Adaptive Motivation in Sports

Adaptive Motivational Patterns and Motivational Climate in Youth Sports

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MOTIVATION

- Motivation defined as ‘the process that initiates, guides, and maintains goal oriented behaviors’

- Motivation varies in terms of level (how much?) & quality (what type of motivation?)
PARTICIPATION MOTIVES

- Children participate in sports primarily to have fun and develop and demonstrate competence.

- How they evaluate and define competence varies across developmental stages.*


AUTONOMY COMPETENCE STAGE (0-4 YEARS)

- Competence is self-referenced; goal is to master the environment.

- Performances of others is deemed unimportant.

- Child competes for learning opportunities/resources.
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SOCIAL COMPARISON STAGE (5-9 YEARS)

- **Rudimentary** then competitive forms of social comparison
- **Winning** becomes increasingly important with age
- Athletes may **lack** cognitive, emotional or physical skills to deal effectively with competition

INTEGRATED STAGE (>9 YEARS)

- Child **differentiates** between effort and ability
- Able to **shift** between self- and other-based reference standards
- More able to **meet** the physical, cognitive, and emotional demands of competition
ACHIEVEMENT GOAL THEORY *

- Individuals motivated to demonstrate competence in achievement settings
- How we define competence impacts motivated behaviours & outcomes
- Individuals can be task- or ego-involved
- Goal involvement impacted by orientations and environment


TASK INVOLVEMENT

- Success defined in terms of effort, learning, and skill mastery
- Success results from hard work and sustained effort
- Success is personally determined and possible for all
- Task-involved athletes demonstrate superior effort & performance, greater perseverance, resiliency, sportsmanship, more enjoyment and less anxiety
“For myself, losing is not coming second. It’s getting out of the water knowing you could have done better. For myself, I have won every race I’ve been in.”

Michael Thorpe

EGO INVOLVEMENT

• Success defined in terms of winning & outperforming others

• Success stems from natural ability; sport enhances social status

• Success is exclusive and contingent on performance of others

• When ability is low, ego-involvement is associated with maladaptive strategies and negative outcomes
“Some people think football is a matter of life and death. I assure you it is much more serious than that”

Bill Shankly – Liverpool FC

“If you make every game a life and death proposition, you’re going to have problems. For one thing, you’ll be dead a lot.”

Dean Smith, Headcoach Basketball, UNC
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BRAIN-STORMER (5 MINS.)

- How do coaches encourage young athletes to develop adaptive (task-involving) and maladaptive (ego-involving) motivational habits in sport?

- Provide one example for both task and ego

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WHAT IS THE MOTIVATIONAL CLIMATE

- The environment in which the athlete trains, practices, & competes *

- Coaches, clubs, parents & peers all contribute to climate via instruction, feedback, reinforcement, programme structure

* Ames (1992) In G.C. Roberts (Ed.) Motivation in sport and exercise, pp. 161-76
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MASTERY INVOLVING CLIMATE

- Athlete rewarded for effort, learning, persistence, & improvement
- Coach encourages a self-referenced (task) perception of success
- Athletes establishes own aims & levels of competency

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PERFORMANCE CLIMATE

- Competition (ego) emphasised over personal development
- Success is equal to winning; anything else is failure
- Athlete strives to display/protect concept of superiority
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IMPACT OF MOTIVATIONAL CLIMATE *

- Ego Climate
  - Performance orientation
  - Self-enhancement
  - Avoiding failure
  - Performance disinhibition

- Mastery Climate
  - Mastery orientation
  - Self-regulation
  - Competitive awareness
  - Effort-performance


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CLIMATE VS. WINNING: WHICH IS MOST IMPORTANT *

- Climate a stronger predictor of athletes’ sport experience & evaluation of coach than win-loss record * **

- Mastery-involved coaches rated more knowledgeable, likeable, better teachers; more likely to retain athletes * **

* Cumming et al., (2007) J App Sport Psych, 19, 322-36,
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CREATING A MASTERY CLIMATE *

• Acronym TARGET fosters mastery involvement in achievement settings

• Task, Authority, Recognition, Grouping, Evaluation, and Timing

• Applicable in practice and competition

* Ames (1992) In G.C. Roberts (Ed.) Motivation in sport and exercise, pp. 161-76

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TASK

• Select developmentally appropriate & challenging tasks

• Explain purpose & value of tasks/training activities

• Keep practices varied & balanced; encourage participation across sports & positions
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IN THE LAST 5 YEARS, FEWER KIDS ARE ACTIVE THROUGH SPORTS, DUE IN PART TO EARLY, SINGLE-SPORT SPECIALIZATION

MULTI-SPORT PARTICIPATION CAN LEAD TO BETTER PERFORMANCE, LESS BURNOUT, LESS SOCIAL ISOLATION, AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, MORE LIFE-ENRICHMENT IN SPORTS.
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**AUTHORITY**

- Give athletes input in team **decisions** (practice, strategy, rules)
- Let athletes **choose** from a limited **range** of tasks/activities
- Encourage athletes to take **ownership** of their development

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3UJYJRO_3-0 – Todd Marinovich Project](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3UJYJRO_3-0)
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RECOGNITION

• Use **private** recognition for individual accomplishments; don’t invite social comparison

• Reward **controllable** aspects of performance i.e., effort, persistence

• **Words** more powerful than material rewards

“Sports do not build character, they reveal it”
John Wooden, Basketball Coach UCLA
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THE WOODEN APPROACH

- Wooden viewed learning in terms of explanation, demonstration, imitation, & repetition
- Praise should be specific, informative & given selectively
- Mistakes are opportunities for learning & development

GROUPING

- Create mixed ability groups for team drills
- Encourage cooperation over competition within teams
- Spend equal time working/talking with able & less able athletes
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**EVALUATION**

- Evaluate athletes on *individual* success & improvement
- Assess athletes over *range* of attributes; view weakness as potential
- Consider impact of experience, relative age, biological *maturity*
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TIMING

- Recognize that athletes learn/develop at different rates
- Let athletes set timelines for learning & development
- Allow adequate time/opportunity for less skilled athletes

DOES TARGET WORK?

- A true test of TARGET resides in development, implementation & evaluation of coach education programs
- (1) Can coaches be taught to be mastery involving? (2) How does it impact the athlete development?
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YOUTH ENRICHMENT IN SPORT PROJECT

THE MASTERY APPROACH TO COACHING

• MAC workshop & educational materials promoting mastery involvement in sports & life * **

• Applied TARGET & positive coaching principles to present coaching guidelines; emphasizing personal improvement & effort

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Mastery Approach to Coaching Video Clip

TESTING THE MAC * **

- Two recreational basketball programs in Seattle (treatment vs control)

- >200 athletes (9-15 years) across 37 teams

- Pre-post measures of achievement goals & anxiety
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CHANGES IN MASTERY

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of Measurement</th>
<th>Mastery Orientation</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Preseason</td>
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<td></td>
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CHANGES IN EGO

<table>
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CHANGES IN ANXIETY

![Graph showing changes in anxiety scores over time.]

ADDITIONAL OUTCOMES

- Trained coaches perceived as more task-involving
- Athletes of trained coaches reported greater task involvement in school
- No differences in win-loss records across coaches
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TAKE HOME MESSAGES

1. Recognise developmental changes in how children evaluate ability and ‘readiness’ for engagement in competition

2. While winning is important, the process of striving to win through effort is persistence is more important

3. The motivational climate established by the coach plays a major role in terms of producing an adaptive athlete that can functional effectively in sport