



Examiners' Report Lead Examiner Feedback

January 2022

Pearson BTEC Nationals
In Sport and Exercise Science (31815H)
Unit 3: Applied Sport and Exercise Psychology

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January 2022

Publications Code 31815H_2201_ER

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A grade boundary is where we set the level of achievement required to obtain a certain grade for the externally assessed unit. We set grade boundaries for each grade, at Distinction, Merit and Pass.

Setting grade boundaries

When we set grade boundaries, we look at the performance of every learner who took the external assessment. When we can see the full picture of performance, our experts are then able to decide where best to place the grade boundaries – this means that they decide what the lowest possible mark is for a particular grade.

When our experts set the grade boundaries, they make sure that learners receive grades which reflect their ability. Awarding grade boundaries is conducted to ensure learners achieve the grade they deserve to achieve, irrespective of variation in the external assessment.

Variations in external assessments

Each external assessment we set asks different questions and may assess different parts of the unit content outlined in the specification. It would be unfair to learners if we set the same grade boundaries for each assessment, because then it would not take accessibility into account.

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, are on the website via this link:

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>

Awarding BTEC qualifications in 2022

Ofqual has [set out their plans](#) for awarding qualifications in 2022 and intend to return to a normal, pre-pandemic, approach to grading standards over by 2023. They have confirmed that 2022 will be a transition year, to reflect that we are in a pandemic recovery period and students' education has been disrupted.

Our guiding principle and approach to awarding BTEC qualification results in 2022 will be to ensure parity in relation to the approach being taken for GCSE and A level learners. BTEC courses have a different structure and design to academic qualifications - BTECs are modular qualifications (with assessments taking place throughout the course) compared to GCSEs and A levels which are linear (assessed and awarded at the same time at the end of the year), and therefore our approach needs to be different.

In 2022 we will return to the usual method of calculating BTEC qualification results, however adaptations including, U-TAGs and reduced internal assessment, are in place to provide a comprehensive package of support for students.

The basis of our awarding approach to BTECs this year is to ensure it is as fair as possible for all learners. We will use a range of evidence to set grade boundaries for the external units. Part of this evidence will be to closely monitor learner performance in all assessments that contribute to learners' final qualification grade, to ensure parity with A level and GCSEs.

Further information can be found [on our website](#) and via our Social Media channels.

Unit 3: Applied Sport and Exercise Psychology 31815H

Grade	Unclassified	Level 3			
		N	P	M	D
Boundary Mark	0	10	21	33	46

Introduction

This was the eighth series of the 2017 specification, and the fourth time the case study has been presented as unseen. The structure has remained constant in the format of a case study where a young athlete experiences an event that changes their relationship to their activity. The format of the assessment is the same with three activities based on the case study. Each activity is marked using a levels-based approach, where the overall quality of the response is considered rather than identifying individual marking points. While the case study is always different the three activities remain the same.

The case study is about Sasha who is an 18-year old county tennis player who is a brilliant player but becomes angry very quickly and this leads to aggressive behaviour. Sasha's aggressive behaviour is linked to increases in her arousal levels. Initially Sasha has the appropriate arousal levels needed to play well and this is shown by the terms 'excited and focused' and that 'she has lots of energy'. Being in a flow state suggests that Sasha is at her optimal point of arousal, and this is leading her to be successful in the first set.

However, the situation soon changes as Sasha becomes annoyed by line calls going against her and the perceived slow play of her opponent. Her arousal levels increase and there is evidence she is experiencing stress as her heart rate races. As her arousal levels increase, they have a negative impact on her performance, and she loses focus. There is evidence that she is choking as she starts to make big, unforced errors. Eventually Sasha starts to display hostile aggression as she throws her broken racket at her opponent. She also smashes her racket on the ground, but this is not a form of aggression as it is not aimed at another living being. The increases in arousal level and resulting behaviour cause Sasha to lose the match.

Individual Sub Tasks/Questions

Activity 1

In this activity learners had to describe how psychological factors were impacting on Sasha in the case study. To do this activity well, learners had to read and analyse the case study thoroughly to enable them to draw out the relevant information and produce an extended answer.

This involved three stages which made up the three traits of the levels-based mark scheme. Firstly, they had to identify specific psychological factors that were impacting on Sasha; secondly, with reference to the content of the case study show where each factor was present and the positive or negative impact/effect each factor was having on performance. Credit was also awarded for defining/explaining each factor and for providing any additional information about the factor.

Learners could be awarded with a Band 3 grade either by covering 3 factors in detail or covering up to five factors in less detail.

Good responses made significant and continual references back to the case and showed the examiner that they were clear about how each factor was impacting on Sasha. In this case study the psychological factors that had most relevance were as follows:

- Fixed mindset
- Arousal
- Aggression
- Hostile aggression
- Stress/distress/eustress
- Anxiety/somatic/cognitive anxiety
- Self-confidence/self-efficacy

It is really important for learners to identify the key issues specific to the case study. For example, in this case study arousal and aggression were the key factors with fixed mindset and self-confidence also being present. Learners will only receive full credit for selecting these specific factors rather than generic psychological factors.

Some learners focus on motivation which has very limited relevance to this case study and as a result will receive very limited credit. If motivation is covered in there would be very explicit references to motivation, such as 'she

really enjoys winning medals and trophies' or 'she really likes pushing herself and finding out what she is capable of'.

There is a maximum amount of credit that can be awarded to each factor so there is no need to write everything you know about each factor. You will receive credit for identifying a factor, defining/describing and then providing further information about it, showing where it is present/impacting in the case study (most important), and whether the impact is positive, negative or both. Credit can be awarded to each specific factor that the learner writes about.

Learners will benefit from spending time reading and rereading the case to accurately identify which factors are most important and relevant in this case study rather than trying to fit their knowledge to case studies.

Learner's responses were marked by gaining a mark in one of three grade bands:

Grade band 1: 1-5 marks

Grade band 2: 6-10 marks

Grade band 3: 11-15 marks

Activity 1

This response was placed in Band 3: and gained 15 marks out of 15

Act1

Activity 1

Describe the psychological **factors** that impact on Sasha in the case study.

Your answer should focus on the:

- (a) key psychological factors
- (b) impact of the factors
- (c) effect of the factors on Sasha's performance.

(15)

The psychological factors which are impacting Sasha are aggression, arousal, mindset and self-esteem.

The first factor which effects Sasha is aggression. Aggression can be defined as a range of behaviours which aim to cause psychological or physical harm to a person or object. There are four types of aggression. These are assertive behaviour, channelled / instrumental aggression, hostile aggression and relational aggression. Assertive behaviour is a form of aggression in which an athlete stands up for themselves and plays with emotion. This form of aggression is within the rules of the game. Channelled aggression is also within the rules of the game.

Channelled aggression is often seen in sports which require aggression but athletes do not intend to harm their opponent. For example, boxing requires channelled aggression but the athlete's goal is often non-aggressive. Hostile aggression is another form of aggression in which the athlete does intend to harm or injure their opponent. It is a physical form of aggression which is never within the rules of the sport. The last type of aggression is relational aggression. This is a non-physical form of aggression in which an athlete aims to cause psychological or emotional harm. Many of these types link to Sasha's case study. Sasha is seen to 'lose her temper' and her coach is concerned that Sasha has 'an anger problem'. She also expresses hostile aggression. This can be seen when she 'throws her broken racket in the direction

of her opponent? This is hostile aggression as she attempts to physically harm another person. She also displays relational aggression when she calls her opponent a 'cheat'. This is non-physical but aims to cause emotional harm and so this is relational aggression. This overall has a very negative impact on Sasha's performance. Her focus on her anger causes her to 'lose focus' and make 'errors'. It is significantly decreasing her performance as before she became angry she played well.

The next psychological factor which impacts Sasha is arousal. Arousal can be defined as an athlete's state of ~~at~~ alertness and anticipation which readys the body for action. It may be referred to as the 'level of readiness'. Arousal includes both physiological and psychological activation. An athlete can be either under-aroused, over-aroused or at optimal arousal. Under aroused means to be bored

or drowsy. An athlete's attentional field may be too wide and they become easily distracted. Over-aroused suggests hyperactivity and an attentional field that is too narrow. Optimal arousal is where an athlete's performance will be at its best. This is where an athlete is calm, focused and alert. Optimal arousal is often a moderate level of arousal. Sasha begins her competition at optimal arousal level. We can see this as she is 'excited and focused' and experiences a 'flow state'. A flow state is often known as being in the zone. Sasha's performance also peaks while her ~~perf~~ arousal is at optimum. She then experiences over-arousal and this has a negative impact on her performance. Her 'heart races' and she is 'very tense' suggesting her arousal has increased too much. This causes Sasha to 'lose focus' and make 'errors' which leads to a huge decrease in her performance.

Sasha also shows signs of a fixed mindset. An athlete with a fixed mindset believes that their attributes are set in stone and cannot be changed or developed. This is the opposite to a growth mindset in which an athlete believes that they are able to improve and develop their skills or ability. Sasha has a fixed mindset which is evident when she says she 'cannot change'. This shows that she believes her attributes are not changeable and she cannot develop or improve.

This type of mindset may also cause Sasha to avoid challenges, ignore feedback and give up easily. Her fixed mindset has a negative impact on her and her performance. Her mindset is impacting her aggression and confidence and so leads to her losing matches and experiencing a decrease in performance.

Another factor which affects Sasha is self-esteem. Self-esteem can be defined as how much a person likes or values themselves. A person with

high self-esteem is likely to have a positive opinion of themselves and like who they are as a person. A person with ~~low~~ low self-esteem may dislike themselves and have a very negative view of themselves. Low self-esteem can be linked to low motivation and energy levels, low mental health and a lack of self-confidence. Low self-esteem can have a very negative impact on an athlete and their performance. If an athlete does not like themselves they may believe that they are incapable or undeserving of success. We see Sasha has low self-esteem when she says 'you are so stupid' and 'you are so rubbish'. This is an expression of her own self-doubt and shows that she does not like or value herself. This has a negative impact on Sasha's performance as she goes on to lose matches. She clearly lacks belief in her athletic abilities and lacks the motivation to win.

This response shows both breadth and depth of knowledge and skills. The response is really well organised; for example, when they discuss aggression they identify the factor, then they define it (range of behaviours designed to cause harm to another person), then they provide further information in explaining the four types of aggression. The learner goes on to show where this factor is present in the case study by giving example of hostile aggression and then why this is an example of hostile aggression. Finally, the learner describes the negative impact of aggression on Sasha's performance – it causes her to lose focus and make errors.

This is an excellent structure for learners to use to present content that will be creditworthy. This learner could have reduced their answer considerably to cover these five areas and still have received full credit.

In addition to aggression the learner identifies three other relevant factors – arousal, fixed mindset, and self-esteem. For each factor, the learner provides a definition and then some further information or explanation of each factor, they use quotations or content directly from the case study to show where the factor is impacting and link it to performance showing whether it is having a positive or negative impact.

This response would have been at the top of grade band 3 due to the accuracy of their response and the depth of content they produced.

This response was placed in Band 2: and gained 7 marks out of 15

The psychological factors that in this case study are Arousal, ^{anxiety} ~~anxiety~~, self confidence and stress

The first psychological factor that is in this case study is Arousal. Arousal is the readiness of an athlete to perform. Sasha's starts to show how ready she is when 'she is very excited and focused'. Sasha's arousal is at it optimal peak. This will make her performance increase because she is focused and ready to perform.

~~The athlete also~~ This tells us that her focus is optimal. Sasha's performance starts to show when 'all the shots she makes are successful'. This clearly shows that she is performing at her best because she

is at an optimal level of arousal.
 In the second half of the case study
 Sasha's arousal levels start to go over the
 optimal level that it was at. ~~She~~ Sasha
^{'loses focus'}
~~starts to lose focus~~. Her optimal focus has not
 gone over causing her to start making errors.
 'unforced errors such as hitting ^{serve} ~~the ball~~
 into the net'. This is showing her performance
 is decreasing because of the mistakes she makes.
 This is ~~also~~ because she is not ready to
 perform.

~~The next psychological factor that is present
 in the case study is aggression. Aggression is
 built up from frustration. Sasha shows
 that she can control it when~~

The next psychological factor is anxiety.
 Anxiety is the feelings of an athlete e.g feel
 excited or they feel worried. Sasha's shows that she
 can control her ^{cognitive} anxiety when 'she feels
~~that~~ she has a lot of energy'. As long
 as she controls her cognitive her performance
 will be at it's peak. Sasha starts to show
 that she is worrying when all 'she can
 think about is the slow play of her opponent'

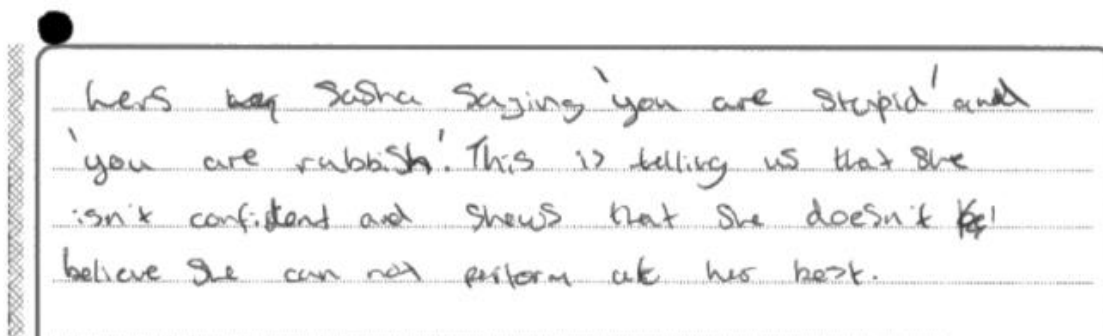
This tells us that she can't control her feelings. This will make her performance drop, and she will make more mistakes as she goes on.

The third psychological factor that I have found present in the case study is self confidence. Self confidence is the athlete's ability to perform and succeed. The athlete's self confidence performance will be optimal when Sasha was 'playing well and reached the county championship' playing well in the county championship and reached the final. Sasha's self confidence will be at an optimal point because she has shown her ability to perform. This will make her performance increase because she has hit her optimal self-confidence through reaching a final.

Sasha's confidence however, starts to drop in the second half of the case study.

In Sasha's performance drops when the umpire calls ~~at~~ two of her serves 'out' when she is convinced they were in.

This will drop her self confidence because she will ^{start} believe her ability isn't there. She to show this when she her coach



In this response the learner has identified 3 relevant factors but there are inaccuracies in their response. Arousal is completed well with a description of what arousal is, where it is present in the case study and how it changes. Anxiety is inaccurately defined and the references to the case study are not correct as examples of anxiety. Self-confidence is well designed but the content they have used from the case does not support self-confidence and is often fitted around the content rather than being explicit.

While there is creditworthy content here it is mostly for one factor and the learner shows a lack of breadth and accuracy in their response.

Activity 2

In this activity learners had to explain psychological theories that account for Sasha's experiences in the case study. To do this activity well learners had to do three things: i) identify correct theories that are linked to the factors described in Activity 1; ii) explain the key principles of each theory and ii) contextualise the theory to show how it accounts for the experiences of Sasha in the case study.

Ideally a learner would cover at least three theories that are clearly linked to the factors that they identified in Activity 1. It is expected that there is detailed coverage of at least two theories and less detailed coverage of other theories with clear and coherent links to the case study and how it could explain Sasha's experiences. Credit can be received for all theories that are covered so a learner can receive credit for depth and breadth of knowledge.

In this case study the theories with most relevance were as follows:

- Frustration-aggression theory
- Adapted frustration-aggression theory
- Instinct theory
- Inverted u hypothesis
- Catastrophe theory
- Individual Zones of Optimal Functioning (IZOF)
- Fixed/growth mindsets
- Vealey's self-confidence model
- Bandura's self-efficacy theory
- Weiner's attribution theory

Motivation theories (need achievement theory, achievement goal theory) were poor choices of theory as there is no explicit evidence in the case study to support their relevance. Thus, they attracted limited credit.

Learner responses were marked by gaining a mark in one of three grade bands:

Grade band 1: 1-5 marks

Grade band 2: 6-10 marks

Grade band 3: 11-15 marks

This response was placed in Band 3: and gained 15 marks out of 15

One theory which can be applicable to the case study for Sasha's mindset is Dweck's theory of mindset. Dweck's theory shows how fixed mindsets and growth mindsets both have different influences on focus, belief, challenge, effort, feedback and mistakes. From the case study Sasha has been identified to have a fixed mindset so when it comes to focusing Sasha has a narrow attention field and can't think of anything else but on her opponent and if she is going to win. This can be seen in the case study when she says, 'she loses focus and all she can think about is the slow play'. Due to Sasha only having a fixed mindset, her focus decreases whereas if Sasha had a growth mindset she would ~~be~~ have a moderate attentional field where she could take cues from a wider attentional

field and a narrower attention field.
 Another way it is shown that ~~Sasha~~ Dweck's theory can show Sasha has a fixed mindset is mistakes. Due to ~~so~~ Sasha losing focus and making mistakes such as 'hitting the ~~net~~ serves into the net' and 'shots are out of play', it causes Sasha mindset to want to give up because her ^{inherent} talent ~~shows that she is not good~~ ^{feels to Sasha that her} ability level is not as good and it could cause her to spiral ~~to~~ into learned helplessness. However if Sasha were to have a growth mindset she would have a more approachable behaviour to the mistakes and she will be more ~~focused~~ adaptive to want to learn from the mistakes. Finally Lastly a way to show ~~that~~ from Dweck's Sasha ^{has} a fixed mindset is effort. This can be seen in the case study when it says, 'With a fixed mindset, Sasha feels she doesn't have to put as much effort in due to her talent. ~~but she also~~ However this doesn't go her way and she, 'loses the next three games' ~~and more~~. This would cause Sasha to become demotivated and disheartened to play. However if she had a growth mindset

than she would take on the mistakes she makes as a learning curve and it would prevent Sasha from, 'make big, unforceful mistakes'!

Another theory which shows Sasha's aggression is frustration-aggression theory. The principle of this theory shows that Sasha was driven towards a goal ('winning her county tennis match'), she hits an obstacle which is her opponent, she gets frustrated leading to either punishment or success from not being seen ~~and~~ leading to catharsis, all from her aggression. From the case study we can see that Sasha does get punished which leads to her getting more frustrated and causes her performance to decrease. This can be seen in the case study when it says, 'umpire warns her about her bad behavior... will have points removed if she continues'. After she has been punished Sasha gets more frustrated and it leads to her, 'losing the third set and the match'. If this ^{behaviour} continued to happen Sasha's performance would decrease even more as by having high levels of

aggression it could lead to Sasha's mindset changing to be more negative and it could cause her to in the future not being able to achieve her goals. This would then lead to her Sasha wanting to give up in the future. The positives to this frustration aggression theory is it shows how an athlete can perceive their aggression as being positive so naturally they would want to do it again if they weren't caught or they could be punished and ~~want to~~ ^{get} more frustrated just like Sasha which could lead to in Sasha's case, her coach becoming increasingly 'concerned' ~~from~~ for Sasha's future. However the consequences to this theory are not everyone is naturally ^{aggressive} aggression, for example in the case study Sasha, 'smashes her racket into the ground', which is assertion and not intentionally harming anyone. Also if an athlete is punished it does not mean the athlete is frustrated again, they could accept it and move on.

The last theory I can link to Sasha's

arousal is catastrophe ~~the~~ theory of arousal. Catastrophe's theory's principle is like Hull's Drive theory as arousal increases performance will increase. However this is up until an optimal point where extreme decline in performance will happen and the athlete can either ~~to~~ continue to worsen or they can ~~improve~~ ^{recover}. From the case study, Sasha is fine at the start because she is at, "peak flow state" and "easily wins the first set of three set final". However when Sasha 'loses focus', she extreme declines in her performance and, 'starts to make big, unforced errors'. This causes Sasha to become overaroused as she continually, 'hits serves into the net'. ~~and~~ From this we can see that Sasha is worsening in performance so much so that she, 'refuses to shake her opponents hand and calls her a cheat'. ~~and~~ This could then lead Sasha ~~into~~ ~~think~~ in the future to think she might not be good enough and decline ~~into~~ ^{further} in her performance or she could lead into learned helplessness. The positives of theory is it can show the athlete can recover from declining in their

performance even if they might not be exactly the same in performance however a negative aspect of this theory is it does not include ~~show that athletes have a~~ ~~not suggest why athletes~~ optimal point of arousal which is not always true. and it can

In this response the learner covers three theories in detail. Each theory is correctly identified and there is significant explanation of the main principles of this theory and then the theory is applied to the case study using content from the case study. The way the student presents Frustration-Aggression theory is a model response for this question as the theory is explained and then each aspect of the theory is applied to the case study using content from it.

Some learners will explain part of the theory and then assume the knowledge of the rest of the theory, but this seriously limits the amount of credit that can be awarded. In particular this happens with inverted U hypothesis and catastrophe where often only the second half of the theory is presented. It is important that each theory is explained to present the full detail of the theory.

This response has been placed at the top of grade Band 3 even though only three theories have been covered in depth and with accuracy. Alternatively, they could have achieved the same mark by covering five theories but without the same depth as presented here.

This response was placed in Band 1: and gained 5 marks out of 15

Activity 2

In the case study the first psychological theory shown is Dweck's growth vs fixed mindset theory. This theory discusses how an athlete overcomes obstacles or hard decisions placed on them in relation to their personality. There are two types of mindset: fixed and growth. Growth mindset sees failure as an opportunity for self-development, challenge thoughts and ideas and areas to improve on with other people. A person with a fixed mindset is worried about what people think of them, they surround themselves with people who tell them how good they look, they avoid social situations and they see intelligence as fixed. In the case study, Sasha has a fixed mindset; she calls her opponent a 'cheat' and refuses to shake her hand. At the start of the case study, her coach has said she 'needs to change her mindset' and Sasha's reply was 'I have always been like that and I will never change'. This shows that Sasha has a fixed mindset as she is worried about what people are going to think of her for losing, so she blames her opponent and believes she can't change her anger.

In the case study, another psychological theory shown is the reversal theory. This theory suggests that anxiety can affect performance. If the athlete sees these signs as a good thing, their performance will increase. Sasha shows somatic anxiety; this is a physical response to anxiety by Sasha having a high heart rate. This shows us that her body is getting ready to perform. Throughout the game, she 'loses focus' as all she can think about is 'how slow her opponent is playing'.

In the case study, another psychological theory shown is the frustration-aggression hypothesis. This theory suggests that aggression is caused by not achieving goals or having goals blocked. There are 4 types of aggression. In the case study, Sasha displays assertive aggression; this is aggression that is not in the rules and players lie about doing it. We can see that Sasha shows assertive behaviour by calling her opponent 'you are stupid' and 'you are rubbish'. This leads to Sasha losing the match and calling her opponent a 'cheat' and refusing to 'shake her opponent's hand'. Sasha's coach cannot believe she lost the match and is concerned about her anger. This shows that Sasha believes her opponent has stopped her achieving her goal of winning and results in Sasha 'throwing her racket to the ground and breaking it'.

In the case study, another psychological theory shown is the intrinsic aggression theory. This theory suggests that aggression will be released on to another being through a game. There are 4 types of aggression. In the case study, Sasha shows hostile aggression; this is never within the rules, e.g. biting someone's ear, and is often caused by anger. At the start of the case study, Sasha feels 'excited but focused' when Sasha starts getting frustrated by her opponent 'slowing the game down'; this leads to Sasha 'smashing the racket to the ground' and then she 'throws her racket in the direction of her opponent'.

This response gains credit for identifying three relevant theories and presenting some limited knowledge on each theory.

In this response, the learner shows knowledge of fixed and growth mindsets but the application to the case is incorrect and then some irrelevant content is chosen. However, the content around 'not being able to change' is appropriate for this theory.

The content around frustration-aggression theory attracts limited credit as there is very little accurate explanation of the theory. Most of this content is relevant for Activity 1 rather than Activity 2.

Reversal theory was not creditworthy in this case study as there is no content in the case study to support it. Likewise, theories that support motivation would not be relevant to this case study.

Activity 3

In Activity 3 learners had to focus on interventions that would help Sasha to control her arousal levels and her aggression.

The interventions that were most relevant to the case study were as follows:

- Progressive muscular relaxation (PMR)
- Mind-to-muscle relaxation (relaxation imagery)
- Breathing control
- Self-talk (to change negative self-talk into positive self-talk)
- Imagery (or mental rehearsal) for self-confidence
- Calming Music (as a means of promoting relaxation)

There was some limited credit awarded to students who covered goal setting and performance profiling, especially when related to developing self-confidence or reducing aggression. Credit would not be awarded to interventions that increase arousal, such as pep talks, as these are not appropriate for a tennis player who already has high arousal and aggression levels.

To gain credit in this activity learners need to do five things: i) identify 4 or more correct interventions specific to Sasha's needs; ii) give a brief description of the intervention; iii) justify why each intervention is needed with reference to Sasha's experiences in the case study; iv) explain the principles behind each psychological intervention by giving sufficient detail for the intervention to be replicated; v) describe how and when the intervention can be implemented in relation to Sasha's training i.e. when would it be practiced and when would it be used. Learners can receive credit for all the relevant interventions that they cover.

A good for learners to approach this is to use the following approach:

Which (intervention)?

What (is it)?

Why (have you chosen this)?

How (do you do it)?

When (would you use it)?

Due to the high weighting of this activity within the paper, it accounts for 50% of the marks, it was expected that learners would cover at least four interventions and provide detailed information on at least three interventions.

In this activity some learners rely on interventions that are not on the unit specification, such as nature walks, therapy, sports massage, 1:1s, talks with your Mum/Dad. These techniques would not receive any credit.

Learner responses were marked by gaining a mark in one of five grade bands:

Grade band 1: 1-6 marks

Grade band 2: 7-12 marks

Grade band 3: 13-18 marks

Grade band 4: 19-24 marks

Grade band 5: 25-30 marks

This response was placed in Band 5: and gained 28 marks out of 30

The first intervention that I would recommend as a sports psychologist is self talk. Self talk is an internal dialogue which can be sometimes be unconscious or unintentional. There are three types of self talk that Sasha could do; motivational, instructional and positive. Firstly, Sasha could use motivational self talk to hype herself or psych herself up for a performance or game. This can be used in forms of short snappy words or phrases, also known as mantras which can be repeated. Instructional self talk can be used for tactical or technical reasons within a sport, for example the stance that Sasha has to stand in when approaching the ball or the technique, this can be words such as 'stance' or 'shoulders' if she forgets to turn her shoulders, it will help remind her of the tactical aspects within the sport. Lastly, positive self

talk would be very beneficial for Sasha as it is clear throughout the case study that she uses negative self talk 'you are so stupid' and 'you are so rubbish'. This negative self talk impacts Sasha's mindset, confidence and motivation negatively as her performance worsens throughout the game. Therefore, to switch to positive self talk, it will increase Sasha's self confidence, esteem and efficacy, her motivation and decrease her cognitive anxiety, as bad/negative thoughts will stop going through her mind and affect her psychologically. Self talk can be completed before a training session/game, during a training session/game or after a training session/game. It can also be beneficial to do before critical moments in a game in Sasha's case a point earning serve or return. She could also tell herself 'you can do this' or 'I can win' as a form of motivational, positive self talk. However, it's important to be aware that it takes time for these phrases or words to mean something to the athlete, therefore they need to practice it often for it to create a meaning. Also

it may take longer when the athlete already has negative self talk, to get rid of and replace it with positive self talk can be difficult at first but perseverance and repetition will help.

The second intervention that I would recommend as a sports psychologist is imagery. Imagery is a visualisation or stimulation to create (new) or recreate (past) images of performances. It can be from an internal or external ~~perspective~~. An ~~inter~~ perspective. An internal perspective is more recommended as it allows the athlete to imagine themselves doing the skill/activity from their own perspective. Therefore, sasha could imagine herself serving a point and being successful. An external perspective can also be beneficial, if for example Tanya wanted sasha to improve her form of the skill and therefore, from an external perspective, she can watch herself doing the skill. An external perspective is from somebody else's viewpoint, for example

her coach watching her ~~return~~ return, her technique may not be completely correct, therefore, an external perspective would favour that outlook. It's important for Sasha to make sure the visualisation is as vivid as possible to make it more realistic and therefore ~~related~~ related. She should link her imagery to her emotions and do it in different places / locations so that it is ^{realistic} ~~repeatable~~. The three types of imagery is visual imagery, auditory imagery and kinesthetic imagery. As a sports psychologist I would recommend to use these polysensory, meaning all at the same time for the best outcome. Visual imagery is Sasha imagining ~~herself~~ seeing herself doing the skill, this would be helpful in achieving success so that she can create a mental blueprint of what it should look like to do the skill. The second type of imagery is auditory imagery, which is where the athlete imagines what they would hear whilst doing the skill or performance. And lastly, kinesthetic imagery is what the athlete would imagine it feels like

to complete a performance well. By completing these polysensory, the athlete has a higher chance of realistic visualisation for success. However, it's important to be aware that it's a different process for everyone and will not be easy to suddenly complete. It will take time to become realistic and relevant. It can be completed before, during or after training or games or even at critical moments in a performance.

The third intervention I would recommend is decreasing arousal levels, also known as relaxation techniques. These could be progressive muscle relaxation, breathing control, relaxing imagery or music. These can be done wherever, before, during or after training or performances. It is completed to reduce

levels of arousal down back to optimal levels for sasha and calm down her aggression. Progressive muscle relaxation can be done by contracting the muscle for 4 seconds and then releasing. By connecting with neural pathways, impulses are also sent to the brain to relax & calm down - this will also decrease arousal. Another technique could be breathing control, this is where sasha would use a 1:2 ratio of breathing, breathing in for 4 seconds and out for 8. This will optimise sasha's ability to increase O₂ levels to her organs and muscles to allow greater blood flow and cool down the body encouraging relaxation. Relaxing images could also be useful by watching calming images & videos, it could also be listening to audios & scripts which can allow your body to physically and psychologically focus on one specific thing which will help calm down by decreasing arousal levels back to optimal points. Relaxing music can also be useful. It's important

to complete these frequently and in different places to allow full chance of arousal levels to decrease.

This response presents four interventions that are presented in great depth. For each intervention the learner gains credit for correctly identifying appropriate interventions, justifying their selection and linking them to the correct factors in the case study, explaining how the intervention is done and its key principles and then explaining how it can be implemented in training or competition and how it should be practiced.

This response was placed in Band 2: and gained 7 marks out of 30

activity 3

The first psychological intervention which sasha can use is breathing control. breathing control is needed to help bring aggression down and become more calmer. breathing control is breathing in and out of ur nose and mouth and helps reduce frustration and aggression. how breathing control is used is when playing sport and you have become frustrated and angry you must then breath in and out and letting your body trying relax and come back to its normal self. breathing control can be recorded in a diary to show how affective it is and what can be changed to help reduce aggression and frustration more. in the line 'she smashes her racket into the ground and break the frame' breathing control could have been used to prevent her from smashing her racket on the floor.

The second psychological intervention which sasha should use is goal setting. goal setting is known as SMART. specific, measurable, achievable, related, time. sasha can use goal setting to help change her fixed mindset into a growth mindset. goal setting will help to set achievable goals for her to achieve and become less angry when playing games. goal setting can be used whenever but most importantly when playing a match, she can set goals to practise techniques to help her not become frustrated and angry by using the SMART technique the goal must be specific, measurable, achievable, related, and completed in time. in the line 'sasha replies that she has always been like that and she cannot change', she shows goal setting can be used to help her change. goal setting can be recorded also into a diary to show whether she has changed or if she hasn't and goal setting is always used in training or when in a game.

The third psychological intervention which sasha should use is relaxation imagery. relaxation imagery is imagining a place when you feel relaxed and focused and not tense. this can be used to help regain focus and feel less tense. relaxation imagery can be used whenever, if you are in a stressful situation or you are too aroused and having a decrease in performance imagery can help regain optimal arousal. how this is used in game scenarios so when your performance is decreasing

ask if the coach will call a time-out or try gain 10-20 seconds to yourself to imagine a place where you feel focused and relaxed. sasha could use relaxation imagery in the line 'sasha becomes very tense and her heart races. she loses focus and all she can think about is the slow play of her opponent'.

This response covers three interventions but only breathing control will and relaxation imagery specifically meet the needs of Sasha. Some credit is awarded to goal setting for presenting some of the principles, in terms of ensuring they are SMART.

This learner should present at least one more interventions and relate them to the case study to move up into higher mark bands.

Summary

- Read the case study several times, highlight the key content and identify which psychological factors are being covered. As you identify factors you might also think about which psychological theories are closely linked to these factors and which psychological interventions may be used to control these factors.
- Each paper will cover different psychological factors and there will be specific content that has been worded so that it can clearly be linked to specific factors.
- It is most important that you spend time to accurately identify which factors are being covered in the case study as if you select incorrect or less relevant factors it is likely that you will select less appropriate theories to explain the case study and psychological interventions to help the sports person.
- When answering questions refer to the content of the case study as much as possible and make sure that the content you refer to is in the case study
- Once you have selected a factor or intervention then add in a short definition or description showing that you understand what it is as you will receive credit for this.
- Be careful not to discuss more than one factor at any one point as

this will limit the amount of credit that you can receive for each one; for example, if you are discussing anxiety and stress then discuss them separately as even though they are related they have different definitions and different aspects.

- Likewise, when you discuss interventions do each one separately rather than putting all the arousal control interventions together; this approach will ensure that you maximise the credit you can receive.
- Credit will be awarded for breadth or depth of knowledge.
- Be careful not to write everything that you know about a factor, theory, or intervention as each one will have a limit to how much credit can be awarded. Once you have covered the detail that has been asked for in the guidance to the activity then move on to the next factor, theory, or intervention.
- You should be able to cover enough content on the pages provided to achieve the full marks for the activity without having to use additional pages. If you find you need to use more pages, then you are probably including irrelevant content or too much content.
- Be selective about which theories and interventions you cover and make sure they are the most relevant for the answer.
- If you cannot fully justify the inclusion of a factor, theory, or intervention by using the content of the case study then do not use as it prevents you from covering relevant material which will be awarded credit.
- Use the marking grid for each activity to guide you and ensure you cover all the content needed for each activity.
- Please click [here](#) for the specification and SAMS.



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