me feel anxious. Despite feeling competent in my knowledge, I thought I lacked competence in my ability to transfer that knowledge in an impactful and effective way. I was left contemplating do I deliver a session that addresses the current issues? While hoping the relationship I had built with the group was strong enough for us to have meaningful discussions on sensitive topics. Or instead, deliver a watered-down version to avoid any potentially uncomfortable moments for both myself and the group. **Evaluation:**

		The session on mental health and wellbeing was far more successful than I had initially expected. I decided to go with the approach where I would deliver the topic in its entirety based on the belief I had a strong enough relationship with the group for sensitive areas not to be an issue. I felt there was trust between group members and between the group and myself. Previously, I felt I would have gone down the watered-down option, delivering a session the briefly talked about some of the more sensitive topics but not exploring them in any meaningful way out of a fear of creating an uncomfortable and awkward environment. I found open and honest discussions took place on the importance of mental health, and wellbeing has to live a healthy lifestyle. I believe these discussions wouldn't have taken place if a) the relationship with the group and between the group was strong and b) if I had delivered a session that didn't address the sensitivities of mental health and wellbeing. **Analysis:** The process of reflecting on my feelings and evaluating my impact as a practitioner allowed me to understand that I was avoiding uncomfortable situations out of my insecurities. By being aware of how I felt as a neophyte practitioner in specific situations and how I responded to

		those situations, I was able to determine when I was as impactful to a client/group as possible and when I was making decisions based out of fear. By trusting in the relationships that I had built with a group, which is of fundamental importance for a neophyte practitioner (Tod & Andersen, 2005; Horvath & Bedi, 2002). I could more effectively deliver an impactful session to the group. **Conclusion:** To conclude, showing faith and trust in the relationships I had built with the group proved to be an inspired decision as it allowed insightful discussions to take place and for me as a practitioner to deliver an impactful and effective session as possible. **Action Plan:** Sharing more with my supervisor regarding how I am feeling around delivering session with clients. Likewise, being more open and honest about any insecurities I may be experiencing will allow me to understand my own experiences better and develop more as a practitioner.
12/11/17	Delivering incongruently to an athlete.	**Description:** An athlete had been referred to me for support regarding an issue. I was not sure what the problem was, so the session involved understanding their issue and then aiming to develop an intervention. After spending a

		reasonable amount of time building rapport, understanding the issue, I offered some potential solutions in line with the mental skills approach, for example, self-talk, imagery, pre-performance routine. Each suggestion was met with reluctance and the athlete seemingly losing interest as the session progressed, and so did I, I questioned my practice, what am I even doing here? **Feelings:** I was frustrated and frankly miserable. Why was I delivering this way? I knew it was not what I enjoyed doing, and it was not what was best for the athlete. They wanted somebody to listen to their issue, not offer a skill for them to develop. I was terrified of leaving my comfort zone of trying something I was not comfortable with – even though I knew it was best for the athlete and something I would be more congruent with. I did not want to be found out to be a fraud by trying something and failing. But in reality, I was fraudulent by not being true to how I want to deliver. Feeling incongruent was uncomfortable, demotivating, and significantly reduced my enjoyment of working as a practitioner. **Evaluation:** After evaluating my effectiveness with the athlete, which is a key responsibly of an applied practitioner (Anderson

		et al., 2002), I began to recognise I was not acting in line with my personal beliefs or values, and as a result, doing the athlete a disservice. The athlete did not arrange for a second session, and a coach who initially referred the athlete had suggested to me they felt that the session was not useful. While this was indeed painful news to hear, especially as a trainee practitioner, it did allow me to reflect on my work. Why was I offering these mental skills? I should have provided more, am I just anxious to explore alternative avenues in case I am found to be a fraud? These were some of the questions I found myself asking during the drive home from training following that conversation with the coach. **Analysis:** I had never felt comfortable offering athletes solely mental skills, primarily because I struggled to see the real benefit in them myself, so how could I sell this to an athlete? While I have never really developed a practitioner philosophy, I usually have delivered what I have felt comfortable with. Despite this, I have always had an affinity towards a counselling-based approach, focused on holistic support. I just lacked the required confidence in my ability to practice this approach. I was anxious that I tried this approach, failed, I would look stupid, lose respect with the athletes and coaches and

		fundamentally make my role less secure. The irony is, by delivering an approach that I don't enjoy, and that may not satisfy all the needs of the athlete, I was seemingly making myself appear stupid and losing respect for players. **Conclusion:** To conclude, I delivered an approach that I was comfortable with, due to the client-friendly and practitioner friendly aspect of it, despite it not being an approach I feel congruent with. Similarly, it was an approach that was not best fitted for the athlete. However, a fear of failure with trying a new approach, I was anxious to leave my comfort zone, even at the detriment of the relationship with the client. As a result, the relationship broke down with the athlete, and we did not have a second session. For me, this highlights the need for me to understand my values and beliefs and to design a congruent practising philosophy. **Action Plan:** It was during this drive home that I decided a change in my approach was needed. I decided to dedicate some time to reading relevant research and speaking with my supervisor to look for answers to my problem. I alluded to Poczwardowski et al. 's. (2004) paper, which provided recommendations on developing a professional

		philosophy, which started with identifying your personal core beliefs and values. Following this, I aim to engage in the process of rigorous self-examination (Simons & Andersen, 1995) and self-discovery (Corlett, 1996), to identify my core values and beliefs to help shape my professional philosophy. Poczwardowski et al. (2004) had suggested how reflecting on core personal beliefs leads to the emergence of a theoretical paradigm regarding behaviour change.
10/01/18	Development of a professional philosophy	**Description:** This reflection collates my thoughts on the development of a professional practice philosophy following the process of engaging in self-discovery and evaluation. Before starting the doctorate, philosophy of practice was not something I had not considered. During my masters, on placements, I generally delivered what I felt most comfortable with (normally MST) without any real thought behind why. Similarly, during the initial stages of the professional doctorate, I have not acted with any meaningful philosophical guidance. However, discussions during professional doctorate sessions and conversations during CPD events have emphasised the importance of a professional philosophy and remaining congruent with that philosophy of practice.

		Poczwardowski et al. (2004) highlight how their personal core beliefs and values should underpin a practitioner's philosophy. **Feelings:** I felt during the process of self-reflection an overwhelming sense of liberation. I had not enjoyed many aspects of delivering to date. I felt incongruent, incompetent and fraudulent and questioned why I was even doing this. However, by reflecting on my values and core beliefs, I began to experience an increased sense of congruence, understanding, and confidence. All of which significantly enhanced my motivation towards practice. I had not felt this sense of excitement and nerves towards future practice since the very start of my practice. The nerves where primarily as a result of recognising I would now be delivering in a way I had not done previously, how would I cope with this new approach? I needed to do some further reading! **Evaluation:** After engaging in the process of self-evaluation and discovery to understand my values and beliefs, I was more confident in delivery. As mentioned, before this, I had no significant philosophical direction. I felt fraudulent delivering sessions and had not enjoyed a large number of consultancy sessions that I delivered.

		Speaking with peers and supervisors facilitated this process of self-reflection. By sharing values, I was able to determine what was most significant to me as a practitioner and those I valued less. Despite the positive outcome, this process was a lengthy and at times, arduous process, how do you understand what is important to you? While I am happy with the result, I no doubt expect throughout my development, there will be tweaks to this philosophy based on further experiences. **Analysis:** My background was in mainstream psychology, meaning I had minimal exposure to sport psychology topics during my academic qualifications. My only exposure to undergraduate sport psychology was heavily MST focused (e.g., imagery, self-talk, and relaxation exercises). It was not until my masters when I was exposed to alternative interventions. Therefore, it appears apparent to me that I opted to primarily deliver MST in the early stages of my training during consultancy sessions because it was what I felt comfortable delivering. Similarly, the client-friendly nature of MST, meant I felt ‘safe’ delivering it, I wouldn’t get caught out, I would be able to deliver something at least. Through a process of supervision, reflections and discussions during professional doctorate

		sessions, my confidence in my ability to practice increased. My shift towards a more client-led, holistic approach underpinned by a counselling-based approach coincided with my enhanced confidence. It was underpinned by a lack of enjoyment and lack of congruence in my previous delivery style. **Conclusion:** Initially, my philosophy of practice was underpinned by a mental skills approach primarily underpinned by a cognitive-behavioural model, i.e., I am the expert, you have a problem, let me fix it. I began to recognise that this method of delivery was not congruent with my core values or beliefs. I initially opted for this approach because of its ease of delivery, my previous exposure to it, and the saliency of MST in contemporary literature. However, after feeling incongruent during delivery and recognising the importance of developing a professional philosophy and delivering congruently to that model, I engaged in a rigorous self-examination process, as per the recommendations of Poczwardowski (2004). This process allowed me to identify my core values and beliefs and develop an initial professional philosophy. **Action Plan:** Despite now having a professional philosophy that matches my values and beliefs, research has suggested a

		practitioner’s philosophy continually develops over time (Tod, Andersen, & Marchant 2009). Therefore, to ensure my continued development, continuing to engage in the process of supervision and reflection will allow me to build my professional philosophy. While at times, I recognise an athlete may enter, merely looking for a technique to manage anxiety, or to feel more confident in front of goal, in which case mental skills may offer a useful service. My philosophy progressing will be aimed at providing a more holistic approach, recognising the richness of the person as well as the athlete, and supporting the person through personal change rather than try to offer a quick directive fix.
05/03/18	Cricket Sport Psychology Reflections. (CASE STUDY 2)	**Description:** I was approached to design and deliver a Sport Psychology support service to a cricket board’s emerging player programme (EPP) during their winter training break. The EPP represents the top tier of the counties player development pathway and is designed to provide greater opportunities for young players from minor counties to progress with first-class county sides. Initially, I had held face to face meetings with the academy director to provide me with information about

		the EPP, to understand what his goals and expectations were for the sport psychology programme and to collect data so that I could begin to design a programme that would best suit the needs of the athletes while also meeting the goals and expectations of the head coach. This programme was the Cricket Boards first attempt at bringing in a Sports Psychologist, and the head coach wanted the athletes to receive a programme that would allow them to develop many of mental skills required to make it as a professional cricketer. His decision to integrate psychology was influenced by many of the athletes from previous years, seemingly being technically good enough but not making the grade as a professional cricketer. Feedback from first-class county head coaches suggested that the athletes “couldn’t handle the pressure” or they “weren’t mentally tough enough”. His goals and expectations of me were to 1) Introduce the concept of Sport Psychology to athletes who were part of the EPP and 2) Deliver sessions over the winter training period that would allow athletes to develop, mental skills required at the elite levels of cricket. Using a mixture of performance profiles, informal chats and stakeholder analysis, I gathered data to create a working model that would inform the sport psychology support service I would be delivering. Following the needs

		analysis and creation of a working model, I decided to provide a series of 5 workshops aimed at helping athletes manage their emotions and perform under pressure. The workshops would be supplemented with each athlete receiving one formal 1:1 support session. Alongside informal sessions throughout the winter training programme aimed at addressing the needs of the client. **Feelings:** Initially, I found myself when offering support, to be both mentally and physically exhausted. I was delivering sessions during evening hours, often after working within the day time. As a result, I was extremely fatigued when delivering sessions which is a contributing factor to practitioner burnout and reducing the quality of work produced (Arnold & Sarkar, 2015). As a result, my sessions often lacked creativity and innovation, and I felt disappointed that I could not offer more effective and engaging sessions. However, I simply did not have the time or energy at this stage if my development to be able to design better sessions. I felt disappointment because firstly I set myself high-standards, but secondly, this was for many athletes, their first real encounter with sport psychology. Pain and Harwood (2004) had suggested athletes can have initial negative perceptions of psychological support. Therefore, I had hoped to address

		these negative perceptions by delivering fun, interactive and engaging sessions to help develop mental skills. Reflecting on my feelings, I think I simply lacked motivation. For a period of a few months, I was working up to 6 days a week, 12 hours a day and was mentally and physically exhausted. I lacked the motivation to take the time to design fun and interactive sessions and instead simply delivered the more traditional workshop-based psychology support sessions. **Evaluation:** It would be unfair to suggest that these sessions did not go well, feedback from both athletes and coaches was positive and reflecting on the workshops, I felt they were effective at achieving their aims and objectives. My main regret was more that this was an opportunity for me as a practitioner to enter an environment with a black slate and deliver something different to how I had previously delivered sessions. I had hoped to deliver more practical based sessions, having both coaches and athletes to be active participants in sessions. That is not to say this would have been a more effective method of delivery. It was a method of delivery that I had been curious to try out to help develop as a practitioner. Despite this, the sessions I delivered achieved the aims of the psychological support service. These were to 1)

		Introduce the concept of Sport Psychology to athletes who were part of the EPP and 2) Deliver sessions over the winter training period that would allow athletes to develop mental skills required at the elite levels of cricket. **Analysis:** It was clear that practitioner burnout was the key contributing factor as to why I lacked the motivation (and time) to be able to deliver the creative and innovative sessions that I wanted to give. While yes, the sessions were useful, I wanted to use this opportunity to step out of my comfort zone and grow as a practitioner. Managing competing demands is not uncommon for practitioners, and there will be many times in the future where I am required to balance different roles, what is important is that I develop and learn better-coping strategies to manage these demands. A simple coping strategy that I employed towards the end of delivery that I found effective was ensuring I was engaging in practitioner self-care, through simple ideas such as meal preparation to ensure I had a proper diet and engaging in exercise (Mullenbach, 2016). **Conclusion:** To conclude, I have recognised the importance of self-care. Although I am enthusiastic and committed to

		delivering as many sessions as possible and developing as a practitioner, I must understand when to say no and when to ‘switch off’. Had I allowed myself the opportunity to recover before delivering sessions, I would have been able to have left what felt comfortable. Therefore, design the innovative and creative sessions I had hoped to achieve. Instead, I was fatigued, lacked motivation and remained in my comfort zone. As a result, I potentially missed further opportunities to develop as a practitioner. **Action Plan:** To ensure my future development and to most importantly take care of myself, I need to ensure I allow myself satisfactory ‘down-time’ and time to switch of from the role and identity of a sport psychologist. Doing so will hopefully prevent further burnout and ensure the quality of work I produce is not diminished. Similarly, if similar situations arise again, not being afraid to say I am too busy, or no to delivering sessions. Recognising that it is better to provide a session later or not at all than to deliver a bad session and potentially damage future relationships with coaches and athletes.

12/04/18	Junior cricketer 1-2-1 private session.	**Description:** A few months into the consultancy work I was doing with a cricket academy, I received a phone call from a parent of one of the athletes in the programme. They had stated the coach had agreed that I was allowed to provide some extra support away from the academy setting, as the discretion of both myself and the athlete's parents. The initial conversation over the phone was that this athlete had recently had a breakdown during one of his matches, he had lost his wicket for a low score, stormed off the pitch, trashed the dressing room and sulked for a few hours. The parent went on to say the found their child crying later that evening over the match with the child stating they were very nervous about playing, and how they were ‘scared of not getting runs and letting the team down. I agreed to a meeting with the athlete, initially with the parent present to and then on an individual basis. This approach was to allow the athlete to open-up more freely without the presence of an authoritative figure in the room. Consistent with my philosophical approach, I explored other areas of the athletes life such as school, friendship groups, family life etc. Following these discussions, I began to hypothesize how the athlete’s wider life may be impacting on his athletic life. However, after a perceived lack of impact

		on my part, I reverted to old habits and switched to delivering a mental-skills based approach. **Feelings:** Initially, my reaction was this was not something that needed support, I play cricket and am aware of how ‘normal’ it is for batters to sometimes behave in this way following a dismissal. However, upon hearing of the distress the athlete was in, later on, I decided to take on the client. Now more comfortable with my practitioner philosophy, I used motivational interviewing (Miller & Rollnick, 2002), as it was an approach I felt resonated with my personal beliefs on how behaviour change should be achieved. That is, it views the client as the expert with the practitioner’s role to facilitate the client in finding their own solution. I was left frustrated after a few sessions, though, I could not see any impact. As the sessions passed by, I found myself panicking more and desperately trying to force having an impact. Following the switch to a mental-skills based approach, I felt disappointed in myself again. Why did I go to this approach? Should I have just waited it out with the method I feel congruent with? **Evaluation:** While in our first few sessions, I was consistent with a client-led approach, I found progress limited, and I was

		uncomfortable with what I perceived as a lack of progress. After a few weeks, I found myself reverting to old, more comfortable habits in the shape of mental skills. I was feeling like the client-led counselling based approach was not being effective; for a reason, I could not pinpoint. However, after reverting to a mental-skills approach, I was able to see the impact my initial approach had. During the couple of mental skills training sessions, we had together; I noticed a change in behaviour I felt our practitioner-client rapport was not as strong, the athlete not as engaged and even myself slightly disinterested. It wasn’t until about halfway through the second of our mental skills sessions that I plucked up the courage to ask if they were finding these sessions useful? To which the athlete replied along the lines of, *“well I found the first few sessions really useful as it helped me understand more things about myself, but the ones where I have to practice relaxation stuff not as much as I think I can do that anyway”.* I was shocked, firstly at his honesty, most people would probably lie and say yes they were useful, but also at how wrong my initial impressions were at the lack of progress I had perceived my initial approach to have had. **Analysis:**

		I feel I reverted to this because I had expected that through my use of guided, open-ended questions, consistent with the techniques recommended for motivational interviewing the client would have visibly displayed more progress. Either through verbally confirming that they were making progress or vicariously through parent/coach feedback. The sessions I had with this athlete, coupled with self-reflection and discussions with my supervisor and peers, increased my awareness towards my insecurity regarding the approach I was offering. I have consciously tried to move away from a mental skills-based approach to be more congruent with my beliefs and values as a person as per the recommendation of research (e.g. Poczwardowski et al., 2004). In my shift from a mental skills approach to a client-led, holistic approach, I have doubted my ability to be as effective. The techniques I am delivering are more alien to me compared to mental skill techniques, and this brings with it self-doubts regarding my ability to be effective. However, I have to recognise that as a neophyte practitioner, at times, I will make mistakes or not be entirely effective and providing I reflect and learn from these experiences, then that is okay. **Conclusion:**

		We finished the remaining sessions we had together adopting the initial approach. The athlete recognised that he should discuss with his friends and family that sometimes he doesn't want to talk about cricket, or how he got on, or what matches he coming up, as he feels this places a lot of pressure on him due to not wanting to let other people down. He also recognised that despite his performance in cricket, and the interest of his social circle in his cricket performance, that people would not think of him less, or perceive to have been let down as a result of him not performing. It was also apparent to me following reflection that self-doubt regarding my ability to be impactful when delivering client-led session led sessions resulted in insecurities regarding my effectiveness. It was then these insecurities that culminated in me reverting to a mental-skills approach – my comfort zone. **Action plan:** For future development, ensuring I reflect on incidences like this to understand my reactions. Similarly, recognising that it may be my insecurities that feeds my paranoia regarding being effective. Therefore, ensuring I remain congruent throughout consultancy.

25/05/18	Behaviour management in workshops	**Description:** I was delivering a workshop to footballers as part of an academies PDP age group (16-18-year-olds). I had been working at the academy for several months and had a relatively good relationship with the team and coaching staff. The workshop topic was on preparing for a transition, focussing on preparing to either transition into a professional environment or preparing for release. Specifically, we were looking at what you might need to cope with both scenarios and how we could develop the skills to cope. I had delivered many previous workshops on different topics throughout the season to a relatively high level of success I felt. However, this one was occurring towards the end of the season, some players were not engaging with the session and were instead being disruptive. I struggled to manage their behaviour and the session suffered as a result. **Feelings:** I felt a little bit helpless when trying to manage the behaviour of the players. I had delivered many sessions before, and they were always engaging and well behaved, well, for footballers in an academy of that age. I did not want these sessions to be authoritarian and feel like school; I am quite happy for there to be a level of humour and informality in these sessions. However,

		when a line is crossed, or when I need the group to focus, they have always respected that. I felt this workshop was critical, given the stage of the season (within the next few weeks they would be told whether they would be released or offered a contract) so when they were not engaging and not responding to being asked to settle down and listen, I couldn't help but feel angry. I am not a shouter, I feel by standing at the front shouting at them I would 1) feel like a complete idiot and 2) risk harming some of the relationships I have built with players. I was out of options, they hadn't responded to how I usually manage their behaviour, and I was not prepared to shout at them. I did not want to have to leave and get a coach again. I felt this would not reflect well on me. The team would feel like I have 'grassed on them' a term they used to throw around to each other, and the coach may feel I do not have the respect of the players. I left the session feeling disrespected, angry and helpless. **Evaluation:** Very little went well within this session, the players did not engage, and a handful were disruptive throughout the session. The only positive I can take from the session is that I have been able to reflect on reasons as to why it potentially went so wrong and develop an action towards

		improving it for future delivery. What did not work with this session was the timing of delivery. It was the end of the season, and many players felt they knew if they would be retained or released and as a result were simply not interested in taking part in the session. Previously, the workshops had been conducted within the season, and therefore players felt they would benefit more from them and also that they were being judged. For example, if they were not engaged, the staff would hear about it, and it may impact their decisions regarding offering players a contract. **Analysis:** The focus of my analysis is to reflect on why I felt I could not manage the group. I am confident in accepting the session did not go well due to the timing of the session, many players would not be there in a few weeks, they were disengaged, and I can accept that. My lack of ability to control the group when they started to misbehave is the main area I wish to learn from as a result of reflecting. I feel I placed too much emphasis on not wanting to harm relationships with players. Research suggests that building relationships with players is imperative to successful delivery (Katz & Hemmings, 2009). However, by not taking control of the situation, I could have equally damaged relationships with some

		players, particularly the ones who I would be working with over the next season. They may perceive me as weak and somebody who not come down hard on them. I feel my experience here closely matches that of neophyte teachers. Peters (2012) suggested training teachers felt confident in their ability to manage behaviour, although relied primarily on behaviourist methods such as punishments. This is something I could integrate to facilitate behaviour management. **Conclusion:** To conclude, I felt the session was unsuccessful primarily due to the timing, players not being fully engaged and my reluctance to take full control. I did not feel confident enforcing punishments or shouting out of fear of harming relationships with players, which would be detrimental to the future success of my role. What I feel I should have done differently is to end the session short, once they had not initially responded to me, I should have finished the session and been confident to do so. Similarly, approaching some of the key players within the team and speaking to them individually following the meeting to remind them of the behaviours that are expected and how I expect them to promote these behaviours when others are not adhering to them. **Action plan:**

		While I am hoping this was just a one-off bad session due to the timing of delivery, there are still some important areas I need to address to ensure I develop. Firstly, having a behaviour management 'plan B' is an area I need to build, there will be other times when my soft approach is not appropriate or useful. I need to be confident in my ability to manage these situations. Having spoken and reflected with colleagues and my supervisor, potential options to explore excluding disruptive players from sessions, talking individually to disruptive players and ending sessions short.
20/07/18	Reflections of working with athlete suffering from anxiety.	**Description:** This reflection represents my time working with a footballer which, as the consultancy process progressed was revealed to be suffering from a form of anxiety disorder which was not only affecting his sporting performance but his social, school and familial life. The footballer was 15 years old and was playing for the football club academy, where I was acting as the lead academy psychologist. I was made aware of the athlete by the coach who had highlighted him as somebody I should speak with as he hadn't been able to train or play competitive matches for the last few weeks due to him

		feeling anxious about sport. As the athlete was 15 years old, I arranged a formal meeting with both the athlete and his Dad to gain a clearer understanding of the presenting issue. Once we had formally met, we agreed to meet once a week at the clubs training ground. After a few weeks, it became clear to me that the athlete was suffering far more than your ‘typical’ sporting or competitive anxiety and was likely suffering from something of a more clinical nature. The athlete had reported missing classes in school, missing school altogether, avoiding social events alongside avoiding taking part in football, something which he loved. I remained in close contact with the Dad throughout the process and advised that he speak with his GP and be referred onto a mental health specialist or clinical psychologist, this was agreed, and he began sessions with a clinical psychologist. While working with the clinical psychologist, we also kept our regular weekly sessions. This was for several reasons; firstly, I didn’t want our relationship to end abruptly, because if he were able to return to playing football again, I would be a part of his support team and secondly, I didn’t want him to feel as though the football club was a place that he thought he wasn’t able to come to or that we were shutting him out. He made massive amounts of progress

		working with the clinical psychologist and could return to normal functioning in his social life, such as attending school and playing with friends. However, he was unable to return to playing football, he had expressed his loss of love for the game and didn’t want to play competitively anymore he just wanted to play for fun with his friends. From both my perspective as the psychologist and his perspective as the person under distress, we both felt at least a temporary absence from competitive would be the best course of action. **Feelings:** Initially, when I was first approached by the coach I expected to be dealing with an athlete suffering from a form of competitive anxiety and was preparing to be delivering an intervention to help address issues related to this, as is supported by the literature (e.g. Kanniyan, 2015). I felt comfortable initially dealing with such an issue, it was something I had worked with athletes on previously to varying degrees of success and therefore felt confident approaching the case. Key to my practice is being able to develop an effective and meaningful working relationship with clients (McDougall et al., 2015). As my relationship with the athlete grew, so too did the facts of this client’s issues. Coming from a mainstream psychology background, I was beginning to

		recognise he was displaying symptoms of anxiety that went far beyond that of competitive anxiety. I started feeling uncomfortable being this athletes sole confidant and felt extremely worried about the athlete's wellbeing. Reflecting on my reaction and how I felt during this stage of the consultancy, I feel as though I had displayed some countertransference (Winstone & Gervis, 2006). My first step here was to contact my supervisor and 'unload' my fears and anxieties onto them and then seek some advice. I felt at this stage, I didn't have the tools to or expertise to deal with a young athlete in crisis. I also shared my experiences with a support team consisting of trainee sport & exercise psychologists. I felt sharing and reflecting with my supervisor and support group extremely reassuring and allowed me to offload some emotional baggage. Todd and Bond (2010) have strongly suggested people of all levels identify their 'go-to' people for support and guidance. I felt immense pressure from the club to have this issue resolved, the athlete had not attended training or matches for a couple of months and was only at the training ground to work with me. While the coaching staff understood I couldn't disclose confidential information, I felt that they were frustrated at what to them seemed like a lack of progress. While I felt satisfied with his progression, as his work with the

		clinical psychologist meant he could return to school, he was expressing to me his desire to take some time away from football, which in my opinion was for the best. But the football club and his Dad both wanted him to return so I felt somewhat conflicted. My philosophy places the welfare of the individual as a priority. In this case, ahead of club interests, for example, a player they have invested time and money into is no longer participating. Similarly, my interests as I may be being perceived as incompetent by key members of the staff at the football club. This dichotomous contradiction resulted in me feeling a degree of anxiety. During this time, again, I found solace in seeking support from supervisor and my peer support group.
		Evaluation:
		In terms of evaluation, there are very few evaluation points to discuss in terms of interventions as much of the intervention work was done with the clinical psychologist and I didn’t want to be contradicting what he was doing away from the football club. Much of my role was to offer a secure space for him to vent, particularly concerning the sport. Evaluating my handling of the situation, this was the first time I have worked with an athlete suffering from a mental health issue. Research suggests that mental health in sport is a

		salient issue (Rice et al., 2016). I don't imagine this will be my last experience. Reflecting on this experience will ensure I am better prepared for any similar future scenarios. I felt I acted correctly and managed the situation ethically. There were many parties involved the athlete, his parents and the clubs all who had their interests concerning this case, so the most significant challenge I found was remaining ethical in terms of not breaching the confidentiality of the client. While the parents were aware of the issue and the athlete was happy for me to discuss sessions with the parents, the football club was not aware of this issue, and I was not prepared to breach confidentiality unless told otherwise by the athlete. I felt by doing so ensured I had a good level of trust and understanding with the client, which upon reflection, I felt meant he was more comfortable discussing his issue in detail with me. Trust is a fundamental prerequisite for a productive consultancy session (Katz & Hemmings, 2009). I think a key evaluation point for me to take away from working with the client was how important having a supervisor and a good support group was. There were times when I was worried about the welfare of this athlete, and it was affecting my personal life as I had developed a good relationship with the athlete. But by seeking support and

		guidance from more experienced peers and individuals who shared the same anxieties as me, I could improve the coping skills to manage. **Analysis:** I have established that it is vital for me to understand my limitations, i.e. what am I comfortable working with, how far am I prepared to go with an athlete before I refer them onto somebody better qualified. In this situation, given the complexities and ethical issues I had to navigate, I felt referring to a specialist was the best option. Discussions with my supervisor allowed me to challenge and determine what the best course of action to take was. Managing the dichotomous challenges of ensuring what is best for the athlete, what is best for the club and what is best for me was a significant challenge of this case study. Had the club been informed in more detail the issue the athlete was facing there may have been a more sympathetic approach and less pressure on me to show noticeable progress. However, client confidentiality is of paramount importance to me as a practitioner and something I am not prepared to break. Consistently referring to and ensuring I am working within the parameters of my governing bodies code of ethics and conduct acted as a guide during stressful periods when I needed advice on ethical issues (BPS

		Code of Ethics and Conduct, 2018). Referring to my philosophy of practice acted as a moral guideline for me when sometimes I was unsure of what was the best course of action to take (Poczwardowski et al., 2004). **Conclusion:** The conclusions I can make from my experiences dealing with this client are twofold. Firstly, appreciating the importance of having a good peer support group with whom I can offload emotional baggage and share experiences. Also, the importance of seeking support and guidance from more experienced individuals; in this case, the support and advice received from my supervisor helped me to make the most informed decisions at critical points. Secondly, having a sound philosophy of practice on which to rely and use as a foundation to practice and make informed decisions I felt made managing the complexities of this case more manageable. While I was never sure, the choices I made were the best decisions. Basing them on the advice and guidance from peer support groups and supervisors, and my philosophy of practice meant I was at least congruent and authentic to my beliefs and values. A congruent practitioner can operate freely and creatively and can act out of their most wholehearted and growth orientated motives and thereby remain authentic (Rogers, 1961).

		Action Plan: I am assuming that this isn’t going to be my only experience of dealing with mental health in sport so moving forward one area I feel I could have managed better was having more contact with the clinical psychologist. Working with the clinical psychologist might have made for a more integrated and holistic support service. However, the clinical psychologist was sought away from the club and had no affiliation with the club, so contact was difficult. However, making more of an attempt to integrate sport psychology and clinical psychology to support an athlete might offer a complete service in the future.
19/12/18	Role clarity	**Description:** After settling into the role of academy psychology, albeit, voluntarily, I found myself confused as to how to make the most effective use of the service I was offering. I was at the training ground two days a week, primary working with the PDP athletes (16+) although, the environment was unique whereby the 1st team were on-site at the same time as the academy athletes. I found some coaches wanted me to work with specific ‘problem players’, others wanted team-based sessions, and some wanted some support for their personal development.

		The science and medicine department wanted some assistance working with injured athletes, and then the players’ would seek individual help. I recognise this is part of the role. However, given my limited time with the academy, I was conscious of spreading myself too thin and not offering anything substantial. Over the season I was there, I opted to primarily focus on working with the players as individuals, with the occasional group-based work and support for the injured athletes. **Feelings:** I felt overwhelmed initially, focusing on a few specific areas meant neglecting other areas, and I had no real way of knowing precisely what the right areas to focus on were. This was my first role working in an elite academy football environment. While I had the experience of working in cricket and female football, I had such a strong desire to want to prove myself as a competent psychologist. On the back of this, the previous sport psychologist had left a positive impact and was a popular member of the support staff, I wanted to follow on with this legacy and felt pressure to perform in my role. After opting to focus on individual support, supplemented with group-based educational sessions, I felt confident that the athletes were benefitting from the service. However, I felt some hostility from some coaches at times when I

		was unable to support their needs fully. One example remains pertinent; when a coach had asked me if I could attend their training session to observe his behaviour and the behaviour of one player in particular. However, I had arranged for three 1-2-1 meetings with players for the same time and was unable to attend. The coach commented along the lines of "but isn't your role to support the coaching staff"? Naturally, this left me doubting my decision to focus on the individual and knocked my confidence. **Evaluation:** I decided to focus on individual support rather than to focus on coach support after asking myself the question of where I feel I can have the most impact. Some coaches were very receptive to support, and others had no real interest in receiving any support. It was based on this that I felt offering assistance to players should be my primary focus. I felt why waste my time with some coaches who have no interest? Reflecting so far, I think I have had a positive impact on most of the players I have provided support for, so therefore, feel it was a right decision. However, I do feel that I should have dedicated more time to working with the coaching staff, in particular the coaching staff who have expressed an interest in the support.

		Analysis: Pain and Harwood (2004) argued that one of the most significant barriers for sports psychologists is the lack of clarity regarding services offered by a sport psychologist. While I feel understand the role of a sport psychologist and the varied nature of services they offer, I feel my biggest issue was prioritising the services. Given the limited time, I was available, and then subsequently relaying this message clearly to all staff. As a result of this, I feel some friction was caused between myself and individual members of the coaching staff. Some of the coaching staff were keen to receive support and regularly engage with the service. Still, I was very limited in terms of time and meetings with players/ educational workshops meant that my time available for coaching staff was limited. There were many practical constraints placed upon me, such as lack of money and time, which research has suggested act as a further barrier to psychology consultation (Kremer and Marchant, 2002). However, overall I feel many of the issues I experienced where as a result of my lack of clarity to coaching staff regarding the services I was offering over the limited amount of time I was on site. **Conclusion:**

		The conclusions I have drawn from this experience is that for future reference to ensure that I am clear with all relevant parties what services I am offering to avoid potential conflict and confusion. While in this example, I was satisfied with the service I provided and felt given the constraints placed upon me, they were the most effective options I had. Secondly, reflecting on the services I am offering is also vitally important; this will allow me to evolve and develop to meet the needs of the organisation continually. **Action plan:** Moving forward, I aim to provide more support to the coaching staff that have expressed an interest in receiving help. Rather than make it a compulsory element for all coaches to receive support, dedicate a certain amount of time each week for coach support. By doing so, this should provide an opportunity to offer coaching staff the opportunity to develop should they feel need the need to. It should still allow me a satisfactory amount of time to offer support on an individual basis to the athletes.
15/02/19	Influence of my position as a lecturer on consultancy.	**Description:** Having been in my position as Lecturer of Sport and Exercise Psychology for 8-months, I have realized the

		positive impact this position had on me as a practitioner. With this position, my practitioner work was often consultancy based working with a football academy as part of my academic role, then occasionally with a cricket academy privately. I noticed how the consistency in my approach had improved and an increase of confidence in my ability to deliver client-centred, counselling-based sessions. **Feelings:** Initially, during practice, I was quite anxious, full of self-doubt and imposing pressure upon myself. This anxiety was mainly concerning my feelings of incompetence, like an imposter and having to offer something tangible to clients during sessions. Following my appointment as a lecturer, I observed a switch to being more relaxed and confident in delivery. This, in turn, resulted in me enjoying practice a lot more. Todd, Andersen and Marchant (2009) highlighted how neophyte practitioners confidence grows as they develop as practitioners. **Evaluation:** Alongside enhanced feelings of confidence, I also felt considerably more competent in my abilities. For example, working with a nervous footballer, previously I had relied on mental-skills training such as relaxation, out of a desire to be viewed as competent. However, as

		my philosophy of practice developed, which coincided with my appointment as a lecturer, when approached by a footballer with similar symptoms I was able to deliver more congruently and closer to my personal beliefs and values. It was reported that the athlete felt much less nervous as a result of exploring his feelings of nervousness rather than masking the symptoms with a relaxation based technique. **Analysis:** Earlier in my development, I associated incongruence to a lack of confidence in my ability to deliver client-led, counselling-based sessions. As a result of my appointment as a lecturer, this has afforded me the opportunity to engage in broader reading and gain a clearer understanding of the theoretical underpinnings associated with my philosophy of practice. By gaining this clearer understanding, my confidence in my competence significantly increased as I felt I had a greater knowledge regarding techniques and so on. Similarly, I felt in the hectic world of sport, where there is limited safety regarding job roles, especially for a psychologist, I was always trying to be impactful as quickly as possible. Therefore, I placed a lot of pressure on myself to deliver results, which I felt contributed to my tendency to revert from a counselling-based

		approach to an MST approach when progress was limited early on with clients. So by no longer being in that environment, the perceived safety associated with an academic position and opportunity to engage in wider reading, allowed me to be more congruent with my personal beliefs and values consistently. **Conclusion:** To conclude, it appears that by enhancing my theoretical knowledge and removal of self-imposed, and to an extent, organisational pressure, I no longer felt the need to achieve results immediately. Instead, I was more comfortable with letting sessions take their natural course and flow at their own pace. The removal of pressure and enhancement of knowledge also greatly enhanced my confidence when delivering a client-led counselling-based approach. Following earlier reflections, it was apparent my lack of confidence in that approach was a contributing factor towards my tendency to resort to MST. **Action Plan:** To continue more extensive reading to enhance my theoretical understanding. Similarly, remaining up to date with contemporary research and continue the development of my practitioner philosophy.

21/04/19	Concluding sessions with a private client.	**Description:** I had been working with a private client for a period of 5-weeks. The client was a 15-year old cricket player, who also excelled in golf and hockey playing county level for all three sports. I had worked with the athlete as part of my role with the cricket academy, and the athlete's parents contacted me to arrange some further private support. There were no prevalent issues, it was more a proactive approach, with the parents feeling the athlete better understanding themselves and the role of emotions would be beneficial to the athletes' development. The athlete was keen to engage in sessions and was curious about how to better himself. We agreed on a series of five, 1-hour sessions to be delivered for 2-months. Following the end of the five sessions, the parents expressed a desire for further sessions, again outside of the regular hours I had with the athlete as part of the cricket academy. I suggested rather than booking another five sessions, we play it on an ad-hoc basis, and if there is something I can help with, then to give me a call. The parents were quite forceful in trying to gain further sessions. **Feelings:** Following the five-sessions, I was quite satisfied with the outcome. We had engaged in 5, client-led sessions where

		we explored a variety of topics of interest to the client and linked them to scenarios he had faced during some of his sports. However, the final two sessions, I felt where a little forced, I was trying to think of further topics to explore, but the client seemed quite happy with what we had covered. This was frustrating, I felt guilty, I had been paid for five-sessions, but frankly, the final session included nothing substantial. I was glad it was coming to an end, it was great to see somebody be proactive, but fundamentally, we had run out of topics to discuss. I was then morally torn when the parents wanted further sessions. Do I take the money and just try to drag these sessions? Or do I say I don’t think any more sessions will benefit the athlete further? While for me, it was a straightforward decision; it did create some internal debate. **Evaluation:** I felt five sessions was plenty. We had covered a wide variety of topics; I felt the athlete now had an opportunity to put some of these into practice. The sessions were mostly successful, minus the final session whereby it was dragged out slightly. I also think my decision not to take the money’ was correct. While it would have been easy to have earned some extra money and I could have delivered some sessions that would

		have maybe had some benefit, it didn’t feel right. Instead, with the parent’s, we agreed I would available in the future for anything that may require my assistance. **Analysis:** This was a sense of morality, would it have been morally right to have taken another five sessions worth of money? Arguably, I could have had some benefit to the athlete, although based on the final session and a half, this would have been doubtful. Similarly, the athlete would still have some access to me through the cricket academy. I felt this decision was underpinned by my desire to remain ethical and moral in my practice. Too often did I hear of instances during my training of ‘bad practice’ and practitioner’s acting immorally, often as examples of what not to do. Therefore, I feel that as a result of being exposed to poor practice, with the continuous promotion of good practice during my training route to date, this allowed me to make a correct morally informed decision. **Conclusion:** To conclude, this example highlights how, as a practitioner psychologist, I may be faced with decisions based on my morals. While I feel some practitioners may have opted to deliver a further five sessions, and no doubt they may have been effective and enhanced the

		development of the client. In my case, I felt I had reached the limits of my effectiveness, and to continue further would have been immoral. **Action Plan:** Continuing to reflect on situations that challenge my morals, and sharing these instances with supervisors and peers will ensure I consistently deliver excellent levels of practice underpinned by a sense of professional morality.
20/08/2019	Diversity leading to development.	**Description:** I was conscious of ensuring diversity in my applied practice to ensure continued development. Both in the sense of evolution as a sport psychologist and exercise psychologist. Given the title is sport and exercise psychologist, I was often frustrated when informed typically you specialise in one or the other, this was even reinforced on the BPS careers page. I felt my role is to help people both in the context of sport and exercise rather than sport or exercise. Therefore, at the start of my journey, I set out to ensure my holistic development as a practitioner. Approximately 61% of my hours were dedicated to sport (e.g. football and cricket) while 39% was dedicated to exercise. **Feelings:**

		Initially, I experienced apprehension, often asking myself, had I spread myself too thin? The two roles at times can seem very different. I was working with an international footballer in the morning then later that same day with a 75-year old former metalworker who needed support towards change. At times this was frustrating, and it was very easy to feel lost with my development stagnating. However, I began to recognise that on the surface, the roles are very different, but at their core, they are very much alike. This was about helping people, and the ways in which I was trying to achieve this were very similar, both roles seemingly had a positive impact on each other. **Evaluation:** At times balancing the two roles was exhausting, I felt like two different people. Working within professional football was exciting and demanding and required me to be able to adapt to this environment. Whereas the exercise psychology role was a lot more mundane and slow-paced, I couldn't act how I do in the football environment in a health care setting. The constant change to match the appropriate social context was, at times, very tiring. Despite this, the positive effect this had on my development certainly outweighed the negative. For example, my role within the health care

		setting required me to focus on developing patience, developed around building relationships and trust. This was directly applicable to my positions in sport, whereby, my focus, especially during 1-2-1 sessions was on taking a counselling based client-led approach. **Analysis:** Reflecting on my hours gained throughout applied practice, I feel the diversity across these hours has had a significant impact on my development as a practitioner. Working across both sport and exercise domains while working with male and female athletes, juniors and seniors, amateurs and professional all presented different challenges which required me to adapt to. Often, this development was transferable to other areas of my practice. For example, developing the ability to communicate complex psychological information to junior athletes allowed me to develop creative ways of delivering to more senior athletes. **Conclusion:** In conclusion, the diversity of my practice had a positive impact on my development as a practitioner, primarily through the development of transferable skills in different scenarios. I feel comfortable operating within both sport and exercise-related environments and

		recognise the value that taking a holistic approach to my training has had on my overall development. **Action Plan:** Despite my current role (lecturing) affording less opportunity to engage in consultancy work, I will ensure I continue to develop holistically as a sport and exercise psychologist and where applicable operate within both domains. At their core, both roles are about supporting people through change.

Reflection Sheet 3 (Learning Outcome 3) – Research Communication and Dissemination

Date	Summary of Activity	Reflection
27/09/17	Research interview for junior-senior transition.	**Description:** During one of the interviews for empirical paper 1, an athlete talked about a particularly difficult time during their life when making the transition. She had highlighted how she struggled to make the transition at a young age. In particular, moving countries, being away from her family, having to attend university full-time and being a ‘loner’. While she did not display visible physical characteristics of being distressed, I could undoubtedly sense this was a difficult period in her life, and there was some pain when reflecting on this. **Feelings:** Initially, I felt a great sense of panic as I recognised this was a difficult period for her to discuss. I thought “I hope she doesn’t break down and cry, that would look so bad if the manager walked passed and saw her crying during one of my interviews”. I was filled was so much dread I found myself not really focussing on what was being said, but rather my attention turned inward towards my

		awkwardness. I could not wait to ask the next question and try to move away from feeling awkward. **Evaluation:** I think I did well to mask my feelings of panic; I managed to keep a confident outward appearance, politely nodding as she answered the question. However, internally I was crumbling, looking for any sign that she might start to become visibly (to me and any passers-by) upset. When I began to recognise that she was becoming upset, I did not react – positively or negatively. Instead, I just counted down the seconds until I could move on and try to shift her attention from this challenging moment. It felt wrong that I did not address this issue, I found myself thinking afterwards should I have paused the recording and checked to see if she was okay to carry on? While I can see value in this experience, as it allowed me to react to an unexpected, uncomfortable situation, I did not address what troubled her – I simply carried on as if nothing had happened. **Analysis:** Her reaction to this question was something I had not anticipated, and as it was a research interview rather than consultancy, I felt a little underprepared in terms of dealing with what I perceived to be an awkward subject for her to discuss. I think my initial reaction of panic

		(albeit internally) stemmed from a fear of outsiders seeing her in distress and me being questioned as to why this was. I did not want the research to be in jeopardy – if the senior management thought I was doing some harm, they might have pulled the plug, and all my hard work would've been to no avail. I was confident that the research was not harming the participants, and I was able to support participants following their interviews. Reflecting on this reaction, I recognise it as I was somewhat selfish. I initially focused on how I felt and how the outcomes may affect me. Instead, I should have focused more on how she felt and ensured she was comfortable to continue. **Conclusion:** To conclude, I now feel I am better prepared to support participants should anything unexpected occur during data collection. This experience has taught me to be prepared and to have a plan of action regarding future interviews. **Action plan:** To further develop as a researcher, ensuring I am comfortable stopping an interview should a participant become distressed to confirm they are happy to continue. Similarly, preparing for unexpected encounters during interviews and ensuring I have a plan to deal with it. The

		plan should involve stopping the interview, checking the participant is happy to continue. If they are not, offer support to the participant and signpost to any relevant services.
30/01/18	Focusing on research at the start of the professional doctorate.	**Description:** At the start of the doctorate, I was in a comfortable position in terms of applied hours. I had a stable placement, at a professional female football club, which informed the inspiration for empirical paper 1. Based on the applied work I was conducting, I had identified a gap in the literature in terms of the junior to senior transition in women's football. Therefore, I wanted to prioritise getting my first empirical paper started. Previously, research has suggested trainee practitioners tend to focus on consultancy rather than research during the initial stages (Collins & McCann, 2015). **Feelings:** Initially, I felt quite confident about conducting my first empirical paper. I had progressed throughout my masters only the year prior, so I was still confident in my ability to engage in the research process. Similarly, being enrolled onto a professional doctorate meant I was part of an educational institute and as such had access to journals

		and academic books. I initially felt that the empirical papers would be more challenging to complete that the applied case studies, and as such, prioritised them while I was in a position whereby I could do so. **Evaluation:** I felt my decision to prioritise the empirical paper first was justified. My position within my placement put me in an ideal environment to conduct practitioner-based research and allowed me access to elite level athletes – a difficultly many researchers face. However, there were some difficulties to overcome, in particular, managing my role as both a practitioner and researcher. Ensuring I balanced my roles was crucial, and while I felt I did so to a reasonable standard, there was on occasion a little friction with the 1st team manager regarding focusing on my research over my role as a practitioner. **Analysis:** In terms of making sense of this experience, I recognised that I prioritised what I viewed as an important and while I was in a strong position to conduct research. I felt by doing so this ensured I was able to conduct quality data from elite level athletes. I prioritised my researcher role over my role as a practitioner, as is highlighted in my reflections below. This was primarily in response to my

		view regarding what I valued as most important and to some extent, self-serving at that time. **Conclusions:** Concluding from this experience, I felt my decision to focus on my empirical paper rather than case studies was justified. **Action Plan:** In terms of future development, ensuring I better manage my dual role position as a practitioner-researcher will ensure my continued progress.
02/02/18	Adopting the role of practitioner-researcher	**Description:** For empirical paper one, as I was working as an intern sport psychologist within the organisation, I was required to consider the impact my researcher role would have on my role as a practitioner. Naturally, my role within the organisation changed from practitioner to that of practitioner-researcher. For example, how would I be perceived by the players and coaching staff? How would I manage the two roles independently? How would the positions interfere with one another? My leading cause for concern was how the players would perceive me. I wanted to avoid confusion regarding my roles. I did this primarily by stating that only during formalised

		interviews would I be adopting the position of researcher, the remainder of the time, I would be the practitioner. **Feelings:** I found managing multiple roles to result in a mixture of emotions. Firstly, I found it quite enjoyable; I was able to conduct research and use the results to facilitate my ability to deliver interventions to many of the athletes I was supporting. However, my managing of the roles at times could have been better. For example, at times, I prioritised research over consultancy, which on one occasion caused some minor controversy with the coaching team. Judkins-Cohn et al. (2014) had suggested that failing to maintain a balance between practice and research can potentially lead to conflict and tension. During this period, I did feel awkward around the coaching team. They were right. I had dedicated more time to my research and less time to my practitioner role. Which was the role I was employed to do; the study was a benefit of this role. I found the players did not notice any significant differences, however. I do not feel they were unable to distinguish between my two-roles, which is something I was anxious about before starting the research. **Evaluation:**

		Initially, I thought it to be of no significance focusing on the research element and having that finished, whereby I could then return to my role as a practitioner. However, it was clear to me after that I would need to find a much better balance between the two positions for future research. However, I did find the experience beneficial to my development as a practitioner. The research I was gathering was then being used to inform my practice. Thus, I had gone full circle, from practice informing my research to the results from this research informing my practice. **Analysis:** My shift in focus from that of a practitioner to the researcher was primarily underpinned by a desire to get my first piece of work finished. I opted to take an almost selfish standpoint, focusing on my needs rather than that of the organisation. I was employed as an intern, so was not paid for the services I was offering. Therefore, I felt, I could justify focusing more on my research. While the issue was not a big one, the manager simply commented that I had been focusing a lot on my research, there was an undertone of annoyance. This did cause me to reflect and better manage the two roles – I did not want to upset the manager (the person who had brought me in). Doing

		so could have potentially meant my position within the club was in jeopardy. **Conclusions:** I have learnt from this experience to manage my roles as a practitioner-researcher better when researching within an organisation. By doing so, I am less likely to cause conflict and tension with the coaching staff (Judkins-Cohn et al., 2014). I have also found great value in adopting these dual roles. In particular, to deliver evidence-based practice and design research that will have an applied impact. **Action Plan:** To ensure future development as a researcher, I would find a better balance between the two roles. At the start of the research process, I would set boundaries with the coach regarding when they would be happy for me to conduct research and when they would rather me focus on my applied work. By doing so, I should avoid creating unnecessary tension and conflict.
01/03/18	Development as a practitioner-researcher	**Description:** With empirical paper 1, before starting the research, I was employed as the intern 1st team sport psychologist for a professional female football team. I had been in this position for several months, the majority of my work

		involved supporting the younger athletes through their transition into the first team. For example, managing the extra demands etc. Naturally, to facilitate the development of my interventions, I turned to the literature to look for guidance. While I found some useful papers (e.g., Morris, Tod & Eubank, 2016), I still felt there were significant gaps in the literature and therefore, my knowledge. For example, the majority of transition research in football was focused on men's football. While there are no doubt similarities between the two, there are also some significant differences. For example, female youth footballers are often part-time, training twice per week, whereas senior female footballers are full-time training 5-6 times per week. Equally, female footballers often balance full-time A-levels or University alongside their professional career, a phenomenon less frequent in football. Therefore, upon recognising a gap within the literature, I decided to focus my first research on this area. Gathering information for my research, interviewing participants and consistent with the role of practitioner-researcher further understanding the participants' social world (McLeod, 1999) allowed me to understand further the demands faced by athletes transitioning into a 1st team female football club. Given this formed the majority of

		my applied work, I found this to impact on my practitioner abilities positively. **Feelings:** Initially, turning to the literature to further provide support to the athletes I found quite frustrating. I managed to find some literature that was helpful when designing interventions, but I still felt I lacked enough knowledge to design a thorough research-informed intervention. While I could turn to literature away from football to help me understand the challenges of dual-career athletes, I still felt this did not reflect what was being discussed in the consultancy room. After engaging the research, I felt much more confident and competent in myself as a practitioner. I was able to use my findings to inform my practice. As a result, I noticed improvements in the effectiveness of consultancy sessions. **Evaluation:** Researching within the organisation was a positive experience. I found that by understanding the unique experiences of the athletes I was supporting, I was better able to design interventions to match their needs. For example, recognising athletes were managing multiple transitions (e.g. youth to senior, part-time to full-time, college to university) to name but at a few, I was able to offer a more holistic intervention to some of the athletes.

		Previously, the interventions were focusing on the youth to senior transition and the challenges associated with that (e.g. pressure, increased demands). I also hope that the findings from this paper will further support other practitioners working in a similar field. **Analysis:** This was the first occasion that I have conducted practitioner-research, and I felt that by doing so, I developed as both a practitioner and researcher. I felt as if I had gone full circle, to begin with, my practice informed the design of my research question. The results of this research then informed my practice and enhanced my development as a practitioner. **Conclusions:** To conclude, the experience of practice informing research and then research informing my practice was beneficial to both my development as a practitioner and as a researcher. My ability to design effective interventions was improved as a result of my research. Similarly, my ability to create and conduct research was enhanced because of my practice. Overall, this was a positive experience. **Action Plan:** To ensure continued development, I will look to further take on practitioner-researcher roles in the future. I found

		this experience significantly enhanced my development across both roles, and as such, hope future research will also result in the same outcome.
05/05/18	Research Philosophy Empirical 1	**Description:** Throughout this paper, I adopted an interpretivist paradigm, whereby I could inquire into participants experiences and their understanding of these experiences (Bryman, 2012). This approach allowed me to understand female footballer's social worlds subjectively. **Feelings:** This paradigm is one that I had adopted in previous work such as undergraduate and master's thesis' therefore felt comfortable taking this position. I found being able to develop meaningful relationships with the participant as liberating. Entering their social world and exploring their experiences was a privilege. However, upon analysis of the data, I found myself doubting the subjective element. How do I know what I am identifying is right? I doubted my ability to identify interesting and pertinent themes. While there are methods to enhance the trustworthiness and reliability of the data, such as member checking and using a critical friend, I felt fraudulent. I doubted my ability to produce high-quality data at times. **Evaluation:**

		There were both positives and negatives to adopting this approach. Firstly, I felt congruent gathering the data, and thoroughly enjoyed the relationships I developed with the participants. Particularly, being able to enter their social world and co-operatively explore their experiences and understanding of their experiences. However, the sensation of being fraudulent when analysing the data was apparent throughout. I doubted myself when creating themes – did they represent the participants' experiences? The subject element of analysing the data caused a lot of anxiety and doubt in my ability as a researcher. **Analysis:** Concerning the positive elements of this approach, such as developing relationships and exploring participants experiences this closely linked to my practitioner philosophy. With this philosophy, I value the importance of the relationship with the client and seek to develop it while placing the client at the centre of the process. Much like with the interpretivist approach that places the participant at the centre of the research. This could potentially explain why I felt congruent during the data collection phase. However, I felt the feelings of being a fraud stemmed from how this approach is perceived to be less ‘scientific’. What if ‘experts’ didn’t like my research – should I have opted to do a more objective approach

		wee examples of some of the thoughts I was experiencing. Maybe, adopting a different philosophical position in the future will allow me to make more explicit comparisons between my experiences. **Conclusion:** To conclude, this approach is one I felt congruent with and one that I enjoyed. Despite feeling fraudulent at times, I thought I was able to congruently and effectively achieve my research aims. **Action Plan:** In terms of future development, whilst I felt this approach allowed me to explore and understand the participants' subjective experiences, I would be interested in adopting other philosophical positions (e.g. post-positivism) to further my development. I feel taking alternative views will allow me to gain an appreciation for conducting research using alternative positions.
15/05/19	Preparing a paper for a Journal	**Description:** Having finished my systematic review and submitting it to my portfolio, I opted to prepare to submit this paper to a journal. Following consultation with my supervisors and research team, we chose to submit it to the Psychology of Sport and Exercise Journal. There were a few changes to make from the original paper prior to

		submission to the journal article. After making these changes, and following the guidelines proposed by the journal, I had formally submitted the paper. **Feelings:** I was so relieved to have finally sent this paper to a journal. It was 12-months in the making, then another 3-weeks making minor changes to prepare it for the journal. I felt a great sense of pride and accomplishment – this was the first piece of work for the professional doctorate that I was submitting to a journal. I could not wait to receive the result. I was optimistic; after all, I had spent 12-months working on the research! Surely, they had to accept it. At no stage did I think this paper would not be accepted, my supervisor had passed it, researchers that had supported me through it had all highlighted the merits of the paper. For me, it felt like a case of when it would be published not if. **Evaluation:** Preparing the paper was a lot more work than I had initially anticipated. In my naivety, I simply thought it would be a case of submitting the same document that I had submitted as part of my professional doctorate. This resulted in me falling behind my schedule for completing other work. However, I had done it. I had successfully submitted a piece of work to be reviewed in a peer-

		review journal. 6-months ago, I would not have had any idea what the process involved, and now I had gone through the process. **Analysis:** The process took longer than I had initially expected, primarily due to my lack of experience publishing. I was not aware of all the documents that would be required, the amendments I would have to make. Regarding my excitement towards publishing and submitting to a journal, this was the process of 12-months of work. Having dedicated so much time and effort to this paper – to finally have the potential to have something substantial result from this was a rewarding feeling. Despite being advised it is unlikely to get published on the first occasion and that PSE is a highly competitive journal. I was still excited – arguably, the ignorance of being a neophyte. **Conclusions:** Firstly, I now better understand the process of preparing a paper for a journal. As such, recognising that this is a time-consuming process, so preparing to dedicate more time to this is something I have learned from this experience. Rather than expecting it to be a case of uploading a single file! **Action Plan:**

		To ensure further development as a researcher, dedicating more time to preparing a paper for submission is paramount. This will prevent further delays and allow me to devote more time to ensuring a high-quality submission to a journal.
10/08/19	Review rejection	**Description:** Following the submission of my systematic review to PSE, I had an anxious wait for a few months. While I was initially optimistic, to begin with, as the weeks went on, I slowly began to become more anxious. I eventually received the email I had been waiting for; unfortunately, it was the one I had been dreading. I saw the subject heading titled ‘decision on manuscript – rejected.’ The reviewer’s comments were lengthy, a few pages of feedback that I had to sieve through, all ‘constructively’ critiquing 12-month of work. I forwarded the email to the co-authors, to which they responded positively. Despite being disappointed, they suggested it was a positive review despite the rejection. **Feelings:** My initial response to the rejection was devastation and embarrassment. I felt like a failure. I engaged in a period of self-doubt, anger at the response and denial regarding the reviewer’s feedback. Reading through the feedback, I

		found myself becoming tenser, and I couldn’t finish reading them in one sitting I was growing angry. After a few days, the anger seemed to dissipate, and I started to see more of the constructive elements to the feedback from the reviewers. I began to see areas that the review could’ve been improved and looked at the comments not positively, but with a more definite sense of understanding. After a few weeks, my initial, youthful optimism returned, I could start visioning how the comments will make the paper better, how it would look, and I was excited to try and get it published somewhere else again. **Evaluation:** This experience initially was a real confidence blow. I felt this was a substantial piece of work, one I had dedicated a lot of time and effort to designing. Therefore, to be rejected impacted the belief I had in myself to be successful. I did initially find myself thinking is this even worth it? Will I ever be good enough if this wasn’t good enough? The truth was, there were indeed elements of the paper that needed improvement, but I could not see them initially. I was blinded by my excitement and naïve optimism. However, after the initial bitter taste of disappointment, I could see the paper for what it was and the reviewer’s comments in the context for which they

		were designed to be given. The paper had potential but needed work. The reviewer’s comments were not ‘digs’ but reflected an expert’s opinion on how to improve the paper. However, the sting of rejection was still quite prominent. **Analysis:** In terms of making sense of this experience, I feel the stages I went through closely reflect those highlighted within Kubler-Ross’ grief model (1973). For example, within their model, they suggest an individual goes through 5 stages when dealing with grief 1. Denial, 2. Anger, 3. Bargaining, 4. Depression, and 5. Acceptance. Within the context of this experience, I initially was overcome with feelings of denial “this can’t be right, there must be a mistake” quickly followed by anger when reading through the comments. Bargaining was perhaps less prevalent, but depression was experienced in terms of loss of confidence and motivation to continue. Finally, I arrive at acceptance, whereby I could view the feedback as constructive. Similarly, Woolley and Barron (2009) how for early career researchers, manuscript rejection is a painful process. However, many manuscripts still go on to get published after a process of improvement. **Conclusions:**

		Learning from this experience, I now recognise that rejection is part of the research process. While I imagine this will always ‘hurt’, I envisage myself progressing through the stages of grief much more quickly with experience. The anger and disappointment at a rejection will remain, but my ability to use the feedback constructively will improve. My much more experienced co-authors barely reacted to the disappointing news after all. **Action Plan:** For future development, initially having more pragmatic and realistic expectations towards the outcome of my paper will lessen the sting of future rejections. Similarly, using the feedback from reviewers to ensure my continued progression as a researcher, both for the paper it refers to and more generally to my research as a whole.
02/09/19	Researcher Philosophy Empirical Paper 2	**Description:** For empirical paper 2, I wanted to show a progression in my ability as a researcher. Similarly, I wanted to adopt an alternative philosophical position to what I had used in the past and felt more comfortable using (i.e. interpretivist). I felt by doing so it would allow me to develop as a researcher. With this paper, I took a post-positivist position. This position recognises there is an

		external reality but acknowledges this can only be understood in a limited way (Alasuutari et al., 2008). With this approach, I was able to apply methods of the natural sciences using a quantitative and more ‘scientific’ approach to study social reality (Bryman, 2016). **Feelings:** Compared to empirical paper 1, I felt much less congruent with this approach and enjoyed the process a lot less. I found the process of analysing the data quite tedious – counting verbalisations and then making comparisons between conditions. I felt much less congruent adopting a quantitative methodology underpinned by a post-positivist paradigm **Evaluation:** I felt taking this approach did allow me to develop as a researcher. I enhanced my competence in adopting alternative philosophical positions while also adding to my research skill set. For example, improving my ability to adopt quantitative research methods. However, I could not help feeling throughout the process a sense of incongruence. The post-positivist position did not align with my personal beliefs. I believe that reality is subjective and that to understand a participant’s experience, you must explore their reality and how they make sense of their experiences. So, for me, it is about

		interpreting how a participant understands their lived experience. Therefore, I feel to feel congruent in future research, when appropriate, remaining true to my beliefs and adopting a philosophy that aligns with them (i.e. interpretivist). **Analysis:** For this paper, I adopted a Think-Aloud methodology – I feel my decision to take a post-positivist position was influenced by contemporary research using this approach. Therefore, I was more comfortable following the trend than following what I felt most comfortable doing. However, I still saw value in this method, and I felt the data was significant and does advance the field. Instead, I think I could have achieved the same outcome while being congruent with the position I took. Despite this, I still feel with future research, I could adopt this position again, but rather for the right project. **Conclusions:** Concluding, I feel focusing more on remaining congruent to my beliefs and aligning research designs with these beliefs. That is not to say avoiding a post-positivist position, but rather designing this research so that it better matches my beliefs and values regarding how research should be conducted. **Action Plan:**

		In terms of moving forward, I will continue to reflect on my research – further clarifying my beliefs and values towards obtaining and understanding knowledge. By doing so, this will also allow me to develop research that better matches these beliefs and ensures congruence throughout the research process.

Reflection Sheet 4 (Learning Outcome 4) – CPD & Dissemination

Date	Summary of Activity	Reflection
01/11/17	Reflecting on the first six months of Professional Doctorate taught session and how they influenced my development.	**Description:** Reflecting on practice is an effective way to increase the understanding and effectiveness of how one works (Woodcock, Richards & Mugford, 2008). Professional doctorate sessions involve a day, once a month, where the cohort meet up and discuss a theme that has been predetermined. Naturally, these sessions often require a lot of participant engagement, and members of the group share experiences or thoughts related to the topic and learning takes place. The sessions could be defined as informal group reflective practice, whereby, the group shares experiences in the presence of students who are at a similar career stage, often under the supervision of a senior practitioner who facilitates the session. I have found these sessions invaluable for my development as a psychologist. Both in terms of understanding some of the negative thoughts and feelings I have experienced in the first six months and learning new and creative ways to work in the field. **Feelings:**

		Initially, I hated the idea of sharing experiences as part of a group, the first few sessions I couldn’t help but think if this type of learning was for me. Reflecting on how I felt initially, I was overcome with self-doubt, would I be as knowledgeable as the others in the group? Do I possess the insight to contribute? These were questions I often pondered, and out of fear of looking and feeling stupid, I tried to keep my engagement as minimal as possible. However, after the first few initial weeks had passed, I realised that other members of the group felt nearly the same way. Worried, they weren’t ready or didn’t have enough knowledge or experience. I eventually began feeling comfortable sharing my experiences, both good and bad and in particular sharing my feelings, both during the formal taught sessions and during breaks over a coffee more informally. **Evaluation:** At the start, I very rarely engaged in group discussions, as of result of firstly, not naturally being somebody comfortable speaking and taking on workload, at times I know I can be a social loafer. I am quite happy for others to take on the workload, but secondly out of this fear of looking and feeling stupid. Even when, at times, I thought I had good points to make or relevant experiences to share, I could not quite force myself to engage in any meaningful

		level. I do reflect on this with regret and feel I missed out on many potential learning opportunities. However, as the weeks went by, having conversations with group members and listening to them share feelings that I was experiencing, I found quite a liberating experience — my development following this, particularly concerning my self-awareness, moral, and personal growth. Previous research investigating group supervision experiences provide support to this experience; for example, Branch (2010) suggested group based reflective practice allowed students to become more compassionate and self-aware. **Analysis:** ‘Reflecting alone can be limited by our own knowledge’ (Copley et al., 2011. p.17). This statement resonates with me, as reflecting as part of the group I feel I have developed more than I ever would by merely writing about my experiences in a reflective diary — trying to make sense of why I initially felt so anxious to contribute to discussions and felt so out of place is difficult. Reviewing the literature, there is some support to the notion that family upbringing can be a contributing factor when experiencing imposter syndrome. Harvy and Katz (1985) linked imposter syndrome behaviours in individuals who come from families where they have exceeded expectations regarding success in educational goals. While

		I come from a primarily traditional, middle-class upbringing, none of my parents studied at University. I am the eldest sibling, so I was the first to attend University, and nobody in my family studied at level 7 or level 8. So, potentially, there is an argument that I felt out of my depth because nobody I know closely has ever reached the levels I have, and I doubt my ability to reach the standard required. While this may be a potential reason, I do feel like there is more to why I experienced imposter syndrome. However, I was relieved to see this is a typical experience and that my classmates were all experiencing these same self-doubts. **Conclusion:** To conclude, I have learned from this experience that despite often feeling like you are the only person to feel a certain way, it is often likely many people are experiencing almost identical feelings. Following on from this, I think reflective group practice has been an essential part of my development to date. This process has helped to alleviate my anxieties and grow both as an academic, practitioner and a person. **Action Plan:** To ensure my continued development, I am going to try to ensure that in situations where I may be suffering from self-doubt, to feel still confident enough to share my

		thoughts or experiences. It is likely I will not be the only person experiencing such feelings, and sharing my experiences will further allow me to develop.
09/12/17	Promoting change in adults	**Description:** As part of my role as a wellbeing facilitator, I was required to deliver sessions on a variety of topics to groups of individuals at risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. I am 23 years old, and the groups primarily consist of elderly retirees. This was a challenging experience, being significantly younger than the members of the groups, trying to educate them on the right and wrong caused me distress. My role requires me to deliver educational workshops to promote positive behaviour change. These sessions included topics such as nutrition, exercise, mental wellbeing, and issues of a similar nature. I delivered these sessions from a traditional lecturing position, whereby I authoritatively presented information, with the learners required to apply and reproduce the information (Girgin & Stevens, 2005). **Feelings:** After being informed, I would be required to promote behaviour change in adults significantly older than myself. I was quite anxious. I did not want to come across condescending during sessions, which I feared I would do.

		Similarly, I felt it would be challenging also due to the fact I was promoting change in people who have a lifetime of habits to reverse. For example, somebody who has lived a sedentary lifestyle for decades, how was I to motivate and promote change, so they now become more physically active? In terms of my delivery style, I felt so incongruent with how I wanted to deliver. I envision myself delivering, engaging, interactive, discussed based sessions, with the learner at the focus of the learning process. Instead, the first few weeks of delivery, I was the complete opposite, I set a few tasks. Still, primarily it was me delivering a lot of information and expecting them to listen for 60-90 minutes. I felt like a fraud, like I didn't deserve to be there, or didn't have the knowledge to deliver effectively. I also received little feedback on my approach to delivery. Therefore, I did not know if I was useful. I just knew I was not congruent; how I felt I should deliver and how I delivered were opposites. **Evaluation:** I found the sessions to be dull, uninspiring and based on my post-session notes, ineffective. Because I was delivering a traditional lecturing approach, but to a small group of people (10). The environment was probably best suited to interactive sessions such as a workshop, rather than a traditional lecture. Similarly, the clientele also

		would’ve benefitted from more interactive sessions, and nobody wants to voluntary sit through a lecture on what to eat and what not to eat. Despite my beliefs regarding how knowledge should be disseminated (e.g., co-constructed with the learner at the centre of the process), I was not delivering this way. Instead, I delivered with the view I was the expert, which, resulted in me feeling incongruent and arguably explained why I felt the sessions were ineffective at achieving their outcomes. **Analysis:** Trying to make sense of why I delivered incongruently to my beliefs, I felt the anxiety I initially experienced regarding delivering to the group resulted in me reverting to an approach I felt more comfortable delivering. With this being my first real experience of group-based delivery, I was naturally nervous, coupled with the anxiety towards delivering to a group much older than myself around potentially sensitive topics that resulted in me turning to what I knew. Most of my education has been provided in lecture rooms of 150 people, with the information presented, and I was required to apply and reproduce. Therefore, I tended to remain in my comfort zone when feeling uncomfortable. **Conclusion:**

		To conclude, it is apparent to me that when, as a result of feeling anxious, I reverted to what I felt comfortable with, which was what I had primarily experienced as a student. This approach to delivery resulted in me feeling incongruent and also ineffective. I recognise now that it is vital to place your anxieties aside and remain congruent with your beliefs and values regarding knowledge. By reflecting on this experience, it will allow me to clarify my philosophical position and develop my approach to dissemination. Similarly, this reflection has allowed me to change my approach and deliver more congruent and compelling sessions to the groups. **Action Plan:** To deliver more engaging and interactive sessions that places the learner at the centre of the process. Providing a learner-focused session (Postareff & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2008) will also be more consistent with my beliefs about how knowledge should be disseminated and, therefore, ensures I remain congruent to my philosophical beliefs.
20/12/17	Reflections of BPS DSEP annual conference Glasgow.	**Description:** The BPS DSEP conference at Glasgow was my first conference as a trainee sport and exercise psychologist. This conference presented an ideal opportunity for me to witness some of the latest contemporary research within this field. I found myself reflecting on much of my

		consultancy work following this conference. I chose to attend sessions primarily focusing on mental health in sport and the role we as sport psychologists have in supporting athletes who are presenting with mental health issues. Before the conference, I firmly believed that mental health issues, severe mental health issues, were something a sport psychologist had no business in dealing with. I believed it was our ethical responsibility to refer immediately to a clinical psychologist as soon as we suspect there may be mental health issues at play. However, it was during a workshop, where a discussion took place with a more senior sport psychologist who suggested, are we not best placed to support athletes with mental health issues? At least as much as a clinical psychologist. It was recommended that given we understand the culture, and challenges associated with the sport, we may possess the best knowledge to support an athlete, for example, an athlete suffering a crisis transition as a result of transitioning into the first team. **Feelings:** I found myself quite conflicted. On the one hand, I felt, do we have the right training to manage mental health issues? And on the other hand, would I be doing an athlete a disservice by merely referring them to a clinical psychologist who may not understand the unique

		environment that is sport. From a BPS and HCPC perspective, I would never want to expose a client to something that would potentially worsen their mental health symptoms, but equally, would I be doing so by referring them on and not attempting to support them myself? I experienced a mixture of emotions following this session, frustration, and joy mostly. Frustration that I couldn’t figure out where exactly I stood on this issue and satisfaction because I knew I was developing, I was challenging previously held beliefs and was at least trying, to create new ones. **Evaluation:** Before the workshop at this conference, I felt confident in my ability to manage a situation whereby an athlete was presenting mental health issues. I would speak with supervisors, other relevant senior figures and refer to a clinical psychologist. However, this workshop made me question this process, is this the best solution? Do I possess the skills to help an athlete with mental health issues? What do I need to develop if I don’t? While I still don’t feel I have all the answers, my approach has undoubtedly changed. I would feel more strongly in working alongside clinical psychologists and providing a more holistic service. However, potential challenges arise with regards to funding, not every organisation or athlete will have the

		ability to work with both sport and clinical psychologists, so in situations such as this, I will need to develop an appropriate philosophy. Regardless, I am happy I attended this workshop as the opportunity to engage in these discussions with leading practitioners and challenge my position ensures that my practice continually develops. **Analysis:** What I have gathered from this experience is that my philosophy of practice will continually develop and that as a trainee, I have to accept and be comfortable with my philosophy of practice, changing over time and the anxiety that often accompanies this. Cropley et al. (2007) suggested that reflections can often create more questions than answers. This is a finding that at this moment in time resonates with me. I am finding myself asking more questions and equally, lacking confidence and clarity regarding finding any answers. However, this research did further suggest, such reflections should be accompanied by support from supervisors, and as such, at my next supervisor meeting, I will bring this topic up. **Conclusion:** To conclude, while I feel it is probably typical for trainees at this stage of development to be confused about what the right course of action is, I can’t help but feel frustrated that I don’t possess the required knowledge. At the same time,

		I am feeling strangely satisfied, particularly in relation to being challenged to review my practice. **Action Plan:** My action plan is to primarily follow this up with my supervisor and begin to discuss the role of a sport psychologist in providing mental health support. Similarly, I will bring this to the table at the next professional doctorate meeting to engage in some group based reflective practice to facilitate me in developing a solution. Research has suggested that group-based reflective practice is a useful tool for the development of trainee sports psychologists (Huntley & Kentzer, 2013).
20/03/18	A pedagogical approach to delivering to academy football coaches.	**Description:** I had been asked to deliver a series of workshops to academy football coaches throughout the season. In particular, the academy director had requested a block period of 5 workshops delivered over four weeks. The sessions were provided to all of the academy coaches and were designed to educate coaches on psychological principles, to enhance their coaching skills. Three learning outcomes were intended, these were coaches should; 1) Have a clearer understanding of the psychological tenets underpinning sport; 2) Be able to apply relevant psychological principles to training sessions, and 3) Understand the challenges players may

		experience when transitioning through phases and how best to support them. I adopted a learning-focused approach which aims for the application of knowledge and development of critical thinking (Postareff &Lindblo-Ylanne, 2008). Given the audience, I did not want to overload my sessions with PowerPoint slides. Instead, I delivered interactive and discussion-based sessions. Instead, I wanted learners to actively contribute to their experiences. Given the room was full of high-level expert coaches, recognizing the level of expertise in the room and allowing learners to reflect on their coaching practice was a vital part of the sessions (Kaufman, 2003). **Feelings:** I was excited about delivering to the coaching staff, I had been in the position a few months and so had a good relationship with some of the coaching staff. However, others I had not developed this relationship with and as such was slightly more apprehensive towards delivering to this group. I also recognised that not all the coaches would be interested in these sessions; they would simply be in the room because they had been told to do so. While frustrated by this, this is just life, especially in elite sport. During the sessions, aside from the initial nervousness I typically experience at the start of the sessions, I found

		the sessions enjoyable. I was anxious the coaches would not be engaged, but on the contrary, they were fully engaged and interactive during the session. This greatly relieved my anxieties, and I felt I delivered a lot more freely. Similarly, by providing learning-focused sessions, I was able to remain congruent with my beliefs. **Evaluation:** I felt the sessions were successful at meeting the programme learning outcomes. This was based on coaches’ evaluation forms, where they were required to rate the programme 1-5 and then provide qualitative feedback. Some coaches also attended a focus group session to give more feedback to ensure the development of the programme. The feedback was mostly positive, with comments reflecting how they enjoyed the interactive and engaging nature of sessions. This was pleasing to hear as I had dedicated a significant amount of time to developing these sessions. However, one area that was highlighted for an area for development was making some sessions more practical based. Coaches work on the field, so delivering sessions in this environment may prove fruitful in terms of furthering understanding of topics. Similarly, a coach highlighted handouts summarizing key points from the session would

		have been useful to supplement discussions during sessions. **Analysis:** I felt the sessions were primarily successfully at meeting the programme aims. I felt this success was mostly due to the learner-focused approach, which I adopted throughout the programme. In particular, coach feedback suggested the resilience session was most useful as it was most directly related to their coaching practice. By appreciating their level of expertise and using this to facilitate session content, they were central to the learning process. It was also interesting to see how coaches felt more practical based sessions would benefit them and supplementing sessions with handouts. As previously suggested, this could be due to the practical nature of their roles. **Conclusion:** To conclude, it appears placing the student (coach) at the centre of the learning process benefited the success of the service. Many reported initially seeing the programme as a tick box exercise but by the end reported benefitting from it. Feedback from the learners will also be used to further develop the programme both within this organisation and future organizations. **Action Plan:**

		Future sessions could look to embed more practical elements, to reflect better the coaching environment, these changes follow feedback from coaches. Similarly, providing handouts of key points to supplement the information from sessions may help to reinforce understanding further.
10/10/18	Reflecting on the first week of Lecturing alongside full-time professional doctorate.	**Description:** After landing a role lecturing at a University Centre over the summer of 2018, September presented the first month I would be formally teaching. Previously, I had only experience of guest lectures, and therefore, this represented my first role as an employed lecturer. My first few months in the position were relatively quiet as there were no regular teaching hours, this presented an ideal opportunity for me to adequately prepare for the semester ahead and 'find my feet' within this role. I was employed to teach three days a week, and I combined this with consultancy work and a full-time professional doctorate. My first week involved me delivering two hours of lectures, two hours of seminars and two hours of practical sessions. The majority of my hours this semester were as a module leader on the level 6 Applied Sport, Exercise and Health Psychology module. My aim for the first week was to introduce the module and begin to form

		a relationship with the students. I had been informed that this cohort had been discontent with the previous module leader and as a result, were anxious about the psychology module. I, therefore, made it a priority in this session to try and alleviate any anxieties the group had about the upcoming semester. **Feelings:** Initially I felt a wide variety of emotions. Excited to finally start teaching after months of waiting, anxious about making a good impression and being perceived as knowledgeable. Finally, stressed at having to manage the multiple demands that I had placed on myself and what was being placed on me organisationally. Research has suggested neophyte practitioners are more susceptible to organisational stress compared to their more senior counterparts (Kinman, 2001). As mentioned, I also placed a lot of pressure on myself to succeed. I desperately wanted to be effective and importantly be seen as useful (e.g. disseminating information, students engaging, students performing academically, etc.). As a result of my desires to be successful, I felt I placed extra, unnecessary stress on myself. Stoeber and Rennert (2008) suggested perfectionism can result in increased levels of perceived stress in some teachers. **Evaluation:**

		A positive experience about this situation was I learnt a lot about the ‘educator me’. Much of my time training towards my vocational and academic qualifications, I have understood the ‘practitioner me’ and the ‘researcher me’ with teaching/disseminating often taking a back seat. This role and in particular this first week showed to me that this is something I am passionate about, and most importantly, something I enjoy doing and want to excel in. That being said, I anticipate experience the multitude of stressors (self-imposed and organisationally) over a prolonged period would result in potentially negative consequences (e.g. mental health issues). Research supports this, suggesting that prolonged stress in education often results in teacher burnout (Farber, 1991). **Analysis:** Despite having a few months to plan, this still felt like I was being thrown in at the deep end, I had no previous teacher training experience, and now I was leading a module to level 6 students. Naturally, as previously mentioned, this resulted in me experiencing a cocktail of positive and negative emotions. However, I felt this experience significantly improved my self-confidence. At times, I can be a reserved individual, whereby I am happy to avoid situations that make me feel uncomfortable. Therefore I think I have missed opportunities to learn and

		grow. With this role, there was no hiding, no social loafing, I was tasked with leading and delivering on a level 6 module, and therefore, I had to deliver. Approaching this challenge head-on and embracing the challenges that came with it I felt resulted in rapid development in both my ability to disseminate information but also significantly increased my confidence to do so. **Conclusion:** My conclusion of this experience is that what I felt was fairly ordinary. There were times when I felt isolated, and that I was the only person who felt the way I was feeling. However, speaking with other neophyte academics (e.g. individuals in GTA positions) they had all experienced the same things I had, which was a huge relief. Engagement in contemporary neophyte teacher literature (e.g. Le Maistre & Pare, 2010) also provided a welcomed relief. **Action plan:** For future development, ensuring I am continually engaging in practitioner self-care to manage any potential negative experiences associated with the role. Alongside this, ensuring I continue to engage in reflective practice and share experiences with peers regularly.

05/12/18	BPS DSEP poster presentation	**Description:** I had opted to deliver a poster presentation for the BPS Belfast 2018 annual conference. The poster was based on my first empirical paper – junior to senior transition in female soccer. I was presenting on the first day of the conference in the morning, having arrived via aeroplane that morning. The poster was delivered to a reasonable standard, and this was my first experience of delivering a poster presentation and of delivering at a conference. I was asked a fair amount of questions from attendees and engaged in some thoughtful discussions with fellow practitioners which I enjoyed. **Feelings:** Firstly, I was exhausted, having arrived at the conference on the morning of the first day, I had been up since 3am, travelled to the airport, flown, then arrived at the conference. This feeling of exhaustion heightened nerves before presenting. I had not presented a poster presentation before, so my nerves were fueled by the fear of the unknown. Once I had started, though, this feeling of nervousness quickly turned into feelings of excitement. With attendees asking questions, engaging in discussions, I seemingly felt I was able to ‘handle my own’ which added to my self-efficacy in terms of delivering a poster presentation. Prior to presenting, I doubted my ability to

		answer questions, I feared being asked a question I couldn’t answer. **Evaluation:** I enjoyed this experience; the majority of my anxiety stemmed from the fear of the unknown. For future presentations this won’t be the case, I will know how it works, what is expected etc. However, before delivery, I was not enjoying the conference. Because of my nervousness, I could not focus nor engage with the conference. As a result, I missed critical points during workshops and seminars. I could have also been more prepared, for example, I was not aware there was a competition and I would be asked questions on my poster regarding key research points. Had I known this, I would have better-prepared responses to these questions, rather than answer on the spot. **Analysis:** Nervousness and anxiety towards presenting at a conference for the first time are common. For example, I shared my experience with peers who were also presenting for the first time. They all described similar anxieties. This made me feel a little more at ease with the situation in the sense that I was not the only presenter experiencing these anxieties. **Conclusion:**

		Following speaking with other members at the conference, I was able to conclude that the anxiety associated with presenting was normal for people new to this environment. Despite being a lecturer at the time, so I was comfortable talking to a group, the anxiety associated with not being in control and fear of the unknown led to me feeling uncomfortable. By sharing with others, I was reflecting on these experiences and see them as normal. **Action plan:** In terms of future development, firstly I would ensure I am better prepared to answer questions about my poster, and not just expect generic superficial questions. Secondly, if presenting on the first day, arriving the day before to prevent feelings of exhaustion will allow me to focus more clearly and avoid further feelings of nervousness and anxiety.
28/05/19	Development of a pedagogical approach	**Description:** This reflection presents the development of my pedagogical approach throughout my first year as an academic. I was module leader for a level 6 Sport, Exercise and Health Psychology module and deliver a 2-hour lecture followed by a 1.5-hour seminar (x2 groups). Early in the semester, I found I was primarily offering teacher-centred sessions. Whereby I viewed myself as the

		expert, provided direct instructions and students were mostly passive listeners. As the semester developed and my confidence grew, my approach changed towards a more student-centred approach, for example, learning was more cooperative, with enquiry based learning and students working together to achieve goals. This was particularly true for seminar/workshop sessions. Lectures remained more teacher-centred, primarily due to the number of students making it more challenging to benefit from the advantages of a student-centred approach fully. Still, also, lectures involved covering mainly theoretical content and a teacher-centred approach is useful for providing such information. **Feelings:** I feel the shift in my pedagogical approach from teacher-centred to student-centred, particularly for seminars/workshops reflects the increase in my confidence and decrease in negative emotional states such as anxiety when delivering sessions. I had attended an in-house CPD event for staff which I found insightful. In a group of primarily seasoned academics, I was able to hear their views of on how they deliver sessions and also, how they have developed in their approach. Research has suggested than a useful coping tool for new educators to possess when managing the demands of teaching and to

		evolve as an educator is to invest in professional development opportunities (Manuel, 2003). Naturally, as my confidence developed, I became more comfortable with asking questions to the group and promoting group-based discussions to encourage learning. Initially, I felt more comfortable relying on my ‘expert knowledge’ and slides. This way, I would avoid any potentially uncomfortable silences, and limit the chance for difficult questions. **Evaluation:** I feel that students engaged more and learned more when my approach evolved into a more student-centred approach. By posing questions, opening up problems and presenting real-world scenarios, the students became active learners in the classroom, and not only learnt from the content of the session, but also discussions with each other. Baeten et al. (2010) suggested that a student-centred approach can promote deep approaches to learning in students. This was also reflected in the module evaluation forms. Students provided qualitative feedback such as “*the lessons were engaging”* and “*real-world scenarios helped to facilitate my understanding”.* At times though, I did find myself reverting to more heavy content, for example, I was delivering a session on a topic I did not feel 100% confident to give, and I found

		myself less confident to ask questions and promote discussions. **Analysis:** A question I need to consider is, did the student learning experience improve as the semester developed because 1) my confidence in my ability to teach increased, 2) my pedagogical approach evolved to primarily student-centred learning, or 3) a combination of both. I feel it slightly naïve just to assume that I developed how I teach, and that is why the student learning experience improved. I think that a combination of me feeling more confident in delivering sessions, coupled with an approach that fostered more student engagement was the cause for why both the students and I thought they were grasping key concepts more quickly. Another area to consider though is why when I reverted to a more teacher-centred approach for one session. I think the simple answer is because I felt I did not possess the same level of knowledge as other topics I had taught. Therefore, was more anxious about being asked difficult questions, or not being able to answer a question, or getting something wrong. **Conclusion:** What I can draw from this experience is that, after discussions with more senior academics, it seems

		reasonable for a pedagogical approach to evolve as you become more experienced and comfortable in your academic skin. Reflecting has also allowed me to recognise that despite accepting a student-centred approach promoted a better student learning experience when I feel uncomfortable I am likely to revert to a teacher-direct approach to avoid potential further uncomfortable situations. **Action plan:** In terms of future development, ensuring I am reflecting on my practice will facilitate the evolution of my approach to teaching. Similarly, developing sessions that still promote a more student-centred environment for sessions where I may feel I may be uncomfortable. Thereby preventing moving into my comfort zone of merely delivering rather than teaching and engaging.

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Consultancy Case Study 1

A Reflective Account of Delivering the “Healthier You: National Diabetes Prevention Programme:”

A 12-Month Case Study

This case study presents a reflective account of my experiences delivering the NHS national diabetes prevention programme. While this case study differs slightly from the ‘traditional’ sport and/or exercise psychology case study; delivery of this programme allowed me to develop, implement and maintain personal and professional standards and ethical practice. Similarly, it allowed me to apply models, theories, and knowledge derived from reproducible findings. This case study highlights how I overcome delivering outside of my comfort zone while experiencing high-levels of existential anxiety to develop as a practitioner. Most notably, in my ability to form and develop meaningful relationships with a variety of individuals — the ability to do so later impacted my ability to deliver this programme successfully.

Introduction to the Programme

A recent report published by the National Cardiovascular Intelligence Network (NCVIN) described the prevalence of non-diabetic hyperglycemia in England at 10.7% or approximately 5 million people and outlined that the incidence is higher amongst black and minority ethnic groups, with an onset often at a younger age. The report also highlights how prevalence increased with both age and obesity (Public Health England, 2015). The Healthier You: NHS National Diabetes Prevention Programme (NDPP) was announced in the NHS Five Year Forward View, published in October 2014 (NHS England, 2014). The aim was to become the first country to implement an at large scale evidence-based national diabetes prevention programme. This programme was modelled on scientific models (e.g., models of behaviour change, Prochaska & DiClemente, 1986.) both from within the UK and internationally. The NDPP is a joint initiative between NHS England, Public Health England, and Diabetes UK and targets people already identified as having non-diabetic hyperglycemia, and who are therefore at high risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. These high-risk individuals are offered a 12-month behavioural intervention programme which facilitates them in reducing their risk of developing Type 2 diabetes through weight loss, improved diet, and increased level of physical activity.

The Intervention

The programme is delivered in two stages; firstly service users are referred onto the programme by their GP after being confirmed as suffering from non-diabetic hyperglycemia (Pre-Type 2 Diabetes). This is an HbA1c (or equivalent) score of between 42 and 47, for reference a healthy HbA1c score is considered less than 42. Service users then take part in a one-to-one individual assessment with the practitioner which lasts for 30 minutes and includes taking clinical metrics including HbA1c, weight, height, blood pressure, waist circumference BMI and a wellbeing questionnaire (WEMWBS). Following the completion of the individual assessment service users are then assigned onto the group, which consisted of 13 workshops over 12 months. My role was to deliver the intervention to the group and facilitate the group into making positive lifestyle changes. Firstly, there were seven weekly workshops, each lasting up to 90 minutes. These workshops were educationally based and involved educating and supporting the group around crucial topics related to making positive lifestyle changes (e.g., nutrition, exercise, and mental health). There were then six follow-up review workshops over the remainder of the 12 months to monitor and evaluate the service user progress and ensure lifestyle changes are being maintained. These reviews involved the measurement of clinical metrics and informal conversations regarding the service users' subjective experience of the programme.

The Client

Six service users from the group completed the programme with a 96.7% attendance rate; any individual to miss a session was offered a phone consultation to ensure relevant material was received. The average age of the six participants on the cohort was 70 with one male participant and five female participants, the average HbA1c score on referral from GPs was 45. Reflections on service delivery, service user progress, and evaluations of the effectiveness of the programme are based on the development of the six participants across the

12 months of intervention. Following the initial one-one assessment, the clinical metric averages were a HbA1c of 42, the average weight of the cohort was 79.6 kilograms, average waist circumference was 106.6cm, average blood pressure score was 148/65, and the average WEMWBS score was 59. These scores acted as a baseline measurement and were used as reference points during the programme to determine the progress of the group. Given the clinical metric scores, it was recommended all service users lost 5-10% of their current weight and reduced their waist circumference to increase the likelihood of their HbA1c score returning to the normal range of less than 42.

Practitioner Philosophy

A professional philosophy acts as a driving force for a consultant to offer support and guidance regarding a client's behaviour change (Ravizza, 2002). The intervention delivered was a programme of 13 sessions over 12 months consisting of 9 modules covered across seven weekly sessions followed by six review sessions. Topics are predetermined following guidelines. However, the specific information and how it is delivered is at the discretion of the practitioner leading the sessions. Therefore, the consultant's values, beliefs, and approach influence and underpin how the intervention is delivered. My philosophical approach when working with this group was influenced by both humanistic principles (Rogers, 1951) and to a lesser extent, although still prevalent, principles that underpin cognitive behavioural therapy (Beck, 1995). Humanistic principles highlight the strength in having a greater understanding of the person, the value in adopting a client-centred approach and believes in empowering the individual (Katz & Hemmings, 2009). Kirschenbaum and Henderson (2005) highlight how a humanistic philosophy assumes some basic tenants that are required to promote personal growth. These tenants are empathy (active listening), unconditional positive regard (accepting individuals for who they are), and congruence (being genuine, honest and open). Whereas, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) values the importance of changing maladaptive behaviours and dysfunctional thoughts (Woolfe et al., 2003). I felt both approaches could complement each other for this chosen group as both consider the quality of interaction between the practitioner and client as well as empowering the client as important (Katz & Hemmings, 2009). Given the longevity of the intervention, I felt key to the success of the programme was to develop meaningful relationships with the group, fundamental to the development of these relationships is the ability to show empathy, unconditional positive regard, and congruence (Poczwardowsk et al., 2004).

Underpinned by my philosophy, my approach was to deliver client-centred sessions. Introducing key topics (e.g., nutrition, exercise, mental health) and then creating an environment for group members to share experiences, enhance self-awareness, support each other and grow as individuals. To achieve this, an intervention technique that influenced my approach was Personal-Disclosure-Mutual-Sharing (PDMS). PDMS stems from counselling and cognitive behavioural therapy settings and represents a conscious verbal presentation of specific situations or issues to gain resolution through interpersonal interaction (Holt & Dunn, 2006). Within groups, PDMS has been shown to facilitate empathy as it provides group members with a greater understanding of each other's personal experiences (Dryden, 2006). Research such as Rime (2007) highlights how communication is improved in self-help contexts when using PDMS (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous). In sport and exercise settings, PDMS has also been shown to be a useful tool to enhance group functioning (e.g., Evans et al., 2013; Barker et al., 2014). Alongside PDMS, other interventions I also engaged in include motivational interviewing, adopting techniques such as OARS (open-ended questions, affirmation, reflective listening, and summarising) to build relationships and provide support for group members to promote personal growth (Miller & Rollnick, 2012).

Module content

Refer to appendix 1 and 2 for information on module content, expected outcomes, and a detailed delivery timetable. Reflections and programme evaluations follow this section.

Week 1 – Module one

Week one presents the first opportunity to be together as a group and for rapport to be developed between group members and between myself and the group. The main objectives of the session are to introduce the programme, enhance the cohorts' understanding of Type 2 Diabetes, and introduce the concept of goal setting. Consistent with PDMS research (Pain & Hardwood, 2009; Evans et al., 2013) I asked the group to share their hopes and fears for attending the programme in an attempt to build cohesion between the group. This task also acted as an opportunity for me to begin to show some of the critical tenants required to promote personal growth (e.g., empathy, active listening). Following this, I facilitated a discussion between the group regarding their fears for attending, mostly the fear of developing Type 2 diabetes. This discussion acted as an opportunity to satisfy one of the session objectives to increase their knowledge of Type 2 diabetes and Pre-Type 2 Diabetes. To conclude the session, we finished with a goal setting exercise where the group set themselves SMART goals to achieve at certain milestones on the programme. Justification for having cohort members set goals is supported by research in health, (Cullen et al., 2001) exercise (Wilson & Brookfield, 2009) and sport (Simons et al., 2003) as an effective way to enhance and maintain motivation and for the individuals to monitor their progress throughout the programme.

Week 2 – Module two

During module two, I looked to increase the cohort’s awareness of what a healthy lifestyle is and how, as a group, they could begin to adopt a healthier lifestyle. Five healthy lifestyle messages were promoted; Eating a healthy diet, undertaking regular physical activity, achieving and maintaining a healthy weight, positive mental health and wellbeing and making consistent healthy lifestyle choices. To promote these key lifestyle messages, the group members were required to provide examples of why each lifestyle message is essential to living a healthy lifestyle and provide examples of behaviours you might see. For example, an ideal answer might be, “healthy eating is necessary as diet is fundamental to preventing many diseases and helps to control weight, an example of eating a healthy diet might be reducing the amount of saturated fat consumed”. This discussion aimed to have the group analyse and engage more with content rather than listen and read information. Active engagement and co-operative learning in sessions have been suggested to be an effective method to promote understanding of key concepts (Cavanagh, 2011). This discussion led to further talks on engaging in behaviour change and what challenges the group may experience when making changes to their lifestyle and how they may begin to overcome these challenges. Inspired by Trans-Theoretical Model as proposed by Prochaska and DiClemente (1983), which introduces characteristics you may experience at different stages of the model (Pre-contemplation, Contemplation, Preparation, Action, and Maintenance) when engaging in behaviour change. For example, complete denial in the pre-contemplation stage and absolute commitment in the action stage. Cohort members were encouraged to mark the stage they felt they were currently at and to track their progress following the model as the programme progressed. I explained to the group how the model was not static and involved transitioning through different stages and explained that relapse could occur at any stage when trying to make behaviour changes. To emphasize the importance of understanding the transitioning nature of this model, I had the group discuss and write down possible factors that might result in transitioning positively through the stages, e.g., from preparation into action and what factors might result in relapse, e.g., from preparation down to contemplation. Helping individuals understand factors that increase the likelihood of relapse is supported by research, particularly in mental health and addiction (Jacobson & Curtis, 2000). The objective of this activity was to help individuals identify what factors they have within their control, e.g., how much effort they put in to exercise or to reduce unhealthy food. Similarly, what is out of their control, e.g., life events that may result in emotional eating, and for the group to begin to generate behaviours that will increase the likelihood of making positive transitions.

Week 3 – Module three

Module three's focus is on healthy eating, and the main topics covered in this session are promoting a high fibre, low-fat diet, understanding food groups, healthy eating tips, and then explain the concept of a food diary to the cohort. Using motivational interviewing techniques such as those highlighted by Millner and Rollnick (2012). Consistent with my approach, I wanted the group to support and learn from each other in their journey of self-discovery while I merely facilitated discussions. To start the session, I asked some open-ended questions such as "tell me why healthy eating is important" and "what does healthy eating consist of" in the hope that it would spark some enlightening discussions. Interestingly, there were some disagreements between the group. For example, one individual made a generic statement *"we have too much fat in our diets"* to which another replied *"well I certainly don't, my portion sizes are just big and eat too much*" this then resulted in another individual saying *"I used to overeat as well so what I did was buy smaller plates, so it looks bigger*". By collectively sharing experiences, the group began to recognize that while as a group they are here to achieve the same outcome (preventing the development of Type 2 diabetes), how they reach that outcome will be through different methods. The discussions led to participants sharing stories and experiences. Research has suggested that sharing experiences in a supportive environment can be a fundamental way to promote empathy (Dryden, 2006). Encouraging the cohort to understand the benefits of making small changes to eating behaviours was a vital objective of this session. Wing et al. (2011) highlighted how making small healthy changes to diet can have a significant impact on the progression of Type 2 diabetes, mainly through the effect it has on weight loss/maintenance. World Health

Organisation (2000) also suggested how eating high amounts of foods that provide little nutrition and lots of energy/calories will be stored as fat, and this excess fat in the body will disrupt essential bodily functions. The group completed a week-long food diary; the aim of this exercise was for it be a reflective exercise allowing individuals to self-monitor their eating patterns and identify areas of improvement. Reflecting is an effective method of promoting self-awareness and improve understanding (Anderson et al. 2004).

Week 4 – Module four & five

Modules four and five covered overcoming barriers to healthy eating and understanding food labels. This session began with the group writing down their barriers to healthy eating on sticky notes and them sticking to a wall at the front of the room. The wall represented a collection of obstacles that needed to be overcome for the group to progress and achieve their targets. Metaphors have been used in other fields such as psychotherapy to help promote understanding of concepts (Witzum et., 1988). Metaphors are also an excellent tool to help improve learning and understanding as they act as a mediator between current knowledge and new knowledge (Glynn & Takahashi, 1998). Consistent with my approach, the group then collaboratively offered solutions to the barriers in an attempt to 'breakthrough' the wall. Examples of solutions the group suggested were cooking in bulk and freezing some food to overcome the barrier of lacking time to cook healthy meals. Research has proposed instructional games can be an effective way to promote engagement and understand (Garris et al., 2002). To facilitate the cohort's understanding of hidden sugars in food and enhance their ability to detect these hidden sugars, the group participated in the sugar game. The game involved rating food products from high to low in terms of their sugar content and then estimating their sugar content. This exercise meant individuals were firstly more aware of how much sugar is actually in certain food products and also how to begin finding hidden sugars in food. Alongside this, individuals were encouraged to download the Change4Life app to assisting finding hidden sugars in food.

Week 5 – Module six

Module six involved promoting key concepts around physical activity (PA) and exercise and the importance of both in preventing or delaying the onset of Type 2 Diabetes. A sedentary lifestyle is a significant risk factor for people at risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes (LaMonte et al., 2005). Despite the benefits of PA for older adults being well documented, approximately two-thirds are considered underactive (Stewart et al., 2001). Therefore, a vital objective of this session was to increase awareness of the benefits of PA and exercise in terms of preventing Type 2 Diabetes and other life-threatening diseases. To achieve this, the group was required to label on a picture of the human body all the benefits they could think of associated with PA and exercise. Following this exercise, the group expressed their disbelief at all the potential benefits PA has towards their health. As we did during the healthy eating module, individuals were required to fill out a week-long PA sheet and then reflect on this and compare their activity levels to that of the recommended guidelines of 150 minutes of moderate PA each week. This activity allowed individuals to reflect on their typical weekly activity levels and then identify any potential areas for improvement.

Week 6 – Module seven & eight

Modules seven and eight aimed to help individuals understand and overcome barriers to behaviour change and physical activity. Given the perceived success of the sticky note activity in week four based on feedback from group members, we began this session with the same activity. Much like during week 4, the activity sparked meaningful discussion amongst the group, with each offering support and advice to one another regarding potential solutions and ways to ‘break down’ barriers. An example of a solution to a barrier the group presented was finding an activity you enjoy, such as a dance class to overcome the obstacle of hating exercise. Key to breaking habits and forming new ones is first understanding how habits are formed. The development of healthy habits has been a critical topic in weight loss research-based models (Webb et al., 2009) with findings suggesting participants with a clearer understanding on habit formation and how to form healthier habits experiencing significant weight loss (Lally et al., 2008). The group identified some of their current practices, and consistent with Duhigg (2012), proposed to determine the cue-routine-reward for each habit. This activity aimed to raise awareness of the dominant environmental and social triggers have in influencing our lifestyle.

Week 7 – Module Nine

Module nine was the final taught content session and involved promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. To start, facilitating the group understanding of the link between mental health and an increased risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes, e.g., increased stress, increases the likelihood of developing Type 2 Diabetes (Wales, 1995). This discussion presented an opportunity for me to display some of the critical tenants required to promote personal growth, such as empathy, active listening and genuineness Kirschenbaum & Henderson (2005). To promote effectively managing stress within their life to reduce their likelihood of developing Type 2 Diabetes, we looked at developing different types of relaxation techniques. Techniques such as progressive muscle relaxation are effective in reducing state and trait anxiety (Rausch et al., 2006). The group initially felt uncomfortable engaging in relaxation techniques but were encouraged to dedicate 10 minutes a day for the next two weeks as a trial period, and at the next meeting, we would discuss whether or not they found the suggested techniques useful.

Week 8, 12, 18, 26, 39 & 52 – Review Sessions

The remaining six sessions were review sessions and occurred sporadically over the remaining months of the programme. These sessions were a chance to monitor participant progress by tracking the weight, waist, HbA1c, blood pressure, and mental wellbeing of the group. It was also an opportunity to provide any further support to participants should they have felt they required extra help. There was no formal structure for these sessions; instead, they were an opportunity for individuals to ask questions or to revisit specific topics or areas of issue that had been covered in previous sessions. These sessions were also an opportunity to evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of me as a practitioner. I did this through formalized evaluation forms, which were complemented by informal conversations about what the group enjoyed about the sessions and how I could improve as a practitioner providing the programme, and practitioner reflections.

Programme Evaluation

Clinical Metric Statistics

		Cohort Average Clinical Metrics				
		HbA1c	**Weight (kg)**	**Waist (cm)**	**Blood Pressure**	**WEMWBS**
Time Frame	**GP Referral**	**45**	**79.6**	**106.5**	**148/85**	**59**
	6 Month Review	**40**	**75.3**	**103.5**	**135/82**	**58**
	9 Month Review	**39**	**74.9**	**102.8**	**141/76**	**60**
	12 Month Review	**39**	**75.2**	**101.6**	**141/77**	**62**

Evaluating the impact and effectiveness of the programme involved using objective clinical metric results, these results suggested a positive effect for preventing the development of Type 2 Diabetes. Pre-diabetes is diagnosed when an individual has an HbA1c between a score of 42 – 47. All participants referred onto the programme fell between the 42-47 range with a cohort average of 45, by the six-month review this had reduced to 40 a reduction of five points. By nine months, the average had reduced a point further to 39 and at the final review had remained at 39, meaning the cohort's blood sugar scores were considered within the normal range. Participants also recorded significant weight loss and waist circumference reduction, with a cohort average weight loss of 4.4 kilograms and cohort average waist circumference reduction of 4.9 centimeters. Research has shown weight loss and waist circumference reduction to be critical prerequisites for the prevention of type 2 diabetes (Gastadelli, 2008; Lindstrom et al., 2006). The cohort's average blood pressure scores also slightly improved from 148/85 to 141/77 over 12 months. Research has supported the effectiveness of behaviour change lifestyle programmes in helping to reduce and control blood pressure (Appel et al., 2003). Finally, wellbeing scores improved across the duration of the 12-month programme, participants completed the WEMWBS to determine a mental wellbeing score on initial referral, and then again at six, nine and twelve months. Scores highlight how WEMWBS scored improved from a cohort average of 59 to an average of 62, potentially suggesting that by making positive changes to their lifestyle, this positively influenced their mental wellbeing. Overall, the clinical metric results support the effectiveness of the NHS NDPP in preventing the development of Type 2 Diabetes over 12 months for the highlighted cohort.

The clinical metric scores only demonstrate the effectiveness of the programme. The measures do not determine whether continued lifestyle changes will be applied following discharged from the programme. To increase the ability to assess the impact of the programme, alongside clinical metric evaluation, subjective evaluation also took place in the form of patient evaluation forms. Participants were required to answer a series of questions related to the programme. They were then provided with an opportunity to write down their experiences of the programme and offer any suggestions for improvement. Responses were positive from the cohort, with all participants answering either agree or strongly agree to the predetermined statements, such as *"I feel able to continue with the lifestyle changes I have made during the programme."* Participants also made positive comments in the section for them to reflect on their experience and provide feedback. Themes that emerged were *"it was helpful to make friends with the group,"* and *"the information helped me to make changes to my lifestyle*." Suggestions for improvement primarily involved having an extra session on nutrition. Appendix 3 provides an example of a completed an evaluation form.

Reflecting on the evaluation of the programme, it can be determined the programme was successful in achieving its primary objectives. The success of this programme can be attributed to several factors. Significantly, the relationships that I developed with the group allowed for a collaborative service delivery which was based on participants actively engaging in promoting change. As the programme developed, I began to understand the importance of developing relationships and understood the client(s) are the driving force behind change (Tod & Bond, 2010). As the working alliance developed, my anxiety levels decreased, and confidence increased. My approach to delivery also evolved, from a primarily authoritarian style, to more collaborative approach which better reflected my theoretical orientation, philosophical position and worldviews. McEwan, Tod and Eubank (2019) suggested individuation is a fluid process that influences a practitioner's identity based on their personal and professional experiences. I feel this more collaborative approach to delivery resulted in increased engagement from group members and ultimately had a positive impact on the effectiveness of the programme.

Practitioner Reflections

Reflecting on applied work in Sport and Exercise Psychology settings is recognized as an essential process for learning and developing (Knowles & Gilbourne, 2010). Practitioner reflections are an integral part of practitioner development as it allows for opportunities to consider thoughts, feelings, and actions when practicing (Cropley et al., 2007). Reflecting can enable practitioners to make sense of and learn from their experiences, increase understanding, improve self-management, and improve overall effectiveness (Anderson et al., 2014). Following each session, I took detailed notes and reflected on my thoughts, feelings, and actions and how they influenced my delivery of the session. My reflections are shaped and affected by the structured guidelines proposed by Gibbs (1988). These guidelines include providing a description of what happened, my thoughts and feelings, an evaluation of the good and bad regarding the experience, an analysis of the situation, a conclusion, and finally, a proposed action plan.

As well as evaluating the effectiveness and impact of the programme, key to my development as an applied practitioner working in sport and exercise is to measure my impact and effectiveness as an applied practitioner. The majority of my applied work has been conducted in a sporting context. Given the title, I am hoping to obtain is that of Sport and Exercise Psychologist; I felt to develop more holistically as a practitioner engaging in applied work in an exercise/health-based environment would be beneficial.

This case study represents my first experience of working in an exercise psychology context. Critical moments have been defined as "*those frequently experienced moments in our lives where we must confront the anxiety associated with an important change to our identity*" (Nesti et al., 2012). I felt that gaining applied experience in an environment of which I was not as comfortable, acted as 'critical moment' in my development as a Sport and Exercise Psychologist. While presenting many opportunities to learn and develop, initially, I found the experience overwhelming and challenging. I experienced a high degree of existential anxiety, which resulted in me experiencing anxiety and self-doubt amongst other emotions. Concern regarding one's ability to deliver an effective service is a common feature of neophyte practitioners (Todd et al., 2017). Existential phenomenological research, however, suggests these critical moments to be vital as it causes an individual's identity to be challenged and provides the individual with an opportunity to evolve their identity through developing greater self-knowledge and awareness (Nesti et al., 2012). This evolution of my identity primarily involved a greater understanding of my thoughts and feelings and the impact they have on my delivery.

Many of the negative emotional responses I experienced coincided with the delivery of modules I felt I lacked the required knowledge base to deliver confidently. During these sessions I often found myself distracted by own cognitive activity (e.g. I hope it looks like I am confident). I felt very much aware of my limitations regarding knowledge and skills and as a result experienced high levels of anxiety when delivering these sessions. Tod, Hutter and Eubank (2017) highlighted heightened levels of cognitive activity and anxiety often reflect a trainees' insecurities regarding competence. Despite my struggles, I seldom sought guidance from others, likely out of a desire not to be viewed as incompetent. However, I was a member of a multi-disciplinary team consisting of psychologists, nutritionist's dieticians, and nurses. Research has suggested having a support network, whether you are a neophyte or experienced practitioner, to seek out support, advice, and guidance (Tod & Bond, 2010). Therefore, to ensure my continued development, sharing and reflecting with a support network will reduce the saliency of negative emotions I experience. Likewise, reflectively discussing experiences with my supervisor has been suggested to be a key process underlying development (Foltz et al., 2015).

As the programme progressed, so too did my ability to deliver the programme in an effective and impactful manner. While I did not objectively measure this impact, the sessions became more engaging, authentic and free flowing. This change occurred alongside the development of relationships or working alliances with the group members. According to Tod & Anderson (2012) the ability to understand and develop effective practitioner-client relationships is fundamental to effective service delivery. Likewise, a deeper understanding of the working alliance between practitioner and client(s) is often a prerequisite for the development of collaborative service delivery (Tod & Bond, 2010). The development of my ability to form a working alliance with the group members was a key contributing factor to the perceived success of the intervention. Appreciating the need to further develop the interpersonal skills (e.g., empathy, active listening, compromise) needed to develop these relationships (Ronnestad & Skovholt, 2013) will be key to my continued development.

To conclude, this experience has shaped my development holistically. I have a clearer understanding of my reactions when I feel uncomfortable and how this impact upon my delivery, a principal motive for engaging in reflective practice (Cropley et al., 2007). To ensure my continued development, I must further develop the interpersonal skills required to form effective relationships which often underpin effective practice. This development will likely come from continued exposure to applied practice but also through a process of engaging in CPD activities. For example, wider reading around the development of interpersonal skills. Alongside this, feeling comfortable sharing my experiences with peers and wider support network. This will likely reduce the saliency of the negative emotions and also offer opportunity to appreciate how others would feel in the same situation.

Overall, the objective and subjective feedback would suggest the programme was effective at promoting positive behaviour change, at least over 12 months. The subjective data supports the effectiveness of the programme intervention, but also the effectiveness and impact of my role. For example,

> Mike was on hand to answer my questions, and I felt the sessions were more co-operative rather than teacher led. There were times when he would talk to us about a topic and other times where we would have to help each other, which I felt worked well and helped us change our behaviour.

Alongside formal evaluation methods, practitioner reflections further highlight my perceived effectiveness at delivering the programme. While certainly not perfect, this experience has provided areas for further development. Importantly, this experience has provided me with the realization that I can help clients, a vital stage in the process to reducing anxiety levels (Tod, Andersen & Marchant, 2011). My development over the 12-month delivery of this intervention is clear. I progressed from experiencing high levels of self-doubt to enhanced confidence in my ability to deliver and form working relationships with a wide variety of people from different backgrounds. This skill I feel will benefit me throughout the rest of this professional doctorate and my professional career.

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Appendix 1: Module content and expected outcomes.

Module 1: Introduction

Content	Outcomes
• Course aims and objectives. • Assess importance and confidence to make healthy lifestyle changes. • Ice breaker exercise – PDMS group sharing exercise. • Understanding of pre-Type 2/ Type 2 diabetes. • Clinical Metrics explained. Signpost to HCP. • Self-monitoring. Goal Setting. • Clinical Metrics	• Understand participant anxieties and hopes/fears for attending the course. • Encourage group interaction, motivation and therefore behaviour change. • Being to develop relationship with group members and for intergroup relationships to begin to form. • Increased knowledge of pre-diabetes. • Understand what readings mean and reasons for reviewing them. • Emphasise the importance of self-monitoring. • Set SMART goals to achieve over the course of the programme. • Take weight measurement

Module 2: Pre-diabetes and a Healthy Lifestyle

Content	Outcomes
• Introduce the 5 Healthy Lifestyle Choices. • Benefits and challenges to change. • Weekly action planning. • Clinical Metrics	• Understanding of 5 key lifestyle goals. • Understanding of journey and available support. • Understand and address potential barriers. • Take weight measurement

Module 3: Healthy Eating

Content	Outcomes
• Assess importance and confidence to make healthy dietary changes • Healthy Eating – Group discussions on what a healthy diet consists of. • Food Diaries – Dietary Assessment – Group sharing exercise.	• Encourage group interaction, motivation and therefore behaviour change • Understanding of the following concepts: The importance of low fat and high fibre diets for diabetes

• Positive Thinking and weekly action planning. • Clinical Metrics	prevention Energy Balance. The Eatwell Guide. The Eight Tips for Healthy Eating. The need to eat healthier foods and reduce unhealthy foods in the diet. Understanding food groups. Healthy preparation styles. • Motivational and reflective tool for participants Individual & group understanding of current diet(s) and identification of ways in which to improve. • Begin to focus the group on positive thinking, goal setting and how they can achieve these goals. Encourage behaviour change. Goal setting tool – weekly action planning. • Take weight measurement

Module 4: Barriers to Healthy Eating

Content	Outcomes
• Barriers to Healthy Eating • Strategies for Eating Out • Goal Setting	• Discussion around the group's perceived barriers to healthy eating and possible solutions • Understanding how to eat out more healthily Development of strategies for eating out • Look at goal setting and how they can achieve these goals. Encourage behaviour change. Goal setting tool.

Module 5: Eating Less and Food Labelling

Content	Outcomes
• Energy In and Out	• Recap on energy balance.

• Portion Sizes: Eating Less • Food Labelling Sugar Game • Clinical Metrics	• Introduce the energy intake goal. • Emphasise importance of nutrition as well as energy content of foods. • Increased knowledge of appropriate portion sizes and the need to eat appropriate amount of food and less overall if trying to lose weight. • Awareness of food labelling and terms to watch out for on the packet. • Increase awareness of sugar content in food and the effects of advertising on food choice. • Take weight measurement

Module 6: Physical Activity

Content	Outcomes
• Review food diaries / progress • Assess importance and confidence to increase physical activity • Introduction to Physical Activity • Physical activity advice • Exercise diary • Goal setting Problem Solving • Optional Activity: Walk or Seated Exercise • Clinical Metrics	• Allows participant to raise concerns over food eaten the previous week and facilitator to guide participant in making positive changes to their diet • Encourage group interaction, motivation and therefore behaviour change • Assess current knowledge of physical activity Highlight the benefits of physical activity and types of physical activity • Understand guidelines for physical activity / what is physical activity Discuss and review levels of activity and ensure participants are getting at least recommended amounts of daily activity. • Signpost e.g. local access, GP referral, additional support • Monitor awareness of physical activity

	undertaken, good reflective and motivational tool for participants • Ensure participants are aware of what they would like to achieve from attending the course Encourage behaviour change • Promote easy accessible form of physical activity • Take weight measurement
Module 7: Physical Activity Barriers	
Content	Outcomes
• Barriers to Physical Activity • Clinical Metrics	• Problem solving activities. • Encouraging sustainable lifestyle changes • Take weight measurement
Module 8: Barriers to Behaviour Change	
Content	Outcomes
• Environmental and Social Cues • Habits – Breaking bad habits, forming new and healthy ones. • Planning and Time Management: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity • Clinical Metrics	• Investigate factors that may influence negative behaviour. • Implement triggers that encourage positive choices. • Understand personal cues that trigger habits. • Planning meals in advance to avoid rash decisions. • Incorporating activity into daily life • Take weight measurement
Module 9: Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing	
Content	Outcomes
• Review physical activity diaries / progress • Assess importance of and confidence to maintain healthy emotional wellbeing • Positive Thinking	• Allows participant to raise concerns over physical activity undertaken in the previous week and facilitator to guide participant in making positive changes to their activity levels • Encourage group interaction,

• Relaxation techniques • Optional Relaxation exercise • Setting long term goals • Behaviour Change • Review all topics • Q&A Agree follow-up route Agree further 121 or group sessions • Clinical Metrics	motivation and therefore behaviour change • Promote positive mental health & wellbeing and sign post if any mental health concerns are raised Understand current feelings & thoughts Relook at behaviours & barriers • Demonstrate and encourage relaxation techniques to promote greater sense of wellbeing • Simple strategy • Monitor goals set at the beginning / during the course and discuss barriers if these have not been fulfilled. Set new goals for future post course completion. • Maintaining Positive Changes Staying Motivated • Ensure participants have all the relevant to making positive lifestyle changes and sign post to local services such as smoking cessation, health trainer, alcohol reduction, where required. • Clear understanding of next steps and programme continuation • Take weight measurement

Review sessions

Content	Outcomes
Assess goals, action plans and changes to health and behaviours/habits. Clinical metrics.	• Understand where they currently are in relation to the goals they had set. • Take weight, blood pressure, HbA1c, waist, BMI and WEMWBS.

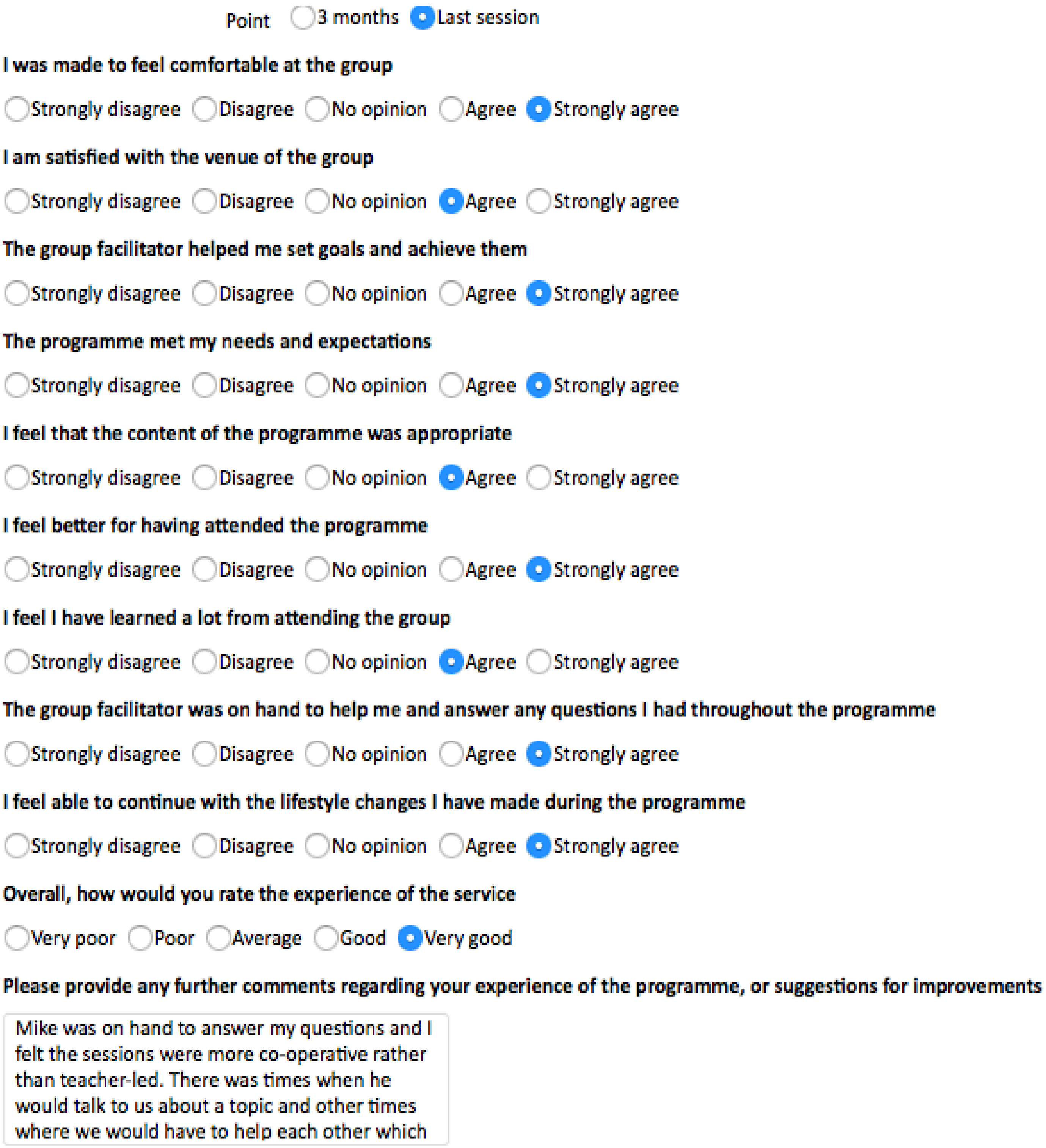
Appendix 2: 12- month Intervention and Weekly Overview

	Modules Covered	Time	Method
Individual Assessment	Take clinical metrics including HbA1c, weight, height, blood pressure, waist circumference and BMI. Baseline questionnaire and WEMWBS.	30 minutes	Individual
Week 1	Module 1: Introduction **Clinical metrics – weight**	60 minutes	Group
Week 2	Module 2: Pre-diabetes and a Healthy Lifestyle **Clinical metrics – weight**	90 minutes	Group
Week 3	Module 3: Healthy Eating **Clinical metrics – weight**	90 minutes	Group
Week 4	Module 4: Barriers to Healthy Eating Module 5: Eating Less and Food Labelling **Clinical metrics - weight**	90 minutes	Group
Week 5	Module 6: Physical Activity **Clinical metrics - weight**	90 minutes	Group
Week 6	Module 7: Physical Activity Barriers Module 8: Barriers to Behaviour Change **Clinical metrics - weight**	90 minutes	Group
Week 7	Module 9: Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing **Clinical metrics - weight**	90 minutes	Group

Week 8	**Review**: clinical metrics including weight, blood pressure, waist circumference and BMI. Assess goals,	60 minutes	Group

	action plans and changes to health and behaviours/habits. **Activity/Subject:** Stress and Time Management	12 minutes minimum	Individual contact
Week 12	**Review**: clinical metrics including weight, blood pressure, waist circumference and BMI. Patient satisfaction survey. Assess goals, action plans and changes to health and behaviours/habits. **Activity/Subject:** Preventing Relapse	60 minutes	Group
		12 minutes minimum	Individual contact
Week 18	**Review**: clinical metrics including weight, blood pressure, waist circumference and BMI. Assess goals, action plans and changes to health and behaviours/habits. **Activity/Subject:** Healthy Eating with Variety and Balance, Physical Activity Barriers	60 minutes	Group
		12 minutes minimum	Individual contact
Week 26	**Review:** clinical metrics including HbA1c, weight, blood pressure waist circumference and BMI. Assess goals, action plans and changes to health and behaviours/habits. **Activity/Subject:** Balance Your Thoughts for Long Term Weight Management	60 minutes	Group
		12 minutes minimum	Individual contact
Week 39	**Review:** clinical metrics including HbA1c, weight, blood pressure, waist circumference and BMI. WEMWBS. Patient satisfaction survey. Assess goals, action plans and changes to health and behaviours/habits. **Activity/Subject:** Looking Back and Looking Forward	60 minutes	Group
		12 minutes minimum	Individual contact
Week 52	**Review:** clinical metrics including HbA1c, weight, blood pressure, waist circumference and BMI. WEMWBS. Patient satisfaction survey. Assess goals, action plans and changes to health and behaviours/habits. **Activity/Subject:** Looking Back and Looking Forward	60 minutes	Group
		12 minutes minimum	Individual contact

Appendix 3: Completed evaluation form example.



Point ○ 3 months ● Last session

I was made to feel comfortable at the group

○ Strongly disagree ○ Disagree ○ No opinion ○ Agree ● Strongly agree

I am satisfied with the venue of the group

○ Strongly disagree ○ Disagree ○ No opinion ● Agree ○ Strongly agree

The group facilitator helped me set goals and achieve them

○ Strongly disagree ○ Disagree ○ No opinion ○ Agree ● Strongly agree

The programme met my needs and expectations

○ Strongly disagree ○ Disagree ○ No opinion ○ Agree ● Strongly agree

I feel that the content of the programme was appropriate

○ Strongly disagree ○ Disagree ○ No opinion ● Agree ○ Strongly agree

I feel better for having attended the programme

○ Strongly disagree ○ Disagree ○ No opinion ○ Agree ● Strongly agree

I feel I have learned a lot from attending the group

○ Strongly disagree ○ Disagree ○ No opinion ● Agree ○ Strongly agree

The group facilitator was on hand to help me and answer any questions I had throughout the programme

○ Strongly disagree ○ Disagree ○ No opinion ○ Agree ● Strongly agree

I feel able to continue with the lifestyle changes I have made during the programme

○ Strongly disagree ○ Disagree ○ No opinion ○ Agree ● Strongly agree

Overall, how would you rate the experience of the service

○ Very poor ○ Poor ○ Average ○ Good ● Very good

Please provide any further comments regarding your experience of the programme, or suggestions for improvements

Mike was on hand to answer my questions and I felt the sessions were more co-operative rather than teacher-led. There was times when he would talk to us about a topic and other times where we would have to help each other which

Consultancy Case Study 2

Providing psychological support to a cricket academy: A reflective account

The present case study collates the reflections and personal experiences of a trainee sport and exercise psychologist delivering a sport psychology support programme as part of an elite performance pathway. The case study highlights the challenges faced and maps out the development of the trainee sport and exercise psychologist as the programme progresses from initial contact through to evaluation. In particular, the need for the practitioner to demonstrate adaptability in meeting the client's needs due the influence of wider issues (e.g., time and funding). After conducting a needs analysis, it was determined the support programme would consist of five core workshops followed by 1-2-1 support sessions. Although, due to obstacles that presented themselves during delivery of the programme, 1-2-1 support was limited. The five core workshops delivered were 1) Pre-performance routines, 2) Mind-set, 3) Pressure Testing, 4) Performing under pressure, and 5) Emotional Control. The programme was underpinned by an eclectic philosophical approach; namely humanistic and cognitive-behavioural techniques and was influenced by psychotherapies such as Client-centred therapy (Rogers, 1951), Personal Construct Theory (Kelly, 1955), and Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (Ellis, 1957; REBT).

Client Overview

The client in the present case study is a County Cricket Board. The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) fund an Emerging Player Program (EPP) to develop talented cricket players. The EPP represents the top tier of a county's player development pathway and is designed to provide more significant opportunities for young players to progress into professional cricket. The EPP operates in the off-season (Autumn/Winter months) at indoor training venues and offers specialist 1-2-1 coaching, nutritional advice, strength and conditioning, injury prevention, and psychological support. I was initially approached by the head coach to provide psychological support to the EPP, which would be the county's first experience of running a psychological support programme. This case study, therefore, offers original findings as this represents an organization's first experience of providing psychological support and a trainee sport and exercise psychologist's first experience of designing and delivering a programme from start to finish.

Initial meetings revealed the head coach's goals and expectations were to 1) Introduce the concept of sport psychology to athletes and 2) Develop athletes' mental skills which are required at the elite levels of cricket. Therefore, the programme would primarily focus on performance-based issues. These meetings were crucial in ensuring the programme delivered was appropriate for the culture of the EPP and meeting the needs of the organisation (McDougall et al., 2015). Likewise, providing an opportunity for clarity on professional boundaries, disseminating information, ensuring client confidentiality (Eubank et al., 2014) and issues such as providing performance and welfare support but not major clinical related issues (Ravizza, 2002). I also used this opportunity to outline the boundaries of my professional competence while being transparent regarding my qualifications, adhering to my governing bodies' code of ethics and conduct (BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct, 2018).

Practitioner Philosophy

In applied practice, the values and beliefs held by the practitioner actively inform the philosophical approach driving the consultancy process (Poczwardowski et al., 2004). A practitioner's professional philosophy significantly influences their approach to the consulting process from initial entry through to assessment, intervention delivery, and evaluation. Professional philosophy is what drives the helping process while also acting as a compass for a consultant during their applied work (Ravizza, 2002). Traditionally, I have positioned my philosophical approach being underpinned by counselling and humanistic based principles (Rogers, 1951). I place importance on valuing the athlete(s) as unique; that is, I view each athlete as having their own subjective experiences of events that may differ from other athletes. I also value the quality of interaction between practitioner and client, placing importance on developing a practical working alliance with athletes to facilitate them into making positive changes. Similarly, I value promoting both performance and personal development, which is to suggest I take a holistic approach to support, recognizing the person as well as the athlete. Humanistic psychology views people as self-actualizing, with motivation and responsibility for their development (Henriksen et al., 2011). It also suggests having a broader conceptualisation of the person, not just specifically on their role as an athlete (Poczwardowski et al., 2004).

For the present case study, due to the nature of the consultancy process with this client, I adopted a more performance-focused outcome. This change was primarily due to the desires of the organisation due to limited funding and time. Therefore, they wanted to make the quickest and most significant impact on their athletes. As a result, I opted to adopt a more eclectic approach, underpinned by a mixture of humanistic and cognitive-based principles. Group sessions were primarily underpinned by a cognitive behavioural approach with a focus on performance development and mental skills training. While this resulted in me feeling somewhat incongruent throughout delivery, I felt the only way to meet the needs of the organisation was to demonstrate adaptability in my approach, even if this meant being incongruent with my traditional approach. The limited 1-2-1 work I was able to offer was more congruent with my philosophical approach and underpinned by humanistic and counselling based principles.

This eclectic approach then, in turn, influenced the techniques adopted during the delivery of the support programme. Emphasising a client-centred approach, with the importance of empowering the athlete (Katz & Hemmings, 2009), I felt needed to be embedded into the support programme. For example, in group settings creating a collaborative environment where athletes could openly discuss topics and share their individual experiences with other group members allowing them to seek support and guidance. I was also influenced by Mental Skills Training (MST), seeking to develop essential skills such as imagery, relaxation techniques, and emotional control. Similarly, I was underpinned by work in Personal Construct Theory (Kelly, 1955), specifically utilizing performance profiles (Butler & Hardy, 1992). Performance profiles were used initially during the needs analysis stage, to identify and then address areas for development by embedding specific psychological topics into the support programme. Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy (REBT) (Ellis, 1957) was also installed into the support programme. It is essential to recognise REBT supports a humanistic philosophy, with a focus on the person first and athlete second and is therefore applicable to a wide range of non-performance-based issues (Turner, 2016).

Needs Analysis

A needs analysis involves using various methods to assess and measure the demands of a sport and challenges faced by athletes or an organisation to gain a clearer understanding of the client's current psychological needs (Keegan, 2016). The needs analysis was shaped by both formal and informal stakeholder analysis meetings, informal conversations (with players and coaching staff), and finally, performance profiles were given to players to complete. Given the nature of this consultancy, the focus of this needs analysis was on identifying performance issues, rather than personal issues. While this is not consistent with my preferred approach of identifying the holistic needs of athletes, the decision was primarily made due to the varying constraints associated with this consultancy.

The needs analysis took place informally, such as before, during and after training sessions or in-between sessions. By using different methods and techniques to conduct my needs analysis, it allowed me to adopt a more holistic approach to understanding the performance needs of the client (Arksey & Knight, 1999). As I was gathering information relevant to the unique challenges experienced by the athletes and the context in which they experienced them both informally and formally and from a variety of invested sources.

Stakeholder Analysis

Initially, the needs analysis involved meetings with the head coach and other members of staff, these meetings acted as an opportunity to develop a rapport and form a meaningful relationship with the head coach and other members of staff. I felt that by investing time in developing relationships with the coaching staff, it would facilitate my ability to deliver sessions, work with both the athletes and staff in the future, and was, therefore, an essential factor to address. Developing effective working relationships with key stakeholders has been suggested to be a necessary quality of a successful applied practitioner (McDougall et al., 2015). As this was the County's first attempt at integrating sport psychology support into the EPP, I was initially worried about misconceptions and negative connotations associated with sport psychologists. Ravizza (1988) has argued the negative associates with the term 'sport psychology' is often the most significant barrier when entering an athletic environment. To address my anxieties and navigate potentially treacherous waters, it was during these meetings I addressed any potential misconceptions. For example, offering a quick fix solution and only working with 'problem' athletes as has been reported by research (Kremer & Marchant, 2002). I found by discussing professional boundaries, confidentiality, the service I would be providing, and my limitations of competence, I was able to alleviate any anxieties I was experiencing. This also ensured both the head coach and I had the same expectations about what was required from myself and the organisation.

Information regarding potential session content was discussed, the head coach suggested sessions on performing under pressure and managing emotions based on his opinion of what the athletes needed to develop. Upon reflection, a potential limitation of using the head coach as one of my primary sources of information is, I was then influenced by his vision for the programme and his perception of the athletes' needs, which may not have been a true reflection of their needs. Similarly, using coaches as a primary source of information is an approach I have rarely used before, due to the philosophical position I traditionally adopt. Although later, I did obtain information from the athletes, I may have been biased in how I interpreted their input. Despite these potential limitations, the constraints placed upon me during the consultancy required me to be more flexible in how I typically gather information. The head coach revealed the desire for five core workshops to be delivered to the EPP squad, and this was primarily due to time and budget availability. He had expressed that I had complete freedom in the design of the workshops and any other aspects of the programme that I deemed relevant. The main aim of the workshops was to enhance the psychological development of the EPP squad.

Informal Chats

Informal chats with players and coaches allowed me to form relationships and develop a complete understanding of the players' needs (Fifer al., 2008). Conversations with players and coaches were often brief and by chance. For example, when speaking with a player waiting to bowl, I might ask, "Are there any areas of sport psychology you might benefit from to include in the workshops?" These conversations were an effective way of 'filling in the gaps' following on from my meetings with the head coach. We talked about what I was planning for the winter training programme, whether they approved of what was being proposed, topics they would want in the programme, and much like the meetings with the head coach, broke down some potential barriers I may have been facing. I was anxious about how the athletes might perceive a sport psychologist, considering they had not received any previous formal psychological support and because of any negative connotations they may have towards psychology. To counteract potential negative connotations associated with my role, I first spoke the players about their sport, given I had once been in a similar position to them, and I play at a competitive standard I was able to relate to them on a sporting level. The players I felt reacted positively to this as I could engage in cricket jargon and share my experiences of being in a similar position to them. The players were more open to me after these conversations and even showed an interest in who I played for, whether I was a batsman or a bowler, which I felt helped to form relationships in the early stages. Orlick and Partington (1987) suggested possessing a good knowledge of the sport as an important factor for 'fitting in' in an athletic environment. Once I had felt the players were more comfortable with my presence, I then began to enquire about the psychology support programme, themes around performing under pressure, and managing emotions were regularly discussed, supporting information gathered from the head coach.

Performance Profiles

I had arranged to deliver a workshop before the start of the off-season for the athletes to undertake a performance profile (appendix 1). The performance profile aimed to generate any extra information from the players that hadn't already been identified and to create a report helping players identify individual strengths and areas for development. A performance profile is an assessment strategy with a primary objective of placing the athlete at the centre of their development (Butler & Hardy, 1992). A performance profile draws upon vital elements of Kelly's (1955) Personal Construct Theory (PCT) as it requires athletes to actively identify, reflect, and rate their abilities for their sport. Performance profiles allowed me to identify themes of areas for improvement, which I could then use, alongside the information I had already obtained to design the programme. Athletes were required to rate each skill on the importance to their role (API), their self-assessment of that skill (ASA), and their ideal score (AIS). A discrepancy score (D) between the athletes rating of importance and athletes rating of their ability was then developed. Consistent with Gucciardi and Gordon's (2009) recommendations, D is calculated by taking the ASA away from the AIS and multiplying by the API; D= (ASA – AIS) x API. The three skills with the highest discrepancy score were considered areas for development, and the three lowest considered as strengths. A report was provided to the athlete following completion of the profile (figure 2). Potential limitations of self-assessment measures with athletes in the present case study could be their lack of sporting awareness or knowledge to identify and rate appropriate qualities (Weston, 2005). Research has also stated there is some evidence to suggest athletes' mood states are likely to influence profile ratings, specifically positive mood states are likely to result in higher-profile scores (Doyle & Parfitt, 1999).

Case Formulation

Case formulation is the bridge that links practice, theory, and research together to inform any actions taken (Keegan, 2016). Case formulation involves creating a working model for a client. Following the completion of the needs analysis, a working model was created to ensure a psychological support service that fully met the needs and expectations of the client. To meet the athletes' needs, the working model was influenced by a combination of both humanistic and cognitive behavioural principles. Primarily, techniques such as PCT (Kelly, 1955), helping athletes understand the assumptions of their sport and ability. Client-centred therapy (Rogers, 1961), valuing the suggestion each athlete is unique and the importance of person-situation interactions. Finally, REBT (Ellis, 1957), facilitating athletes to understand how their thoughts influence their emotions and behaviors in a sporting context.

Delivering workshops was the primary source of psychological support provided to players during the off-season. This decision was the desire of the organisation due to their limited resources in terms of adequately funding psychological support services. Data generated from performance profiles, informal conversations, and stakeholder analysis acted as the primary sources of information for the needs analysis. Research has supported the delivery of psychological skill workshops to elite youth athletes (e.g., Sheard & Golby, 2006). Five one-hour workshops were delivered to address many of the themes that were identified from the needs analysis (e.g., performing under pressure and managing emotions). Given the ability to be mentally tough and perform under pressure is a critical element in elite-level cricket (Bull et al., 2005), it was determined workshop themes should be based on performing under pressure. Research such as Fletcher and Sarkar (2016) proposed salient psychological skills for practitioners to develop to facilitate psychological resilience and performing under pressure. These qualities (e.g., regulation of arousal, self-awareness) underpinned the content of the workshops delivered. Players also received one 1-2-1 session following the completion of the five core workshops to offer an opportunity for players to discuss any potential issues privately. This decision was made as a 1-2-1 approach is more consistent with my professional philosophy; however, it would not have been an appropriate approach for the entirety of the service. Primarily because a workshop-based approach allowed me to access a higher number of athletes in a smaller time frame, which was the desire of the organisation due to limited funding. Needs analysis revealed through informal conversations with players that they felt receiving individual support would be beneficial to them as it offered a chance to discuss more private issues. Research has highlighted athletes often use sport psychology services for matters that are not directly related to performance (e.g., family/social issues; Birrer et al., 2012).

Intervention Strategies

A critical decision made when delivering workshops was to divide the players into two groups based on age. Group one consisted of ages 14-15, and group two was ages 16-17. This decision was based on the information provided by the coaching team during needs analysis as they had strongly recommended splitting the athletes up based on age primarily due to differences in challenges they would be facing. Topics for the sessions remained the same, although minor changes were made to the content of each session to reflect best the learning stages of each group (Grey, 2010) and the different stages they were currently at with their careers. Having smaller groups with players of a similar age, I felt promoted more intimate and detailed group discussions. Delivering two sessions to two different groups also allowed me to reflect in action, which is reflecting on an incident while it can still benefit the situation rather than reflecting on what I would do differently in the future (Schon, 1983). I could reflect on events during the first session to improve my delivery of the second session. To ensure fairness of delivery, groups would alternate between the first and second session of the evening. The coaching staff was present during the delivery of these sessions. I felt their participation was essential to facilitate the integration of vital psychological principles into the training environment (Sherman & Poczwardowski, 2005) and to increase player adherence and engagement in topics (Maddux, 1993). Having the coaching staff present also increased the likelihood of continued psychological development throughout summer when there would be no formal psychology support in place as the coaching staff would have a basic understanding of what had been covered during the offseason (see appendix 2 for programme content).

Workshops

The first session was a 60-minute interactive workshop delivered to two groups. The first group was aged 14-15 years, and five athletes participated, the second group was aged 16-17 years old, and four athletes participated. The small group sizes focused on empowering the athlete and took a collaborative approach. Despite the small group sizes, naturally, some athletes would not feel comfortable sharing some more personal issues in a group-based setting, so discussions would primarily be performance focused. Similarly, the entirety of the individual needs would not necessarily be met within a group setting. However, out of a desire to remain congruent with my preferred philosophical position, I delivered as close to a client-centred workshop as I felt I could with the constraints based upon me (e.g., lack of funding/time/access). In this instance, I did however have to adapt the intervention to reflect the client's (organization's) needs.

The overall aim of the session was to discuss the importance of developing cues and routines pre-performance to help facilitate performance. Athletes revealed during discussions that they were extremely nervous prior to important matches or when being observed by first-class county coaches in training. Assisting athletes to develop routines, facilitates them to better cope and remain relaxed before and during matches and training sessions (Arnold & Sarkar, 2015). Creating routines meant helping athletes to create “a sequence of task-relevant thoughts and actions which an athlete engages in systematically before his or her performance of a specific sports skill” (Moran, 1996 p.177). It was explained to the athletes that developing a pre-performance routine could help to alleviate many of their negative experiences they had discussed experiencing before important matches or in trial training sessions and increase the likelihood of achieving peak performance (Mesagno et al., 2009).

Session two involved delivering a 60-minute interactive workshop in the same format as the previous session. The overall aim of this session was to facilitate an understanding of different mindsets and what type of mentality the players felt they should adopt to be successful in cricket. The meeting began by athletes answering the question, “what mindset characteristics do you think the England cricket players showed at your age?”. Both groups discussed their answers and concluded there were four main mindset characteristics, 1) positivity, 2) learning from mistakes, 3) motivation for training and 4) belief that they will improve with practice. These characteristics closely aligned to those typically associated with a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006). Players, therefore, were encouraged to identify ways of developing these characteristics. This was achieved by highlighting the characteristics they had identified as merely a set of beliefs. Therefore a shift in beliefs is required to adopt a mindset that will foster their development (Dweck, 2009). Players were displayed with belief statements via PowerPoint and as a group decided whether the beliefs were helpful to their development or not with the aim of promoting a shift in their beliefs.

Session three took place in the training hall, and a 90-minute practical session was delivered by myself and the head coach to the one group. There was a 60-minute pressure practical session followed by a 30-minute debrief and reflection session, which would inform session four's content. A practical session was used to break up the potential monotony of being in a classroom for a third consecutive week and to create a realistic environment for pressure testing. Working alongside the head coach, a fielding session was designed, which required the players to perform in 1) a low-pressure (LP) environment and then 2) a high-pressure (HP) environment. To truly replicate an HP environment, athletes would need to experience both physical stress and psychological stress (Vickers & Williams, 2007) and perceive the event as being of high importance (Baumeister, 1984). This environment was achieved by increasing task difficulty and video recording the athletes participating, with athletes being told North England selectors had requested the videos. This decision was justified for two main reasons 1) it would provide an opportunity for athletes to reflect on how they felt in an HP environment, something which is difficult to achieve normally in an elite sport setting and therefore presented an ample opportunity to learn. 2) Parents were informed before the session to ensure they agreed to their child taking part, and all athletes were debriefed following the session. The performance of the task dropped significantly in the HP conditions compared to the LP condition, with all players scoring fewer points. A reflective session took place during the debrief, and players were required to write down and discuss their thoughts and feelings during both tasks and how they influenced their performance. Players were also required to write an explanation on why they thought they affected their performance, and this information was then used to shape the following session.

Session four followed the same structure as sessions one and two. Informed by the practical session, the session aimed to help the players understand their thoughts and feelings when under pressure and to develop techniques to promote clutch performance. The session started with a discussion on the athletes' reflections following the practical session, and players reported experiencing, being judged, awareness of physiological responses, and reinvesting technical information, all of which are characteristics of choking in sport (Otten, 2009). Reinvesting explicit technical information by consciously monitoring skills they would typically perform automatically is consistent with self-focus theories such as explicit monitoring hypothesis (Beilock & Carr, 2001) and Consciousness Processing Hypothesis (Masters, 1992). To promote a 'clutch' performance, which refers to superior performance under pressure (Otten, 2009), players were required to explain why they felt their thoughts and feelings negatively impacted their performance in the HP condition. Reoccurring themes from this discussion where they felt physiological responses were "out of control" and that they were "extremely critical of myself when I messed up." To help address this, players were introduced to strategies that research has suggested promote clutch performance such as imagery (Blair et al., 1993) relaxation strategies (Bell et al., 2013) and positive self-talk (Hardy, 2006).

The final session again took part in the classroom and aimed to help the players understand the role of emotions in sport. Players had reported during needs analysis that they experienced negative emotions, which negatively impacted their performance, which intensified during 'more important games,' and this was supported by anecdotal evidence during the practical session. Turner and Barker's (2013) paper investigating the efficacy of REBT in elite youth cricketers acted as a blueprint for this session. Due to time constraints, brief REBT was delivered, which research has suggested can be as effective as long-term REBT (Palmer, 1995). The session consisted of discussions around emotional and behavioural performance issues, and players were introduced to the ABCDE framework with regards to identifying irrational beliefs, disputing them and replacing them with rational beliefs. Athletes were also encouraged to understand the characteristics of an emotional response, for example, physiological changes, subjective experience (an individual's conscious experience during an emotional episode; Vallerand & Blanchard, 2000), and action tendencies which mediate and energize subsequent behaviour following an emotion. To achieve this, players were shown video footage of international cricketers in a variety of competitive situations. They were then asked to discuss what emotions they might be feeling in each situation.

One-one Support sessions

Based on the information received from coaching staff and athletes during needs analysis and time, budget, and player access constraints, it was determined players would receive one formal 60-minute 1-2-1 session following the completion of the workshops. 1-2-1 support was initially intended to extend on topics covered during workshops. This was based on discussions with the athletes during the final session. Interestingly, however, these sessions tended to be used by the athletes to discuss challenges that were not directly performance related. For example, one athlete talked about the difficulties of their sport-life balance and anxieties about playing up to six matches a week while studying for their exams. McKenna and Dunstan-Lewis (2004) highlighted the pressure to excel in both sport and academia often could result in academic issues such as failing exams. I could emphasize with this athlete, given I had been in a similar situation at his age. However, Arnold and Sarkar (2015) highlighted, limiting the amount a practitioner self-discloses ensures the focus remains on the athletes and maintains professional credibility. Therefore, consistent with my philosophical underpinnings, during these 1-2-1 sessions, I drew upon client-centred counselling skills, such as active listening, being supportive, authentic, and non-judgmental (Woolfe et al., 2003).

There was a common theme during these sessions, with athletes disclosing information not previously discussed in group settings or during needs analysis. Themes that emerged were related to not wanting to disappoint parents, managing the workload of sport and social/school life, fear of failure, and anxieties regarding transitioning into the next stage. I would have liked to have had more time available for 1-2-1 support meetings as I felt players were more comfortable disclosing sensitive information. As there were only 60-minutes available, I thought I was not able to fully support their needs in such a short amount of time. Ideally, the focus of the support programme would have been 1-2-1 support, supplemented with occasional but fewer group workshops. However, the circumstances of this consultancy meant this was not a feasible option. The fact there was a finite amount of time coupled with the number of athletes, numerous 1-2-1 meetings with every athlete was not realistic. Naturally then, due to the constraints, workshop delivery was the most efficient method of delivery. However, I couldn’t help but feel extra 1-2-1 support may have had more of a positive effect, due to the perceived success of the one, 1-2-1 session made by both myself and observations made by the players. In this instance, I do not feel I could have challenged the expectations of the organisation, particularly as a neophyte practitioner. However, in future sessions with this organisation I will be more forceful in suggesting a focus on 1-2-1 support.

Evaluating Effectiveness

Evaluating the effectiveness of interventions is essential to determine the impact each had on achieving the aims of the service. To assess intervention and practitioner effectiveness, an amended consultant evaluation form (Partington & Orlick, 1987; Appendix 3), an end of season meeting with coaches alongside consultant reflections were used as social validation methods. Social validation methods have previously been employed to facilitate practitioners determining athlete satisfaction and to assist development (Page & Thelwell, 2013). These methods allowed me to cross-reference athlete feedback, coach, and support staff feedback with my consultancy reflections, helping me to establish not only the effectiveness of the interventions but also my effectiveness at delivering them. Based on these methods of evaluation, I feel the psychological support service was effective primarily because it met the aims and objectives that had been agreed before the commencement of service. Overall, players rated the usefulness of the sport psychology programme 4.5/5, suggesting they benefited from the service.

It is crucial to evaluate the impact the workshops had on achieving their goals and objectives, which was to enhance the mental skill development of cricketers. Both players and coaching staff reported the performance profiling session as beneficial. One athlete commented, “the performance profile helped me to identify specific areas to work on, and it complemented what I was doing with the coaching staff, meaning I could work on my target areas in training.” These profiles were also beneficial when designing content for the sessions as I could shape the material around the needs of the athlete. Coaches also reported these profiles as useful, stating the profiles helped them when working with the players on a 1-2-1 coaching basis. Athletes reported sessions 3 and 4 as the most valuable sessions delivered, with them citing these sessions most frequently in the “what has worked well this season” section of the CEF. The athletes reported that being able to reflect on their experiences immediately following the pressure practical session helped enhance their self-awareness and helped to normalize their experiences by hearing the similarities in experiences to other athletes. They also commented that using their reflections to shape the discussions of the following session meant they felt their unique needs were being addressed. Consultancy reflections also support this, and I found these sessions to be the most engaging for the athletes with them actively participating in discussions and sharing experiences.

Athletes reported the pre-performance routine session as the least effective. They reported the development of longer routines were not practical given the amount of cricket and different formats that they play (e.g., T20 cricket, one-day) so developing routines for each of these would be too time-consuming. Coach feedback also echoed the player’s comments. They felt the session was also not realistic given the time demands placed on athletes not just by sport but also in academia. Based on this feedback, in future programmes this session will be replaced, although with what will be further determined by conducting a second needs analysis. Finally, a common theme that emerged from the evaluation methods was more 1-2-1 support was required, consultancy reflections highlight this, as previously mentioned I felt I was not able to address in detail some of the challenges the athletes were discussing in a 60-minute session. Athletes also reported they found the session beneficial as it meant they could present problems in a confidential environment. However, they highlighted preference over more 1-2-1 sessions and fewer workshop sessions. So, in terms of developing the programme for future users, I would look to remove the pre-performance routine sessions and instead offer an extra 1-2-1 session. However, overcoming the logistical issues that prevented more 1-2-1 support in the previous off-season will remain a challenge. Therefore, engaging in meetings with the head coach offering my feedback on how to improve the support programme may be a potential solution to overcoming the challenges and freeing up more time with the athletes.

Reflections and Discussions

This programme represents a first attempt at designing and delivering a psychology support programme for athletes from beginning to end. I found this experience provided me with excellent learning and development opportunities. At times, I doubted my ability to be able to deliver a truly effective service, and I found myself struggling for creativity and innovation when designing workshops and sessions. The programme was being offered during evening hours, and I was working in other sport and exercise settings during daytime hours and found myself exhausted mentally and physically. Fatigue is a key predictor of practitioner burnout, which can affect the quality of work that is being produced (Arnold & Sarkar, 2015). While at times, delivering the programme was a challenge. Ensuring I was engaging in practitioner self-care, through simple ideas such as meal preparation to ensure I had a proper diet and engaging in exercise (Mullenbach, 2016) meant I could better manage the mental and physical challenges I experienced during this busy period for me as a practitioner. I felt overall, the programme was successful at achieving its goals and expectations and acted as an ideal learning opportunity for me to continue my development.

Despite not being my traditional approach to delivery, I enjoyed delivering the workshops during the programme, and I found them to be effective at meeting the goals and expectations of the programme. However, I could not avoid a sense of incongruence delivering them when compared to how I felt working individually with players both in formal settings and during informal training ground conversations. While I understand, the programme was influenced by a variety of different aspects including time, funding and coach involvement. Feeling congruent with one's philosophy is imperative for a practitioner to be and feel as though they are effective (Ravizza, 2002). I felt I offered more to the athletes on the brief occasions I could work individually with them. I found the discussions I had during these sessions to be more personal and detailed compared to the group discussions we had during workshops.

I recognise the importance of workshops. Still, for me to develop as a practitioner in this role and for the programme to develop to continually meet the needs of the client and help to progress players into the field of professional cricket, I feel the need to offer more individualized support to help meet the needs of the individual rather than the needs of the client group as a whole. Despite my preferences, the needs of the client, who in this case were the organization must be met. For this programme, a focus on 1-2-1 session was not practical. As a result, I had to deliver in a way that was uncomfortable for me and incongruent with my philosophy of practice, because, it was suitable for the needs of the client. Despite the challenges, I feel my ability to adapt and demonstrate flexibility in matching the intervention to the client's needs highlights my development as a practitioner to date. Tod, Hutter and Eubank (2017) suggested neophyte practitioners often have the inability to adapt interventions to meet clients' needs. This successful experience can be further used a source to draw practitioner confidence from as an example that I am able to operate outside of what feels comfortable and still remain effective (Tod, Andersen & Marchant, 2009).

This experience also further highlights the importance of developing a productive relationship with athletes, support staff, and coaches (Poczwardowski et al., 2004). Developing relationships with coaching staff and athletes, I found encouraged 'buy-in' from both parties. Having support from the coaching staff, I felt facilitated the ability for me to develop relationships with the athletes. Coaching staff reinforcing the importance of developing psychologically, I felt meant athletes were immediately more engaged than I had initially expected. I felt that by accepting the coaches' expert knowledge and making them a part of the programme (e.g., by asking for their input on certain areas), they were more involved in the process and wanted to see the programme succeed. I have always placed importance on developing relationships with athletes and coaches/support staff, previously I have focused primarily on developing relationships with the athletes. Moving forward, ensuring I spend as much time developing relationships with coaches and other support staff will be a vital element of my philosophy of practice.

Another key learning point I felt was learning to trust my judgement and intuition in situations where I think I doubt my ability to have the right answer. Ravizza (2002) highlighted that trusting in one's professional judgement and believing that what you are doing is correct is vital if you expect athletes or coaching staff to believe and trust in you. I felt that through reflecting both in-action and on-action, having regular meetings with my supervisor, attending regular CPD events, and attending doctorate classes, my professional judgement was continuously being trained and improved (Martindale & Collins, 2013). I found this increased my confidence when delivering sessions. Sharing experiences with others helped to offload anxieties and listening to others sharing similar experiences made me feel as if I wasn't alone in feeling how I felt at times.

To conclude, this case study provides an original account of a trainee sport and exercise psychologist's experience of designing and delivering a psychological support programme. It highlights the influence of wider factors on the design of the programme and the need to be flexible in the delivery of the programme, despite at times feeling uncomfortable doing so. This experience has allowed me to further develop many of skills required to be a successful practitioner, notably, the ability to adjust interventions to meet the needs of the client (Tod, Hutter & Eubank, 2017). To ensure my continued development, having a clearer understanding of the influence wider factors can have on service delivery and therefore the need to adopt flexibility in my approach. Further to this, continuing to value the importance of developing meaningful relationships with coaching and support staff alongside athletes to facilitate the likelihood of successful delivery. Finally, I have learned the importance of practitioner self-care to prevent burnout and have learned to trust my professional judgement when delivering.

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Appendix 1: Performance Profile and Report

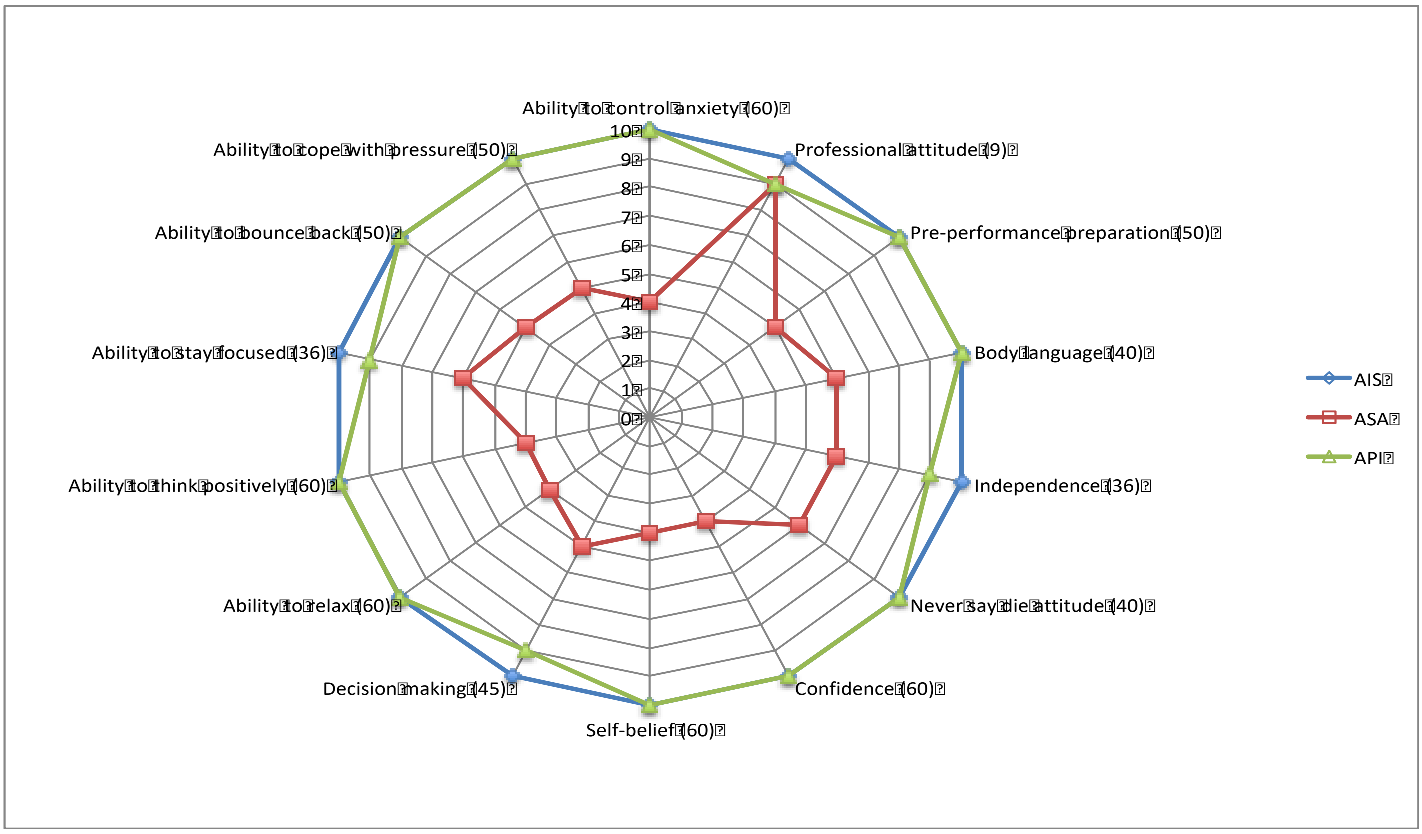
EPP Performance Profile			
Player Name:			
Playing Position:			
	Importance Rating /10	**Individual Rating /10**	**Ideal Rating /10**
Ability to control anxiety			
Professional Attitude			
Pre-performance preparation			
Body Language			
Never say die attitude			
Confidence			
Self-belief			
Decision Making			
Ability to relax			
Ability to think positively			
Ability to stay focussed			
Ability to bounce back			
Ability to cope with pressure			

[redacted]

Player Name: [redacted]

Playing Role: All rounder

Strengths	**Areas to Develop**
1. Professional attitude (10)	1. Confidence (60)
2. Independence (36)	2. Self-belief (60)
3. Ability to stay focussed (40)	3. Ability to relax (60)



Appendix 2: Workshop Summary

Session number	Topic and Aims	Content
1	**Pre-performance routines:** (Interactive workshop x2 groups) 1. To help athletes understand the role of pre-performance routines have in relation to cricket performance. 2. To be able to develop pre-performance routines to enhance performance effectively.	This session aimed to help athletes develop a sequence of task relevant thoughts and actions an athlete engages in systematically prior to performance. The purpose of these routines where to help athletes adopt the optimal mind-set for both training and competitive environments and to assist in schema development. Players were encouraged to develop behavioural components to their routines. For example, batsmen whether training or competing, following a mistake would practice the correct shot, with the correct technique to promote the optimal mind-set and reinforce neuromuscular pathways. Players were also encouraged to focus on cognitive elements of their pre-performance routine (Cotterill, 2011). Using the Set Hypothesis (Adams, 1961) as a theoretical underpinning, athletes were encouraged to optimize their mind-set based on the situational demands (e.g. refocusing after making errors). Athletes were encouraged to be consistent with their routines, specific, show patience and finally practice their routines.
2	**Mind-set:** (Interactive workshop x2 groups) 1. To introduce different types of mind-set in relation to training and competition. 2. To understand how mind-set can influence performance and	The aim of this session was to help athletes differentiate between fixed and growth mind-set. With a fixed mind-set athletes would typically avoid difficult challenges, give up easily and believe talent is fixed. Whereas athletes adopting a growth mind-set are more likely to embrace challenges, be resilient, be more willing to learn and understand that talent can be developed (Dweck, 2009). Athletes will

	development.	possess both mind-sets however, will tend to favour one more than the other. Athletes were shown a series of beliefs (e.g. I want to work hard and embrace challenges) and as a group decided whether these beliefs were helpful to their development or not. To further help shift beliefs towards favouring a growth mind-set athletes were required to list their inspirations for success. Athletes listed, to make my family proud, to be a professional cricketer, I love cricket as some examples of their inspiration list. To conclude, a discussion took place on where and when would their list be most effective, the group decided to have their list in their cricket bag would be a motivational reminder and using it when they are struggling either performance wise or motivation wise would be most effective.
3	**Pressure testing:** (Practical session x2 groups) 1. To observe how players performed and reacted in pressured situations. 2. To encourage athletes to reflect on their thoughts and feelings following pressure testing to facilitate self-awareness.	The pressure testing session aimed to place athletes in a realistic pressure situation and provide opportunities for them to reflect on their thoughts and feelings during the session and how these affected performances of the task. Working alongside the head coach a fielding session was designed which required the players to perform in 1) a low-pressure (LP) environment and then 2) a high-pressure (HP) environment. During the LP task, athletes were required to participate in a relatively simple fielding exercise and were given points for successfully completing aspects of the drill. During the HP task athletes were required to complete a more challenging version of the previous fielding drill and were video recording doing so. Athletes were told the videos were being analysed by national selectors. Increasing physical stress (task difficulty) and psychological stress (perceived importance of performance being analysed by national

		selector) helped to create a HP environment (Vickers & Williams, 2007). Points scored in the HP task were considerably less than points scored in the LP task. Following the task, a 30-minute debrief and reflection took place. Athletes were required to reflect on their thoughts and feelings during the task and state whether they felt each thought or feeling was helpful or disruptive to performance. They were then informed that these reflections would be used in the following weeks session.
4	**Performing under pressure**: (Interactive workshop x2 groups) 1. To discuss reflections during the practical session and how the athletes' thoughts and feelings 2. To develop the athletes' abilities to recognize and control their thoughts and feelings during pressurized situations.	Following on from the pressure testing session, the aim of this session was to help athletes identify the differences between 'choking' and performing under pressure. The athletes reflected on their thoughts and feelings during the high-pressure task the following week. The common themes that emerged across the group were being judged, awareness of physiological responses and reinvesting technical information all of which are characteristics of choking in sport (Otten, 2009). Themes that emerged from the group were then collated and players were asked to rate as a group the impact out of 10 they thought they had on performance. E.g. "Engaging in negative self-talk after a mistake" was rated as 8/10 for having a negative impact on performance. The next stage was to then promote clutch performance by introducing coping skills that will help them better manage the impact the thoughts and feelings have on their performance. Athletes were mostly introduced to basic psychological skills that research has suggested promotes clutch performance such as imagery (Blair et al., 1993) relaxation strategies (Bell et al., 2013) and positive self-

		talk (Hardy, 2006). I used the PETTLEP model to introduce the concepts of imagery and progressive muscle relaxation techniques to the athletes.
5	**Emotional Control:** (Interactive workshop x2 groups) 1. To help athletes understand the role of emotions in elite sport and how they relate to sporting performance. 2. To help athletes develop ways to regulate their emotions and enhance sporting performance.	The final session looked at emotional control and helping athletes understand the role of emotions in sport. Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) was used. Players were shown videos of professional cricketers in scenarios and their emotional reactions. Whilst watching the videos they were required to fill out a worksheet which required them to identify the activating event (A), hypothesize the athletes' beliefs (B) and identify what the consequence was (C). For example, watching the bowler, bowl the final over of a T20 world cup match. Players identified the final over of a world cup final to be the activating event, a mixture of positive and negative beliefs (B) and the bowler under performing and losing the game (C). The players then suggested it was the negative beliefs that resulted in the negative emotive reaction they witnessed and not the event itself because the batsman managed to perform in the same situation. They were then encouraged to dispute some of the hypothesized negative beliefs and finally replace them with more helpful beliefs. Of course, this was all hypothetical but to conclude players were required to relate this to an experience they had and apply the same process. The aim was to help players realise that it is how their beliefs towards an event that cause potential negative emotional responses rather than the event itself.

Appendix 3: Consultant Evaluation Form

Evaluation of Psychological Development Programme

NAME: **DATE:**

How useful have you found the Sport Psychology programme over the duration of the season?

(1= not useful at all, 5= very helpful)

1 2 3 4 5

Have you been able to put anything you learnt in the Sport Psychology workshops into a game or training practice?

Was the Psychology profile helpful for you to understand your mental strengths and weaknesses?

Yes/No

What has worked well this season?

How could the program be improved in preparation for next season? (workshops, handouts, player profiling, individual sessions)

Consultancy Case Study 3

Counselling a professional female footballer during a transition: A reflective account

The present case study reports a reflective account of applied work delivered by a trainee sport and exercise psychologist working within a professional female football team, specifically with an 18 year-old athlete. The case study highlights the intervention process from initial contact through to cessation of the intervention. Reflections on challenges experienced by the practitioner, such as maintaining confidentiality, transference, and countertransference, and insecurities of working as a neophyte practitioner, are also discussed. A counselling-based approach underpinned by humanistic psychology principles formed the basis for the intervention. The athlete reported experiencing a wide range of holistic challenges while making the transition from the development squad into the senior team. For example, reduced social life, struggling academically and performance-based issues. The outcome of the consultancy suggested the athlete was able to manage better the challenges associated with the transition and reported improving wellbeing and performance.

Context

The Practitioner

At the time of consultancy, I was enrolled in a professional doctorate, which combined BPS Stage Two training with a level 8 doctoral qualification. As part of the programme, you are required to submit a combination of empirical research and applied case studies, alongside continuous reflections of all work, in line with the four core competencies proposed by the BPS: ethical practice, research, dissemination, and applied practice. During the consultancy, I was employed as an intern at a professional women's football club competing in the Women's Super League 1 (WSL1), usually working 2-days per week offering psychological support. I was primarily working with the management and coaching staff, with support to players provided on an ad hoc basis, should they feel, or management feel they required assistance. Before this role, I had previous experience working in a regional talent centre (RTC) of another women's football team, and experiencing working within a male cricket academy, however, this was my first role working within a senior professional team.

During the early stages of my training, my philosophy of practice was primarily underpinned by mental skills training, based upon the cognitive behavioural model, as is often the case for early career practitioners (Todd & Bond, 2010). However, through reflecting on my philosophy and practice (Poczwardowski,et al., 2004), and a process of self-examination (Simons & Andersen, 1995) and self-discovery (Corlett, 1996), I was able to better match my practice to my core values and beliefs, reflecting the process of individuation (McEwan et al., 2017). This philosophy of practice was based around holistic support of the person and the athlete, with the understanding that performance and wellbeing are linked (Brady & Maynard, 2010), with issues related to broader life-affecting athletic performance and vice versa. Similarly, viewing the client as the expert and my role as a practitioner to facilitate the athlete through change. The development of this approach was also influenced by group discussions during doctoral sessions, with peers reflecting on consultancy experiences. Huntley and Kentzer (2013) highlighted the value of group-based reflective practice for the development of sport psychology practitioners. The sharing of consultancy experiences allowed me to recognise that athletes often experience a diverse range of challenges, that require more holistic support, rather than my previous approach of using mental skills to mask the symptoms (Corlett, 1996). Therefore, with this client, my practice was underpinned by humanistic and counselling based approaches.

The Client

The client at the time of consultation was an 18-year-old female football player, who was making her debut season as a full-time professional footballer. She had been with the current club since a junior and had progressed through the age groups, and recently transitioned from the club's development programme into the first team. While also transitioning into the first team, she had enrolled in a full-time degree programme at a local university and was transitioning from A-levels into University. A recent FIFPro report highlighted how 46% of current female football players worldwide combine their careers with academic studies. Transitioning into professional football is often a challenging experience (Morris et al., 2016), with athletes reporting high levels of anxiety before a transition. Within the context of this case study, the athlete not only experienced challenges related to the transition into senior football, but also challenges associated with studying at University full-time, and from moving from part-time football to full-time football.

The athlete approached me following a training session for an informal meeting, which lasted approximately 30-minutes, where she discussed that she was *"struggling mentally with training with the first team."* Coincidentally, a coach had also made a passing comment during that session that this player "*looked like she was struggling a little bit."* While she was a talented player, having represented her national team at various age groups. She was also currently representing her national team at U19 level, she had described the demands of full-time football with senior players as something she was struggling to manage. During the initial meeting, she had also mentioned how *"a lot was going on in her life at the moment,"* and she was having difficulty balancing a football career, University, and a social life. Research has suggested how Olympic athletes reported similar challenges of being a dual-career athlete (de Subijana, Barriopedro & Conde, 2015). She recognised that the demands of life away from football could be further intensifying the demands she was experiencing within her football career.

Consultancy

Reflections on the First Contact

After our initial meeting, I was initially quite apprehensive regarding working with this athlete. I first wondered; do I need to tell the manager? Much of the work I had done up until this point was with the manager, and he had stated he was happy for me to provide support to the players. He had said he understood the need for confidentiality, but if it were an issue that he could help with from a professional perspective, then he would like to be informed. I experienced high levels of anxiety regarding the situation, and I did not want to upset the coach and risk my position at the club. I began reflecting on who I perceived to be the client in this case, Haberl and Peterson (2006) suggested it is essential for practitioners to identify who the client is. Although I was employed by the organisation (at the discretion of the manager), I determined that the client is the athlete within the context of the consultancy. McDougall et al. (2015) highlighted how within elite sport team environments, practitioners often work within a complex network and are usually required to handle sensitive information that is important to different groups. Despite this, I made the decision not to inform the manager as a key aspect of my philosophy of practice is to maintain, where is appropriate confidentiality, this is also in keeping with the BPS code of ethics and conduct (2018). Should the manager confront me, I decided I would inform him that I did not want to break trust with the athlete early in the relationship, with confidentiality being an essential prerequisite of trust (Katz & Hemmings, 2009). However, if any issues arose from our meetings that concerned him, with the agreement of the athlete, then he would be informed. Andersen et al. (2001) highlighted how the loose nature of sport psychology delivery (often not taking place in formal office settings) presents difficulties for maintaining absolute confidentiality *"everyone knows everyone, and because of the location and times of delivery, it often becomes obvious who is being served"* (Andersen et al., 2001, p.14). With this in mind, I recognized at some stage, I would likely have to justify why I opted to maintain confidentiality.

Despite my apprehension, I was excited to have been approached by an athlete and to begin work with her. During the initial meeting, she had highlighted vital areas that demonstrated the broader issues she was experiencing. I began to reflect on the saliency of these issues (e.g., social life, university) and what impact they may be having on her athletic performance. I began to reflect on how she was likely experiencing a critical moment within her career (Nesti et al., 2012) and as such, turned to the literature for some further insight before our next session. Critical moments are often met with anxiety as the individual's identity is challenged (Ronkainen & Nesti, 2017). I questioned whether the issues she had initially described were because of her identity being challenged, and as such, prepared for the following session.

Intake Process

A primary aim of an intake process is to establish a relationship with the athlete and clarify objectives, expectations, and boundaries associated with the helping process (Rogers, 2016). Before the consultancy, I had developed a professional relationship with the athlete, through interactions we had, had on and around the training ground, which has often been cited as one of the most influential factors in determining successful outcomes (Beutler, 2009; Norcross, 2011). Therefore, the focus was primarily on establishing aims, expectations, setting boundaries and the development of a working alliance. The working alliance helps to organize and structure the professional relationship. It describes the professional relationship in terms of task (the specific issue), goal (the desired outcome), bond (quality of professional relationship), and views (perception regarding the professional relationship; Dryden, 2006). As I had regular access to the athlete, I decided to conduct the intake process and needs analysis separately, to ensure I had as much information available as possible to develop a working model.

I was conscious of ethical considerations regarding this one-to-one meeting. Haberl and Peterson (2006) suggested how logistics, time, space, and resources all offer ethical challenges to elite sport, in particular to confidentiality. While the athlete was aged 18, consideration had to be made regarding the location of the meeting for both safeguarding and confidentiality purposes. I felt it would be inappropriate to be in a room out of view from everybody else. However, it was equally inappropriate I felt, to be in full view of others who could hear the conversation. To overcome these ethical challenges, I opted to use an office with a window so that confidentiality was maintained regarding the content of communications. Issues regarding safeguarding to both the athlete and myself would be overcome as members of the club would be able to see into the office should they walked past.

I began the session by briefly explaining my philosophy of practice, in a manner of which she would be able to understand. She seemed quite relaxed to start with, but this was not entirely surprising as she was familiar with who I was and my role at the club. I wanted to develop a professional relationship further. To achieve this, I applied the core counselling conditions of displaying genuineness in the relationship, experiencing unconditional positive regard, and displaying an empathic understanding (Katz & Hemmings, 2009). Practically, this involved skills such as active listening, acknowledging her issues, being supportive, setting aside any personal opinions or biases and acceptance for the client as they are. Following this, I clarified my professional boundaries, in line with my philosophy of practice I explained how during our formal support sessions, that I (as the sport psychologist) would aim to explore both the professional athlete and the person behind the athlete. I also clarified how I would be available over the phone, skype and email during reasonable times. We concluded the session and arranged for a meeting the following week to conduct a needs analysis.

Needs Analysis

The following session involved undertaking a needs analysis with the athlete, with the primary aim to understand the athlete's psychological needs and how best to help (Rogers, 2016). While I had obtained some relevant information from our first two sessions, to ensure I was able to understand her challenges fully this session was primarily aimed at gaining a more complete understanding. Likewise, this session acted as an opportunity to reaffirm identified issues from the previous two sessions. In keeping with my philosophical position, which views the athlete as the expert and the role of the practitioner to facilitate the athlete through behaviour change, an unstructured interview formed the basis of this needs analysis. Research has highlighted some benefits of using unstructured interviews such as they allow for a conversation-like manner (Blackman, 2002), and they are particularly useful in the early stages of knowledge acquisition (Agarwal & Tanniru, 1990).

I started the interview off by simply asking, *"so tell me about yourself,"* I started with this broad question to allow her to talk in length and act as an initial ice breaker. She began to answer by discussing her footballing career, how she had been at the club since a very a young age, her first season as a professional, and how her family supported her through everything, especially with the challenges she is facing now. This discovery allowed me to follow up and ask, *"so what challenges are you experiencing now?"*. She began to explain how, during pre-season, she felt she was managing playing senior football well. However, in the first few weeks of the season, she had thought she was struggling to keep up physically and that she was struggling mentally. I began to explore what had changed from preseason to now, and why she thought she was struggling. She explained firstly, that the senior international players had returned, so the standard of football in training had increased, she also revealed starting a full-time degree at a local University which she was falling behind on due to the demands of football. We began to explore some broader issues away from football, to which she explained how education was important, both of her parents were doctors. She recognized that football is a short career, and women's football does not carry the same lucrative rewards as men's football. She also explained how, due to the demands of full-time football and having to catch up on University work, she was finding very little time for social activities with friends. De Knop et al. (1999) highlighted how the pursuit of academic and athletic excellence could result in delays in psychological and social development. Aquilina (2013) suggested positive socialisation to a perceived benefit of being a dual-career athlete. However, the athlete in this case study was seemingly reporting the opposite.

The athlete repeatedly discussed a variety of challenges related to University, friends and family as well as performance issues such as managing pressure. Therefore, I came to the conclusion that based on the information obtained throughout the intake sessions and needs analysis it appeared the athlete was experiencing a variety of holistic challenges. She was catching up on missed University work during evenings after training sessions. Similarly, she was engaging in extra fitness sessions during her free time to manage the increase in physicality during training sessions. She had described feeling under immense pressure during training because she was desperate to live up to her potential, and she found this desire to be successful an all-encompassing thought away from football. We had agreed that in the following sessions, we would explore ways to switch off away from football and to explore ways to manage the pressures of training and competing in a full-time elite team sport.

Case Formulation

Based on the challenges the client had described in our previous sessions, I had concluded, in line with my philosophical approach to adopt a counselling-based approach underpinned by principles of Humanistic psychology. Reflecting on the needs analysis, I was confident the athlete was experiencing an array of holistic challenges. These challenges appeared to be both performance and personal. I believe performance and wellbeing are inextricably linked, therefore, in line with my philosophy the intervention delivered would address both performance and wellbeing issues. Referring to the literature, I felt the challenges the athlete had described to me were consistent with some contemporary models of transitions. For example, Wylleman and Lavelle's (2004) transitional model highlights how normative transitions (i.e., youth to senior) may often overlap with transitions away from the sport (i.e., moving in higher education). The model also states how transitions outside of sport can often impact on the athletic development of that individual. Similarly, other models, such as Alferman and Stambulova (2007) and Stambulova (2003), highlight how during transitions athletes negotiate various internal and external demands via internal and external resources. When an athlete's resources match or exceed outweigh the demands, then a successful transition will occur.

The athlete was currently transitioning from A-levels into University, from living with parents to living away from home and from junior, part-time football into senior, full-time football. There appeared to be numerous transitions occurring all over a short period. The athlete was experiencing a variety of internal and external demands because of the many transitions and was struggling to cope. I had discussed this case with my supervisor, who had advised that offering her a space to address her challenges and facilitating her to discover better ways to cope with the demands of each transition.

Before starting an intervention, to ensure the athlete and I were both working towards the same goals, I had presented to the athlete a summary of our first two sessions. This summary included what I had perceived to be the main challenges she was experiencing. This allowed the opportunity for the athlete to add or remove anything that she did not agree with, while also ensuring I fully understood her described experience. Thereby demonstrating some key humanistic tenants to promote personal growth, such as active listening (Kirschenbaum & Henderson, 2005). With my position at the club, I was not restricted in terms of time, and the athlete and I decided not to set a specific number of sessions and instead measure progress as the consultancy develops. Reflecting on the decision to present a summary the main challenges, in retrospect this may appear quite directive and not in line my preferred approach. Instead, for example, I could have discussed my interpretations of the sessions focused around transitions and then offered the opportunity for the athlete to seek clarification or make amendments. This may have facilitated the athletes understanding of the situation. Although, I was confident in the relationship with the athlete that if there was anything she disagreed with in the summary, she would have brought it to attention.

Intervention

In total, there were three formal intervention sessions, each lasting approximately 1-hour, and took place in a consultancy room on the training ground. The meetings took place over five weeks, this was due to the fact the season had started, and sessions had to fit around the training and match day schedule. In between these sessions, there were regular 'catch-ups' often on the side of the training pitch or during lunch. These acted as an informal, subjective way for me to monitor her progress in a training environment. Consistent with my philosophy of practice, the sessions were flexible and client-led (Rogers, 1951).

The 'theme' of the first session was how she had felt out of balance in life, and while she loved football, she had thought it had completely taken over her life since turning a professional.

Me: '*So, tell about what has been going on since we last spoke.*'

Athlete: '*It has just been about football really, I have trained 6 out of 7 days this week, and on my day off I went to the gym to do some more fitness work. I managed to get some University work done and catch up on missed lectures. But my friends went to the cinema one night, and I couldn't go because I was just exhausted from training.*'

When exploring this experience more, she had described a desire to switch off from football when she was at home. She had explained how, since turning professional, it was all she could think about, and it was draining her, but felt there was no time to focus on anything else; otherwise, she wouldn't be successful. It was apparent that the athlete had a firm 'athletic identity' (Wiechman & Williams, 1997), which is the degree to which an individual resonated with their role as an athlete (Brewer et al., 1993). Cooperatively, we began to explore life away from football. What was salient was her use of past tense, for example, '*oh I used to love going* *out with my friends*' or '*I used to love going to the cinema*.' I decided to bring this to her attention, and she stated, '*I realise that I have literally no time to do what I love away from football, apart from occasional catch up on missed lectures*.' She described feeling sad at this realisation and expressed a desire to find more time to do other things she loved, besides football. I questioned how she might achieve this, to which she replied '*I guess on my days off, using them as my days off, rather than going to gym or going to the park and training, the fitness coach has told me I shouldn't be overdoing it anyway and that my body will catch up to the demands'*. After agreeing, we decided to look at how that might be achieved over the following week until our next session and concluded the meeting.

The second session began by recapping on what we discussed during the first session and reviewed her progress over the week. This was to ensure I had understood her issues from the previous session and provided an opportunity for the athlete to reflect. The athlete had described how she had stopped doing extra fitness sessions during her free time, and used this time to get up to date with University work. She had described the last week as feeling better, less drained, and more relaxed when at home. However, she had reported feeling like she was struggling in training. During this moment, she broke down into tears and said, '*I just feel like I am failing.'* My initial reaction was panic, I had never had an athlete cry during a session before, and this feeling was magnified as it was an 18-year-old female sat in front of me in tears. I just wanted to press pause, ring my supervisor and ask for help. Tod (2007) highlighted how neophyte practitioners often are dependent on guidance from their supervisors. I attempted to manage my own emotions, conscious that crying is often therapeutic, I resisted trying to stop her, despite my discomfort. At this time, I also felt an overwhelming emotional experience, an almost innate response to comfort the athlete resulted and when she had regained her composure, we explored why she had been feeling this way.

Having read research surrounding within career transitions, I was conscious that external pressures from friends and family often could make a transition stressful (Pummel, Harwood & Lavalle, 2008) and therefore wondered if that was impacting her emotional state. There had been moments during sessions when I felt this had been eluded to, but she was often resistant to discussing further. For example, she had reported earlier desperately wanting to succeed to make her family proud, so I explored whether she felt they were adding pressure to her situation. She expressed that her family was supportive and facilitated the process rather than hindered it. Having eventually discussed this in more detail, it appeared that any external pressure from family or friends was not significant enough to be perceived as a significant stressor. Research had also suggested how athletes have reported self-imposed pressure, which can lead to maladaptive consequences of perfectionism during a transition (Flett & Hewitt, 2005). Because of this desire to be successful, athletes often missed educational activities and social events, this finding matched some of the challenges the athlete had previously described experiencing. As we began to explore her experiences more, I felt this may have been a contributing factor to how she was feeling.

Reflecting on what we had discussed so far, I felt she was putting herself under immense pressure to be successful and expected to be successful almost immediately.

Me: '*So why has training been so difficult for you this last week?*'

Athlete: '*I just want it so badly, I have come from training in the development squad, where I was quite far ahead of everybody. Now, I feel so far behind people, but I know I can get to their level, and I just want to be there.*'

The athlete is motivated to succeed; this a crucial resource to navigate through a transition (Stambulova, 2003), and I was therefore, conscious about reducing this motivation to be successful. Similarly, Morris et al. (2016) highlighted being dedicated to football and working hard in training as a salient theme for athletes transitioning into senior football. However, the pressure she was putting herself under to succeed immediately seemed maladaptive and appeared to be negatively influencing her performance and wellbeing. We had to conclude the session due to running out of time, and we had arranged for another meeting the following week to discuss this issue further.

Before the third session, I explored the broader literature in mainstream psychology, mainly counselling based psychotherapy techniques, not traditional to sports psychologists. One method that I felt may be useful was the process of therapeutic role-playing. From our discussions in previous sessions I felt that the athlete was almost lacking a sense of perspective, that she couldn't appreciate how far she come over a relatively short period of time. At times I wanted to say, "give yourself a break" and "you'll be fine". Role-playing offers a naturalistic form of psychotherapy and helps clients see how they behave and assimilate this behaviour (Corsini, 2017). I hoped that this exercise would help to give the athlete a better sense of perspective. Remaining with the theme that was discussed the previous week and to facilitate the athlete to understand their behaviour and through self-discovery find a solution, we engaged in a role-play exercise. Role-playing has been suggested to be an effective strategy for receiving feedback on maladaptive responses (Yalom, 1970). I played the role of the athlete, reporting a strong desire to be successful and feeling extremely frustrated at the fact that I perceived myself not to be. The athlete played the role of a practitioner, who was required to provide support to me (the athlete).

Me: '*What can I do to stop feeling under so much pressure?*'

Athlete: '*I would say recognise how far you have come, that the step up is a big one and will naturally take a few weeks to adjust to the demands, to just try and enjoy the process and keep working hard.*'

Reflecting on the effectiveness of this exercise, I found it to be quite helpful in increasing the athlete's self-awareness regarding her challenges. She immediately stated that she recognised she had unrealistic expectations and was placing herself under immense pressure. She also understood how this was affecting her life outside of football, resulting in missing university and social occasions. Which, in turn, was affecting her overall wellbeing, which was then further affecting her performance, and it was becoming a vicious circle. She had recognised that using her time away from football to switch off mentally was essential and had found some benefit to doing so in the previous weeks. She now understood the importance of gaining perspective regarding success. It was necessary to recognise that being motivated and working hard are not traits to discourage, but rather, better understood within the context of professional football.

The conclusion to this intervention came about somewhat prematurely, following the role-playing session, the athlete was away for 3-weeks on an international break. She returned, stating how much better she had felt over the last few weeks, reflecting on what we had discussed and how she had now found a better balance or ‘formula’ to her life. I was surprised by this, and I thought she would have requested more sessions after the conclusion to our third session. However, it could be argued that being away from this environment for a while allowed her to reflect and challenge her beliefs, resulting in positive behaviour change.

Monitoring the athlete's progress throughout the intervention took place using subjective measures. To measure performance enhancement, I used notes from staff meetings discussing players' development, coupled with self-report data from the athlete during informal chats and formal meetings. The athlete did not report much improvement in performance until after she had returned from the international break, perhaps because she needed time to reflect on what we had discussed and to challenge her own beliefs. Reports from coaching staff, however, indicated that at least they perceived there to be an improvement in performance. One coach stated, “*She has improved over these last few weeks, she looks fitter, stronger and is playing with a bit more freedom.”* Monitoring improvements in wellbeing was more difficult.

I relied primarily on information provided by her during our formal meetings and any informal chats we had during training. Throughout the sessions, she had highlighted that she was dedicating more time to switch off from football, freeing up more time to catch up with University work and socialise with friends and family. She had reported that she was *"feeling much better"* and that she was *"in a better headspace."* These had been significant challenges she had experienced, and factors that I deduced to resulting in her low wellbeing, coupled with performance issues. Therefore, based on this, I concluded that the intervention was effective at achieving its aims. I was conscious of the fact that I am relying on the athlete being entirely truthful, which I recognise as a limitation to this approach to monitoring effectiveness. However, I was confident in the working relationship we had developed and that I had created a space for her to be comfortable in disclosing information.

Alongside measuring improvements in wellbeing and performance for the athlete, it is also essential to measure the effectiveness of myself as a practitioner. The knowledge, delivery style and characteristics of the psychologist influence the overall efficiency of the service (Partington & Orlick, 1987). Underlined by my philosophy of practice and approach taken with this intervention, I was particularly interested in measuring my effectiveness in developing a working relationship (e.g., trust, openness, collaboration) with the athlete, which is vital in determining the effectiveness of the support (Petipas et al., 1999). Evaluating my effectiveness primarily involved reflecting on the consultancy experience, although a brief informal chat with the athlete also took place.

I felt I had developed a strong working alliance with the athlete throughout our intervention. This was my first experience of working with a female athlete, so I think I can reflect positively on the fact I was able to build this strong relationship successfully. I felt the client could openly express her true feelings and emotions, and I supported her in a non-judgmental and empathetic way. This was also reinforced by the athlete when I had asked her for some brief feedback, she had said she felt comfortable during the sessions, and although was anxious to start with, felt she could discuss her issues without judgement. The athlete also reported she preferred being encouraged to find her solutions rather than being directed. For me, this was reassuring as, throughout this intervention, I felt I could work and remain congruent with my philosophy of practice, which is aligned to my core values and beliefs (Poczwardowski et al., 2004). Previously, in similar consultancy sessions, I had often found myself reverting to delivering mental skills training aimed at solely performance enhancement, or taking a more eclectic approach. Primarily due to a lack of confidence in my ability to be effective at delivering a holistic, counselling based approach.

Despite this being a positive consultancy experience for both practitioner and athlete, there is one main area, that professionally I would change. During the second session, when the athlete cried, I immediately felt a strong emotional attachment to the athlete. Countertransference can occur when a practitioner may experience intense emotions towards a client, which may evoke from a previous relationship (Winstone & Gervis, 2006). Part of my identity is an older brother to two sisters, one of which was the same age as the athlete. It could be concluded that seeing the athlete (a younger female) cry resulted in me taking a 'protective' older brother approach, blurring the lines between my identity and practitioner identity. Upon further reflection, during the time she was upset, I felt she also 'transferred' emotions and for a moment, cast me as an 'older brother' or similar figure. Anderson (2005) had highlighted how amid the pressures of elite sport, a practitioner whose primary interest is the wellbeing of the athlete might seem attractive. While at no stage did I feel this was the case, that is not to say these issues should be ignored. In fact, recognizing the potential for such incidents can ensure I am able to maintain professionalism and practice ethically. Stevens and Andersen (2007) assert the need for sport psychologists to recognise their own transference and countertransference. Andersen (2005) suggests practitioners share their own experiences of incidences of transference and countertransference to facilitate understanding. Likewise, formally reflecting on incidents of transference and countertransference will enhance my ability to deliver safely and ethically (Rowan & Jacobs, 2002).

Conclusion

To conclude, this case study presents the reflections of a trainee sport and exercise psychologist working within an elite team sport setting. The case study highlights the process of applied work, from initial contact through to cessation of the intervention. Challenges associated with service delivery are also discussed; for example, working with an individual within a team sport while ensuring ethical practice is followed. The experiences of the practitioner are discussed, both positive and negative and reflect the insecurities and challenges that neophyte practitioners often experience.

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Consultancy Agreement and Report

Consultancy agreement

Parties

1. **Michael McGreary.** 5 Rosslyn Crescent, Moreton, Wirral. CH46 0ST. 07940983058
2. **Cheshire Cricket Board.** 2 Moss Lane, Northwich. CW8 4BG

1. Term

1.1 The trainee sport and exercise psychologist shall provide the Services to the Client from the date of this Agreement in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.

1.2 This Agreement shall be reviewed upon completion of the off-season psychological support programme.

2. Services

2.1 The trainee sport and exercise psychologist shall deliver for the Client a psychological support programme throughout the 2017 winter training programme in accordance with clause 2.2 below.

2.2 The psychological support shall include but not be limited to workshop delivery and face to face meetings. There will be a minimum of 5 workshops delivered over the duration of the training programme.

2.3If the trainee sport and exercise psychologist is unable to provide the Services due to illness, injury or other unforeseen circumstance then the individual will use their reasonable endeavours to find a suitable replacement for such period of time.

3. Fees and expenses

3.1 The Client will pay the trainee sport and exercise psychologist a fee of £25 per workshop, paid monthly.

3.2 The Client shall reimburse the trainee sport and exercise psychologist reasonable expenses incurred in providing the Services unless otherwise agreed.

4. Confidential information and Client property

4.1 The trainee sport and exercise psychologist shall not use or disclose to any person either during or at any time after such engagement by the Client any confidential information about the business or affairs of the Client or about any other confidential matters which may come to the trainee sport and exercise psychologist's knowledge in the course of providing the Services.

4.2 The restriction in clause 0 and 4.2 does not apply to:

(a) any use or disclosure authorised by the Client or as required by law; or

(b) any information which is already in, or comes into, the public domain otherwise than through your unauthorised disclosure.

4.3 All documents, manuals, hardware and software provided for the Client's use and any data or documents (including copies) produced, maintained or stored on the Client's computer or other electronic equipment (including mobile phones), remain the property of the individual.

5. Termination

Either party may at any time terminate this Agreement with immediate effect with no liability to make any further payment (other than in respect of any accrued fees or expenses at the date of termination) if the other Party is in material breach of any of their obligations under this agreement.

6. Variation and third-party rights

6.1 This agreement may only be varied by a document signed by both the Client and the trainee sport and exercise psychologist.

6.2 The Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999 shall not apply to this agreement and no person other than the Client and the trainee sport and exercise psychologist shall have any rights under it.

7. Governing law and jurisdiction

7.1 This agreement and any dispute or claim arising out of or in connection with it shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the law of England and Wales.

7.2 The courts of England and Wales shall have exclusive jurisdiction to settle any dispute or claim arising out of this agreement.

THIS AGREEMENT has been signed on behalf of the trainee sport and exercise psychologist and the Client on the date set out at the beginning.

SIGNED

for and on behalf of **(company)**

EXECUTED AND DELIVERED as a Deed by

Name: Client

Signature:

in the presence of:

Signature:

Name:

Address:

CHESHIRE
CRICKET BOARD

EPP Psychology Support Report

CHESHIRE
CRICKET BOARD

Aims of the Service:

As was discussed during meetings with members of the County Cricket Board, most notably performance manager Gavin Colebourn, providing a Psychological Skills Training Programme to the Emerging Player Programme (EPP) was the main aim of the service. This would be delivered via five 60-minute workshops, each focusing on developing psychological skills relevant to an elite cricket player. Coaching staff and members of the cricket board felt players needed to develop some of the key psychological skills required to reach professional status in cricket. These psychological skills included the ability to control and harness emotions during performance, the ability to perform to a high standard under pressured circumstances and the for athletes to adopt more regularly characteristics associated with a growth mindset. The programme would start with all athletes and coaches receiving an introduction to sport psychology workshop followed by players completing a psychological performance profile. Players and coaches were then provided with completed profiles to help track player development.

Summary of Service Provided

Session number	Topic	Aims
Intro and Profiling	**Introduction to Sport Psychology and Profiling.**	1. Introduce sport psychology, the aims of the service and what will be expected of the

	(Interactive workshop X1 group)	athletes. 2. To complete a psychological performance profile of the athletes.
1	**Pre-performance routines:** (Interactive workshop x2 groups)	3. To help athletes understand the role of pre-performance routines have in relation to cricket performance. 4. To be able to develop pre-performance routines to enhance performance effectively.
2	**Mind-set:** (Interactive workshop x2 groups)	3. To introduce different types of mind-set in relation to training and competition. 4. To understand how mind-set can influence performance and development.
3	**Pressure testing:** (Practical session x2 groups)	3. To observe how players performed and reacted in pressured situations. 4. To encourage athletes to reflect on their thoughts and feelings following pressure testing to

		facilitate self-awareness.
4	**Performing under pressure**: (Interactive workshop x2 groups)	3. To discuss reflections during the practical session and how the athletes' thoughts and feelings. 4. To develop the athletes' abilities to recognize and control their thoughts and feelings during pressurized situations.
5	**Emotional Control:** (Interactive workshop x2 groups)	3. To help athletes understand the role of emotions in elite sport and how they relate to sporting performance. 4. To help athletes develop ways to regulate their emotions and enhance sporting performance.

Recommendations

Following the delivery of the programme all athletes were asked to fill out a form evaluating the effectiveness of the psychological support programme. Meetings also took place with relevant stakeholders discussing the impact of the programme. Themes that emerged from player feedback included finding the pressure testing and performing under pressure workshops the most effective, with feedback suggesting it has helped them to understand how they react under pressure and develop effective coping strategies to enhance performance. In terms of developing the programme, players reported the desire for more one-to-one support to be offered, so this is an area that should be taken into consideration when designing any future psychological support programmes. Coaching staff reported they felt the programme was a success and echoed comments made by the athletes regarding the success of performing under pressure workshops.

Executive Summary:

This report provides an overview and evaluation of the agreed psychological skill development programme that was delivered over the winter training period 17-18. As was agreed, the programme focused on helping players understand how they react in pressured situations and to help them develop skills to perform under pressure. Players also completed a psychological performance profile which identified their strengths and weaknesses. Discussions with coaching staff and athletes have highlighted the effectiveness of the programme. However, as this is the cricket boards first attempt at introducing a psychological skills programme, long-term benefits cannot yet be determined. Future recommendations for improvement include offering more individual support to the athletes, as was highlighted in the evaluation forms.

Teaching Case Study

Delivering a psychologically informed coach education programme to academy football coaches

This case presents a reflective account of a trainee sport psychologist delivering a series of coach education workshops within an English football academy. To assess the current learners' needs, a focus group coupled with informal chats, was adopted. Coaches reported a desire to be informed on supporting transitions, developing resilience, coaching decision making and creating a high-performance culture. The psychologist took a learner-focused approach, which involved creating a cooperative learning environment accounting for the learner’s current knowledge and experience (Postareff & Lindblom-Ylanne, 2008). Five workshops were delivered mid-season over four weeks. To assess the effectiveness of the workshops at achieving their learning objectives and to enhance the quality of future workshops further, coaches were required to complete an evaluation form and take part in a focus group. Feedback from coaches was positive and suggested they were better able to implement psychology into training sessions. Coaches also offered suggestions for improvements to the programme, which mainly included delivering more practical focused workshops.

This case study provides a reflective account of a trainee sport and exercise psychologist designing and delivering a psychologically informed coach education programme. The case study presents how the needs of the organization were assessed, the programme offered, and how the effectiveness of the programme towards meeting its intended learning outcomes was measured. The educational programme was given at a coach level, to all academy coaching staff over one month during a season. Research has highlighted the competitive and masculine nature of professional football (Cushion & Jones, 2006; Kelly & Waddington, 2006) and the impact this has on shaping the lives of youth academy footballers (Brown and Potrac, 2009). Therefore, the programmes primary focus was to facilitate coaching staff in creating an environment for psychological development, which in turn will enhance performance (Champ et al., 2018). A learner-focused approach (student-centred) was taken, which emphasizes theoretical knowledge, the application of knowledge, critical thinking, learners taking responsibility, and learners being active creators of their understanding (Postareff & Lindblom-Ylanne, 2008). This approach also takes into consideration the prior knowledge and experiences of students when planning learning and views the relationship between educator and student as cooperative (Samuelowicz &Bain, 1992).

Context

Practitioner

The practitioner was a trainee sport, and exercise psychologist enrolled onto a Professional Doctorate, which combines the British Psychological Society (BPS) stage 2 with a doctoral qualification. I was employed to lead the psychological support programme at a professional football club's academy. I had previously worked in professional women's football, and at a minor county crickets club academy, this was my first role working in men's football, however. My practitioner philosophy very much influences my approach to teaching and dissemination. My philosophy of practice is to provide holistic support of the person and the athlete, with the understanding that performance and wellbeing are linked (Brady & Maynard, 2010) and is underpinned by Humanistic psychology principles. While also recognizing that the athlete is the expert, and my role as the practitioner is to facilitate them through positive behaviour change. Like my practitioner philosophy, my philosophical, pedagogical approach matches my core values and beliefs (Poczwardowski et al., 2004). My approach is to facilitate the development of knowledge, whereby I guide the process to help students (coaches) discover by themselves, focusing on a learning-focused (student-centred) environment (Postareff & Lindblom-Ylanne, 2008). With this approach, I believe each learner has specific needs and takes responsibility for their learning (Postareff & Lindblom-Ylanne, 2008) and are active creators of knowledge while developing their conceptions (Trigwell et al., 1994). Within the context of this case study, it was also essential to consider the learner, the learners (coaches), were all adults with significant experience of a football environment. Therefore, I wanted to ensure learners would actively contribute to the educational process, account for their current knowledge and expertise, and allow opportunities for learners to reflect on their coaching practice (Kaufman, 2003).

The Club

The football club was a professional team based in England and was one of the 92 UK teams that make up the English Football League. The club was a category two football academy as part of the Elite Player Performance Plan (EPPP) with a proud record of producing players that go on to play at the highest level. The club had requested psychological support to players, parents and coaching staff across the three development phases (foundation development phase, youth development phase, and professional development phase). The support was to be delivered through a variety of methods (e.g., workshops, one-to-one support). The club had expressed a desire to expand on support offered to coaching staff (see appendix 1 for academy psychology coach support plan). Discussions with the academy director had suggested some members of the coaching staff would be more receptive to support than others. Eubank et al. (2014) highlighted challenges associated with building relationships and establishing credibility with numerous individuals (e.g., coaches and support staff) to be pertinent.

Similarly, Pain and Harwood (2004) identified that clarity of services offered, problems fitting in, and negative connotations of sport psychology to be salient barriers to sport psychology. Despite some of the potential obstacles, the academy director had requested some educational coach workshops to be delivered to all full-time coaching staff to act as CPD for coaches. He had asked for five sessions to be provided during January and then any extra sessions to be delivered on an ad-hoc basis.

Needs Assessment

I had been offered a timeslot of four weeks' mid-season to deliver five workshops to coaches. This time was chosen as it was the quietest time of the year for coaches, and the academy director wanted something delivered during the present season (I had not joined the organisation until after pre-season). Conducting a needs analysis of an organisation aims to provide the practitioner with a clearer understanding of their psychological needs (Keegan, 2016). To assess the learning needs of the coaching staff, I arranged for an informal meeting, which involved a focus group, allowing the opportunity for all members to share their thoughts for the programme (Greenbaum, 1998). While developing the programme, I engaged in informal conversations with coaches to discuss topic ideas, which allowed me to make minor adjustments to meet their needs better. By adopting different approaches, I was better able to understand the client's needs from a more holistic perspective (Arksey & Knight, 1999).

Focus Group

The focus group took place informally in a team meeting room with a fair representation of coaches, while not all coaches could attend, at least one coach was present from each of the development phases. This session aimed to engage in a group discussion around psychological topics and identify as a group their expectations, needs and goals. Pain and Harwood (2004) had suggested that coaches often view themselves as amateur psychologists. Therefore, they may appreciate consultants who actively seek their input. Similarly, Kaufman (2003) highlighted how it is critical to take the learners' knowledge and experience into account and how adult learners should have the opportunity to contribute to the educational process actively. I had prepared a few questions, for example, how do you think psychology can help you develop players? However, I primarily adopted a flexible approach and followed the direction of the group discussion. This flexibility allowed for ample opportunity for coaches to elaborate on topics of importance (Gratton & Jones, 2004), while also validating and clarifying information discussed within the group (Ennis & Chen, 2012). I was conscious of a few coaches dominating the discussion and, therefore, not developing a programme that met the whole needs of the group. To avoid dominating voices during group discussions, I actively encouraged all coaches to engage in the discussion and offer an opinion (Gratton & Jones, 2004), for example, directly asking the view of a coach who may have been quiet during the session.

Key themes began to emerge throughout the discussions regarding how psychology can support the coaching staff. These themes were determined based on suggestions made by multiple coaches or a suggestion that the group on a whole seemed to agree with. It is also important to note, that the coaches often spoke in laymen's terms, for example, *"we need to develop tough players, that can hack it"*. Often, this required the ability to read between the lines and translate this into a psychological topic (e.g., resilience). In my role as facilitator, I would then feed this back to the group, for example *"it sounds like you are discussing X, Y and Z, how does a session on X sound?"* to which the group either agreed with or felt there were better alternatives. Primarily, the themes discussed were creating a high-performance culture of winning while maintaining enjoyment, developing resilience, improving decision making, and preparing players for the next step (i.e., YDP to PDP or PDP to professional). Resilience was a reoccurring 'buzz word,' coaches felt that with resilience, players would be better positioned to make transitions and become better footballers. Talent development research (e.g., Holt & Dunn, 2004; Holt & Mitchell, 2006; Mills et al., 2012) identified resilience as a salient factor that positively influenced player development. Based on this information, I began to develop a programme to follow up with coaches to make any required amendments.

Informal Chats

Throughout the design of the programme, I would regularly engage in informal conversations with coaches, sharing ideas, and making some adjustments when necessary. These conversations also allowed me to develop relationships with coaches further while gaining a clearer understanding of the needs of the coach (Fifer et al., 2008). These conversations often took place during training sessions or more informally during lunch and free time. While these conversations did allow me to refine the programme, they were primarily to build relationships with the coaching staff. While it is recognised that the relationship with the athlete is essential for effective delivery (Holt & Strean, 2001). The ability to build and develop multiple relationships when working in a high-performance environment is necessary to offer an effective service that is expected from sport psychologists (Eubank et al., 2014). I felt that having a good relationship with coaches before delivering the programme would encourage buy-in. Similarly, it helped to reduce anxieties I had about delivering to the coaching staff.

Programme Delivery

Based on the needs of the coaches identified from the focus group and informal conversations, and given the timeframe to deliver, five workshops were offered over four weeks (see appendices 2-6 for PowerPoint slides). The content of the programme included; an introduction to the programme, what is high-performance culture, developing resilience, managing transitions, and coaching decision making. Upon completion of the programme, coaches should; 1) Have a clearer understanding of psychological principles underpinning sport; 2) Be able to apply relevant psychological principles to training sessions, and 3) Understand the challenges players may experience when transitioning through phases and how best to support them. These outcomes were determined based on the academy psychology programme's objectives for coaches, which formed part of the wider academy sport science and medicine department strategy. Similarly, my pedagogical approach shaped the intended learning outcomes of this programme. A learning-focused approach aims for the application of knowledge and development of critical thinking (Samuelowicz &Bain, 1992; Postareff

&Lindblo-Ylanne, 2008). To assess whether the programme met these learning outcomes, coaches participated in a second focus group and completed an evaluation form (appendix 7).

The learning climate and teaching approach can influence student engagement (Willis, 1993). Therefore, I was conscious of overloading the learners with PowerPoint slides filled with information and delivering traditional lecturing, transmission-based teaching sessions. This approach has been defined as a method of teaching whereby an educator authoritatively acts as a source of expert knowledge who transmits information to be applied and reproduced by a learner (Girgin &Stevens, 2005). Therefore, in line with my active teaching approach, I kept PowerPoint slides and information to a minimum to encourage active participation and engagement by learners. However, despite the apparent strengths of adopting such as an approach, it does require 'buy-in' and engagement from group members. As sessions are driven by group engagement, should coaches not engage, sessions may lack meaningful content.

Session One

The first session aimed to act as an introductory session, introducing myself, and sports psychology as a profession. While I had good relationships with some of the coaching staff, others, I had not yet formally met. After the formalities of introducing myself, I had explained how I would be available for one-one support, to discuss further on workshops, player support and coach support. One coach joked, *"we all need support, the number of hours we do,"* initially I was taken aback by the comment, but this presented an ideal opportunity to highlight that I am not just here for the wellbeing of the players, but also the staff. This comment led nicely on to a critical discussion point on 'what do they perceive sport psychology to be?' This was not originally part of the session plan. Still, my pedagogical approach of creating a learning-focused or student-focused (in this case coach) environment allows for this flexibility and opportunity for learners to shape the content (Postareff &Lindblo-Ylanne, 2008). I also wanted to use this session an opportunity to enhance their motivation to learn, and I was aware that for some coaches, this was a tick box exercise, and they did not want to be there. One coach had made a joke saying, *"how long will this be, I have to get my haircut later"*, I was quite annoyed by this comment as I felt it devalued my service. However, I recognised that in a sporting environment, you must learn to take 'banter' (Nesti, 2010) so I simply replied with a comment about how he was losing his hair. Being a part of the culture is also crucial for building relationships, research has consistently highlighted that relationship building is an essential characteristic for sport psychologists and also for effective delivery (Sharp & Hodge, 2013; Chandler et al., 2014; Sharp et al., 2015).

To enhance motivation to learn, I followed Wlodowski's (1999) four steps of inclusion, attitude, meaning, and competence. This was through engendering feelings of connection and respect, building positive attitudes, maintaining their attention and interest and through formative feedback. I felt the session was successful at meeting its objectives, there was an informal tone to the session, and many of the coaches were active participants in the learning experience. I felt that for some coaches, much of the content they already knew, having previously had psychological support at the football club. Therefore, some coaches seemed disengaged towards the end of the session, which, while frustrating, I recognise as usual.

Session Two

Session two aimed to introduce the concept of a high-performance culture, what it is, and how it can be developed. Sport psychology research has often neglected organisational factors associated with athletic development (Fletcher &Wagstaff, 2009). From a practitioner perspective, understanding these influences and helping to create and maintain a high-performance culture is a vital role of the sport psychologist (Fletcher &Arnold, 2011; Wagstaff, Fletcher &Hanton, 2012). Therefore, collaboratively educating coaches on how to create and maintain a high-performance culture is imperative and was also a topic many coaches referred to when assessing their needs. As part of the teaching process, I wanted to ensure I considered the prior knowledge and experiences of the learners (Kember &Kwan, 2000) and encouraged the group to ask questions, present opinions actively, and make the sessions interactive to construct knowledge (Postareff &Lindblo-Ylanne, 2008). The first discussion point began by exploring what a high-performance culture involves. Some key themes began to emerge from the group discussion including, tradition, culture and club values. These values seemed to correspond with Schein's (2010) three layers of organisational culture (cultural artefacts, espoused values, and basic assumptions). I found this discussion to be positive, and my approach allowed the learners to ask questions, offer opinions and challenge each other to help to create new knowledge for the group. Despite the positive discussions and generation of new knowledge, an incident within the session left me feeling frustrated. A coach received a phone call and decided to answer during the middle of a group discussion, and after a few seconds on the phone stated, *"I'm alright to go and take this aren't I? This isn't too important"?* I wasn't sure how to react at the moment and agreed, and the coach left the session. I was disappointed. I felt that the coaches had been engaging and valued the session rather than viewing it as something they had to do. So, to be told by a coach they didn't think it was too important angered me. Maybe, by taking this informal approach and promoting discussions that often went off in different directions, some coaches perceived it to be of less importance. However, I still felt my learner-centred approach allowed for the generation of new knowledge through active engagement and discussions. For example, some FDP coaches had developed ideas on how to create an environment that encourages fun, while still producing many of the key attributes required to progress within the academy.

Session Three

Session three introduced resilience, which, based on discussions with the head coach and academy coaches, appeared to be a 'buzz' word. The intended learning outcomes for this session were twofold, 1) for coaches to understand what resilience is (and isn't) and 2) for coaches to develop ways to promote resilience. To begin the session, we started by defining what resilience is (and isn't), I had the group each write down three words or phrases that they associated with resilience. Examples of common terms used included 'toughness,' 'cope with pressure,' 'hard-working' and 'cope with setbacks.' Fletcher and Sarkar (2013) highlighted the multiple definitions of resilience, *"A dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity"* (Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000, p.543) and "*An individual's stability or quick recovery (or even growth) under significant adverse conditions"* (Leipold & Greve, 2009, p.41) are just some examples of the multitude of definitions highlighted within their paper. Many of the descriptions posit that adversity and positive adaption are key concepts within resilience (Fletcher &Sarkar, 2013). Based on these key concepts, I explained what resilience is and then explained what it isn't, i.e., it is not a fixed trait, and it is not the suppression of emotions. I felt the group had developed a reasonable understanding of resilience, and progressed the session to begin discussions on how it can be improved. I asked, "what do you feel your role is, in developing resilience"? I set this as a task, and for the coaches in small groups to discuss and write down their answers. Themes that emerged from this task included giving players more responsibility, not 'destroying' a player if they fail, and developing training sessions that encourage resilience. Following this, I introduced the idea of promoting a facilitative environment, which is an environment that allows the development of psychological resilience (Flecher &Sarkar, 2016). Consistent with my pedagogical approach, the coaches were then encouraged to discuss what they do to promote this type of environment and how they could further develop it. A popular idea that was considered suggested one session a week should be designed to encourage failure. Rather than not inform the players, players would be notified and encouraged to recognise what coping strategies they might need to either increase the likelihood of success or manage the possibility of failure. Reflecting on this discussion, I felt it highlighted the appropriateness of adopting a learning-focused approach. By allowing the opportunity for members of the group to engage in discussions and share opinions, it resulted in the generation of new knowledge for both the group and myself. Kember (2009) highlighted how the quality of teaching was perceived to have increased when moving from a primarily content-focused approach to a learning-focused approach. Overall, I perceived this session to be successful at meeting the intended learning outcomes. Coaches appeared to demonstrate a clearer understanding of what is meant by the term resilience and based on the evidence from the final discussion regarding how to promote an environment that fosters resilience. I felt coaches now had a more precise understanding regarding how to develop resilience.

Session Four

Session four aimed to discuss the challenges players found when transitioning between the different phases as part of the EPPP, for example, transitioning from the youth development phase (YDP) to the professional development phase (PDP). The session also aimed to facilitate coaches supporting players before, during and after the transition. Recognising that the coaches had been former professional footballers, or had at least been academy footballers, I asked them to reflect on the challenges they experienced when making transitions. Knowles (1984) highlighted adult learners bring life experiences and knowledge to learning experiences, and I felt it appropriate to make use of their previous experiences to promote learning. The focus of the discussion tended to be on the physical challenges, for example, playing with older boys, needing to get stronger, quicker and fitter. There was very little consideration for the broader challenges associated with a transition, for example, recognition of transitions not directly related to sport (e.g., junior to senior school or childhood to adolescence). Wylleman and Lavalle (2004) highlighted within their developmental model how transitions away from sport could often impact the athletic development of that individual. Therefore, I facilitated the discussion towards these issues and asked how they, as coaches perceived their roles in supporting the players. While the coaches acknowledged these issues to be of importance, they highlighted that they are not judged on their ability to help players manage broader challenges, but rather on their ability to produce professional footballers. This is in line with previous research investigating culture at an organisational level within academy football. For example, Champ et al. (2018) highlighted how the culture of a football club offered limited identity-related resources, which have been suggested to impact long-term psychological development negatively. This discussion left me frustrated at the fact that coaches all recognised that broader issues away from football, particularly during a transition, are essential and will, at least to some extent, influence the development of the player. However, they had expressed no real desire to move from the cultural norm of focusing primarily on player development. Champ et al. (2018) highlighted that coaches want to survive within the social context of football. As a result, a majority express a desire to adhere to cultural norms and demonstrate successful performance outcomes. Evaluating this session against the learning objectives, which were to facilitate coaches' understanding of supporting players before, during and after transitions, I felt I was mostly unsuccessful at meeting these objectives. Whist I felt learning took place, and the challenges typically associated with transitions where understood, I left the session feeling frustrated at a perceived lack of progress. I felt nobody would leave that session and go against the cultural norms of focusing primarily on player development and not supporting players through wider challenges during a transition (and wider challenges in general to a further extent). I questioned whether this was because of how I had delivered the session, or was this a broader issue associated with football in general. Either way, I felt disappointed in my ability to have a positive impact.

Session Five

The final session involved coaching decision making, and the primary learning objective was to explore methods for promoting decision making in players. I initially introduced the seven steps to effective decision making. This included 1) identify decision, 2) gather information, 3) determine alternatives, 4) weigh the evidence, 5) choose among alternatives, 6) take action, and 7) review your decision. Coaches were then encouraged to engage in a discussion around how to promote these seven steps within a football context. To achieve this learning objective, the discussion followed Kolb and Fry’s (1975) experiential learning cycle, whereby coaches would firstly engage in a conversation around how they can encourage decision making in players (concrete experience). This would allow coaches to reflect on their understanding of improving decision making and relate it to previous experiences (reflective observations). In turn, this process would give rise to new ideas and further encourage discussions (abstract conceptualisation). Finally, following the conclusion of the session, coaches would be able to apply new methods to the real world and observe the results (active experimentation). However, in terms of assessing learning, this is something that would be required to be reviewed over time due to the expectation that learners are engaged in a continuous process of experimentation, reflection, and refinement. Learning has been suggested to be most effective when it is grounded in experience (Train &Elkin, 2001) and when the learner actively reflects on this experience (Dewey, 1938). Therefore, to determine the effectiveness of this session, a follow-up session was planned at a later date. This session would involve coaches reflecting on what they had delivered to enhance decision making and their perceived success at doing so. However, this session was not formally able to take place due to repeated scheduling clashes. However, I was able to meet with coaches informally. The feedback from these meetings had indicated that the discussions within the group had prompted fresh ideas, and based on their reflections, they felt some players had shown signs of improved decision making.

Evaluation

Recapping on the learning objectives, which were, coaches should; 1) Have a clearer understanding of psychological principles underpinning sport; 2) Be able to apply relevant psychological principles to training sessions, and 3) Understand the challenges players may experience when transitioning through phases and how best to support them. Assessing whether the programme was successful at meeting these intended learning objectives involved coaches completing a programme evaluation form, which asked coaches to rate their learning experience on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest afforded grade. Coaches were also asked a series of questions related to each of the key topics and were encouraged to provide qualitative feedback. A focus group also took place four weeks following the completion of the programme to evaluate the effectiveness of any new methods the coaches had implemented as a result of the programme and receive further feedback on the programme. This process would also act as quality assurance, allowing the opportunity for learners to give feedback and further improve the programme. While these methods would primarily rely on honesty from the learners, more formal assessment methods such as examinations were deemed not appropriate given the context the programme was delivered, running the risk of losing respect and credibility with the coaching staff. However, formative methods such as recapping questions at the end of each session took place to assess learning.

Feedback from the evaluation forms was positive; all coaches rated the programme as four out of five or higher, suggesting they viewed the programme as a useful learning experience. Similarly, qualitative feedback was also positive; for example, when asked whether they have been able to apply anything they have learned from the workshops into their training sessions. Coaches positively reported that the discussion of a resilience training session where players are likely to fail, and as such told to prepare coping strategies to help manage failure and/or increase the chances of success, without informing the players of specific strategies to employ. They suggested this enhanced player’s self-awareness, something which would be useful during match play. Mills et al. (2012) have highlighted how factors such as awareness and resilience are essential attributes within youth development. There were some areas for improvement; for example, coaches had suggested making more sessions practical based. Coaches primarily work on the training field, therefore, delivering more practical based sessions may have resulted in coaches engaging in a deeper level of understanding. This suggestion resonated with me. I have never delivered a practical based session with coaches, although the benefits of doing so seem significant. I envisage the session involving small groups of coaches delivering to each other, followed by a collective reflective feedback session. For example, coaches could prepare a psychologically informed session, deliver this session to their peers and then conclude with reflective feedback from coaches. This could also be supplemented with a one-to-one session with myself following the session for further feedback. Although, wider reading and discussions with my peers and supervisors is needed to address this gap in my knowledge.

The focus group was attended by most coaches who participated in the workshops as part of the programme. The focus group aimed to provide an opportunity for coaches to discuss their experiences of the programme after they had, had time to reflect on the content and apply some of the key discussion points. As with the focus group that underpinned the needs analysis, preset questions were flexible, allowing for opportunities to elaborate on topics (Gratton & Jones, 2014). Examples of preset questions included, *"how have you found applying some of the psychological principles discussed*" and *"do you feel you learned more about how to apply psychological principles in training."* The discussions followed much of what had been highlighted within the evaluation forms, with coaches mostly complimentary of the programme. One new point for improvement had been suggested. One coach had suggested supplementing workshops with handouts of key points discussed during the session. He had indicated that at times, there were a lot of good points being made, but it was hard to keep up, and therefore, some information was missed or forgotten. Thus, a handout would further consolidate discussion points and allow for future retrieval of information.

Evaluating the feedback from coaches and my reflections after each session, I feel learning outcomes 1 and 2 were both met (have a clearer understanding of psychological principles underpinning sport and to be able to apply relevant psychological principles to training sessions). Coaches had expressed they now felt more comfortable implementing psychological principles into training sessions and expressed a clearer understanding of the role psychology. However, I felt learning outcome 3 (understanding the challenges players may experience when transitioning through phases and how best to support them) was not met. While coaches displayed a good knowledge of the challenges associated with transitions between age groups and different phases. They had expressed an interest in primarily focusing on supporting the problems directly related to performance. For example, increasing tactical awareness or technical development, rather than supporting the wider issues associated with transitions. Within the context of academy football, the focus is often on developing players to play for the first team and to be sold for profit. While this was frustrating I think for this learning outcome to have been met, a complete cultural shift would have been required at this football club (who base their business model on producing and selling academy players). Perhaps then, the learning outcome may have to be adjusted to better fit within the context of the football club. For example, develop an understanding of the challenges associated with transitions who to suggest speaking to, to support the athlete (e.g. psychologist, welfare office, sport scientist etc.). This places less demands on the coach, but ensures athletes receive support through a transition.

Conclusion

To conclude, the programme was successful at achieving its learning objectives, and coaches reported they found the sessions to be useful, particularly the session on developing resilience, which they said translated best to their coaching practices. Coaches also reported the sessions were more engaging than they had anticipated as they expected content-driven sessions. This finding could be attributed to my pedagogical approach, which aimed to facilitate coaches in their learning through a cooperative learning experience while appreciating their current knowledge and expertise (Postareff & Lindblom-Ylanne, 2008). Initially, many coaches reported the programme to be a ‘tick box’ exercise; however, by the end, appreciated psychological factors more. Improvements suggested by the coaches included designing more practical based sessions to reflect better the environment in which they primarily operate. Reflecting on the programme, I also felt giving summary handouts of key points covered within each session may have further consolidated learning and understanding (Kember &Kwan, 2000). However, I felt this programme was a successful first attempt at delivering a psychological coach education programme. Reflecting on the feedback from learners and my personal experience will ensure the continued development of the future programme and myself as a practitioner (Knowles et al., 2007).

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Appendix 1

Coaching Staff

The Academy Psychologist currently works with the Academy Coaches on producing sport psychology focused coaching sessions. More specifically this involves the development of a specific coaching session for either of the phases (PDP, YDP, or FDP). The aim of the session is to improve a psychological attribute of either the team or an individual. Currently sessions are in place that focuses on the following 6 topics:

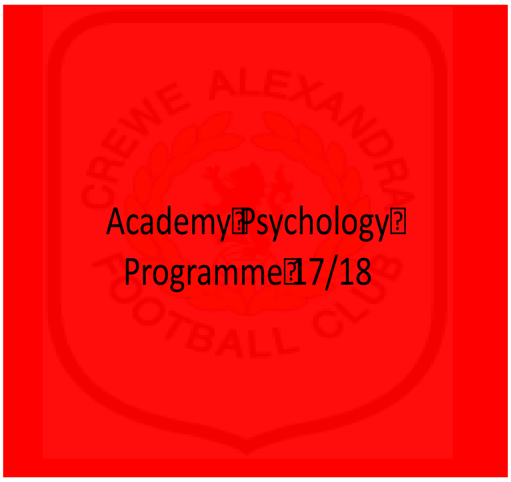
- Building confidence
- Reducing anxiety
- Better communication
- Better emotional control
- Making more effective decisions
- Developing resilience

As from the 2017/18 season the current coach education program in place will be further developed through the addition of a series of workshops. The aim of these workshops will be to focus on creating a high-performance culture within which players are encouraged to develop resilience, improve decision making, develop an understanding of winning and preparing players for the next step. In addition to this, the Academy Psychologist will work with the coaches individually to provide specific support to coaches should they need it. The aim is, alongside workshops to have 1:1 support meetings with coaches every 6 weeks.

Topic	Delivery Date	Coaches

What is a high-performance culture and how can it be developed.	**TBC**	**Small groups – All full time.**
Developing resilience	**TBC**	**Small groups – All full time.**
Mentality	**TBC**	**Small groups – All full time. Small groups – All full time.**
Leadership – Coaches	**TBC**	**Small groups – All full time.**
Leadership - Players	**TBC**	**Small groups – All full time.**
Player lifestyle management	**TBC**	**Small groups – All full time.**
Team identity/cohesion	**TBC**	**Small groups – All full time.**
Building confidence	**TBC**	**Small groups – All full time.**
Dealing with pressure	**TBC**	**Small groups – All full time.**
Preparing for the next step	**TBC**	**Small groups – All full time.**
Evaluation	**TBC**	**Small groups – All full time.**

Appendix 2 – Session One



Academy Psychology Programme 17/18

Psychologist - Mike McGreary

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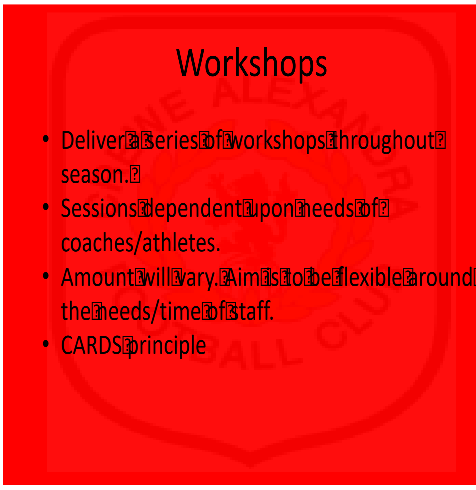
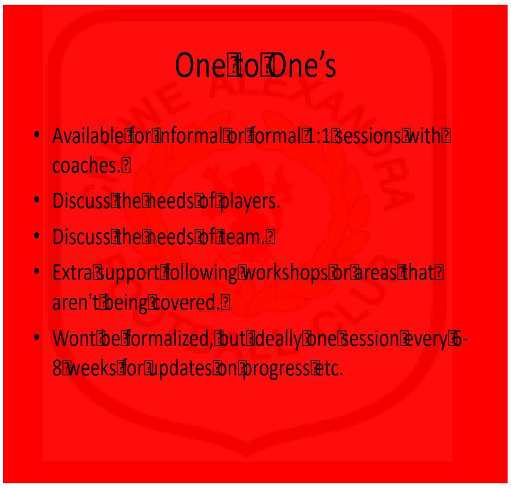
07940983058

- Everton Ladies RTC
- Liverpool Ladies 1st team
- Cheshire Cricket
- Individual athletes
- Doctorate LJMU



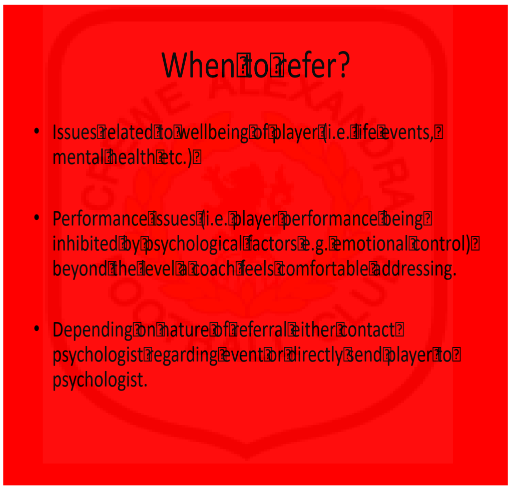
Workshops

- Deliver a series of workshops throughout season.
- Sessions dependent upon needs of coaches/athletes.
- Amount will vary. Aim is to be flexible around the needs/time of staff.
- CARDS principle



One to One's

- Available for informal or formal 1:1 sessions with coaches.
- Discuss the needs of players.
- Discuss the needs of team.
- Extra support following workshops or areas that aren't being covered.
- Wont be formalized, but ideally one session every 6-8 weeks for updates on progress etc.

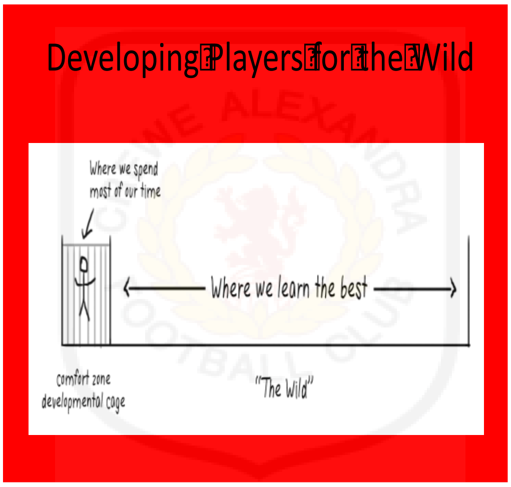


When to refer?

- Issues related to wellbeing of player (i.e. life events, mental health etc.)
- Performance issues (i.e. player performance being inhibited by psychological factors e.g. emotional control) beyond the level a coach feels comfortable addressing.
- Depending on nature of referral either contact psychologist regarding event or directly send player to psychologist.

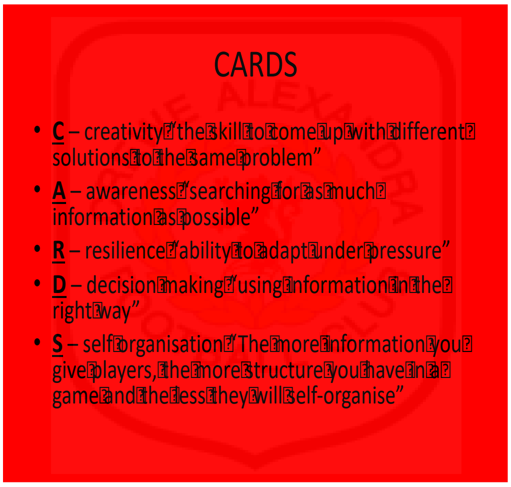
Academy Coaches - Psychology Programme

Topic	Delivery Date	Coaches
What is a high-performance culture and how can it be developed.	TBC	Small groups - All full time.
Developing resilience	TBC	Small groups - All full time.
Mentality	TBC	Small groups - All full time. Small groups All full time.
Leadership - Coaches	TBC	Small groups - All full time.
Leadership - Players	TBC	Small groups - All full time.
Player lifestyle management	TBC	Small groups - All full time.
Team identity/cohesion	TBC	Small groups - All full time.
Building confidence	TBC	Small groups - All full time.
Dealing with pressure	TBC	Small groups - All full time.
Preparing for the next step	TBC	Small groups - All full time.
Evaluation	TBC	Small groups - All full time.



Developing Players for the Wild

Where we spend most of our time
Where we learn the best
comfort zone developmental cage
"The Wild"



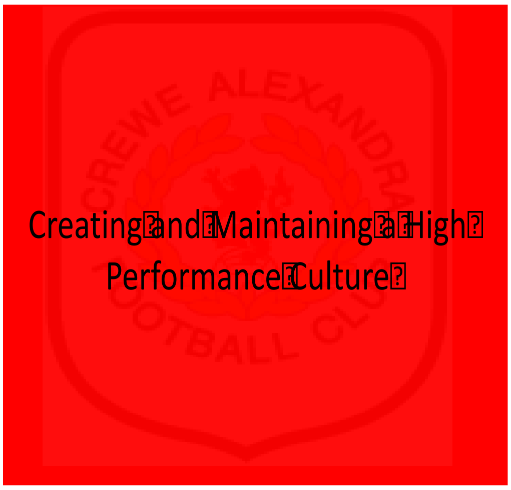
CARDS

- **C** – creativity "the skill to come up with different solutions to the same problem"
- **A** – awareness "searching for as much information as possible"
- **R** – resilience "ability to adapt under pressure"
- **D** – decision making "using information in the right way"
- **S** – self organisation "The more information you give players, the more structure you have in a game and the less they will self-organise"

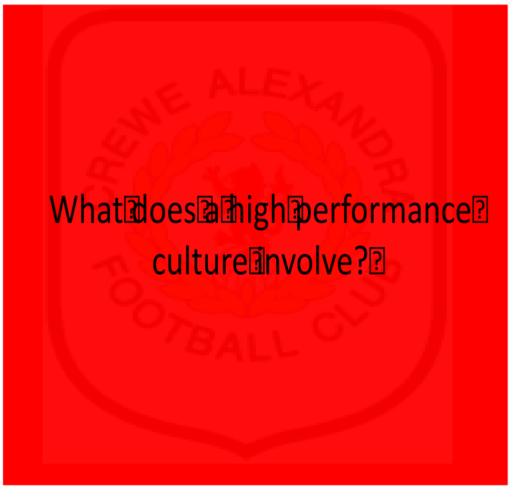
Discussion

- How can we develop the psychological/mental qualities of players?
- Are they are reoccurring themes
- What areas do you want covering?

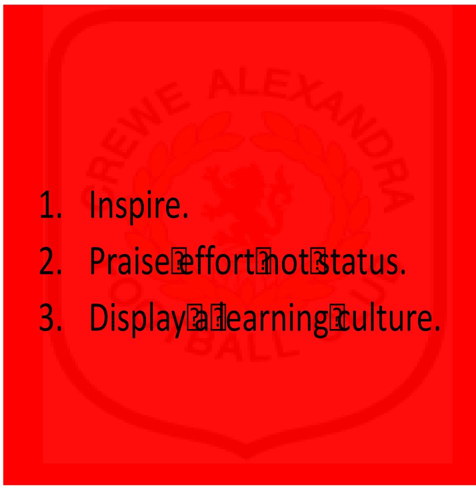
Appendix 3 – Session Two



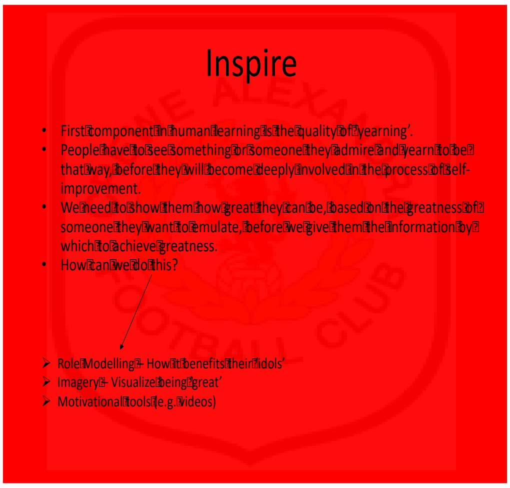
Creating and Maintaining a High Performance Culture



What does a high performance culture involve?



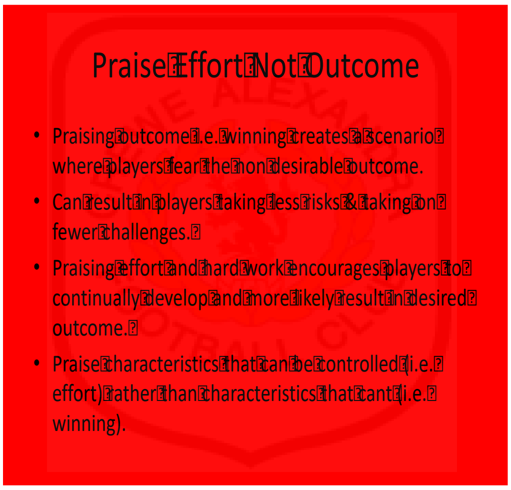
1. Inspire.
2. Praise effort not status.
3. Display a learning culture.



Inspire

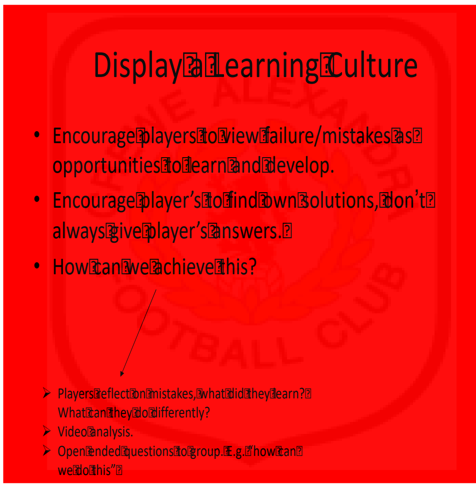
- First component in human learning is the quality of yearning'.
- People have to see something or someone they admire and yearn to be that way, before they will become deeply involved in the process of self-improvement.
- We need to show them how great they can be, based on the greatness of someone they want to emulate, before we give them the information by which to achieve greatness.
- How can we do this?

➢ Role Modelling – How it benefits their idols'
➢ Imagery – Visualize being 'great'
➢ Motivational tools (e.g. videos)



Praise Effort Not Outcome

- Praising outcome i.e. winning creates a scenario where players fear the non desirable outcome.
- Can result in players taking less risks & taking on fewer challenges.
- Praising effort and hard work encourages players to continually develop and more likely result in desired outcome.
- Praise characteristics that can be controlled (i.e. effort) rather than characteristics that cant (i.e. winning).



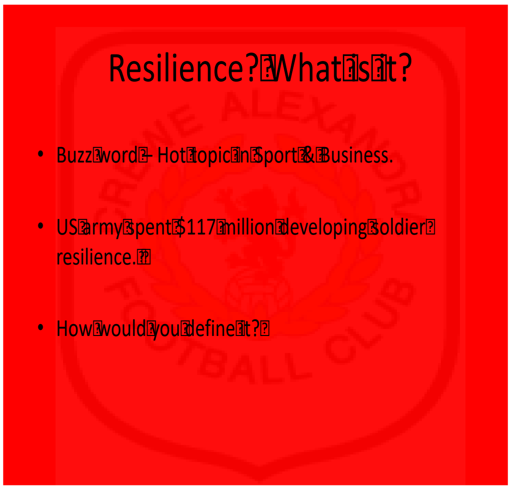
Display a Learning Culture

- Encourage players to view failure/mistakes as opportunities to learn and develop.
- Encourage player's to find own solutions, don't always give player's answers.
- How can we achieve this?

➢ Players reflect on mistakes, what did they learn? What can they do differently?
➢ Video analysis.
➢ Open ended questions to group. E.g. "how can we do this"

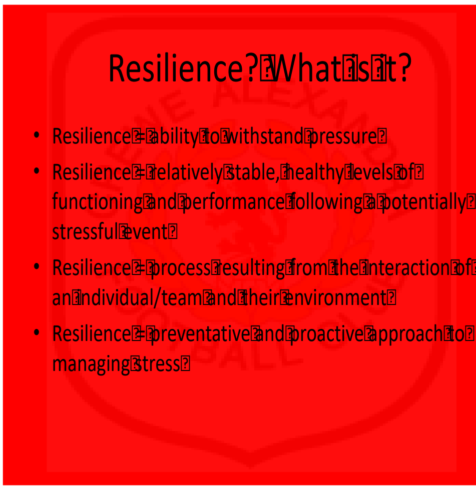
Appendix 4: Session Three

Developing Resilience



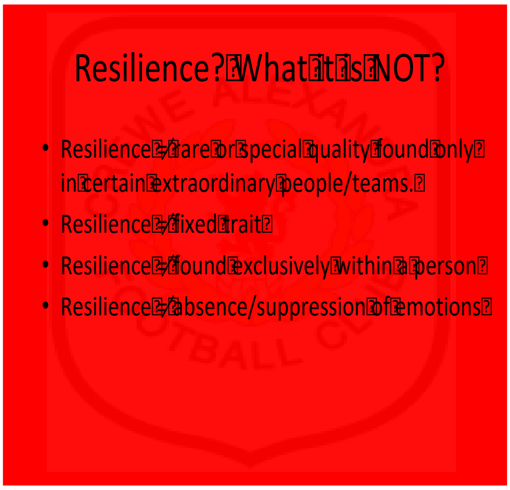
Resilience? What is it?

- Buzz word - Hot topic in Sport & Business.
- US army spent $117 million developing soldier resilience.
- How would you define it?



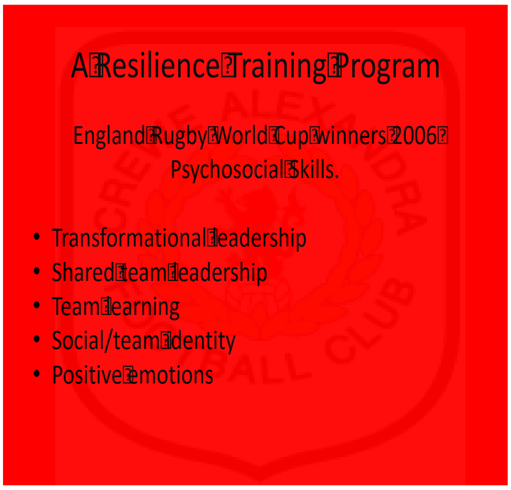
Resilience? What is it?

- Resilience = ability to withstand pressure
- Resilience = relatively stable, healthy levels of functioning and performance following a potentially stressful event
- Resilience = process resulting from the interaction of an individual/team and their environment
- Resilience = preventative and proactive approach to managing stress



Resilience? What it is NOT?

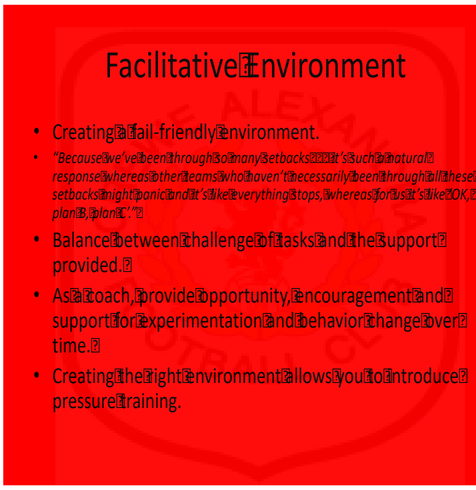
- Resilience ≠ rare or special quality found only in certain extraordinary people/teams.
- Resilience ≠ fixed trait
- Resilience ≠ found exclusively within a person
- Resilience ≠ absence/suppression of emotions



A Resilience Training Program

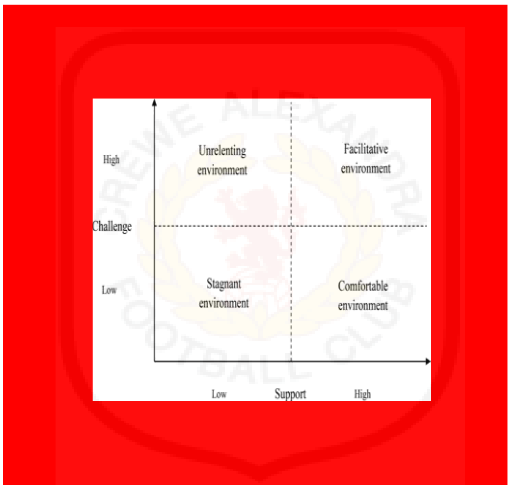
England Rugby World Cup winners 2006
Psychosocial Skills.

- Transformational leadership
- Shared team leadership
- Team learning
- Social/team identity
- Positive emotions



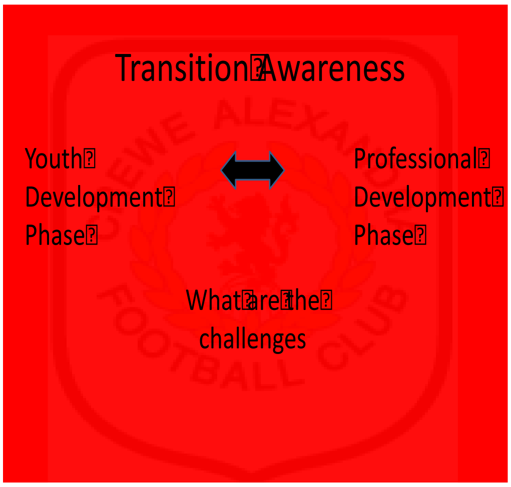
Facilitative Environment

- Creating a fail-friendly environment.
- *"Because we've been through so many setbacks … it's such a natural response whereas other teams who haven't necessarily been through all these setbacks might panic and it's like everything stops, whereas for us it's like 'OK, plan B, plan C'."*
- Balance between challenge of tasks and the support provided.
- As a coach, provide opportunity, encouragement and support for experimentation and behavior change over time.
- Creating the right environment allows you to introduce pressure training.



Appendix 5: Session Four

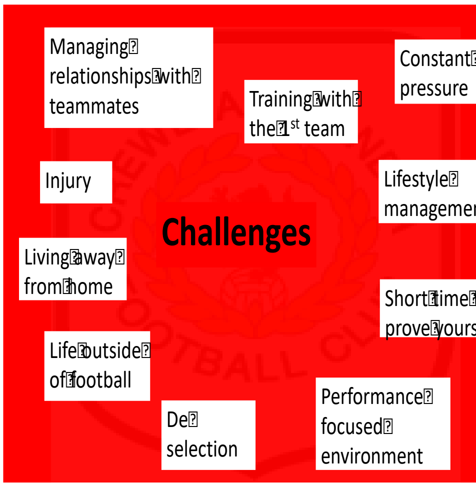
Transition Management


Transition Awareness

Youth Development Phase

Professional Development Phase

What are the challenges


Challenges

Managing relationships with teammates

Training with the 1st team

Constant pressure

Injury

Lifestyle managemen

Living away from home

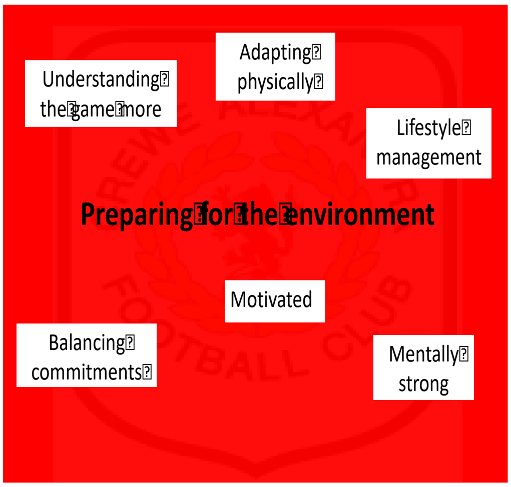
Short time prove yours

Life outside of football

De selection

Performance focused environment

How can you prepare for this environment


Preparing for the environment

Understanding the game more

Adapting physically

Lifestyle management

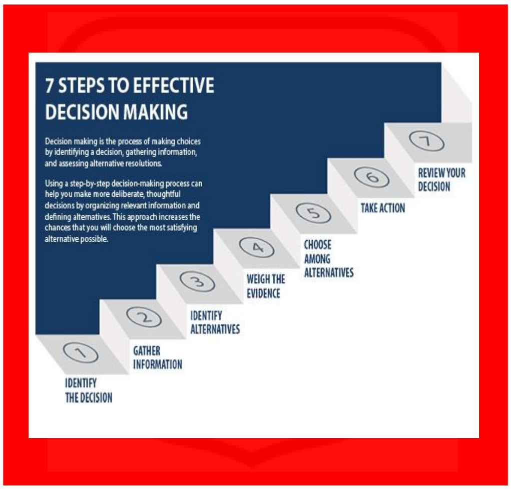
Motivated

Balancing commitments

Mentally strong

Appendix 6: Session Five

Coaching Decision Making

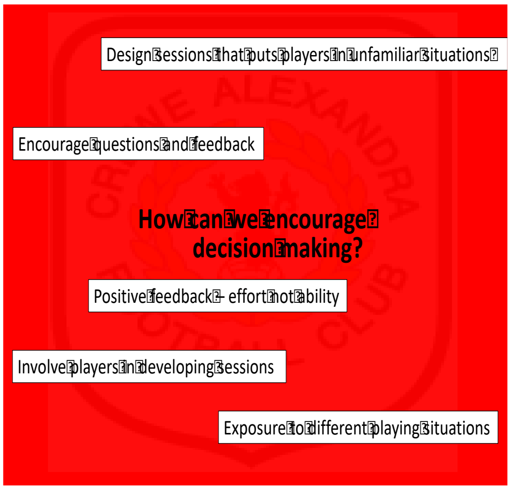


7 STEPS TO EFFECTIVE DECISION MAKING

Decision making is the process of making choices by identifying a decision, gathering information, and assessing alternative resolutions.

Using a step-by-step decision-making process can help you make more deliberate, thoughtful decisions by organizing relevant information and defining alternatives. This approach increases the chances that you will choose the most satisfying alternative possible.

1
IDENTIFY THE DECISION
2
GATHER INFORMATION
3
IDENTIFY ALTERNATIVES
4
WEIGH THE EVIDENCE
5
CHOOSE AMONG ALTERNATIVES
6
TAKE ACTION
7
REVIEW YOUR DECISION



Design sessions that puts players in unfamiliar situations

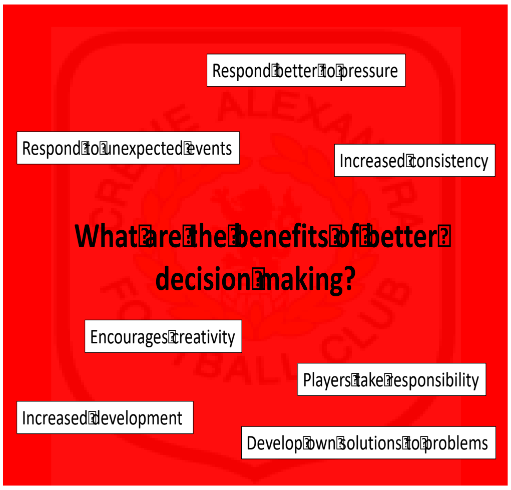
Encourage questions and feedback

How can we encourage decision making?

Positive feedback - effort not ability

Involve players in developing sessions

Exposure to different playing situations



Respond better to pressure

Respond to unexpected events

Increased consistency

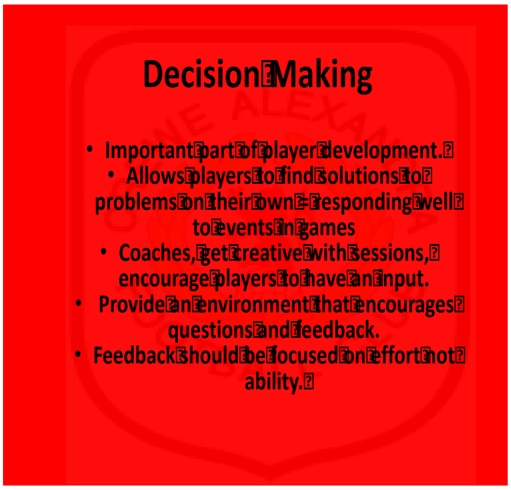
What are the benefits of better decision making?

Encourages creativity

Players take responsibility

Increased development

Develop own solutions to problems



Decision Making

- Important part of player development.
- Allows players to find solutions to problems on their own - responding well to events in games
- Coaches, get creative with sessions, encourage players to have an input.
- Provide an environment that encourages questions and feedback.
- Feedback should be focused on effort not ability.

Appendix 7: Evaluation Form

Evaluation of Psychological Education Programme (2017/18 Season)

NAME: **AGE GROUP:** **DATE:**

How useful did you find the Sport Psychology programme?

(1= not useful at all, 5= very helpful)

1 2 3 4 5

Have you been able to put anything you learnt in the Sport Psychology workshops into a game or training practice?

Were the Psychology sessions helpful in helping you develop new ways to develop and support your players?

Yes No

What session did you find most helpful? Why was this?

What has been a key learning point for you from this programme?

How could the programme be improved for next year?

Teaching Diary

Throughout the Professional Doctorate, I have found myself disseminating information to a variety of populations. This teaching diary presents my development as an educator. Progressing from delivering the NHS national diabetes prevention programme, to delivering to academy football coaches and finally transitioning into an academic position. This reflective account highlights the challenges faced as a neophyte practitioner, and how anxieties and a desire to prove myself often formed my initial pedagogical approach. However, through a process of reflecting on my practice (Galea, 2012), my pedagogical approach developed and allowed me to become more congruent with my beliefs and, therefore, more effective at delivery. My approach emerged from a primarily authoritarian, traditional lecture-based approach to a more collaborative learning experience, placing the learner at the centre of the process. My development was not linear, and this reflective diary aims to highlight the progressive and regressive nature of my journey to finding congruence.

My first real experience of disseminating information was to patients referred to the NHS diabetes prevention programme, where I acted as a wellbeing facilitator. A vital part of this role was to deliver an educational programme aimed at educating and motivating patients to prevent the development of Type 2 diabetes (refer to case study 1 for a detailed account). Within this role, I was delivering to a client group arguably not traditional to sport and exercise psychology practitioners. I found this quite a challenging experience; at the time, I was 23 years of age, attempting to educate individuals, most of whom were retirees, on a range of healthy choices from diets to increasing physical activity. I would deliver to multiple groups throughout the week and found during my initial period in the role, I was often met with some resistance to change. For example, a gentleman in his 80’s had highlighted his way of life had got him this far why should he change (a point that I found both humorous and difficult to disagree with). I was receiving little feedback on my approach to delivery, which initially involved me adopting a more traditional lecturing approach. For example, authoritatively delivering knowledge, viewing myself as an expert, and for the learners to apply and reproduce the information (Girgin & Stevens, 2005). I feel I reverted to a traditional lecture-based approach as this is what felt comfortable and familiar. During my undergraduate degree, my exposure to learning was primarily in a lecture room with 150 people, whereby I was presented information for 2-hours and required to make notes. I was seldom exposed to a cooperative learning environment, not until postgraduate study anyway. Therefore, upon feeling anxious, I went to what I thought I understood and what I was comfortable with, not necessarily what was best for the learners. The lack of feedback was frustrating, I did not know if I was effective (although I felt I wasn’t), or ways in which I could be more effective. This experience was my first position delivering as a trainee sport and exercise psychologist, and therefore, I was desperate to feel like I was having an impact and helping people. Without feedback, I found it difficult to determine whether I was having an impact. I was relying primarily on reflections following sessions to develop my approach to delivery. After a few weeks of delivery, I couldn’t help but feel I wasn't as effective as I could be, this is highlighted in an extract from one of my post sessions reflective notes.

> *“I feel I could have been more effective during delivery today, there was a lack of engagement from the group, I think this was primarily because I spent a lot of time delivering content. They seemed a little bored and switched off by the time it came to them actually being involved in the session, I felt I had already lost them”*

Following this session, and after a period of critical reflection, which is defined as a reflective practice that questions values and actions (Anderson, Knowles & Gilbourne, 2004), I adapted my pedagogical approach. Firstly, I wanted to enhance the motivation levels of the group to want to learn and improve their health. Turning to the literature, Knowles (1984) highlighted how adult learners are practical, like to be respected, and are goal orientated. Wlodkowski (1999) had suggested four ways to enhance motivation in adult learners, 1) inclusion, 2) attitude, 3) meaning, and 4) competence. Therefore, I wanted to include the learners in the learning process, engendering feelings of connection and developing a climate of respect. Briggs' (2014) constructive alignment theory underpinned my evolved approach, which suggests learning should be co-constructed. For example, learners construct meaning from what they do to learn, when learners obtain new material, they link it to previously held experiences in memory. This is supported by previous research such as Kaufman (2003), who had highlighted that learners should actively contribute to the educational process. Following this change in approach from positioning myself as the expert to a more collaborative learning experience, I found my delivery became much more effective, and I felt more congruent as an educator. This finding was primarily based on my reflections, although I observed an improvement in mood within the group, as is highlighted in the following extract.

> *"today's session was much better; the group was more engaged and contributed towards the session. It also felt more natural opting for a collaborative learning approach, I was nervous, to begin with, but the group responded well to it."*

My change in approach to a more learner-centred approach, focusing on cooperative learning (Postareff & Lindblom-Ylanne, 2008), had a positive impact on group engagement and my confidence to deliver effectively. I determined this approach had a positive effect on group based on the frequency of group members engaging in discussions and tasks, which seemingly had increased following a shift to a more collaborative approach. However, despite the increased group engagement, many of the group still highlighted they were not confident in their ability to maintain positive long-term health changes. I began to adopt self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977) into my teaching practice, as self-efficacy theory refers to *"beliefs in one's capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments"* (Bandura, 1986). Introducing elements of self-efficacy theory into my teaching would enhance the learner's confidence in their ability to maintain long-term changes. By creating a climate that would allow learners to draw on the four sources of self-efficacy (enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and affective states), I was able to enhance the group's belief in their ability to change health behaviours in the long term successfully. For example, learners would be encouraged to share successes from the past week, and this would allow other learners to observe the behaviours of similar others to form expectancies regarding their behaviour (vicarious reinforcement). I found this had a positive impact, with learners reporting towards the end of the programme enhanced confidence in their ability to maintain positive health changes.

Alongside delivering the national diabetes prevention programme, I also delivered to various audiences in high-performance sport, all of which I felt helped to develop my pedagogical approach. For example, delivering coach education sessions to football academy coaches, which formed the basis for my teaching case study. My approach towards delivery to this client group was developed as a result of my experiences delivering the national diabetes prevention programme. In many ways, the two groups were similar, they were both adult learners, and some of the group were reluctant to be there. Therefore, learning from early experiences delivering the national diabetes prevention programme, I started with a learner-focused approach. Similarly, with the group being adult learners, I delivered sessions that appreciated their unique experiences and incorporated this into sessions (Knowles, 1984; Kaufman, 2003). For example, recognising their years of experience in football and expertise of coaching staff, encouraging the coaches to engage in discussions, share knowledge and co-construct the learning environment. I found the group responded positively to being included in the learning experience. However, a challenge associated with this role was the dynamic and changing environment that I found myself delivering in. Previously, I had primarily delivered in a healthcare setting, a 1-hour session meant a 1-hour session, rooms were pre-prepared, and attendance was consistent by participants.

On the contrary, football meant sessions could be cut short, changed to a different time, or a different date and often, participants were not always able to attend. I initially found this a particularly challenging experience, but one from which I learned and developed. For example, encouraging 'buy-in' from coaches, while some coaches seemingly started the programme open to psychology; for others, it was apparent they would require a little more work. Fortunately, I was allowed to integrate myself into the academy environment outside of the formal programme delivery. Therefore, coaches who I had felt were initially cautious towards psychology, I spent more time trying to earn their trust and respect slowly. Coaches operate as social beings in a social environment (Potrac et al., 2002). Therefore, a positive perception of sport psychology can further have a positive impact on the broader psychological support programme (e.g., with players). Often, this took the form of immersing myself in the culture of academy football and 'being one of the lads' (Nesti, 2010). For example, while it may seem trivial, taking part in table tennis matches during free time. I felt this personalised who I was and acted as a social ice breaker between myself and some members of the coaching staff. It also demonstrated my competitive edge, something which I felt was respected by members of the coaching staff. I felt by dedicating time to encourage buy-in, this contributed to the overall success of the programme. McDougall et al. (2015) highlighted how the ability to form multiple relationships and demonstrate an understanding of culture to be salient factors for successful delivery in elite football. However, with some coaches, I struggled to build meaningful relationships, not through a lack of trying on my part. With these coaches, I felt the programme was less successful at achieving its objectives. Learning from this experience, I would recognise that some coaches may not be ready for a high-level of psychological support. Therefore, rather than forcing it upon those who are not 'ready' for support, allow the relationship to grow more organically. Eventually and progressively integrating psychology as part of their practice. Likewise, an alternative approach to developing a relationship with these coaches could have proven fruitful. Despite this, following this programme I recognised the importance of developing a meaningful relationship with participants (e.g., coaches, students, etc.), and by doing so, I am likely enhancing the effectiveness of my ability to disseminate information.

My experiences of disseminating information to a variety of populations prepared me for the transition from a practitioner role to an academic role. Approximately halfway through the doctorate, I was appointed as a lecturer in Sport and Exercise Psychology, at what is now the University Campus North Lincolnshire. I was 24 years old when I was appointed, and initially, I felt entirely out of my depth. The university adopts a widened participation policy, whereby many students are mature, returning to education learners. The average age of students at the university was 29, which heightened my anxieties towards delivering the session. I often found myself anxiously thinking about groups not respecting me because of my age and sessions being a disaster. LaRocco and Burns (2006) highlighted how early-career academics could often be apprehensive towards teaching initially. I was confident in my knowledge. I was not confident in being offered the opportunity to demonstrate this knowledge, however. I feared not being respected simply because of my age and this fear fueled my initial anxiety towards delivery. Reflecting on this, as a result of this fear I overcompensated during the first session with the group and spent the first 10-minutes solely talking about my experiences.

The first module I led was Applied Sport, Exercise, and Health Psychology, to level 6 students. To further add to my anxiety, I had been made aware that this group was difficult, particularly concerning psychology modules due to a dislike of the previous lecturer. I genuinely experienced an overwhelming sense of fear of failure, what if they didn’t like me? What if I couldn’t do this? Are just a few examples of the fleeting thoughts I found myself experiencing in the weeks building up to session one. I think these thoughts stemmed from a fear of ‘what next’ if I genuinely couldn’t deliver as an academic. Working as an academic had been a long-term goal of mine, so failure so early on in my academic career would be a disaster. How would I explain to my friends and family that I couldn’t do it? They had been so proud of me, and what if within the first 6-months I was looking for another opportunity. I recognise now I was theatrical; however, at that moment in time, it felt genuine and was being driven by a fear of failure.

Prior to the first session, I had yet to meet the group formally; therefore, the first session (after my self-indulgent 10-minutes) primarily involved introducing myself and then allowing the students to share their stories. The group contained 15 students, so; fortunately, I was afforded the chance to enable them to share their stories within the allocated timeframe. I found this eased some of my anxieties, and I was able to use this session as an opportunity to build relationships with students, understand them as individuals and act as an initial ice breaker. While relieving my anxieties, I felt it also alleviated some of the student’s anxieties. I also decided to use this session as an opportunity to address the elephant in the room – their previous bad experiences of psychology modules and apparent dislike towards the subject. I felt anxious about discussing this topic, although recognized that is was important I did so. This was about setting my boundaries and alleviating any of the students’ anxieties. I felt by addressing this issue, we would be able to start with a clean slate, and any previous negative perceptions towards the module could then be addressed and effectively managed. By doing so, I felt this would increase the likelihood of delivering a successful module. I kept this discussion lighthearted and simply stated I was aware of their previous psychology related experiences. I suggested ways to improve their overall experience. Primarily, by making the sessions a collaborative learning experience and therefore more engaging and (hopefully) more enjoyable. However, in order to do this, I also emphasized that as students, I would expect them to come prepared, engage in broader reading and be engaged during sessions. Reflecting on this, by allowing the students to voice any concerns, I felt it allowed us a group to move forward together on the right foot. I thought this session to be successful at achieving the learning objectives set out at the start. Albeit, these were only to introduce the module and assessments. I determined it to be successful as I felt the group was engaged and responded positively to addressing previous issues. Similarly, one student joked, “maybe this year won’t be as bad as I thought.” Many of my anxieties had reduced, the group was not the awkward and challenging group I had anticipated but rather an engaging and for want of a better word, bubbly group. Despite this, I still felt a strong desire to prove myself; I was the youngest in the room, I wanted to show that despite my age I deserved to be at the front of the room and that they could trust me. From a professional perspective, I also wanted them to enjoy psychology. I love the subject and wanted them to share the passion that I had for the subject.

The next two sessions were not as successful, and I seemingly had gone against my promise to deliver engaging and enjoyable sessions. Out of my desire to prove myself as the expert, and as somebody the students could trust to help them progress, I had regressed in pedagogical approach. My need to feel like an expert meant I felt almost an obligation to transfer to the students this knowledge I had accumulated. Morton (2009) highlighted how, during his initial experiences as a neophyte academic, a similar phenomenon whereby he viewed himself as the ‘masterful teacher.’ After spending the previous 12-months developing, becoming more congruent with my epistemological and ontological beliefs, and more effective as an educator, it felt like I had moved back to square one. My sessions were very much content-driven, I asked very few questions, set very few tasks and I was boring myself, let alone the students. I had utterly abandoned my principles as an educator to deliver a collaborative, learner-centred approach (Postareff & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2008) underpinned by Briggs’ (2014) constructive alignment theory. This change was out of a desire to be viewed as the expert, which seemingly stemmed from a fear of not being respected (and failing). Following reflections on these sessions and reflecting on what I had done well previously, for example, changing my approach for the national diabetes prevention programme. I consciously decided that the remainder of the module would be delivered in a way that felt most congruent and aligned to my beliefs and values. This would involve learners co-constructing their learning environment, being active participants in the learning process and being offered the opportunity to discuss and debate (Postareff & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2008).

Following this change in approach, I once again felt congruent and, most importantly, effective at delivery. Students were seemingly more engaged, discussing key points and debating on methods of delivery. From my perspective, this was great to experience; I was witnessing students understanding, discussing, debating and applying knowledge. For example, during discussion, students were evidencing engagement in more extensive reading (e.g., highlighting points not delivering during lectures). Their enhanced commitment was also evidenced in the formative feedback that I had given to students following a formative 10-minute presentation assessment. Formative feedback is a necessary part of student learning within higher education settings (Yorke, 2003). Their general level of knowledge displayed reflected the change in my approach. Although no direct comparison can be made, I would have been surprised if the students' level of knowledge would have been this high had I continued with my original approach.

My change in approach also coincided with a teaching observation of one of my sessions by my line manager. While initially anxious, this was my first opportunity to receive feedback on my pedagogical approach. I wanted to use this as an opportunity to develop further and address any issues that I had potentially overlooked. The observed session was mostly positive, students were all engaging, and based on discussions within the session, learning as well. My observer had highlighted that the strengths were the relationship I had with the students and student engagement with their subsequent willingness to ask questions (Appendix 1). Upon receiving this feedback, I felt a great sense of pride. Initially, I had set out to develop a good relationship with the students, primarily because of their negative experiences of psychology. Similarly, since my change in approach, student engagement, and a sense of cooperative learning have been the main aim of my sessions, so I was relieved to be commended on that. There were also some interesting points brought up regarding future areas for development. For example, using opportunities to model referencing conventions on slides, I had not realised but on some slides, for example, when referring to a figure, I had not referenced the academic source. Likewise, it was suggested I could further develop critical thinking by encouraging students to engage in more critical discussions. Both points had been areas I had overlooked when reflecting on my pedagogical approach and was something I looked to address moving forward.

I agreed with the feedback from my observer, reflecting on my session, there were times when I felt I could have encouraged more critical discussions. Similarly, reviewing my slides, there were times when I had inadvertently not provided model references. Moving forward, ensuring I am promoting more critical discussions is one area I will look to develop on. In order to do so, seeking CPD opportunities that facilitate educators in promoting critical discussions. For example, seeking further support on the types of questions I can ask to encourage these discussions or in-session tasks that can be designed to evoke critical discussion will all add to my development. One area I wanted further feedback on, though, was the relevancy of the tasks I had set. Students were required to engage in role-play, practicing counselling skills with one another, and offering each other feedback. I was curious to identify whether there were aspects that could be improved. There was some feedback regarding potentially adding a third person to act as an observer, although no real feedback resulted from this.

Following the completion of the module, students were required to complete a module evaluation form. The students were required to provide a mark out of 10 for four distinct areas (Appendix 2). 1) the teaching on my course, 2) assessments and feedback, 3) academic support, and 4) skills and employability. The student's average rating for ‘the teaching on my course’ was 9.4/10 with qualitative feedback (Appendix 3), suggesting students enjoyed the sessions, and they were well explained and structured to support their assignments. Secondly, students' average rating for assessment and feedback was 9.4/10, with qualitative feedback suggesting students were happy with the level and timings of feedback received. Thirdly, academic support was rated 9.6/10, with students reporting they felt they could approach the tutor for support for both academic and pastoral support. Finally, students rated skills and employability 8.7/10, with many reporting they felt skills developed within this module would help them with their future careers. Although some students felt the skills were not directly transferable. In terms of addressing these comments to progress the module, highlighting how key skills developed throughout the module are relevant to careers broader than that of a psychologist. For example, the ability to build relationships, be empathetic and show excellent listening skills are vital skills for many careers both in sport and away from sport. Utilising the student feedback and evaluations to develop my practice further, a few students had mentioned how, during some sessions, my tendency to talk fast was challenging to follow at times. This is something I have been aware of for a while and something I find incredibly frustrating. I find it difficult to explain why this occasionally occurs, for example, typically an increase in speech rate is due to nervousness, which I do not feel this is. Often, I find myself speaking faster when I am more relaxed and passionate about a point. Therefore, it may happen as a result of wanting to get across as much information as I possibly can, when, in reality, taking the approach of less is more can be just as effective. I have tried techniques to help slow down, for example, drinking water in between key points. However, often this is to very little success, this is usually displayed through a realisation mid-session that I have been talking at a speed no human-being can comprehend. At which point, I usually make a joke with the students and try to summarise the key points. Therefore, for future development, this is a key area I need to address within my practice.

To conclude, I feel my journey as an educator has significantly developed throughout the professional doctorate. Initially, starting with anxiety to prove myself, prove I am an expert and attest I am knowledgeable. I then slowly progressed to feeling confident in my ability to design sessions that take a learner-centred approach (Postareff & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2008), focused on designing a collaborative teaching process (Mascolo, 2009). However, this progress was not necessarily linear, and there were times when I found myself delivering incongruently with my beliefs and doubting my ability to be effective. However, through reflective practice, I was able to develop and more effectively manage myself in practice (Anderson, Knowles & Gilbourne, 2004). Progressing forward, remaining reflective within my practice and using feedback from external sources will continue to be key tools for my continued development.

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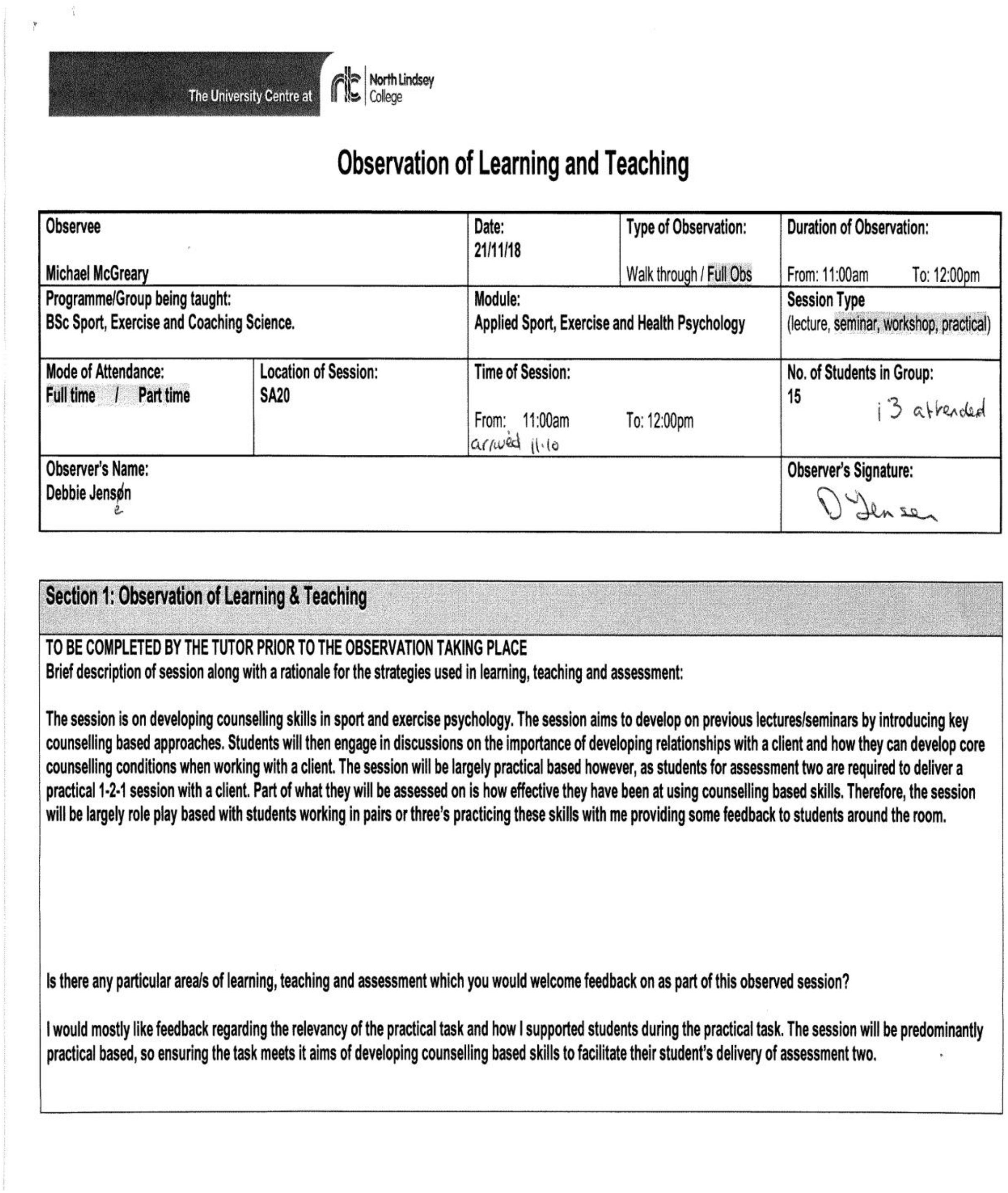
Appendix 1 Teaching Observation Report – Applied Sport, Health and Exercise Psychology Evaluation



The University Centre at North Lindsey College

Observation of Learning and Teaching

Observee Michael McGreary	**Date:** 21/11/18	**Type of Observation:** Walk through / [✓ Full Obs]	**Duration of Observation:** From: 11:00am To: 12:00pm
Programme/Group being taught: **BSc Sport, Exercise and Coaching Science.**	**Module:** **Applied Sport, Exercise and Health Psychology**		**Session Type** (lecture, [✓ seminar, workshop, practical])
Mode of Attendance: **Full time / Part time**	**Location of Session:** **SA20**	**Time of Session:** From: 11:00am To: 12:00pm arrived 11.10	**No. of Students in Group:** **15** 13 attended
Observer's Name: **Debbie Jens~~o~~n** e			**Observer's Signature:** D Jensen

Section 1: Observation of Learning & Teaching

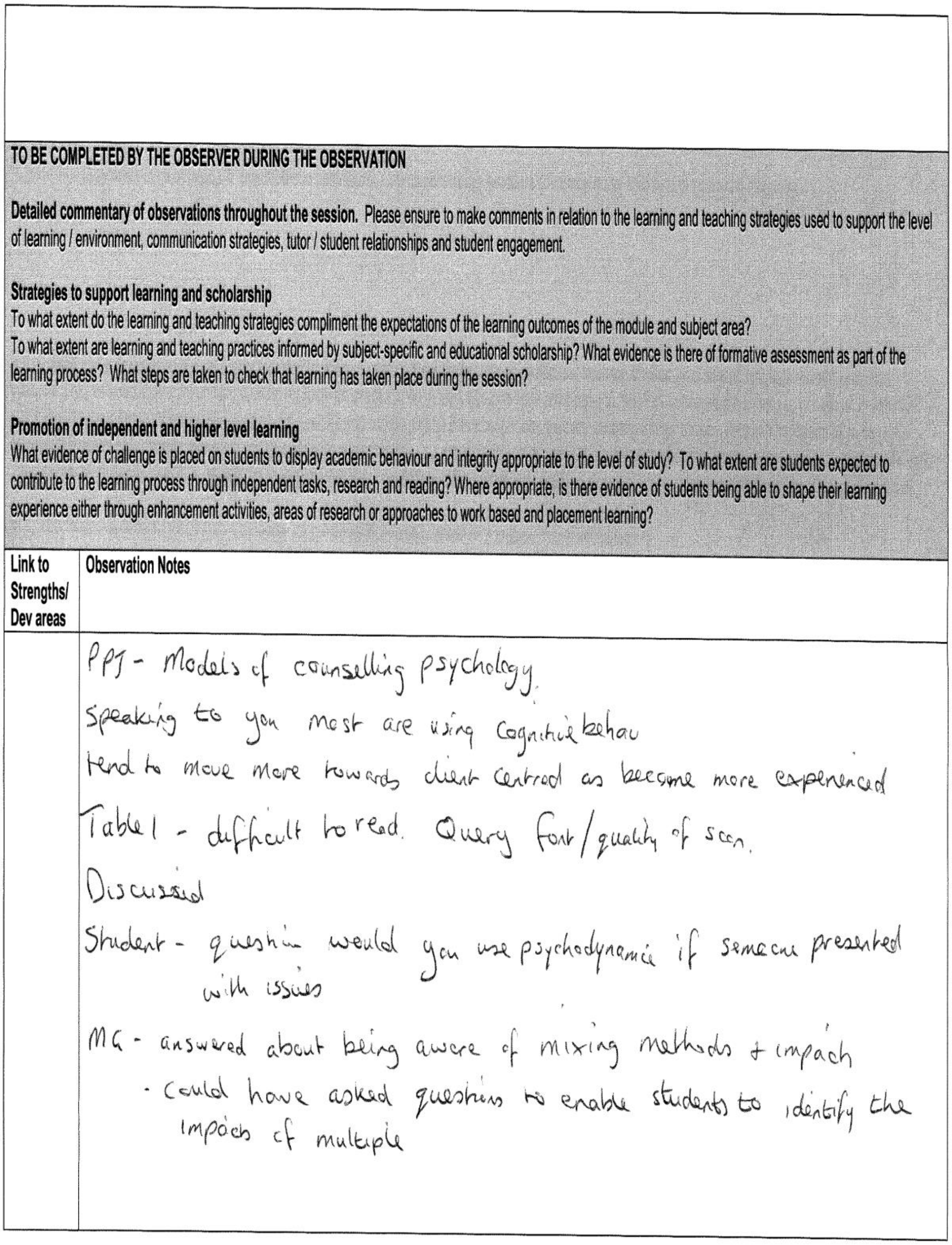
TO BE COMPLETED BY THE TUTOR PRIOR TO THE OBSERVATION TAKING PLACE

Brief description of session along with a rationale for the strategies used in learning, teaching and assessment:

The session is on developing counselling skills in sport and exercise psychology. The session aims to develop on previous lectures/seminars by introducing key counselling based approaches. Students will then engage in discussions on the importance of developing relationships with a client and how they can develop core counselling conditions when working with a client. The session will be largely practical based however, as students for assessment two are required to deliver a practical 1-2-1 session with a client. Part of what they will be assessed on is how effective they have been at using counselling based skills. Therefore, the session will be largely role play based with students working in pairs or three's practicing these skills with me providing some feedback to students around the room.

Is there any particular area/s of learning, teaching and assessment which you would welcome feedback on as part of this observed session?

I would mostly like feedback regarding the relevancy of the practical task and how I supported students during the practical task. The session will be predominantly practical based, so ensuring the task meets it aims of developing counselling based skills to facilitate their student's delivery of assessment two.



TO BE COMPLETED BY THE OBSERVER DURING THE OBSERVATION

Detailed commentary of observations throughout the session. Please ensure to make comments in relation to the learning and teaching strategies used to support the level of learning / environment, communication strategies, tutor / student relationships and student engagement.

Strategies to support learning and scholarship
To what extent do the learning and teaching strategies compliment the expectations of the learning outcomes of the module and subject area?
To what extent are learning and teaching practices informed by subject-specific and educational scholarship? What evidence is there of formative assessment as part of the learning process? What steps are taken to check that learning has taken place during the session?

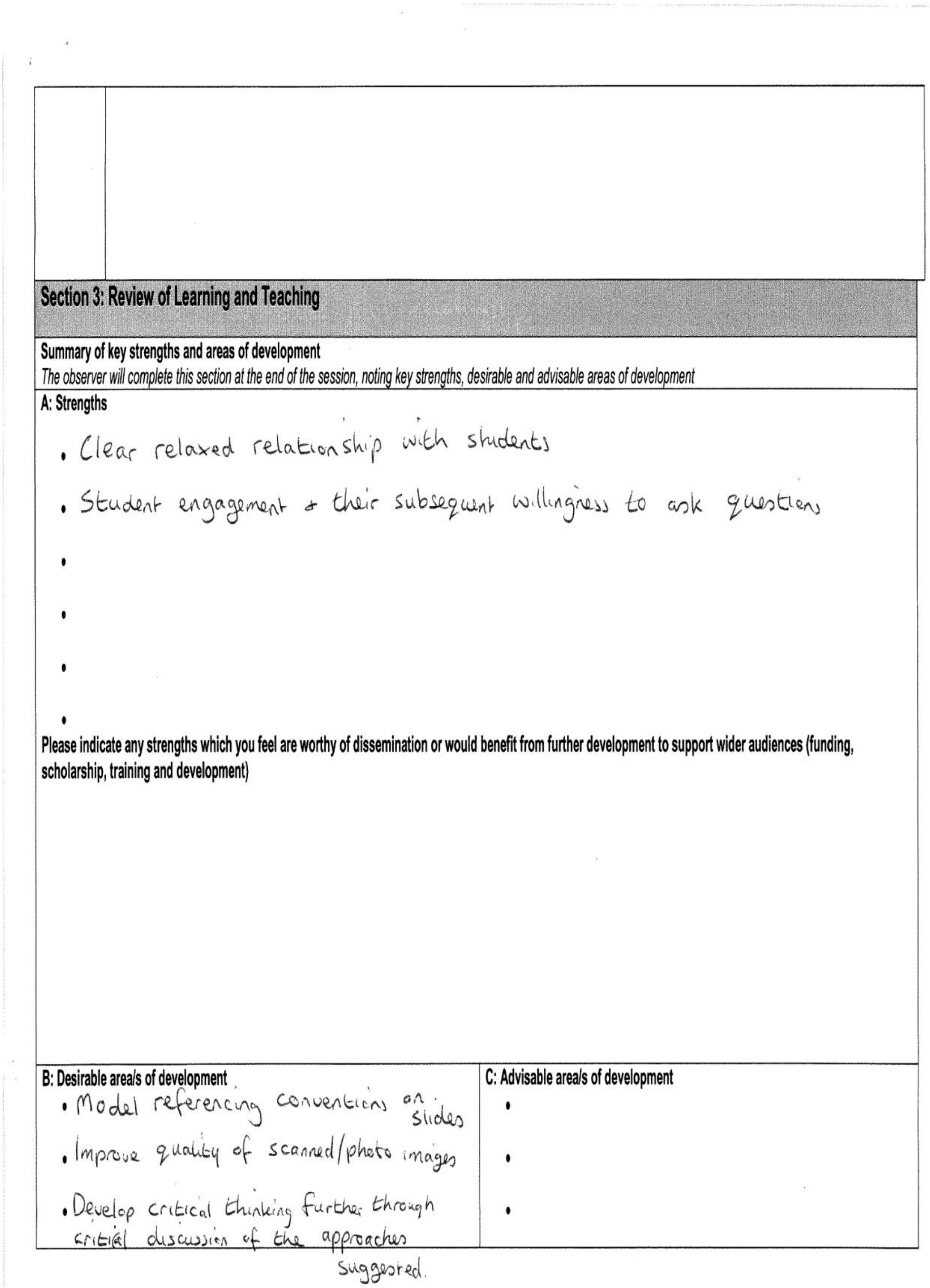
Promotion of independent and higher level learning
What evidence of challenge is placed on students to display academic behaviour and integrity appropriate to the level of study? To what extent are students expected to contribute to the learning process through independent tasks, research and reading? Where appropriate, is there evidence of students being able to shape their learning experience either through enhancement activities, areas of research or approaches to work based and placement learning?

Link to Strengths/ Dev areas	**Observation Notes**
	PPT - Models of counselling psychology. Speaking to you most are using Cognitive behav tend to move more towards client centred as become more experienced Table 1 - difficult to read. Query font/quality of scan. Discussed Student - question would you use psychodynamic if someone presented with issues MG - answered about being aware of mixing methods + impact · Could have asked questions to enable students to identify the impact of multiple

	Role play
Link to Strengths/ Dev areas	**Observation Notes**
	Practical task - all students engaged in role play Placed in pairs based on who they are set next too - could limit experience as they have a good relationship with this person MG went and listened to each group and provided some feedback Consider adding a third person to give feedback on skills
Section 2: Discussion with students	
	Learning and Teaching Do the students feel that they are developing a greater understanding of the subject area? To what extent has this session developed their interest in, and understanding of, this topic? How do they intend to extend this learning further through independent tasks and activities? confidence - Yes
	Assessment and Feedback Are the students aware of how they will be assessed within this module / unit? How do students receive feedback (formative and summative)? How do they make use of the feedback provided to them to promote further learning? assessment immediate Feedback

Link to Strengths/ Dev areas	**Observation Notes**
	How can we build prof relationship, Student could we share something of ourselves Yes - One student - told it takes away from β client Rogers? Gain it through Student - is it about setting up the room M4 - how do you think the room should be laid out 2 Students off task having personal conversation with arms crossed. Working alliance Task + goal - tend to be goal at these ↓ | What + how Bond - professional relation - supporting paper on moodle Could have added reference. Prof Boundaries slide - another poor scan/photo from academic source but not referenced. Active listening - explained Easier to do than explained - task to practice later Formulating questions

Read paper Socrates, Sophistry Sport psychology - model referencing



Section 3: Review of Learning and Teaching

Summary of key strengths and areas of development
The observer will complete this section at the end of the session, noting key strengths, desirable and advisable areas of development

A: Strengths

- Clear relaxed relationship with students
- Student engagement + their subsequent willingness to ask questions
-
-
-
-

Please indicate any strengths which you feel are worthy of dissemination or would benefit from further development to support wider audiences (funding, scholarship, training and development)

B: Desirable area/s of development	**C: Advisable area/s of development**
• Model referencing conventions on slides	•
• Improve quality of scanned/photo images	•
• Develop critical thinking further through critical discussion of the approaches suggested.	•

•			•		
Signature of observer		**Name**	D Jensen	**Date**	
Signature of observee		**Name**	Michael McCreary	**Date**	27/11/19.

Section 4: Tutor Reflection on the Session

Overall, I felt the Session went well. There was a good level of engagement from students, asking questions and engaging in discussions. I was also happy with the standard of students work during the task. However, as was suggested in observers comments grouping people into 3's rather than pairs may have allowed me to spend more time with each group and for students to offer peer support.

Please provide a reflective account following the observed session and the feedback provided to you

You may find it useful to consider the following: How did the session go against what was originally planned? What went well – and why? What did not go as well as planned? Why do you think that was the case?

Included on previous sheet.

Please complete the development plan, indicating the relevant action/s and timescales for completion

Area for development	Desirable / Advisable	Action	Completion date
Model referencing on slides	Desirable	Ensure when mentioning r/s to reference	28/11/18.
Improve quality of images	Desirable	Take better photo's	28/11/18.
Develop critical thinking	Desirable	Encourage critical discussions during sessions with students	28/11/18.

Signature of Observee: **Name :** **Date:**

TO BE COMPLETED BY COGNATE AREA LEADER / JLC EQUIVELANT

Notes:

CAL Signature: GReid **Name :** Gillian Reid **Date:** 28/11/18

Appendix 2: Programme Area Review – Applied Sport, Health and Exercise Psychology

Evaluation

Semester	A	**The Teaching on my course**	**Assessment and Feedback**	**Academic Support**	**Skills and Employability**
Module Title	Applied Sport, Health and Exercise Psychology	**Rating (1-10): 9.4** **Key themes:** Students reported enjoying the module and felt the teaching was excellent, with informative and well-explained sessions throughout. Students felt the structure of the sessions helped them with their assessments and that lectures were engaging with a link to the real world.	**Rating (1-10): 9.4** **Key themes:** Students reported that feedback and grades were provided on time with feedback being fair and constructive. They felt the marking criteria was relatively clear, although two students did suggest it could have been made slightly clearer.	**Rating (1-10): 9.6** **Key themes:** Students reported they could approach the tutor throughout the module for both academic and personal issues. They highlighted that emails were responded to in a timely manner and that guidance was provided throughout the module.	**Rating (1-10): 8.7** **Key themes:** Students reported feeling they could take skills learned from teaching sessions to the real world. Skills such as improved confidence in working with clients, building relationships and ethics. Some students reported not necessarily gaining any extra skills that would be directly related to their future career path, although still found the module useful.
Level:	6				
Evaluation date:	30/01/19				
No. of participating students	15				

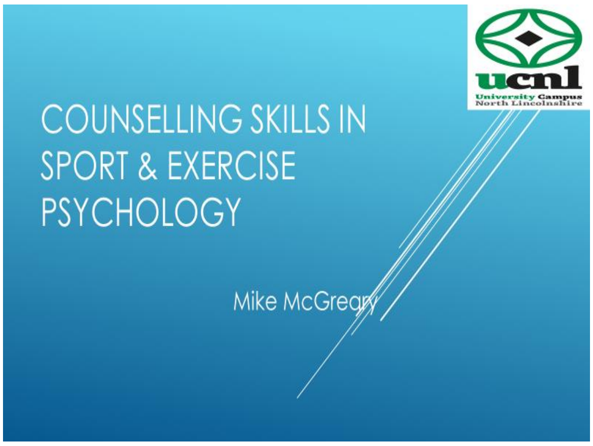
Appendix 3: Qualitative student feedback

DW – Mike's sessions have been really enjoyable this semester. I was anxious entering this module after not enjoying it in previous years but Mike made me feel at ease and made the process personable. While I have no intentions pursuing a career in psychology, I feel there are skills that I have learnt this semester that will help me with my career in coaching.

BH – After being out of education for nearly 10-years I was worried I would not be able to achieve the grades I wanted. Mike’s support throughout the year has meant that I have been able to get a first-class for this module. The sessions were engaging, and I enjoyed the discussions we would have during class, particularly in relation to managing relationships in sport – something I can relate to.

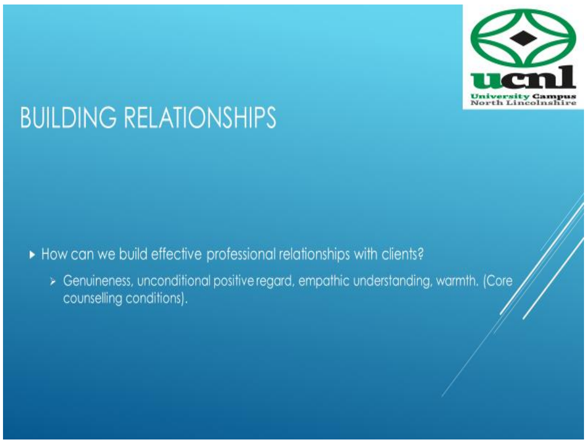
JP - Psychology was the module I was most anxious about heading into the final year. I want to do a masters and felt this may be the module the held me back. However, I have found the sessions really enjoyable, there have been some really interesting debates during classes and Mike is always available for support outside of the classroom. The skills I have learnt here about building relationships will help me with my future career in performance analysis once I have finished my masters.

Sample of Lecture Slides from Teaching Observation Session:



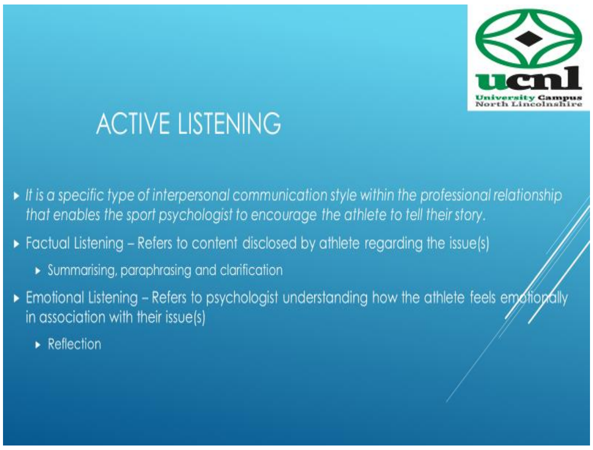
COUNSELLING SKILLS IN SPORT & EXERCISE PSYCHOLOGY

Mike McGreary



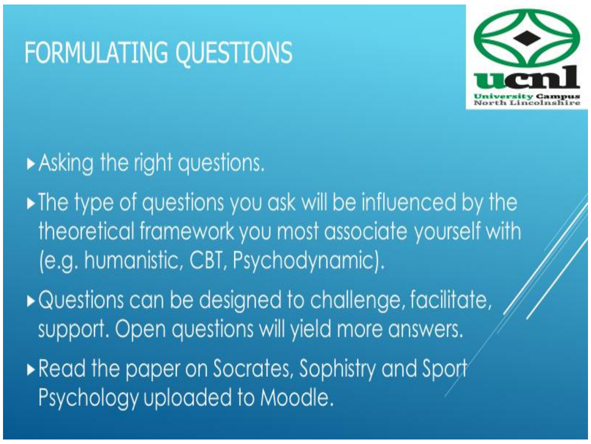
BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

- How can we build effective professional relationships with clients?
  - Genuineness, unconditional positive regard, empathic understanding, warmth. (Core counselling conditions).



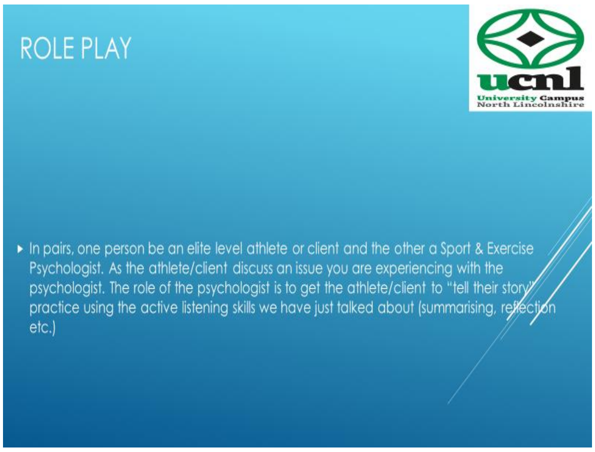
ACTIVE LISTENING

- *It is a specific type of interpersonal communication style within the professional relationship that enables the sport psychologist to encourage the athlete to tell their story.*
- Factual Listening – Refers to content disclosed by athlete regarding the issue(s)
  - Summarising, paraphrasing and clarification
- Emotional Listening – Refers to psychologist understanding how the athlete feels emotionally in association with their issue(s)
  - Reflection



FORMULATING QUESTIONS

- Asking the right questions.
- The type of questions you ask will be influenced by the theoretical framework you most associate yourself with (e.g. humanistic, CBT, Psychodynamic).
- Questions can be designed to challenge, facilitate, support. Open questions will yield more answers.
- Read the paper on Socrates, Sophistry and Sport Psychology uploaded to Moodle.



ROLE PLAY

- In pairs, one person be an elite level athlete or client and the other a Sport & Exercise Psychologist. As the athlete/client discuss an issue you are experiencing with the psychologist. The role of the psychologist is to get the athlete/client to "tell their story" practice using the active listening skills we have just talked about (summarising, reflection etc.)

Think Aloud Protocol in Sport and Exercise: A Systematic Review

Abstract

This paper aimed to systematically review Think Aloud research in sport and exercise, primarily due to the increased use of a Think Aloud in sport research and need for methodological clarity. A comprehensive literature search of online databases, alongside relevant journals and backward searches of reference lists took place. Eligibility criteria included studies adopting Think Aloud as their primary method of data collection, investigating a topic related to sport and exercise and both concurrent and immediate retrospective Think Aloud methods. Moher et al.'s. (2009) The Preferred Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses guidelines (PRISMA) informed the analysis and reporting stages of this systematic review. Fourteen studies were included for review. Results were reported in three distinct sections: study characteristics, research design, and purpose and findings of the research. The review identified some limitations of previous papers, such as ambiguity in defining the skill level of participants and lack of papers stating their philosophical position. The discussion highlights the ability for Think Aloud to extend, support and add to the current literature by accessing information previously unavailable to traditional retrospective data collection methods. The discussion also focuses on ways for future research to enhance overall research quality, for example stating philosophical positions and developing new Think Aloud training methods.

Keywords: Systematic Review, Think Aloud method, Concurrent Verbalizations, Cognitions.

There is a large amount of research outside of sport that has used Think Aloud to track the processes associated with cognitive tasks, for example Think Aloud was used to understand superior thinking in chess (de Groot, 1946/1978; Charness, 1991; Ericsson & Lehmann, 1996) and other cognitive tasks such as text comprehension and memorization (Ericsson & Lehmann, 1996). However, more recently the Think Aloud method has seemingly increased in popularity amongst researchers in sport and exercise over the past decade (e.g. Nicholls and Polmam, 2008, Calmeiro & Tenenbaum, 2011; Whitehead, Taylor, Polman, 2016). Investigating the cognitions of athletes during the performance of a task has been of significant interest within the field of sport and exercise psychology (Eccles, 2012). Our initial investigations indicated some gaps or differences in the use of Think Aloud within these studies. Such gaps include, how participants are trained to use Think Aloud, this seems to be either missing or varies across the research (see Birch & Whitehead, 2019). In addition, although the earlier Think Aloud in sport research looked at cognition and decision making (e.g. Calmeiro & Tenenbuam, 2011; Roca, Ford, McRobert, & Williams, 2011) more recently research has begun to employ Think Aloud to investigate how athletes cope with stress during performance (Kaisler et al., 2013; Swettenham, Eubank, Won, & Whitehead, 2018), or pace during endurance performance (Samson et al., 2017; Whitehead et al., 2018). In addition, many of these studies present different ontological and epistemological approaches to their research therefore, this review aims to provide further methodological clarification and offer suggestions to future researchers using this methodology in sport and exercise.

The Think Aloud method is a concurrent verbal report method developed by Ericsson and Simon (1993), provides a valid means of capturing in-event cognitions for researchers and involves participants verbalising their thoughts (thinking aloud) during performance of a task. There are three levels of verbalizations; Level 1, "*is simply the vocalization of covert articulatory or oral encodings*" (Ericsson and Simon, 1993 p.79). An example of this would be participants simply verbalising their inner thoughts during task performance. Level 2, *"involves description, or rather, explication of the thought content"* (Ericsson and Simon, 1993 p.79). An example of this is participants verbalising inner thoughts alongside verbalising sensory experiences, feelings, and movements (internal representations). With level 2 verbalisations, the participant is required to vocalize only what is in their current short-term memory and focus. Finally, a third level of verbalization (Level 3) *"requires the subject to explain his thought processes or thoughts. An explanation of thoughts, ideas, hypotheses or their motives is not simply recoding of information already present in short term memory but requires linking this information to earlier thoughts and information attended to previously*" (Ericsson and Simon, 1993 p.79). For example, participants are required to verbalise inner thought and speech and then expand on these thoughts by explaining their motives and thoughts. However, as Level 3 Think Aloud requires additional information, this, therefore, changes the sequence of heeded information (Ericsson and Simon, 1984). In addition, Ericsson and Simon (1993) state how this level of Think Aloud may not correctly represent an individual's motives of causes linking to their thoughts and in turn, this may change the structure of the thought process. Furthermore, more specific nuances are provided surrounding the time period of when Think Aloud occurs; concurrent Think Aloud, and retrospective Think Aloud (Ericsson & Simon, 1980). Concurrent verbalisations are when participants are able to report their mental processes as they are experienced (e.g. during the execution of a task). Thus, providing the researcher with access to information in a performer's short-term memory (Eccles, 2012). Retrospective Think Aloud refers to when participants report the information immediately after the completion of a task, for example, immediately following a golf shot (e.g. Calmerio & Tenenbaum, 2011; Whitehead et al., 2015). Some information remains in the short-term memory following the completion of a task. Therefore, retrospective Think Aloud provides the researcher with access to this information (Ericsson & Simon, 1980).

Outside of sport, Think Aloud method has frequently been adopted in cognitive and experimental psychology research. In Fox et al.'s. (2011) meta-analysis of verbal reports they found over 1,500 articles referring to think-aloud and other concurrent verbalization methods. Decision making and thought processes in poker players of varying skill-levels (Germain & Tenenbaum, 2011), mathematic strategies of adults (Kirk & Ashcraft, 2001) and the thought processes of expert chess players (Ericsson, 2006) are examples of research papers that have used Think Aloud to collect live cognitive data from participants. More recently, this approach has been used as a way of gaining insight into the cognitions of athletes. Sport has always had an interest in obtaining and understanding the insights of participants' cognitions during a task (Eccles & Arsal, 2017). How do mentally tough cricketers develop their mental toughness? (Bull et al., 2005), what are mentally tough exercisers thinking during exercise? (Crust et al., 2014) Are examples of research papers investigating mental toughness. These questions highlight the interest researchers have in exploring the cognitions of athletes. However, concerns regarding the impact of TA on task performance has meant that contemporary sport and exercise literature, until recently, has favoured retrospective recall methods when investigating varying cognitions during sports performance. For example, Mulligan et al. (2012) coupled retrospective interviews with video recordings to investigate decision making quality in ice hockey. Similarly, Macquet and Fleurance (2007) investigated decision making in badminton using data collected from researcher observations and data collected from athletes during self-confrontation interviews. Macquet (2009) coupled self-confrontation interviews with video recordings of expert volleyball players' decision-making processes.

A limitation of these papers, however, is the time between the event and participants recall of their experiences of that event, and therefore papers that employ a retrospective recall method may lose vital information through memory decay (Ericsson & Simon, 1993; Nicholls & Polman, 2008). There is also the issue of participant recall bias (Bahrick et al. 1978) whereby participants recall of events are distorted by their success or failure in that event. Alongside this, there have been calls to increase methodological rigour in qualitative research in sport and exercise psychology (Nicholls & Pollman, 2008; Eccles & Arsal, 2017). A main premise of TA is to reduce the amount of time between participants experiencing an event and reporting verbally these experiences (Ericsson & Simon, 1980). Recently, researchers in sport and exercise psychology have more frequently used TA as a method for collecting 'live' cognitions of athletes. For example, investigating changes in cognitions of cyclists competing in a 16.1km time trial (Whitehead et al., 2017), investigating the cognitions of professional snooker players (Welsh et al., 2018), and investigating the cognitive mediations of golfers during a putting task (Arsal et al., 2016).

Despite the salient application of concurrent verbalization methods such as TA in research, there remains some controversy surrounding its use as a method. Due to concerns, it changes cognitive processes mediating performance (Klatsky, 1984), a concern which is also mirrored within sport and exercise psychology literature. Whitehead et al. (2015) attempted to address these concerns by investigating the effects of Level 2 and Level 3 verbalisations on the performance of high and low skilled golfers. The results suggested both levels of verbalisations did not have a significant impact on the performance of the task. Whitehead et al. 's. (2015) findings are consistent with Fox, Ericsson and Best's (2011) systematic review suggesting that verbalization during a performance of cognitive tasks, using Level 2 TA, did not impact on golf performance. In addition, within Whitehead et al. 's study, participants who were instructed to explain their thoughts (level 3 verbalization) slightly improved their golf performance during the experimental condition, compared to the control condition. A potential suggestion for this slight improvement in performance was, participants did not dwell on mistakes, and that TA helps participants to seek solutions (Whitehead et al., 2015), this finding was also similar in Fox et al., (2011) meta-analysis. However, it is important to be explicit in that instructing participants to use Level 3 TA, such as in Whitehead et al. ’s. (2015) will disrupt the natural thought process, as participants may direct their attention to their procedures, which in turn will change the structure of the thought process (Ericsson & Simon ,1993).

Conducting systematic reviews in sport and exercise psychology has been of growing significance. Tod and Eubank (2017) cited since 2016, 8 out of the 11 articles published in the International Review for Sport and Exercise Psychology contained to some degree, an element of a systematic review. While a systematic review into verbal reports has been conducted in mainstream psychology (Fox, Ericsson & Best, 2011), to date, and the author's best knowledge, a review of Think Aloud research in a sport and exercise psychology context has not taken place. The authors believe there is pressing concern about the use of this method, leading to consideration of an attempt to identify the extent and nature of this concern within the extant research and suggestions to address it, leading to the adoption of a systematic review method of identifying the extent and nature of this concern within the extant research literature.

This paper consequently, aims to conduct a systematic review of the extant literature that has adopted TA in sport and exercise leading to future research suggestions and enhanced methodological quality. Therefore, the purpose of the present paper was to review how TA has been used as a data collection method in sports research. Specifically, this paper aims to (1) examine the sample characteristics associated with each included paper (e.g. age, gender, competitive level); (2) review the research design adopted by each research paper (e.g. qualitative, quantitative, mixed, TA level used, training provided, and philosophical approach); and (3) examine the purpose of the research and key findings (e.g. stress and coping, expert vs novice).

Method

Sources

The search strategy initially involved three primary sources in identifying research that has used TA in sport: (a) an online search of the following databases: *SPORTDiscus, PsychINFO, Scopus, and Web of Science;* (b) a manual search of the following journals: *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, Psychology of Sport and Exercise, The Sport Psychologist, The International Journal of Sport Psychology, International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, Frontiers in Psychology, Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, and Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology*; these journals were selected based on their previous records of publishing TA or research in a similar area, and (c) backward searches of reference lists of retrieved articles that met the inclusion criteria. Keyword combinations used during search strategies included*, think aloud and sport, concurrent verbalisations and sport, verbal reports and sport, verbal protocol and sport, and think aloud method with athletes* and truncations thereof. These keywords were selected based on some of the common keywords used in previous TA research in sport settings (e.g. Whitehead et al., 2017; Swettenham et al., 2018; Welsh et al., 2018).

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria consisted of research papers that have instructed and explicitly stated Ericsson and Simon’s (1980) level 1, level 2 or level 3 TA as the primary method of data collection. The current review included both concurrent and immediate retrospective TA. Further to this, the paper must have investigated a topic within sport and exercise and used athletes (novice through to elite) for the study population. Studies must have also been written or translated into English. Included papers had to be published in the year 2008 or later. Finally, included papers must have clearly stated what level of TA they instructed participants to engage in for data collection. This included journal articles, dissertations, book chapters, and conference reports.

Articles that were excluded from the review included research papers that may have used other verbal report methods (e.g. interviews) that were not TA. The review also excluded articles that had used TA but not as the primary method of data collection or papers that had used TA but had not clearly stated what level of TA. This decision was made based on a lack of data available from TA when not used as the primary method of data collection. Similarly, papers published before 2008 were excluded to ensure the most recent papers were included for review. Furthermore, articles were excluded if they had not used athletes (e.g. coaches, support staff, judges) or had not investigated a topic related to sport as the central premise for research. Studies written in languages other than English, or ones that had not previously been translated into English were also excluded based on the lead researcher not possessing or being able to obtain translator software and not speaking other languages.

Procedure

Initially, the search strategy yielded 796 research articles, after inclusion and exclusion criteria had been applied, fourteen studies met the inclusion criteria and were initially included in the review process, the search strategy flowchart is available upon request. While some research papers used TA as part of their data collection procedures, they were excluded from the current review as they had not clearly stated what level of TA participants were asked to engage in (e.g. McRobert et al., 2009; McRobert et al., 2011; Roca et al., 2013). Of the fourteen studies included for review, three papers were multi-study papers. Therefore, the fourteen studies included for review were sourced from eleven research papers. Given the primary purpose of this paper was to systematically review papers that have used TA, Moher, et al. 's (2009) Preferred Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses guidelines (PRISMA) informed the design, implementation, analysis and reporting phases for the systematic review of TA in sports research. However, the authors recognise there are alternative guidelines, for example, PRISMA-P (Moher et al., 2015), which is designed to facilitate the development and reporting of systematic review protocols, of which the authors felt this paper was not. Consistent with the recommendations outlined by the Cochrane guidelines (Higgins, 2011), each study underwent an independent quality assessment check conducted by the lead researcher (e.g. Were subjects appropriate to the study question? Method of subject selection described appropriately?). To assess the overall quality of included research papers and ensure methodological robustness, Trimmer et al. ’s. (2003) quality assessment checklist was used. As per their recommendations, this checklist was modified to satisfy the needs of the user. For example, removing questions that were not relevant to the research question (e.g. If blinding of investigators to intervention is possible is it stated?). A total quality score between 0 and 1 for each study was calculated by dividing the actual score by total possible score. A quality assessment table, which is available upon request was created and provided a summary of total quality scores for each of the included studies, all of the included studies scored over 0.5 and it was, therefore, concluded they met the quality assessment criteria. A second researcher then reviewed the scores, and an agreement was made on final quality assessment scores. Detailed tables were created which are available upon request, similar to those used in previous research (Sallis, Prochaska & Taylor, 2000; Goodger et al., 2009; Park, Lavalle & Tod, 2011), to classify (a) study characteristics (e.g. age, sport, sample size), (b) research design (e.g. level of TA, TA training procedure), and (c) purpose and findings (e.g. stress and coping, cognitions during performance). These areas were chosen primarily to provide readers with a clearer understanding of how TA has been used in sports literature and to help promote the best methodological practice and identify potential future areas of research.

Trimmer et al. ’s (2003) quality assessment checklist was used to assess the quality of papers included for review. Results from the quality assessment suggested included studies scored solidly in criteria related to research questions being sufficiently described, the design of the study being appropriate to answer the question, subjects being sufficiently described and appropriate to the study question and finally, results were reported in sufficient detail. Studies that opted to use statistical analyses also scored strongly in areas related to analyses being appropriate and reported to a sufficient level. However, studies generally received lower scores (e.g. either partially satisfied or not satisfied at all) in criteria related to the method of subject selection being described and appropriate. Often, studies either briefly mentioned or neglected to mention how participants were approached and recruited. Many studies also neglected the role of a control condition, opting to use an experimental condition primarily. Finally, included studies' quality of reporting of potential measurement biases was varied. Few studies cited methods such as member checking as a method for limiting such biases. However, most studies failed to adhere (or failed to mention) to methods for preventing measurement biases.

Analysis

Analysis of the final fourteen research studies was conducted by the independent reviewer and took place systematically in three stages. Hard copies of each study were obtained, and firstly, data was extracted relevant to the studies sample characteristics. Secondly, data was extracted relevant to the study's research design and finally, data relevant to the study's purpose and findings. Summary tables for (a) sample characteristics, (b) research design, and (c) purpose and findings were created and are available upon request.

The sample characteristics of each research paper were first analysed; this involved analysing the type of sport, sample size, participant gender, participant age, and competitive level of athlete participants. The aim of analysing these elements was to provide the reader with a detailed examination of the typical sample characteristics used by TA research in sport and exercise psychology research and to facilitate researchers identifying sampling gaps.

Secondly, the research design was systematically analysed, reviewing whether the TA research papers were either qualitative, quantitative, mixed or other. This process also involved identifying whether authors had identified the papers' philosophical position and approach to data analysis. The level of TA used by researchers was also reviewed (e.g. Level, 1, 2 or 3) while also reviewing whether TA training was provided to participants before data collection. The aim of analysing research designs was to provide an in-depth analysis of methodological aspects of the studies, identify trends in data analysis, and finally to facilitate researchers developing better methods in the future.

Finally, the purpose and findings of the included studies were reviewed. Specifically, this investigated the topic(s) being investigated by the paper and the main findings of the paper. This was achieved via the extraction of data from hard copies of the included studies and producing a summary table. Following this, a critical friend was used as per the recommendations of Smith and McGannon (2017) to enhance research quality, the critical friend had previous publications related to TA literature and reviewed the lead investigator’s initial findings intending to enhance trustworthiness. Following discussions with the critical friend, some minor changes were made to the initial findings. Reviewing the purpose and findings of the studies served firstly to provide the reader with a concise overview of the areas investigated by TA research and to help investigators identify gaps in the literature. Secondly, it served to provide a brief overview to readers of the main findings and outcomes of TA research in sport and exercise. Overall, analysis of the fourteen research studies aims to provide readers with a clear overview of TA as a method for collecting data, promote a more transparent procedure for adopting TA in sport and exercise research, and to encourage future TA research.

Results

Search results

Fourteen studies satisfied the inclusion criteria and were subjected to review. All fourteen studies were published journal articles. Among the reviewed studies, one was published in 2008, one was published in 2011, with the remainder of studies published between 2013 and 2018.

Study Characteristics

The fourteen studies identified were firstly analysed to examine key population characteristics (e.g. sample size, genders of participants, competitive level of participants, age, and sport being investigated), with a summary table generated to highlight study characteristics.

Of the fourteen papers to be included for review, there was a total of 260 participants recruited by researchers. The largest sample size contained 52 participants (Arsal et al., 2016) and the smallest sample size containing 5 participants (Nicholls & Polman, 2008) with a mean sample size of 18.6. Of the fourteen research studies, eight papers (61.5%) used both male and female participants, and five papers (38.5%) used male-only participants, no study opted for a female-only study population. Males accounted for 76.5% (199) of participants used by research investigating TA in sport; females accounted for 23.5% (61) of participants used. The age range of participants across all the included studies ranged from a mean age of 16.33 through to a mean of 41.3. What these findings suggest is first, males have been the primary source of sample populations for TA in sport and exercise research. This highlights a potential sampling gap in the literature base and future research should look to exploit this sampling gap.

Of the fourteen research studies, golf was studied in seven studies (50.0%), of which, putting tasks were used explicitly in four of these seven studies (e.g. Arsal et al., 2016; Kaiseler et al., 2012a; Kaiseler et al., 2012b; Calmeiro & Tenenbaum, 2011). The remaining three studies involved participants' thinking aloud throughout the entire duration of a hole or a series of holes (e.g. Nicholls & Polman, 2008; Whitehead et al., 2016a; Whitehead et al., 2016b). Cycling accounted for three (21.5%) of the fourteen research papers, specifically, a 16.1km time trial (TT) in either competitive, practice, or laboratory-based setting (e.g. Whitehead et al., 2017; Whitehead et al., 2018a; Whitehead et al., 2018b). Tennis (14.3%; Murphy et al., 2016; Swettenham et al., 2018) accounted for two studies, while snooker (7.1%; Welsh et al., 2018), and long-distance running (7.1%; Samson et al., 2015) accounted for one paper each.

There was some ambiguity regarding defining the competitive level of athletes as participants in the included studies. Authors classified their participants' competitive level for their study, resulting in an enigmatic element to the terminology adopted across research papers. For example, some papers stated participants as being novices, others referred to them as beginners. While there was also some ambiguity regarding participants classed as 'highly skilled' or 'competitive amateurs' in relation to their sport, which made for difficulty in classifying competitive levels of participants across papers. Based on the classifications authors made regarding the competitive level of their participants, the competitive level ranged from novice/beginner through to 'super-elite'. Welsh et al. (2018) adopted the term super elite for a participant who had won the triple crown in snooker (i.e. world championship, UK championship, and masters). At the other end of the spectrum, Whitehead et al. (2018b) used the term novice for participants who had no previous experience in competitive cycling. Another study defined their population sample as highly skilled golfers, with a mean handicap of 1.4 and a standard deviation of 1.7. Five studies used either amateurs or competitive amateurs as their participant sample. However, it is difficult to determine precisely what is implied by amateur across each of the papers, an amateur could mean they do not make a living from their sport, or it could imply they are extremely low skilled. Finally, six studies compared groups of differing skills, three compared high skilled golfer's vs low skilled golfer's, one compared expert vs beginner golfer's, one compared amateur vs novice cyclists and finally, one compared skilled vs less skilled tennis player's anticipation skills using eye-tracking data and immediate retrospective TA. The competitive level of participants across the studies is diverse, there needs to be greater clarity regarding classifying these levels. Investigators should look to be explicit when stating why they have classified the competitive level of their participants at one level rather than another. There also needs to be more consistency when using terminology, for example, some studies used terms such as novices, beginners, or even low-skilled to define participants with no experience in that sport. In contrast, others used these terms to define participants with experience, but lacking in skills.

Research Design

Researchers have used quantitative methods in ten of the final fourteen studies, qualitative methods in three papers and one paper used a mixed-method approach. Level 2 TA was the most common method of TA researchers instructed participants to engage in, accounting for all but two of the research studies. Although, one of these studies (Murphy et al., 2016) asked participants to engage in both level 1 and level 2 TA. This appears to be as a result of early TA research adopting Level 2 TA and subsequent research using this research as a blueprint. Level 2 also offers more data than Level 1, i.e. it requires participants to verbalise internal thoughts, feelings, and senses rather than merely inner speech. Level 3, however, requires participants to explain their thoughts, hypotheses or motives. These cognitions, however, can result in information being retrieved from an individual's long term memory and is termed delayed retrospective reporting (Eccles, 2012).

One paper (Welsh et al., 2018) adopted level 3 TA to collect data from participants. Four papers also used questionnaires alongside TA to collect data, three studies (Kaiseler et al., 2012a; Kaiseler et al., 2012b; Swettenham et al., 2018) used the Competitive State Anxiety Inventory (CSAI-2R; Cox, Martens & Russel, 2003), and one paper used the Mental Readiness Form-3 (MRF-3; Krane, 1994) which is a shortened version of the CSAI-2 questionnaire (Martens et al., 1990). Researcher philosophies were communicated in five studies, three studies (Whitehead et al., 2018a; Whitehead et al., 2018b; Swettenham et al., 2018) positioned themselves in ontological realism, with a post-positivist epistemology. One paper (Welsh et al., 2018) positioned themselves in an ontological relativism, with a subjectivist epistemology.

The remaining papers did not specify the researchers' philosophy of the paper. However, upon analysis of the research design of these studies, it would be argued the majority of papers took an approach consistent with ontological realism with a post-positivist epistemology. After consultation with a critical friend, the same conclusion was also drawn.

Consistent with Ericsson and Simon's (1993) recommendation for TA research, all research papers provided participants with training on how to TA before data collection. Ten papers had participants complete three exercises while 'thinking aloud', the most common exercises for participants to complete included 1) counting dots on a page, 2) arithmetic exercises, and 3) an anagram problem-solving task. Two papers required participants to practice the task (e.g. golf-putting) while 'thinking aloud' while receiving feedback from researchers. One paper provided a model example of how-to TA when performing a task and then participants practiced TA for 1-hour. Finally, one paper had participants complete three TA exercises and then practice 'thinking aloud' with recording devices during a training session.

Purpose and Findings

Analysis of the final fourteen research papers resulted in two general research areas of interest being identified. This was achieved through extracting data and identifying similarities between the studies. A critical friend was again consulted to agree on which studies belonged to a general research topic. Eight studies investigated areas related to cognitions during a performance, and five studies investigated stress and coping during the performance of a task.

Cognitions during performance.

Examination of thought processes of different skilled participants (e.g. high vs low skilled athletes) was a primary area of focus for studies investigating thought processes of performers during a task (Calmeiro et al., 2011; Arsal et al., 2016, Whitehead et al., 2016a; Whitehead et al., 2016b; Whitehead et al., 2018b). Some findings from TA studies found contradicting results to results from studies employing retrospective methods of data collection. For example, according to the automaticity account (Beilock & Carr, 2001), higher-skilled golfers would verbalise fewer thoughts during a golf putting task than less skilled golfers. Arsal et al. ’s. (2016) study found the reverse when employing a TA method, whereby more skilled golfers verbalised significantly more per putt than their less-skilled counterparts, which is more consistent with the cognitive control account of skilled performance (Ericsson & Kintsch, 1995). In a similar study, Calmeiro et al. (2011) suggested higher-skilled golfer’s thought patterns followed a temporal pattern of thoughts consisting of an evaluation of putting conditions, determination of plans and goals, and shot execution. Higher skilled players were also more likely to verbalise diagnostic related thoughts following a putt whereas lower-skilled golfers rarely engaged in diagnostic related thoughts. Initially, what these findings are highlighting is the potential for TA to expand research in sport psychology by offering alternative findings to more traditional retrospective methods of data collection. These new findings could be a result of TA accessing areas of a performer's short term memory, not typically accessed during traditional methods of data collection (Eccles, 2012). Despite some findings contradicting the results of previous research, other results supported the findings of previous research. For example, two studies investigated differences in thought processes of high versus low skilled golfers under pressure when completing six holes during a round of golf. Firstly, consistent with previous TA golf research that higher-skilled performers verbalised more regarding the planning of a shot and used more planning strategies and goals to execute a shot when compared to lower-skilled golfers. In their second study, results indicated that when under pressure, consistent with reinvestment theory (Masters, 1992; Masters and Maxwell, 2008) higher skilled golfers thought processes regressed from less automatic thought processes to a more technical based thought process.

Research investigating differences in cognitions between trained and untrained cyclists indicated that trained cyclist's cognitions differed from untrained cyclists, despite no real difference in the total number of verbalisations. Trained cyclists' cognitions were primarily related to internal associate cues, whereas, in comparison, untrained cyclist's cognitions were primarily related to pain and discomfort. Results also indicated the trained groups had less irrelevant task thoughts compared to the untrained group, supporting previous research suggesting a possible relationship between cognitions and performance (Brick et al., 2016). Results from studies using TA to investigate thought processes alluded to extending on previous studies using retrospective methods (e.g. interviews). Murphy et al. 's. (2016) paper investigated the anticipatory skills of high vs low skilled tennis players. Results from TA data highlighted that when presented with only contextual information, higher-skilled participants evaluated the situation and potential outcomes more effectively. This was in line with previous research (e.g. McRobert et al., 2009, Roca et al., 2013).

Stress and coping.

Stress and coping processes during the performance of a task was another main area of researcher focus when employing a TA method (Nicholls & Polman, 2008; Kaiseler et al., 2013a; Kaiseler et al., 2013b; Swettenham et al., 2018; Welsh et al., 2018). Lazarus (1999) encouraged researchers to explore stress and coping over time and explore the micro-analytical aspects of the dynamic process between stress and coping. TA appears to present an ideal opportunity for researchers to explore these micro-analytical processes.

Research conducted by Kaiseler et al. (2013a; 2013b) investigated gender differences in stress, appraisal, and coping during golf putting - they suggested gender differences in coping are as a result of appraisal processes made by participants rather than gender per se. TA revealed differences in the type of stressors reported by genders. Female participants reported stressors related to the 'funny putter' (induced stressor) and their technique, whereas male participants reported stressors related to outcome. Coping differences appeared to be caused by differences in appraising stressful events. In their second study, results indicated similar results with males and females reporting similar stressors to those reported in study 1. Meanwhile, females reported predominately technique focused coping strategies whereas, males primarily made more external attributions. Subtle differences in results were attributed to different stress manipulations (e.g. evaluation apprehension, funny putter versus ego-threatening feedback) which influenced the appraisal process of participants.

Two papers (Nicholls & Polman, 2008; Welsh et al., 2018) investigated stress and coping during the performance of a task. Nicholls and Polman’s paper required high-performance adolescent golfers to verbalise thoughts over 6-holes of golf. Welsh et al. investigated the stress and coping processes of elite and super-elite snooker players during a practice game of snooker, Findings from all three studies indicated support for the transactional model (Lazarus, 1999). Participants' verbalisations of stress sources and coping responses changed throughout the performance of the task (e.g. over the course of 6-holes or course of a practice snooker session), which lends support to the idea that stress and coping occur as a process and do not occur in isolation. Specific findings relevant to elite performers eludes to problem-focused coping being a key psychological characteristic of expert performance. However, caution should be taken when generalising findings from snooker and golf to all sports.

The final paper investigating stress and coping processes (Swettenham et al., 2018) further explored gender differences and investigated stress and coping in both competition and training. Results from this study were similar to those from other studies as part of this review. For example, results indicated that problem-focused coping was the primary coping mechanism adopted by participants in both competition and practice environment and that performance stressors were the most salient reported stressors. Interestingly, results across the studies showed significant associations between external stressors and physical stressors with avoidance coping in practice conditions but not in competitive conditions. This suggests participants may be attempting to block out external distractions and physical discomfort or pain during practice conditions, alternatively, they may not be experiencing pain or discomfort, and it is therefore not verbalised. Gender differences revealed male players experienced a higher level of external and physical stressors in practice whereas, females experienced these stressors more in competition. Male participants experienced higher levels of performance stress during competition whereas, females experienced this stressor more in practice conditions. The researcher, therefore, suggested gender differences occur only for the type of stressor appraised not the coping response, which is consistent with previous similar research (Lee-Baggley et al., 2005).

The majority of papers reviewed also referred to the practical implications TA method can have. For example, information regarding how athletes thought processes change throughout an event or task may be beneficial to applied practitioners as they gain an insight into the cognitive responses of athletes during events (Whitehead et al., 2018). Similar to this, Nicholls and Polman (2008) suggested that applied consultants could use TA to listen to the client's thoughts during specific points of a client's performance (e.g. following a mistake). Using TA to capture in event stress and coping processes of athletes also had practical benefits to coaches, as well as an applied practitioner (Swetenham et al., 2018). For example, they provide the practitioner with detailed accounts of how the athlete responds in specific situations, allowing for analysis and subsequent support to be offered.

While there are apparent differences between studies that have adopted TA as a method for collecting data, for example, the task participants were required to complete or the general area of investigation. There are some similarities in the benefits of using TA as a method for collecting data. Most notably, these benefits include the ability to access information that alternative, more traditional data collection methods (e.g. interviews, questionnaires) may not be able to access. The ability to access such information offers a potential explanation as to why some of the findings from the included studies not only extend previous research but offer alternative findings to previous work.

Discussion

The present study aimed to provide a systematic review of TA research in sport and exercise. Specifically, the aims of the review were to (1) examine the sample characteristics associated with each included paper; (2) review the research design adopted by each research paper, and (3) examine the purpose of the research and key findings. The present systematic review provided an analysis of a total of fourteen research studies that had employed TA as its primary method of data collection in a sports context. Results indicated common trends in ways in which TA has been used to investigate phenomena related to sport and performance. Given the relevant infancy of TA in sport, (nine of the papers reviewed have been published within the previous three years of this review). This review aimed to provide the reader with a clearer understanding of TA research in sport concerning phenomena investigated, study characteristics and research design. With the implications being to improve methodological practice, identify future research directions and promote best practice to enhance the quality of research produced.

Sample Characteristics

The most salient finding from this review regarding sample characteristics was, studies had a relatively disproportionate distribution of male to female athletes, with male athletes accounting for slightly over 76% of the total participants sampled. There appears to be a scarcity in TA research investigating females as a single-gender with no study in the current review investigating female-only athletes, compared to five studies that employed male-only participants. Papers included in this review identified differences in the cognitions of athletes from different genders. For example, gender differences occur only for the type of stress appraised by the athlete, not the coping response (Kaiseler et al., 2012a; Kaiseler et al., 2012b; Swettenham et al., 2018). These studies were the first time gender differences in appraisals had been reported, despite participants being in identical achievement situations. Previously, research investigating gender differences had identified males tend to be more ego orientated and competitive than females in achievement situations (Vazou et al., 2006). This provides support to the notion that the utilisation of TA can expand on previous research adopting retrospective data collection methods. In response to calls that sport psychology research requires a greater understanding of female athletes (Conroy et al., 2008), future research could utilise TA as a method for collecting data to facilitate understanding of the differences in the type of stressors appraised by male and female athletes during performance of a task.

The athletic level of participants used varied throughout the included studies from novice through to ‘super-elite’. Although as mentioned in the results section, a limitation of TA studies included in this review was the ambiguity in defining the athletic level of participants. Future research needs to be explicit in stating the athletic level of participants and how they arrived at defining the athletic level of their participants. It is hoped that by doing so, skill levels of participants will be more transparent, and the quality of future research will be enhanced.

Research Design

Studies included for review would have primarily fallen under the position of ontological realism with a post-positivist epistemology. However, many of the studies did not explicitly state their ontological and epistemological position, it could be concluded that this was their position based on the design of the study. One paper (Welsh et al., 2018) positioned themselves within ontological relativism with a subjectivist epistemology which did allow them to extend further on their interpretations of the data through member reflections and critical friends strengthening the validity of their research (Bloor, 2001). Therefore, based on findings from this review and in keeping with recommendations of contemporary research (e.g. Smith & McGannon, 2017) it is theoretically crucial for future research to investigate more from philosophical positions at different ends of the spectrum, as alternative approaches will offer new insights into areas of research. For example, different philosophical positions could be used to verify contemporary theories or be used to generate new theories concerning an area of interest. Although it is essential to recognise that results generated from different philosophical approaches are merely different and not better or worse (Eccles & Arsal, 2017). Easterby-Smith et al. (2002) highlight the importance that future research understands, and states, their research philosophy. This will help refine and clarify the research method and subsequently gather evidence to answer the research question, it helps the researcher to avoid inappropriate and unrelated works and finally helps the researchers to be more creative and exploratory in the development of their study. Therefore, based on the findings of the current review, to ensure the best methodological practice, future research should be explicit when stating the philosophical position of their paper.

Consistent with Ericsson and Simon’s (1993) recommendation for TA research, all research papers provided participants with training on how-to TA before data collection. The majority of studies used the same TA training template, which required participants to complete three exercises while ‘thinking aloud’, the most common exercises for participants to complete included 1) counting dots on a page, 2) arithmetic exercises, and 3) an anagram problem-solving task. A smaller number of studies required participants to TA while practising the task (e.g. golf putting) and received feedback from researchers. A recent paper explaining how to conduct TA research in sport and exercise highlighted common pitfalls that were also identified within this review (Eccles & Arsal, 2017). Namely, warm-up exercises, which, in the context of studies in this review, may not be appropriate for sport and exercise participants. For example, it could be argued that it is not appropriate for participants who will be required to verbalise during a sporting task, practice these verbalisations by counting dots on a page or solve arithmetic and anagram problems. It appears some papers have addressed these concerns, however, and attempted to develop TA training programmes more relevant to the participants' task. This review recommends future researchers adopt a similar approach, and use the recommendations of Erricsson and Simon (1993) as a guideline, but modify their recommendations to fit best the task participants will be completing. This should help address concerns of the relevancy of practice sessions to sport and exercise participants.

Purpose and Findings

This review revealed TA in sport research to have two main areas of researcher interest, these are cognitions during the performance of a task and stress and coping. Within these two groups, there were further areas of interest, such as gender differences and skill differences. Research papers within this review interested in skill differences were primarily focused on differences in cognitions of participants of varying skill levels. Results in this area had a significant impact upon this field, for example, Whitehead et al. (2016) found experienced golfers to verbalise less towards the technical elements of performance compared to their less-skilled counterparts. Which is consistent with findings from previous research (Beilock et al., 2002). However, when under stress, performers in the latter stages of motor learning regressed in their thoughts to earlier stages of motor learning, in line with reinvestment theory (Masters, 1992; Masters & Maxwell, 2008). Calmeiro and Tenenbaum (2011) also found experienced athletes followed a temporal pattern of thought sequences that were characterised by evaluation of putting conditions, determination of plans and goals, and shot execution. This finding was supported by previous research such as Thomas and Oliver (1994), who suggested increased planning strategies and goals guide experts in the execution stage. Conversely, novice performers tended to verbalise mechanical and technical aspects of putting and were believed to rely on step-by-step skill execution. Beilock et al. (2003, p. 300) stated performers in early stages of skill development are "controlled by declarative knowledge that is held in short term memory and attended step-by-step". Murphy et al. (2016) also highlighted how higher-skilled tennis players were more likely to make statements related to advanced memory representations. This information is suggested to facilitate individuals by allowing for a more detailed evaluation of the event and prediction of potential outcome events, enhancing anticipatory skills. This finding further extended on previous work (e.g. McRobert et al., 2009) by suggesting how skilled performers may be able to make use of contextual information as a retrieval cue to access relevant information from LTM. Findings such as these extend on previous research as data gathered by methods relying on retrospective methods such as interviews and video footage which are associated with memory bias and added meaning (Whitehead et al., 2015). Whereas, capturing information in the moment allows the researcher to gather data from the performers short term memory, which may not be available to researchers using retrospective methods. What these findings also highlight is the capacity for TA to be used as a method for affirming previous knowledge as well as being a method for adding to the knowledge base. Some papers included in this review had participants' TA during a task in non-naturalistic settings, for example, putting on an artificial green. Research has acknowledged this is less complex than putting on a real green, during a competitive match, and therefore, results should be interpreted with this in mind (Arsal et al., 2016).

There were also significant findings related to research investigating stress and coping of athletes during the performance of a task. Notably, all research included in this review investigating stress and coping found some evidence to support the transactional model of stress and coping, i.e. stress and coping changed throughout the performance of a task suggesting that they occur as a process (Lazarus, 1999). However, most of the included research papers acknowledged that not all elements of the model were examined (e.g.

emotions) this should, therefore, be recognised as a potential limitation of this research. This also presents an ideal opportunity for future research to further add to the knowledge base. Differences across genders in relation to stress and coping were also frequently researched (e.g. Kaiseler et al., 2013a; Kaiseler et al., 2013b; Swetenham et al., 2018). Results from these studies indicated gender differences occur as a result of the type of stress appraised, not the coping response, which is consistent with previous findings (lee-Baggley et al., 2005). These findings also offer support to the situational hypothesis, which suggests differences in coping responses are a result of males appraising the same situation differently to females. While there is no gold standard for measuring stress and coping, a combination of methods and research designs including TA has been suggested to provide the most in-depth understanding of stress and coping (Kaiseler et al., 2012). A limitation of these studies, however, is that TA measures cognitive strategies, but ignores behavioural strategies (e.g. deep breathing), which in relation to stress and coping literature have also been reported to be a pertinent coping resource (Nicholls et al., 2005). There is also the acceptance that participants only verbalise what they are aware of. Therefore, individuals are unable to explain what is occurring outside of their awareness, and as such, unconscious processes will not be verbalised (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). Despite these limitations, TA appears to offer an alternative to measuring cognitive processes, and there appears to be scope for TA to be used in conjunction with more traditional retrospective methods such as interviews (Eccles & Arsal, 2017).

To enhance the overall quality of research produced using TA, research should firstly consider enhancing the transparency of how participants were approached and the appropriateness of participants used in research. Previously, research has been ambiguous regarding the method for how participants were selected. For example, it was unclear whether participants had been selected using a simple random sampling method from a pool of university students, selected using a convenience sampling method, or even another method.

Specifying a rigorous sampling method enhances a study's credibility and prevents potential selection bias (Martinez-Mesa et al., 2016). Further to this, many studies neglected the role of a control condition. A control condition would allow comparison between groups and for researchers to assess in the influence of the independent variable on the outcome. Finally, while some studies made explicit reference to how they prevented measurement bias (e.g. critical friend, member reflections) others either made minimal reference or no reference at all. As previously mentioned by Eccles and Arsal (2017), TA can be used by different types of researchers with different epistemological approaches. However, it is essential for researchers using TA to be explicit and transparent regarding their philosophical positions and potential biases. This will allow readers to understand how the TA data has been interpreted. Following calls from research such as Smith & McGannon (2017) to enhance transparency, deepen the analysis of data and strengthen methodological rigor of research, which they summarized as but did not limit to *"the intellectual precision, robustness, appropriateness, sufficiency, and cohesiveness of concepts, methodologies, epistemology, ontology, and methods deployed in the research process and output"* future research should explicitly state how they prevented researcher bias and.

Future Research and Conclusions

The current review has made suggestions throughout for researchers considering using TA as a method for data collection in future research. Extending on this, it is suggested future research could expand on the current dominant areas of research and widen the research scope. For example, expanding the range of sports investigated to include more open skilled sports, offering opportunities to collect concurrent verbalisations from athletes in areas such as cognition, stress, and coping, and skill level differences in more dynamic sports. There is also a need for more papers to adopt alternative philosophical approaches to the extant approach of ontological realism with a post-positivist epistemology. Some of the more recent TA papers (e.g. Welsh et al., 2018) have highlighted how adopting alternative philosophical standpoints can still produce high-quality research and contributes to further extend on previous research. Different perspectives would offer new insight into areas of research as well as potentially generate new theories. As highlighted, studies in this review primarily required participants to engage in Level 2 verbalisations (e.g. verbalise inner thoughts and internal representations that are not initially part of inner thought or speech). Future research could look to extend on previous TA research by adopting Level 3 verbalisations, requiring participants to justify their thoughts and motives. Level 3 verbalisations offer participants the opportunity to provide implicit theories on their cognitive processes, therefore, offering more data that is useful for a wide variety of invested parties (e.g. coach, psychologist, athlete). It is important to note that the authors are not stipulating Level 3 TA to be a ‘better’ form of data collection. Level 3, as specified by Ericsson and Simon (1993) could disrupt the naturally occurring thought process, however, from an applied perspective, it could offer coaches and psychologists an insight into the knowledge and expertise of their athletes. For example, Whitehead et al., (2016b) used TA at Level 3 with coaches, as a tool to aid the coaches' understanding of their own decision making. By asking for this extra level of explanation, coaches become more aware of their thought processes. However, it is clear that using Level 3, did change the natural thought process of the coach and therefore, we urge researchers to approach this with caution. Further, research using TA could opt to explore unconventional areas of research, such as using TA to aid reflection in coaches (Whitehead et al., 2016b) or the benefits of using TA for an applied sport and exercise psychologist. Such research would help to expand the portfolio of research conducted using TA and present a useful tool for applied practitioners during various stages of the consultancy process. Applied practitioners could use TA as a tool for gathering information from a client as well as monitoring and evaluating the progress of a client. For example, a practitioner could use TA to collect the cognitions of an athlete during a performance, use this data to facilitate the development of an intervention and then utilise TA again to monitor and evaluate the impact of that intervention (Whitehead et al., 2018).

To conclude, the recent growth of TA research in sport, which is reflected by the recent number of articles being published in scientific journals, this paper aimed to provide the reader with an enhanced awareness of TA research in sport. This systematic review reported the methodological practices of TA research in sport, study characteristics, and an overview of the purpose and findings drawn from research. This review identified some limitations in previous TA research and has suggested ways for future research to address these limitations and enhance the overall quality of research conducted. This review also recognised the potential for TA to generate new information, expand on previous research and support previous findings by gaining access to information traditional retrospective methods might not be able to access. The review also acknowledges the potential limitations of TA. It offers support to the idea of combining this method with verbal retrospective methods such as interviewing to enhance the reliability of data collected. Finally, this review provides directions for researchers to conduct using TA to expand further the scope of research currently being produced and address real-world problems.

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Appendix 1: ***Overall Quality Assessment Scores***

Study	**Quality score (0-1)**
Arsal, G., Eccles, D. W., & Ericsson, K. A. (2016). Cognitive mediation of putting: Use of a think-aloud measure and implications for studies of golf-putting in the laboratory. *Psychology of sport and exercise*, *27*, 18-27.	0.81
Swettenham, L., Eubank, M., Won, D., & Whitehead, A. E. (2018). Investigating stress and coping during practice and competition in tennis using think aloud. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 1-21.	0.75
Kaiseler, M., Polman, R. C., & Nicholls, A. R. (2013a). Gender differences in stress, appraisal, and coping during golf putting. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, *11*(3), 258-272.	0.76
Kaiseler, M., Polman, R. C., & Nicholls, A. R. (2013b). Gender differences in stress, appraisal, and coping during golf putting. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, *11*(3), 258-272.	0.76
Murphy, C. P., Jackson, R. C., Cooke, K., Roca, A., Benguigui, N., & Williams, A. M. (2016). Contextual information and perceptual-cognitive expertise in a dynamic, temporally-constrained task. Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied, 22, 455–470	0.80
Nicholls, A. R., & Polman, R. C. (2008). Think aloud: Acute stress and coping strategies during golf performances. *Anxiety, Stress, & Coping*, *21*(3), 283-294.	0.88
Samson, A., Simpson, D., Kamphoff, C., & Langlier, A. (2017). Think aloud: An examination of distance runners' thought processes. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, *15*(2), 176-189.	0.73
Welsh, J. C., Dewhurst, S. A., & Perry, J. L. (2018). Thinking Aloud: An exploration of cognitions in professional snooker. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *36*, 197-208.	0.72
Whitehead, A. E., Taylor, J. A., & Polman, R. C. (2016a). Evidence for skill level differences in the thought processes of golfers during high and low pressure situations. *Frontiers in psychology*, *6*, 1974.	0.87
Whitehead, A. E., Taylor, J. A., & Polman, R. C. (2016b). Evidence for skill level differences in the thought processes of golfers during high and low pressure situations. *Frontiers in psychology*, *6*, 1974.	0.87

Study	**Quality score (0-1)**
Whitehead, A. E., Jones, H. S., Williams, E. L., Dowling, C., Morley, D., Taylor, J. A., & Polman, R. C. (2017). Changes in cognition over a 16.1 km cycling time trial using Think Aloud protocol: Preliminary evidence. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 1-9.	0.83
Whitehead, A. E., Jones, H. S., Williams, E. L., Rowley, C., Quayle, L., Marchant, D., & Polman, R. C. (2018a). Investigating the relationship between cognitions, pacing strategies and performance in 16.1 km cycling time trials using a think aloud protocol. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *34*, 95-109.	0.82
Whitehead, A. E., Jones, H. S., Williams, E. L., Rowley, C., Quayle, L., Marchant, D., & Polman, R. C. (2018b). Investigating the relationship between cognitions, pacing strategies and performance in 16.1 km cycling time trials using a think aloud protocol. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *34*, 95-109.	0.82
Calmeiro, L., & Tenenbaum, G. (2011). Concurrent verbal protocol analysis in sport: Illustration of thought processes during a golf-putting task. *Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology*, *5*(3), 223-236.	0.73

Appendix 2: Study Characteristics

Study	Sample Size	Gender	Competitive level	Age	Sport
Arsal, G., Eccles, D. W., & Ericsson, K. A. (2016). Cognitive mediation of putting: Use of a think-aloud measure and implications for studies of golf-putting in the laboratory. *Psychology of sport and exercise*, *27*, 18-27.	52 (26 in each group)	45 male 7 female	High skilled group (average 4.42 handicap) Low skilled group (23.19 handicap)	Low skilled (M=21.65, SD = 2.87) High skilled (M=21.85, SD= 3.34)	Golf (putting)
Swettenham, L., Eubank, M., Won, D., & Whitehead, A. E. (2018). Investigating stress and coping during practice and competition in tennis using think aloud. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 1-21.	16	8 male 8 female	Division 1 tennis league players. Competitively played once per week.	M= 28.63 SD= 12.11	Tennis
Kaiseler, M., Polman, R. C., & Nicholls, A. R. (2013a). Gender differences in stress, appraisal, and coping during golf putting. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, *11*(3), 258-272.	37	19 male 18 female	Amateurs – Excluded if possessed official handicap	M= 20.74 SD= 1.87	Golf (putting)
Kaiseler, M., Polman, R. C., & Nicholls, A. R. (2013b). Gender differences in stress, appraisal, and coping during golf putting. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, *11*(3), 258-272.	31	17 male 14 female	Amateurs – Excluded if possessed official handicap	M= 23.35 SD= 7.30	Golf (putting)
Nicholls, A. R., & Polman, R. C. (2008). Think aloud: Acute stress and coping strategies during golf performances. *Anxiety, Stress, & Coping*, *21*(3), 283-294.	5	5 male	High- skilled (Handicap M=1.4, SD= 1.7)	M=16.8 SD= 1.3	Golf
Samson, A., Simpson, D., Kamphoff, C., & Langlier, A. (2017). Think aloud: An examination of distance runners' thought processes. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, *15*(2), 176-189.	10	6 male 4 female	Competitive amateur (3-30 years running experience)	M=41.3 SD= 7.3	Long-distance running

Study	Sample Size	Gender	Competitive level	Age	Sport
Welsh, J. C., Dewhurst, S. A., & Perry, J. L. (2018). Thinking Aloud: An exploration of cognitions in professional snooker. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *36*, 197-208.	7	7 male	Super-elite (n =1) Elite (n=2) Professional (n=4)	M=34.0 SD= 4.5	Snooker
Whitehead, A. E., Taylor, J. A., & Polman, R. C. (2016a). Evidence for skill level differences in the thought processes of golfers during high and low pressure situations. *Frontiers in psychology*, *6*, 1974.	12 (6 high skills, 6 low skilled)	12 male	High skilled (Handicap M= 4.16, SD=0.75) Low skilled (Handicap M=20.16, SD= 5.34)	High skilled (M=16.33, SD= 0.51) Low Skilled (M= 26.33, SD= 8.52)	Golf
Whitehead, A. E., Taylor, J. A., & Polman, R. C. (2016b). Evidence for skill level differences in the thought processes of golfers during high and low pressure situations. *Frontiers in psychology*, *6*, 1974.	16	15 male 1 female	High Skilled (Handicap M=2.25, SD= 1.75) Moderate Skilled (Handicap M= 9.62, SD= 0.91)	High Skilled (M=17.5, SD= 1.19) Low skilled (M=17.25, SD= 0.46)	Golf
Whitehead, A. E., Jones, H. S., Williams, E. L., Dowling, C., Morley, D., Taylor, J. A., & Polman, R. C. (2017). Changes in cognition over a 16.1 km cycling time trial using Think Aloud protocol: Preliminary evidence. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 1-9.	18	15 male 3 female	Competitive amateur	M= 40.9 SD= 11.5	Cycling
Whitehead, A. E., Jones, H. S., Williams, E. L., Rowley, C., Quayle, L., Marchant, D., & Polman, R. C. (2018a). Investigating the relationship between cognitions, pacing strategies and performance in 16.1 km cycling time trials using a think aloud protocol. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *34*, 95-109.	10	7 male 3 female	Competitive amateur	M=40.2 SD=6.6	Cycling
Whitehead, A. E., Jones, H. S., Williams, E. L., Rowley, C., Quayle, L., Marchant, D., &	20 (10 amateur, 10 novice)	20 male	Amateur (n=10) Novice (n=10)	Amateur (M=36.9 SD= 7.0)	Cycling

Study	Sample Size	Gender	Competitive level	Age	Sport
Polman, R. C. (2018b). Investigating the relationship between cognitions, pacing strategies and performance in 16.1 km cycling time trials using a think aloud protocol. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *34*, 95-109.				Novice (M= 32.3, SD= 9.7)	
Calmeiro, L., & Tenenbaum, G. (2011). Concurrent verbal protocol analysis in sport: Illustration of thought processes during a golf-putting task. *Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology*, *5*(3), 223-236.	6 (3 expert, 3 beginners)	3 male 3 female	Expert (n=3) Beginner (n=3)	Mean age not reported	Golf (putting)
Murphy, C. P., Jackson, R. C., Cooke, K., Roca, A., Benguigui, N., & Williams, A. M. (2016). Contextual information and perceptual-cognitive expertise in a dynamic, temporally-constrained task. Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied, 22, 455–470	20 (10 skilled, 10 less-skilled)	20 male.	Skilled (n=10) Less-skilled (n=10)	Skilled (M=28.6, SD=4.7) Less Skilled (M=23.7, SD=4.4)	Tennis

Appendix 3: Research Design

Study	Research Design	Epistemology and ontology	TA level	TA training provided?
Arsal, G., Eccles, D. W., & Ericsson, K. A. (2016). Cognitive mediation of putting: Use of a think-aloud measure and implications for studies of golf-putting in the laboratory. *Psychology of sport and exercise*, *27*, 18-27.	Quantitative	Not explicitly stated	Level 2	Y- Participants TA during two warm up exercises and received feedback. Then practiced putting whilst TA and received feedback.
Swettenham, L., Eubank, M., Won, D., & Whitehead, A. E. (2018). Investigating stress and coping during practice and competition in tennis using think aloud. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 1-21.	Mixed	Ontological realism Post-positivist epistemology	Level 2	Y – Participants completed 3 TA exercises. 1) counting dots on a page, 2) arithmetic exercise, 3) an anagram problem solving task.
Kaiseler, M., Polman, R. C., & Nicholls, A. R. (2013a). Gender differences in stress, appraisal, and coping during golf putting. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, *11*(3), 258-272.	Quantitative	Not explicitly stated	Level 2	Y – Participants completed 3 TA exercises. 1) counting dots on a page, 2) arithmetic exercise, 3) an anagram problem solving task.
Kaiseler, M., Polman, R. C., & Nicholls, A. R. (2013b). Gender differences in stress, appraisal, and coping during golf putting. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, *11*(3), 258-272.	Quantitative	Not explicitly stated	Level 2	Y – Participants completed 3 TA exercises. 1) counting dots on a page, 2) arithmetic exercise, 3) an anagram problem solving task.
Nicholls, A. R., & Polman, R. C. (2008). Think aloud: Acute stress and coping strategies during golf performances. *Anxiety, Stress, & Coping*, *21*(3), 283-294.	Qualitative	Not explicitly stated	Level 2	Y – Participants completed 3 TA exercises. 1) counting dots on a page, 2) arithmetic exercise, 3) an anagram problem solving task.
Samson, A., Simpson, D., Kamphoff, C., & Langlier, A. (2017). Think aloud: An examination of distance runners' thought processes. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, *15*(2), 176-189.	Qualitative	Not explicitly stated	Level 2	Y – Participants completed 3 TA exercises. 1) counting dots on a page, 2) naming/free association task 3) an anagram problem solving task.

Study	Research Design	Epistemology and ontology	TA level	TA training provided?
Welsh, J. C., Dewhurst, S. A., & Perry, J. L. (2018). Thinking Aloud: An exploration of cognitions in professional snooker. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *36*, 197-208.	Qualitative	Ontological relativism with subjectivist epistemology	Level 3	Y – Participants completed 3 TA exercises. 1) counting dots on a page, 2) arithmetic exercise, 3) an anagram problem solving task.
Whitehead, A. E., Taylor, J. A., & Polman, R. C. (2016a). Evidence for skill level differences in the thought processes of golfers during high and low pressure situations. *Frontiers in psychology*, *6*, 1974.	Quantitative	Not explicitly stated	Level 2	Y – Participants completed 3 TA exercises. 1) counting dots on a page, 2) arithmetic exercise, 3) an anagram problem solving task.
Whitehead, A. E., Taylor, J. A., & Polman, R. C. (2016b). Evidence for skill level differences in the thought processes of golfers during high and low pressure situations. *Frontiers in psychology*, *6*, 1974.	Quantitative	Not explicitly stated	Level 2	Y – Participants completed 3 TA exercises. 1) counting dots on a page, 2) arithmetic exercise, 3) an anagram problem solving task.
Whitehead, A. E., Jones, H. S., Williams, E. L., Dowling, C., Morley, D., Taylor, J. A., & Polman, R. C. (2017). Changes in cognition over a 16.1 km cycling time trial using Think Aloud protocol: Preliminary evidence. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 1-9.	Quantitative	Not explicitly stated	Level 2	Y – Participants provided with video modelling TA whilst performing task and practiced TA 1-hour prior to task.
Whitehead, A. E., Jones, H. S., Williams, E. L., Rowley, C., Quayle, L., Marchant, D., & Polman, R. C. (2018a). Investigating the relationship between cognitions, pacing strategies and performance in 16.1 km cycling time trials using a think aloud protocol. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *34*, 95-109.	Quantitative	Ontological realism Post-positivist epistemology	Level 2	Y- Participants required to complete TA video based training exercise. Involved 3 tasks; 1) alphabet exercise, 2) counting dots on a page, 3) verbal recall.
Whitehead, A. E., Jones, H. S., Williams, E. L., Rowley, C., Quayle, L., Marchant, D., &	Quantitative	Ontological realism Post-positivist epistemology	Level 2	Y- Participants required to complete TA video based training exercise. Involved 3

Study	Research Design	Epistemology and ontology	TA level	TA training provided?
Polman, R. C. (2018b). Investigating the relationship between cognitions, pacing strategies and performance in 16.1 km cycling time trials using a think aloud protocol. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *34*, 95-109.				tasks; 1) alphabet exercise, 2) counting dots on a page, 3) verbal recall.
CCalmeiro, L., & Tenenbaum, G. (2011). Concurrent verbal protocol analysis in sport: Illustration of thought processes during a golf-putting task. *Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology*, *5*(3), 223-236.	Quantitative	Not explicitly stated	Level 2	Y - Putting practice with equipment on and engaging in verbalizations with feedback from researcher.
Murphy, C. P., Jackson, R. C., Cooke, K., Roca, A., Benguigui, N., & Williams, A. M. (2016). Contextual information and perceptual-cognitive expertise in a dynamic, temporally-constrained task. Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied, 22, 455–470	Quantitative	Not explicitly stated	Level 1 and level 2	Y – 20-35 minutes of retrospective verbal report training.

Appendix 4: Purpose and Key Findings

Study	Study aims	Key findings/ Conclusion
Arsal, G., Eccles, D. W., & Ericsson, K. A. (2016). Cognitive mediation of putting: Use of a think-aloud measure and implications for studies of golf-putting in the laboratory. *Psychology of sport and exercise*, *27*, 18-27.	The study aimed to test predictions differentiating the automaticity and cognitive control accounts by assessing thinking during the task of putting.	The study provided evidence that supports the cognitive control account of skilled performance and is mostly inconsistent with the automaticity account of performance on the putting task.
Swettenham, L., Eubank, M., Won, D., & Whitehead, A. E. (2018). Investigating stress and coping during practice and competition in tennis using think aloud. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 1-21.	Aims to analyse the relationship between tennis player's stressors and coping responses during practice and competition.	(1) Findings showed problem-focused coping as the most frequently used in tennis. (2) Gender differences occurred only for the type of stressor appraised with differences in coping being due to differences in appraisals.
Kaiseler, M., Polman, R. C., & Nicholls, A. R. (2013a). Gender differences in stress, appraisal, and coping during golf putting. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, *11*(3), 258-272.	(1) To examine stress, appraisal and coping among male female during the execution of a golf-putting task. (2) To increase induced by utilizing stress manipulation (funny putter).	Results showed there were gender differences in the types of stressors reported. Females were more concerned with the 'funny putter' and technique in comparison to males. Males were more concerned with the outcome.
Kaiseler, M., Polman, R. C., & Nicholls, A. R. (2013b). Gender differences in stress, appraisal, and coping during golf putting. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, *11*(3), 258-272.	(1) To examine stress, appraisal and coping among male female during the execution of a golf-putting task. (2) To increase induced stress by utilising stress manipulation (ego-threatening).	(1) Females reported more technique coping and self-talk to cope with stressors such as task execution and outcome. (2) Males reported more external attributions for the stressor outcome.
Nicholls, A. R., & Polman, R. C. (2008). Think aloud: Acute stress and coping strategies during golf performances. *Anxiety, Stress, & Coping*, *21*(3), 283-294.	To develop and implement a technique to measure acute stress and coping during golf performance.	Results provided some support for transactional model (Lazarus, 1999). TA level 2 is a method for collecting stressors and coping during live performances in sports and is less vulnerable to distorted accounts caused by memory decay.
Samson, A., Simpson, D., Kamphoff, C., & Langlier, A. (2017). Think aloud: An examination of distance runners' thought processes. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, *15*(2), 176-189.	An exploratory study aimed at utilising TA to examine the thought processes of runners while participating in a long-distance training run.	Runners thoughts were related to primarily pace and distance, followed by pain and discomfort, and environment.
Welsh, J. C., Dewhurst, S. A., & Perry, J. L. (2018). Thinking Aloud: An exploration of	To employ a TA procedure to examine the real-time cognitions	Provides support for transactional model of coping (Lazarus, 1999). Thought processes change during

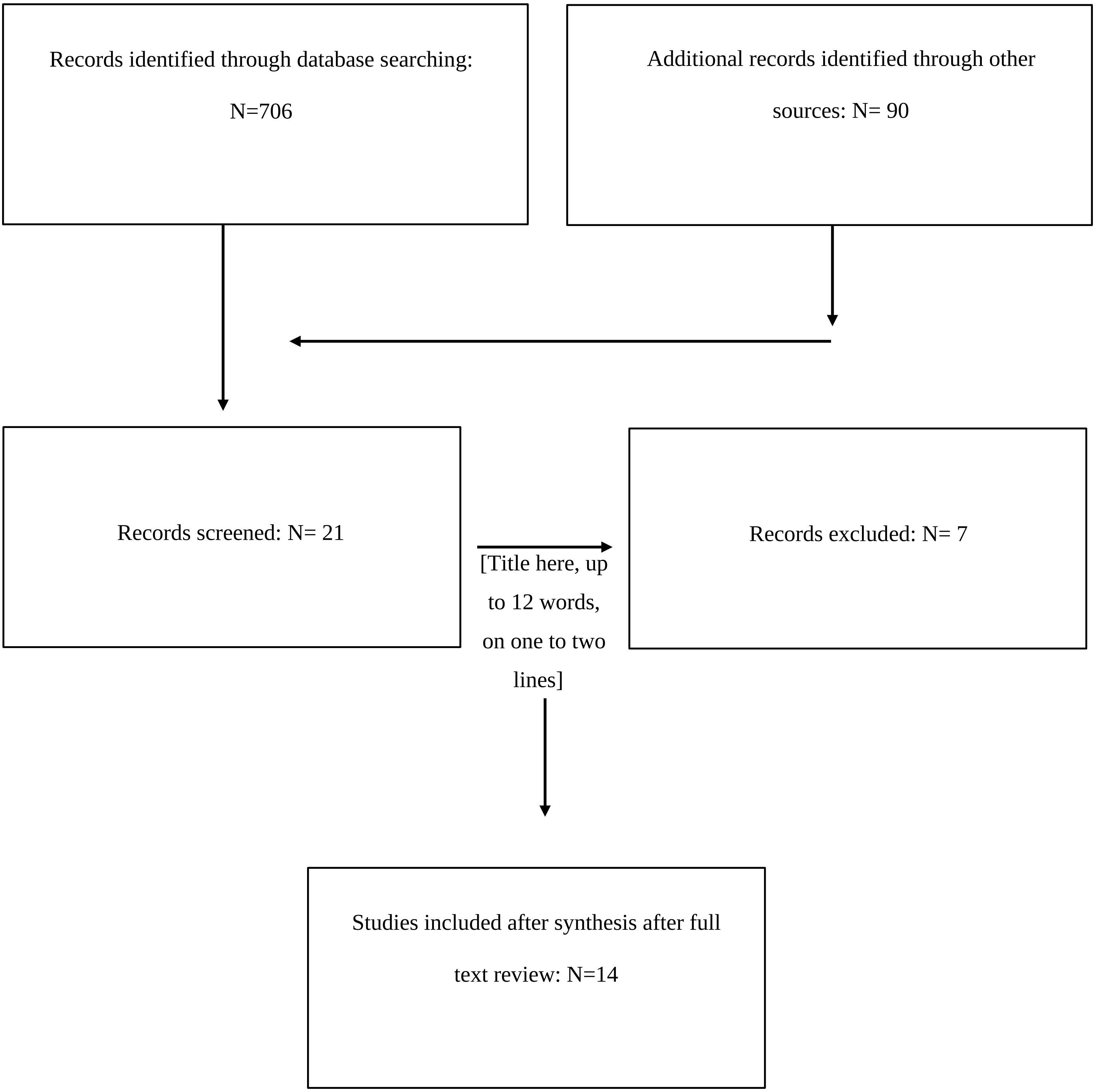
Study	Study aims	Key findings/ Conclusion
cognitions in professional snooker. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *36*, 197-208.	of professional snooker players during solo practice performances within naturalistic settings.	performance, and in particular, at highly dynamical situation specific moments. Problem-focused strategies are vital psychological characteristics of expert and optimal performances in general.
Whitehead, A. E., Taylor, J. A., & Polman, R. C. (2016a). Evidence for skill level differences in the thought processes of golfers during high and low pressure situations. *Frontiers in psychology*, *6*, 1974.	Aims to explore using TA the decision-making process of golfers when playing on a real golf course.	Higher skilled golfers focused more on planning their shots and identifying appropriate strategies to reach their desired goal.
Whitehead, A. E., Taylor, J. A., & Polman, R. C. (2016b). Evidence for skill level differences in the thought processes of golfers during high and low pressure situations. *Frontiers in psychology*, *6*, 1974.	(1) Investigate whether stress through introduction of a competition with monetary prizes influenced thought processes of golfers with varying skill levels. (2) To investigate if measures of propensity for reinvestment relate to greater focus on technique when under pressure.	(1) when faced with pressure of competition higher skilled golfers thought processes changed and regressed to a less automatic and more step by step process. (2) Clear differences in the thought processes of high and intermediate level golfers during both practice and competition were found, with less planning of shots by lower skill golfers. (3) Propensity for decision reinvestment was a strong correlate of changes in cognition towards a more technique focus when under competitive pressure.
Whitehead, A. E., Jones, H. S., Williams, E. L., Dowling, C., Morley, D., Taylor, J. A., & Polman, R. C. (2017). Changes in cognition over a 16.1 km cycling time trial using Think Aloud protocol: Preliminary evidence. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 1-9.	To examine the thought processes of cyclists over a 16.1km TT, using real time, concurrent, TA protocol.	Thought processes change continuously during exercise, with different thoughts becoming more prominent at different times.
Whitehead, A. E., Jones, H. S., Williams, E. L., Rowley, C., Quayle, L., Marchant, D., & Polman, R. C. (2018a). Investigating the relationship between cognitions, pacing strategies and performance in 16.1 km cycling time trials using a think aloud protocol. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *34*, 95-109.	To identify changes in trained cyclist's cognitions and pacing strategies within a real-life, competitive 16.1km TT.	This research finds relationships between cognitions and performance (e.g. power output).
Whitehead, A. E., Jones, H. S., Williams, E. L., Rowley, C., Quayle, L., Marchant, D., & Polman, R. C. (2018b). Investigating the relationship between cognitions, pacing strategies and performance in 16.1 km cycling time trials using a think aloud protocol. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *34*, 95-109.	(1) Investigate differences in cognitions between trained and untrained cyclists during a 16.1km TT in a laboratory setting. (2) Identify changes in cognitions over time in relation changes in pacing strategy (i.e. speed).	(1) Suggests evidence for differences between trained and untrained participants in both cognitive processes and pacing behaviors. (2) different cognitive strategies used to manage discomfort and pain with expertise and training determining coping used. (3) Trained participants were more task focused with untrained using distractive strategies.

Study	Study aims	Key findings/ Conclusion
Calmeiro, L., & Tenenbaum, G. (2011). Concurrent verbal protocol analysis in sport: Illustration of thought processes during a golf-putting task. *Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology*, *5*(3), 223-236.	(1) To use TA aimed at identifying patterns of thought processes and (2) to compare the content and sequence of thought processes of playing of varying skill levels by utilizing an even-sequence analysis	(1) Experienced players spent more time than beginners assessing conditions and/or planning the putt. (2) Experienced players had more thought sequences regarding gathering information, planned strategies, goals related to putt execution, not focusing on mechanical aspects of putt.
Murphy, C. P., Jackson, R. C., Cooke, K., Roca, A., Benguigui, N., & Williams, A. M. (2016). Contextual information and perceptual-cognitive expertise in a dynamic, temporally-constrained task. Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied, 22, 455–470	To compare skilled and less skilled tennis players ability to anticipate shot direction and depth when viewing test stimuli in an animated condition.	Skilled tennis players process contextual information differently to, and in essence, more effectively than less-skilled players. This is in support of the LTWN theory.

Appendix 5: ENTREQ Statement

No	Item	Guide and description	Page number (s)
1	Aim	To review how Think Aloud Protocol has been used as a data collection method in sport research	6
2	Methodology	Systematic review – Systematically review TA as a data collection method to provide reader clarity on TA in sport and how to conduct future research.	6
3	Approach to searching	Search plan was pre-planned underpinned by Moher et al. (2009) PRISMA	8
4	Inclusion criteria	The inclusion criteria consisted of research papers that have used level 1, level 2 or level 3 of Think Aloud as the primary method of data collection. Further to this, the paper must have investigated a topic within sport and used athletes (novice through to elite) for the study population and written in English. This included journal articles, dissertations and book chapters.	7-8
5	Data sources	*SPORTDiscus, PsychINFO, Scopus, and Web of Science;* a manual search of the following journals, *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, Psychology of Sport and Exercise, The Sport Psychologist, The International Journal of Sport Psychology, International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, Frontiers in Psychology, Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, and Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology*	7
6	Electronic search strategy	Keyword combinations used during search strategies included, *think aloud and sport, concurrent verbalizations and sport, verbal reports and sport, verbal protocol and sport, and think aloud protocol with athletes.*	7
7	Study screening methods	PRISMA, quality assessment check (adapted from Trimmer et al., 2003) and researcher collaboration.	8-9
8	Study characteristics	Results section and Appendix 1,2,3	11-12, 31-39
9	Study selection process	Fourteen studies included for review	8

No	Item	Guide and description	Page number (s)
10	Rationale for appraisal	Using the same transparent procedure adhered by Tod et al. (2015) which adopted a modified checklist of Trimmer et al. (2003), to ensure methodological robustness.	9
11	Appraisal items	Adaptation of Trimmer et al. (2003) quality assessment check.	8-9
12	Appraisal process	Each study underwent an independent quality assessment check conducted by the lead researcher	8
13	Appraisal results	All fourteen final studies scored over 0.5 and it was therefore concluded they met the quality assessment criteria	9
14	Data extraction	Hard copies of the included studies were obtained and data was extracted manually from the full text and summary tables were created.	9
15	Software	N/A	N/A
16	Number of reviewers	Analysis of the final fourteen research studies was conducted by the independent reviewer and took place systematically in three stages	9
17	Coding	Data related to the 3 areas of investigation were sought and summary tables produced.	9-10
18	Study comparison	Summary tables were produced to provide opportunity for comparisons across studies	9-10
19	Derivation of themes	N/A	N/A
20	Quotations	N/A	N/A
21	Synthesis output	Discussion section addresses findings and suggests future directions for research.	18-24


Records identified through database searching: N=706
Additional records identified through other sources: N= 90
Records screened: N= 21
[Title here, up to 12 words, on one to two lines]
Records excluded: N= 7
Studies included after synthesis after full text review: N=14

Empirical Paper 1

Breaking into the first team: Retrospective and concurrent perspectives of professional female soccer players experiences of the junior-to-senior transition within the United Kingdom.

Abstract

In the United Kingdom (UK), professional female soccer has grown exponentially in recent years, including with the advent of the Women's Super League. Given this growth, the present study aimed to (a) to explore the junior-to-senior transition in the UK female soccer players (i.e., perceived demands, barriers, resources, and coping strategies); (b) to analyse how changes in the UK female soccer context (i.e., increased professionalization) influenced players' perception of the transition. Six professional female soccer players from two groups took part in the study; senior athlete (N=3) and transitional athletes (N=3). To acquire a holistic understanding, semi-structured interviews were conducted with all athletes. Results highlighted transitional athletes appeared to have a different JST experience compared to the senior group, with the difference in experience attributed to the increased professionalization of female football. In particular, demands associated with being a dual career athlete and greater difficulty balancing the competing demands. As a result, transitional athletes also engaged in more coping strategies. This study provides valuable real-time findings in relation to the JST in professional female football and the context of the increasing professionalization of female football in the UK.

Keywords: within-career transition, elite sport, female soccer, dual-career

Women's Football in the UK

Women's football is now the fourth most popular team sport in the UK with the Football Association (FA) aiming for women's football to be the second most popular team sport by the end of 2020. According to the latest 'UEFA Women's across the National Associations 2016/17' report, there are now 215 professional players in England and approximately 49 are international professional players. A recent report by FIFPro highlights that 46% of current female players worldwide combine their football career with study and, as such, may experience further challenges not typically associated with the traditional male football JST. Female football has become more professionalized and athletes currently transitioning into the first team are entering a different culture to those who have previously transitioned before them. Athletes may be entering an environment with more demands than previously experienced. For example, previous research has found increased activity demands on professional basketball players compared to semi-professional basketball players (Scanlan et al. 2015). Similarly, the increase in frequency of training and matches between professional and semi-professional attributes increased physical and mental demands on athletes. While junior-to-senior transition (JST) research in male football has previously been explored (e.g. Morris et al. 2016), due to the shift from semi-professional to professional status of female football in the UK there is a need for this phenomenon to be further explored within the context of elite female football.

Junior to Senior Transition Research

To be successful in sport and develop their careers, athletes are required to navigate numerous transitions throughout their careers (Wylleman et al. 2011). These transitions can be both normative (i.e., predictable, such as youth-senior transitions), non-normative (i.e., unpredictable, such as career-ending injuries; Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004) and quasi-normative (i.e., transitions predictable to a group of athletes such as cultural transitions). Career frameworks, for example, the holistic athletic career model (HACM; Wylleman, 2004; 2019) suggest how transitions outside of sport such as academic transitions can impact an athlete's development within their sport. Wylleman's framework adopts a career-long perspective, starting with initiation in sport, through to termination of an athlete's sporting career. The model highlights how normative transitions athletes will experience (i.e., youth to senior) may interfere with transitions outside of sport (i.e., moving into higher education). Secondly, Stambulova's (2003) athletic career transition model (ACTM) argues that during transitions, athletes negotiate using a variety of internal and external coping resources, numerous internal and external barriers. Coping resources facilitate the transition (e.g. athlete's skills, social support, etc.) whereas, barriers are factors that obstruct the coping process (e.g. lack of time, funding, support). This model indicates that when an athlete's internal/external coping resources match or exceed the internal/external demands experienced during a transition, then an athlete will make that transition successfully.

Within career transitions can be challenging to negotiate successfully with many complex factors that may hinder the transition. For example, managing demands away from football such as education. The aforementioned models also highlight elements to ease athletes making the transition, for example, having a strong support network on which to rely. Pummell et al. (2008) offer support to both the ACTM and HACM, they suggested external pressures made transitioning a more stressful experience for the athlete. These findings are further supported in the work of Morris et al. (2016), they investigated male youth football players transitioning into the first team and reported factors such as friends, family and similar external pressures made the transition more challenging but also reported social support facilitated the transition. Stambulova et al. (2020) postulated in their ISSP stand on career development and transitions of athletes that research on major normative transitions such as the JST have recently explored their temporal structures, with each transition having multiple phases and each phase having a different set of demands. Stambulova et al. (2017) highlighted one such four-phase model underpinning the JST. The preparation phase covers the last year of junior sport prior to competition in senior sport. The orientation phase refers to the first year as a senior athlete. The adaptation phase covers the second and third seasons as senior athletes and finally, the stabilization phase relates to the third and fourth season as senior athletes. They further detail the transitional experiences of Swedish ice hockey players within each of the four stages. For example, preparing for physical challenges during the preparation stage, accepting and learning team norms and traditions during the orientation phase, and performing well and taking responsibility during the adaption phase. Despite the plethora of JST research, the present study aims to further extend the scope of where this knowledge can be applied by exploring the JST experiences of UK female football players within the context of an increasingly professional setting.

Research investigating transitions in women's football is scarce, and with female football growing globally, the need to investigate within-career transitions is paramount in order to contribute to the delivery of support services. Likewise, exploring this transition from the perspective of female footballers helps to promote inclusivity in research. Thereby, adding to knowledge and subtly promoting social justice. Previous research that has investigated support structures in female football has produced some pertinent results. For example, Gledhill and Harwood (2014) highlighted the support structures elite youth level female football players relied on to have a more positive youth development, citing influencers such as peers, football brothers, and football fathers as being positive influencers on their development. Similarly, work by Gledhill and Hardwood (2015) posited two critical proposals for successful youth talent development in female football. Firstly, players, coaches, teachers, and parents need to *"adaptively interact to produce an optimal talent development learning environment (p.25)".* Secondly, optimal multi-agential interactions between these critical figures will result in a perceived supportive talent development environment. Both pieces of research highlight how, for female athletes to successfully develop in football, there need to be numerous support systems in place to effectively manage the demands placed upon them as they transition through different stages. These results can be further applied to supporting athlete's making transitions into senior football, ensuring athletes have the necessary support systems in place to increase the likelihood of completing the transition.

In Gledhil and Harwood's (2015) paper, however, there was a focus on collating data from athletes who had withdrawn from the sport, potentially limiting our understanding of successful transitions and career development. There was also a reliance on retrospective interviews, with former players recalling their experiences, therefore data could be subject to recall error or bias (Patton, 2002). Likewise, both papers did not explicitly explore the JST and as such may neglect some of the intricate experiences associated with this transition, again, leaving gaps in knowledge. The papers also did not consider the environment of female football in general and the impact this has on talent development and transitions of female athletes. Since their publication, female football has grown significantly with the continued development of the Women's Super League (WSL) notably with increasing broadcasting rights and sponsorship deals, furthering the professionalization of the sport. Despite offering some significant findings concerning the psychosocial factors of female football, some areas require further investigation, in particular, the JST, with consideration given to the changing environment of female football in the UK. To expand on previous work, the present study aims to explore the experiences of professional female football players who have successfully completed the transition and those who are currently in the process of transitioning into the first team. While also exploring the potential impact of the increased professionalism of female football in the UK on these transitional experiences

Gledhill et al. (2017) systematic review highlighted the lack of research exploring female athletes, suggesting greater representation is required given the proposed global plans for female football development (FIFA, 2014) and increased professionalization of football in the UK. Given the increase in professional and semi-professional status of female football players within the UK combined with football becoming a more holistic and inclusive sport globally, the need to answer these unanswered questions is paramount. In particular, the perceived importance of creating effective transitions in women's football acts as a call for research to investigate the transition experiences of female football players. In their editorial for the special issue on dual career development and transitions, Stambulova and Wylleman (2015) call for future research to be translated into information that can be used as recommendations on a national level as well as inform the provision of support services to athletes. The present study seeks to address this niche area of research and understand the experiences and perceptions of the JST in football. From both a retrospective perspective (senior players recalling their transition experiences during a period when female football was transitioning from amateur/semi-professional to professional) and from a lived perspective (players who are currently making the transition reflecting on their experiences so far during a period when female football is now professionalized and continuing to grow).

Dual Career Research

The concept of dual careers (DC) relates to the challenge of combining sports with studies and/or work (Stambulova & Wylleman, 2015; 2019). The EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes (2012) highlight challenges relating to DC such as balancing sports training and education and safeguarding the development of young athletes. The guidelines also highlight some of the key benefits associated with being a dual-career athlete, notably, a balanced lifestyle, reduced stress, expanded social networks and social support networks, enhanced adaptation to life post-retirement and improved employability prospects. In line with this, the guidelines aspire organizations, governments and sporting bodies to create the right environment for dual-career athletes in order the better manage the challenges and increase the benefits of a dual-career. Previous research investigating student-athletes DC experiences has also suggested that student-athletes face transitional changes at an academic, athletic, psychological and psychosocial level (MacNamara & Collins, 2010). Situational conditions can also contribute to the effectiveness of a transition experience (e.g., financing, quality of coaching and cultures), if these conditions are not supportive then athletes may experience more demands when making the transition, such as student-athletes overload, overtraining and even burnout (Elbe & Beckmann, 2006).

More broadly, DC research has often under-researched the development pathways of minority athletes such as women and athletes with disabilities. In Stambulova and Wylleman's (2019) critical review they reported DC athletes need to obtain and maintain an optimal DC balance i.e., balance between the varying and competing demands experienced from sport, education and wider life. Stambulova and Henriksen (2020) also suggest that when managing multiple transitions, athletes need to prioritize demands in order to distribute their available resources accordingly. The ISSP position stipulates a greater need for research to bridge the gap between research and practice in order to facilitate DC athletes. Likewise, it is argued DC athletes also must contend with DC barriers, such as lack of flexibility, financial support, professional support alongside personal barriers such as lack of time for social activity and burnout. Factors such as athletes' personal resources (e.g. support network) and motivation and identity can be key contributors to facilitating DC adjustment. Although, in some instances, some motivational profiles were determined to inhibit DC adjustment. In order to further our knowledge, the review encourages *"deeper exploration of individual career pathways, including minority athletes (e.g., females)"* (p.85). By exploring these experiences, we can better inform practitioners when delivering interventions to athletes making the transition by informing them of the likely barriers and demands they are facing and how best to facilitate a successful transition. Likewise, in line with the EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes

(2012) findings may facilitate organizations in supporting many of their DC athletes by creating the appropriate supportive environment for DC.

This paper aims to (a) to explore the JST in the UK female football players (i.e., perceived demands, barriers, resources, and coping strategies); (b) to analyse how changes in the UK female football context (i.e., increased professionalization) influenced players' perception of the transition.

Method

Organisation and Participants

The organisation selected for the research was a full-time professional club competing in the WSL, the highest club standard in the UK. The organisation is a highly successful team having previously won the WSL. The organisation had a variety of coaching and support staff available to the players. This included club doctor, physiotherapist, nutritionist, strength and conditioning coach, performance analyst and sports psychologist (lead researcher). Typically, the club trained five days a week and competed between once and twice a week. The organisation also has an excellent youth development structure, with the regional center being awarded tier one status and providing support to 60 athletes between U10 and U16 age categories plus a development squad (a team of players aged 16-18, the final stage before entry into the first team). Six female professional football athletes took part in one semi-structured interview each as part of this research. The athletes were grouped into two groups of three participants. Group one (senior athletes) had already successfully made the transition into female football and were first-team regulars. Group two (transitional athletes) were currently in the process of making the transition into the first team. At the time of the interviews, senior athletes were aged between 22 and 26 and transitional athletes were aged between 18 and 19. Senior athletes had made the JST at different clubs from different areas around the country whereas transitional athletes were currently making the transition from the host organizations development squad. Justification for two groups being used to elicit data from athletes was based on how the female football landscape had changed over the previous few years. Senior athletes made the transition during the initial stages of growth in women's football when the first players were starting to turn full-time professional. Transitional athletes were making the transition into a club that was a full-time professional organization and into a sport that was now more professionalized. Using two groups allowed for the exploration of whether the increased professionalism in female football influences the transition experiences of athletes. Eligibility for this study was, senior athletes must have previously experienced the JST, and transitional athletes must be in the process of making the transition into the first team. This criterion was used to ensure relevant data was collected for each group.

Interview Schedule

Construction of the semi-structured interviews was informed by previous theoretical frameworks (e.g., ACTM, HACM) and was adapted from research papers investigating the youth-to-senior transition in football players. *"What emotions did you experience when moving into the first team"* and *"what/who has helped you with the transition into the first team"* are examples of some questions asked to the participants. These questions were designed following minor adjustments to Morris et al's. (2016) paper, for example, structuring questions around the transition, challenges and coping strategies in order to address the present studies aims. The lead researcher presented the initial interview schedule to the research team for a critical peer debrief. Following discussions, the research team agreed that the changes made to Morris et al. (2016) interview schedule would elicit data that addressed the preset studies aims. Likewise, a semi-structured interview would grant the researcher access into the individual experiences associated with the JST that other methods would not (e.g. focus group). Senior athletes and transitional athletes received mildly adjusted interview schedules this was to ensure relevant questions were being asked and to allow each group to discuss their own experiences in greater depth and to allow for more meaningful data to be collected. For example, *"what challenges did you experience in relation to training"* versus *"what challenges are you currently experiencing in relation to training"* senior athletes were also invited to respond to *"what advice would you give to current transitional athletes"*. Interviews for both groups one and two covered vital areas such as a) introduction and background of the athletes, b) transition experiences, and c) support and coping strategies.

Procedure

Once ethical approval was acquired from a UK University Ethics Review Board, the manager of the club involved was approached and provided with a brief of the research aims and interview schedules. Consent was acquired from the manager and permission granted to interview six players from the first team. Participants for each group were recruited based on their suitability for the project and the lead researcher who also acted as a Trainee Sport & Exercise Psychologist for the host organization used a homogeneous purposive sampling technique (participants who share the same or very similar traits) to identify participants who were both eligible for the project and who would produce results rich in information that would provide further comprehension and understanding of the research question (Patton, 2002). Appropriate training was provided to the lead research before data collection to ensure comfortability in conducting interviews; this was delivered by members of the research team. Participants were approached and given information regarding the study, once participants agreed to take part in the research, a time was arranged to conduct a face-face audio-recorded interview. All interviews took place at the football clubs' training ground, and all participants were advised on their right to withdraw, confidentiality procedures, risks, and safeguarding. Interviews lasted for approximately 30-45 minutes. All athletes were interviewed individually. Upon completion of the interviews, all data were transcribed and subjected to analysis.

Data Analysis and Research Credibility

Similar to the extant career development research, this paper positions itself within the post-positivist paradigm (Stambulova & Ryba, 2014). Whereby inquiry is a series of logical steps, participants have multiple perspectives rather than a single reality and adopt rigorous methods of qualitative data collection Creswell and Poth (2018). Stating a papers philosophical positioning helps to refine and clarify the research method and provides transparency (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). Interviews were audio-recorded and lasted between 30 and 45 minutes all interviews were transcribed verbatim by the first author to create a permanent record of the data collected. The researchers adopted an abductive approach (a combination of both inductive and deductive) to thematic data analysis. This allows the researcher to construct new meaning and identify (initial) themes from the data and find key themes, commonalities and differences between the interviews. Consistent with Braun and Clarke (2006; 2019), six phases of thematical analysis were recursively conducted to analyze the data and identify themes. These phases included: (1) familiarizing with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes (grouping codes and data together), (4) reviewing themes to confirm they are found throughout the dataset, (5) defining and naming the identified themes and (6) producing the report. During the familiarization phase, the lead researcher read and re-read the transcriptions, while also listening and re-listening to the audio files to become familiar with the meaning and context of the verbalizations. The next phases of analysis involved generating codes and Nvivo software was used to facilitate this process. Generated codes were grouped into themes and subthemes based upon phrases of similar meaning and underlying concepts. Once all transcripts were analyzed, a further review was conducted by the remaining authors. To negate some of the limitations of inter-rater reliability as highlighted by Smith and McGannon (2018), a different researcher acted as a critical friend to ensure data collection and analysis were plausible and defendable. Discussions between researchers and critical friends helped to ensure coherence between the raw data and our interpretations of this data, and this often involved the refining and naming of themes. To generate additional data and insight into the participants' experiences, member reflections took place between the lead researcher and participants regarding interpretations of the raw data. This allowed a collaborative exploration of potential gaps in analysis and discussion of the researchers' and participants' interpretations of the data (Schinke, et al. 2013).

We would like the research to be judged on the characteristics outlined by papers such as Richardson (2000), Smith and Caddick (2012), and Smith and Sparkes (2013). These judgments include firstly, width, which refers to the magnitude of data collection, analysis and researchers' interpretations. Second, credibility is the research findings being believable, and transparency is the outline of procedures used to collect and analyze data. Thirdly, verisimilitude which questions whether the study demonstrates *"a credible amount of cultural, social, individual, or communal sense of the 'real'"* (Richardson, 2000, p.937). Finally, does this research display rigor that relates to whether the study appreciates *"complex theoretical constructs, data and time in the field, sample(s), context(s) and data collection and analysis processes"* (Sparkes & Smith, 2013, p.197). To meet Smith and Caddick's (2012) recommendations the research team have included detailed descriptions of participants and their contexts, numbers of participants used and how many there were in each group, non-identifiable details of the organization that was involved with the research, as well as information regarding types of interviews used and length of data collection sessions. Data collection methods and analytical technique details are also included, and these approaches were regularly checked with project co-authors to ensure the methods being adopted were relevant and appropriate to meet the research aims.

Results

Following analysis of the transcriptions and audio files, common themes generated regarding the demands and barriers of the transitions and coping strategies used to manage these demands were developed. These are presented as two groups a) Senior Athletes and b) Transitional Athletes. The themes generated for each group are a) Perceived Transition Demands, b) Perceived Transition Barriers and c) Perceived Coping Strategies.

Perceived Transition Demands

Senior Athletes

Perceived transition demands relate to the athletes' challenges during the transition into the first-team environment. Senior athletes reported DC issues as a perceived transition demand, particularly in relation to managing the balance between education and a football career.

> When I moved up to London, I started University at the same time, and football always took a priority I was playing in the champions league during my first semester, so I was missing so much University, and then when I eventually did turn up, I just didn't understand the topic. The University understood that I did sport, but the department didn't really support me with it, which made balancing the both out very difficult (Athlete 3).

And,

> When I first made the move to the first team I was at University at the same time so obviously the lifestyle associated with University didn't really help, going out quite often, drinking more than I probably should have been so I had to cut that down a lot in order to meet the extra demands (Athlete 1).

These athletes seemingly present different experiences related to DC issues, one athlete discusses the challenges of football interfering with education. Whereas, the second athlete discusses how a University lifestyle (drinking, partying) initially hindered her football career, and as a result, required adjustment. A consideration here could be given to the culture of the football club the athletes were transitioning into and the context of female football in the UK at the time of transition. While some teams were professional, the majority were still part-time, semi-professional athletes and as such, DC athletes transitioning into a semi-professional environment may have experienced fewer demands related to balancing education and football in comparison to the few that were transitioning into professional football clubs.

Despite this, senior athletes valued the importance of education and it was perceived as a valuable self-development tool, especially for post-career planning, however, football was always the priority. Some senior athletes perceived education to interfere with their football career.

> University probably hindered it a little bit as well I guess, but at the time I didn't care I was just happy to be playing football and training with the first team. I was missing things like lectures to travel and then I was up early a lot as well so it probably didn't all help (Athlete 1).

Senior athletes then, suggested they had developed a stronger athletic identity rather than academic identity. It was perceived education was something they had to do rather than something they wanted to. Football, on the other hand, was something they would make great sacrifices for, including education.

Senior athletes also reported sport-specific issues as pertinent transitional demands, notably, increased task demands. For example;

> I think the physicality was the biggest challenge I experienced during matches, it still probably is especially international level as well to get the stage I want to get to. But especially as an 18-year-old, physically it was a big challenge as I imagine it would be for most 18 year old's (Athlete 3).

Naturally, junior athletes transitioning into a senior environment would experience greater challenges associated with increased physically, training with teammates with enhanced technical abilities and tactical nuances. Therefore, athletes reported a settling in period whereby they needed time to adjust to these increased demands.

Transitional Athletes

Transitional athletes also experienced DC issues as a salient perceived transitional demand. Much like their senior counterparts, transitional athletes reported football as their main priority and as a result, education often suffered. For example,

> Well it (football) interferes a lot with things like university, like I can very rarely attend university sessions. Even when I am at university I don't really know anybody because I never really had chance to meet them so a lot of the time they are like who is this person (Athlete 5).

And,

> I think finding a balance between football and university can sometimes be difficult, it would be so much easier to just focus on football 24/7 but finding the time to balance University and to make sure I am fully ready to play football at each training sessions and at each match every weekend is a challenge (Athlete 4).

Here, the athletes discuss a lack of time to attend and engage with their education because football consumes so much of their time. Whereas senior athletes reported balancing football and education as a challenge there was a mix in experiences between football interfering with education and education interfering with football. For example, some athletes from the senior group describe having to adjust their University lifestyle in order to focus on their football (e.g. less drinking/ partying). None of the transitional athletes describe this experience, instead, their narrative is very much focused on football consuming their time and trying to catch up with their education in between these moments. For example,

> I don't get my days to myself anymore in terms of things like University work I can't do it during the day anymore I have to do it from half 4 until like 11 at night or in the

> mornings before I go to training so that has changed a lot. Then there’s things like eating wise I have had to change my nutrition to be able to cope with the amount of extra training sessions there are (Athlete 6).

This finding could be understood within the context of professional female football. The senior group were transitioning into a primarily semi-professional environment, which may have meant that some (not all) DC athletes had more time to focus on education. Here, education may have then interfered with their football development at times (e.g. university lifestyle). Whereas, the transitional group, are all transitioning into a full-time professional environment, where the time commitments for football are much more significant. In turn, this leads to less time for education (e.g. attendance at lectures).

As well as DC challenges, transitional athletes reported a lack of social life as a pertinent transitional demand. Much like with DC challenges, transitional athletes discussed the time required to focus on a full-time football career as a hindrance on their wider social life. Athlete four discusses her experience in the following quote.

> I would say my social life has suffered massively. University and A-levels is probably at the point where you decide do you want to commit to this, do you want to commit to being a footballer and for me I always wanted to. As a result, I barely went out during A-level years, I haven’t been out since I have started University because I have been training full time and football becomes the priority which I am fine with. Friends wise I would say some of my closest friends now are within football I rarely get chance to see my friends outside of football but I am lucky to be with people I get on with every day (Athlete 4).

This finding was less salient during discussions with senior group athletes, again, much like above, the context of professional football at the time of their transition may have influenced this. With less time dedicated to football, there is more time for socializing with friends.

Transitional athletes, much their senior counterparts also discussed the increased task difficult as a perceived transitional demand (e.g. increased physicality). This was a common experience across both groups, with athletes regularly citing the increased pace, strength, and intensity of training and competitive matches as challenges during interviews.

Perceived Transition Barriers

Senior Group

Perceived transition barriers refer to themes that interfered with the individual's ability to cope with the transition. The sub-theme of anxiety was constructed from the interview transcripts and often represented a feeling of 'nervousness'. Senior athletes often reported feeling 'nervous' or 'anxious' when they first made the transition to training with the first team.

> I was with my first club, at around 15 years old so I was just thrown into the first team really and I was nervous to start with, I had gone through the pathway all the way to the first team. But I was very nervous, I was only training a couple of times a week. (Athlete 3).

Here the athlete discusses the sensation of being 'thrown in' at a young age, and as a result, feeling nervous of training with senior players. Some athletes from the senior group also discussed struggling with having to move away from home in order to pursue a career in professional football.

> Some of those difficulties were moving away from home for the first time properly, erm, you get used to being away from home with international camps and stuff, so it wasn't a case of feeling home sick, but it was a massive change for me. I come from a small town in Scotland so to move to a big city like London was a huge move for me and carried with it a lot of pressure (Athlete 3).

Professional female football at the time of transition was rare within the UK and the sport, in general, was still slowly growing. As a result, some of the senior players had to move to completely new areas in order to pursue their career goals. This in itself acted as a barrier to coping with the transition, as the act of moving so far away from home presented challenges within itself.

Transitional Group

Transitional athletes also reported heightened anxiety and feelings of nervousness when making the transition into the first team. Here the athletes discuss the pressure to perform well and demonstrated a desire to want to impress their senior players, players they had discussed as being their idols while growing up.

> You are training with some players that you look up to as a young player and then all of a sudden you are training with them it just takes a lot to get used to, like there are a lot of big names and big players here so you don't want to make any mistakes as you don't want them to be thinking 'oh here is another young player coming up' 'looking at them making mistakes again, we don't want them back and stuff' (Athlete 5).

While both groups reported experiencing anxiety towards the transition, there were differences between the groups in terms of sources of their anxiety. Transitional athletes feared making mistakes in front of their idols (senior players) and wanted to earn their respect. This finding could further be explained in relation to the changing environment of female football in the UK. With increased media coverage aspiring female football players have more access to female role models which previously had not be so common. Therefore, those currently transitioning into the first team were transitioning into an environment with players that they had looked up to during their youth careers and players who they had used as role models. For example, *"I was playing with some huge names in women's football, people who I had only seen on television, who are people that I look up to"* (Athlete 4).

Aside from reporting feelings of anxiety, athletes also reported similar negative emotions, such as feeling under pressure when making the transition, mainly as a result of the standard of players *"there is obviously a lot of pressure on me because they are a very high standard, so I have to try and step up to that and be on par with them"* (Athlete 6). This sub-theme may link with the perceived transition demand sub-theme of increased task-difficulty. Naturally, with female football transitioning to full-time professional, the standard of the sport will improve. With these improving standards, junior players entering this environment are expected to adapt to these standard and as such, this carries with it a sense of pressure on the athlete.

Perceived Coping Resources and Strategies

Senior Athletes

Perceived coping resources and strategies related to the methods employed by athletes to manage the perceived demands and barriers associated with the transition. Senior athletes often used social support as a key coping strategy, for example, when facing challenges related to commuting to training sessions, matches and training camps, particularly early on in their transition, parents seemed to be the most prominent form of support.

> My dad took me everywhere I needed to be, driving to Loughborough and back after games to take me where I needed to be and stuff, so I have always been very lucky that they have helped me out (Athlete 2).

Family was also an essential form of support for athletes in facilitating coping with 'issues' relating to both football and personal problems. As athlete three states *"Family was a huge thing for me, my parents especially my dad was very supportive of me making the move, and if I had any issues, especially football issues I would just go to him".* Support received from friends and family was primarily emotional support, notably for challenges they experienced both within and outside of football. The support received involved encouragement and maintaining motivation.

Teammates, support staff, and coaches were also salient sources of support for senior athletes. Senior athletes often used this support to facilitate confidence towards the transition, for example, athlete two states, *"Staff probably helped because they gave me confidence."*. Pertinently, different members of the athlete's support network were utilized in response to different demands and barriers. Staff and coaches primarily for technical, tactical and physical development, teammates for emotional support and technical, tactical and physical development, and finally, family and friends for emotional support. This knowledge can be used to implement more effective support structures within organizations, educating staff and senior members of squads on the importance of offering support and guidance to new athletes making the transition.

Senior athletes also opted for a variety of personal development methods in order to match the demands of the transition. In particular, this was in response to the demands associated with task difficulty. Many of the senior players were not training full-time during the initial stages of their senior careers therefore, undertaking voluntary sessions were required to ensure they were at the peak of their game.

> I put in a lot of extra training sessions, I was training with the first team, then training with the University team then doing some extra training on my own, trying to put into practice what I was working on at the time (Athlete 1).

Transitional Athletes

Transitional athletes also relied on social support to manage some of the demands and barriers associated with the transition and much like their senior peers, they too did so primarily for emotional support. However, the majority of their social support was through teammates and staff who the athletes suggested provided emotional, technical, and tactical support during the transition. From a staff perspective, i.e., managers and coaches, the support provided tended to come in the form of advice on technical and tactical development. For example;

> The staff have been quite good actually, I have a few conversations with the first team manager and he kind of just makes sure that any mistakes that I make it’s not really my fault it more just me having to adapt to this level so he takes the pressure off a bit (Athlete 6).

This advice aimed at helping players manage the challenges associated with the extra demands placed on them during this transition, such as the increased intensity. Unlike the senior athletes, transitional athletes discussed the importance of senior players in facilitating development and facilitating the transition. Senior players were perceived to be a pertinent coping strategy by acting as a role model, sharing their experiences and providing tangible emotional support to them during the transition. Athlete five highlights that senior players are a key form of support when discussing coping with the challenges associated with the transition.

> But being in the first team helped me to develop these ideas, speaking with senior players and then seeing how committed people were to their football I didn’t really understand that until I came down here. Like I thought I need to start doing stuff like that to make sure that I develop. Seeing what some of the players do when they go away on international camps as well helps me with that (Athlete 5).

Transitional athletes, therefore, appeared to want to utilize the experiences of their senior peers and apply this knowledge to their development in order to manage the transition.

Similar to the senior group, it was perceived that personal development, primarily undertaken through extra conditioning sessions, often in response to the extra physical demands of senior football was a pertinent coping strategy. Transitional athletes felt the need to undertake extra conditioning sessions to manage the challenges associated with the extra demands as they thought they were playing “catch up” compared to the more senior players in the squad.

> I go the gym a lot more as well, I look at the players on the pitch and think wow I want to be like them, so I go the gym to cope with the extra physicality. Setting targets helps me a lot because it keeps me on track and gives me a bit of purpose to my training sessions (Athlete 5).

Athletes in the transitional group also discussed using reflective learning as a key coping mechanism. Players reported reflecting both individually and within groups regarding performance in training and in matches to facilitate their development and track their progress. The idea of reflecting on performance also seemed to act as a tool to facilitate goal setting and areas for development, as is highlighted in the following extract from player six.

> I came up with this idea with one of the other players, we always share a car ride into training and debrief in the car and we just came up with the idea of writing it down, we both wanted to improve and we felt this would help us and it just helps me to track my progress along the way (Athlete 6).

This ability to reflect and share experiences with a peer who is experiencing similar challenges to themselves facilitated athletes making the transition for several reasons. Firstly, it provided space for athletes to vent frustrations and seek support and advice from peers viewed as equals. Secondly, it allowed the athletes to learn from their own experiences, understand why they were or were not successful in a situation, and learn from that. Finally, it allowed athletes to understand and identify their own educational and developmental needs. For example, if they were reflecting on struggling with fitness, then the athletes would become aware that fitness is an area they would like to develop on to better manage the challenges of the transition.

Discussion

The present study aimed to (a) explore the JST in the UK female football players (i.e., perceived demands, barriers, resources, and coping strategies); (b) analyze how changes in the

UK female football context (i.e., increased professionalization) influenced players' perception of the transition. Senior athletes reported DC challenges as a pertinent demand, with athletes reporting education interfering with academia and academia interfering with their sporting career. Transitional athletes also reported this as a transitional demand, however, the demand was very much focused on academia interfering with their sporting career. Both groups of athletes reported anxiety as a salient barrier to the transition, although there were some differences between groups in terms of the source of their anxiety. For example, transitional athletes often reported fear of making mistakes in front of senior athletes as a key factor in experiencing anxiety with the senior group reporting nervousness. Both sets of athletes adopted a wide range of coping resources, notably relying on social support and engaging in personal development. Transitional athletes uniquely made reference to engaging in group-based reflective practice to aid their development. The increased professionalization of female football in the UK appeared to have resulted in transitional athletes having a different experience to their senior counterparts. In particular, the challenges associated with being a DC athlete; this finding could be attributed to the increased amount of time dedicated to their football careers (e.g. full-time professionals) compared to the senior group.

A key finding associated with the present study refers to the perceived transition demands experienced by both sets of athletes. Senior athletes reported challenges associated with their education interfering with their football development (e.g. living a typical student lifestyle such as partying). However, others also suggested that their focus on football meant there was little time for their education. Transitional athletes reported that the demands associated with full-time professional meant there was very little time for education, resulting in non-attendance and 'catching up' during free time in evenings. This finding is supported by de Subijana et al. (2015) who suggested that Spanish elite athletes perceived DC to be difficult with managing time between study and sport as a significant demand. Stambulova and

Wylleman (2019) posited that the demands associated with DC often “compete with each other” and as a result, athletes need to find an optimal balance between their sport and education in order to fulfil all of their goals. The findings of the present study would suggest, that athletes from both groups, in particular, transitional athletes struggled to find this ‘optimal balance’. As a result, education was often perceived as less of a priority. With athletes leading intense lives, when they experience numerous overlapping transitions, athletes distribute their resources accordingly (Stambulova et al. 2020). In the present studies case, transitional athletes’ distribution of resources was focused on managing the demands of football, with education, and wider life, less represented. Transitioning into a full-time professional environment, as was the case for transitional athletes results in less time for other, competing demands. This finding furthers our understanding of the challenges DC female footballers undergo the transition into professional female football in the UK. As such, support systems in place could further focus on facilitating the optimal balance between competing demands, as per the updated ISSP position stand (Stambulova et al. 2020).

While both sets of athletes reported anxiety, the sources of anxiety differed slightly. Senior athletes tended to report feelings of nervousness whereas transitional athletes reported fear of making mistakes in front of senior athletes. Bruner et al. (2008) suggested perceived readiness for an elite competition to be a stress source for several rookie ice hockey athletes. This finding further extends the scope of where this knowledge can be applied and support findings from previous JST research. For example, Stambulova et al. (2012) also highlighted how the JST is associated with higher standards and increased physicality and Morris et al. (2016) cited athletes experience heightened anxiety before transitioning into male senior football.

Seeking support from friends, family, teammates and coaches, and personal development were salient coping strategies for both senior and transitional athletes. Morris et al. (2016) found support from friends, family, fellow professionals and staff to be a salient strategy to manage JST demands. Van Yperen (2009) suggested social support seeking to be a prominent psychological factor that predicts career success in adult football. While both groups reported similar strategies, transitional athletes cited seeking support from senior teammates as a prominent source of social support. Whereas, senior athletes discussed seeking social support from family and teammates. Ullrich-French & Smith (2009) highlighted the vital role of football friends (friends who were teammates) had in supporting talent development. Transitional athletes also adopted individual and group-based reflection techniques to help manage some of the demands. Research suggests how reflective practice can be a vital tool in gaining a deeper understanding of oneself and exploring ways to develop (Knowles et al., 2014). This finding extends previous JST research (e.g., Gledhill & Harwood, 2015; Morris et al, 2016; Stambulova et al, 2017) as it identifies a unique strategy employed by athletes to manage the demands of the transition. Stambulova's (2003) ACTM indicates an athlete's internal/external resources must match or exceed the internal/external demands placed on them to successfully navigate the transition. As a result of the increased professionalism of female football in the UK, transitional athletes were experiencing similar, but arguably more intense internal/external demands and therefore, required to utilize more internal/external resources and strategies to manage the transition.

Context of UK Female Football

While both senior and transitional athletes shared similar experiences, there are also some key differences which the changing context of female football in the UK may explain. Notably, transitional athletes' experiences of balancing a DC. While the senior athletes do discuss balancing a DC as challenging, it was less salient throughout their interviews. For some, at times it was challenging, whereas for others it was much more manageable. This difference in experience is likely the result of the context of professional female football at present.

Athletes are transitioning from a part-time to full-time football, from a junior to a senior and often transitioning into higher education. While many of the demands are similar, the transition of female football from semi-professional to professional requires greater commitment and investment from athletes, resulting in greater difficulty finding the optimal balance. As a result, when distributing their resources across the competing demands (Stambulova et al. 2020) football now requires more of these resources, with less afforded to education and wider life. This may also explain the differences in coping resources adopted, with transitional athletes adopting further coping methods (e.g. reflective techniques) compared to the senior group. While the increased professionalism of female football in the UK is welcomed, more awareness and support of the challenges transitional athletes face is required.

Strengths and Practical Implications

The present paper provides a detailed understanding of the JST process in professional female football. This work has provided valuable 'real-time' understandings of the JST in female football and contributes to our growing understanding of elite female football. Findings from this paper may offer some useful insights for applied practitioners and may facilitate practitioners understanding of their clients' transitional experience into professional female football. Such findings may also facilitate practitioners working at an organizational for example, working with the coaching staff and other support staff, to raise awareness of the dynamic challenges faced by athletes, particularly those who are DC athletes. The results of the present study alongside existing research could be utilized to inform organizations (e.g., Universities, Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme) and sporting bodies (FA). This information can be used to ensure the right environment is created for DC female football players and facilitate them in managing the demands and minimize potential barriers to a successful transition, line with the EU Guidelines on Dual Careers in Athletes (2012).

Limitations and Future Research

A limitation of the present study is all participants were or had been student-athletes, whilst this is common internationally in women's football there are still a large number of female football players who choose not to extend their academic pursuits so the main findings from the present study would not necessarily be generalizable to those athletes who choose not to further their education. Another potential limitation of the present study may be athletes from the senior group transitioned into senior football at different clubs, so while the context of female football U.K. was the same, the idiosyncrasies of the specific clubs they transitioned into may have influenced their transition experiences. All participants were recruited from one club, alternative clubs may have had more/fewer support systems in place for transitional athletes and as such their experiences may be different. The present study also adopted a small sample size, again, the results from which may be more specific to these individual athletes and not the wider transitional population. Finally, University support structures were not considered for this paper, nor were the subjects being taken by athletes and the demands required of those subjects, i.e. how many days a week they were expected to attend University classes, all of which could influence the transitional experiences of athletes.

Future research could investigate precisely the challenges of being a DC athlete in professional female football and begin to examine in great depth the unique challenges to having such a role. For example, the motivations for undertaking a full-time career in both education and sports, the benefits of being a DC athlete, and investigate the support system in place for DC football players. Such research would have wide-ranging real-world implications and could not only enhance the development of female football players academically and athletically but also reduce the risk of athletes suffering from burnout alongside other pertinent wellbeing issues. Such research should also consider the support systems available given to professional female football players by both the host club and University and investigate how the support offered supports players in managing the demands associated with making numerous transitions.

Conclusion

To conclude, the present study provides some valuable real-time findings in relation to the JST in professional female football and influence of the increasing professionalization of female football in the UK on this transition. Transitional athletes appeared to have a different JST experiences compared to the senior group. In particular, demands associated with DC and to manage these extra demands, adopted more coping strategies (e.g. reflective techniques). By further understanding these experiences, stakeholders will be in a more informed position to advise relevant organizations and sporting bodies to create the right environment for DC athletes.

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Appendix 1: Interview Schedule Group One

1. Personal background

   - How old are you?
   - Have you participated in any other sports apart from soccer?

2. Background in soccer

   - Can you tell me about your background in soccer?
   - How long have you played professional soccer for?
   - Who got you involved in soccer?

3. The transition

A) What emotions did you experience when you were told you would be training with the first team?

B) How long do you feel it took you to settle in and feel like a 1st team player? Why?

C) Tell me about the challenges you associated with moving up to the first team?

   - ○ in training?
   - ○ in competitions?
   - ○ in relationships with management team?
   - ○ in relationships with team members and competitors?
   - ○ in lifestyle / regime of life (soccer interfering with life outside soccer)?

4. What / who has helped you to make your transition to training with the first team?

   - o Staff/ teammates/ friends/ family.

5. What / who has hindered you throughout the transition?

   - o Social life/ life outside of football/ other commitments.

6. What strategies did you use to cope with the transition and the challenges associated with the transition?

7. What advice would you give your former self or someone who is currently making the transition?

Appendix 1: Interview Schedule Group Two

1. Personal background
   - How old are you?
   - Have you participated in any other sports apart from soccer?
2. Background in soccer
   - Can you tell me about your background in soccer?
   - How long have you played professional soccer for?
   - Who got you involved in soccer?

3. The transition

A) What emotions have you experienced since moving up to train with the first team?

B) Do you feel as though you have settled in well to training with the first team? Why?

C) Do you anticipate any future challenges which are associated with moving up to the first team?

- ○ in training?
- ○ in competitions?
- ○ in relationships with management team?
- ○ in relationships with team members and competitors?
- ○ in lifestyle / regime of life (soccer interfering with life outside soccer e.g. University)?

4. What / who has helped you presently throughout your transition to training with the first team?
   - ○ Staff/ teammates/ friends/ family.
5. What / who has hindered you throughout the current transition?
   - ○ Social life/ life outside of football/ University etc.
6. Are you using any strategies to help you cope with the present transition and the challenges associated with the transition?

    - E.g. seeking social support
    - Physical/tactical/technical/psychological strategies

Empirical Paper 2

Thinking Aloud: Stress and coping in junior cricket batsmen during challenge and threat states

Abstract

Aim: The present study examined stress and coping of cricket batsmen during challenge and threat states using the Think-Aloud method. **Method:** Ten male elite-level junior cricket batsmen took part in the study. A repeated measures design was implemented, with participants verbalising while both in 1) a threat state and 2) a challenge state. Participants were required to score 36 runs in 30 balls during the threat condition and 15 runs in 30 balls during the challenge condition. Verbalisations were subsequently transcribed verbatim and analyzed for stressors, coping strategies, and any other reoccurring themes. A paired-samples t-test was conducted to examine differences in the number of verbalisations made for each theme between conditions. **Results:** Ten secondary themes were grouped into four primary themes; these included (1) stressors, (2) problem-focused coping, (3) emotion-focused coping, and (4) gathering information. There were significant differences $p \leq 0.05$ between verbalisations made concerning stressors, with significantly more verbalisations being made by participants during a threat state. No significant differences were found between any other themes. **Conclusion:** During a threat state, participants reported significantly more stressor verbalisations compared to a challenge state, while there were no significant differences in coping strategies reported ($P > 0.05$). This finding offers a potential explanation as to why athletic performance diminishes when in a threat state as athletes experience a greater number of stressors but do not report engaging in more coping strategies.

Keywords: Concurrent verbalizations, elite-level junior, training, think-aloud.

When performing in pressurized environments, athletes commonly experience stress before, during, and sometimes after the event (Moore et al., 2013). Given this, sport psychology researchers have sought to investigate both the physiological responses (e.g., Turner et al., 2013) and psychological (e.g., Swann et al., 2017) responses of stress and how these impact on sporting performance. It is argued that stress is a dynamic and recursive transaction between the demands of a situation and an individual's resources to manage those demands (Lazarus, 1991). Whereas coping has been defined as "constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984 p.141). One theoretical model that has attempted to try and make sense of individual differences in stress responses is the biopsychosocial model (BPSM) of challenge and threat (Blascovich, 2008). Previously, research has used this model to examine the impact of challenge and threat (CAT) states on the performance of a sporting task (e.g., Moore et al., 2013). Similar to this, the Theory of Challenge and Threat States in Athletes (TCTSA; Jones et al., 2009), which is underpinned by the BPSM, collates physiological and emotional factors underpinning sporting performance. Finally, the Evaluative Space Approach to Challenge and Threat (ESACT; Uphill et al., 2019) was prompted by both the BPSM and TCTSA and argued individuals could be both challenged and threatened.

The BPSM is underpinned by Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress and Dienstbier's (1989) theory of physiological toughness. BPSM proposes that the responses of individuals in motivated situations, such as that of a sporting event, is determined by an individual's evaluations of the demands of the situation and their resources to cope with these demands. According to the BPSM, when an individual is in a challenge state, they have evaluated that they have the necessary coping resources to match or exceed situational demands. A challenge state is characterised by an in heart rate (HR) and cardiac output (CO) and a decrease in total peripheral resistance (TPR). An individual may enter the threat state when they evaluate the demands of the situation as being greater than their available resources. Much like the challenge state, sympathetic adrenal medullary activation is hypothesized. However, it is also predicted that pituitary-adrenal cortical activation occurs. This activation results in cortisol to be released, constriction of blood vessels and inhibits the effects of sympathetic adrenomedullary activation (Blascovich & Mendes, 2000; Jamieson et al., 2013). According to ESACT (Uphill et al., 2019) challenge and threat are not opposite ends of a bipolar continuum but rather, a unidimensional continuum and as such, individuals can be challenged, threatened, both or neither.

The TCTSA (Jones et al., 2009) further expanded on the BPSM by firstly clarifying the cognitive appraisal process that influences an athlete entering a challenge or threat state. Outlining the influence of self-efficacy beliefs, perceived control, and achievement goals on determining CAT states in athletes. The model highlights how the sources of self-efficacy (performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological states), as proposed by Bandura (1986), contribute to the belief an athlete may have in their ability to cope with the demands of a situation. The TCTSA suggests that a challenge state is more likely to be experienced if an athlete has high self-efficacy, a high perception of control and typically adopts approach goals. In contrast, an athlete will more likely experience a threat state if they have low self-efficacy, low perception of control and are more likely to adopt avoidance goals. The TCTSA also states that the three constructs are all interrelated and that all three constructs are required for a challenge state.

The TCTSA incorporates the physiological responses as proposed within the BPSM, however, offers a more detailed description of the emotional response. TCTSA, much like the BPSM predicts positive emotions will be typically associated with a challenge state and negative emotions usually associated with a threat state. However, unlike the BPSM, the TCTSA states that negative emotions (e.g., anger or anxiety) are not exclusively associated with a threat state and can, on occasion be experienced in a challenge state, however, during this state, individuals are more likely to perceive these emotions as facilitative. This finding is explained as CAT states reflect motivational states, and high-intensity emotions of a negative nature can serve a motivational purpose and would, therefore, be more consistent with a challenge state (Jones et al., 2009). This is supported by research such as Jones and Uphill (2004), who stated that athletes could enter a competition feeling anxious, but they view their anxiety as likely to help performance.

Previous research investigating CAT states have suggested that individuals in the challenge state are more likely to produce a superior athletic performance than when in a threat state (e.g., Blascovich et al., 2004; Moore et al., 2012; Turner et al., 2013). A recent systematic review conducted by Hase et al. (2019) found that in 24 of 38 (74%) studies, a challenge state was associated as being beneficial to performance. One study found an effect favouring a threat state, and nine studies reported no significant impact on performance. Further to this, Vine et al. (2016) suggested that during a threat state, individuals' attentional and visuomotor control skills become disrupted. This may lead to them becoming distracted by less relevant stimuli and suffering a decrease in performance.

Research has also suggested that during a challenge, state athletes are said to interpret emotions as facilitative, whereas, in a threat state, they are viewed as debilitative (Skinner & Brewer, 2004). In addition, Williams et al. (2010) also found that a threat state is more associated with higher levels of cognitive and somatic anxiety compared to a challenge state, highlighting athletes are typically likely to experience increased negative emotions, and they are less likely to interpret these as facilitative. Turner et al. (2013) explored whether cardiovascular reactivity patterns could predict batting performance in elite cricketers using a bio-impedance cardiograph integrated system. While also measuring psychological responses using a variety of psychometrics (e.g. Sport Emotion Questionnaire, Jones et al., 2005). The results suggested that challenge reactivity was associated with superior performance. Likewise, Dixon et al. (2019) who examined cardiovascular reactivity in professional academy soccer, suggested challenge reactivity is associated with superior performance. However, relied on self-report measures to assess the emotions of participants'.

Research examining stress and coping strategies in cricket batsmen such as Thellwell, Weston & Greenlees (2007) emphasized perceptions of self, match specific issues, technique, and current playing status to be some of the most pertinent stressors experienced by cricket batters. Similarly, they also revealed general cognitive strategies, emotion-focused coping, general match strategies, and at the crease, cognitive strategies to be salient coping strategies employed by cricket batsmen. Neil et al. (2016) also highlighted that appraisals of stressors made by athletes were central to the stress and emotion process, thereby eliciting emotional responses, which could be detrimental to performance if not successfully managed. Nicholls and Polman (2007) conducted a systematic review of stress and coping research in sport and suggested that the transactional model of stress and coping (TMSC) was supported in 46 out of 64 studies, and highlighted a significant interaction between athletes experiencing stressors and the type of coping strategy used by the athlete. For example, athletes in individual sports adopted more coping strategies than team athletes. There was also evidence to suggest that males will take more problem-focused coping strategies in response to stressors, with females reporting more emotion-focused coping strategies. Furthermore, previous stress and coping research in sport have often used the TMSC as a guiding framework, for example, to examine sources of stress encountered by performers (Fletcher & Hanton, 2003; Arnold, Fletcher & Daniels, 2013), and coping responses to stressors (Holt & Hogg, 2002; Didymus & Fletcher, 2012).

Results from previous CAT studies underpinned by the TCTSA and BPSM highlight the strengths of being able to collect physiological data related to challenge and threat states, such as accurately being able to measure HR, CO and TPR. However, a limitation of previous CAT research is they have often measured psychological responses (e.g. emotions, self-efficacy) using retrospective methods. Similarly, previous stress and coping research have had a reliance on retrospective methods of data collection, such as interviews and self report measures. Retrospective methods of data collection can be subject to limitations such as memory decay (Ericsson & Simon, 1993; Nicolls & Polman, 2008) and recall bias (Bahrick et al., 1996). While previous research has provided key findings, such as challenge states being associated with superior performance and stress and coping occurring as a dynamic process during performance. The present study aims to further develop the stress and coping literature by using the BPSM and TCTSA as guiding frameworks. Likewise, extending on previous research by examining the psychological responses, specifically the stressors and coping responses of cricket batsman, as they occur live in the moment. This method will reduce retrospective recall and prevent the loss of vital information through memory decay (Ericsson & Simon, 1993; Nicholls & Polman, 2008) while also enhancing our confidence concerning the psychological responses of athletes during challenge and threat states.

Think Aloud (TA) offers opportunities for researchers to capture and examine thought processes during the performance of a task (Ericsson & Simon, 1980). Ericsson and Simon (1993) proposed three levels to verbally reporting data. Level 1 involves participants vocalizing inner speech without any effort to communicate their thoughts. Level 2 requires participants to vocalize inner speech and internal representations that are not initially part of inner speech (e.g., sensory experiences, feelings, movements). Level 3 requires participants to expand on merely verbalising inner speech by explaining thoughts and motives. In line with the majority of TA sport psychology research, participants in the present study were required to engage in Level 2 verbalisations. Level 2 was chosen as it provides access to information from an individual’s short term memory (STM; Eccles, 2012), and participants are not required to provide further explanations for their motives, which given the requirements of the task, participants may have found challenging.

Recently, researchers have used TA as a method for investigating phenomena in relation to sport psychology. For example, Swettenham et al. (2018) investigated stress and coping during practice and competitive conditions and examined gender differences across conditions using a Level 2 TA methodology. With results suggesting that males verbalised significantly more stressors related to performance during the competition condition and physical stressors during the practice condition, whereas females more frequently verbalised external stressors. Whitehead et al. (2016), adopting a Level 2 TA methodology, also found that higher-skilled golfers made significantly more verbalisations per shot compared to lower-skilled golfers. Similarly, when under pressure, higher-skilled golfers had a shift in cognition and verbalised significantly more technical aspects of motor control, consistent with Masters's (1992) reinvestment theory. Kaiseler et al. (2012) examined gender differences in stress, appraisals and coping during a golf putting task. Results highlighted significant differences in the frequency of stressors verbalised between genders, but also, significant differences in appraisals between genders, despite being in an identical achievement situation. These studies provide evidence for the suitability of TA to be used as a method for collecting data related to the frequency of verbalised stressors and coping strategies during threat and challenge states. Similarly, previous TA research also highlights how qualitative data can be coded quantitatively, for example, coding the frequency of verbalized stressors. The present study aims to further expand on this research by exploring the stressors and coping strategies of elite junior cricket batsmen while in challenge and threat states using a TA approach.

Potential limitations of adopting a TA methodology include the process of participants being required to TA during a task, which may interfere with the performance of that task. Whitehead et al. (2015) addressed these concerns by investigating the effects of Level 2 and Level 3 verbalisations on the performance of a variety of skilled golfers. Results indicated both levels of verbalisations did not have a significant impact on the performance of the task. Similarly, a meta-analysis conducted by Fox et al. (2011) suggested that verbalisations during the performance of cognitive tasks did not impact on performance and participants who were instructed to explain their thoughts (level 3 verbalisation) improved their performance. While research suggests Level 3 TA has no significant impact on cognitive tasks, the complexity of the task in the present led to the decision that Level 2 TA would provide sufficient data, while not influencing the performance of the task.

The present study aims to expand on previous research by investigating stress and coping of cricket batters during CAT states. Underpinned by the BPSM, TCTSA and previous research (e.g. Thelwell & Greenlees, 2007; Moore et al., 2013; Turner et al., 2013; Whitehead et al., 2016) it was predicted that participants would verbalise significantly more stressors during the threat condition compared to the challenge condition. Likewise, it was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference in the total number of verbalisations made in relation to coping strategies between the threat and challenge condition. Finally, in line with Masters (1992) reinvestment theory which predicts when under pressure athletes verbalise more technical elements of motor control, it was hypothesized that participants would make more technical verbalisations during the threat condition compared to the challenge condition.

Methodology

Participants

Ten male elite-level junior cricket batsman aged between 16 and 17 years participated in the present study. This number was determined based on previous similar research (e.g., Samson et al., 2017; Whitehead et al., 2018). Participants were recruited from a County Cricket Boards' excellence training programme. The excellence programme represents the last training stage for athletes before coaches select their squad for the forthcoming cricket season. The present study adopted a within-subject design whereby all participants took part in both threat and challenge conditions. Participants were recruited using a purposeful sampling technique, whereby the lead researcher, identified participants who were both eligible and would provide insightful information that would answer the research question (Patton, 2002). To prevent demand characteristics such as verbalising thoughts that participants thought their coaches might want to hear, participants were informed, coaching staff would not hear their recordings. To be eligible for the study athletes had to be currently enrolled onto the excellence programme to ensure their athletic standard was of a high level.

Equipment

Participants completed each task with their cricket equipment (e.g., cricket bat, cricket pads, cricket helmet, cricket gloves, etc.). Participants completed each task at an indoor training venue, batting in a training cricket net. A bowling machine was used to deliver balls to ensure consistency in speed and location of delivery across participants. To record verbalisations during tasks, a recording device was placed in the pocket of the participant, and a wire running inside participants' shirts connecting to the microphone was clipped onto the collar.

Procedure

Once ethical approval for the study was acquired, the performance director for the county cricket board was approached and provided with a research information sheet. The aims of the research and the requirements of the athletes' participation were explained, and consent was then obtained, permitting data collection from athletes. Participants who met the initial eligibility criteria attended an optional workshop, which provided a brief of the research aims and participants who had expressed an interest in participating were supplied with an information sheet. When the number of participants required for the study had been satisfied, consent was obtained, and participants took part in TA training exercises. Participants were firstly briefed on TA and informed they would be required to verbalise what they were thinking (Level 2 TA; Ericsson & Kirk, 2001). Participants then took part in a series of TA practice tasks, as per the recommendations of previous TA literature (Eccles, 2012). Tasks included: a) counting the number of dots on a page, b) a problem-solving task, and c) an arithmetic task. Following training, participants then had a practice session, batting in the cricket nets to ensure they felt comfortable performing the task while wearing the equipment. Participants were also required to verbalise during this session as this also presented an ideal opportunity for the researcher to provide some feedback regarding TA to the participant which is directly related to the experimental task, and for the participant to ask any questions regarding the use of TA if they were unsure. For example, if participants were not verbalising enough, or finding difficulty in verbalising during the task, the researcher could address this to ensure data collected during the experiment would be to a satisfactory level. Once participants felt comfortable with the procedure, they would take part in the first condition, either the challenge or threat condition. To prevent any order effects and in line with the BPSM and TCTSA, which states CAT states may be influenced by previous experience, participants randomly started with either the challenge or threat condition. For both conditions, participants were required to face 30 balls from a bowling machine and score 36 runs, with three runs added to the total each time they lost their wicket. The run demands were calculated based on previous similar research (e.g. Turner et al. 2013) and following discussions with the lead coach.

Challenge condition

To encourage participants into a challenge state, participants were provided with challenge instructions. Instructions were adapted based on previous research (e.g. Moore et al., 2012; Moore et al., 2013) and involved encouraging participants to view the task as a challenge to be met and overcome, to believe they are capable of overcoming the challenge, and affirming this message by stating previous batsmen have completed the task comfortably. Following challenge instructions and before the start of the task, to ensure participants were in a challenge state, their demand and resource evaluations were measured using two items from the cognitive appraisal ratio (Tomaka et al., 1993). Participants were asked 1. “How demanding do you expect the upcoming task to be?” and 2. “How able are you to cope with the demands of the upcoming task?”. Items were measured on a 6-point Likert scale 1= not at all and 6= extremely. As per the recommendations of Moore et al. (2013), a score was calculated by subtracting demands from resources (range of -5 to +5), positive scores reflect a challenge state, and negative scores reflect a threat state (see Tomaka et al., 1993). All participants scores reflected a challenge state (i.e., a positive score). Participants then completed the challenge condition and were reminded to verbalise thoughts between shots and not during shots to avoid interference with motor movement during the execution of the skill (Schmidt and Wrisberg, 2004).

Threat Condition

The second condition involved promoting participants into a threat state. Similar to the challenge condition, participants were required to face 30 balls from a bowling machine and score 36 runs, with three runs added to the total each time they lost their wicket. Participants were provided with threat instructions adapted from previous research (e.g., Moore et al., 2012; Moore et al., 2013). Instructions given to participants highlighted the difficulty of the task and that previous participants had failed to score the required amount of runs. As with the challenge condition, all participants answered two items from the cognitive appraisal ratio to ensure participants were in a threat state. All participants scores reflected a threat state (i.e., a negative score). Participants then completed the threat condition and were reminded to verbalise thoughts between shots and not during shots to avoid interference with motor movement during the execution of the skill (Schmidt & Wrisberg, 2004).

Data Analysis and Research Credibility

The present study adopted a post-positivist epistemology in line with much of the previous TA research (e.g., Nicholls & Polman, 2008; Arsal et al., 2016; Whitehead et al., 2017; Swettenham et al., 2018). It is essential to state a papers philosophical positioning as it helps to refine and clarify the research method and provides transparency (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). Following data collection, audio files were transcribed verbatim, and checks for relevance and consistency were made, which was achieved via immersing in the data and using a critical friend. Transcripts were subjected to line by line content analysis (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) to identify themes in the thought processes of participants in both conditions. To establish what stress and coping strategies were verbalisations that the author interpreted as causing the participants negative concern or worry or had the potential to do so were coded as stressors, and verbalisations, where participants attempted to manage a stressor, were coded as coping strategies similar to Kaiseler et al. (2012). Initially, participants' data were analysed using an inductive thematic analysis; this involved the author reading and re-reading all transcripts of interviews (immersion in the data) using Nvivo 10 (step 1). Following this, the researcher developed a list of codes from the first two transcripts. At this stage, the initial codes were reviewed and considered by a critical friend (step 2). Research such as Saldana (2013) has provided support to this collaborative approach to coding as it allows a "dialogic exchange of ideas." From the initial inductive process, codes were grouped into stressors and coping responses. Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) coping responses of emotion and problem-focused coping were used in a deductive way to allocate the initial inductive ‘coping responses’ into these coping responses. These deductive codes were then used as a point of reference to subsequently analyse the remaining transcripts. However, new codes were identified from the data, for example, ‘gathering information,’ was included as part of the analysis following its saliency throughout the data and representing a different theme to those that had already been identified. Again, this was considered and reviewed by a critical friend. This process is following the recommendations of Smith and McGannon (2017) to ensure data quality and rigour. Eleven secondary themes were grouped into four primary themes for both the threat condition and challenge condition (Table 1, Appendix 1).

In line with the majority of previous TA research in sport psychology (e.g. Kasieler et al., 2012; Whitehead et al., 2016; Swettenham et al., 2018) and in keeping with the philosophical position adopted by this paper, the present paper quantified qualitative data, by taking a similar coding framework to that used in previous research (e.g. Kasieler et al., 2012). Whereby, each time a theme was verbalised, it was counted in terms of frequency (Table 2, appendix 2). This data was then statistically analysed to determine whether there were any significant differences between the frequency of verbalisations for each theme. Initially, outlier analysis was conducted prior to the primary statistical analysis and data was found to be normally distributed; therefore, a series of parametric tests were conducted. The present study adopted a repeated measures design. Therefore, a paired samples t-test was conducted to investigate differences between the coded themes for each condition. Similarly, a paired samples t-test was used to examine differences between demand/resource evaluation scores between threat and challenge conditions. A 95% confidence interval was used to determine the significance levels of the data ($P \leq 0.05$).

Results

The frequency of verbalisations for each theme across each of the two conditions (threat and challenge) were analysed using a paired samples t-test to test for significance, and a 95% confidence interval was applied. Effect sizes are reported using Cohen's d values (δ). Table 1 (appendix 1) presents the coding framework used by the researcher to analyse participant verbalisations, descriptions of secondary theme characteristics, and examples of raw data quotes are provided. Table 2 (appendix 2) presents the means and standard deviations of primary and secondary themes, as well as the percentage and total frequency of verbalisations across both conditions.

Demand/Resource evaluation

A paired-samples t-test was used to determine if there was a significant difference between demand/resource evaluations made before participation in the challenge and threat condition. Effect sizes are reported using Cohen's d values. Results indicated a significant difference between conditions with a large effect size. (*Threat condition: M*=-3.30, *SD*=0.95; *Challenge condition: M*=4.1, *SD*=0.74; *t*(9) = -18.50, *p* = .000, δ = -0.94). This finding highlights that challenge and threat states were successfully manipulated.

Stressors

Secondary themes that emerged from the data related to stressors verbalised were external stressors, performance stressors, and pressure (see table 1, appendix 1 for examples). To analyse coded verbalisations made by participants in relation to stressors experienced across both conditions, a paired samples t-test test was conducted. Significant differences were found for total verbalisations made regarding stressors, and a large effect size was reported. (*Threat condition: M*=12.2, *SD*=4.83; *Challenge condition*: *M*=4.4, *SD*=2.63; *t*(9) = 5.374, *p* = .000, δ = -1.53). Focusing specifically on types of stressors reported by participants, when in a threat state, participants significantly verbalised more about external stressors compared to when in a challenge state. At the same time, a large effect size was also observed. (*Threat condition: M*=4.1, *SD*=3.21; *Challenge condition: M*=1.7, *SD*=1.49; *t*(9) = 2.571, *p* = .030, δ = 0.96). There were also significantly more verbalisations with a large effect size made by participants related to performance stressors (*Threat condition: M*=5.8, *SD*=2.90; *Challenge condition: M*=2.3, *SD*=2.00; *t*(9) = 3.612, *p* = .006, δ = 1.41). Finally, verbalisations coded as pressure stressors, which were verbalisations made regarding factors related to feeling or experiencing pressure, were analysed. There was a large effect size and significant difference between the number of verbalisations made when in a threat state compared to a challenge state (*Threat condition: M*=2.4, *SD*=1.17; *Challenge condition: M*=0.40, *SD*=0.97; *t*(9) = 3.612, *p* = .001, δ = 1.87). These results all indicate that when in a threat state, there is a significant main effect with participants experiencing and verbalising more stressors than when in a challenge state. These findings offer support to the first hypothesis and provide further explanations as to why performance is more likely to decrease when in a threat state compared to a challenge state. As an increased number of reported stressors indicates more instances where the participant has experienced and reported verbalisations that have cause either negative concern or worry.

Emotion-focused coping

Secondary themes that emerged from the data related to emotion-focused coping were emotional release, relaxation, and positive self-talk (see table 2, appendix 2 for examples). A paired samples t-test was carried out on the total number of verbalisations for the coded data related to emotion-focused coping. There were no significant differences found between any of the secondary themes related to emotion-focussed coping. Total emotion-focused verbalisations for threat and challenge conditions were not significantly different and demonstrated a small effect size (*Threat condition: M*=8.70, *SD*= 7.24; *Challenge condition: M*=7.70, *SD*= 3.62; *t*(9) = .525, *p* = .612, δ = 0.18). Emotional release verbalisations between threat and challenge conditions were also not significantly different and demonstrated a medium effect size (*Threat condition: M*=2.70, *SD*= 2.26; *Challenge condition: M*=1.30, *SD*=1.16; *t*(9) = 2.14, *p* = .061, δ = 0.78). Similarly, a small effect size with no significant differences were found between threat and challenge conditions for relaxation (*Threat condition: M*=2.00, *SD*=4.00; *Challenge condition: M*=0.80, *SD*=0.63; *t*(9) = .970, *p* = .357, δ = 0.42). Finally, no significant differences were identified between conditions for positive self-talk while a medium effect size was reported (*Threat condition: M*= 4.00, *SD*= 2.83; *Challenge condition: M*= 5.60, *SD*=3.47; *t*(9) = -1.99, *p* = .078, δ = -0.51). These results suggest that participants do not verbalise more emotion-focused coping strategies when in a challenge or threat state - this finding provides support to the second hypothesis.

Problem-focused coping

Secondary themes that emerged from the data related to problem-focused coping were technical instruction, planning, increasing effort, and concentration (see table 1, appendix 1for examples). A paired samples t-test was carried out on verbalisations for the coded data related to problem-focused coping. Total number of verbalisations made by participants related to problem-focused coping strategies was firstly analysed - no significant differences were found between the threat and challenge condition and a large effect size was observed (*Threat condition: M*=14.6, *SD*= 6.77; *Challenge condition: M*=18.3, *SD*=2.19; *t*(9) = -1.713, *p* = .121, δ = -1.90). Analysing secondary themes, there were no significant differences for total number of verbalisations coded related to concentration between the threat condition with a medium effect size reported (*Threat condition: M*=2.10, *SD*=2.38; *Challenge condition: M*=3.20, *SD*=2.04; *t*(9) = -1.295, *p* = .227, δ =-0.50). No significant differences were identified for verbalisations regarding increasing effort condition although a medium effect size was reported (*Threat condition: M*=2.70, *SD*=2.21; *Challenge condition: M*=4.50, *SD*=3.21; *t*(9) = -1.575, *p* = .150, δ =-0.70). Verbalisations made in relation to planning demonstrated a small effect size and were not found to be significantly different (*Threat* *condition: M*=5.3, *SD*=2.76; *Challenge condition: M*=4.20, *SD*=2.61; *t*(9) = .879, *p* = .402, δ = 0.41). Finally, there was no significant difference and a small effect size for verbalisations made in relation to technical instruction between threat and challenge conditions (*Threat condition: M*= 4.5, *SD*=2.42; *Challenge condition: M*=4.70, *SD*=2.91; *t*(9) = -1.43, *p* = .889, δ =-0.07). These results suggest that participants do not verbalise more problem-focused coping strategies when in a challenge or threat state - this finding provides support to the second hypothesis. However, there were also no significant differences between the two conditions for technical verbalisations, and this finding does not provide support to the third hypothesis.

Gathering information

Verbalisations made in relation to gathering information were statements made in relation to obtaining information from the environment or situation to facilitate performance. A paired-samples t-test was conducted on verbalisations related to gathering information. No significant differences were found and a medium effect size was reported (*Threat condition: M*=4.10, *SD*= 2.77; *Challenge condition: M*=2.90, *SD*=1.59; *t*(9) = 1.450, *p* = .181, δ = 0.53).

Total verbalisations

Mean, standard deviation values, and total verbalisations and percentages of primary and secondary theme verbalisations are presented in Table 2 (appendix 2). A paired-samples t-test was performed on the total number of verbalisations across both conditions. No significant differences were found and a medium effect size was reported (*Threat condition: M*= 39.70, *SD*=11.60; *Challenge condition: M*=31.6, *SD*=8.72; *t*(9) = 1.727, *p* = .118, δ = 0.79).

Discussion

The present study aimed to investigate stress and coping of academy cricket batsmen during CAT states using level 2 TA. Firstly, results indicated a significant difference for demand and resource evaluation scores taken prior to participation in the threat condition and challenge condition, meaning that participants were in a challenge state for the challenge condition and threat state for the threat condition. Results supported the first hypothesis, which predicted participants would significantly verbalise more stress sources during a threat state compared to a challenge state. Results also supported the second hypothesis, which predicted there would be no significant difference in the number of verbalisations made concerning coping strategies between challenge and threat conditions. Results did not provide support for the third hypothesis, which was that participants would make more technical verbalisations during a threat state compared to a challenge state as there were no significant differences. Finally, results also indicated that there were no significant differences in the total number of verbalisations made in relation to gathering information between the two conditions.

There were significant differences found between total overall verbalisations for stressors experienced by participants between both conditions. Significant differences were also found for each primary stressor theme (external, performance, and pressure stressors). These findings provide further support to both the BPSM and TCTSA and further extends the scope to where this knowledge can be applied. The results suggested that when in a threat state, participants are more likely to experience stress sources than when in a challenge state. Both models suggest that if athletes appraise that they do not possess the coping resources required to manage a situation, they will enter a threat state. This finding is in line with research such as Moore et al. (2013), who suggested demand/resource evaluations made before a competition can significantly predict competitive performance. When participants evaluated the competitive demands to outweigh their resources (i.e., a threat state), this was significantly associated with more reduced performance compared to those who perceived their resources to match or exceed the competitive demands (i.e., a challenge state).

Previous research investigating stress in sport had suggested athletes experience a wide variety of stressors, similar to those identified in the present study (external stressors, performance stressors, and pressure). For example, Swettenham et al. (2018) highlighted external stressors as a salient stressor in tennis players. The findings from the present study further extend on this by highlighting that external stressors are more likely to be reported during a threat state than a challenge state. Similarly, the findings from the present study support previous research investigating stress sources in cricket batsman. Thelwell, Weston, and Greenlees (2007) suggested cricket batsman experience a wide variety of stressors when performing in competition, and a few examples include perceptions of self, match specific issues and technique. In the current study, performance-related stressors were the most frequently cited stressors across both conditions. However, they were reported significantly more often by participants when in a threat state compared to a challenge state. This finding suggests that during a threat state, participants are more frequently verbalising stressors related to the performance of skills; this is likely as a result of participants' performance decreasing while in a threat state. Of the ten participants, only one participant successfully completed the task (i.e. scored the target amount of runs) when in a threat state, whereas all participants were successful when in a challenge state, further providing support to previous research (e.g., Blascovich et al., 2004; Moore et al., 2012; Turner et al., 2012). Further to this, Hase et al. 's. (2019) systematic review also suggested that a challenge state is beneficial to performance. The findings from the present study extend the work of previous research by highlighting that in real-time, participants significantly verbalise more stressors while in a threat state compared to a challenge state. This finding offers a potential explanation as to why athletic performance is more likely to decrease when in a threat state.

Despite the significant increase in stressor verbalisations made during a threat state, there was no significant difference found in the number of verbalisations made to cope with stressors reported by participants (external stressors, performance stressors, and pressure). These findings suggest that athletes in a threat state will experience more stressors without verbalising significantly more coping strategies.. The BPSM and TCTSA propose that during a threat state athletes have appraised that the demands outweigh their resources. Therefore, this finding enhances our confidence of previous work. Perhaps surprisingly, results also indicated that during a challenge state, participants did not verbalise a higher number of coping strategies.. Arguably, this finding may be as a result of some coping strategies not being verbalised (e.g. breathing techniques,). Likewise, a possible explanation to this finding could be that during a challenge state, the quality of coping strategies is greater, therefore, athletes would naturally engage in less verbalisations. An alternative explanation to these findings could offer support to the ESACT (Uphill et al., 2019), which suggests individuals can be challenges, threatened, neither or both. It could be argued that this finding provides some support to this model as the lack of verbalised coping responses may be as a result of being both challenged and threatened, rather than alternative ends of a bipolar continuum.

The present study and previous research (e.g., Blascovich et al., 2004; Moore et al., 2012; Turner et al., 2012) have highlighted how a threat state is associated with decreased performance. A potential solution to promoting a challenge state and facilitating performance may be to develop coping strategies to manage the increase in stressors. A recent paper conducted by Hase et al. (2019) specifically highlighted the potential for motivational self-talk to be used as a tool for promoting a challenge state and improving performance. Therefore, future research could further examine the effectiveness of interventions such as psychological skills training, arousal reappraisal, and imagery. These interventions are aimed at developing coping strategies to manage increased stressors when in a threat state, and such interventions may reduce the impact a threat state may have on performance by better regulating emotional arousal and eliminating stressors.

While it was predicted participants in the threat state would make more technical verbalisations compared to when in a challenge state, there were no significant differences found. This finding contrasts with previous research. For example, Whitehead et al. (2016) highlighted that higher-skilled golfers, when under pressure, were more likely to verbalise technical rules, in line with Masters (1992) reinvestment theory. Reinvestment theory states that a skilled performer may regress to an earlier stage of learning during a stressful situation - this has also been referred to as choking in the literature, which is a breakdown in performance under situations of stress or pressure (Beilock and Gray, 2012). Similarly, Vine et al. (2016) argued that during a threat state, performers are more likely to focus their attention inwardly towards internal cues. While there were no significant differences between the groups, during both conditions, technical verbalisations represented a high percentage of total verbalisations, 11.3%, and 14.9%, respectively. This finding could be argued that due to the stage of development of the participants (i.e., junior athletes), then verbalisations of technical elements might still be a vital tool for their athletic development. Rather than hinder performance, it may be facilitating performance. For example, athletes used statements such as *"watch the ball, keep your eye on it," "keep your feet moving"* and *"play the ball straight,"* these statements are reinforcing correct technical elements of batting. As such, rather than hinder performance by directing attention inwardly, they may be facilitating performance by strengthening best practice and are, therefore, a useful coping technique for athletes at this stage of development. Further research is needed, however, on better understanding the underlying mechanisms of this finding. For example, does promoting the conscious control of skills with declarative knowledge help promote a challenge state in junior athletes?

Limitations and future research

A potential limitation of the present study is the lack of any physiological testing to measure participants during CAT states. The present study relied on self-report measures, including two items from the cognitive appraisal ratio (Tomaka et al., 1993), to determine whether participants were in a challenge or threat state. Previous research has used alternative measurement methods, such as Turner et al. (2012), who measured CV reactivity and self-report measures of self-efficacy, control, achievement-goals, and emotions. Similarly, Moore et al. (2013) used cardiovascular measures, performance measures, and a series of self-report measures. While physiological testing would not have further addressed the present studies aims, they could have contributed to determining CAT states– thus increasing the validity and reliability of data. Future research could, therefore, consider this limitation and better address it. Level 2 TA does not require participants to expand on their thoughts or provide motives/explanations for verbalisations. This may have limited data - for example, participants not explaining why they are ‘angry.’ However, the researchers felt given the dynamic nature of batting in cricket; level 2 would provide sufficient data while limiting any potential disruptions to batting performance. Which, reflecting on the research process, the researchers agreed this to be true.

Future research could look to examine the effectiveness of interventions aimed at promoting a challenge state and preventing threat states in athletes. Based on the results of the present study, such interventions should focus on developing coping strategies to manage the increase of stressors during a threat state. Results also seem to suggest this had a detrimental effect on sporting performance. Hase et al. (2019) offer a potential intervention for addressing such issues (e.g., use of motivational self-talk). However, the effectiveness of other psychological interventions should be examined. This presents an ideal opportunity for future researchers to expand on this work. Based on the findings of the present study future research could explicitly investigate the use of technical instructions in junior athletes and the impact it has on performance.

Conclusion

To conclude, this paper has used a novel approach to collecting data from cricket batsmen during CAT states. This paper adopted an idiographic design as advocated by Lazarus (2000) and has extended on previous CAT research by examining stress solely and coping during CAT states as they occur. Findings provide some to support both the BPSM and TCTSA by highlighting that during threat states, participants experience an increase in stressors compared to a challenge state. However, the results did not suggest an increase in coping strategies during a challenge state, which previous theories have eluded. Alongside this, elite junior athletes appear to verbalise technical elements of skills during both CAT states, which they potentially use as a coping mechanism. However, further research is needed to understand this finding in more detail. Future research should look to investigate potential interventions aimed at promoting a challenge state. This research could be by helping athletes reduce the number of stressors experienced and increase their ability to cope and match the perceived demands of the task.

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Appendix 1 - Table 1. Coding framework used to analyse verbalisations for challenge and threat conditions.

Primary Theme	Secondary Theme	Description	Example
Emotion-focused coping	Emotional release	Verbalisation made related to releasing negative emotions such as frustration and anger or expressing emotions.	"Argh, why did I try and do something stupid then?"
	Relaxation	Verbalisations made regarding remaining calm and relaxed or efforts by athlete to be in a relaxed state.	"Stay calm, come on, relax again, come on."
	Positive self-talk	Verbalisations made regarding positive self-statements.	"Really good, good hand work, good contact with the ball, keep working"
Problem-focused coping	Technical instruction	Verbalisations made regarding technical instructions or corrections.	"Watch that ball, keep your eye on it."
	Planning	Verbalisations made regarding tactics and planning for upcoming shots.	"Probably try and hit it through long on, that's where the runs will come from"
	Increased effort	Verbalisations made regarding increasing effort and motivation towards task.	"Keep backing yourself come on, stick with it."
	Concentration	Verbalisations made regarding increasing or remaining concentrated and focused.	"Just keep focussed, should be easy work from here."
Stressors	External	Verbalisations made regarding external factors that may have a detrimental impact on athletic performance.	"It is a hard length to hit, can't get underneath the ball."
	Performance	Verbalisations made regarding factors related to performance of skill.	"Not connected with that one very, struggling to find the middle of the bat here."
	Pressure	Verbalisations made regarding factors related to feeling or experiencing pressure.	"Need some boundaries again now, pressure is building"
Gathering Information		Verbalisations made regarding gathering information from the environment or situation.	"15 runs of 30 balls, comes at around 3 an over."

Appendix 2 – Mean, standard deviation values and percentage and total frequency of verbalisations for primary and secondary stressors.

	Threat condition			Challenge condition		
Themes	Mean	SD	Total (%)	Mean	SD	Total (%)
Emotion-focused coping	**8.70**	**7.24**	**87 (21.9%)**	**7.7**	**3.62**	**77(24.4%)**
Emotional release	2.70	2.26	27 (6.8%)	1.30	1.06	13 (4.1%)
Positive self-talk	4.00	2.83	40 (10.1%)	5.60	3.47	56 (17.8%)
Relaxation	2.00	4.00	20 (5.0%)	0.80	0.63	8 (2.5%)
Problem-focused coping	**14.6**	**6.77**	**146 (36.8%)**	**18.3**	**5.19**	**166 (52.5%)**
Concentration	2.10	2.38	21 (5.3%)	3.20	2.04	32 (10.1%)
Increasing effort	2.70	2.21	27 (6.8%)	4.50	3.21	45 (14.2%)
Planning	5.30	2.75	53 (13.4%)	4.20	2.62	42 (13.3%)
Technical instruction	4.50	2.42	45 (11.3%)	4.70	2.91	47 (14.9%)
Stressors	**12.20**	**4.83**	**123 (31.0%)**	**4.40**	**2.63**	**44 (13.9%)**
External	4.10	3.21	41 (10.3%)	1.70	1.50	17 (5.4%)
Performance	5.80	2.90	58 (14.6%)	2.30	2.00	23 (7.3%)
Pressure	2.40	1.17	24 (6.1%)	0.40	0.97	4 (1.2%)
Information gathering	**4.10**	**2.77**	**41 (10.3%)**	**2.90**	**1.60**	**29 (9.2%)**
Total verbalisations	39.7	11.60	397 (100%)	31.6	8.72	316 (100%)

Research Commentary

This commentary presents a reflective account of the research process and my development as a researcher throughout the professional doctorate. To facilitate the development of this reflective commentary, I turned to my reflective diary and informal researcher notes. My reflections related to key role 3 as part of my reflective diary formed the primary basis for this commentary. Reflecting on these reflections, I generated four overall themes that demonstrated my development and progression towards key role 3. These themes included my philosophy and approach, ethical challenges, my development as a practitioner, and undergoing the review process and publishing articles

Research Philosophy

To further my development as a researcher, I adopted various philosophies across my empirical papers. For example, taking a primarily interpretivist approach in empirical paper one, which recognises the world exists according to how it is experienced and perceived by individuals. Here, with this approach, I was able to inquire into participants' experiences and their understanding and interpretation of these experiences (Bryman, 2012). Whereas, with empirical paper two, I adopted a primarily post-positivist position. This position recognises that there is an external reality but differs from traditional positivism in that it acknowledges that *"this reality can only be understood in a limited way because that understanding derives from the researcher's conceptual tools"* (Alasuutari et al., 2008, p. 18). This paradigm allowed me to apply methods of the natural sciences to study the social reality and to test theory (Bryman, 2016).

With paper one, I adopted an interpretivist paradigm (i.e., knowledge is subjectively constructed, Coe, 2012). I felt this approach allowed me to understand and 'enter' the social reality of the participants. I found this quite a liberating experience, developing meaningful relationships with the participants, and exploring their experiences; I felt congruent. Despite this, I still felt I lacked an element of 'science,' and thus was somewhat torn between what I felt was congruent and what I felt the scientific community expected. Because of this, with empirical paper two, I opted to approach the paper with a more objective, traditional science approach. The contemporary research related to the topic area also influenced my decision to apply a post-positivist paradigm (Alasuutari et al., 2008). For example, the majority of previous research in sport psychology using Think-Aloud (TA) has adopted a post-positivist positivist position (e.g., Whitehead et al., 2018; Swettenham et al., 2018). Reflecting on this decision, I felt less congruent with conducting this research compared to previous occasions when I had taken an interpretivist approach. Primarily, while I thought the data was significant in areas and adds to the current literature base, I felt I missed the opportunity to explore in more detail specific areas. For example, I could have further explored the themes identified, rather than focus on differences in the number of verbalizations. Feedback I received from my supervisor regarding this paper also reflected this. My supervisor had suggested the results highlighted differences. However, further detail regarding the context of the themes would have added to the impact.

Despite the incongruence, I felt between the philosophical position I adopted in empirical paper two and my beliefs, I felt using contrasting approaches across the philosophical spectrum allowed me to develop across a broad range of methods. By adopting different positions, I was better informed concerning my beliefs regarding the development and measurement of knowledge. Thus, having a clearer understanding of my epistemological position. Which, I now recognise as being most aligned with an interpretivist paradigm. An interpretivist paradigm suggests reality is socially constructed, subjective, may change, and there may be multiple realities (Potrac, Jones, & Nelson, 2014). This paradigm also more closely aligns with my practitioner philosophy, which involves holistic support of the person, a recognition that the client is the expert, and appreciates the uniqueness of individuals. The likeness of my practitioner philosophy and interpretivist paradigm may explain why I felt more congruent adopting an interpretivist approach. Despite my preference for adopting an interpretivist paradigm, that is not to suggest this will be my consistent approach moving forward. While it is important to remain consistent with a philosophical standpoint to demonstrate congruence. Equally, I feel it is important to show adaptability depending on the research question to ensure quality research and this can be demonstrated by adopting multiple philosophical standpoints moving forward.

Ethical Challenges

Throughout the professional doctorate, I was presented with many ethical challenges and considerations. Most notably, adopting the role of practitioner-researcher, which I did for both empirical papers 1 and 2. Assuming this role presented a variety of challenges from gaining ethical approval through to finding a balance between my roles as a researcher and a practitioner. For example, with empirical paper one, the first step involved gaining ethical approval; this required the completion of an ethics application form. A process that I was somewhat familiar with having done so for both my undergraduate degree and masters, so I recognized this could be a timely process. However, there were ethical considerations that I had to make that I had previously not experienced. Firstly, as a male working within an elite female sporting environment, I had to ensure safe practice for both myself and the athlete. This research involved conducting one-to-one individual interviews; therefore, to maintain confidentiality while ensuring safe practice, interviews were conducted in a room with a windowed door. This allowed for the session to be viewed by others, to protect both myself and the athlete and maintained confidentiality as interviews could not be heard. I did not initially consider this as part of my ethics proposal, and therefore, was required to amend it. I learnt from this experience to consider issues at a broader level. For example, overcoming challenges associated with researching with members of the opposite sex.

After receiving approval, I was required to gain consent from the gatekeeper (1st team manager). Despite having a positive relationship with the gatekeeper, this took longer than I had anticipated, such is the nature of professional football. Finding time to formally engage in a conversation with the gatekeeper highlighting the research project was challenging. This delay was frustrating; I wanted to move ahead and start collecting and finally formalize some work for the professional doctorate. I was eventually granted permission to conduct research, but I was required to clarify how the study would not interfere with my role as the practitioner psychologist. I had not considered how the study would impact my role, would my position as a researcher within the organization now change how I was perceived as a practitioner? The athletes who I had been providing support to regarding the challenges of their transition would now also take on a dual role of client and participant. The two roles would never formally overlap; for example, preventing consultancy sessions and data collection taking place at the same time. However, I imagine for the athlete; it may have caused some confusion. They may have found themselves thinking, am I speaking to Mike, the psychologist or Mike, the researcher? Champ et al. (2019) also identified challenges to identity as an associated difficulty of practitioner-research. Likewise, the two roles arguably, cannot be officially separated, if a salient issue was identified during data collection this could have been further discussed during a consultancy session. Similarly, if an issue had been discussed in a consultancy session relevant to the research project, this may have been eluded to during data collection.

I also found myself challenged between balancing my practice and researcher related positions. I was employed as an intern sport psychologist and, therefore, not paid while being allowed to conduct research, which contributed towards my professional doctorate. Thus, at times, I found myself adopting the role of a researcher more frequently, for example, conducting interviews rather than consultancy sessions. Focusing on my research was self-serving; I was prioritizing my study rather than the role I was formally required to adopt. The manager observed this shift in my focus and commented that I had conducted a lot of research interviews recently but fewer consultancy sessions. I felt this had created some tension between myself and the manager. Judkins-Cohn et al. (2014) highlighted maintaining a balance between practice and research responsibilities, as well as clearly defining barriers as crucial for reducing conflict and tension.

I felt the outcome to be successful – I managed to conduct my research and still provide support to the athletes. However, that is not to say I could have been more successful in my role as a practitioner-research. I could have managed the two roles more efficiently in terms of balancing time between the two roles. A key lesson I learned from this experience was for future research that involves adopting a practitioner-researcher position, the need to establish clear boundaries at the start with relevant parties (e.g., participants, gatekeepers, etc.). Setting clear boundaries will help to prevent any confusion regarding roles and conflicts of interest. Similarly, ensuring I maintain a balance between both positions and avoiding any self-serving interests would also serve to reduce any potential tension. For example, understanding the expectations of coaches. When would they be happy for me to conduct research? How much time would they feel comfortable allowing me to dedicate to conducting research? Are some of the questions I would ask in the future to avoid potential conflict and tension. Despite some of the challenges I experienced as a result of being a practitioner-researcher, I felt by conducting this type of research, I was better able to reduce the gap between research and practice (Champ et al., 2019), as will be discussed later. While there are arguably considerable ethical challenges to overcome (e.g., managing multiple roles, confidentiality, etc.). I believe this form of research encourages researchers to maintain links with academia and promote models of best practice – thus developing both the applied and academic fields.

Much like with empirical paper one, I adopted the role of practitioner-researcher for empirical paper two, this time within a male academy cricket environment. Ensuring my development as a practitioner-researcher from empirical paper one, I wanted to provide a better balance between my roles as researcher and practitioner to avoid potential conflict (Judkins-Cohn et al., 2014). Baillie (1995) highlighted how adopting a dual role is often multifaceted and complex. Therefore, following my reflections on my role as a practitioner-researcher with empirical paper one, a key area I needed to address was to understand expectancies and set boundaries early on. This involved working closely with the lead coach to develop a schedule to structure both roles and understand when they would be comfortable with me conducting research. Similarly, adopting a flexible approach, for example, being prepared to adjust the programme depending on the needs of the organisation. By setting clear boundaries, understanding expectations and preparing to be flexible, I found there was a much better balance between my roles and a practitioner and researcher. This, in turn, prevented any internal conflict and external conflict with key stakeholders.

Practitioner Development

My applied work underpinned the motivation for conducting research, and my first paper was titled explored the junior-to-senior transitions of professional female soccer players in the United Kingdom. Within my role as practitioner-researcher, I intended to provide further knowledge of the social world (particularly challenges of the junior-senior transition) of professional female soccer players (McLeod, 1999). At the time of conducting this research, I was working as an intern sport and exercise psychologist at a professional female soccer club competing in the Women’s Super League 1 (WSL1). Most of the individual support I was providing was to younger athletes who had recently turned professional – thus making the transition from junior to senior. To facilitate my understanding and seek solutions, I turned to the literature, for example, Morris, Tod, and Eubank (2016), who investigated the youth team to first team transition experiences of professional male soccer players. Despite this paper enhancing my ability to provide support, I still felt I could not offer assistance in certain areas.

For example, despite being full-time professional athletes, most of the players were also enrolled in full-time or part-time Higher Education programmes. While the literature provided me with information on managing the challenges associated with the youth to senior transition (e.g., anxiety towards transition), there was limited information on supporting more holistic challenges related to the transition (e.g., dual-career athlete) in soccer. Notably, there was little to no research investigating the transitional experiences of female soccer players. At the time of writing, female soccer in the United Kingdom was developing, becoming the fourth most popular team sport in the UK, intending to become the second most popular by 2020. Therefore, given the limited literature, growth of the game, and the need to understand the unique challenges faced by female soccer players to enhance my ability to offer support as a practitioner, conducting research exploring these challenges seemed justified.

Following the completion of empirical paper one, I found I was better able to support some of the athletes I was consulting. For example, the results from this research highlighted that being a dual-career athlete and experiencing anxiety towards playing with the 1st team as salient challenges. Similarly, results also revealed social support and personal development attributes to be recurring throughout the data. This information then fed back into my practice; for example, I then focused interventions around integrating social support, and alongside this, enhancing ways to develop personally and more holistically formed many of my interventions aimed at supporting athletes through this transition. This reflected positively in my ability to be effective at supporting athletes. Previously, I found myself struggling to find solutions to help the athletes I was working with, hence how I identified a gap within the literature. By addressing this gap, I was then able to enhance my ability as a practitioner. In this sense, I felt I had come full circle – my practice influenced my research, which later affected my practice.

Similar to this experience, empirical paper two, whereby I again adopted the role of practitioner-researcher, my practice influenced the design of this research. I was providing psychological support to a county cricket board on a consultancy basis and had been for over a year. The head coach approached me and asked for some assistance on creating training sessions that develop players' abilities to thrive under pressure. While helping to create this environment, I considered the idea of conducting research, investigating the thought processes of cricket batsmen during different types of conditions. The title of this project was ‘Thinking Aloud: Stress and coping in junior cricket batsman during challenge and threat states.’ Having previously used Think-aloud (TA) within a cricket context for my master’s thesis and having conducted a systematic review for TA, I felt this would be an appropriate method. I was then able to use results from my systematic review, which primarily highlighted ways to enhance the methodological quality of TA to inform my second empirical paper. The results from this study would then expand current knowledge in this field, and feedback into my practice, facilitating the development of training sessions aimed at promoting psychological development. By adopting this dual role, not only did I develop as a researcher, but also, I grew a practitioner. For example, specific to this paper, I was able to understand the thought processes of players during different conditions better. This better understanding then allowed me to feedback to coaches and as per their request and develop training sessions that allowed players to improve their ability to perform under pressure. For example, results highlighted that during a threat state, participants significantly verbalised more stressors compared to a challenge state. There was also no significant difference in the amount of problem-focused or emotion-focused coping strategies verbalised. Therefore, I was able to conclude that during a threat state, participants verbalise more stressors, but do not verbalise an increase in coping responses to manage these stressors. Using these results, I worked with the coaching staff to create environments that would promote a threat state. When in a threat state, athletes would then be encouraged to identify and utilise appropriate coping responses. However, a crucial part of this process is that players identify and use these coping skills with minimal input from the coaching team to promote the autonomy of athletes. Again, I feel this example highlights how I went full circle, my practice initially influenced the development of the research, the results from which then affected my practice in terms of working with the coaches to create psychologically informed sessions. Within this example, I was providing evidence-based practice in an environment whereby the evidence was constructed. I felt this then allowed me to be more effective at meeting the organisation's needs.

The role of practitioner-researcher in sport psychology has increased and led to some significant findings in areas related to injury (Howe 2003) and the influence of organisational culture on athletic development (Champ et al., 2018; Devaney et al. 2018). Despite some of the challenges associated with adopting a practitioner-researcher role, the overall experience was positive on my development as both a practitioner and researcher. Drawing from my own research (coupled with that of others work) ensured my applied work with these clients was driven by the most relevant theoretical underpinnings. To further enhance my practice, continuing to adopt the role of practitioner-research will be vital when the need to do so is prevalent (e.g., when there is an apparent gap in the current literature) and ensures my applied work is theoretically underpinned.

Review Process and Handling Rejection

The second piece of research I conducted towards my professional doctorate portfolio was the systematic review. My systematic review aimed to review Think Aloud (TA) research in sport and exercise. TA research has its roots in experimental and cognitive psychology, with sport psychology literature, then adopting the approach. However, upon reading previous work, I found myself critiquing the appropriateness of elements of the methodology. For example, past papers had discussed providing training to participants on TA that included anagram and arithmetic tasks. The relevancy of these training tasks in preparing participants to TA during a sport task is questionable. Therefore, to address some of these issues, I felt conducting a review of previous TA papers in sport, to provide recommendations to enhance future methodological rigour seemed logical. As this was my second research paper as part of the professional doctorate, I felt this was in a better position to be ready for publication, which an advisor for the paper also agreed. Following submission to my portfolio, I felt ready to submit the paper to a journal, full of optimism and hope that I was looking at my first published piece of work.

Having addressed some of the feedback from my supervisor, I submitted the review into the Psychology of Sport and Exercise journal. I found the process of preparing and submitting a paper to a journal lethargic. After many weeks of amendments, I had finally developed the document for submission. It was not merely a case of submitting the work I had submitted as part of my doctorate, but rather what felt like a process of jumping through the right hoops. Having finally got the paper ‘ready’ I was not sure what to expect, I had no idea how long this process would take, would I find out if I was successful within the next few weeks? Months? Either way, I was excited and somewhat naively optimistic. I was proud of the work I had produced, and I couldn’t wait to receive the reviewer's comments. Although the co-authors had advised me that it is difficult getting a publication, particularly in this journal, I was still optimistic. Just over two months after submission, I received an email with the subject heading ‘decision on manuscript – rejected.’ I was devastated; I felt this was a substantial piece of work and could not understand why it had been rejected. I began to read the reviewer's comments slowly, and I was finding myself getting angrier and angrier. They were somewhat complementary, praising the review and highlighting how the study made them review the TA method. The biggest issue appeared to be the clarity of my exclusion and inclusion criteria and how I had seemingly not included papers that would have been acceptable to include. The review also indicated the study lacked clarity regarding what was new, what did the review add. I accepted the points begrudgingly and arranged a meeting with one of the co-authors, expecting them to be as angry and disappointed as I was. However, they were mostly positive, while dissatisfied with the outcome, she highlighted that this was a positive review for the first attempt at submission. She encouraged me to view it as a positive and to look to make amendments. I found myself confused; how could I see this as a positive? One study highlighted how 62% of published papers had been rejected at least once (Hall & Wilcox, 2007). I found comfort in this, and after a few weeks, I began to view the feedback as positive, rather than an attack on my work. I recognised that the comments could be used to improve the overall quality of my work. While still frustrated at the outcome, the comments allowed me to develop as a researcher by highlighting critical areas for my development. For example, being more transparent and detail in certain areas of my work (in this case, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and how my review enhances knowledge). Having gone through this publication process, I feel with future research, I can shape my papers up to be more 'ready.' That is, not to assume that because it is good enough for level 8, it will be ready for publication. Similarly, preparing for and accepting negative reviews, facing rejection and getting comfortable with rejection. After all, my co-author barely flinched at this rejection. Wooley and Barron (2009) highlighted how manuscript rejection is painful, but not fatal and that many manuscripts still go on to get published in a reasonable timeframe. Moving forward, I anticipate this will not be my only rejection, so viewing the reviewer's comments as ways to progress my paper rather than a personal attack I feel will help manage the 'sting' of rejection and allow me to develop as a researcher.

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Reflective Practice Commentary

“Someday, I will be a beautiful butterfly, and then everything will be better.”

The current paper presents a reflective account of the experiences encountered throughout enrolment on a Professional Doctorate programme in Sport and Exercise Psychology. Throughout this period, I have experienced many ‘critical moments’ which can be defined as *“those frequently experienced moments in our lives where we must confront the anxiety associated with an important change to our identity”* (Nesti et al., 2012, p.25). Through a process of critical reflection, I have been able to reflect on these moments, which has led to my development across the four key roles posited as part of the programme. Engaging in critical reflections involves asking questions such as ‘what does this mean’? And can have a profound impact on practitioner development (Knowles and Gilbourne, 2010). A quote from a favourite childhood film ‘A Bug’s Life’ states *“Someday, I will be a beautiful butterfly, and then everything will be better”* provides the perfect analogy of my journey throughout this professional doctorate. This quote represents the desires of a caterpillar (neophyte, insecure sport psychologist) to metamorphosise into a butterfly (experienced, qualified and competent sport psychologist). For me, the translation of this analogy is the development from an inexperienced, insecure professional doctorate student to a more confident and competent practitioner, academic and researcher.

The process of engaging in a meta-reflection of my development as a practitioner over the best part of 29 months seemed somewhat daunting. The doctorate required me to keep a reflective diary of my progress across the four key roles (ethics, consultancy, research, and dissemination). My first step was to then review this diary, with a focus on reflections around consultancy and ethics due to previously completing reflective pieces on both dissemination and research. Similarly, I used consultancy notes and observations to further facilitate meta-reflecting on my development throughout the programme. The focus here, is primarily on the development of me as a practitioner, rather than specific interventions as the person employing interventions is central to effective practice (Tod et al., 2017). Upon reviewing and reflecting on my reflective diary, consultancy notes, and observations, three themes were developed to form the basis of this meta-reflection. These themes are developing a practitioner philosophy, managing anxiety, and practicing ethically. Following on from the analogy I adopted earlier; these three themes underpin my process of metamorphosis from that of an anxious and often incongruent caterpillar to a more confident, congruent and experienced, beautiful butterfly. Tod, Andersen, and Marchant (2009) highlighted anxiety regarding service delivery competencies as salient experiences for neophyte practitioners. Similarly, concerns regarding ethical issues and delivering correctly have been pertinent in practitioner development literature (Knowles et al., 2007; Rowley, Earle & Gilbourne, 2012; Collins & McCann, 2015). Tod and Bond (2010) also highlighted how a neophyte practitioner's professional philosophy evolves as a result of direct consulting experience.

Developing a professional philosophy

An initial observation I had made from reviewing my reflective diary, consultancy notes, and reflecting on my overall consultancy experiences was the development of my practitioner philosophy. In particular, how this developed across time, for example, delivering practitioner-led sessions, which often accompanied feelings of incongruence and inadequacy to progressing to deliver more client-centred, holistically focused sessions. Collins et al. (2013) suggested how a neophyte practitioner philosophy develops as they are exposed to more real-world experiences, and how, as practitioners, they become more experienced. My initial impressions of incongruence are highlighted in one of my first consultancy reflections, which focuses on my approach to delivery and how I felt how I had a limited impact:

> After spending a reasonable amount of time building a rapport, understanding the issue, and so on, I offered some potential solutions in line with mental skills approach, for example, self-talk, imagery, pre-performance routine. Each suggestion was met with

> resistance and the athlete seemingly losing interest as the session progressed, and so was I, I questioned my practice, what am I even doing here?

This reflection highlights my battle with congruency early on in my professional doctorate journey. Many of the sessions I had with clients were successful. The athletes often entered and left satisfied; however, in one particular case, the athlete did not return following our initial session. I could sense a mental-skills approach was not the right approach, as is highlighted in the reflection above; they lost interest in the session. For me, this was a crucial turning point in my development, I had not felt congruent in any of my 1-2-1 sessions, I doubted my ability as a practitioner, and fundamentally I was not enjoying the experience. I dreaded consultancy sessions because I was not comfortable. I felt fraudulent. If I did have an impact, I thought I was only temporarily masking the issue. Something had to change, following discussions with my supervisor and peers, I was advised to understand myself better, what do I want from sessions? How should they be delivered? How do I see myself as a practitioner? By engaging in this process of rigorous self-examination (Simons & Andersen, 1995) and self-discovery (Corlett, 1996), I was able to identify my core values and beliefs, which helped shape my professional philosophy (Poczwardowski et al., 2004).

> My reflections led to me recognising that I should be assisting clients through change, rather than directing them, as I had been in the past. Similarly, recognising that I would be working with people who are athletes, rather than athletes who are people and I should, therefore, value the importance of the athlete as a person rather than merely as just a footballer, cricketer, golfer, etc. I needed to appreciate the rest of their lives, while sport may play a massive part in an athlete's life, they often have so much more away from sport, e.g. Recognize, they may be a parent, a friend, a boyfriend, a girlfriend, etc. I had taken the assumption that every athlete enters a session with me wanting to be a better performer, when reflecting on some of the work I have done previously I am

> beginning to recognize, sometimes, the person wants to become a better person, and maybe as a bonus, they become a better performer.

Following this process of self-examination, it was clear that my previous approach of delivering mental-skills was not congruent with how I felt support should be offered. Instead, my focus of support shifted towards holistically supporting the person and the athlete, with an appreciation for broader issues outside of their sport. It was through experiential learning and service delivery experiences that I was able to understand and develop as a practitioner. McEwan and Tod (2015) highlighted service delivery experiences in neophyte practitioners as salient for their development. Similarly, by reflecting on these experiences and understanding my beliefs, values, and how they link with theory, research, and ultimately impact my practice, I was able to develop a congruent philosophy of practice. Knowles, Gilbourne, and Nive (2011) highlighted how practice-reflection-practice allows practitioners to internalize knowledge from theory, research, and practice through sharing interaction with peers and supervisors. This process of interpersonal contact (sharing with peers) gave me confidence to experiment in personalizing and applying psychological knowledge (Hutter et al., 2017).

Despite this shift in my approach, there were still situations where I found I delivered incongruently at times. However, rather than view this as a negative, I recognised this is arguably a typical experience for many sport and exercise psychologists. For example, as is highlighted throughout my second applied case study, the context of the support may influence the approach required. With that example, funding, available time, location, and the desire of the head coach all influenced my approach to service delivery. Which, in this case, resulted in me at times delivering incongruently to my beliefs and values. Despite this, it is essential to recognise that while at times, I will be required to deliver incongruently, incongruence does not mean I am not effective. In fact, Tod et al. (2009) suggested with experience, practitioners may start adapting interventions to meet the specific needs of the client. I understand that with my preferred approach, I require time to understand the complex nature and holistic needs of the individual. In sport, time is not always afforded and, therefore, ensuring I remained effective when incongruent was a vital area of my development. I was able to achieve this through the process of reflecting on my practice and further understanding of my beliefs and values.

The diversity of my practice also had a significant impact on the development of my professional philosophy. I felt my individuation process reflected the diversity of my practice, as well as theoretical orientation, beliefs and values (Tod et al., 2017). Working with a range of individuals across sport and exercise domains and with both males and females, juniors and seniors, amateurs and professionals had a profound impact on my development. For example, my role with LWTC involved working with individuals resistant to change and often required an extremely patient approach focused on building relationships and trust. I found myself to be most effective when I devoted time to understanding the individual and investing time in the relationship. This is turn had a significant impact on my approach towards working in sports such as football where a lack of role clarity, problems fitting in and negative perceptions are significant barriers to sports psychologists (Pain & Harwood, 2004).

Understanding and developing my practitioner philosophy enveloped much of my reflective practice throughout my professional doctorate journey. As a trainee practitioner, it is vital first to understand your values and beliefs, which then allows you to develop a coherent and congruent philosophy of practice (Poczwardowski, 2017). As I progressed as a practitioner, my focus shifted from primarily understanding who I was (i.e., my practitioner identity) and developing a practitioner philosophy to ‘fine-tuning’ my philosophy of practice and in turn, my approach towards delivery. For example, a shift in relying primarily on mental-skills training, to adopting a more counselling-based approach. Engaging in this meta-reflective process has allowed me to track the development of my philosophy of practice. Initially, I entered the programme without any real understanding of my philosophy, and as such, spent the first few months delivering without any philosophical guidance. As such, this led me to feel fraudulent and lacking a sense of direction (which I now recognise as feelings of incongruence). Andersen and Stevens (2007) highlighted how sport psychologists can often feel fraudulent during practice. Likewise, Tod et al. (2009) highlighted how trainee sport psychologist delivery often develops from opting for a practitioner-led style to a more client-focused approach. Through a process of self-discovery and evaluation, I was able to determine my values and beliefs where which in-turn allowed me to develop a philosophy of practice. As I then became more experienced and engaged in the process of experiential learning, I was able to continually adjust my philosophy of practice, each time, becoming more congruent. As I come to the end of this professional doctorate journey, I anticipate my philosophy of practice will continue to be developed because of exposure to updated research and theory, and interactions with peers and supervisors.

Managing Anxiety

Reflecting on my diary entries and field notes, it was apparent anxiety was a salient theme regarding delivering as a practitioner. In particular, during the early stages of my professional journey, anxiety was often a debilitating experience, that arguably hindered my effectiveness. Tod et al. (2009) identified anxiety regarding competence as a significant theme associated with neophyte practitioner development. In relation to my development, I feel this finding resonates with many of the experiences I had, particularly during the early stages of my development. For example;

> I felt anxious starting this group, with it being one of my first groups and one of the first groups being run in the area I felt under pressure to ensure the service was a success. Likewise, I doubted my ability, am I even at a stage where I can deliver a session? I had received some training, but it was limited. I was dreading standing up, and I could see

> myself fumbling over my words, looking an idiot and then that’s it, I would have ‘lost’ the group for the next seven weeks.

And,

> I felt a mixture of emotions, I had developed a relationship with the athlete, so I felt empathy towards him as he was struggling with functioning in daily life. I also felt as if I was out of my depth, and I felt an overwhelming sense of anxiety and self-doubt regarding my ability to help this athlete. This was my first experience dealing with an athlete who was expressing symptoms of a mental health disorder, and I was worried I would do more damage than good by being his only source of psychological support.

These reflective diary entries highlight my anxiety regarding my competence, in relation to delivering to a group, and then an athlete with a complex issue. It could also be determined that these experiences of anxiety were somewhat influenced by my approach to practice. Early on in my professional journey, I perceived I had to be an expert problem-solver, and that I had to give athletes ‘something to take away’. I feel this desire to be seen as an expert, and the pressure to give athletes something every session significantly enhanced my anxiety. Especially in relation to the stage of my development, where I still lacked enhanced knowledge, skills and experience (Tod et al., 2009). This finding closely aligns to my reflections related to developing a practitioner philosophy. Without a clear and coherent understanding of my philosophy, I felt incompetent. How could I feel competent in my delivery if I did not understand how I should be delivering? Afterall, Poczwardowski et al. (2004) highlighted how a professional philosophy significantly shapes a practitioner’s approach to crucial elements ranging from gaining entry to closing a relationship.

As I progressed through my training route, I observed my anxiety regarding competence and self-doubt begin to feel less significant. Sharing experiences during professional doctorate group sessions facilitated alleviating these anxieties. For example, during these sessions, group members would share experiences regarding case studies, CPD events, ethical challenges and research. Often, group members would share their anxieties regarding competence or how they often experienced similar fraudulent sensations to me. I realised that I was not alone in experiencing these feelings. I felt like a weight was lifted. Hunter and Kentzer (2013) also highlighted the usefulness of group reflective practice concerning trainee development. They highlighted how group-based reflections helped to develop applied practitioner skills while also alleviating anxieties. Similarly, Cropley et al. (2011) stated: *"reflecting alone can be limited by our own knowledge"* (p.17). McEwan, Tod and Eubank (2019) also highlighted how peers were an influential source of development for trainee practitioner psychologists. Alongside peers, my supervisors also helped me to understand and manage practitioner anxiety more efficiently. For example, I was directed to further reading regarding neophyte practitioner anxieties. Tonn and Harmison's (2004) account demonstrate how the practitioner experienced anxiety due to an overwhelming desire to do things correctly and avoid mistakes. I found reading this account to be hugely beneficial to understanding myself during practice. Notably, enhancing awareness of my emotional states and how they were 'normal' to experience as a neophyte practitioner.

Similarly, I found taking up a position of lecturer in sport and exercise psychology to be a key source of influence on my development. I found my anxiety and self-doubt regarding practice further reduced, for example:

> Initially, during practice, I was quite anxious, full of self-doubt and imposing pressure upon myself. This anxiety was particularly in relation to feelings of incompetence, feeling like an imposter and having to offer something tangible to clients during session Following my appointment as a lecturer, I observed a switch in feelings to being more relaxed and confident in delivery.

I associated this change in emotional state to my position as 'pracademic', which I felt, allowed me to develop more holistically across the key roles, benefitting my ability to practice. This position allowed me to develop a more precise and stronger theoretical underpinning to my approach by dedicating more time to engage in more extensive reading. As a result, I felt more competent in delivering techniques associated with my philosophy of practice (e.g. a counselling-based approach). I understood that every session, I didn't always have to offer something substantial, I recognised that sometimes the athlete might just want to talk, and that is fine. Similarly, since taking up the position, my contact time with athletes reduced, this resulted in me being able to offer higher-quality sessions. McEwan, Tod and Eubank (2019) suggested critical life events to be salient sources of trainee practitioner development. While I am not suggesting being appointed as a lecturer is as critical a life moment compared to a partner being diagnosed with breast cancer like in their study. However, this event did force me to question my professional identity. It forced me in the sense that I was now more selective with clients I worked with, and how I would deliver. This meant I could deliver sessions more congruently, because fundamentally, if a session went wrong, or my philosophy of practice did not match the needs of the client, I had a position as a lecturer to fall back on – a comfortable position. A useful analogy here may be, it felt as if the shackles had come off. I felt less tied down by the self-imposed pressures of needing to be impactful every time. Less stressed, worrying that I'd lose my placement if I were not perceived as being effective immediately, which would have had significant impacts on my ability to develop. All of which, meant anxieties towards practice subdued. Of course, I still get nervous before a session, and I still worry, I won't have all the answers. However, I now understand that this is normal, part of the process, and as such, I can manage these feelings much better.

Ethical Challenges

Reflective diary entries and consultancy notes concerning ethical challenges formed the basis for this analysis. It was apparent, issues regarding maintaining confidentiality was a recurring ethical challenge that I have experienced during my training. Similarly, ethical challenges associated with competence, in particular, working with athletes displaying mental-health issues was also a remarkable experience. Veskovic and Petrovic (2017) identified confidentiality and competence as two of the most common ethical issues identified within the relevant literature.

The challenge of confidentiality was most prominent during my roles involved in team sports. Anderson (2005) suggested sports psychologists often find themselves managing several ‘masters,’ e.g., athletes, parents, coaches or similar. I found this to be particularly pertinent, and I often asked myself who the client was? Coaches or other senior figures had hired me to deliver psychological support; however, at times, questioned and somewhat expected to be given information regarding work I had conducted with individual players. For example;

> We agreed on what services I would be offering; these were primarily individual player support and working closely with the manager to aid their development. I brought up the issue of confidentiality, and how, with my approach, I maintain confidentiality with players unless they agree to share information. He initially agreed to this but stated that” if I felt it was an issue that he could help with, then I was to try and persuade the player to let me inform the manager.

This example was an everyday experience for me. I made clear my position regarding confidentiality, and coaches often agreed with this stance. However, often followed this up with “let me know if you can though”. I often found this quite a conflicting experience. I wanted to maintain true to my ethical principles of maintaining complete confidentiality (although, if they had expressed a desire for the coach to be informed, I was more than happy to do so). However, I wanted to build relationships with important stakeholders, and by being inflexible regarding my stance, I was anxious I would not be able to form these relationships, which may hinder my effectiveness. Pain and Harwood (2004) highlighted a significant barrier to sports psychologists as not being able to integrate with the coaching staff. I often agreed to the coach’s suggestions;

it felt the most sensible option - a happy medium. An example discussed in previous research highlights the complexities of working within a team setting and the difficulty of understanding exactly who the client is. *"We might consult with a coaching staff member who struggles with her relationship with the head coach, then consult with the head coach on a team issue, and later work with an athlete to understand a comment made by the head coach*" (Haberl & Peterson, 2006, p.32). I found over time, I became more accepting of this challenge and to review each occasion individually. Sometimes, I felt it would be appropriate to discuss an athletes challenges with others (with the agreement of the athlete), other times, I deemed it not appropriate (even if the athlete would agree). I felt as I became more exposed to the nuances of elite team sport environments, I developed a more effective professional judgement. This judgement was underpinned by appropriate codes of conduct, contemporary research, and importantly, practitioner experience.

Managing multiple 'masters' was not the only significant challenge to maintaining confidentiality, however. Naturally, working with teams at times, required me to deliver group-based sessions, therefore, maintaining confidentiality during these sessions was often tricky. Anderson (2005) identifies the difficulty of working with groups and teams maintaining confidentiality. Particularly, controlling what is discussed outside of these group sessions. The following example highlights the challenges associated with maintaining confidentiality during group sessions.

> This one particular session, we were discussing managing anxiety. The session was structured to follow a personal disclosure mutual sharing (PDMS), which stems from counselling and cognitive behavioural therapy settings and represents a conscious verbal presentation of specific situations or issues to gain resolution through interpersonal interaction (Holt & Dunn, 2006). Following the session, one player made

> a comment, which they referred to as ‘banter’ to another player regarding something he said in the session.

Anderson (2005) suggested techniques to enhance individuals feeling more comfortable during group sessions and ensure the best ethical practice. These techniques included making a statement suggesting coming to an agreement which states information discussed during sessions remains in those sessions. Following this, I found taking this approach did reduce further instances of athletes discussing the content of sessions outside of sessions.

Athletes are not immune to suffering from poor mental health, and research has highlighted the detrimental effect this can have on their athletic performance and overall wellbeing (Gorczynski et al., 2017). While not a regular occurrence, working with athletes displaying mental-health issues was a challenge I experienced throughout my professional doctorate journey. I found these experiences the most challenging, and they were often accompanied with feelings of a lack of competence, anxiety and fear. For example;

> As the consultancy sessions progressed, it was apparent the athlete was suffering from a mental health disorder. Sport Psychologists often meet various ethical dilemmas for which there are no real prescribed clear rules of behaviour (Weinberg & Gould, 2011). I felt a mixture of emotions, I had developed a relationship with the athlete, so I felt empathy towards him as he was struggling with functioning in daily life, I also felt as if I was out of my depth, and I felt an overwhelming sense of anxiety and self-doubt regarding my ability to help this athlete

As I reflect on this example, I often question whether I made the correct decision. I referred the client to a clinical psychologist and maintained contact with the athlete throughout the process. Although could I have worked with the client? A clinical psychologist often may not understand the complex environment of elite sport, whereas I did. The athlete was also clearly trusting in our relationship – he had shared he was suffering with me. The anxiety and self-doubt I experienced was fundamentally the reason I referred. I feared to make a mistake, of working outside of my area of knowledge and of harming the client. The BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct (2018) states practitioners should operate within their area of skill, knowledge, training and expertise. Although sport, especially in the context of mental health is not black and white, and psychologists are often required to operate within the 'grey' areas. At the time, I made the right decision, and I felt given my level of experience, I would not have been operating ethically. Now, I feel more competent in my ability to work with athletes displaying mental-health issues, although, I would still seek guidance and support from clinical psychologists.

Conclusion

As I have reflected over the last 29 months of experiences on the Professional Doctorate, I found myself laughing, cringing and contemplating, all in equal measure. I can confidently say (consistent with my professional philosophy) I have developed holistically, and I am a better person and practitioner as a result of the Professional Doctorate. I feel the diversity in my practice contributed to my significant development, and it is with a heavy heart that I close this chapter of my life. However, having been in education since age five, without any significant gaps, I am looking forward to both the future and a well-earned break! Practitioner development is a lifelong process. While I am not at the end of my journey, I am closer to the beautiful butterfly I aspired to be.

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