



Performance Excellence Movement

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What is PEM all about?

The Performance Excellence Movement (PEM) is designed to increase student, practitioner, and public awareness of the application of sport and exercise psychology skills. PEM also serves to increase awareness, knowledge, and skill sets in relation to how sport and exercise psychology expertise can be effectively applied in a number of domains. The hope of PEM is to provide readers with interesting information about how some of our colleagues successfully apply their sport and exercise psychology techniques in their field and in other areas.

In this year's newsletter you will find three articles written by current students that take place in three very different contexts. First, a student from Springfield College explains what consultant life is like as a minority in an urban high school environment and the challenges associated with trying to get buy-in from both students and teachers in "Not so Black and White: Experiences as an AmeriCorps LACES Academic Coach in an Urban High School." Second, a student

from the University of Jyväskylä writes about his experiences consulting at a youth basketball camp in Poland and the task of setting up a mental training program, becoming integrated into the camp and evaluating his own work in "The Soft Side of Hardwood: Sport Psychology in Youth Basketball." Finally, two students from Denver University explore the importance of multicultural competence and continually becoming more self-aware practitioners in "The Evolution of Multicultural Practices in Sport and Performance Psychology."

In addition to the excellent articles, there are three interviews with practicing professionals in the field. Each individual reflects on how they began in the field and in what ways they use psychology in their current career. In addition, they provide advice to current students who soon will be in the job field.

The editors of the PEM hope that you can learn from these experiences and begin to reflect on how you can improve or modify your own practices in the consulting world. We hope you enjoy!

Do you have consulting or applied experience other students could benefit from learning about? Do you want to get experience in a peer review process? Then think about submitting to the PEM!

We are always looking for students willing to share their experiences and help others improve their consulting expertise.

Please contact us if you are interested in submitting an article. We want you to be part of the process for the 2014 newsletter!

 28th Annual Conference
AASP 2013
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Opinions from the Field: A Professor/Practitioner's Perspective

Mr. Marcus Washington

APEX Peak Performance Center Director for the TRACK Program

What is your background as it relates to sport and exercise psychology?

I started off as a college athlete. I pursued football professionally - after bouncing all around the world playing on different football teams - in England and an arena football team in the states I ended up in the Canadian Football League for training camp. After working with athletes, being around athletes, and being an athlete myself I decided to switch gears. I always had an eye towards sport psychology. There was always something about it that was appealing to me but things didn't really grow into anything until I basically was sitting in Montreal working out and I had a change of heart as far as whether or not I wanted to be an athlete or if I wanted to pursue something different - following the realm of sport psychology or athletic counseling. That's what my master's I received from Springfield College is in (athletic counseling).

Could you talk a little about your position and what you do with the Wounded Warrior Project?

My position is an APEX Peak Performance Center Director for the Wounded Warrior Project, TRACK program. The TRACK program basically reintegrates warriors back into civilian life by enrolling them into college courses and getting them back on track to accumulate college credits towards earning a degree by balancing the emphasis on the Mind, Body, & Spirit. Warriors that decide to take advantage of this program have the option of joining the program to attend school here in San Antonio, TX or in Jacksonville, FL. As a requirement of the program they must meet with a personal trainer 3 times per week, and they have 1 mental fitness session - we call it peak performance training - every week with me. In that session, we work 1 on 1 with helping them acquire or helping them refine these skills that we know are effective and work well for peak performers. Whether it be an athlete, or a president of a company doing a presentation - anybody who has a performance arena or a performance event that they need to prepare for we teach them, fine-tune these skills, and sharpen these skills so they can be the most efficient and the most effective in whatever it is they need to do.

In what ways do you use sport psychology in your professional life?

Every day as far as stress management, being adaptable to situations, utilizing self-talk, setting a target and working towards achieving it through different ways of directing focus, being able to lock into what you're doing, really eliminates distractions that can derail you and take you off the beaten path. Every single day with what I'm doing with the warriors that I work with is just helping them to realize those skills, helping them to connect those skills and apply that to their day to day lives - to help them in whatever contest their working for - controlling how they respond, how they view situations and how they can adapt to any given situation that prevents them from having an anxiety attack or a PTSD episode and just blowing things out of proportion. I guess that's generally how I end up applying it day to day.

How did you find your current professional position/ get started in your current field?

I was looking to work with the army program that they had originally, known as ACEP at the time, but then the opportunity with APEX came about and what they were looking for aligned 100% with what I learned through my Master's in athletic counseling that I got through Springfield College. I walked right out of the classroom well equipped to walk right into my position at APEX because it was what they were looking for and needed. I literally used everything that I was trained to do at Springfield College from individual sessions, to running workshops, to planning programs. The posting was out on the listserv and Alicia shot me an email and said I should look into the position. I reached out to get in touch with APEX and landed a great opportunity to work with the Wounded Warrior Project down here in Texas

What should students be doing to prepare themselves in finding a job/being a professional in your field?

I would say application, experience, try to expose themselves to as many scenarios, as many situations, as many opportunities that they can now that will help them grow, help them learn different ways, help them be more versatile with how to deliver sport psychology or just the concepts and skills that we need. Work with different populations that you would have thought twice about working with - don't be afraid to get your hands dirty. Dive right in to an opportunity whether or not you can see how deep the water is. It's almost like a leap of faith. Do everything that you can, to stay involved, to stay up to date and don't be afraid to apply the concepts that you learn.

What is the best piece of advice you have ever received in regards to performance psychology?

It would be - don't rest on your laurels. Don't be content; don't feel like you know everything, or you've gathered absolutely everything that you possibly can gain because there's always new and creative ways to change, adjust and to do things. Keep your mind open to all of those other options. Always be available to try something different and try something new. And be comfortable with being uncomfortable. Understand how YOU can become comfortable with the uncomfortable.



“Don’t feel content, don’t feel like you know everything. Don’t feel like you received or gathered absolutely everything that you possibly can do because there’s always new and creative ways to change, adjust and to do things.”



Not So Black and White: Experiences as an AmeriCorps LACES Academic Coach in an Urban High School

Dolores Christensen, Springfield College

Author Note: I do not pretend to be an expert on racial, ethnic, or diversity experiences. This is my personal story and the stories of my students. The language in this article is representative of that experience and is not meant to be pristinely academic in any way.

Editor Note: The name of the school has been changed to Bayside High School to protect anonymity.

I did not fully know what I was getting myself into by joining the Springfield College Student Success Corps as an AmeriCorps LACES (Leaders in Academic, Community Engagement, and Service) Academic Coach at Bayside High School* in the city of Springfield, Massachusetts in my first year as a PsyD student in Counseling Psychology at Springfield College. As a LACES Academic Coach, I was part of an AmeriCorps team helping Bayside students who were “at-risk” or “high risk” of dropping out of high school. My specific role as a LACES Coach was to assist Bayside student-athletes with academic success, apply or prepare for college or employment, and stay on track for graduation.



Early Expectations

I originally applied to the Springfield College AmeriCorps program because I was drawn to the idea of working with high-school aged athletes—one of my favorite age groups—in a diverse urban environment. LACES Academic Coaches also routinely focus on the school’s football team and I had not yet had the opportunity to work with this sport. I also had minimal experience working with boys, especially African-American boys as my professional experiences had been primarily with white clients from middle to upper class backgrounds. Becoming a LACES Coach would allow me to work with a completely different racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic-status group and further round out my professional development as a counselor-in-training while helping this group successfully navigate their high school years.

I attended a nearly all-white high school in a predominately white, small-town in Northern California and I was excited to challenge myself in an environment outside of my comfort zone like Springfield. It was during my AmeriCorps training that I first heard the rumors about the Springfield Public Schools (SPS) system: metal detectors in every door, fights at lunch were a common occurrence, and that I would be one of the few white people walking the halls. The down economy had hit industrial, blue-collar Springfield especially hard and the families whose students were in the SPS system seemed to be feeling it the hardest. Being at Bayside was a far, far cry from my high school experience.

Responsibilities

As a LACES Academic Coach, I shared responsibilities for the Bayside student-athletes with another LACES Coach, Jess. (I will refer to Jess often in this article because we were an integral team and I could not have done my job without her.) My primary responsibilities included working with student-athletes to ensure their eligibility for sports, increasing overall GPA, student-teacher mediation, and college preparation. On average, I spent four to five days per week at Bayside while also attending all football games, nearly all basketball games, the majority of spring sport events (boys volleyball, baseball, and track and field), as well as assisting with various school events such as class assemblies, Fall Open House, the Spring Career Fair, and opportunities to volunteer in the greater Springfield community. I spent a lot of hours developing my relationships with the student-athletes and often referred to them affectionately as “my kids.”

My daily routine was spent on a range of activities including daily check-in meetings with my students, signing up for the SATs, discussing yesterday’s history test or following up with a grade change. Then I would complete my daily rounds: making trips to the four guidance offices, checking in with a teacher during his or her prep period, waiting outside of a classroom to make sure my kids got to class on time, or finding a student during his lunch period to review our academic plan for the week. I would stay at Bayside until I had to leave for class or, on the days I was there after school, until the last student left for the day.

Cultural Differences

Bayside High School is a widely diverse grade 9-12 high school. Over half of students were Hispanic/Latino/Latina, a third identified as African-American, and just over 10% identified as Caucasian. A quarter of Bayside cited a language other than English as their first language and 72% of the student body qualified for free or reduced-price lunch. Great challenges permeate all Springfield Public Schools and Bayside was not immune to these challenges. A few of my kids came from less-than-ideal homes. Some lived in the worst parts of Springfield where gang activity was common, while others lived in nicer “white” neighborhoods. Most of my students relied on public transportation to get to and from school and I had to keep the Springfield bus schedule in mind whenever I arranged for after-school help. One of my kids struggled with tardiness on a daily basis because his house was outside of the bus zone and he had to walk the long distance to school. Another student did not own a cell phone or watch and was perpetually late at the beginning of the year because he lost track of time in the morning.

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Even though the students at Bayside faced challenges, many of my kids were gifted athletes and admitted that sports were what kept them “out of trouble.” Many played something year-round, even if the sport was not their favorite activity, simply because they enjoyed being a part of a team and spending time with their teammates. Staying academically eligible in order to maintain his team participation was vital to each athlete. I learned quickly that one of the biggest motivating factors to keeping grades high was to continue to be a part of the social connection that sport provided (Petitpas, Cornelius, Van Raalte, & Jones, 2005).

The first time I walked through Bayside during a passing period I felt like I had a sign on my head that said, “I AM WHITE.” The first night I stood on the sidelines during a home football game, Jess and I were the only—the *only*—white people standing with the team. I constantly felt like I was trying *not* to be “too white” or appear racist in any way. Was it ok to say that I am a huge fan of the rapper Drake or would that appear like I was trying too hard to fit in? It was difficult to learn and remember the names that were so vastly different than any I grew up with. I made assumptions like asking for “Mom and Dad’s names” for a note home, not realizing that many of my kids lived with one parent or another family member entirely. As awkward as these situations were at the time they were instrumental in helping me to develop and increase my cultural awareness and sensitivity as Marten, Mobley, and Zizzi (2000) advocate for when working with athletes of various racial or ethnic backgrounds.

“I gradually realized over the year that it was more important to empower my kids to make their own decisions instead of trying to make decisions for them.”

One example of feeling like the color of my skin was really different and that difference really mattered occurred whenever Jess and I were mistaken for one another. I did not think we looked anything alike and yet students and teachers got us confused on a weekly basis. One time I was so baffled by this mix-up that I asked the opinion of one of my students. She shrugged and said simply, “All you white people look the same.” My jaw dropped and I indignantly sputtered that we were two separate people and looked completely different! In the middle of my resentful tantrum, it suddenly crossed my mind how often my kids might have shared my same feeling of being stereotyped. It was not a pleasant experience to be put into a clumsy category that did not feel appropriate and this was one of the most significant learning points for me during my time at Bayside. Feeling judged and minimized—though my student did not intend for this to happen—is not something easily forgotten and experiencing this first-hand has since served to slow down my judgments of others. Instead of taking the easy way out in my encounters with others, this experience has made me more determined to attempt to see dynamic, multifaceted individuals who are owners of a unique story and undeserving of an “all you people” label.

Counseling Skills

My counseling skills were tested frequently during my time at Bayside. I worked hard to develop rapport and a positive working relationship with my students because this was something that would be integral to our success together (Petitpas, Giges, & Danish, 1999). I wanted to get to know them as people and create a role for myself where I was available for any type of assistance. However, my attempts were not perfect at all times. Despite graduate training in counseling techniques, my kids were still especially adept at giving one-word answers to my perfectly crafted open-ended questions. I relied heavily on the Motivational Interviewing techniques of summarizing and reflecting to help my kids open up gently regarding their thoughts and feelings rather than suffering through a series of rapid questions (Miller & Rollnick, 2002). At the same time, I was also more direct than I had ever been with clinical clients. For instance, if one of my students failed English, he would not graduate. In a case like that, I was very clear with each student’s choice since there was less “wiggle room” than in a traditional therapeutic relationship where a client may have many options when faced with a decision.

I also had to exercise my counseling skills more often with frustrated teachers than I anticipated. Similar to my students, I used summarization and reflection so their dynamic experience could be fully heard. For example, one of my students was extremely hostile towards his history teacher. The teacher was especially dismissive of my student but it was difficult to work with the teacher because of how defensive I felt on behalf of my student. However, I kept my student’s long-term success in the classroom in the forefront of conversations with the teacher and tried to make our meetings reflective of the challenges he routinely faced with my student. I attempted to validate frustrations and complaints so the teacher could explicitly hear that I wanted him to feel respected and understood while working with me. Like many clients I will meet in my career, we were still able to work productively with one another even if we did not see eye-to-eye on the issue.

More than anything, I learned to be *incredibly* patient. Much like my clinical clients, sometimes my kids were simply not ready to do the things I, or their teachers, wanted them to do (e.g., turn in extra credit assignments on time), despite knowing the consequences of that decision (e.g., that Environmental Science grade will remain an “F” for the marking period). I gradually realized over the year that it was more important to empower my kids to make their own decisions instead of trying to make decisions for them. This was largely supported by making the connection between my use of Motivational Interviewing skills with clinical clients to my Bayside students. Once I “backed-off” and unconditionally supported my kids’ choices—while ensuring we had a clear conversation regarding the possible outcomes and consequences—I noticed that they were more drawn to the things I wanted them to do all along. One student started requesting grade-check sheets after I had given up asking him to do it. This was just one example of what many practitioners have preached: the desire to make a change had to come *from my student* (Miller & Rollnick, 2002; Petitpas et al., 1999).



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Lessons Learned and Future Applications

My overall experience at Bayside was outstanding and there were many lessons that I will build on in my future career. I learned what it was like to have my life changed on a daily basis in the most positive and unique ways. There were many frustrating days at Bayside but all it took was my toughest kid asking for extra help on his Algebra II homework or one basketball star telling me, "I wouldn't be on the team without you!" to quickly remind me how worthwhile and impactful my role as a LACES Academic Coach was—for my students and for myself. For some of my kids, I knew that I was their biggest, and often their only, advocate during the school day. This responsibility, whether accurately placed or not, was both incredibly humbling and endlessly inspiring. I learned that patience and genuine investment in each individual led to more fruitful and meaningful relationships for us both. The impact of this lesson will be invaluable in my future work with clients who may also be faced with a tough situation or an unwillingness to carry out a task but see me as a helpful support to assist them in doing so. Most of the time I asked my kids to do something they did not want to do (e.g., go to class, pass Biology, work with a difficult teacher) and it meant a great deal to me when we reached a point where they could trust me because I had demonstrated over and over again that I was a positive, supportive, and accepting mentor. Try as I might to describe it now, there are no words for a feeling like that.

"I was continually blown away by the drive, humility, hilarity, curiosity, and passion my kids brought to school each day. My greatest hope is that I was able to convey to them that they are important, special, amazing people who have unlimited potential in their future."

While at Bayside, I learned to confront my own stereotypes and become comfortable with being uncomfortable (Kontos & Breland-Noble, 2002). Various community members would often raise an eye-brow when I mentioned that I worked with Bayside's student-athletes. My service at Bayside was usually dubbed "a nice thing" but was usually accompanied by vague surprise and slight disbelief that I would willingly go to Bayside on a daily basis. Now when my friends make a joke about Springfield or I drive through a less-than-great part of the city, I actively work to confront the rigid assumptions that accompany the knee-jerk reaction to label people or places as "bad," "troubled," or "unsafe." I more readily halt my own assumptions and wrestle with where such judgments come from. Every day at Bayside I was in the minority and I struggled with the insecurities that came with that role. Since then, I have tried to be more cognizant of the person who may be feeling this same insecurity within certain social groups and try to make a point to provide a venue for that person feeling respected, included, and heard. This has given me a greater appreciation for some of the stereotypes clients from racial or ethnic minority groups may have encountered in their lives and be in a better position to gently explore those experiences.

I also learned that it was ok to admit I did not know what it was like to be an African-American teenager growing up in an urban city (Kontos & Breland-Noble, 2002). In order to develop my competency as a culturally sensitive mentor with my kids (Martens et al., 2000), I spent many hours getting teased for asking the "dumb" questions. I realize now that it can become easier to have those "I'm different and you're different" conversations throughout the course of therapy and this willingness to be open and sensitive will be especially useful when meeting with diverse clientele (Martens et al., 2000). Honoring the client's individual story can lead to a greater understanding between me and my client and can contribute to a better working alliance, a vital component to successful and effective therapy.

Concluding Thoughts

Being at Bayside was one of the most valuable experiences of my young career and something I will never forget. I was continually blown away by the drive, humility, hilarity, curiosity, and passion my kids brought to school each day. My greatest hope is that I was able to convey to them that they are important, special, amazing people who have unlimited potential in their future. I have taken more from them in our year together than I thought possible and they have pushed, molded, and created a better version of the person I was when I first introduced myself at a football practice in the fall; someone who is more patient, flexible, understanding, open-minded, and kind. My kids have left an indelible mark on my development both as a professional and as a person and it will never be possible for me to repay a debt like that.

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Opinions from the Field: A Professor/Practitioner's Perspective

Dr. Judy Van Raalte
Professor of Psychology at Springfield College



"If it's not working, try something different. Maintain self-awareness of what's going on, and be open to the possibility of change."

What is your background as it relates to sport/exercise psychology?

I became interested partly because of majoring in psychology as an undergraduate student. I was part of a research team led by a social psychology professor, and I was the only college athlete in the group. When the professor found any research related to sport, she gave it to me, and I found that combination of sport and psychology interesting. There were not as many opportunities for graduate work in sport psychology, so I looked at who was publishing in sport psychology and who was presenting at conferences, and those were the programs to which I applied. I was looking for a psychology department because of my undergraduate background. As a tennis player, I had a personal interest in the psychological aspect of the game. I was interested in how people who weren't always the best were successful, and people who were very skilled could still be unsuccessful. As I studied psychology, I found that sport is a great natural laboratory because you have measurable performance outcomes of psychological variables that have real world applications.

How did you find your current professional position/ get started in your current field?

When I was in graduate school, I went to a number of conferences, including AASP. Through mingling, I met Al Petitpas who started the Athletic Counseling program at Springfield College in 1982. When I finished my doctorate, I applied to the Director position of the Athletic Counseling program at Springfield College, and Al was the chair of the search committee. I got the job in 1990, and I'm still here today. Attending conferences and networking was really helpful for me. I wasn't completely sure it was the type of job I wanted, but I got some good advice to interview and see, and I am extremely happy that I did.

What should current students be doing to prepare themselves in finding a job/being a professional in your field?

Be an awesome networker. Team up with others when networking or searching for jobs; it works better in teams. I was hoping to meet a certain male professional at a conference, and happened to see him go into the men's room; my male colleague followed him into the bathroom to tell him I wanted to meet him and we ended up talking afterward! Get all the experience you can and work hard. Networking and having a breadth of experience helps you to be more marketable. For students hoping to go into practice, people who have a license in psychology or social work at the Master's or Doctoral level have the broadest opportunities. Business skills, marketing, and ethics background are also important. For students interested in research/academia, gaining experience in publishing, presenting, and networking is essential.

What is a piece of advice you would offer students who want to practice sport/exercise psychology?

There is no clear career path, but there are many niches. Find yours and go for it. If you have an interest area, pursue a more specified direction. For example, if you are a golfer, make connections with people in your sport and in your domain. If you are interested in health and fitness, connect with health clubs and explore opportunities such as employee health. Take into account your geographical area, interests, talents, and connections.

What is the best piece of advice you have ever received in regards to performance psychology?

If it's not working, try something different. Maintain self-awareness of what's going on, and be open to the possibility of change. It's a simple philosophy, but it's one that is optimistic and information for a lot of situations.

What are the pros and cons of being a professor, practitioner, and researcher at the same time?

The nice thing about being a full-time professor is that I have a day job, and the applied work is on the side. The applied work is pleasure; my athletes meet with me, we solve a problem and move on. I'm a better professor because I also do the work the students are doing. In this way, the rise and fall of the economy doesn't affect me as much because I have a secured academic position. In applied work, sport psychology can be more tiring and involved. You live and die with your athletes, even though it's ultimately their job to perform. I like the balance of applied work and teaching because they feed each other. A lot of interesting research questions come up during my practice, and for me, both aspects fit together. This can also be a problem; if you do everything, it's hard to do everything well. If you want to have a life, that's also a challenge. But I love it, because at any given moment, I could be doing a bunch of different things; on the other hand, it can be easy to get behind on everything! You get the best of all worlds, but the burden of all of them as well. Teaching, research, and practice are all challenging and rewarding in different ways. I wouldn't want to give up any one of them; I feel lucky to do them all.



The Soft Side of Hardwood: Sport Psychology in Youth Basketball

Grzegorz Więclaw, University of Jyväskylä

Preparation and Proceedings

Sport psychology services delivered to young athletes and their organizations are associated with significant developmental benefits (e.g., Watson, Connole, & Kadushin, 2011; Visek, Harris, & Blom, 2009). Nonetheless, the models for sport psychologists practicing in youth contexts are scarce. The only comprehensive framework to date is the Youth Sport Consulting Model (YSCM) by Visek et al. (2009). The YSCM consists of six phases: (i) practitioner's considerations, (ii) initiating contact, (iii) doing sport psychology, (iv) wrapping up the season/consultation, (v) assessing the consulting relationship, and (vi) termination or continuation. The YSCM was a cornerstone of the work presented here and served as a signpost throughout the process.



The first phase of the YSCM was addressed by a thorough self-reflection. The practitioner's choice to work for a youth academy was no coincidence, but rather streamed out of enjoyment with previous experiences as a consultant in youth sport and non-sport contexts. Consultant's personal philosophy guided the decision making processes before, during and after the consultation. At its core was positive youth development, often defined in the literature by the 5C's – competence, confidence, connection, character and compassion/caring (Jones, Dunn, Holt, Sullivan, & Bloom, 2011). For the second phase, 25 sport academies from Poland were targeted and their managers contacted by e-mail with a consultation offer. The follow-up of the three interested academies was done by phone.

For the third phase (i.e., doing sport psychology), which was at the heart of the collaboration with the academy, an eclectic approach was taken, blending the knowledge gained by the practitioner at the university with his practical experiences in the field of sport psychology. This also included personal experiences from other settings such as youth camps, theatre arts and conflict resolution. The main source of inspiration and certainly a considerable contribution to the individual courses and the program as a whole was the SUPER Program (Sports United to Promote Education and Recreation; Danish, 2002), which focuses on the development of mental and life skills in young athletes. In the manual of the SUPER Program, Danish (2002) provides outlines and practical methodology for each session, which was a useful foundation for creating workshops for the basketball academy. Finally, for the last three phases of YSCM, simple evaluation questionnaires were prepared for the athletes. Coaches and the management team were interviewed for the feedback.

Tasks and Duties

The practitioner worked with 52 young basketball players and four coaches during the summer. The campers were between 10-16 years old and all competed in regional leagues. None of the players or coaches from the academy had worked with a sport psychology consultant before. In fact only a few knew what sport psychology entailed. Thus, the main focus of the consulting program was educating both the athletes and the coaches about the importance, purposes, principles, and nature of mental training for sport and life (cf. Visek, Harris, & Blom, 2009). Specific tasks of the consultant during the summer included: (a) observation of teams' functioning in practice and competition, (b) conducting sport psychology and life skills workshops for the young players, (c) conducting sport psychology workshops for coaches, and (d) conducting individual sessions for both coaches and players. The consultant was also at the disposal of the coaches to help out in day-to-day activities, training sessions, video recordings, analysis, etc.



Throughout the summer each team participated in 16 group workshops targeting basic psychological skills such as relaxation, imagery, and focus and refocus techniques. Furthermore, the consultant also worked on improving the cohesiveness of each team and elevating their spirit. The workshops were designed to be simple activities involving fun and physical components (cf. Orlick & McCaffrey, 1991). See the chart below for an example of the workshops the consultant conducted with the teams. Many individual young athletes and coaches took the chance to speak to the consultant in one-on-one consultation sessions. For example, one coach asked for help when dealing with a hyperactive player, who had a great ability, but could not sustain his focus throughout the practice time. The practitioner and the coach collaboratively, thought about strategies of how to use the player's excitement for the game without him ruining the training session for the other players. One solution, which worked really well in this case was to stream that player's energy into showing the team their next exercise.

Another coach wondered about sustaining the motivation of the players during the off-court training, which involved a fair bit of endurance and strength training. The coach found it difficult to explain the value of practice without a basketball in sight. One practical solution was creating a random free throw contest in the middle of such training. The activity was fun for

Więclaw Continued from Page 7

the athletes, while coaches saw the value in it as well because they were better able to explain the importance of physical training in enhancing basketball performance. Such simple activity simulated match conditions where players were physically tired and needed to perform a relatively easy task of a free throw.

Traditionally, many sport psychology practitioners have postulated that in order to stay objective, the consultant should intervene from outside of the team. Here the consultant remained fully engaged with the academy's everyday life. He was not a stranger, who temporarily came in, intervened and exited; rather he became an integral part of the coaching staff and an important link in the process of training the young athletes. The consultant observed the teams' practices and games, ran the notice board, and organized social events such as watching basketball e.g., *Coach Carter, More than a Game, Space Jam* and games (e.g., Poland's Euro Basket Qualifier games). With such an approach, the workday never ended. There was no time off for the consultant working at a youth sports camp of this sort. Informal work, outside of the set sessions was equally important as the scheduled sessions. 'Hanging out' with the athletes on the camp grounds gave the consultant an opportunity to get to know them better and delve deeper into the structures of each team. This was important in building trust-worthy relationships, developing mutual understanding, and monitoring the progress of every team as well as each individual athlete. In all those endeavors the consultant strived to remain a role model for the young people – always accessible, trust-worthy, helpful, positive, and composed (cf. Orlick & McCaffrey, 1991). Most certainly, strong relational foundations allowed for consultation sessions to be more efficient and more meaningful for the young athletes. The practitioner always had something personal at hand that he could open or close a conversation with all the athletes.

When conducting individual sessions with players and coaches, the consultant followed the interview protocol as discussed by Robert Weinberg (2012) and the University of Jyväskylä code of ethics. In situations where the practitioner was not exactly sure what to do, he would consult his university supervisors and/or colleagues from ENYSSP (European Network of Young Specialists in Sport Psychology) via phone. This support was used especially in tricky cases when the performance and clinical issues could potentially intertwine. For example, the practitioner had to deal with one young athlete who was being socially alienated from the rest of the team. In one-one-one sessions, the practitioner encouraged the athlete to think of ways he could take responsibility for actively participating in the social life of the team. The focus of the sessions with this particular athlete was geared towards improvement of his individual wellbeing as well as overall team functioning.

Sample Consulting Schedule for Basketball Camp

Week	Workshop Topic	Examples of activities
1	Introduction to mental training in basketball	Presentation of the working model of mental training in youth basketball Expectations and workshop 'rules' (respect, fun, and participation)
2	Team cohesion	Team building activities and ice breakers
3	Goal setting	Awareness of dreams and goals Performance profiling
4	Concentration	Focusing and refocusing (example of free throw) Enhancement of collective concentration
5	Relaxation	Progressive relaxation, deep breathing Simple biofeedback exercises
6	Performing under pressure	Self-talk routines Creating own routines and game plans

Evaluation

Overall, it was an exciting, eventful, and purposeful summer for the practitioner. In addition, it was a perfect starting point for a young and aspiring sport psychology professional. However, the work would not have produced such positive results if not for the involvement and full approval of the coaching and managing staff (cf. Watson et al., 2011). Once the coaches are on the same page, it was much easier to get a message across to the young athletes. It was a privilege for the practitioner to work with open-minded coaches who offered support and space to proceed. Like the young athletes, the coaches and managing staff approached sport psychology with great curiosity and appreciation. The consultant felt welcome and quickly established his credibility. The practitioner found the process of working within the academy structures extremely smooth and straightforward.

Wrocław Continued from Page 8

Youth Athletes

It was especially important to understand the perspective of the youth athletes in the camps. How did they perceive the mental training workshops in general? What did they like and find useful? What could be improved? How did they perceive the consultant's contribution to their summer and their overall development as basketball players? All of these questions were asked in a short evaluative survey, which athletes completed anonymously and voluntarily at the end of the summer. Forty-seven (out of 52) youth athletes completed the questionnaire.

The results were rather encouraging. On a five point Likert-type scale, 5 being the most favorable rating, the consultant's contribution to the camps was assessed as an average of 4.87, the applicability of the mental training workshops' content as an average of 4.51, and the atmosphere created during the workshops as an average of 4.68. Forty-six (97.87%) of the youth athletes would recommend mental training to other youth basketball players. In the open-ended section of the survey, the most appreciated aspects of the consultant's contribution to the summer camps were relaxation activities, trust building exercises, and the general atmosphere created by the consultant. At the very end of the questionnaire there was some space left for free communication with the consultant. The emerging themes from this section were requests by the players for the consultant to continue working for the club throughout the rest of the season, gratefulness to the consultant for his cooperation and contributions, and general contentment with the services athletes received.

"The most appreciated aspects of the consultant's contribution to the summer camps were relaxation activities, trust building exercises, and the general atmosphere created by the consultant."

Self-evaluation

As a young sport psychology practitioner, the consultant was pleased with what was done during the summer of 2012. For someone with rather limited practical experience, basically starting from scratch, it was an ideal placement. A mental training program for youth basketball was created and implemented independently by the consultant. Although it took an enormous amount of work, the practitioner felt it was definitely worth it. The practitioner ran a daily journal where he would outline daily successes and challenges. Furthermore, he video recorded some of the group sessions for his own analysis. He felt it was extremely valuable to observe himself.

The group sessions went especially well. The consultant perceived he had quite an influence over the group dynamics and collective learning. He was able to stimulate interest in sport psychology among the youth athletes; however, it was quite challenging to keep up with all the athletes and work with them individually as planned. At least one individual session with every athlete and coach was scheduled, but the consultant failed to meet that standard due to a lack of time. There were definitely youth athletes with whom the consultant spent more time informally. Typically those athletes were the ones interested in mental training and willing to develop themselves further. But the consultant also attended the athletes who were homesick and felt bullied. However, sometimes the consultant felt that he missed the group of athletes that fell in between two attention seeking categories; e.g. the boys who behaved well, but were quiet and unnoticed. The practitioner felt that it would be beneficial to spend more time with this group of athletes next summer. It could be achieved by good scheduling of one-on-one consultation sessions and approaching athletes from this group more often in informal situations, e.g. during a meal. The schedules of the camps were so intense that the consultant often needed to compromise his own well-being (e.g., skipping sleep or meals) in order to be at the service of the athletes. Nevertheless, he felt it was a perfect initiation experience. Upon the completion of the master's program in June 2013, the consultant would like to continue working in the youth sport environment in Poland and beyond.

As a social institution, youth sports have a great capacity to provide opportunities for the growth and development of not only better athletes, but also better people (Watson et al., 2011). In such an environment there is sufficient room for potential contribution of applied sport psychology. Even though mental training in youth athletic contexts in North America has been used since the 1970s (Orlick & McCaffrey, 1991), in Poland it is still a novel and unexplored area. This summer a seed was planted, which is expected to make the youth athletic organizations realize the need for sport psychology services among young Polish athletes.

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Opinions from the Field: A Professor/Practitioner's Perspective

Ms. Caiti Bergman
Athletic Academic Advisor, University of Nevada



What is your background as it relates to sport/exercise psychology?

I earned BS and MS degrees from Miami University in sport psychology. I played soccer from youth and into college and had personal experiences with sport psychology throughout my time as a soccer player. Reflecting on my experiences during this phase is really what sparked my interests in athletic identity development and what happens after athletes end their sport career.

How do you use sport psychology in your daily professional life?

The biggest things I do as an athletic academic advisor are goal setting, anxiety management, and building confidence with athletes. These strategies are focused toward their current academic status and, ultimately, when they end their careers as college athletes.

How did you find your current professional position/ how did you get started in your current field?

While in graduate school, I interned for our student athlete support office. That was really a stepping stone for understanding the basics of NCAA academic eligibility and got my foot in the door to intern with a Big Ten university. After graduation I know everyone wants to go straight to the full time, full benefits job. I would advise against it. I know the pay is horrible, but if you can intern for a big university, or a big company (if that's more of the route you're going), it will open up many more doors for you after your year there.

What should current students be doing to prepare themselves in finding a job/being a professional in your field?

Volunteer, intern, make connections! If you have an idea of a position you would one day like to be in you need to contact that person and see if they can make some time to meet with you to talk about the field and what it's all about. I called up the head of a Big Ten university, drove 2 hours to the meeting, met for 30 minutes, and drove 2 hours back home. These connections can have such an impact on your career in the future. Go to conferences and introduce yourself to people. People love talking about their work. Don't be shy— just introduce yourself and make sure they remember you. ALWAYS send a follow up note thanking them for their time and insight into the field.

What tools do you suggest students develop in aims of working in the performance psychology field?

Counseling tools are a must. Clients have to feel comfortable with you in order to open up. Counseling skills will allow you to know how to gain more trust in a client, gather more information from them, etc. Once you get to a comfortable level with the athlete, this sometimes means they open up so much that it becomes outside your scope of practice and you need to refer out. So much of performance psychology could be about an underlying issue outside of their sport that is affecting their performance so knowing when regular problems turn into clinical issues is huge.

What is one piece of advice you would offer a student who wants to practice sport/exercise psychology?

Be prepared to not find the perfect job. For me, there wasn't a position called, "Person who consults with college athletes about identity development and preparing for life after college sports," so, I went with Athletic Academic Advisor. Will I be doing more than consulting about identity development? Sure. But it's the one place where I can have these conversations and make the impact that I want to make. You might have create your own position or find something that will allow you to use your skills in a way that's not typically thought of.

What is the best piece of advice you have ever received in regards to performance psychology?

"Control your controllables!" This is something that is helpful for you and your clients. If you want something to happen, figure out what it is that you have control of and take action. Everything else, leave it behind you.

"I know the pay is horrible, but if you can intern for a big university, or a big company, it will open up many more doors for you after your year there."



The Evolution of Multicultural Practices in Sport and Performance Psychology

Carly Schwartz, and Brooke Lamphere, University of Denver



Throughout psychological, sociological and counseling literature, the need for multicultural competency is identified as a key component in professional development and practice. Within the realm of sport and performance psychology (SPP), culture involves cognitive, affective, and behavioral components derived from a belief and value system that "depends upon an individual's capacity to learn and convey knowledge from generation to generation" (Ikulayo&Semidara, 2011, p. 339). Historically dependent upon White, Western-European, heterosexual populations, the systematic evolution of psychotherapeutic research and practice no longer caters to a monocultural perspective. A salient emphasis in the evolution of SPP as a field highlights the necessity of expanding beyond the domain of traditional white, male-dominated sport to more diverse populations (e.g., performance-related domains; Aoyagi, Portenga, Poczwadowski, Cohen, & Statler, 2011). Future directions in psychological practice and research must be dedicated to multicultural sensitivity, as a continued focus on traditionally targeted clientele no longer serves as an accurate representation of "mainstream" populations (Prochaska& Norcross, 2010). Literature pertaining specifically to SPP underemphasizes the importance of multicultural awareness and sensitivity, particularly in regard to the development and implementation of applied practice or interventions (Duda& Allison, 1990; Ram, Starek& Johnson, 2004). Culturally relevant issues such as gender or sexual orientation (Alley & Hicks, 2005; Hardin & Greer, 2009; Meany, Dornier, & Owens, 2002), ethnicity (Stone, Lynch, Sjomeling, & Darley, 1999; Ram et al., 2004; Schinke & Moore, 2011), and religious or spiritual affiliation (Ikulayo&Semidara, 2011) can contribute markedly to performance outcomes, yet few resources detail the effectiveness of mainstream interventions with diverse populations. This article presents three components integral to the continued evolution of SPP, including (1) an awareness and understanding of personal perceptions and biases, (2) development and maintenance of a working knowledge of the primary culture with which clientele identify, and (3) an emphasis on the argument for the inclusion of culturally relevant constructs in practical interventions (Schinke & Moore, 2011). Challenging current and future sport psychology practitioners through an emphasis on multicultural competency will allow for a greater degree of overall inclusivity and directly impact the quality of therapeutic relationships in practice.

Current research pertaining to the implementation of cultural sport psychology in practice stresses the importance of cultural sensitivity and awareness, in order to provide consistently effective and relevant services. While the majority of psychological disciplines have adopted an emphasis on multicultural competency in practice, training, and education, SPP has yet to follow suit (Schinke & Moore, 2011). Aoyagi and Poczwadowski (2012) analyzed and discussed the development of applied sport psychology practice in relation to theoretical frameworks of this practice. Currently, the rapid growth of the application of principles of performance excellence within SPP overshadows the need for empirically-based theoretical support (Aoyagi and Poczwadowski, 2012). Therefore, many professionals adopt the stereotypical view of sport psychology as a reactive, intervention-based practice, as opposed to a holistic, in-depth, psychological relationship. However, select educational programs have begun incorporating theories from broader psychological disciplines in order to enhance the development of SPP practitioners. Many of these theories incorporate multicultural components that facilitate a more comprehensive learning experience on behalf of the practitioner (Aoyagi & Poczwadowski, 2012; Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009). The notion of multicultural competence within theory-based practice does not often transfer to SPP due to the overall lack of theoretical grounding. For example, an SPP practitioner with no multicultural training might consider certain non-verbal behaviors a sign of inattention or disrespect, while in reality they are a reflection of the athlete's unique cultural values and practices. Thus, the importance of tailoring sport psychology interventions to specific cultural parameters of the present population is evident. Approaching practice through a multicultural lens allows practitioners to enhance the effectiveness of therapeutic relationships by relating to the clients through the incorporation of identified cultural values and perspectives (Schinke & Moore, 2011).

"Throughout the process of increasing multicultural competence, SPP practitioners must recognize that a practitioner is a person first, and must work to develop a thorough understanding of personal biases and experiences."

Throughout the process of increasing multicultural competence, SPP practitioners must recognize that a practitioner is a person first, and must work to develop a thorough understanding of personal biases and experiences. Multicultural sensitivity on behalf of the practitioner often significantly impacts the perceptions of the client, the manifestation of the presenting issue, and the overall development of therapeutic rapport (Anderson et al., 2004; Schinke & Moore, 2011). Encouraging an awareness of personal interest, prejudices, limitations, and frustrations is an essential first step in managing effective practice. Therefore, implementing self-reflective practices facilitates further exploration and understanding of the decision-making process and overall therapeutic experience (Anderson et al., 2004).

Gaining a deeper understanding, both personally and professionally, of one's cultural background and corresponding worldviews, values, or perspectives will facilitate the development of a greater capacity to relate to and empathize with the cultural perspectives of various clientele. Within the present performance domain, and in relation to overall psychological well-being (Schinke & Moore, 2011), implementing this athlete-centered humanistic approach allows the therapeutic relation-

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-ship to flourish, contributing to therapeutic change (Anderson, Knowles, & Gilbourne, 2004). An in-depth understanding of multicultural practice involves awareness and sensitivity. Awareness encompasses the cognitive recognition of differing cultural components, and sensitivity includes a familiarity with the affective or emotional experience of cultural diversity (Schinke & Moore, 2011; Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009).

To promote awareness and sensitivity, practitioners must partake in the process of self-reflective practice to understand the possible implications of personal biases. Recent literature accentuates that few SPP practitioners consistently engage in general reflective counseling, and culturally reflective practice, in particular (Gilbourne, 2004; Cropley, Hanton, Miles, & Niven, 2010; Knowles & Gilbourne, 2010). As a practitioner, lacking awareness of culturally relevant characteristics of both the client and the self may negatively impact quality and effectiveness of care, performance enhancement, and psychological well-being (Comas-Díaz, 2011). Within a clinical domain, clients report higher satisfaction with the therapeutic relationship and overall effectiveness of services when holding a perception of the practitioner as culturally competent (Comas-Díaz, 2011; Schinke & Moore, 2011). A culturally competent practitioner's heightened sense of awareness regarding personal biases contributes to the openness and effectiveness of the therapeutic relationship. Furthermore, internalization of diversity as a professional value is a complex process involving the following components: (a) seeking knowledge of unfamiliar cultures and cultural experiences; (b) incorporating this knowledge and open perspective to applied interventions; (c) understanding the contribution of cultural diversity in interpersonal development; and (d) consistently employing self reflective practice through an emphasis on continued multicultural education, self-assessment, and growth.

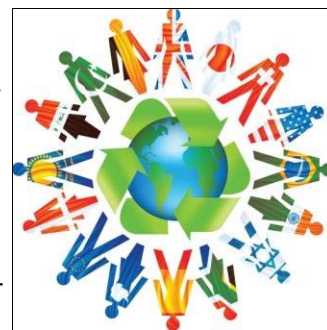
The American Psychological Association (APA) called for organizational change related to multicultural education and training to enhance cultural competency in applied practice. In order for SPP to continue to progress as a scientifically relevant field, AASP, as well as individual practitioners, must adopt a similar emphasis or focus on multicultural education. Adopting pre-existing educational training guidelines from similar professional organizations, including and extending beyond APA, will provide a foundational approach to such organizational change within the SPP community (Schinke & Moore, 2011).

While an educational emphasis on multicultural competence can contribute to the internalization of diversity, this focus must extend to applied practice to ensure progress. The shifting focus from problem-centered therapeutic intervention toward an athlete-centered, humanistic approach through a multicultural lens (Anderson et al., 2004) has been found to directly contribute to client satisfaction and effectiveness of treatment. Attrition and success rates of diverse clientele vary depending on the perceived cultural competence of the practitioner. Thus, the ability of a practitioner to incorporate values and elements of a client's culture throughout the intervention process significantly contributes to diverse client retention and positive therapeutic outcome (Schinke & Moore, 2011).

The incorporation of the unique cultural values and perspectives of the client also contributes to the development of a quality therapeutic relationship. Relationship development often takes a significant amount of time and involves a process in which perception and understanding of the self, the other, and the interaction of the two influence the course of the relationship as well as effectiveness of communication (Gottman, 2011; Park & Raile, 2010). Park and Raile (2010) identified the connection between perceptual congruence and communication satisfaction in relationship development, reporting that individuals tend to describe higher satisfaction with inter-relationship communication when viewing the other as empathetic and accepting of their point of view. For example, a practitioner's choice of language or wording often reflects previous education or the socialization process, which may not align with the perceptions or socialized understanding of the client (Schinke & Moore, 2011). A discrepancy in language or communication resulting from such misunderstanding of culturally-based perceptions of the client can contribute to the development of an ineffective therapeutic relationship (i.e., a relationship lacking rapport and trust). Current research stresses the contribution of cultural diversity in interpersonal relationship development, ultimately resulting in heightened client retention and satisfaction.

"To promote awareness and sensitivity, practitioners must partake in the process of self-reflective practice to understand the possible implications of personal biases."

Finally, the consistent employment of reflective practice assists in maintaining cultural relevance in practical interventions, by highlighting the specific purpose behind the constructs of awareness and sensitivity (Anderson et al., 2004). James and Clark (1996) dissected the various components of the "why" or purpose behind reflective practice, and identified three areas of emphasis: technical, practical, and critical perspectives (as cited in Anderson et al., 2004). Approaching reflective practice from a technical perspective entails an assessment of standards, competencies, and adequacies of interventions. The technical perspective emphasizes a clear understanding of the theoretical backing for designated therapeutic interventions highlighting the benefits of purposeful practice- the benefits of focusing on the "why" and not the "what" (Sinek, 2009). Emphasizing the



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meaning or purpose behind an applied intervention as opposed to simple completion of the task itself enhances the benefits of SPP practice. Approaching reflective practice from a practical standpoint emphasizes the allocation of meaning to various components of the interpersonal interaction based on the inherent elements of culture and experienced socialization of both client and practitioner. The presuppositions, perceptions, and experiences of each client must be interpreted within the context of the social interaction in order to purposefully understand client's feelings and actions (Anderson et al., 2004). Acknowledging the impact of a client's individual experiences or beliefs in social interactions such as the therapeutic relationship enhances the trustworthiness and effectiveness of the practitioner. Finally, the critical component of reflective practice challenges existing practices or tendencies related to internalized economic, political, or organizational values. The current tendency reflects a desire to exclude certain perspectives or values from the therapeutic setting to maintain practitioner objectivity. A true client centered focus to practice includes an awareness and understanding of the subjective views of both client and practitioner to provide personalized and effective service. James and Clarke (1996) recommended incorporating all three factions within reflective practice in order to effectively manage the practitioner-client relationship. Cultivating effective self-reflection involves a process of skill development and nurturing through practice in order to consistently provide the highest quality services (Anderson et al., 2004).

"Modeling the development of a multicultural emphasis in SPP on the existing psychological and sociological perspectives will serve as a necessary and pertinent component in the future growth, relevance, and professionalism of the field."

Comparing multicultural perspectives within the broader field of psychology and sociology to available literature focusing solely on sport and performance psychology reveals a critical element within the field that is sorely lacking. The historically predominant focus on a monocultural approach to SPP is shifting toward a higher degree of diversity saturation without adequate empirical and theoretical support. Modeling the development of a multicultural emphasis in SPP on the existing psychological and sociological perspectives will serve as a necessary and pertinent component in the future growth, relevance, and professionalism of the field. The three components presented throughout the above discussion seek to challenge current and future practitioners to reflect on personal and professional biases and perceptions regarding cultural competence, ideally contributing to a normative shift in theory and practice.

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A note from the editors

As editors of the 2013 PEM Newsletter, we first want to thank the students that have contributed their experience to this year's newsletter. Additionally, we would also like to thank all others that have made the final product possible. This includes the AASP Executive Board and Student Representatives, former PEM Initiative Leaders, and the individuals in the performance field who so willingly participated in this effort. The PEM Newsletter would not have been possible without your helpful contributions, guidance, and support, and for this we are grateful. We would also like to thank the AASP Executive Board and Student Representatives for the opportunity to serve as the editors of the PEM Newsletter. This has been a learning experience for us, beginning with the initial development and design phases and continuing on through the process of recruitment and editing.

We would also like to reinforce the thoughts shared by the past two years' editing teams. The current team of editors also believes that the PEM Newsletter is an excellent student publication that can increase student, practitioner, and public awareness of the application of sport and exercise psychology skills. Additionally, the PEM Newsletter has the potential to spread knowledge of the possible impact that the field of sport and exercise psychology can have on both sport and non-sport domains. We also believe it is essential that AASP student members have a venue through which they may publish articles regarding applied sport and exercise psychology. These articles help to create a newsletter that provides readers with information about sport and exercise psychology techniques and best practices. As your editors, we have tried to create a final product that reaches these goals.

Please submit any comments, concerns, or questions regarding the newsletter by using the online feedback form available on the PEM Student Initiative page on the AASP Website (<http://www.appliedsportpsych.org/Students/PEM>). Looking to the future, we invite AASP student members to become more involved in the PEM Newsletter and to help this initiative grow!

Thank you,
- The PEM Team

