

Unit 20: Applied Sport and Exercise Psychology

Unit code:	F/600/0044
QCF Level 3:	BTEC National
Credit value:	10
Guided learning hours:	60

● Aim and purpose

The aim of this unit is to provide learners with an understanding of the skills employed by sport psychologists when they work with sports performers and exercise participants.

● Unit introduction

There is a lot of coverage in the media about sports performers using sport psychologists to help them improve their performance but there is very little detail about what they actually do. This unit enables learners to explore the range of psychological methods which can be utilised when dealing with sports performers and exercise participants. The unit will be of interest to learners who aspire to work as sports coaches or fitness professionals because possessing sound knowledge of psychological techniques is essential to ensure they get the best performances from the people they are working with.

The unit covers three key areas in sport and exercise psychology and looks at a range of techniques which can be used to enhance performance. Firstly, learners will explore methods used to promote and develop motivation in sport and exercise; secondly, learners will look at the skills of imagery and mental rehearsal and consider their psychological applications. Thirdly, learners will be introduced to methods of managing and controlling arousal levels within the sporting environment to ensure optimum arousal levels are achieved to match the requirements of the activity.

The final part of the unit concerns the preparation of a psychological skills training programme. Learners will apply psychological techniques to meet the specific needs of an individual. The importance of applying an individual approach to psychological skills training and reviewing the interventions applied is stressed.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Know the role of the sport and exercise psychologist
- 2 Know the techniques used to influence motivation in sport and exercise
- 3 Know the use of imagery and mental rehearsal in sport and exercise
- 4 Know the techniques used to control arousal in sport and exercise
- 5 Be able to plan and review a psychological skills training programme for a selected sports performer.

Unit content

1 Know the role of the sport and exercise psychologist

Roles: research; consultancy; education; performance enhancement; lifestyle management; injury rehabilitation; team building

2 Know the techniques used to influence motivation in sport and exercise

Techniques: benefits, eg directing energy, achieving outcomes, exercise adherence; goal setting eg types of goal (outcome, process, performance), time scale for goals (short-, medium- and long-term goals), principles of goal setting, presentation of goals (goal setting staircase, goal setting continuum); performance profiling (definition, applications, benefits), process (introducing the idea, eliciting constructs, assessment, using results), interpreting the results (areas of perceived strength, areas of perceived weakness, areas resistant to change); decision balance sheet (gains and losses to self, to others, approval from others, from self), prompting; contracting; charting and rewarding attendance, social support networks

3 Know the use of imagery and mental rehearsal in sport and exercise

Imagery: definition; uses, eg relaxation, goal setting, concentration, developing confidence, controlling emotions, handling pressure, decision making

Mental rehearsal: definition; uses, eg skills practice and rehearsal, practice for events, in competition practice, practice 'what if' scenarios, replay performance, performance routines

4 Know the techniques used to control arousal in sport and exercise

Techniques: eg progressive muscular relaxation, breathing control, biofeedback, mind to muscle techniques, imagery; arousal increasing, eg energising imagery, increasing breathing rate, use of music, affirmations, acting energised; assessment of anxiety, eg use of CSAI 2, SCAT, Sport Anxiety Scale

5 Be able to plan and review a psychological skills training programme for a selected sports performer

Consultation skills: development of appropriate skills to elicit information, eg questioning, listening, communication; development of appropriate physical environment

Plan: aims; objectives; outcomes (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound targets); content; identification of relevant techniques; outcomes; resources, eg human, financial, physical; other client considerations, eg other responsibilities and personal demands, time available

Review: methods, eg feedback, interviews, questionnaires, monitoring physical performance; strengths; areas for improvement; identification of future needs

Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 describe the role of the sport and exercise psychologist	M1 explain the role of the sport and exercise psychologist	
P2 describe three different techniques used to increase motivation in sport and exercise and their benefits	M2 explain three different techniques used to increase motivation in sport and exercise and their benefits	D1 evaluate three different techniques used to increase motivation in sport and exercise and their benefits
P3 describe four uses of imagery and mental rehearsal in sport and exercise	M3 explain four uses of imagery and mental rehearsal in sport and exercise	
P4 describe techniques that can be used to control arousal levels	M4 explain techniques that can be used to control arousal levels	D2 evaluate techniques that can be used to control arousal levels
P5 use consultation skills to plan a six-week psychological skills training programme for a selected sports performer [SM2, SM3, TW1, CT2, CT6]	M5 explain the six-week psychological skills training programme for a selected sports performer.	D3 justify the six-week psychological skills training programme for a selected sports performer.
P6 review the six-week psychological skills training programme for a selected sports performer, identifying strengths and areas for improvement. [RL3]		

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers	RL – reflective learners	SM – self-managers
	CT – creative thinkers	TW – team workers	EP – effective participators

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

The aim of this unit is for learners to appreciate and experience as many psychological skills and techniques as is possible. They can then apply these techniques to their own performance and the performance of athletes they are coaching. There should be as much practical work as possible.

The majority of the input will be tutor-led as learners experience the psychological techniques, and then sessions can be learner-led as they learn to implement techniques. There will be an emphasis on practical tasks, presentations and group work.

Knowledge regarding the roles of sport and exercise psychologists requires a mixture of tutor-led input and individual learner research as learners develop an appreciation of how a sport psychologist works and what the role involves.

Gaining understanding relating to motivation requires a mixture of tutor-led input to present the range of techniques to develop motivation, and then learner activities as they implement these techniques. Learners will need access to resources to help them set goals, develop their own performance profile and produce a decision balance sheet.

To gain an understanding of imagery learners need to have an opportunity to develop their own imagery skills and then experience the application of these skills using a range of psychological techniques.

Questionnaires and inventories are needed to give learners experience of methods of assessing arousal and anxiety. Tutors need to present relaxation techniques as a means of controlling arousal and anxiety levels; this can either be done in person or through a pre-recorded tape or CD.

In order for learners to be able to plan a psychological skills training programme tutors will need to present sample psychological skills training programmes to the learners. Tutors need to provide guidance on how to identify training needs and how to tackle them.

Learners will be given the opportunity to develop their listening and questioning skills and appreciate the skills needed to present a professional consultation and then design a training programme.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way in planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Introduction to the unit and unit overview.
Assignment 1: The Role of the Sport and Exercise Psychologist (P1, M1). Tutor introduces the assignment brief.
Tutor-led session on the role of the sport and exercise psychologist.
Assignment 2: Influencing Motivation in Sport and Exercise (P2, M2, D1). Tutor introduces the assignment brief.
Learners to research process, outcome and performance goals and methods of implementation.
Learners to practise implementing techniques to influence motivation.
Assignment 3: Using Imagery and Mental Rehearsal in Sport and Exercise (P3, M3). Tutor introduces the assignment brief.
Learners to practise developing imagery skills and their application.
Assignment 4: Controlling Arousal Levels in Sport and Exercise (P4, M4, D2). Tutor introduces the assignment brief.
Learners to examine methods of identifying the symptoms of high and low arousal levels.
Learners to practise methods of controlling arousal levels.
Assignment 5: Developing a Psychological Skills Training Programme (P5, P6, M5, D3). Tutor introduces the assignment brief.
Learners to research conditions for an effective consultation and develop appropriate skills.
Learners to practise consultation scenarios to elicit information.
Learners to plan practice psychological skills training programmes.
Learners to develop methods to review effectiveness of psychological skills training programmes.
Evaluation of unit.

Assessment

This unit can be assessed through a series of structured assignments which could be presented as a psychological skills training package. Assessment should focus on the application of the techniques and the practical or observed experiences of learners.

For P1, learners need to show an appreciation of the role of the sport and exercise psychologist, the work they perform and the environments in which they operate.

For P2, learners will need to have an understanding of the theory of motivation and experience the techniques, their application and benefits in order to provide a description.

For P3, learners need to describe the use of imagery and mental rehearsal in sport and exercise and how they can be used to influence performance. This can be done through research and through their own experiences of the techniques.

For P4, learners need to develop an understanding of the importance of arousal control and be able to describe techniques that can be used to either raise or lower arousal levels.

For P5, learners need to apply all of their accumulated knowledge of psychological skills training and use it to plan an appropriate training programme for a selected sports performer.

For P6, learners will be required to undertake a review of the completed six-week programme, identifying strengths and areas for improvement.

For M1, which builds on P1, learners must explain the role of the sport and exercise psychologist and examine the scope of their work and the range of people they work with.

For M2, which builds on P2, learners need to explain three different techniques to increase motivation, how they work and are implemented, and the benefits to the sports people who use them.

For M3, which builds on P3, learners need to explain the application of mental rehearsal and imagery to sport and the types of imagery that can be used.

For M4, which builds on P4, learners need to explain the techniques of arousal control, how they work and when they should be used.

For M5, which builds on P5, learners need to explain the design of the psychological skills training programme in terms of its aims and objectives and how it will benefit the sports performer.

To progress to D1, which builds on criteria P2 and M2, learners need to evaluate the three different motivational techniques by looking at the strengths and weaknesses of each one and why they may or may not be effective. This evaluation can be done through a mixture of personal experience and a review of relevant research.

For D2, which builds on criteria P4 and M4, learners must look at the strengths and weaknesses of the techniques used to control arousal levels and assess their suitability to specific performers. This evaluation can be done through a mixture of personal experience and a review of relevant research.

For D3, which builds on criteria P5 and M5, learners need to justify the content of their psychological skills training programme and why certain methods were selected to improve the performance of the individual.

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, M1	The Role of the Sport and Exercise Psychologist	Research into the range of roles of the sport and exercise psychologist.	Poster.
P2, M2, D1	Influencing Motivation in Sport and Exercise	As a fitness instructor prepare a report into motivational strategies that can be used to help customers achieve their goals.	Written report.
P3, M3	Using Imagery and Mental Rehearsal in Sport and Exercise	As an assistant to a sport and exercise psychologist implement methods of imagery and mental rehearsal.	Practical observation. Observation record.
P4, M4, D2	Controlling Arousal Levels in Sport and Exercise	As a sports coach select methods used to control arousal with your sports performers or exercise customers.	Presentation. Witness statement.
P5, P6, M5, D3	Developing a Psychological Skills Training Programme	As an assistant to a sport and exercise psychologist carry out a consultation and prepare a six-week training programme. Review the programme.	Practical observation and written plan. Observation record.

Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC Sport and Exercise Sciences sector suite. This unit has particular links with the following unit titles in the BTEC Sport suite and the BTEC Sport and Exercise Sciences suite:

Level 2 Sport	Level 3 Sport	Level 3 Sport and Exercise Sciences
Psychology for Sports Performance	Sports Coaching	Sport and Exercise Psychology
Exercise and Fitness Instruction	Leadership in Sport	Instructing Physical Activity and Exercise
Effects of Exercise on the Body Systems	Instructing Physical Activity and Exercise	Sports Coaching
	Psychology for Sports Performance	

This unit links with the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for:

- Achieving Excellence in Sports Performance at Level 3
- Coaching, Teaching and Instructing at Level 3
- Instructing Physical Activity and Exercise at Level 3.

Essential resources

Effective delivery of this unit requires access to appropriate psychological skills methods which can be gained through sport psychology texts, websites or recorded sessions. The use of case studies through written or visual resources is also essential.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

This unit focuses on the application of the skills of sport and exercise psychology needed for working in coaching or fitness instruction. Centres are encouraged to develop links with sports clubs who use sport psychologists or have coaches who implement psychological techniques. This could be done through inviting them in to speak to learners or to give demonstrations of psychological techniques.

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

Berger B, Pargman D and Weinberg R S – *Foundations of Exercise Psychology* (Fitness Information Technology, 2006) ISBN 9781885693693

Burton D and Raedeke T D – *Sport Psychology for Coaches* (Human Kinetics, 2008) ISBN 9780736039864

Carron A V, Hausenblas H A and Estabrooks P A – *The Psychology of Physical Activity and Exercise* (McGraw-Hill, 2002) ISBN 9780072489019

Cox R – *Sport Psychology: Concepts and Applications* (McGraw-Hill, 2007) ISBN 9780071106429

Kremer J and Moran A P – *Pure Sport: Practical Sport Psychology* (Routledge, 2008) ISBN 9780415395588

Weinberg R S and Gould D – *Foundations of Sport and Exercise Psychology* (Human Kinetics, 2007) ISBN 9780736064675

Williams J M – *Applied Sport Psychology: Personal Growth to Peak Performance* (McGraw-Hill, 2005) ISBN 9780072843835

Journals

Applied Sport Psychology

International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching

Journal of Applied Sport Psychology

Peak Performance

Websites

British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences www.bases.org.uk

BBC Sport www.bbc.co.uk/sport

Istadia www.istadia.com

Mind Tools www.mindtools.com

Peak Performance online www.pponline.co.uk

Youtube www.youtube.com

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit.

Skill	When learners are ...
Creative thinkers	using consultation skills to plan a six-week psychological skills training programme for a selected sports performer
Reflective learners	reviewing the six-week psychological skills training programme for a selected sports performer, identifying strengths and areas for improvement
Self-managers	using consultation skills to plan a six-week psychological skills training programme for a selected sports performer
Team workers	using consultation skills to plan a six-week psychological skills training programme for a selected sports performer.

Although PLTS are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

Skill	When learners are ...
Creative thinkers	deciding on the content of their six-week psychological skills training programme assessing the advantages and disadvantages of a range of psychological skills techniques
Reflective learners	practising their consultation skills with their peers
Team workers	practising their consultation skills with their peers
Self-managers	following guidelines for completing a psychological skills consultation.

● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
ICT – Use ICT systems	
Use ICT to effectively plan work and evaluate the effectiveness of the ICT system they have used	preparing an agenda for their psychological skills consultation recording the responses at the psychological skills consultation
Manage information storage to enable efficient retrieval	recording the responses at the psychological skills consultation
Follow and understand the need for safety and security practices	recording and interpreting the information collected at the consultation
ICT – Find and select information	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	researching techniques to develop psychological skills
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	
Bring together information to suit content and purpose	interpreting information gathered at the psychological skills consultation to form a psychological skills training programme
Present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience	providing information for a presentation on methods to control arousal levels in sports performers
Evaluate the selection and use of ICT tools and facilities used to present information	interpreting information gathered at the psychological skills consultation to form a psychological skills training programme
Select and use ICT to communicate and exchange information safely, responsibly and effectively including storage of messages and contact lists	accurately recording information from the psychological skills consultation
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	discussing the effectiveness of psychological skills techniques
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	interpreting the information gathered at the psychological skills consultation and using it to form a psychological skills training programme
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	accurately recording the responses at the psychological skills consultation.