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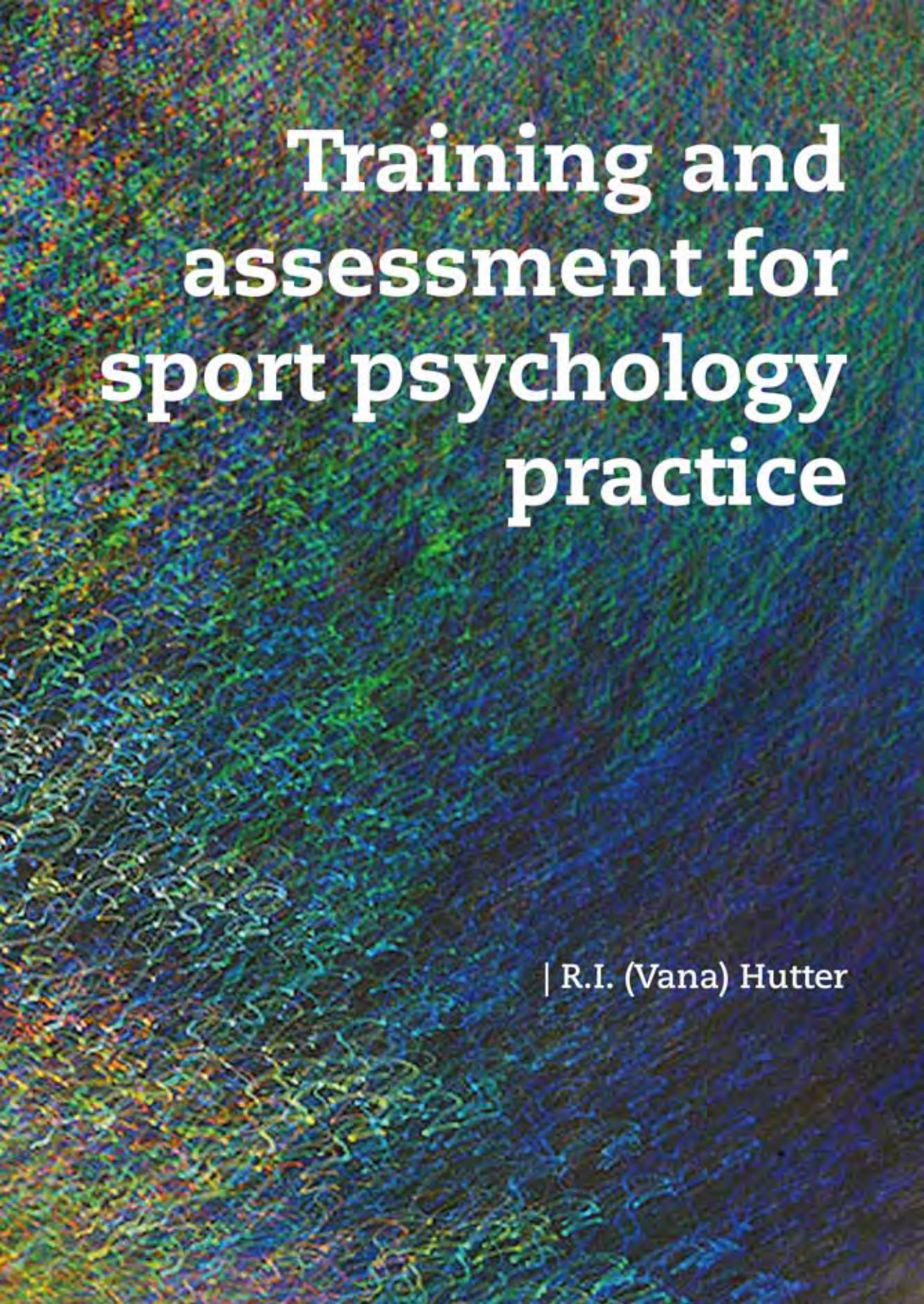
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Training and assessment for sport psychology practice

| R.I. (Vana) Hutter

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The work presented in this thesis was supported by:



ISBN: 9789491602566

Cover picture: Ball of confusion, by Bruce Gray (www.brucegray.com)

Printed by: Printservice Ede

VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT

TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT FOR SPORT PSYCHOLOGY PRACTICE

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

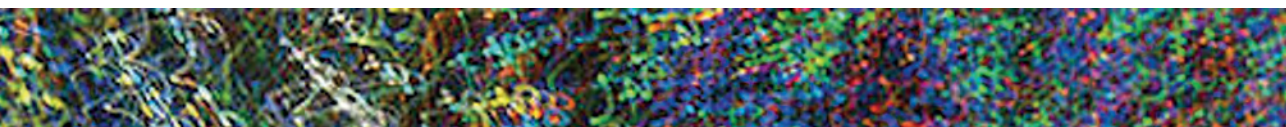
ter verkrijging van de graad Doctor aan
de Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam,
op gezag van de rector magnificus
prof.dr. V. Subramaniam,
in het openbaar te verdedigen
ten overstaan van de promotiecommissie
van de Faculteit der Gedrags- en Bewegingswetenschappen
op vrijdag 20 mei 2016 om 11.45 uur
in de aula van de universiteit,
De Boelelaan 1105

door
Rebecca Ivana Hutter
geboren te Castricum

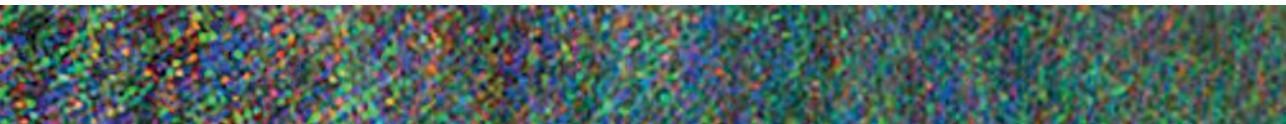
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Chapter 1. **Introduction**



Introduction

Sport psychology practice is coming of age: It is evolving towards an established and well respected professional discipline in the world of sports (e.g., Bach, 2015; Cropley, Hanton, Miles, & Niven, 2010; Haberl & Peterson, 2006). This is reflected in improved acceptance of sport psychology services by athletes, coaches, and other stakeholders; by a growing evidence base of sport psychological theories and interventions; and by an increase in training programs and aspiring professionals. However, important hurdles remain to be taken in the development of sport psychology towards a fully established field of service delivery in sports.

The issue that has been highlighted most as hindering advancement of sport psychology practice is that of defining the profession (e.g., Aoyagi, Portenga, Poczwadowski, Cohen, & Statler, 2012; Cropley et al., 2010; Wylleman, Harwood, Elbe, Reints, & de Caluwé, 2009). Although different definitions of sport psychology in general are available, “most of the ‘standard’ definitions are very broad, vague, and more focused on what sport psychologists research, instead of what they do. While these definitions may be appropriate for the discipline of sport psychology, they are impractical, less relevant, and potentially misleading when applied to the practice and profession of sport psychology” (Practice Committee, American Psychological Association [APA], Division 47, Exercise and Sport Psychology, 2011, p. 5).

Different authors have made suggestions to resolve the issue of defining applied sport psychology (ASP) or sport psychology practice. Aoyagi et al. (2012) advocated the use of the term *performance psychology*, to underline the focus of sport psychology practitioners on sport performance, and thus separate their work from psychologists merely working with athlete-clients. Aoyagi et al. consequently posited that: “performance psychology is the study and application of psychological principles of human performance to help people consistently perform in the upper range of their capabilities and more thoroughly enjoy the performance process.” (p. 36, see also Practice Committee, Division 47, Exercise and Sport Psychology, APA, 2011, p. 9). Alternatively, Cropley, Miles, Hanton, and Niven (2007) attempted to define effective practice in sport psychology: “Effective practice in applied sport psychology concerns meeting the needs of the client(s). Effective practice is therefore a process where, (a) a working alliance is developed between client(s) and practitioner, (b) clients goals are clear and agreed by all stakeholders, (c) appropriate evidence-based interventions are undertaken to achieve goals, and (d) goals are achieved or reformulated. Honest evaluation and reflection on the process then occurs to inform future practice, which requires the consultant to pro-actively seek sincere feedback.” (p. 527). In an attempt to define the field, Anderson, Miles, Mahoney, and Robinson (2002) stated that: “The general field of applied sport psychology is principally concerned with the application

of theories, principles, and techniques from psychology to induce psycho-behavioral change in athletes to enhance performance, the quality of the sport experience, and the personal growth of the athlete.” (p. 434). When we use the terms sport psychology practice or ASP in this thesis, we refer to the type of services captured by the latter definition.

A second important challenge for sport psychology practice is concerned with the training and education of practitioners. One might argue that education for practice will suffer, just as practice itself, from the lack of a clear definition of sport psychology practice. Indeed, the Practice Committee of APA, Division 47 (2011) asserted that: “without a clear definition of the profession of sport psychology, there cannot be a clear training model for the profession.” (p. 5). Against this backdrop, it is not really surprising that there are currently no established, generally accepted models for training and education of sport psychology practitioners (e.g., Etzel & Watson II, 2006; Kontos & Feltz, 2008; Morris, Alfermann, Lintunen, & Hall, 2003). There is a large variety of training models in place, and with the growing number of graduate programs (Burke, Sachs, & Schweighardt, 2015; Fitzpatrick, Monda, & Wooding, 2015), this variety may even be expanding. It has been questioned whether these different models can be trusted to deliver adequately trained professionals for the field (e.g., Practice Committee, APA, Division 47, Exercise and Sport Psychology, 2011; Tod & Lavallee, 2011).

Furthermore, relatively little is known about learning for sport psychology practice. Regardless of the training model of choice, training and education for the field should be informed by an understanding of learning and professional development of (future) practitioners. Therefore the aim of the current thesis is to gain more insight into training and education for sport psychology practice. Specifically, the aim is to explore existing education, to gain insight into what future practitioners have to learn, how they learn, and how to assess whether and what they have learned. Answers to these questions can contribute to high quality training and assessment in education for sport psychology practice.

The Status Quo on Education and Training for ASP

Researchers, educators, and practitioners have only recently started to delve into learning and professional development for ASP. Important progress is currently being made in charting relevant competencies for sport psychology practice. Fletcher and Maher (2013) provided an overview of the competencies outlined by the worlds’ leading sport psychology associations such as ISSP, APA Division 47, and AASP. These outlines include knowledge competencies (e.g., knowledge of developmental and social issues [APA, 2005]), skills (e.g., performance enhancement techniques [Tenenbaum, Lidor, & Papaianou, 2003]), and attitudes (e.g., respecting athletes’

beliefs and values [Ward, Sandstedt, Cox, & Beck, 2005]). However, the competency profiles discussed are far from complete; as of yet they are inadequately described and defined, and important competencies are lacking (e.g., Fletcher & Maher, 2013). Moreover, there has been critique on a competency-based approach as the way to go forward with the training of sport psychology practitioners. That is, Collins, Burke, Martindale, and Cruickshank (2014) made a compelling case for an expertise-focused approach to professional development, as opposed to a competency-based approach, to better capture the complex nature of the profession. Nonetheless, progress on conceptualizations of competencies may help to understand and define competence for sport psychology practice.

Competencies and an adequate definition of competent practice provide us with the intended *endpoint(s)* of training and professional development in sport psychology. For the advancement of training in ASP, it is also essential to look at the *process*. Tod (2007) described the “long and winding road” of maturation of sport psychology practitioners from a lay helper, through the phases of beginning student, advanced student, and novice professional, to experienced professional. These phases present different challenges and may require different tasks and activities for further development and learning. The body of literature on tasks and activities that may be helpful on this developmental path is growing and broadening. Historically, supervision and (supervised) internships have received most attention in the sport psychology literature; as a result the importance of supervision for professional development has been well established (e.g., Cropley et al., 2010; Fitzpatrick et al., 2015; Tashman, 2010). Moreover, Andersen, Van Raalte, and Brewer (1994) have outlined the skills that sport psychology supervisors require. Different models of supervision, such as cognitive-behavioural, psychodynamic or phenomenological models, and their application to sport psychology have been described (e.g., Van Raalte & Andersen, 2000). Recurrent issues in sport psychology supervision have been discussed, including exploitation tendencies, personal issues, or narcissistic traits of supervisees, as well as transference and countertransference processes in practice and supervision (e.g., Andersen, Van Raalte, & Brewer, 2000; Andersen & Williams-Rice, 1996). The aforementioned literature originates from the supervisor’s side of the supervision process. The experiences of supervisees form an insightful addition (e.g., Foltz et al., 2015; Holt & Strean, 2001; Tammen, 2000; Tonn & Harmison, 2004). From supervisees’ accounts it transpires that initiating (supervised) internships is often a daunting experience, characterized by a combination of anxiety and excitement, and that reflective practice coupled to actual practical work helps trainees progress.

More recently, the scope has been broadened from supervision to other activities and tasks that constitute training and professional development. Tod and

colleagues have studied learning experiences of trainee sport psychologists during and after an ASP module (Owton, Bond, & Tod, 2014), during an ASP training program (e.g., Tod, Andersen, & Marchant, 2009; Tod, Marchant, & Andersen, 2007), and following initial training (e.g., Tod, Andersen, & Marchant, 2011; Tod & Bond, 2010). From this body of research, several useful learning experiences emerged. These included: practical experience, live demonstrations by experts, and interactions with peers and training staff. Stambulova and Johnson (2010) analyzed the lessons learned by students in their ASP training program. Their results confirmed the important role of reflections on the practical experiences for professional growth. Importantly, they also noted that analyzing the lessons learned by their students provided them (as educators) with richer and more useful information about their course than the information obtained through standard evaluation.

Positioning the Content of the Thesis: Constructive Alignment

Educational sciences offer different theories and models to understand learning, education, and instruction. Such theories or models help frame the available knowledge on training and professional development in ASP, and thus allow identification of gaps in current knowledge and understanding. A particularly useful conceptual framework, which will be adopted to structure the research presented in this thesis, is that of *Constructive alignment* (e.g., Biggs, 1996; Biggs & Tang, 2011). Constructive alignment is a simple, contemporary model for the design of learning, and stresses the interrelations between learning outcomes, teaching/learning activities and assessments (see Figure 1).

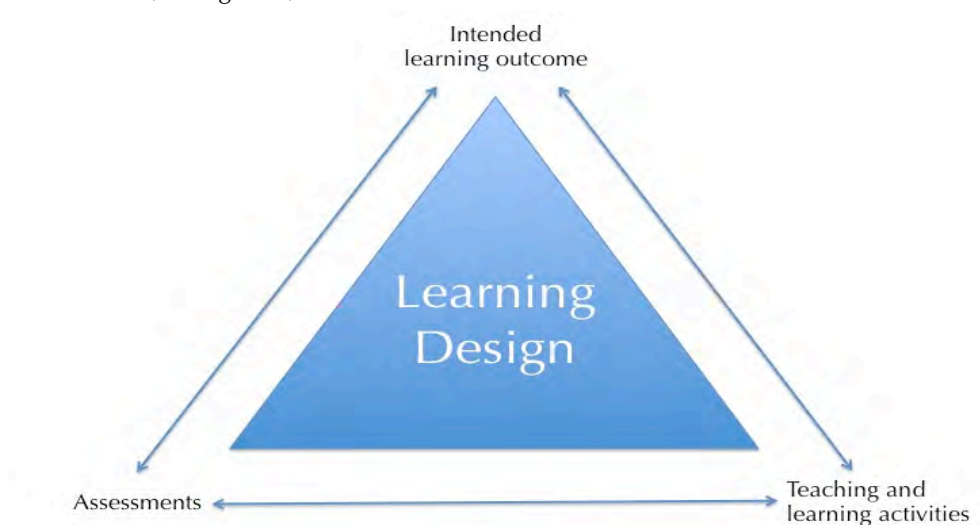


Figure 1. Learning design according to constructive alignment (adapted from Biggs en Tang, 2011).

The term constructive alignment consists of two elements, *constructive* and *alignment*. The term constructive refers to the constructivist view on learning that underpins the model. Constructivism places the learner in an active, central role in the creation of meaning and construction of knowledge. Alignment refers to the premise that learning activities and assessment regimens should be aligned with the intended learning outcomes and with each other. According to Biggs and Tang (2011) constructive alignment “emphasizes what students have to do to construct knowledge, which in turn suggests the sorts of learning activities that teachers need to encourage in order to lead students to achieve the desired outcomes.” (p. 22). They further aptly note that constructive alignment “brings teaching and learning closer together, even if in English we don’t have a single word for it.” (p. 74).

In the current thesis the aim is not to test, or propose, constructive alignment as a methodology to design training for ASP. Instead, the model (specifically the vertices learning outcomes, learning experiences, and assessment, and the edges between them) is used to position the separate studies in a unified context, and to help the reader understand the interrelations between them.

In Chapter 2 we (Hutter, van der Zande, Rosier, & Wylleman, in press) will present the training routes towards ASP expertise that are currently available in Europe. The study provided insight into what (kind of) educational programs are available, how they are organized, and where they are located. Moreover, the study identified a network of experts on ASP education. The research and experiences presented in the other chapters of the thesis took place at one particular program, namely the post-masters program in applied sport psychology, at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. The specific context of this program is described in the various chapters.

In Chapter 3, we (Hutter, Oldenhof-Veldman, & Oudejans, 2015) investigated what trainee sport psychologists want to learn in supervision. This study can be positioned at the top vertex of the constructive alignment triangle in Figure 1. The themes that emerged in this study illustrate the challenges that trainees/novice consultants encounter when they start actual sport psychology practice. Sport psychologists should become proficient at handling these challenges before they start working independently from a supervisor. The themes in the study can thus be seen as (part of) intended learning outcomes for the training of sport psychology practitioners. In Chapter 4 we (Hutter, Oldenhof-Veldman, Pijpers, & Oudejans, conditionally accepted) relate learning experiences to the themes from Chapter 3. Chapter 4 relates to the lower right corner of the triangle (teaching and learning activities) in that it identifies learning experiences that were found helpful by novice consultants in sport psychology. More in particular, the study addresses the edge of the triangle between learning activities and intended learning outcomes by exploring the question which

learning experiences contribute to which learning outcome(s).

Chapter 5 addresses the left corner of the triangle, that is, the issue of assessment. We (Hutter, Pijpers, & Oudejans, 2016) examined the structured case presentation assessment method as an alternative to the examination of written reports only. The study was fed by some of the issues described in Chapter 6, and was an important step in the action research we undertook at the post-masters program to improve our assessment. The full account of the action research partly overlaps with the content of Chapter 5 and 6 and is therefore included as an Appendix to the thesis. In the Appendix we (Hutter, Pijpers, & Oudejans, in press) critically discuss our experiences and actions in light of the literature on assessment of competence. Moreover, I hope that the Appendix illustrates the practical value of action research as a systematic method to investigate and implement change.

Chapters 6 and 7 (Hutter, 2014; Hutter & de Bruin, 2016) zoom in on the specific teaching/learning activity of supervision, and can as such be positioned in the right corner of the triangle in Figure 1. Chapters 6 and 7 are narrative accounts of my / our experiences in developing and providing supervision. In Chapter 6 I look back on the process of designing supervision from scratch, and share the lessons I learned in developing supervision as part of a post-master program in ASP. In Chapter 7, Karin de Bruin and I reflect on the challenges we experienced in educating/supervising the current generation of trainees, the so-called Millennials.

Collectively, the chapters aspire to shed light on all relevant aspects of training in ASP –learning outcomes, learning activities (learning experiences in general and supervision specifically), and assessment –, and to provide a starting point for exploring the relations among them. In this manner, the work presented in this thesis seeks to contribute to the advancement of training and assessment for sport psychology practice.



Chapter 2. **Education and Training in the Field of Applied Sport Psychology in Europe**



Hutter, R.I. (V.), van der Zande, J., Rosier, N., & Wylleman, P. (in press).
Education and training in the field of applied sport psychology in Europe.
International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology.

Education and Training in the Field of Applied Sport Psychology in Europe

Abstract

Applied sport psychology¹ (ASP) service delivery rests on adequate training in ASP. To enhance future quality of ASP, attention should be drawn to education in the field. We examined programs and courses that lead to applied sport psychology (ASP) expertise in Europe and explored the possibility and objectives of a network of educators in ASP. Data were collected through a survey ($N = 59$; 30 European countries, 35 ASP education programs) and analyzed using descriptive statistics and content analysis. An overview of education in ASP in Europe is presented and discussed in terms of entry, structure, and completion of programs and courses. In addition, perceived quality of programs and a network for educators in ASP are discussed.

Findings illustrate that education in ASP is available in most European countries, but programs and courses vary widely in terms of level, size, and applied focus. Educators in ASP are interested in interacting, mainly with the objectives to form a network, collaborate, and exchange (e.g., knowledge, staff, students, experiences, quality standard).

Keywords: educational programs, applied sport psychology education, network, sport psychology educators, Europe

¹ The definition of 'applied sport psychology' has been topic of debate in the literature (see e.g., Wylleman et al., 2009). In the current study we consider education in applied sport psychology to refer to programs and courses that provide students and professionals with knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for the professional practice of sport psychology. We see the practice of sport psychology as "principally concerned with the application of theories, principles, and techniques from psychology to induce psycho-behavioural change in athletes to enhance performance, the quality of the sport experience, and the personal growth of the athlete" (Vealey, 1994; Williams & Straub, 1993, as cited in Anderson, Miles, Mahoney & Robinson, 2002, p. 434). Education in applied sport psychology does, in the current study, not refer to educational sport psychology services for athletes, coaches, teams, etcetera.

Education and Training in Applied Sport Psychology in Europe
Education in applied sport psychology (ASP) forms the bedrock of the quality of ASP service delivery. To further enhance the level of service delivery, education in ASP should be of the highest possible quality and widely available to students and professionals in the field.

The interest in ASP education by prospective students seems to increase and generally speaking, international mobility of students is a growing trend (e.g., Altbach & Teichler, 2001; Lasanowski & Verbik, 2007; Rodríguez González, Bustillo Mesanza, & Mariel, 2010). The interest in the European Master Program in Sport and Exercise Psychology (EMSEP; Strengel, in Hutter, 2012; Hatzigeorgiadis, in Sanchez, 2011) illustrates that this internationalization trend also applies to sport psychology students. Therefore, students who want to pursue a career in ASP would benefit from an international overview of training and education in their field of interest. For Anglo-Saxon countries, such an overview exists in the form of a directory of graduate programs in ASP, regularly compiled by AASP (e.g., Sachs, Burke & Schweighardt, 2011). For most other countries, and specifically the European context, no overview of training and education is available.

In the recent past, attempts have been made to identify education in the field of ASP globally (Morris, et al, 2003), and in Europe (Wylleman et al., 2009). Wylleman and colleagues concluded that, while information on several ASP-related educational programs in Europe is available, a detailed overview and description (e.g., organising institute, content, duration, eligibility) of programs en route to ASP practice are lacking. Wylleman et al. suggested that FEPSAC, as the leading organisation for sport psychology in Europe, should develop initiatives to enable guidelines for high quality education, take the lead in analysing ASP education programs throughout Europe, and develop or support initiatives in ASP education. They felt these steps to be of particular importance for the European context, as research on ASP practitioners and their backgrounds is scant in Europe. The current study was undertaken under the patronage of FEPSAC and largely follows the recommendations of Wylleman et al.

Specialised education in ASP is relatively young. Therefore educators are still learning how to best prepare students for practice. One way to further enhance our knowledge of effective teaching in ASP would be to tap into experiential knowledge of educators. Tod, et al. (2007) interviewed both students and staff about learning experiences that they found to be helpful for professional development. Client interactions, relationships among teaching staff, supervisors and students and specific events outside of the training programs were found to aid students in developing service-delivery competence. Keegan (2010) gives a personal report of how he teaches consulting philosophies to ASP students and shares his use of video material, role-

playing, reflective practice and written assignments. These two examples illustrate that teachers, program managers, supervisors and other educators carry a wealth of experiences and histories of trial and error with them. When these 'experts through experience' are brought together to exchange their successes, mistakes, experiences and knowledge, they can learn about effective teaching from peers, and become inspired to experiment with new methods and apply new insights. Thus, we suggest that a network for educators in ASP should be established.

The study aims to provide an overview of education and training for ASP expertise in Europe. The resulting overview of available education may serve prospective students and professionals; and it provides a basis for future cooperation between educators, quality assessment and management in education, and initiatives for continued professional development. In the study, many experts on education in ASP were contacted and possibilities for a network were explored. The study, as such, marks the start of the network for Educators in Appled Sport psychology (the EASY network), from which education in ASP is hoped to benefit.

Method

A survey was designed to collect information about available ASP education programs. In an effort to contact as many prospective respondents as possible, we employed an extensive approach in contacting educators in applied sport psychology. The following institutes, associations, or persons were contacted by e-mail ($N = 242$): group-members of the European Federation of Sport Psychology (FEPSAC; $n = 22$), students of EMSEP ($n = 16$), national Olympic Committees ($n = 47$), national psychology associations ($n = 35$), national psychology student associations ($n = 32$), contacts derived from the *World Sport Psychology Sourcebook 3rd edition* (Lidor, Morris, Bardaxoglu, & Becker, 2001; $n = 42$), and additional personal contacts of the authors ($n = 48$). In addition, we posted announcements on the FEPSAC website and on the Facebook page of the European Network of Young Specialists in Sport Psychology (ENYSSP). A total of 96 prospective network members were identified, located in 36 different countries in Europe. A total of 72 of the prospective network members confirmed their involvement, interest, and/or expertise in ASP education and were sent the survey.

Fifty-nine individuals (82% response of the 72 included participants) from 30 different countries completed the survey. All respondents confirmed to be (one of the) key-persons in education in their respective country. Mostly respondents were affiliated to universities, national federations, or both. The vast majority of respondents are known to be strongly linked to the practice of sport psychology, that is, they are ASP practitioners and/or ASP researchers.

Respondents were asked if, and how, they would be interested to participate in

a network for educators in ASP. Specifically respondents were asked about their objectives for, and expectations of, such a network, about issues they would like to discuss with colleagues, and about ways they could contribute to the network.

A total of 42 respondents reported that an educational program in ASP exists in their country, and were asked in the survey to provide information on the program concerning: admittance of foreign students, language of teaching, mode of study, duration, attainment level, acknowledgement after graduation, tuition fees, ratio theoretical versus practical education, quality assurance, entry requirements, maximum number of students, internships, study load, supervision, strong points of the program, points to be improved, emphasis on specific topics, and miscellaneous suggestions or remarks (for a copy of the survey, see Appendix A). We thus collected information on a total of 35 programs. In Appendix B the name of the programs, and the country and organization or institute in which they reside, are provided (see Appendix B).

Data from the survey were analyzed quantitatively (i.e., by frequency) to identify common characteristics of ASP education in Europe and qualitatively (i.e., content-analysis of open-ended questions) to identify strong and weaker points of programs and to obtain information on the need for a network for educators. The majority of the survey questions were multiple choice questions. Other questions were open-ended, the data from these questions consisted of numbers (maximum number of students and study load) or were assigned to categories by the authors (answer categories of entry requirements were bachelor / master / other, combined with sport science / psychology / both, answer categories for both internship and supervision were yes / no). Frequencies of the thus obtained ordinal and nominal data were analysed, to identify common characteristics of ASP education in Europe.

The questions regarding the strong points, points to be improved, and the network were open-ended and allowed for elaborate answers. Citations were derived from the answers of the respondents to the open-ended questions and served as data-units in the analysis; Each citation consists of an independently interpretable and meaningful unit. In some cases the citation consisted of a complete answer, in other cases the answers were split into multiple citations. This was done when an answer contained more than one meaningful unit and addressed more than one issue. As an example, when a respondent listed three strong points of their program, this answer was split into three citations, each listing one strong point of the program. The citations were analysed by the third author using Nvivo 10 software. The third author coded the citations using fine meshed open coding. Next, the structure of open codes and belonging citations was re-assessed by the first and third author together and codes revised and combined. Next, codes and citations were compared for similarities and differences, and overarching themes formed (axial coding). The resulting themes and

codes were again discussed with the first author, and, independently checked by the second author. The number of citations within the thus obtained themes and codes are used to describe common strong and weak points of educational programs in Europe, and to describe common objectives and input for the network.

The information on the programs, collected from the survey, was sent back to the respondents to check accuracy of the interpretation of the survey data. The information on 26 (74%) of the reported programs was confirmed by the respondents, confirmation of the remaining nine programs was not received.

Results and Conclusion

The aim of the study is to provide an overview of education and training for ASP expertise in Europe. Information was gathered on 35 different programs. Details of the surveyed programs are presented in Table 1. The results will be discussed in terms of entry, structure, completion and perceived quality of programs; a network for educators in ASP will be discussed; followed by a discussion of limitations of the study, practical implications, and future directions.

Overview of ASP Educational Programs

Entering Programs. Availability of education is limited to a certain extent, in terms of both existence of programs and intake of programs. First, in some European countries, ASP education is not available; students who want to obtain ASP education need to look abroad. Most ($n = 30$; 86%) programs accept foreign students. However, for the majority of these programs ($n = 22$), the student would have to speak the local language, because teaching is not (fully) in English. Zhang and Mi (2010) point out that “certain academic disciplines, most notably those that are linguistically demanding, may be more sensitive to language proficiency, or proficiency in language skills” (p. 373). It seems fair to say that the discipline of ASP is linguistically very demanding, among other things due to the key role of rapport and communication in ASP service delivery. The demands on the language proficiency of international students are therefore high.

Almost all ($n = 32$; 91%) programs have a maximum number of participants they admit, mostly set at 15 to 25 students. Whether this limited intake of students is a good or a bad thing depends on the perspective taken. From an educational point of view, small groups of students are desirable, or even necessary, to provide adequate training of skills and attitudes (whereas the transfer of knowledge might be less bound to student numbers). From an economical standpoint, the limited labor market for ASP practitioners may also advocate limited numbers of students to be admitted. However, the number of aspiring ASP students increases and the limited intake of students could form an obstacle for students to obtain their desired education. Moreover, as long as evidence-based selection criteria for ASP students are lacking, the field is at risk of

educating the “wrong” students and missing out on talented ASP students (for a discussion on prerequisites of prospective students versus trainable competencies in ASP, see Fletcher & Maher, 2013).

The range of tuition fees for educational programs in ASP is wide. Some programs do not charge a tuition fee at all, while the tuition fee of other programs varies from less than €1,000, to more than €15,000. Especially the higher tuition fees may create a barrier for ASP education for some students. Fortunately, a number of European educational programs ($n = 8$; 23%) are free of tuition, providing affordable routes towards ASP practice.

The majority of programs ($n = 21$; 60%) can be entered with a bachelor degree: 12 with a bachelor degree in either sport science or psychology, four in sport science, four in psychology². Six (17%) programs require a master degree: three of these demand a master degree in psychology; three can be entered with a master degree in sport science as well. Other entry requirements were reported for eight (23%) programs (e.g., a doctorate, an undergraduate degree of a BPS approved program, additional demands, specific courses, or respondents reported different entry requirements for different levels in the program). The results show a variety in type of programs and corresponding target groups for education. Programs that can be entered with a bachelor degree could be considered basic, foundational education in sport psychology, whereas programs and courses that require a master degree or have specific entry requirements offer specialization in sport psychology, beyond the foundational level. In addition, there was one 4 ECTS program that caters for continued professional development, the PE4EP. The course requires three to five years working experience as an applied sport psychologist or as an elite coach. The importance of continued professional development in sport psychology seems to becoming more and more acknowledged in the field of sport psychology. Therefore educational initiatives to support such continued learning should be encouraged.

The results indicate that over half of the programs accept students from both sport sciences and psychology (i.e., $n = 15$ out of 27 programs that specify a bachelor or master degree as entry requirement). This illustrates that both multi- and mono-disciplinary entry policies are applied. The kind of education background that is required to enter programs links to the long-standing debate about appropriate educational backgrounds in sport psychology (e.g., Gardner, 1991; Silva, 1989; Taylor, 1994). More recently, Aoyagi, Czech, Portenga, Metzler, & Poczwardowski (2009) noticed an interdisciplinary trend in the design of ASP curricula. Aoyagi et al. refer mostly to the North-American situation, but the entry requirements in Europe in this study suggest a similar pattern of interdisciplinarity in ASP education.

² One program did not specify the type of bachelor degree required.

Program structure. The intensity of the ASP educational programs, in terms of study load and mode of study (part-time or full-time), varies widely. Some ‘programs’ appear to consist of only a single course or a few courses (2 to 11 European Credit Transfer System credits³ [ECTS]; $n = 6$; 17%). Most other reported education ($n = 25$; 71%) is more extensive, having a range in study load of 24 to 180 ECTS⁴. Programs of mid-range size (between 24 and 90 ECTS; $n = 13$; 37%) are mostly offered in part-time mode ($n = 9$). The bigger programs of 120 or 180 ECTS ($n = 12$; 34%) are usually offered in full-time mode ($n = 7$). The PE4EP program, the only program explicitly directed at continued professional development, has a study load of 4 ECTS.

Although all reported programs offer education in ASP, their applied focus varies. The reported ratio between applied education and theoretical education ranges from 30% applied:70% theoretical to 90% applied:10% theoretical. The fact that the lowest ratio reported was still 30 percent applied education strengthens our confidence that we have successfully contacted educators in applied sport psychology, as opposed to merely sport psychology researchers or educators of purely theoretical courses in sport psychology. In addition, the programs with these lower ratios have a large study load (i.e., over 60 EC). Even though the majority of teaching can be considered theoretical in these programs, due to the size of the programs the practical content in the program seems still substantial. Last, the programs with lower ratios applied versus theoretical education are mostly programs that can be entered with a Bachelor degree, supporting the perception of these programs as foundational education, as opposed to specialization or continued professional development education.

As can be inferred from Appendix B, the majority of programs and courses are positioned within university settings. Others are organized by other organizations, such as centers, companies or federations. The reported ratio between applied education and theoretical education seem mostly higher for education that is positioned with other organizations than universities.

The majority ($n = 23$; 66%) of programs include a practical internship: In 19 of these programs students receive formal supervision during their internship, four programs provide a practical internship that is not formally supervised. Yet one other program was reported to offer formal supervision, but no practical internship. In total, 12 programs (34%) do not provide a practical internship. Interestingly, there is no clear relation between offering a practical internship and the reported applied focus of programs: Some programs report a high degree of applied teaching but do not provide a practical internship, but other programs focus highly on theoretical teaching and do

³ 1 ECTS equals 25-30 hours of study, an academic year corresponds with 60 ECTS.

⁴ Three programs in the UK are either not credit bearing, or were not able to report a study load in ECTS.

include a practical internship.

Program completion. Different educational levels are obtained with the different programs. Attainment levels are, to a large extent, related to entry requirements. The most common path in ASP education in Europe is entry with a bachelor degree and graduating at master level ($n = 17$; 49%). Four programs that require a bachelor degree for entry lead to different attainment levels than master level (e.g., post-master level). For the few programs requiring a Master degree to enter ($n = 6$; 17%), the final attainment level is diverse. Three programs lead to a post-master level, one to a certificate, one to a qualification on master level, and one to a specific national post-degree. Of the remaining programs (with other entry requirements than a bachelor or master degree, $n = 8$), two programs are reported to lead to a PhD.

Apart from attainment level it is interesting to see whether graduates of the programs obtain recognition as ASP practitioners (e.g., licensure). Zaichkowsky and Perna (1996) have described the differences between accreditation, registration and licensing in ASP practice. Morris et al. (2003) criticized these definitions and descriptions, and also pointed out that some of these terms are used differently in different countries. Moreover, it is unclear whether respondents are familiar with the definitions by Zaichkowsky and Perna. In the survey diversity in terminology, corresponding usage and interpretation was anticipated. We therefore surveyed whether education program lead to some kind of official acknowledgement as sport psychology practitioners by governing bodies, as opposed to inquiring the exact type of acknowledgement (i.e., accreditation, licensure or registration). This is in line with studies differentiating between practitioners with, and practitioners without credentials (e.g., Lubker, Visek, Watson, Singpurwalla, 2012; Sanchez, Godin & De Zanet, 2005; Woolway & Harwood, 2015).

In fourteen programs included in the current study (40%) graduates obtain official acknowledgement as sport psychology practitioners. These findings seem to fit the reality in Europe as described by Sanchez et al. (2005) who concluded that ASP practitioners with and practitioners without credentials co-exist. Morris et al. (2003) concluded that certification or licensure of sport psychologists is not that common, and even rare when looking at certification or licensure by psychology related bodies. The results of the current survey suggest an increase in professional acknowledgement in comparison to the findings of Morris et al. Programs that want to establish accreditation, licensure or registration, were advised by Morris et al. to collaborate with national organizations in establishing an official recognized status for ASP practitioners.

Table 1. ASP education programs in Europe and accompanying information about entering programs, program structure and completion of programs.

Program	Entry requirements	Attainment level	Maximum amount of students admitted	Admittance of foreign students	Language of tuition	Tuition fee (€)	Quality assurance
Austria	MaBo	Cert	25	Yes	Local	€ 2,500 - 5,000	Yes
Belgium	MaPs	P-Ma	10	Yes	Local	€ 2,500 - 5,000	Yes
Croatia	BaPs	Ma	30	Yes	Local	< € 1,000	Yes
Czech Republic ¹	Other ^a	Other	25	Yes	English	No tuition fee	No
Czech Republic ²	Other ^a	Other	15 -20	Yes	English	No tuition fee	No
Denmark	BaSS	Ma	Varying	Yes	Local	No tuition fee	Yes
Finland	BaBo	Other	15	Yes	English	No tuition fee	Yes
France ¹	BaSS	Ma	20	Yes	Local	< € 1,000	Yes
France ²	BaSS	Ma	110	Yes	Local	< € 1,000	No
Germany ¹	BaBo	Ma	10	Yes	Local+ English	€ 1,000 - 2,500	Yes
Germany ²	BaBo	Other	12	Yes	Local	€ 2,500 - 5,000	Yes
Greece ¹	BaBo	Ma	15	Yes	English	€ 2,500 - 5,000	Yes
Greece ²	BaBo	Ma	2-4	No	Local	No tuition fee	Yes
Ireland	BaBo	Ma	20	Yes	Local is English	€ 2,500 - 5,000	Yes
Italy ¹	BaSS	Ba	30	Yes	Local	€ 1,000 - 2,500	Yes
Italy ²	BaPs	P-Ma	20	Yes	Local	€ 2,500 - 5,000	No
The Netherlands	MaBo	P-Ma	18	Yes	Local	€ 10,000 - 15,000	Yes
Norway	Other	PhD	Varying	Yes	Local+ English	No tuition fee	Yes
PE4EP	Other	Cert	15	Yes	English	€ 1,000 - 2,500	Yes
Poland ¹	MaPs	P-Ma	22	No	Local	€ 1,000 - 2,500	Yes
Poland ²	MaPs	Ma	No limit	No	Local	€ 2,500 - 5,000	Yes
Portugal ¹	BaBo	Ma	25	Yes	Local+ English	€ 1,000 - 2,500	Yes
Portugal ²	BaPs	P-Ma	20	Yes	English	€ 1,000 - 2,500	Yes
Romania	BaPs	Ma	20	Yes	Local	< € 1,000	Yes
Russia	Ba	Ma	15	Yes	Local	€ 5,000 - 10,000	Yes
Spain	BaBo	Ma	30	Yes	Local	€ 1,000 - 2,500	No
Sweden	BaBo	Ma	15	Yes	Local+ English	No tuition fee	Yes
Switzerland	MaBo	Other	25	No	Local+ English	€ 10,000 - 15,000	Yes
Turkey	BaBo	Ma	12	No	Local	No tuition fee	Yes
United Kingdom ¹	Other	P-Ma	75	Yes	Local is English	€ 5,000 - 10,000	Yes
United Kingdom ²	Other ^a	Ma	20	Yes	Local is English	€ 5,000 - 10,000	Yes
United Kingdom ³	Other ^a	P-Ma	400 ^b 20 ^c	Yes	Local is English	> €15,000	Yes
United Kingdom ⁴	Other ^a	PhD	15	Yes	Local is English	€ 2,500 - 5,000	Yes
United Kingdom ⁵	BaBo	Ma	160	Yes	Local is English	€ 5,000 - 10,000	Yes
United Kingdom ⁶	BaBo	Ma	25	Yes	Local is English	€ 5,000 - 10,000	Yes

Note. When more than one program is available in a country, the programs are numbered in superscript. BaSS = Bachelor degree in Sport Sciences, BaPs = Bachelor degree in Psychology, BaBo = Bachelor in either Psychology or Sport Sciences, MaPs = Master degree in Psychology, MaBo = Master degree in either Psychology or Sport Sciences, PT = part-time, FT = full-time, Cert = certificate, Ma = Master level, P-Ma = Post-master level.

Program	Study load (ECTS)	Study mode	Average duration (months)	Ratio practical and theoretical education (%)	Practical internship	Formal supervision	Acknowledgement as ASP practitioner
Austria	8	PT	6-12	90% :10%	Yes	Yes	Yes
Belgium		PT	18-24	70% :30%	Yes	Yes	No
Croatia	2	FT	0 - 6	70% :30%	No		No
Czech Republic ¹	3-6 ^b 4-8 ^c	both	12-18	50% :50%	No		No
Czech Republic ²	3-6 ^b 5 ^c	both	12-18	60% :40%	No		No
Denmark	120	FT	18-24		No		No
Finland	120	FT	18-24	40% :60%	Yes	Yes	No
France ¹	120	PT	18-24	40% :60%	Yes	No	No
France ²	60	FT	6-12	50% :50%	Yes	Yes	Yes
Germany ¹	120	FT	18-24	60% :40%	Yes	Yes	Yes
Germany ²	90	PT	6-12	90% :10%	No		Yes
Greece ¹	120	FT	18-24	40% :60%	Yes	Yes	No
Greece ²	120	FT	> 24	30% :70%	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ireland	90	FT	6-12	40% :60%	Yes	No	Yes
Italy ¹	24	PT	0 - 6	70% :30%	No		No
Italy ²	60	PT	6-12	40% :60%	Yes	Yes	No
The Netherlands	60	PT	> 24	80% :20%	Yes	Yes	Yes
Norway	180	FT	> 24	50% :50%	No		No
PE4EP	4	FT	0 - 6	60% :40%	No		Yes
Poland ¹	11	PT	12-18	60% :40%	Yes	Yes	Yes
Poland ²		FT	> 24	80% :20%	Yes	Yes	Yes
Portugal ¹	120	PT	18-24	40% :60%	Yes	Yes	No
Portugal ²	30	PT	0 - 6	70% :30%	Yes	Yes	No
Romania	120	FT	18-24	40% :60%	Yes	No	No
Russia	5	PT	18-24	50% :50%	Yes	Yes	Yes
Spain	30	both	0 - 6	50% :50%	Yes	Yes	No
Sweden	60	PT	> 24	60% :40%	Yes	Yes	Yes
Switzerland	30	PT	> 24	50% :50%	Yes	No	Yes
Turkey	60	PT	18-24	40% :60%	Yes	Yes	No
United Kingdom ¹		both	> 24	70% :30%	Yes	Yes	Yes
United Kingdom ²	180	PT	> 24	40% :60%	No		No
United Kingdom ³	20 ^b 40 ^c	both	> 24	40% :60%	No		No
United Kingdom ⁴	180	both	12-18	60% :40%	Yes	Yes	No
United Kingdom ⁵	120	both	6-12	50% :50%	No	Yes	No
United Kingdom ⁶		FT	12-18	30% :70%	No		No

Perceived quality of programs. Respondents were asked to reflect on strong points, and points to be improved of their program. The analysis of answers resulted in thirteen codes and nine themes of codes for reported strong point of programs. With regard to points of improvement of programs, fifteen codes and four themes of codes emerged. One respondent addressed a strong point and point to be improved in one citation (i.e., “Pure theoretical focus is both a positive point and a negative”). In Table 2 the codes and overarching themes of codes are outlined, and numbers of citations for each theme and code reported.

Table 2. Codes and themes relating to strong point of programs and points to be improved, as reported by respondents. Numbers indicate the number of citations in each code or theme.

Answer category	Themes	Codes
Strong points		Combination of theoretical and practical education (11)
	Applied focus (22)	Applied focus of a program (9)
		Applied seminars (2)
	Staff/educators (14)	Staff/educators (14)
	Internationalization (7)	Internationalization (7)
	Supervision (5)	Supervision (5)
	Education itself (4)	Education is evidence based (2)
		Emphasis on both sport and exercise psychology (2)
	Network or cooperation with partners (4)	Network or cooperation with partners (4)
	Participants (4)	Different education backgrounds of students (3)
		Interaction with students (1)
	Organization (3)	Organization (3)
	Set-up (3)	Set-up (3)
Points to be improved		Pure theoretical focus is both positive and negative (1)
		More lecture hours (3)
	Study load (9)	Longer duration of the program (1)
		Collective sessions (1)
		More practical work (3)
		More supervision (5)
	Specific components (7)	Improvement of way theoretical modules are taught (1)
		Research skills (1)
		Organizational issues (1)
		Accept only a number of students (1)
	Administrative issues (5)	Accredit a full program (1)
		Turning the program into licensing (1)
		Facilitating administration (1)
		Offer English language workshops (1)
	Internationalization (4)	Offer more courses in English (1)
		Integrated tuition fee policy for countries participating in EMSEP (2)

Quality assurance institutes can provide an expert and objective judgment of the quality of educational programs. UNESCO (2010) defines quality assurance as “the systematic review of educational programs to ensure that acceptable standards of education, scholarship and infrastructure are being maintained” (para. 1). Examples of quality assurance institutes for education are the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in the UK, and the joint Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organization (Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie [NVAO]) for Belgium and the Netherlands. The vast majority ($n = 30$; 86%) of the programs are reported to have a quality assurance institute that judges, and thereby guards, the quality of the program.

A Network of Educators in ASP (EASY-network)

In the study we explored the possibility and objectives of a network for educators in ASP. Respondents who indicated that there is currently no ASP education in their country ($n = 17$) were also included in this part of the study. These 17 respondents may not be experts on education in ASP, but they are able to provide information about the potential contribution of a network to countries where there is currently no ASP education.

Respondents ($N = 59$) were asked about their expectations of, and objectives for, a network. Most of the obtained citations⁵ related to ‘establishing a network and collaborations’ (46), ‘sharing information about ASP education’ (24), ‘enhancing education in ASP’ (19), ‘establishing European standards’ (9), and ‘ASP practice’ (34). Next, respondents were asked what kind of issues they would like to discuss with colleagues. Two discussion domains emerged from the answers: ASP education (41) and ASP practice (20). The ASP education issues can be categorised in ‘didactical issues’ (17), ‘content and structure of education’ (12), ‘networking and cooperation’ (6), and ‘accreditation and guidelines for ASP education’ (5). The citations that relate to ASP practice can be categorised in ‘issues concerning service delivery’ (9), ‘tools and methods in ASP practice’ (5) and ‘specific issues in sport’ (6). Last, we asked respondents how they could contribute to the network. Answers can be categorised as ‘networking and being an active member’ (12), ‘offering expertise in ASP education’ (15), ‘offering expertise in ASP practice’ (14), and ‘offering collaboration in research’ (5).

In instigating the study, we hoped that the overview and the resulting network would provide ASP educators with possibilities to learn and develop. Respondents seem to share this line of thinking: They frequently indicated that sharing and obtaining information, knowledge and experiences are their objectives for the network.

⁵ The numbers between parentheses refer to the amount of citations for each code or theme mentioned.

Moreover, respondents listed a wide range of issues they would like to discuss with colleagues, for example didactical issues or the guidance of trainees. The reported 'issues to discuss' form an inspiring draft for the agenda of future meetings and exchanges between members of the EASY network. Overall, the results indicate that educators in ASP are interested in networking, deepening and/or broadening their expertise and to contribute to the competence of colleagues.

Limitations of the Study

Efforts were made to obtain information from all European countries, and to contact as many people involved in ASP education in Europe as possible. Per program, and often even per country, only a relatively small number of people are able to provide information on ASP education. The pool of prospective participants was therefore small and thus made it very difficult to cross-validate the obtained information. This may have resulted in a possible bias of the results. To minimize the threat of providing incorrect information, we have sent the respondents an excerpt of Table 1 with the information we obtained from their responses. The information was then confirmed or corrected by the majority of the respondents (the information provided in Table 1 is confirmed by one or more respondents for 74% of the programs, information for which confirmation was not received is reported in italics).

It should be kept in mind that respondents provided information on the programs they were themselves involved in. This is thought to have resulted in accurate information on the characteristics of the programs, but may have biased the reflections on strong points of programs, and points to be improved.

The inclusive approach of the study dictates that the survey allows for a wide diversity of education systems, terminology, organizing institutions, etc. Open-ended questions were included in the survey, and too strict definitions avoided in the questions and answers options. A "one-size-fits-all" list of answer options would fail to reflect the situation of each program accurately. The benefit of the chosen approach is that information is not "lost" because respondents drop out when the survey is not applicable to their education context. As a downside, however, respondents may have had different understandings of concepts surveyed. For example, the meaning of the "applied" in ASP may have varied between respondents.

Despite the broad, inclusive approach of the survey, information was gathered mainly from university based programs. Some programs that are positioned outside university (e.g., in collaboration with federations or Olympic committees, or at privately owned companies) were included, but the programs contacted are mostly at graduate and post-graduate level. The only exception is the PE4EP program, which is explicitly directed at on-going training for professionals. Other continued professional development programs, or in-service training courses may exist, but were not included.

It could be that (potential) respondents may have understood that the survey asked about university degree programmes, because of the nature of the questions, and, consequently, shorter in-service training courses were not reported.

Practical Implications

Fletcher and Maher (2013) offer a critical review of the current state of competency literature in ASP and conclude that “if applied sport psychology is to become an accountable field, it must gain a better understanding of competence and its implications for the training and development of practitioners” (p. 266). It is hoped that communications on ASP-related education, such as this study, will further develop insight in training and education in ASP, form a first step towards transparency and comparability, enhance networking with all relevant educators in the near future, and contribute to the visibility and identity of sport psychology as a professional discipline. The provided overview of educational programs in ASP can help prospective students locate programs and obtain information.

Moreover the overview may help educators locate and contact colleagues. Metaphorically speaking, it is in the DNA of the professional fields of both sport psychology and education to look for room for improvement. When educators become more knowledgeable and competent, the quality and design of the education they provide is thought to develop accordingly. The overview and the initiated network may provide professionals with possibilities to learn and grow, by bringing together ‘experts by experience’. Respondents shared this line of thinking; they frequently indicated that they want to share and obtain information, knowledge and experiences. Moreover, respondents list a wide range of issues they would like to discuss with colleagues, such as didactical issues or the guidance of trainees. Overall, the results show that educators in ASP are interested in deepening and/or broadening their expertise and contribute to the expertise of colleagues.

Future Directions

While the interest of students in sport psychology education in general, and in ASP practice in particular, is increasing, (substantial) education in ASP is not yet available in all European countries. Availability of ASP education can be enhanced by increasing the amount of educational programs in ASP. This would especially be valuable in countries or regions where there is currently no education in ASP. Responses to the survey suggest that some respondents are contemplating to start an ASP educational program. They indicated that they would appreciate help in doing so, for instance from experienced colleagues and through international mentoring or support. Respondents with experience in ASP programs offered to share their expertise on education, or even help with the set-up of new programs. This illustrates how cooperation may lead to a better coverage of ASP education throughout Europe. It also

illustrates the potential power of the network, when the needs of some parties are matched by supply from others.

Many respondents mentioned they would like to exchange staff and students between programs. This objective can be supported by The Erasmus+ mobility fund. This fund offers grants for both student and teacher mobility between universities (see e.g., http://ec.europa.eu/education/opportunities/higher-education/staff_en.htm and http://ec.europa.eu/education/opportunities/higher-education/study-mobility_en.htm). Other desired objectives of the network may be harder to achieve. Respondents suggested to work towards European standards for either ASP education or ASP practice. Accreditation of high quality educational programs, or establishment of quality standards, could provide a strong impulse for quality advancement in ASP education. However, to agree on standards or criteria for ASP education that do justice to the specific qualities of all programs, is not an easy task. The overview of educational pathways shows similarities between programs, but it is also clear that ASP programs in Europe are far from uniform. Due to contextual, educational and cultural differences, international uniformity in ASP education may not be feasible, nor desirable. Attempts should be made, however, to make comparison between programs easier. The current study provides a first step in this process by giving an overview of education pathways and indicating similarities and differences. In general, significant progress has been made to make national education systems more transparent and comparable in Europe, as a result of the Bologna declaration (see e.g., Krejsler, Olsson & Petersson, 2012). The objective of the Bologna declaration was not to make education uniform, but to adopt a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, to establish a system of credits, and to eliminate obstacles for free mobility of staff and students (van der Wende, 2000). It seems fruitful to adopt this approach in the further international development of ASP education as well.

Quality of ASP education could be enhanced and monitored through cooperation between programs. First, programs could mutually inspect each other's quality. For example, educators could consider peer review of teaching methods, assessment methods, quality assurance systems in supervision, etcetera. Although not suggested by the respondents, another step we propose to consider, based on the findings of the study, is to share the expert judgments of programs. Almost all educational programs included in the study have a system of quality assurance in place; there are independent institutes involved to provide an expert judgment of the quality of the program. Such an exchange can provide educators with valuable information on good practices of other institutions. Moreover, when judgments are shared, a set of shared quality measures might evolve from these expert judgments, which may provide a first basis for international accreditation standards.

The first practical challenges from here on are to further disseminate the available overview and information, to expand both the information and the network, and to keep the available detailed information up to date. Next, the network needs a pro-active contribution of network members and an infrastructure for interaction to provide added value for ASP education and educators. In this process, FEPSAC should ensure a strong supporting influence (in line with Seiler & Wylleman, 2009; Wylleman et al., 2009). In addition, it would be worthwhile to undertake a similar initiative to explore which continued professional development education or in-service training courses are available. The only program reported in the current study is that of PE4EP, which has a close alliance with FEPSAC. Future efforts could additionally aim at providing an overview of more continued professional development programs and in-service training possibilities.

Conclusion

We provided information on ASP education programs in Europe. This information is hoped to serve prospective students who are looking for education routes to obtain ASP expertise. In the near future we will disseminate this information further, preferably also online, and will take care of keeping the information as up to date as possible. If educators wish to have information on their program included in our overview, or want to become involved in the EASY network, they are invited to contact the first author.

*Appendix A. Content of survey sent to respondents***Information respondent**

Name:

Country:

Is there any education in applied sport psychology in your country? Yes/No

General information

What is the name of your organization/institute?

What is the name of the educational program in the native language?

What is the name of the educational program in English?

What is the address of your organization/institute?

Organizational aspects of the educational program

What are the entry requirements? *For example a bachelor degree in psychology or a master degree in sport science and other requirements.

What is the maximum amount of students admitted to the program?

Can foreign students be admitted to the program? Yes/No

What is the language of instruction? English/Other

What is the study load of the program (in European Credits (EC))?

What is the study mode?

- ☐ Full-time
- ☐ Part-time
- ☐ Other

What is the (average) duration of the program?

- ☐ 0 - 6 months
- ☐ 6 - 12 months
- ☐ 12 - 18 months
- ☐ 18 - 24 months

More than 24 months

What is the final attainment level?

- ☐ Bachelor
- ☐ Master
- ☐ Post-master
- ☐ PhD
- ☐ Other

Are the graduates of the program acknowledged as applied sport psychologists?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes, accredited applied sport psychologist

- ☐ Yes, licensed applied sport psychologist
- ☐ Yes, registered applied sport psychologist
- ☐ Other

How much is the tuition fee? * For the total program

- ☐ There is no tuition fee
- ☐ Less than € 1000,-
- ☐ Between € 1000,- and € 2500,-
- ☐ Between € 2500,- and € 5000,-
- ☐ Between € 5000,- and € 10000,-
- ☐ Between € 10000,- and € 15000,-
- ☐ More than €15000,-

Educational Program

How would you describe the distribution between practical and theoretical education?

Does the program contain a practical internship?

If yes, how many hours does the practical internship entail?

Is there any formal supervision during the practical internship?

If yes, how many hours of supervision per student?

What would you consider strong points or selling points of your program?

What would you consider points to be improved for your program?

Does the program emphasize certain topics?

Is there an accreditation-, certification- or quality assurance institute which provides an expert and objective judgement of the quality of the educational program? Yes/No

Do you have any additional suggestions or remarks?

EASY-network

What are your expectations of the EASY-network?

What are your objectives regarding the EASY-network?

Which issues would you like to discuss with colleague educators?

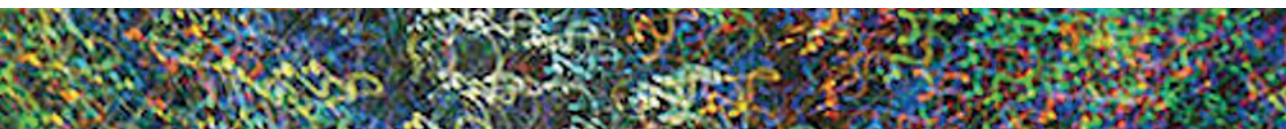
In what ways do you think you might contribute to the network?

Do you have any additional suggestions or remarks regarding the network?

Appendix B. The name of the organization or organizing institute of ASP education programs and the name of the program in the native language.

	Organization/Institute	Name of the program
Austria	Center of Mental Excellence GmbH	Modulserie "Sportpsychologisches Training / Coaching im Leistungssport"
Belgium	KU Leuven, Faculty of Kinesiology & Rehabilitation Sciences & Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences	Permanente Vorming Getuigschrift Praktijkgerichte Sportpsychologie (interfacultair programma)
Croatia	The University Centre for Croatian Studies at the University of Zagreb	Psihologija sporta
Czech Republic ¹	Palacký University in Olomouc, Faculty of Physical Culture	The cluster: psychologie tělesné výchovy psychologie sportu
Czech Republic ²	Masaryk University	The cluster: Exercise psychology, Sport psychology, Psychology of handicap – giftedness
Denmark	Aarhus University, Denmark	Idræt
Finland	University of Jyväskylä	Master's Degree Programme in Sport and Exercise Psychology
France ¹	University of Pau and Pays de l'Adour	Master Expert en préparation physique et mentale
France ²	L'Unité de Formation et de Recherche en Sciences et Techniques des Activités Physiques et Sportives, Lyon 1	Master de préparation physique et mentale et Réathlétisation
Germany ¹	Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg, Philosophical Faculty II, Dept. of Sports Science	Angewandte Sportpsychologie
Germany ²	flowandgrow	Performance and contextual coaching
Greece ¹	University of Thessaly	Μεταπτυχιακό δίπλωμα στην Ψυχολογία της Άσκησης and EMSEP
Greece ²	University of Athens, Department of Physical Education and Sport Science	Μεταπτυχιακό Πρόγραμμα Σπουδών "Φυσική Αγωγή και Αθλητισμός" - Εξειδίκευση: Αθλητική Ψυχολογία
Ireland	University of Limerick, Exercise and Performance Psychology	MSc. in sport, exercise and performance psychology
Italy ¹	University of Tor Vergata, Faculty of Medicine, Dept of Motor Sciences, Roma	Coaching
Italy ²	Inter-University Center "Mind in Sport Team".	Master in Psicologia dello Sport
Norway	Norwegian School of Sport Sciences	Bachelor in sport science, specializing in training, coaching and sport psychology.
PE4EP	Vrije Universiteit Brussel	Psychological Excellence for Elite Performance (PE4EP)
Poland ¹	Józef Piłsudski University of Physical Education in Warsaw, Poland	Studia Podyplomowe Psychologia Sportu

	Organization/Institute	Name of the program
Poland ²	1. Department of Sport Psychology, Polish Olympic Committee 2. Section of Sport Psychology, Polish Psychological Association 3. National Centre Research & Applied of Sport Psychology, Gdansk University of Physical Education & Sport	Program Ustawicznego Kształcenia Psychologów Polskiego Komitetu Olimpijskiego and Certyfikat Psychologa Sportu: a/ klasy II b/ klasy I c/ klasy Mistrzowskiej- Superwizora
Portugal ¹	Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias and Faculty of Human Movement, Technical University of Lisbon	Master in Sport Psychology
Portugal ²	ISPA - Instituto Universitário	Pós-graduação em Psicologia do Desporto e da Actividade Física (versão separada para Psicólogos e treinadores)
Romania	Romanian Association of Sport Psychology	Masterat de Psihologie Sportiva
Russia	The Pedagogical Institute of Physical Culture and Sport	Спортивная психология
Spain	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona	Diplomatura de Postgrado en Psicología Aplicada al Rendimiento Deportivo
Sweden	Halmstad University, School of Health and Welfare	Att arbeta som idrottspsykologisk rådgivare and Att arbeta som psykologisk rådgivare med grupper och organisation inom idrotten och arbetslivet
Switzerland	University of Bern, Institute of Sport Science	Postgraduale Weiterbildung Sportpsychologie
The Netherlands	Exposz, Faculty of Human Movement Sciences, VU University Amsterdam	Postacademische Opleiding tot Praktijksportpsycholoog
Turkey	Marmara University School of Physical Education and Sports	Egzersiz ve Spor Psikolojisi Yüksek Lisansı
United Kingdom ¹	Liverpool John Moores University	Qualification in Sport and Exercise Psychology (QSEP)
United Kingdom ²	Staffordshire University	MSc Sport and Exercise Psychology, MSc Applied Sport and Exercise Psychology and BSc Sport and Exercise Psychology
United Kingdom ³	Leeds Beckett University	Part of BSc. Sport and Exercise Science: "Applied Sport Psychology", MSc. Psychology of Sport and Exercise and Professional supervised training route: BPS Stage 2 Qualification in Sport and Exercise Psychology
United Kingdom ⁴	University of Chichester	BSc Sport and Exercise Psychology, MSc Psychology of Sport and Exercise, MSc Sport and Exercise Psychology (British Psychological Society Accredited)
United Kingdom ⁵	Bangor University	Sport and Exercise Psychology (BSc hons)
United Kingdom ⁶	Loughborough University	Sport and Exercise Psychology (MSc) MSc Sport and Exercise Psychology



Chapter 3. **What Trainee Sport Psychologists Want To Learn In Supervision**



Hutter, R.I. (V.), Oldenhof-Veldman, T. & Oudejans, R.R.D. (2015).
What trainee sport psychologists want to learn in supervision.
Psychology of Sport & Exercise, 16, 101-109.

What Trainee Sport Psychologists Want To Learn In Supervision

Abstract

Supervised experience is a crucial element in the education of trainee sport psychologists (TSPs). Insight into the issues that are raised in supervision is relevant for the development of educational programs. The purpose of this study was to gain insight into supervisory issues of TSPs.

369 Supervision questions from fourteen TSPs were collected from written supervisory reports. The supervision questions were initially rated on the supervisory issues described by Loganbill, Hardy and Delworth (1982) and Rabinowitz, Heppner, and Roehlke (1986). Inter-rater agreement and occurrence of issues were calculated. For most of the supervisory issues described by Loganbill et al. (1982) and Rabinowitz et al. (1986) the inter-rater agreement and occurrence was low.

An alternative model for supervision questions of TSPs was developed through inductive and deductive analyses. The model consists of two higher-order categories ('Know-how' and 'Professional development'), six lower-order categories ('Intake', 'Treatment plan', 'Execution', 'Reflections', 'Working principles' and 'Coping with dilemmas') and 19 separate themes.

The supervisory issues proposed by Loganbill et al. (1982) and Rabinowitz et al. (1986) do not fully capture the learning needs for supervision as formulated by the TSPs studied. Our alternative model provides an overview of supervision questions of TSPs. The developed model may contribute to the quality of trainees' learning in supervision by helping both trainees and supervisors prepare for supervision, and by helping sport psychology educators to offer efficacious curricula and learning experiences.

Keywords: Supervision questions, Sport psychology education, Professional development

What Trainee Sport Psychologists Want To Learn In Supervision

In recent years the popularity of sport psychology has grown, both in terms of athletes seeking sport psychological services, and in the number of students wanting to pursue a career in sport psychology. The development of expertise and excellence in education and application is of vital importance to the continued growth of sport psychology. The bar in sport psychology is continuously raised. As professionalization in sports continues, higher demands are placed on sport psychologists. The increased demands for sport psychologists call for more in-depth knowledge about learning, professional development and excellence in sport psychology.

One important learning venue that has been advocated in sport psychology is supervision (Andersen et al., 2000; Andersen & Williams-Rice, 1996; Knowles, Gilbourne, Tomlinson, & Anderson, 2007; Tod et al., 2007; Watson, Zizzi, Etzel, & Lubker, 2004). Learning in supervision can be defined as learning on the basis of reflective practice with a supervisor. Supervision should develop self-directed learning by the supervisee (Siegers, 2002). When TSPs work with athlete-clients under supervision, supervision aims to protect the welfare of the athlete clients. Furthermore, supervision aims to contribute to the development of TSPs into competent, ethical sport psychology practitioners (Van Raalte & Andersen, 2000). As such, high quality supervision advances TSPs on their path towards expertise and excellence in ASP.

To date, supervision in sport psychology has mainly been investigated in (case) studies on learning experiences during supervised practicum (e.g., Holt & Streat, 2001; Tod et al., 2007; Tod & Bond, 2010; Tonn & Harmison, 2004) and analysis of 'lessons learned' by students (Stambulova & Johnson, 2010). From these studies it can be concluded that supervision in sport psychology can serve many different functions, such as helping to cope with the demands of service delivery (Stambulova & Johnson, 2010), providing support and guidance to trainees (Tonn & Harmison, 2004), and aiding reflective practice and fostering self-awareness (Holt & Streat, 2001).

In recent years competencies and professional development of sport psychology practitioners have received increasing attention in the literature (e.g., Cropley et al., 2010; Poczwadowski & Sherman, 2011; Poczwadowski, Sherman, & Ravizza, 2004; Simons & Andersen, 1995; Stambulova & Johnson, 2010; Tod et al., 2007; Ward et al., 2005). This research sketches what TSPs should develop to become effective practitioners. It tells us what should be learned. However, it does not address the issue of what should be learned when and how. Moreover, it ignores the perspective of the trainee; the question what TSPs, as the learning agent in a supervision dyad, seek to learn in supervision has been largely overlooked. Indeed, Stambulova and Johnson (2010, p. 3) state that only "few studies exist on how novices in the field make their first steps in developing their professional identities and philosophies during ASP

education” and “more efforts should be done to make the voices of novice practitioners in the ASP field heard”. The current study focuses on a specific component of education for ASP, namely the supervised practicum. The learning needs of TSPs themselves are at the core of the study. Knowledge of these learning needs may contribute to the development of expertise and excellence in sport psychology education. By knowing what TSPs need for professional development, educators can progress to improve, ease, or fasten the developmental path of TSPs.

A better understanding of what TSPs seek to learn in supervision may contribute to the quality of the supervision learning experience in a variety of ways. First, TSPs may find comfort in learning about the supervisory issues of peers and will benefit from understanding issues in professional development (Tod, 2007). Moreover, TSPs should learn how to prepare for a supervision session (Sansbury, 1982). Insight into supervision issues may help TSPs by providing them with issues to consider in preparation for a supervision session. Third, knowledge of occurring issues in supervision can contribute to the training and professional development of supervisors (as also suggested by Ellis, 1991). If typical issues are known, they can be used as training material for supervisors, or as content for peer consultation sessions among supervisors. It is worth mentioning that the training and supervision of TSPs is still in its infancy in many countries, and the development of training methods and material for supervisors in sport psychology is much needed. Finally, insight into common supervision issues can lead to the development of more efficacious curricula and learning experiences outside supervision.

The available literature on supervision and supervisory issues stems mainly from the field of counselling psychology. Several models for supervision of counsellors are available (e.g., Stoltenberg's, 1981, counsellor complexity model or Hess' model of development, 1986; see Worthington, 2006, for a review). Most of these supervision models outline developmental stages through which supervisees are expected to progress in supervision, and suggest appropriate supervisory behaviours for each stage. To our knowledge, the models of Loganbill, et al. (1982) and Sansbury (1982) are the only models on supervisory issues, zooming in on what issues are actually addressed in supervision.

Loganbill et al. (1982) state that there seem to be a number of common basic issues that each supervisee inevitably encounters during their development as a counsellor. They encourage each supervisor to develop a personal list of recurring issues, but also propose eight key supervisory issues (Loganbill et al., 1982, pp. 21-26):

- competence (the ability to use skills and techniques in order to carry through the treatment plan),
- emotional awareness (the ability to be aware of and effectively use one's own feelings

within the therapeutic and supervisory dyad),

- autonomy (a true sense of one's own choices and decisions),
- theoretical identity (the development of a synthesized theoretical identity to serve one practically),
- respect for individual differences (the ability to view the client as a person and to appreciate differences in backgrounds, values, and physical appearance),
- purpose and direction (the establishment of a treatment plan),
- personal motivation (the development of an understanding of personal motivation for the profession, the exploration of incentives such as intimacy, power, finance, personal growth, intellectual curiosity and altruism), and
- professional ethics (the internalization of ethical standards).

Sansbury (1982) combines these supervisory issues with Fleming and Benedek's (1966) concepts of 'internal expansion' and 'external expansion' to propose a staged model of the eight supervisory issues. The supervisory issues directed at external expansion are proposed to emerge first, more specifically in the order: issues of competence, purpose and direction, identity. As the supervisee develops, supervisory issues directed at internal expansion are supposed to follow (starting with emotional awareness, then respect for individual differences, autonomy, professional ethics, and personal motivation).

Few studies have tested the models of Loganbill et al. (1982) and Sansbury (1982). Ellis (1991) tested and found partial empirical support for the staging proposed by Sansbury (1982). Other studies testing the models mainly found that out of the eight proposed issues, the four issues of theoretical identity, individual differences, professional ethics, and personal motivation do not seem to occur (consistently) in supervision (Heppner & Roehlke, 1984; Rabinowitz et al., 1986). In addition, it was concluded that extra supervisory issues may have to be added to the original list, specifically the issues: support, transference/countertransference (Heppner & Roehlke, 1984), supervisory relationship, and personal issues (Rabinowitz et al., 1986). From these studies it can be concluded that there is partial support for the models of Loganbill et al. (1982) and Sansbury (1982).

To summarize, for training and education purposes it is important to know what TSPs want to learn in supervision. There is currently no model available for supervisory issues in sport psychology supervision, despite the potential benefits of such a model. In the field of psychology in general, the available models of Loganbill et al. (1982), Sansbury (1982), and suggested additions (Heppner & Roehlke, 1984; Rabinowitz et al., 1986) are criticised for a lack of empirical validation, and support for the models is limited.

The purpose of the current study is to gain insight into the issues that TSPs seek to learn in supervision by providing a model of supervision questions in sport psychology. The study consists of two parts. First, we check to what extent the eight supervisory issues of Loganbill et al. (1982) and two additional issues proposed by Rabinowitz and colleagues (1986) offer an applicable framework to describe supervision questions of TSPs. Second, we propose an alternative model of supervisory questions in sport psychology. By inductive and deductive analysis of supervision questions of TSPs we aim to uncover the core(s) of what TSPs seek to learn in supervision.

Method Part 1

Participants

Six male and five female TSPs of a 60 European Credits (EC) post-master program in applied sport psychology participated in the study. Additional information on the program, the involved supervisors and supervision guidelines is provided below. At the start of the program mean age of the participants was 27.4 years ($SD = 4.7$). Seven TSPs enrolled in the study held a master degree in human movement sciences, two in psychology, one in pedagogy, and one in sport and exercise sciences.

The education program. To enter the program, students have to possess a relevant master degree, with at least 30 EC master courses on sport psychology topics. The program consists of thirteen modular courses, all with an evidence-based applied focus, that is, a focus on skills and applicable knowledge. Learning by doing is an important teaching mode throughout the program, implemented inside and outside the classroom. Both formal, non-formal and informal learning opportunities are offered (e.g., discussions are held as part of a class, but students are also encouraged to organise peer consultation discussions among themselves and to discuss with people outside the education context, see e.g., Colardyn and Bjornavold (2004) for definitions of formal, non-formal and informal learning). In each course TSPs complete at least one practicum assignment with clubs, federations, athletes, coaches or teams. Each course is taught by a different expert, who mostly is also working as an applied sport psychologist. The program is designed to prepare TSPs for practice.

The supervised practicum. The final course of the program consists of a supervised practicum of 16 European Credits, in which TSPs complete a minimum of seven supervised cases; at least three cases with individual athlete-clients, at least one case with a coach-client, and at least one team-case. To complete the course, a minimum of seventy contact-hours with clients, and a minimum of thirty-five hours of supervision are required. The duration of the supervised practicum varies widely, on average TSPs

finish the seven cases and the required supervision over a course of two years.

Supervisors. During the practicum, TSPs are supervised by experienced sport psychologists. Each TSP is supervised by three different supervisors and completes at least two cases with each supervisor. To be eligible as a supervisor in the program a minimum experience of five years as an applied sport psychologist and a minimum of fifty completed cases is required. In addition, eligible supervisors undergo an assessment procedure based on a competency profile of supervisors (see Hutter, 2014). Yearly training in supervision skills is offered by the program, and mandatory for all supervisors. In total 13 supervisors were involved in this study.

Guidelines for supervision. At the start of a collaboration between a TSP and a supervisor, a tripartite contract is signed by the TSP, supervisor and program manager. In the contract the responsibilities of all three parties are outlined. The supervisor is, among other things, responsible for fostering role clarity in supervision, providing feedback to the TSP, enforcing autonomy and independence of the TSP, and providing a role model of professional competency. Among the responsibilities of the TSPs are to prepare for supervision, to provide open, honest and accurate information on the cases, to adopt a critical attitude towards their professional strengths and weaknesses, and to abide by the code of conduct. The program is responsible for the development, execution and evaluation of the course ‘supervised practicum’, and for selecting and assigning supervisors. All three parties are obliged to confront a TSP or supervisor when the code of conduct is violated, and are responsible for creating a learning environment in which the TSP can acquire the competencies required for ASP practice.

Procedure

Data collection. In the post-master program the TSPs are required to prepare the supervision sessions with a written preparation sheet. The preparation sheet contains four elements:

1. a short description or update of the case(s)
2. the trainee’s reflection on the case(s), in which the TSP answers five questions, adapted from the reflective practice cycle of Korthagen (1993) (“what does the client want?”, “what do I want?”, “what did I do?”, “what do I think?” and “what do I feel?”)
3. a ‘supervision question’, the central issue(s) the TSP would like to address in the supervision, based on the reflections on the case(s)
4. a description of what the TSP has already done to explore his or her supervision question.

For Part 1, a total of 208 preparation sheets of the TSPs were collected. The sheets

were collected by the first author at the end of each collaboration between a TSP and a supervisor, data collection was thereby done independent of the supervisors and supervision process. The supervision questions from the preparation sheets served as data units. The supervision questions were copied from the preparation sheets to an anonymous dataset by the first author. If a supervision question contained more than one question, the supervision question was split into multiple questions (thus yielding more than one data-unit). For instance the supervision question: "Should I continue with this case, and if so, what is the best course of action?" was split into two questions: "Should I continue with this case?" and "What is the best course of action if I continue with this case?". If a supervision question needed extra information for appropriate interpretation, brief case information could be added to the question, derived from the case description on the preparation sheet. These additions were clearly marked in the dataset and separated from the supervision question itself. For instance, the supervision question: "How can I handle the language barrier that I experience?" was copied to the dataset as: "How can I handle the language barrier that I experience? (addition by first author: the athlete-client speaks English only, which is not the native language of the TSP)". A total of 260 data units was obtained.

Data treatment. The first two authors rated 260 supervision questions on the extent to which they related to the ten supervisory issues of: competence, purpose and direction, emotional awareness autonomy, theoretical identity, respect for individual differences, personal motivation, professional ethics (all from Loganbill et al., 1982) and supervisory relationship and personal issues (both from Rabinowitz et al., 1986). The raters (i.e., the first two authors) read and discussed the original articles and the operationalization of the issues by Ellis (1991) to obtain a clear and joint understanding of the meaning of the supervisory issues described. They then independently scored the supervision questions regarding the extent to which they related to each supervisory issue. This was done on a four-point scale, in line with Ellis (1991), from 1 "not at all related to the supervisory issue" to 4 "totally related to the supervisory issue". This method thus yields ten scores per supervision question, one for each supervisory issue.

Data analysis. Two measures were determined to establish whether the supervisory issues of Loganbill et al. (1982) and Rabinowitz et al. (1986) could be used to describe the supervision questions of TSPs. First inter-rater agreement was established. If the supervisory issues offer a fitting description of the issues TSPs bring to supervision, then a high degree of agreement between the two raters is expected. Inter-rater agreement (Cohen's kappa) was therefore calculated for the independent scores of the two raters, Cohen's kappa's were interpreted using the following cut-off scores: < 0.20 no to poor agreement, 0.21–0.40 fair agreement, 0.41–0.60 moderate agreement, 0.61–0.80 substantial agreement, and 0.81–1 good to perfect agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977).

Second, frequencies of scores 1 to 4 were determined for each supervisory issue. If the supervisory issues capture the issues raised in supervision by TSPs, then high scores (3 or 4) are expected to occur for each supervisory issue. If a supervisory issue was scored with a 3 or 4 in less than ten percent of the supervision questions, then it was concluded that incidence of that supervisory issue in the dataset was low. This cut-off point of 10% was chosen by the authors and is therefore arbitrary.

Results Part 1

The inter-rater agreements for the scores of supervision questions on the supervisory issues range from -.005 to .351. There was no or poor inter-rater agreement (Cohens kappa < 0.2) for 'Emotional awareness', 'Autonomy', 'Theoretical identity', 'Respect for individual differences', 'Personal motivation', and 'Supervisory relationship'. There was fair inter-rater agreement (Cohens kappa 0.2 - 0.4) for 'Competence', 'Purpose and direction', 'Professional ethics', and 'Personal issues'. For the latter two supervisory issues, it should be noted that the count of agreement on score 1 ('does not relate at all to the issue') was high, that is, 199 (77%) for 'Professional ethics', 214 (82%) for 'Personal issues'. These high counts indicate that the raters mainly agreed that many supervision questions did not relate at all to the supervisory issues of professional ethics and personal issues.

In addition to the inter-rater agreement, the frequencies of scores within each supervisory issue were calculated. High scores (3 or 4) occurred reasonably frequently (> 10%) on the supervisory issues 'Competence', 'Purpose and direction', and 'Emotional awareness' only. Frequencies of high scores on all other supervisory issues were low (< 10%). Table 3 represents the frequencies of all scores on the different supervisory issues, for the two raters.

Based on both the low incidence of seven out of ten supervisory issues, and the mostly weak inter-rater agreement for the extent to which supervision questions relate to the supervisory issues, we concluded that the ten supervisory issues proposed by Loganbill et al. (1982) and Rabinowitz et al. (1986) do not offer a sufficient framework to describe our sample of supervision questions of TSPs.

Table 3. Frequencies of scores of the extent to which supervision questions of TSPs relate to the ten supervisory issues of Loganbill et al. (1982) and Rabinowitz et al. (1986). (1 = question does not relate at all to supervisory issue, 4 = question relates totally to supervisory issue)

Supervisory issue	Rater	1	2	3	4
Competence	1	106 (41%)	52 (20%)	38 (15%)	64 (25%)
	2	202 (78%)	3 (1%)	16 (6%)	39 (15%)
Purpose and direction	1	124 (48%)	45 (17%)	31 (12%)	60 (23%)
	2	146 (56%)	15 (6%)	29 (11%)	70 (27%)
Emotional awareness	1	181 (70%)	34 (13%)	23 (9%)	22 (8%)
	2	173 (67%)	7 (3%)	35 (13%)	45 (17%)
Autonomy	1	170 (65%)	69 (27%)	18 (7%)	3 (1%)
	2	217 (83%)	12 (5%)	25 (10%)	5 (2%)
Theoretical identity	1	196 (75%)	45 (17%)	15 (6%)	4 (2%)
	2	259 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (0%)	0 (0%)
Respect for individual differences	1	184 (71%)	55 (21%)	19 (7%)	2 (1%)
	2	240 (92%)	3 (1%)	12 (5%)	5 (2%)
Personal motivation	1	243 (93%)	13 (5%)	3 (1%)	1 (0%)
	2	257 (99%)	0 (0%)	3 (1%)	0 (0%)
Professional ethics	1	206 (79%)	35 (13%)	15 (6%)	2 (1%)
	2	228 (88%)	10 (4%)	13 (5%)	9 (3%)
Supervisory relationship	1	208 (80%)	35 (13%)	15 (6%)	2 (1%)
	2	114 (44%)	82 (32%)	58 (22%)	6 (2%)
Personal issues	1	228 (88%)	20 (8%)	8 (3%)	4 (2%)
	2	232 (89%)	11 (4%)	10 (4%)	7 (3%)

Method Part 2

Participants

Fourteen TSPs participated in Part 2. Eleven of them were the same participants as in Part 1, three new participants were added (see also data treatment and analysis). The total group of participants in Part 2 consisted of seven male and seven female TSPs, mean age at the start of the program was 27.1 years ($SD = 4.2$). Eight TSPs held a master degree in human movement sciences, four in psychology, one in pedagogy, and one in sport and exercise sciences.

Procedure

Data collection. Initially the same 260 data-units (supervision questions) as in Part 1 were used. An additional set of 109 supervision questions (from 74 preparation sheets) was later added to the dataset, using the same procedure as in Part 1. Of these 109 additional questions, 32 belong to the same TSPs that provided the original 260 questions, but were collected later. These questions were collected to check for data-saturation (see 'Trustworthiness of the model' below). The other 77 questions of the added 109 questions stem from the three new TSPs that were enrolled in Part 2 of the study. These questions were collected to enable data-triangulation (see 'Trustworthiness of the model' below).

Data treatment and analysis.

Open and selective coding of the data-units. A combination of open coding, selective coding and axial coding was applied to the dataset, to build a model of supervision questions of TSPs. First an inductive approach was applied, the first two authors independently grouped and coded 260 supervision questions based on the content of each question (open coding). The groups of supervision questions formed, and the codes used, were then compared and discussed until agreement was reached on initial groups and themes (i.e., codes or combinations of codes) within the data (investigator triangulation of the coding and grouping). The data-units were then re-assessed deductively using the established themes as codes, linking supervision question to the themes (selective coding). The supervision questions that related to the theme 'written report' (9 questions) and questions that were judged as 'miscellaneous' (11 questions) were deleted from further analysis.

Building the model by axial coding of the codes and themes. Next, the first two authors discussed the interrelationships between themes (axial coding) and established overarching categories. Next, these overarching categories were also compared (axial coding) and again overarching categories were formulated, thus inductively building an initial model of supervisory issues from the data-units consisting of three levels: themes, lower-order categories and higher-order categories. The themes, lower-order and higher-order categories as well as the resulting initial model were critically discussed with an external expert (i.e., the program manager of the education program, who was neither involved in the supervision of the TSPs, nor in data collection or the coding process) (investigator triangulation of the initial model). Final adaptations to the model were then done through an iterative process of checking the model's categories and structure as a whole, and checking consistency and completeness of the list of questions within each theme and category.

Trustworthiness of the model. Two additional, deductive, checks of the model were applied. First, the model was scrutinized for data saturation, in other words, it was checked whether new themes would emerge when new data was added to the dataset. For this check, 32 new questions of the same TSPs that provided the 260 original questions were used. No new codes emerged, all 32 units could be assigned to themes within the model. Therefore, it was concluded that data saturation had been reached and the model encompasses all themes in the data. Next, to test the validity of the model, data triangulation was applied. Data from new sources was added to the model, that is, 77 supervision questions of three additional TSPs. The first two authors independently assigned the added supervision questions to the 19 themes of the model. The classification was identical for 58 data-units (75.3 %). The result of the data triangulation lends initial support for the validity of the model.

Results Part 2

Table 4 presents the resulting model of themes, lower- and higher-order categories of supervision questions of TSPs. The analysis of the data-units resulted in 19 themes of supervision questions posed by TSPs. Based on similarities and relations between the 19 themes, six lower-order categories of themes were established: ‘Intake’, ‘Designing treatment plan’, ‘Execution’, ‘Reflections’, ‘Working principles’ and ‘Coping with dilemmas’. Finally, based on the characteristics of these lower-order categories and their associated themes, two higher-order categories were differentiated: ‘Know-how’ and ‘Professional development’. The number of questions within themes and categories varies (e.g., there are 78 questions in ‘Treatment plan’ and 35 questions in ‘Intake’). In Table 4 the number of questions in each theme or category is displayed (N). In addition, Table 4 also reports the number of TSPs that asked the questions in the theme. For instance, the 16 questions within ‘Referral and fear of ineffectiveness’ come from seven different TSPs. The higher-order categories, lower-order categories, and themes of the model are described in more detail below. For each theme examples of questions within the theme are given.

Table 4. The model of themes, lower- and higher-order categories of supervision questions of TSPs, including the number of supervision questions of TSPs per theme and category, and numbers of TSPs asking questions within each theme.

Higher-order categories	Lower-order categories	Themes
Know-how (N = 184)	Intake (N = 35)	Guiding question of the case (N = 8, 5 TSPs)
		Assessment methods (N = 13, 7 TSPs)
		Psychological report (N = 14, 8 TSPs)
	Treatment plan (N = 78)	Treatment goals (N = 7, 5 TSPs)
		Treatment outline (N = 65, 14 TSPs)
		Adapting treatment plan (N = 6, 4 TSPs)
	Execution (N = 71)	Interventions (N = 55, 13 TSPs)
		Evaluation (N = 7, 5 TSPs)
		Termination (N = 9, 5 TSPs)
	Professional development (N = 162)	Reflections (N = 75)
Development (N = 12, 9 TSPs)		
Referral and fear of ineffectiveness (N = 16, 7 TSPs)		
Working principles (N = 45)		Personal thoughts and feelings (N = 24, 9 TSPs)
		Balance client-led/directive counselling (N = 21, 8 TSPs)
		Session management (N = 17, 8 TSPs)
Coping with dilemmas (N = 42)		Business operations (N=9, 6 TSPs)
		Athlete's environment (N = 18, 6 TSPs)
		Athlete's motivation (N = 10, 7 TSPs)

Know-how

Questions within 'Know-how' are typically about how to act or proceed with the case(s). Questions in this category are pragmatic in nature, with TSPs asking for tools, suggestions for actions, subsequent steps to take, etc. The higher-order category of 'Know-how' consists of three lower-order categories 'Intake', 'Designing treatment plan', and 'Execution'.

Intake. Questions in the lower-order category 'Intake' are concerned with the intake stage of TSPs with their clients. In supervision, TSPs want to learn how to get to the core of the clients' needs, that is, how to frame the guiding question of the case (theme: 'Guiding question of the case', examples of questions: Did I focus and probe the guiding question enough?, and How do you establish the guiding question of a team?). Moreover, TSPs seek advice on assessment methods to use for the intake with the client. Questions about assessment methods relate to both psychometrical, conversational and observational methods of assessment (theme: 'Assessment methods', examples of questions: How do you approach an intake with a team?, Which questionnaires can I use now and in the future?, What would be a good way to approach an intake with a young athlete?, and What do I need to ask specifically with young athletes?). In addition to the selection and use of assessment methods, TSPs bring up the psychological report in supervision. They pose questions about how to interpret and report the information they gathered in the intake session and assessment (theme: 'Psychological report', examples of questions: Do I draw the right conclusions from the results of the questionnaires?, I wonder if I am on the right track with my observations after the intake with my client. Did I miss anything?, Do I need to go deeper into the history with her father and coach or am I reading too much into the situation?, and Is this sport psychological report complete?).

Designing treatment plan. The lower-order category of 'Designing treatment plan' evolves around setting up a plan to work with the client. TSPs seem to struggle with determining clear goals for the trajectory with the client and ask their supervisors how to prioritise and set treatment goals. Moreover they seek confirmation for their treatment goal(s) (theme: 'Treatment goals', examples of questions: How do I describe goals to work on with the coach-client?, Is the objective for this trajectory realistic and suitable for the team?, or What best to aim for with my treatment plan, given that there is only a few months time?). After establishing the treatment goal, TSPs proceed to design an outline for the trajectory to accomplish the treatment goals. TSPs ask their supervisors how to do so (theme: 'Treatment outline'). The questions in this theme vary from broad, open questions (e.g., How do I go about this case' or Which sessions and interventions should I plan?) to more specific questions in which the TSPs propose an

outline and seek confirmation from the supervisor for their plan. As cases progress, TSPs may encounter doubt about their original treatment goal and outline, or feel the need to adapt the goal and outline to better fit their clients' needs. In supervision they discuss whether or not they should adapt the original treatment plan (theme: 'Adapting treatment plan', examples of questions: Is it a good choice to change the treatment plan? The problem is that I, of course, would like to design a perfectly fitting treatment plan at the beginning., or Is it best to stick to the initially determined goal or is it okay to adapt according to the situation?).

Execution. The lower-order category 'Execution' contains questions on how to execute the actual trajectory after the intake is done and the (initial) treatment plan established. TSPs want to broaden their intervention repertoire and improve their intervention skills through supervision. They ask supervisors for tools and exercises, and for advice on how to execute different interventions (theme: 'Interventions', examples of questions: How can I best approach thought training with this athlete, who finds it difficult to put thoughts and feelings into words?, In what practical ways can I use mental training for young athletes, so they enjoy becoming aware of mental factors and learning mental skills?, and What are other successful ways to implement learned skills in practice?). TSPs are looking for ways to evaluate their work with their clients, and ask their supervisor about evaluation methods (theme: 'Evaluation', examples of questions: Should evaluation be performed by means of evaluation forms or just by conversation?, I wonder how I should approach the evaluation?, or Is it wise to evaluate 'in between', given that the trajectory will continue next year?).

As cases approach their end, TSPs want to learn how to decide when 'the work is done' and how to bring their case to a closure in an appropriate way (theme: 'Termination', examples of questions: How do I conclude this trajectory properly? (for the team and for myself), and What would be the best way to determine the moment of conclusion?).

Professional Development

The questions in the higher-order category 'Know-how' are quite directly linked to the cases of TSPs. In contrast, questions in the higher-order category of 'Professional development' shift the attention more towards the TSPs themselves instead of their case. Issues, challenges, and dilemmas that the TSPs encounter on their way to become a professional, are addressed. The questions and themes of 'Professional development' are more reflective in nature and directed at development of the TSP him/herself. 'Professional development' overarches three lower-order categories: 'Reflections', 'Working principles', and 'Coping with dilemmas'.

Reflections. The lower-order category 'Reflections' entails reflective questions on a

broad variety of themes. TSPs reflect in supervision on their professional actions. They want to discuss with their supervisors whether a specific course of action they have chosen was the 'right' course (theme: 'Actions taken', examples of questions: Am I on the right track?, Could I have approached the situation differently?, and I would like to reflect with the supervisor on the completed sessions.). In addition to reflections on actions taken, TSPs also want to evaluate their development as applied sport psychologists on a more general level. They seek feedback from their supervisor about their overall growth and development and inquire about things to improve in their service delivery (theme: 'Development', examples of questions: I would like to reflect on my learning points with the supervisor, and What are strong points and points to improve on the way I talk with the coach?).

TSPs struggle with doubts on their effectiveness and 'fit' with the demands of specific cases. In supervision they reflect on these doubts and seek advice, both on their fear of ineffectiveness and the possible need to refer (theme: 'Referral and fear of ineffectiveness', examples of questions: How do you deal with the feeling that you have not contributed optimally to the team, due to a lack of hours for mental training?, If I am successful in referring: can I continue to work with the client on sports related issues and how can I do so?, and Should I even start with mental training shortly before an important game/contest?). Finally, TSPs reflect on their personal thoughts and feelings. They want to explore their thoughts and feelings, and learn from their supervisor how these personal thoughts and feelings are best managed in professional practice (theme: 'Personal thoughts and feelings', examples of questions: How can I cope best with moments of silence and how come I have difficulties with silence?, Where does my sensitivity for the opinion of others come from and how can I cope better with this?, and How do I manage to choose the best option in a certain situation, instead of the option that avoids conflict?).

Working principles. Themes in the lower-order category 'Working principles' relate to the development of a personal working style by the TSP. In supervision, TSPs seek help to find a balance between directive counselling and a client-led approach (theme: 'Balance client-led/directive counselling', examples of questions: How can I avoid to provide answers and examples too quickly, even asking questions too quickly, but instead have the client think for himself?, How do I manage to ask less leading and 2-choice questions?, and Where is the balance between telling somebody what to do and letting that person find out themselves?). Moreover, they want to learn how to manage certain aspects of sessions, such as timing, holding the thread of the session, or decision making within the session (theme: 'Session management', examples of questions: How do I stick to the initially set goal for the session?, How do I manage to stay focused during sessions and not get distracted by all the details?, and How should

I act on issues raised at the end of the session.). In addition, TSPs also seek advice on the business side of their working style, for example they ask how to build a network, how to treat late cancellations, etcetera (theme: 'Business operations', examples of questions: How do you create, grow and keep a network within sports?, How do you cope with clients who cancel (by telephone) at the last minute?, and How do I more objectively choose whether to spend time at the club/with a team with a view to making potential contacts?).

Coping with dilemmas. The lower-order category of 'Coping with dilemmas' entails questions TSPs have on dilemmas they encounter in their casework. TSPs are confronted with dilemmas concerning the environment of the athlete, and they want to learn from their supervisors how they could deal with significant others of their client such as parents and coaches (theme: 'Athlete's environment', examples of questions: How can I best cope with the difficult relationship between father and daughter?, How can I cope with the negativity of the assistant coach?, and To what extent do you involve parents when working with a young athlete?). Occasionally, TSPs are also confronted with a (perceived) lack of motivation of their client for the sport psychology service. In supervision, they ask how they should handle low motivation, or how they can motivate the athlete (theme: 'Athlete's motivation', examples of questions: How do I cope with a client who gives the impression that he is not doing his best or is not motivated to get something out of mental training?, and What is the best way to cope with athletes who (seem to) spend little time on their assignments between sessions?). Finally, TSPs address their dilemmas with boundaries in supervision sessions. This theme consists of questions concerning the TSPs own boundaries as well as athletes' boundaries. TSPs want to learn how to guard their personal boundaries in their interaction with their clients. Moreover, they discuss with supervisors dilemmas of respecting the athletes' boundaries, and how to prevent role-uncertainty due to an informal contact style between athlete and TSP (theme: 'Boundaries', examples of questions: How do I make my boundaries clear to the coach?, Could it harm to approach clients in an informal way (addition by first author: TSP is afraid that the sessions become too sociable (chatting, lots of laughing, etc.)), and What pros and cons do I take into consideration when I get a request to accompany a young athlete to an international tournament?).

Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of the current study was to gain insight into the issues that TSPs seek to learn in supervision by developing a model for supervision questions in sport psychology. To do so, we first turned to existing models from the counselling psychology literature. The model of supervisory issues of Loganbill et al. (1982),

expanded with supervisory issues of Rabinowitz et al. (1986), was found not to be suitable to describe supervision questions as posed by TSPs. Inter-rater agreement on the extent to which the supervision questions relate to the supervisory issues was problematic, suggesting that the issues do not provide a clear and appropriate description of the supervision questions of TSPs. Moreover, and in line with previous research (Heppner & Roehlke, 1984; Rabinowitz et al., 1986), we found limited occurrence of the supervisory issues of theoretical identity, respect for individual differences, professional ethics and personal motivation. In addition, we did not find support for the extra supervisory issues that were suggested by Rabinowitz et al. (1986) (supervisory relationship and personal issues) either. Inter-rater agreement was poor and fair for supervisory relationship and personal issues respectively, incidence of the issues in the dataset was low. Overall, the only supervisory issues that occurred frequently in supervision questions of TSPs and were scored with a fair inter-rater agreement were 'Competence' and 'Purpose and direction' (both from the model of key supervisory issues of Loganbill et al., 1982).

It should be noted that the data-collection in our study differs from that in previous studies. Previous studies have used retrospective data from supervisees and supervisors (analysing afterwards which issues occurred in the session, according to supervisee and supervisor). The data used in the current study were the questions formulated by TSPs, in preparation of their supervision session. This data does not encompass all issues that occur in supervision, they are only the issues brought to the supervision by supervisees. The formulation of purposeful supervision questions requires insight of the TSP into his or her competencies and deficiencies, as well as required competencies for sport psychology practice. It could be hypothesised that the low incidences of certain supervisory issues are the result of blind spots of the TSPs for the issues. According to Loganbill et al. (1982) supervisees may be unaware of certain supervisory issues, specifically when they are in the so-called stagnation phase for the supervisory issue at hand. The stagnation phase, for beginning supervisees, "is characterized by a naïve unawareness of any difficulty or deficiency (...) of the important issues in supervision" (Loganbill et al., 1982, p. 17). In interpreting the results of the current study one should be aware that TSPs 'don't know what they don't know'. Therefore, TSPs will have blind spots, and may 'miss' important supervisory issues in the questions they ask their supervisors. However, it seems unlikely that the TSPs are in the stagnation phase for the majority of Loganbill et al.'s (1982) supervisory issues, and will stay in the stagnation phase throughout their entire practicum. We feel that the lack of occurrence of the majority of Loganbill et al.'s (1982) supervisory issues can therefore not be (fully) attributed to stagnation of the TSPs on the issues.

An alternative explanation of the low incidence of many supervisory issues may

lie in the fact that the study, by addressing the perspective of the TSPs, omits the perspective of the supervisor. It might well be that Loganbill et al.'s (1982) supervisory issues do occur in TSP supervision, but they are introduced by the supervisors, not the TSPs. As is the case with Loganbill et al.'s model, most models on supervision and development of supervisees are developed from the perspective of supervisors, not supervisees. Thereby they implicitly advocate pro-active, rather than reactive, supervision and diminish the role of the supervisee as the active learner in the supervision dyad. Moreover, as Worthington (2006) points out, supervisor-based models do not inform supervisors about the readiness of supervisees to learn certain aspects of the profession. In our view, TSPs should be given the main responsibility for their professional development, and should, as the learning agent, have an active role in establishing the content of supervision (see also Webster-Wright, 2009). In the program on which the study was based, this view is reflected in the responsibilities that are outlined for TSPs and supervisors in the tripartite supervision contract. The contract states that TSPs are (among other things) responsible for preparing the supervision session and adopting a critical attitude towards their strengths and weaknesses as an applied sport psychologist. Among the responsibilities of the supervisor are, according to the contract, to promote autonomy and independence of the TSP. An important role of supervisors is, apart from guarding the welfare of the TSPs' clients, to help TSPs resolve the issues they bring to supervision. We agree with Stambulova and Johnson (2010) that the voices of neophyte practitioners should be heard, and find this specifically important for supervision.

Therefore, in the current study the perspective of the TSPs was deliberately chosen. However, this does not mean that the issues TSPs bring to supervision constitute the full content of supervision in sport psychology training. In addition to TSP-led issues, supervisors will introduce and probe issues that the TSP did not formulate or experience as a learning need. Apart from the fact that TSPs 'don't know what they don't know', supervision questions asked by the TSPs might be heavily led by the case, rather than the overall professional development of the TSP. TSPs in the given structure of supervision preparation formulate a supervision question by reflecting on a specific case or incident. Supervision questions asked, are therefore prone to be focused on the specific case or incident, instead of focussing on a wider span of competency-issues. The supervisor might be better equipped to keep a meta-vision on the professional development of the TSP, and may therefore introduce absent, recurring or overarching professional development themes in supervision sessions. From this discussion it follows that the results, conclusions and model presented are restricted to the learning needs formulated by the TSPs and should be interpreted as such. The study addresses the question what TSPs *want to learn* in

supervision, which not necessarily corresponds with what they *should be learning* in supervision.

Some of the themes in the model, specifically the themes within the category of know-how, contain rather elementary questions. The themes of 'guiding question of the case', 'assessment methods', 'psychological report', 'intervention techniques' for example are, at first sight, surprising, because the TSPs under study had received, prior to the supervised practicum, skills and knowledge training on intake and observation methods, psychodiagnostic instruments, counselling techniques, intervention methods, design methodology of an intervention plan, etc. It seems that, despite this training, TSPs do not feel (fully) competent in applying the skills and knowledge when they start working with actual clients in the supervised practicum. To interpret these findings, and take advantage of the findings to improve the education program, additional questions have to be asked. Could it be that TSPs were taught, but did not actually learn the skills and knowledge, and therefore they start learning in supervision, with the supervisor as a (remedial) teacher? Or might it be that TSPs did learn the skills and knowledge, but lack the confidence and feelings of competence to apply them when working with clients, and are therefore asking their supervisor for information on, and confirmation of, their competence? Or do other factors explain the findings that TSPs in supervision want to learn about some themes that were taught previously?

Regardless of the underlying explanations, the findings imply that it is worthwhile to scrutinize the courses in which the TSPs are expected to become competent and confident in elementary components of service delivery such as establishing the guiding question of the case and using appropriate assessment and intervention methods. The analysis of the learning needs of TSPs in supervision provides an evaluation of the effectiveness of the education program in preparing TSPs for supervised practicum and eventually practice. Other education programs could benefit from the study's methodology, by applying similar analyses to their TSPs to evaluate their program. As such, the study can contribute to expertise in sport psychology education by providing a method to evaluate program's effectiveness in preparing TSPs for supervision. Apart from the evaluative function the study's approach provides to other programs, it would be interesting to compare learning needs of TSPs from different education programs and different cultures. Cross-cultural research could indicate differences in learning needs between students in different cultures and programs, and ideally indicate good and best practices for preparing TSPs for supervision. This would be especially valuable in the European context, where research on professional development of ASP practitioners and education is scant (Wylleman et al., 2009). Moreover, additional research using the model and/or study methodology could test the model's validity beyond the context of the study.

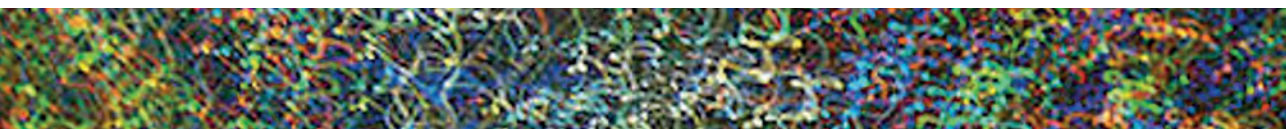
Although the validity and applicability of the model in other education contexts has to be tested, we take a preliminary step by discussing the characteristics of the TSPs and the existing literature. Although all enrolled TSPs stem from one educational program in ASP, the differences between them are wide in terms of experiences and backgrounds. They stem from different education backgrounds prior to the post-master program, and their personalities and sporting experiences vary widely. Some of them, for example, have no personal experience in elite sports, others have been (elite) athletes, coaches or referees. In addition, their cases are very different from each other, spanning from young talented athletes to older merely recreational athletes or retiring athletes, from individual sports athletes to athletes from co-acting team sport, from newly appointed coaches to seasoned ones, and including Paralympic as well as Olympic disciplines. Moreover there are substantial differences between the TSPs' supervisors in working philosophy and theoretical approach towards sport psychology. Despite these many differences between the TSPs and their unique practicum experiences, there are surprisingly clear similarities and commonalities in what they seek to learn in supervision. This is inferred from the fact that the supervision questions within each theme were asked by different TSPs. In fact, questions in each theme stem from at least four different TSPs. The majority of themes even contain questions from half of the group of TSPs studied, or more. The themes and categories in the model are therefore concluded to be meaningful to, and representative of, a broad category of TSPs.

To further elaborate on the potential validity of the model outside the context of the study, the relationship between the existing literature and the model can be explored. Some aspects of sport psychology service delivery that have been stressed extensively in the literature, do not emerge from the analyses as separate themes or categories. Perhaps most notably absent is the working alliance or relationship between the athlete-client and the TSP (e.g., Barney, Andersen, & Riggs, 1996; Cropley et al., 2010). Although not present as a separate theme, questions regarding the working alliance are more covertly present in the data and the model. Some questions in the theme of 'reflections on thoughts and feelings' for instance include reflections on thoughts and feelings about the client and the level of rapport. Similarly, a number of questions coded as fear of ineffectiveness, carry within them doubts about the establishment of a good working alliance.

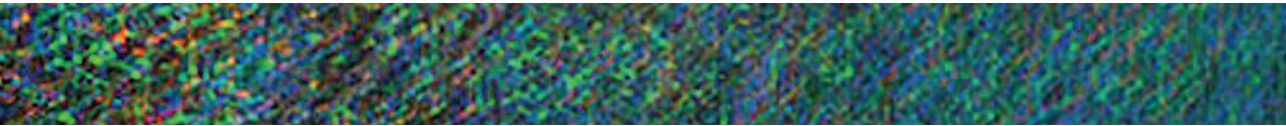
In general, issues that are described in previous (case-) studies on supervised practicum experiences seem to fit well with the reported model. For instance, Stambulova and Johnson (2010) reported that Swedish TSPs in their supervised practicum learned about "combining of different methods to know the client and decide about working issues" (p. 300). These "lessons learned" strongly resemble our

category 'intake' and the accompanying themes of 'guiding question of the case' and 'assessment methods'. Another example are the reflections of Cropley (in Cropley et al., 2007) of his first year of supervised practicum, on being personable. He reflects "I have entered with the attitude that "I'm the sport psychologist and they (the client) are here to listen to me."" (p. 481), "I found myself dominating the session somewhat, and thinking back there was ample opportunity to get clients involved and explore their thoughts and feelings" (p. 488) and "I have been keen to empower the client to make decisions rather than giving him the answers to any problem" (p. 489). These reflections provide good examples of the theme 'balance client-led/directive counseling'. Similarly, Tonn's (Tonn & Harmison, 2004) reflections during her practicum on professional boundaries are illustrative to the theme 'boundaries' in our model. More examples can be found in the existing literature, for most, if not all, themes in the model. In this vein, we invite supervisors, practitioners and supervisees to explore the model by trying to fit the issues they encounter(ed) in early professional development in the themes and categories of the presented model.

To summarize, through analyses of supervision questions of TSPs we gained insight into what TSPs want to learn in supervision. The themes and categories in the resulting model occur often and with different TSPs, despite the heterogeneous group of TSPs studied. In addition, many reflections and data on supervised practicum from the existing literature fit well with the themes and categories of the model. Therefore the model of supervision questions may be valid for other educational programs and TSPs. We suggest that the described model is tested by applying the model to TSPs from other educational programs. The model might serve as a framework to further investigate supervision and supervision experiences of TSPs. The model offers insight into supervision questions of TSPs and may, as such, contribute to excellence in education and professional development of TSPs toward expertise in ASP. TSPs may use the model to prepare for supervision and supervised practicum. By learning what it is peers seek to learn in supervision, TSPs can find reassurance that their questions to their supervisors are normal and acceptable. Moreover, the themes and categories may help TSPs to discover or better formulate their own learning needs. The model may also help supervisors of TSPs to prepare for their role. When supervisors are more aware of typical learning needs of TSPs, they can explore appropriate responses, learning methods and techniques to help TSPs resolve their supervision questions. Finally, educators can use the model as a framework to critically examine their curriculum. Such evaluation may lead to alternative or extra learning experiences offered to TSPs related to the supervision themes, thereby paving their way to sport psychology expertise and excellence.



Chapter 4. Professional Development in Sport Psychology: Relating Learning Experiences to Learning Outcomes



Hutter, R.I. (V.), Oldenhof-Veldman, T., Pijpers, J.R., & Oudejans, R.R.D.
(conditionally accepted).

Professional development in sport psychology:
Relating learning experiences to learning outcomes.
Journal of Applied Sport Psychology.

Professional Development in Sport Psychology: Relating Learning Experiences to Learning Outcomes

Abstract

To enhance the training of sport psychology consultants, it is important to know which learning experiences are useful for which components of professional development. We interviewed 15 novice consultants on their learning experiences related to 13 different topics. *Traditional learning experiences* (e.g., courses, teachers) were related to the development of practical *know-how*. *Learning from others* (e.g., peers, colleagues) was related to *professional development* (i.e., dealing with issues, challenges, and dilemmas that occur in sport psychology practice). *Practical experience and reflective activities* were related to both *know-how* and *professional development*. These results can be used to shape effective sport psychology education.

Professional Development in Sport Psychology: Relating Learning Experiences to Learning Outcomes

The journey towards efficacious training in applied sport psychology starts with outlining what sport psychology practitioners should learn (i.e., learning outcomes), followed by matching appropriate learning experiences to achieve these learning outcomes (e.g., Biggs & Tang, 2011). The current study is centred around these two related educational constructs of learning outcomes and learning experiences. Learning outcomes (also known as learning objectives, learning standards, or intended learning outcomes) address the question of what sport psychologists should learn. Learning experiences refer to “any interaction, course, program, or other experience in which learning takes place” (“Learning experience,” 2013). Learning experiences have received increasing attention in the sport psychology literature (e.g., McEwan & Tod, 2014; Owton et al., 2014; Tod et al., 2007). Studies have underlined the importance of practical experience, live demonstrations by experts (e.g., teachers or supervisors), and role plays. Moreover, interactions with peers and training staff were found to be important for professional development, as were sports participation, personal therapy, and employments in other fields. From these studies and related literature the importance of supervision and reflective practice for professional development of sport psychology practitioners also emerged (e.g., Cropley et al., 2010; Foltz et al., 2015; Knowles & Gilbourne, 2010; Woodcock, Richards, & Mugford, 2008).

Training and education usually offer trainees a wide variety of learning experiences. Insight into which learning experiences are helpful for which learning outcomes can help educators and trainees shape learning. If, for example, trainees find role plays particularly helpful to develop intervention skills, but less useful for developing confidence as a professional, then role plays can be used extensively when the focus is on intervention skills, and other learning experiences can be offered when aiming to improve professional self-confidence (in line with constructive alignment for education, e.g., Biggs & Tang, 2011).

Recently, Hutter et al. (2015) investigated what trainee sport psychologists wanted to learn in supervision. They found 19 common learning objectives of trainee sport psychologists (see Table 5 for an outline and brief description of selected topics).

Sport psychologists should become proficient on these topics before they start working independently from a supervisor. The topics from the study can thus be seen as (part of) intended learning outcomes for the training of sport psychology practitioners, and are used as such in the current study. Hutter et al. categorised the topics in two main categories, labelled *know-how* and *professional development*. The category *know-how* refers to practical, pragmatic skills. The category *professional development* refers to issues, challenges and dilemmas that sport psychologists

encounter, and that they have to learn to cope with. Topics from both the *know-how* and *professional development* category were used in the current study, because both categories contain valuable learning outcomes for sport psychology consultants. The selected topics are thought to be salient and relevant for (novice) sport psychology consultants and fit well with the themes emerging from individual accounts of professional development (e.g., Collins, Evans-Jones & O'Connor, 2013; Holt & Streat, 2001; Lindsay, Breckon, Thomas, & Maynard, 2007; Tod & Bond, 2010; Tonn & Harmison, 2004), and the findings of Stambulova and Johnson (2010) on lessons learned by sport psychology trainees.

Table 5. Topics addressed in the interviews (derived from Hutter et al., 2015).

Topic	Brief description of the topic
Guiding question of the case / treatment goals	Getting to the core of the clients' needs, setting treatment goals, and prioritising them.
Assessment methods / psychological report	Selection and use of assessment methods for intake sessions with clients, and the interpretation and reporting of the information.
Treatment outline	Designing an outline to accomplish the treatment goals.
Adapting treatment plan	When in doubt about the original treatment goal and outline, being able to adapt the goal and outline to better fit the clients' needs.
Interventions	Having a broad intervention repertoire and delivery skills.
Referral and fear of ineffectiveness	Handling doubts on personal effectiveness, the 'fit' with the demands of specific cases, and the possible need to refer.
Personal thoughts and feelings	Being aware of personal thoughts and feelings, and managing these in professional practice.
Balance client-led / directive counselling	Having a personal balance between directive counselling and a client-led approach.
Session management	Managing timing and decision making within sessions.
Business operations	Being an entrepreneur, and managing the business side of practice, e.g., building a network, treating late cancellations.
Coping with athlete's environment	Dealing with significant others of the athlete client such as parents and coaches.
Coping with athlete's motivation	In case of a (perceived) lack of motivation of the athlete client, being able to motivate, or deal with low motivation.
Coping with boundary issues	Guarding personal boundaries in interaction with clients, and respecting the athletes' boundaries.

Aim and Epistemology of the Study

The aim of the current study was to investigate which learning experiences are useful for which learning outcomes, and in what way learning experiences contribute to learning outcomes. This research aim is grounded in pragmatism, an epistemology that is concerned with functionality, with what works (e.g., Driscoll, 2005; Giacobbi, Poczwadowski, & Hager, 2005; Sparkes, 2015). Pragmatism transpires on two different levels in the current study. First, the impetus of the study was the pragmatic question of what works in the training, learning and development of sport psychologists. In other words: which learning experiences are useful to them? Due to the notion (and teaching experience) that there may not be ‘all-purpose’ learning experiences, the question was further specified to: what works for which outcomes, and how? The research was thus driven by a pragmatic desire to learn about the relationship between learning experiences and learning outcomes.

Second, the pragmatic epistemology of the current study is reflected in the research methodology and data analysis methods. Pragmatists contend that the research question should drive methodological choices (e.g., Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005; Sommer Harrits, 2011; Sparkes, 2015). In the current study, the interest was in the lived experience of novice sport psychology students, and how they understood their development towards different learning outcomes. Therefore a qualitative method of data collection, particularly interviews, was chosen.

To be able to answer the research question, the qualitative method of data collection was combined with a quantitative method of analysis. Sparkes (2015) noted that for pragmatists “the quantitative and qualitative paradigms and their associated methodologies are compatible and can fruitfully be used in conjunction with one another within a ‘what-works’ approach” (p. 51). In addition, Giacobbi et al. (2005) reported that pluralistic methods are often applied by pragmatists during multiphase research projects.

The aim of the current study is to investigate how learning experiences help novice sport psychology consultants develop on different aspects of service delivery. Insight into the relationships between learning experiences and learning outcomes may help trainees, educators, and supervisors to pursue or design learning experiences that are most helpful to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Moreover, it may inspire continued professional development efforts of novice consultants.

Method

Participants

Participants were recruited from a 60 European credits⁶ post-masters program in applied sport psychology in the Netherlands, from here on referred to as the program. The program can be entered with a Master's degree in psychology or sport sciences, and is designed to prepare students for practice in sport psychology. The program contains 12 modular courses (e.g., advanced sport psychology, interventions, social aspects and guidance of teams). Each module contains at least one practical assignment with athletes, teams, or coaches. In addition, trainees complete seven cases (minimum number of contact hours is 70 hours) during which they are supervised by three different supervisors.

All 28 graduates of the program were invited to participate in the study. A total of 18 graduates (64%) volunteered to participate. Pilot interviews were conducted with two of them. One other interviewee was omitted from analysis; she had quit sport psychology practice directly after graduation. Of the remaining 15 participants ($M = 35$ years, $SD = 7.5$), eight were male, and seven female; seven of the participants held a Masters degree in psychology before entering the program, and eight a Masters degree in human movement sciences or sport sciences. Participants had on average 231 hours ($SD = 214$) experience as an applied sport psychologist after graduation. The participants stemmed from two different cohorts. The heterogeneity of the sample (in terms of gender, background, experience, cohorts) ensured a rich contextual background and various styles of learning to be represented in the study.

Interview Procedure and Guide

The second author served as an interviewer for the study. She held no position in the program, and was not a stakeholder in the field of applied sport psychology. These characteristics made her an independent interviewer and enabled participants to reflect openly and honestly. Interviews were conducted either face to face or through Skype, and audio recorded.

Tod et al. (2007) recommend "in-depth examination of the rich details and complexities of those experiences. Interviewing graduates (...) should contextualize and extend the findings from sport psychology graduate surveys" (p. 319). Interviews were thus chosen based on the expectation that interviews would provide richer data than surveys, and that this data would help illustrate the relationship between learning experiences and learning outcomes. In addition, it was expected that interviews would require less time and effort of the participants. Although of lesser importance from a

⁶ One European credit equals 25-30 hours of study load; a full-time academic year typically consists of 60 European credits.

pragmatic viewpoint, using interviews for data collection is in line with the majority of existing literature on learning experiences (e.g., McEwan & Tod, 2014; Tod et al., 2007), enabling comparison with the findings in the current context. A structured interview method (as opposed to semi-structured or narrative interviews) was chosen to allow for the quantitative steps in data analysis as described later.

In the interview, learning outcomes outlined in Table 5 were discussed one by one. For each learning outcome, the interviewer explained what was meant by the learning outcome. Next, she asked whether the interviewees felt that they had learned or developed on the particular topic. If the interviewees assented that they had, the interviewer asked which learning experiences had helped them to develop on the topic.

In the two pilot interviews the interviewees mostly elaborated on development itself; they shared how they acted different now, compared to before. Although these answers offer a rich illustration of professional development, the focus of the study was on the experiences that brought about the development. McCracken (1988) suggested to use planned prompts or auto-driving prompts when the topic of interest does not emerge spontaneously. In line with this recommendation, we decided to give the interviewees a sheet listing a wide variety of examples of learning experiences (e.g., classes, self-reflection, workshops, learning from peers and colleagues, and learning from other employment or education other than sport psychology) at the start of the interview. It was made clear to them that any experience that helped them develop was relevant, and that they did not have to limit themselves to the examples on the sheet. The sheet helped interviewees understand the purpose of the interview and what was meant by learning experiences. This contributed largely to the amount of information obtained on learning experiences (i.e., a higher number of relevant, meaningful units in the transcripts, and higher levels of groundedness of the interviews). Interviewees checked the sheet with learning experiences every now and then, and the interviewer referred occasionally to the sheet to stay on topic, but in general the interviewees spoke in a spontaneous, self-directed manner about their learning experiences.

Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were then checked; the research team listened to the audio recording while reading the transcripts. After having read the transcripts several times, and using the interview guide, the first and second author made a first draft of the coding book. The coding structure was designed to label each meaningful unit in the interviews (from here on called quotation) with information on the learning outcome (i.e., the topics addressed in the interview, see Table 5) and how learning occurred (i.e., what kind of learning experience was

described by the interviewee). The examples of learning experiences from the sheet were used as initial codes for the code book, additional codes were added through the coding process by the research team (i.e., open coding).

Different measures were taken to enhance the trustworthiness of coding (following recommendations of Silverman, 2015). First, the research team was trained in coding. The research team formulated operational definitions of each code, creating a shared understanding of the meaning of the codes. Then, one interview was selected and coded collectively in a research team meeting. Next, the research team members individually coded three selected interviews. Coding was then compared, discussed and consensus reached. Next, the remaining interviews were coded by a member of the research team, and checked by another member. The first author did a final check of coding of all interviews. Throughout the study, research team meetings were held in which segments of interviews were reviewed, corrections of coding were discussed, and newly added codes were discussed and operationalized. The final coded interviews were sent back to the interviewees, together with an explanation of the coding (i.e., member checking).

Categorization of learning experiences. To structure the interpretation of the results, we categorized the obtained learning experiences into three different categories. The first category is *traditional learning*, learning experiences in this category refer to classical, formal learning in which structured and intentional learning stems mainly from external sources (e.g., teachers, books). The category contains quotations coded with: *education program*; *module*; *teacher*; *homework assignments*; (feedback from) *exam committee*; *prior education*; *other training*; and *literature*. The code *education program* was used when interviewees referred to the post-master program in general terms, without specifying which part of the program helped them to develop. The code *other training* was used for any additional formal training the interviewees took, such as conferences, seminars workshops and courses.

The second category is learning through *practical experience and reflective activities*. Both practical experience and reflective activities are incorporated in this category because they are interrelated, and usually mentioned in combination (see also Results and Discussion). The generic code *active learning* was originally used for all quotations that referred to experience, for example trying things out, applying methods with higher degrees of personalisation or flexibility, and trying to be guided by 'hunches' more often. After further inspection of the quotations, three distinctions were made within this code: *experience* (used when interviewees referred to practical experience in general, without specifying further), *individuation* (when interviewees described how they learned from adapting and personalising techniques and procedures they were taught), and *experimenting* (when interviewees described trying

out new ideas, and learning from the effects of these experiments). Other codes in the category learning through *practical experience and reflective activities* are *supervision*, *casework* (when interviewees referred specifically to the experience they gained as part of the casework in the program), *reflective practice*, *response client* (when interviewees described that they learned from the reactions or feedback they got from clients), *recording* (e.g., recording of sessions, presentations), and *role play*.

The third category of learning experiences is *learning from others*, and contained the codes: *peer consultation* (also known as peer supervision); *learning from colleagues*; *learning from fellow students*; *learning from other people* (who are not colleagues or fellow students); and *learning from others* (unknown whom). The latter was used when it was unclear from which other person(s) the interviewee had learned.

The three categories are not completely mutually exclusive, one might for instance argue that learning from a teacher is also *learning from others*, that role plays can be a part of *traditional learning*, or that peer consultation fits with the category *practical experience and reflective activities*. The learning experiences were categorized based on: the existing literature on learning experiences (e.g., Collins et al., 2013; McEwan & Tod, 2014; Owton et al., 2014); the concepts of formal, informal, and non-formal learning (e.g., Eshach, 2006); the researchers' opinion on which category they fitted in best; and on the basis of co-occurrences of learning experiences. The resulting categorization was then discussed with experts from educational sciences. These experts agreed with the categories and their description, and reported no controversies with existing views in educational sciences.

Check on development. Before exploring which learning experiences the interviewees found helpful for a specific learning outcome, it was important to check whether they had actually developed on the outcome. Interviewees mostly confirmed that they had developed professionally on the discussed learning outcomes (186 instances). In 32 instances participants expressed that they had not developed much or not enough yet, on a specific topic. Development was still a work in progress for a relatively large group of participants on *referral and fear of inefficacy* ($n = 6$), and *business operations* ($n = 8$). Conclusions about learning experiences that contributed to these two topics should thus be interpreted with caution.

Quantification of data. The research question of which learning experiences are useful for which learning outcomes dictated that the qualitative data on useful learning experiences be analyzed further, to establish the relationship between learning experiences and learning outcomes. With Atlas.ti (for Mac, version 1.0.28) combinations of learning outcomes and learning experiences were identified. The 13 learning outcomes addressed in the interviews, and 22 different codes for learning

experiences resulted in 286 possible combinations. We then calculated how often these combinations occurred (from here on called co-occurrences). In relating the learning experience to learning outcomes, the qualitative data was thus transformed into quantitative data, a process called quantitizing (e.g., Sandelowski, Voils, & Knafl, 2009).

Quantification of data obtained from structured interviews is commonly applied in mixed methodology research (Bryman, 2006). Because both the number of quotations per topic and per learning experience vary considerably, standardisation of the co-occurrences is needed to interpret the relative contribution of each learning experience to each learning outcome. This standardisation can be achieved by calculating odds ratios (e.g., Mosteller, 1968; Rosenthal, 1995). Odds ratios can be used as a measure for strength of association between categorical data (e.g., Rosenthal, 1995; Tan, Kumar, & Srivastava, 2004). Based on the co-occurrences, we calculated the strength of association between a learning experience and a learning outcome. Strength of association was calculated as the ratio between the probability that a specific learning experience contributed to a certain learning outcome and the probability that other learning experiences contributed to the learning outcome⁷.

Strength of association

$$= \frac{(\text{learning experience_learning outcome} / \text{learning experience_all other learning outcomes})}{(\text{all other learning experiences_learning outcome} / \text{all other learning experience_all other learning outcomes})}$$

For example, the learning experience *teacher* co-occurs four times with the learning outcome *treatment outline*. However, it also co-occurs with other learning outcomes (e.g., *assessment methods*, *interventions*), adding up to a total of 25 co-occurrences with other topics than *treatment outline*. The probability that *teacher* is mentioned in relation to learning about *treatment outline* is therefore $4/25 = .16$. Other learning experiences also co-occur with *treatment outline* (e.g., *supervision*, *module*). In total, 48 co-occurrences were found between *treatment outline* and learning experiences other than *teacher*. These learning experiences other than *teacher* co-occurred 608 times with learning outcomes other than *treatment outline*. The probability that learning experiences other than *teacher* co-occur with *treatment outline* thus is $48/608 = .08$. The strength of the association between learning from *teachers* and *treatment outline* is calculated as the ratio between these two probabilities, that is, $.16/.08 = 2.0$. This strength of association means that the probability that *teachers* are mentioned as a source to learn about *treatment outline* is twice as large as the probability that any of the other learning experiences is mentioned

⁷ In case a learning experience is only mentioned in relation to one specific topic, the probability that that specific learning experience contributes to that developmental topic cannot be calculated. In these cases the denominator is zero, because the learning experience is not mentioned for other developmental topics.

in relation to *treatment outline*, thus suggesting a clear contribution of teachers to learning about treatment outlines. Therefore, if a group of students is to learn how to establish a treatment outline, than learning from an expert who teaches the topic (i.e., *teacher*) seems to provide a useable and useful route, whereas other learning activities such as *literature*, or *peer consultation*, are less likely to be of use.

Rosenthal (1995) advocated qualitative descriptors of strength of association, and suggested to describe odds ratios of about 1.5 as weak associations, about 2.5 as moderate associations, about 4.0 as strong associations, and about 10.0 as very strong associations. However, such qualitative descriptors are not without critique and may (need to) vary between disciplines (Rosenthal, 1995). In the current study, we report the values of the odds ratios, rather than qualitative descriptors. An odds ratio of 1 means that one single learning experience is as strongly associated with a learning outcome as all other learning experiences taken together. For a comparison of one learning experience to all learning experiences collectively the minimum ratio of 1.5 for a weak association is thought to be too conservative. Therefore, an odds ratio of 1.0 was used as an additional cut-off point to Rosenthal's classification in Table 6; odds ratios greater than 1.0 are thus (arbitrarily) regarded as meaningful.

To summarize: we quantitized the qualitatively obtained data by counting co-occurrences and calculating odds ratios from these counts. This allowed for analysis of the extent to which learning experiences related to learning outcomes, thus providing a deeper understanding of the relationship between them. In the results and discussion section, the relationship between learning experiences and learning outcomes will be illustrated by quotes from the interviews.

Results and Discussion

Quotations

A total of 530 quotations were obtained that described one or more learning experiences. In 72 of these quotations some explicit reference was made to the sheet with learning experiences, either by interviewer or interviewee, the remaining 458 quotations were spontaneously formulated learning experiences. An average of 35 learning experiences ($SD = 6.9$) were coded per interview. An average of 50 ($SD = 18.6$) quotations of learning experiences were obtained per learning outcome. There was a large difference in the number of times learning experiences were mentioned, ranging from two quotations for *role play* and *recording*, to 114 quotations coded with *experience*. In Table 6 the strengths of associations between the learning experiences and learning outcomes are presented.

Table 6. The strength of association between learning experiences and learning outcomes.

			Know-how topics					Professional development topics									
			guiding question of the case / treatment goals	assessment methods / psychological report	treatment outline	adapting treatment plan	interventions	personal thoughts and feelings	referral and fear of ineffectiveness	balance client-led / directive counselling	business operations	session management	coping with athlete's environment	coping with athlete's motivation	coping with boundary issues		
q = n =																	
traditional learning	education program	19 10	0.55	1.43	0.66	1.02	3.02	0.61	0.70		1.02		0.99	1.21	2.22		
	module	46 13	2.83	1.20	1.99		2.51	1.45	1.29	0.28						1.36	
	teacher	29 11	2.85	2.58	2.03		2.56		1.53		0.65						
	literature	31 13	0.33	1.92			5.20	0.36		0.89	0.61		3.89	1.55			
	other training	23 12	0.45	2.18		0.83	3.58			0.58	7.63	0.62					
practical experience and reflective practice	experience	112 15	1.32	1.43	1.43	2.12	0.17	1.87	1.15	1.35	0.75	1.46	1.73	2.22	0.98		
	individuation	34 12	1.40	1.71	1.69	1.89	1.11	0.70	1.28	0.38	0.55		1.14	0.66	1.18		
	experimenting	27 12		0.29	1.55	0.70	1.47	0.89	0.49	0.49	2.44	5.54	0.68	1.79			
	supervision	82 13	1.43	0.29	1.76	2.09	0.33	1.37	0.90	1.90	0.47	1.76	0.72	2.08	2.99		
	casework	41 13	1.49	0.84	0.62	3.71	0.32	0.90	1.93	1.93		0.34	2.11	1.84	0.46		
	reflective practice	52 15	0.63	0.47	0.76	0.36	0.53	2.30	0.81	2.73		4.10	0.73	1.43	1.68		
	response client	25 12	0.88	0.31	1.05	0.76	0.54	0.46	4.50	3.48	0.76	1.94	0.74				
learning from others	peer consultation	32 14	0.32	0.79	0.38	2.88	0.91	1.66	1.37	0.41	1.26	0.44	1.22	1.50	2.88		
	colleagues	47 14	0.98	1.69	0.54	0.40	1.61	0.78	1.66	0.90	1.33	0.97	1.29	1.00	0.40		
	fellow students	10 4		0.82			0.68	4.88		3.24	2.04		1.97		2.03		
	other people	19 9	0.55		0.66		1.70	0.61			13.1	0.74	2.15		2.22		

Note. Strengths of associations ≥ 1.0 in very light grey, ≥ 1.5 in light grey, ≥ 2.5 in medium grey, ≥ 4.0 in dark grey, ≥ 10.0 in very dark grey. Learning experiences *prior education*, *assignments*, *exam committee*, *recording* and *role play* omitted due to a low number of quotations.

Traditional Learning

The learning experiences categorised as *traditional learning* (i.e., *education program; module; teacher; literature; other training; homework assignments; and the exam committee*) contributed, in general, more to development on the *know-how* topics, than to the *professional development* topics. There are more and stronger associations in the top left part of Table 6 than in the top right. Almost all *traditional learning* experiences were associated with the learning outcomes *assessment methods/psychological report*, and *interventions*. The following quotes illustrate how different kinds of traditional learning have helped the interviewees develop on these topics: “Of course I have learned a lot on interventions in the education program, but which exercises you can use for a specific athlete, I’ve taken that from the literature really” (PP15 on *interventions*, coded with *education program* and *literature*), and “Furthermore I have done... apart from the sport psychology courses, [a course on] diagnostics of ADHD and autism and that kind of stuff” (PP5 on *assessment methods/psychological report*, coded with *other training*).

The learning experiences *module* and *teacher* were interrelated, that is, a module and its teacher were often mentioned together. Both were additionally associated with *guiding question of the case/treatment goal*, and the *treatment outline*. PP4 shared, for example:

In the courses by [teachers of the courses intervention techniques and psychodiagnostics], ... we were given plenty of guidance in how to approach the intake. And so yes, I have learned how to interview, question, and how to probe of course, and so, yeah there is a learning effect from those classes, and from those experts.

Our finding that modules and teachers provided meaningful learning experiences fits well with the literature. Tod and colleagues (Tod et al., 2009; Tod & Bond, 2010; Owton et al., 2014) highlighted the role that teachers fulfil as external sources of expertise and useful interaction. They concluded that teachers may be particularly important in early career development when trainees still lack internal sources to draw from and seek role models to copy. Moreover, they suggested that professional elders can help trainees cope with insecurities. We found associations between the topic *referral and fear of ineffectiveness* with the learning experiences *module* and *teacher*, suggesting that the teaching in the program had indeed helped interviewees with their fear of being ineffective.

Most *traditional learning* experiences seemed only of limited value for learning how to establish or adapt a treatment plan. Moreover, there were only a limited number of associations between *traditional learning* experiences and *professional development* topics. Associations were found between learning from *literature* and

coping with the athlete's environment or *motivation*. PP 8 for example stated (concerning *coping with athlete's environment*): "I've read about that myself, about sports parents." Tod et al. (2007; 2009; Tod & Bond, 2010) suggested that trainees can find solace in learning about the developmental issues of peers. This suggestion was echoed by the responses of the interviewees. PP8 for instance reflected:

What helped me most..., I remember that we read articles about how in the beginning you are reasonably insecure and want to hold on to the fixed things that you learned. I read articles about that and realised that that was actually very normal.

Throughout the program, students were required to study theory and literature. The interviewees reported that literature had been helpful for them to develop (specifically on *assessment methods/psychological report, interventions, coping with athlete's environment, and coping with athlete's motivation*). However, the interviewees were rather precise on what was helpful or not. Their reflections on literature resonate well with Tod et al.'s (2007) conclusion that theory and research is found useful when trainees can directly apply it.

Other training was associated with *business operations*. PP8 explained:

I took a business boot camp a couple of weeks ago, and that was, well, a very "American style" happening, but it gave me a lot of new insights on how to do acquisition of clients. What should your website look like? How do you get customers to come to you? It may sound very corporate, but every sport psychologist that graduates is, in principal, an entrepreneur.

Interviewees often reported on *business operations* that they had not developed (enough) and gave the advice to include more on this topic in the program. This critique on training has been reported more often in the literature (e.g., Owton et al., 2014; Tod et al., 2009). The results illustrated that interviewees used additional training to fill in the gaps that the program left unfilled, and that they found additional training to be useful for extending or strengthening know-how gained in the program (specifically *assessment methods/psychological report* and *interventions*). Similarly, a neophyte sport psychologist shared that she took additional training in rational emotive behaviour therapy, motivational interviewing, and solution focused approaches (Collins et al., 2013).

Overall, it can be concluded that the *traditional learning experiences module, teacher, literature, and other training* were useful according to novice consultants. These learning experiences contributed particularly to practical know-how, such as establishing the guiding question, treatment goals and outline; and applying assessment methods and interventions.

Learning Through Practical Experience and Reflective Activities

The actual work with clients, and reflective activities such as *supervision* and *reflective practice*, are intertwined learning experiences. McEwan and Tod (2014) described this as “practice-reflection-practice” and aptly noted: “Experience alone ... is not enough. Professional experience is used as a guide to competence by the presence of a deliberate practice feedback system: interacting with a client and then engaging in active reflection, [and] supervision” (p. 86). The learning experiences in the category *practical experience and reflective activities* were mentioned often, and were associated with a broad range of topics, including both *know-how* and *professional development* learning outcomes (see Table 6).

Interviewees referred to practical experience in four slightly different ways: in general, without much further elaboration (code *experience* e.g., stating that they learned through client contact hours, by doing); the experience gained as part of the casework within the program (code *casework*); adapting or personalising methods and techniques they were taught (code *individuation*); and *experimenting*. All these forms of gaining practical experience were found helpful, as illustrated by the following quotes: “So eventually you start moulding yourself and checking, like: okay what suits me as a person and you build that into a kind of treatment plan that you subsequently use per person and shape further” (PP11 on *treatment outline*, coded with *individuation*).

My last case [in the program]. That was a ski jumper with fear issues and we went to work with that and we made progress, but... it’s not entirely, well, it wasn’t top notch, let’s put it that way. Certainly not concerning the result.

However they were satisfied enough. So that can also be a criterion” (PP13 on *referral and fear of ineffectiveness*, coded with *casework*).

A component of practical experience that interviewees specifically referred to were the responses from clients (code *response client*). The way clients react, and the feedback they got from them, helped the interviewees deal with fear of ineffectiveness and develop a balanced consulting style. PP1 for instance shared: “When you provide the athlete with a whole lot of information and question marks appear in their eyes, then you start thinking, hey, okay he doesn’t get it right now and I am too active myself in giving information.”

As highlighted previously, practical experience and reflection are coupled learning experiences. In our setting, the *casework* experiences of the interviewees were coupled particularly to *supervision*. Both were associated with *the guiding question of the case*, to *balance client-led/directive counselling*, and *coping with athlete’s motivation*. For other learning outcomes the association with *casework* was stronger than with *supervision* (e.g., *coping with athlete’s environment*), or vice versa (e.g., *coping with boundary issues*). It thus seems that although the actual work with athlete

clients (code *casework*) and the discussion of, or reflection on, that work with a supervisor (code *supervision*) went hand in hand, they also offered different contributions to professional development of trainees. The following quotes illustrate the contribution of *supervision*, or a combination of *supervision* and *casework*:

The supervision sessions. In a number of the seven cases we had to complete, I have, in consultation with the supervisor, adapted the plan. So I brought it up myself, like: well I have the idea that I should do this and that, and then we talked about it [in supervision] and then it was explained to me that that is ok [adapting the plan], as long as you can justify it and know why you are adapting. I still do that now. (PP15 on *adapting treatment plan*)

Again supervision.... So more about role confusion, ambiguity, etcetera, isn't it? How far.. how far do you go, till what point do you let people in, etcetera? ...

So well, yes, supervision has helped me develop a certain attitude towards that [boundaries], I reckon. (PP6 on *coping with boundary issues*)

In addition to supervision, interviewees reflected by themselves on their practical experiences and development (code *reflective practice*). This kind of self-reflective practice mainly contributed to *professional development* learning outcomes (e.g., *session management*, *balance client-led/directive counselling*, and *personal thoughts and feelings*). PP12, for instance, became aware of a disbalance in her counselling style through reflection:

It's that you start realising like, hey, I act in a certain way... yet I am not happy with that, and then I try something else and reflect on that ... and at a certain point in time you have marked out your personal frame through reflective practice.

The importance of practical experience, supervision, and reflective practice has also been stressed in the existing literature, either in personal accounts of supervised practicum experiences (e.g., Cropley et al., 2007; Holt & Strean, 2001; Tonn & Harmison, 2004), reflections of practitioners (e.g., Collins et al., 2013; Lindsay et al., 2007; Simons & Andersen, 1995), or studies of learning experiences (e.g., McEwan & Tod, 2014; Tod & Bond, 2010; Tod et al., 2007; Tod et al., 2011). These findings, and ours, suggest that it is important to train students in reflective practice. Students from our program were trained to use the reflective cycle of Korthagen and Vasalos (2005). Other models in the literature include Anderson et al.'s model of guided reflection (2004, as cited and used in Cropley et al., 2007), Boud's reflective learning model (2001, as cited and used in Woodcock et al., 2008), critical incident reflection (Tripp, 1993, as cited and used in Holt & Strean, 2001), Gibbs' six-stage cyclic framework (1988, as cited in Knowles et al., 2007), and treatment fidelity frameworks (Bellg et al., 2004, as cited and used in Lindsay et al., 2007).

Role play was only mentioned twice in the interviews. This is surprising since role play has previously been indicated as a useful learning experience (e.g., Tod et al, 2007; 2009). In line with our results, however, McEwan and Tod (2014) reported that role plays were mentioned more by clinical and counselling psychologists, than by sport psychologists. They hypothesised that this was because sport psychologists in their study were trained outside of a structured program. Our interviewees, however, were trained in a program, and in a large number of classes role plays were used. It is worthwhile to critically evaluate the ways role plays were structured, executed and evaluated in the classes. Overall, it can be concluded that *practical experience and reflective activities* contribute to the full scope of learning outcomes studied.

Learning From Others

Others (e.g., fellow students, colleagues) were relevant sources for learning, particularly for *professional development*. Others appeared less influential on development of *know-how*; there are stronger associations in the bottom right part of Table 6 than in the bottom left. Interviewees had learned from colleagues and fellow students in various ways. The experiences of these others provided ‘vicarious experiences’, as illustrated by PP7 (on *coping with boundary issues*): “I didn’t experience that yet, but ... a class mate raised it in a conversation ... and that shaped it for me”. In addition, others provided useful feedback and guidance. As an example, PP 13 shared (on *referral and fear of ineffectiveness*): “Consulting with colleagues, when you are in doubt of a case present it to them: right, what seems to be at play here? Am I capable enough for this? And what if...?” These findings are in line with Owton et al. (2014). In their sample, one trainee encountered depressive symptoms of an athlete-client and struggled with referral and detaching herself. The experience of this trainee raised awareness of these professional issues for the whole group of trainees. Moreover, Owton et al. highlighted the function of feedback from peers, by sharing an example of how one trainee remotivated himself as a consequence of feedback from his peers.

Colleagues were mentioned more often than fellow students as sources to learn from, especially in association with the *know-how* learning outcomes. Students all obtained similar practical know-how within the program. Therefore there may not be as much to learn from fellow students compared with professionals outside of the program. Moreover, after graduation, there are no longer teachers, supervisors, and fellow students to learn from. Interviewees may have actively sought input and advice from colleagues to substitute the discontinued learning from the program. The usefulness of collegial advice has also been addressed in the literature. Consultants who had recently finished British Psychological Society accreditation strongly advised peers to seek advice from (more experienced) colleagues (Eubank, 2013). Moreover,

seasoned consultants shared how they valued collegial advice and support in their (ongoing) professional development (e.g., Fifer, Henschen, Gould, & Ravizza, 2008; Simons & Andersen, 1994).

Peer consultation is a formalised setting to learn from others. Usually, peer consultation is centred around a challenging situation or incident of one of the participants. *Peer consultation* was mainly associated with the *professional development* learning outcomes. PP8 shared how *peer consultation* had helped her (*coping with boundary issues*): “it’s been very valuable for me to talk with others about it [in peer consultation] and reflect like, this cannot go on like this. Okay what do we do now? I want to, indeed, communicate my boundaries.” Tod et al. (2007) and McEwan and Tod (2014) reported that peer consultation was useful for professional development, but that the contribution of social interaction between peers was mentioned more frequently, and that organising peer consultation required a pro-active approach. In our setting, regular peer consultation is obligatory for accreditation. This obligation promotes and facilitates participation in peer consultation in our sample, which subsequently was found useful for learning, particularly on *professional development* learning outcomes.

Learning from fellow students, colleagues and peer consultation takes place within the field of sport psychology. In addition, interviewees learned from people outside sport psychology, for instance partners, friends, and colleagues in other work settings. PP2 shared how she attended young professional meetings to meet people outside of sport psychology and learn about *business operations*. A relative of PP10 is a doctor and she had “many ethical discussions with him. So indeed like what do you take home with you and what not, and what do you talk about at home and how do you cope with confidential things.”

Other people, from within and outside the classroom, and within and outside the field of sport psychology, were valuable sources for learning, particularly on *professional development* topics. Other people (e.g., peers, colleagues) may complement personal experience, by providing vicarious experiences; and enhance or extend reflective activities by providing feedback, different perspectives, and peer consultation.

Concluding Remarks

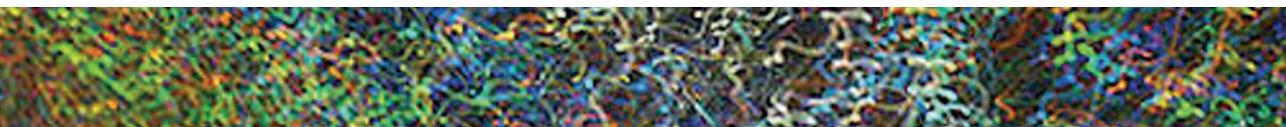
In the current study we related learning experiences to learning outcomes. Overall, the patterns of associations suggested that *traditional learning* experiences are most useful for development on *know-how* topics. *Know-how* is further developed, sharpened and extended through application and reflection. *Learning from others* may be of limited value for mastering *know-how*. Gaining experience and undertaking reflective activities seemed indispensable for development on *professional*

development learning outcomes. In addition to learning from experience and reflective activities, *learning from others* complemented or honed *professional development*. The *professional development* topics were less associated with *traditional learning*.

An important limitation of the study is that it is retrospective in nature. Novice consultants were asked which learning experiences they found, in retrospect, useful. This line of inquiry enabled interviewees to reflect on their learning process as a whole, because they had a little 'distance' to their formal training and had gained other learning experiences outside of training as well. As a downside however, the study relied on the recall of the interviewees; learning experiences that may have been very helpful in early training, but not later, may have been obscured.

The current study adds to the existing body of literature on professional development and learning experiences as it investigated specifically to which learning outcomes the various learning experiences contributed. Previous research (McEwan & Tod, 2014; Owton et al., 2014; Tod & Bond, 2010; Tod et al., 2007; 2009; 2011) investigated which learning experiences were useful for developing sport psychologists in general. The findings of the current study offer insight into the specific contribution of learning experiences to specific learning outcomes, and may as such aid, substantiate, or otherwise improve curriculum development and training efforts for sport psychology practice.

The results of the study are currently used to critically evaluate the learning activities in the program where the study took place. Specifically, we aim to better align the learning experiences with the intended learning outcomes of courses in the program. We found that novice consultants had learned from *traditional learning* experiences, especially for development of *know-how*. This finding suggests that formal education and structured programs for sport psychology practice are important. Fortunately, the number of countries in which formal and structured programs are available is growing, as is the information on these programs (e.g., Hutter, van der Zande, et al., in press; Sachs et al., 2011). Moreover, the study illustrated the importance of practical experience, ideally coupled with reflective activities, for all learning outcomes. It thus seems advisable for trainees and educational institutions to invest in training of reflective skills of trainees, and in high quality supervision. The findings may also substantiate accreditation systems in which (supervised) practical experience/contact hours are required. Finally, we recommend trainees and novice consultants to take advantage of professional networks whereby others can provide valuable learning experiences, mainly for *professional development*.



Chapter 5. **Assessing Competencies of Trainee Sport Psychologists: An Examination of the ‘Structured Case Presentation’ Assessment Method**



Hutter, R.I. (V.), Pijpers, J.R., & Oudejans, R.R.D. (2016).
Assessing competencies of trainee sport psychologists:
An examination of the ‘Structured Case Presentation’ assessment method.
Psychology of Sport & Exercise, 23, 21-30.

Assessing Competencies of Trainee Sport Psychologists: An Examination of the 'Structured Case Presentation' Assessment Method

Abstract

There is virtually no literature on how to assess competencies of applied sport psychologists. We assessed casework of ASP students and compared written case report assessment (WCRA) with structured case presentation assessment (SCPA) on reliability and acceptability (e.g., validity, transparency, feedback function and preference of methods, as perceived by students and assessors). Participants were 11 students, nine supervisors and three exam committee members. 18 Cases were evaluated with both WCRA by the supervisor and SCPA by two exam committee members. Ten of these cases were also evaluated with WCRA by exam committee members. Interrater reliability measures were calculated and compared for the different assessment methods. Participants' perception of the validity, transparency, and feedback function of the methods, and the preferences for assessment methods were surveyed with a brief questionnaire.

SCPA by the exam committee resulted in higher interrater reliability than WCRA by supervisor and exam committee. The feedback function of SCPA seemed superior to WCRA by either supervisor or exam committee. For assessment by the exam committee, the perceived validity and transparency of SCPA seemed higher than of WCRA. Students and exam committee had the highest preference for SCPA by supervisor and exam committee. Overall it can be concluded that, for assessment by the exam committee, structured case presentations provided a more reliable and acceptable method of assessment than written case reports only.

Keywords: Assessment, competency, Structured case presentation

Assessing Competencies of Trainee Sport Psychologists: An Examination of the 'Structured Case Presentation' Assessment Method

As the world of sport is becoming increasingly professional, it is important for the field of sport psychology to develop in tandem with this professionalization. The training and professional development of sport psychology practitioners play an important role in this process. In recent years, education and training of sport psychologists has received increasing attention. Insight into what should be learned to be successful in sport psychology has evolved through research, evaluation, and personal accounts (e.g., Cropley et al., 2010; Fifer et al., 2008; Gould, Murphy, Tammen, & May, 1991; Partington & Orlick, 1987; Simons & Andersen, 1995; Ward et al., 2005; Weigand, Richardson, & Weinberg, 1999; Yukelson, 2001). In these studies a wide variety of skills have been identified as important for sport psychologist's development, such as reflective practice, critical self-evaluation and abiding by ethical regulations, applying and understanding interventions, understanding and fitting in with the sporting context and culture, communication skills, and building an effective working alliance.

Following up on this body of literature, and in accordance with developments in related fields such as medicine and professional psychology, competencies for sport psychology service delivery have been conceptualised (AASP, 2012; APA, 2005; Fletcher & Maher, 2013; Stapleton, Hanks, Hays, & Parham, 2010; Tenenbaum, Lidor, Papaianou, & Samulski, 2003). Organisations, such as the American Psychology Association (APA, division 47), the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP), and the International Society of Sport Psychology (ISSP), have outlined areas of competence, mostly distinguishing between required knowledge and skills. ISSP, for example, depicted intervention skills and communication skills (Tenenbaum et al., 2003), and AASP (2012) distinguished between counselling skills and skills in sport and exercise, such as coaching. As for the knowledge-oriented competencies, knowledge of psychology, sport science, and sport psychology theory and practice were commonly listed competencies (AASP, 2012; APA, 2005; Tenenbaum et al., 2003). In addition, both ISSP and AASP explicitly mentioned knowledge of research and scientific methodologies.

The advanced knowledge of competencies is important to enhance training and performance in the professional field of sport psychology. However, one important aspect of competencies is still absent: There is virtually no literature on how to assess sport psychologists' competencies, or how to evaluate whether TSPs are "fit for practice". For certification by AASP (2012), for example, a mentorship evaluation and verification form has to be completed by mentors, but instruction is lacking on how scores on the criteria on this form should be established. APA, division 47, provides a self-assessment checklist "intended to assist practitioners in assessing their knowledge

and skills in terms of the proficiency criteria" (2005, p. 1), but no benchmarks or recommendations for self-assessment are given. ISSP (Tenenbaum et al., 2003) specified competence in different competence standards, but also overlooked the matter of how these standards should be evaluated. In short, although competence domains and criteria have been described, the question of how to assess competence remains largely unattended.

One possible explanation for the dearth of literature on competency assessment in sport psychology could be that there are hardly any competency problems in the field, and the unspecified systems are actually working well. However, in 2000 Andersen et al. stated "Given the research in clinical and counselling psychology and the limited studies among sport psychology consultants, impairment is an area waiting for research in the field of sport psychology" (p. 137). It seems that the wait is still ongoing; a literature search on professional impairment, competency problems or gatekeeping in sport psychology rendered no studies investigating the occurrence and incidence of competency problems in sport psychology. Thus, it is evident that the process of developing and assessing professional competence has been largely overlooked within the sport psychology domain.

Preventing competency problems in the field may not be the only function of competence assessment, though. According to Kaslow (2004) "the assessment of competence fosters learning, evaluates progress, assists in determining the effectiveness of the curriculum and training program, and protects the public." (p. 778). These are all functions that contribute to the quality of practice and education in sport psychology, and thus lend to the professional development in the field.

Competency assessment for complex professions is not an easy task. According to Epstein (2007) "All methods of assessment have strengths and intrinsic flaws" (p. 388). Similarly, Kaslow et al. (2009) highlighted "salient challenges" (p. S34) for all assessment methods in their competency assessment toolkit for professional psychology. In our personal experience, we recognise the difficulties in designing appropriate and acceptable measures for the evaluation of sport psychology students' competence. We are, in different roles, responsible for assessment in the post-master program in applied sport psychology in the Netherlands. The first author is a member of the exam committee and teacher in the program. The second author is the program manager. The third author is a member of the steering committee of the program. The impetus for the current study was our wish to take a critical look at the assessment method applied in the program, and to investigate an alternative way of assessing competence. The study aims to contribute to the knowledge on methods to assess competence, in our case of TSPs who are about to enter practice. As outlined previously, despite the important functions of assessment of competence, very little is

known about competence assessment in the field of sport psychology.

Context and Background of the Study

The most important assessment of competence in our post-master program is the evaluation of supervised casework, with which the TSPs conclude the program. Before the study took place, cases were evaluated by supervisors and an exam committee by assessing a written report on the case (see also Hutter, 2014). Both students and assessors were critical of this written case report assessment (WCRA). Assessors had the impression that the written reports did not completely capture the how, what and why of the students' professional actions (see also Hutter, 2014). Moreover, (wide) discrepancies occurred (in some cases) between the evaluation by the supervisor and the exam committee. Students indicated that they struggled to clearly present the professional decision-making and rationales behind their actions in the written reports. On a pragmatic level, both students and assessors perceived the written reports to be time consuming, tedious, and inefficient in terms of learning. Different actions were taken to improve the assessment. For example, we tried to reduce the discrepancies between assessors by revising the assessment criteria list and providing training for the assessors (Hutter, 2014). To try to relieve the workload associated with the written reports, we prescribed a maximum number of pages for the case reports. Although these actions improved some aspects of the assessment, room for improvement remained. Therefore we continued to discuss the needs, challenges, and available methods for assessment with stakeholders (such as students, assessors, and supervisors) and turned to the literature on competency assessment in search of a better assessment method.

Petti (2008) offered an elaborate description of a structured case presentation procedure that is used at the California School of Professional Psychology to assess students' clinical competence (from here on called CSPPA). For CSPPA, students hand in a written case report, which is read and (preliminarily) evaluated by the assessors. Next, the assessors conduct a 60 minutes oral examination with the student. At the end of the oral examination, the assessors complete the evaluation and grading of the student, using a standardised criteria list outlining different competencies and competency domains. The CSPPA (Petti, 2008; Swope, 1987) has been reported to have high reliability (Dienst & Armstrong, 1988; Tori, 1989, both as cited in Petti, 2008), and it has been used for over a decade (Petti, 2008). Goldberg et al. (2011) compared CSPPA with three other assessment methods for the evaluation of performance of clinical psychology interns. CSPPA was the preferred method of both the interns and the examiners in the study, in terms of clarity, simplicity, and fidelity. Kaslow et al. (2009) categorised CSPPA as *case review presentations*, and discussed this method in the competency assessment toolkit for professional psychology. They

deemed case review presentations useful for assessing different foundational competencies (e.g., interventions) at different developmental levels, including entry level to practice.

For our study, we adapted the CSPPA structure of assessment into what we labelled a *Structured Case Presentation Assessment* (SCPA; see 'Method' section for further explanation). We chose the CSPPA structure, with assent of the before mentioned stakeholders, for its evidence-based merit, but also its practical feasibility within the post-master program. Standardised criteria lists were already part of the assessment method applied prior to the study. For SCPA, the same criteria lists could be used, with the criteria now scored in two stages; first, preliminarily on the basis of the written report and second, after the discussion meeting with the student. Organisation-wise, only the discussion meeting had to be added on top of the written reports used in the original WCRA method. The rest of the logistics of assessments did not require any substantial changes for SCPA to be introduced.

In general, in applying assessment methods, assessors should strive for high validity, reliability, objectivity, and transparency (e.g., van Berkel & Bax, 2015), for the provision of valuable feedback for the professional development of students (e.g., Hattie & Timperley, 2007), and for assessment methods that are highly accepted by the people involved (e.g., van der Vleuten, 1996). In the current study we compared evaluation of the written case reports only (i.e., WCRA) to evaluation on the basis of a written case report and a discussion meeting with the student (i.e., SCPA). Our comparison of assessment methods focused on interrater reliability and the preferences of students and supervisors.

Method

Participants

Students. At the start of the study, all students in the final stage of the post-master program (17 in total) received a written explanation of the study by e-mail, outlining the aim of the study and the rationale and procedure of the SCPA. The final stage of the program consists of supervised casework of at least seven different cases, and a minimum of 70 client contact hours. Each case consists of at least six client contact hours, and five hours of indirect supervision (i.e., the supervisor is not present at the client contact, supervision sessions are held with supervisor and student). During the research period, 11 students (5 women, 6 men, average age 27.2 years, $SD = 1.8$) concluded at least one of their first two cases. A total of 19 cases from these 11 different students were evaluated with both WCRA and SCPAs. The first SCPA served as a pilot assessment, to allow the assessors to become familiar with the procedure, timekeeping, structure, and execution of SCPA. The remaining 18 SCPAs and

corresponding WCRA were included in the study.

Assessors. The 18 cases included in the study were supervised by nine different supervisors. The exam committee involved in the study consisted of three members; two members were also teachers in the post-master program, the third was also a supervisor in the program. All assessors were senior sport psychologists with much experience in sport psychology practice. They also had experience with the WCRA, and had received basic training in WCRA. The assessors who conducted the SCPA, (i.e., the exam committee, see 'SCPA procedure' below) received information in writing and in person about the aim and procedure of the SCPA.

Inclusion of Cases

The assessment of the first two cases of students in the program was formative, meaning that students obtained an evaluation to benchmark their level of competence. An insufficient grade (i.e., *unsatisfactory*) in this stage had no consequences for students, other than informing them that their level of competence was under par. The assessment of the remaining five cases was summative: Students had to obtain a grade of at least *satisfactory* to complete the particular case. For the current study, only formative assessed cases (i.e., the first two cases of students) were included. In this way, if different outcomes of both assessment methods would occur, this would not have undesired positive or negative practical consequences for students.

Prior to the study, all formatively assessed cases (i.e., first and second cases) were evaluated using WCRA by the supervisor, and each first case of a student was evaluated using WCRA by a member of the exam committee. During the study, all included cases were additionally evaluated by SCPAs. SCPAs were conducted by two members of the exam committee (in alternating pairs). The following evaluations were thus obtained for first cases of students: WCRA by the supervisor, WCRA by a member of the exam committee, SCPA by the same member of the exam committee, and SCPA by an additional exam committee member. For second cases of students, WCRA evaluation by the supervisor, and SCPA evaluations of two exam committee members were obtained. An overview of the included cases with corresponding assessors and assessments is presented in Table 7.

All cases that were concluded in the research period were included in the study, except one. For the excluded case, no SCPA meeting took place, due to logistic problems in planning the examination.

Table 7. Overview of participants, cases and assessors included in the study.

Student	Case of student	Supervisor (WCRA)	Exam committee member (WCRA)	Exam committee members (SCPA)
1	1st case	1	3	Pilot
1	2nd case	1	-	1 & 2
2	1st case	2	1	1 & 3
2	2nd case	2	-	2 & 3
3	1st case	3	1	1 & 2
3	2nd case	3	-	1 & 2
4	1st case	2	2	1 & 2
4	2nd case	2	-	1 & 2
5	1st case	4	3	2 & 3
5	2nd case	4	-	1 & 2
6	1st case	5	3	2 & 3
6	2nd case	5	-	1 & 2
7	1st case	3	2	2 & 3
7	2nd case	4	-	2 & 3
8	1st case	6	3	1 & 3
8	2nd case	6	-	1 & 2
9	1st case	7	1	1 & 3
10	1st case	8	3	2 & 3
11	1st case	9	3	2 & 3

Assessment Procedures

After completion of each case, students handed in a written report. The written report consisted of two parts: an overall case report (maximum length 12 pages), and reports of each session (maximum length 1 page per session).

The written reports were evaluated with two criteria lists, that is, the criteria list for case reports and the criteria list for session reports. The criteria lists (see Appendix C) outline different competencies and domains and have been developed through the collaboration of exam committee members and supervisors (see Hutter, 2014). The criteria list for case reports consists of 39 items and was designed to evaluate six domains: *intake session and presenting concern* (10 items), *professional vision and working model/framework* (seven items), *goals* (four items), *treatment plan* (five items), *evaluation* (four items), and *reflective practice* (nine items). The criteria list for session reports consists of 24 items and addresses three domains: *session-goal* (five items), *interventions* (nine items), and *reflective practice and communication* (10 items). Each item on the lists was scored with *unsatisfactory*, *unsatisfactory/satisfactory*, *satisfactory*, *satisfactory/good*, or *good*.

WCRA procedure. Written reports were handed in to the program manager and sent for evaluation to the assessors involved in the case (i.e., the supervisor, and if the report concerned the first case of a student, a member of the exam committee). The assessors completed the evaluation with the criteria lists for case and session reports and sent these back to the program manager. This was the customary procedure of assessment of cases in the post-master program, prior to the study.

SCPA procedure. For SCPA, the written reports were sent to the assessors (i.e., two members of the exam committee, for first cases one of them was the same member that completed the WCRA of the case). In line with the CSPPA (Petti, 2008), assessors were allowed ample time to read the report. In most cases the SCPA meeting took place within four weeks after handing in the report. Assessors were requested to evaluate the case report, and to evaluate one session report. The session to be evaluated was randomly selected by the program manager. The assessors scored the same criteria lists for case and session reports as in WCRA, but did so in two stages in the SCPA procedure. After reading the written case report, the assessors gave scores for all items for which they felt they had sufficient information from the written report. If assessors felt that they lacked information to give a score for a particular item on the basis of the written report only, they marked the item as *to be determined at the SCPA meeting*. The assessors then completed their evaluations after the SCPA meeting took place. For the purpose of the study, the assessors sent both preliminary and final SCPA evaluations to the program manager.

For the majority of the evaluations the WCRA and SCPA were separate assessments. However, for first cases of students, one member of the exam committee evaluated the case twice. This member completed a WCRA based on the written report only; and a preliminary SCPA evaluation based on the written case report only, followed by a final SCPA based on the case report plus the SCPA meeting. Although the WCRA and SCPA are presented as separate procedures, in these cases of "double assessment" the WCRA scoring and preliminary SCPA scoring were, in reality, done in a combined fashion. The assessor typically first scored the written report with WCRA, with forced scores on items that they ideally would like or need more information on; and marking these items as *to be determined at the SCPA meeting* for the preliminary SCPA evaluation.

The structure of the SCPA meeting was the same as in the CSPPA (Petti, 2008): In the first 10 minutes the assessors prepared the meeting in absence of the student, then a 40 minute period was used to discuss the case with the student, and the last 10 minutes were used to prepare and provide feedback to the student. Just as with CSPPA, the student did not have to present the case, because information was already available in the written report. The assessors used the preparation time to compare which scores

they had indicated *to be determined in SCPA meeting* and sketched a rough guideline for the discussion time with the student. In the 40 minutes discussion with the student, the assessors tried to obtain information of the student's competence on the criteria they felt they could not score on the basis of the written report only. Attempts were made to lower the students' anxiety for the assessment by explaining the procedure thoroughly, by allowing them ample time to think and collect their thoughts and feelings, and by verbally and nonverbally encouraging open and honest reflections about the case. Moreover, in each SCPA meeting the assessors clarified that the points that would be discussed were on the table because the assessors needed more information to determine the level of the students' competence, and not necessarily because these were weak points in the case. After the discussion with the student, the assessors briefly discussed the meeting separately from the student, and prepared key points of feedback. Next, the assessors delivered this feedback verbally to the student. Finally, the student was invited to share his/her experience of the SCPA meeting with the assessors. After the SCPA meeting (usually the same day) the assessors completed the criteria lists for case and session reports (SCPA scores), scoring the items that were previously marked as *to be determined in SCPA meeting* as well, and sent these to the program manager. The program manager then sent all completed criteria lists of the case to the student. In exceptional cases in the study, the student had received the evaluation from the WCRA's before the SCPA meeting took place.⁸ After assessments were completed, participants received an evaluation questionnaire and gave informed consent for their data to be included in the study.

Data Collection

Scores of criteria lists. The following data were collected for all cases ($N = 18$): (a) WCRA scores of the supervisor for all items on the criteria lists; (b) the *to be determined in SCPA meeting* scores on the criteria lists of two exam committee members; and (c) SCPA scores of two exam committee members for all items on the criteria lists. In addition, the WCRA scores of an exam committee member were collected for the students' first cases included in the study ($n = 10$).

Opinion of students and assessors on assessments. Students and assessors were requested to complete a brief online questionnaire. The first author (as a member of the exam committee) did not complete the questionnaires, to prevent researcher bias in these data. Respondents were asked to indicate on a visual analogue scale the extent to

⁸ Education and examination regulations state that students are entitled to obtain evaluations within four weeks after completion. Therefore, if a SCPA could not be scheduled within four weeks after handing in a report, and the student claimed his/her right to obtain the evaluations, then the completed WCRA were sent to the student.

which they agreed with statements addressing:

- transparency (*the evaluation was completed in a fair fashion* [students] / *I was able to evaluate the case objectively* [assessors], and *the grounds on which I am evaluated are clear to me* [students] / *the grounds on which I should evaluate the case are clear to me* [assessors]);
- validity (*the evaluation does justice to my professional competence during this case* [students] / *I was able to judge the level of professional competence of the student during this case* [assessors], and *I agree with the evaluation* [students] / *I stand by my evaluation* [assessors]);
- feedback (*the feedback I received is helpful for my professional development* [students] / *the feedback I provided is helpful for the students' professional development* [assessors], and *I can relate to the feedback* [students] / *I stand by my feedback* [assessors]).

The online visual analogue scales rendered scores ranging from zero (no agreement with the statement) to one hundred (full agreement with the statement).

Students scored the six statements for each assessment method with which their case was evaluated (i.e., WCRA by the supervisor, WCRA by the exam committee [after first cases], and SCPA by the exam committee). Supervisors scored the six statements for their WCRA evaluations. Exam committee members scored the statements for the assessments they applied to a case (i.e., WCRA and/or SCPA).

In the last question of the questionnaire, students and exam committee members were asked to rank different assessment methods in order of preference. We wanted to check which assessment method (WCRA or SCPA) and which assessors (supervisors, exam committee members, or both) were preferred by students and assessors. These two dimensions (assessors and method) combined, resulted in six options to be ranked:

- WCRA by supervisor only
- WCRA by exam committee only
- WCRA by supervisor and exam committee
- SCPA by supervisor only
- SCPA by exam committee only
- SCPA by supervisor and exam committee

Data Analysis

Frequencies of the score to be determined in the SCPA meeting.

Frequencies of the score *to be determined in the SCPA meeting* were calculated for each item on the criteria lists. Exam committee members gave this score in preparation of SCPA, when they felt that the written report contained too little information to be able to score the item. In the WCRA, assessors are “forced” to give a score for each item. Frequencies of *to be determined in the SCPA meeting* thus indicate how often judgements are forced to be made with insufficient information. We argue that scores that are given on the basis of insufficient information are unreliable. Therefore, we used the frequencies of the scores *to be determined in the SCPA meeting* as indicators of reliability of WCRA.

Interrater reliability. Krippendorff’s alpha (K-alpha) was used as a measure of interrater reliability. K-alpha is frequently used in qualitative research and incorporates characteristics of other reliability/agreement measures such as Fleiss’ kappa, Scott’s pi, or correlation coefficients (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007). K-alpha takes agreement by chance into account, is suitable for ordinal data, and can be applied to datasets with missing data (Krippendorff, 2011). K-alpha ranges from -1 to 1. If the judgements are unrelated (i.e., agreement achieved is equal to achievement that can be expected by chance) K-alpha is 0. A negative K-alpha indicates that disagreements are systematic: The agreement is worse than what would result from chance. Krippendorff (2004) contends that a K-alpha of at least .80 indicates perfect interrater agreement, but tentative conclusions are acceptable for K-alphas of at least .667. He states that “Except for perfect agreement, there are no magical numbers, however.” (p. 429).

Types of agreement. Interrater reliability was calculated for three types of agreement:

- WCRA-agreement, which is a comparison of the WCRA scores of the supervisor with the WCRA scores of the member of the exam committee (students’ first cases only, $n = 10$, a total of 630 pairs);
- SCPA-agreement, which is a comparison of the SCPA scores of the two exam committee members ($N = 18$, a total of 1134 pairs);
- WCRA/SCPA-agreement, which is a comparison of the WCRA scores of the supervisor with the SCPA scores of the two exam committee members (students’ first cases only, $n = 10$, a total of 3402 pairs),

Levels of calculation. For each type of agreement we calculated interrater reliability on two levels: *overall*, and separately per *item* for the 63 items on the criteria lists. With the overall calculation the general interrater reliability of each assessment method is evaluated. With the calculation per item interrater reliability of separate items are inspected. It could be, for instance, that certain items are weak in terms of interrater reliability, while other items render high agreement between assessors. Interrater reliability was calculated on both levels, for each type of agreement, resulting in the following K-alpha's: K-alpha WCRA-agreement overall, K-alpha SCPA-agreement overall, K-alpha WCRA/SCPA-agreement overall, 63 K-alphas for WCRA-agreement (one for each item), 63 K-alphas for SCPA-agreement, and 63 K-alphas for WCRA/SCPA-agreement.

Statistical comparison of interrater reliability between types of agreement. To analyse whether interrater reliability differed between SCPA and WCRA, we compared the K-alphas for SCPA agreement per item with the K-alphas for WCRA agreement per item, using Wilcoxon signed rank tests for paired samples.

Moreover, we wanted to check whether SCPA by the exam committee resulted in better agreement with the supervisor's (WCRA) evaluation of the case than WCRA by the exam committee. After SCPA, exam committee members have more information on the case and the student. Therefore their evaluation might be more equal to the evaluation of the supervisor. We tested whether there was a difference between K-alphas for WCRA/SCPA agreement per item and for WCRA agreement per item, using Wilcoxon signed rank tests for paired samples.

Questionnaire data. Finally, we examined the questionnaire data of students and assessors to evaluate the validity, transparency, and feedback function of each assessment method as perceived by assessors and students, and their preference for assessment methods. For each assessment method in the study (WCRA by supervisor, WCRA by exam committee, and SCPA by exam committee) descriptive statistics were calculated for each statement in the questionnaire. For the ranking of assessment methods, frequencies of ranks were calculated, that is, how often an assessment method was ranked as first preference, second preference, etc.

Results

Frequencies of the Score 'To Be Determined in the SCPA Meeting'

A total of 36 evaluations were completed by members of the exam committee (18 cases, assessed by two members). Frequencies of the score *to be determined in the SCPA meeting* were calculated for each item on the criteria lists. These frequencies ranged from 0 to 24 (out of the 36 evaluations). On average, an item required further

discussion at the SCPA meeting in 32.5% of the evaluations. However, there are substantial differences among items in the number of times they had to be discussed at the SCPA meeting to determine a score ($SD = 16.4$). For some items, exam committee members were generally able to give a score based on the written report. The following items were almost always ($\geq 94\%$ of the evaluations) given a score without requiring discussion at the SCPA meeting: *describes the sports history of the client, establishes and describes a case-concept of the client, and describes the psycho-diagnostic assessment in line with the standards of the course psycho-diagnostics*.

A number of items ($n = 9$) were frequently ($\geq 55\%$ of the evaluations) scored as *to be determined in SCPA meeting*, thus indicating that the exam committee often struggled to give a score on the basis of the written report only. These items are: *notifies potential discrepancies within the behaviour of the client, and acts upon it; adapts consulting style and approach to the client; varies consulting style and approach with client; substantiates the choice for the consulting style and approach; recognizes potential transference and countertransference processes; establishes whether the skill and practice material is understood by the client; describes possibilities for improvements related to the strong and weak points; is guided by a clear working vision in the session; and applies issues that were addressed in supervision in the session*.

On average, exam committee members scored 21.7 ($SD = 6.0$) out of the 63 items on the criteria lists as *to be determined in SCPA meeting*. This indicates that the written report provided the exam committee with too little information to give an appropriate score for about one third of their scores. The exam committee members did not always agree whether an item should be discussed at the SCPA meeting to determine a score. There were 1134 pairs of scores in total: 18 cases, scored on 63 items. In about half of these pairs, exam committee members agreed that a score could be given without further discussion at the SCPA meeting (565 pairs, 49.8%). In about one sixth of the pairs, the exam committee members agreed that discussion at a SCPA meeting was required to determine a score (155 pairs, 13.7%). However, in 414 instances (36.5%) one exam committee member indicated that discussion at a SCPA meeting was required to determine a score, while the other member gave a score without need for further discussion.

Overall the results show that, according to the exam committee, the written report is often insufficient to give an appropriate score for items on the criteria lists. This finding raises serious concerns about the reliability of evaluation of cases based on the written report only.

Interrater Reliability

Interrater reliability was highest for SCPA and lowest for WCRA. The K-alphas overall were .42, .25, and .20 for SCPA-agreement, WCRA/SCPA agreement, and WCRA agreement, respectively. The lowest K-alpha for WCRA agreement further adds to the concern on reliability of WCRA. K-alphas of all assessment methods were below .667, the level required for tentative conclusions, but the agreement between scores was higher for SCPA evaluations than for WCRA evaluations. The agreement between SCPA evaluations of the exam committee and the WCRA of the supervisor was higher than the agreement between exam committee and supervisor with WCRA, but lower than the SCPA agreement between exam committee members.

K-alphas were calculated per item on the criteria lists, and compared for SCPA and WCRA. See Figure 3 for a summary of the K-alphas per item. There was a significant difference between K-alphas per item for SCPA agreement ($Mdn = .43$), and the K-alphas per item for WCRA agreement ($Mdn = .17$; $Z = 4.57$, $p < .001$). Interrater reliability of SCPA by exam committee members was superior to the interrater reliability of WCRA by supervisors and exam committee members. Next, we checked whether the scores of exam committee members were in better agreement with the supervisors’ scores with SCPA than after WCRA. We compared the K-alphas per item of WCRA/SCPA agreement to the K-alphas per item of WCRA agreement. See Figure 4 for a summary of the K-alphas per item. There was no significant difference between WCRA/SCPA-agreement ($Mdn = .18$) and WCRA-agreement ($Mdn = .17$; $Z = 1.24$, $p = .212$). After SCPA the scores of the exam committee were not in better agreement with the supervisor scores than after WCRA.

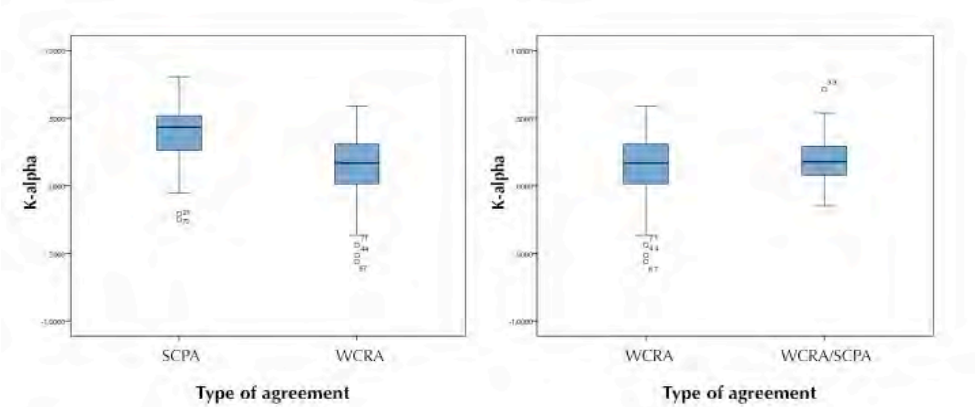


Figure 3 and 4. Boxplot summaries of K-alphas per item of the criteria lists for SCPA agreement and WCRA agreement and WCRA agreement and WCRA/SCPA agreement.

There were a number of outliers in the K-alphas per item. These outliers indicate items that are scored with exceptionally high, or exceptionally low, interrater agreement. In WCRA interrater reliability was low for the following items: *reflects on the consequences of these thoughts and feelings for his/her professional actions*; *describes strong and weak points of the session*; and *notices potential discrepancies between the behaviour of the client and the case-concept, and acts upon it*. In SCPA, agreement was low for the items: *integrates the conclusions from the psycho-diagnostic assessment into the treatment/intervention outline*, and *recognizes potential transference and countertransference processes (session)*. Relatively high agreement existed between SCPA scores of the exam committee and WCRA scores of supervisors (WCRA/SCPA agreement) for the item *formulates a clear and realistic intervention plan*.

Questionnaire Data

After each assessment, students and assessors gave their opinion on the assessment methods applied, by scoring the extent to which they agreed with the statements of the questionnaire. The mean scores and standard deviations of responses are summarised in Table 8.

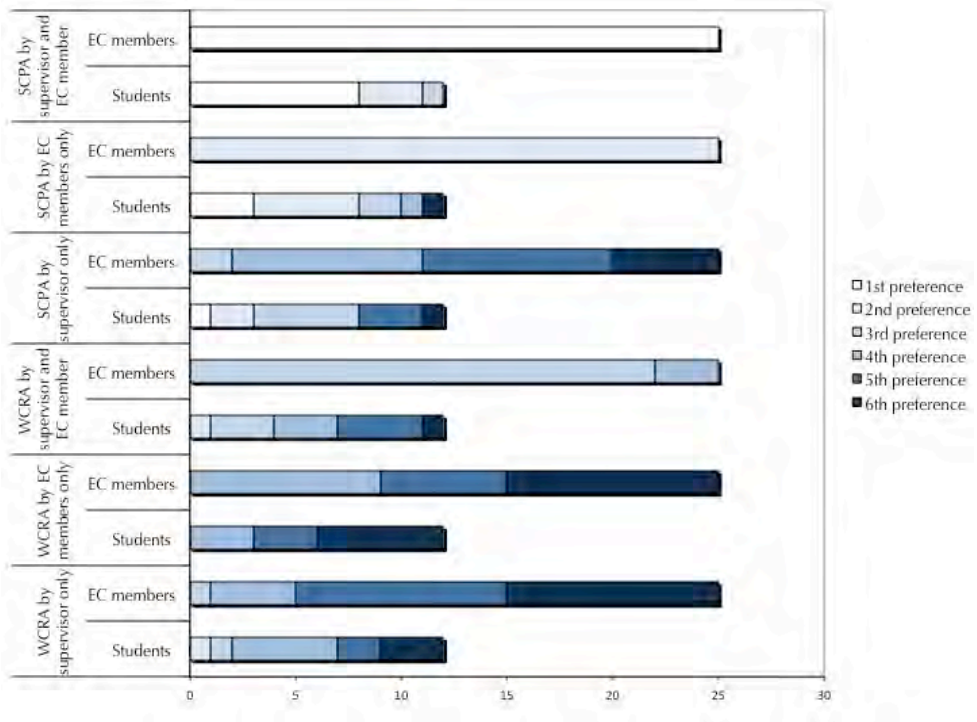
Table 8. Mean scores and standard deviations (between brackets) of the extent to which students and assessors agree with the statements about transparency, validity, and feedback function of each assessment method.

Students	Respondents:	11	9	11	Assessors	Respondents	8	2	2
	N of responses:	16	9	16		N of responses:	17	5	25
	Assessment method:	WCRA	WCRA	SCPA		Assessment method:	WCRA	WCRA	SCPA
		by Sup	by EC	by EC			by Sup	by EC	by EC
The evaluation was completed in a fair fashion.		73.8 (22.8)	62.1 (25.1)	72.3 (26.2)	I was able to evaluate the case objectively.		67.7 (22.5)	81.4 (5.6)	89.4 (6.0)
The grounds on which I am evaluated are clear to me.		66.5 (28.9)	65.3 (24.6)	73.2 (29.5)	The grounds on which I should evaluate the case are clear to me.		73.7 (18.4)	78.4 (9.2)	88.1 (6.9)
The evaluation does justice to my professional competence during this case.		71.4 (21.5)	52.0 (33.0)	66.3 (32.2)	I was able to judge the level of professional competence during this case.		70.1 (27.6)	71.2 (9.8)	88.9 (8.5)
I agree with the evaluation.		74.3 (17.8)	64.2 (27.3)	73.4 (28.0)	I stand by my evaluation.		84.4 (15.9)	83.8 (9.6)	95.6 (8.0)
The feedback is helpful for my professional development.		56.8 (36.5)	63.8 (28.3)	79.0 (24.2)	The feedback is helpful for the students' professional development.		81.9 (17.2)	84.2 (9.2)	86.4 (12.8)
I can relate to the feedback.		62.3 (32.8)	61.9 (30.0)	74.5 (28.0)	I stand by my feedback.		86.8 (15.3)	89.2 (8.0)	92.6 (9.4)

The results suggested that students perceive transparency, validity and feedback function to be higher for WCRA by the supervisor and SCPA by the exam committee than for WCRA by the exam committee. When we compared WCRA by the supervisor with SCPA by the exam committee, students seemed to perceive these assessments to be equally fair ($M = 73.8$ and $M = 72.3$ respectively). The grounds on which students are evaluated seemed clearer to them with SCPA ($M = 73.2$ versus 66.5). Students seemed to agree equally with the evaluations of their supervisor (WCRA, $M = 74.3$) and the evaluations resulting from SCPA by the exam committee ($M = 73.4$). However, students indicated that the evaluation they received from their supervisor did better justice to their professional competence ($M = 71.4$) than the SCPA evaluation by the exam committee ($M = 66.3$). In terms of feedback, students seemed to prefer SCPA by exam committee to WCRA by their supervisor. The feedback from SCPA is recognised better ($M = 74.5$ versus 62.3) and more helpful for professional development ($M = 79.0$ versus 56.8). Apart from the extent to which the evaluation does justice to the level of competence, students valued SCPA by exam committee equally, or higher than WCRA by their supervisor.

Students and exam committee members ranked six different combinations of assessment methods and assessors in order of their preference. The ranks given by students and exam committee are presented in Figure 5. As can be seen in the figure SCPA received more often high ranks (first to third preference) than WCRA, which received more low ranks (fourth to sixth preference). The results thus illustrated a clear preference of both students and exam committee members for SCPA over WCRA. Moreover, both students and exam committee members valued a combination of the supervisor and an exam committee member as assessors. The most preferred assessment method is SCPA by the supervisor and a member of the exam committee, followed by SCPA by exam committee members, as applied in the study.

Figure 5. Frequencies of ranks students and EC members assigned in order of preference to six different assessment methods. Lighter coloured bars indicate a high preference for an assessment method. Data are obtained from 12 questionnaires completed by 9 students and 25 questionnaires completed by 2 EC members.



Discussion and Conclusions

In the current study, we investigated whether SCPA is a better assessment method than WCRA. As expected, we found that reliability of WCRA was problematic. We found that reliability of assessment was better with SCPA, and that, for assessment by the exam committee, students and assessors perceive SCPA to have benefits in terms of validity, transparency and feedback function. We will discuss these findings in more detail, starting with the comparison of interrater reliability and the questionnaire data between the assessment methods, followed by a discussion of the limitations and implications of the study.

Kaslow et al. (2009) stated that it is challenging to assess skills and attitudes and to achieve high fidelity with written examinations. Moreover, they pointed out that record reviews (comparable to the session reports assessed in the study) may fail to capture all procedures, interventions, and treatment components. They also stressed that direct observation data are required for reliable assessment with competency evaluation rating forms. Our findings are in line with Kaslow et al.'s critique of written

examinations. We found that often information was lacking in WCRA for proper assessment, and that interrater reliability of WCRA was low.

Interrater reliability was significantly higher with SCPA than with WCRA. In SCPA, assessors hear the students describe knowledge application, skills, and values in interaction with clients, and can observe verbal and nonverbal communication (Kaslow et al., 2009). All these factors may contribute to the higher interrater reliability of SCPA. Another factor of importance concerns the assessors involved with each method. For the interrater reliability of WCRA, the evaluation of the supervisor is compared with the evaluation of a member of the exam committee. These two assessors differ in the amount of contextual knowledge they have on the student and the case, in that one has been supervising the case, the other has only read the students' written report. In SCPA the knowledge of the case and student is the same for both assessors, as both members of the exam committee have read the written report and participated in the SCPA meeting. This homogeneity of information may play a role in the higher interrater reliability of SCPA.

In the discussion on interrater reliability it is important to bear in mind that, although intuitively the assessment of the supervisor may have higher fidelity to students and assessors (and some of the data point in that direction), substantial direct observation of trainees' interactions with clients is required for proper evaluation in field settings (Pulito, Donnelly, Plymale, & Mentzer, 2006, as cited in Epstein, 2007). In our set-up, where supervision is indirect, the supervisor has no direct observation of the interaction. Moreover, different studies have addressed the potential bias of supervisors in evaluation of supervisees (e.g., Gonsalvez et al., 2013; Yap et al., 2012). Thus, rather than privileging the supervisor's assessment as the gold standard and expecting the exam committee members to assimilate their assessments, we strive for assessments from both assessors that are as objective as possible and result in high agreement between evaluations.

Although interrater reliability is higher for SCPA than for WCRA, the K-alphas are still lower than .667 recommended for tentative conclusions (Krippendorff, 2004). A low interrater reliability is a common problem in assessments. Jonsson and Svingby (2007) concluded that both consensus estimates (e.g., percent agreement or Cohen's kappa) and consistency estimates (e.g., Spearman or Pearson correlations) often do not meet the minimum values required for acceptable judgements. Unfortunately, no interrater reliability of the original CSPPA is reported by Petti (2008). Therefore, the reliability found in the current study cannot be compared with previous applications of the same assessment procedure.

We conclude that the introduction of SCPA significantly improves interrater reliability of our assessment of casework. Reliability might be further improved through

more elaborate training of assessors, exchanging and discussing evaluations among assessors, and operationalizing scoring criteria, for example in the form of rubrics.

We used the questionnaire data to compare the (perceived) validity, transparency, and feedback function of the assessment methods. Two different comparisons will be discussed: a comparison between different assessors (i.e., WCRA by the supervisor and WCRA by the exam committee) and between different methods (i.e., WCRA by the exam committee and SCPA by the exam committee).

WCRA by the supervisor is perceived to be more fair and valid than WCRA by the exam committee. The supervision relationship, information exchange during the case, and the guidance of the supervisor in the execution of the case, may all play a role in the better reception of the supervisor's WCRA evaluation. Interestingly, the students seem to find the feedback that they receive from the exam committee (both with WCRA and SCPA) to be more helpful for their professional development than the feedback from the supervisor. According to Hattie and Timperley (2007): "Feedback is one of the most powerful influences on learning and achievement" (p. 81). They stated that feedback should address the three questions of where am I going, how am I going, and where to go next. The results suggest that the exam committee's feedback was more informative for students regarding these three questions. It might be that the feedback of an external, third person is a valuable addition to the feedback already gained in the supervision context.

From the results of the questionnaire data it became clear that when students are assessed by the exam committee, they prefer the validity, transparency and the feedback function of SCPA over WCRA. The questionnaire items consistently received higher scores for SCPA than WCRA by the exam committee.

When asked to rank the assessment methods, both students and exam committee members expressed a clear preference for SCPA over WCRA. This finding is in line with Goldberg et al. (2011), who reported that SCPA was the preferred method of assessment of students and assessors in comparison to three other oral examination procedures. Students and exam committee members expressed the highest preference for SCPA to be conducted with the supervisor and an exam committee member. It seems that students (and exam committee members alike) prefer assessment by multiple assessors. This preference is contingent with recommendations in the literature to use multiple assessors (Baartman, 2008) or multisource feedback (Andrews et al., 2013) in assessment of competency. Based on the questionnaire data and the ranking, we conclude that SCPA provides an acceptable assessment method.

Limitations of the Study

For practical, logistical and financial reasons we chose not to include supervisors in SCPA. Therefore, we cannot separate the influence of the assessment method (SCPA versus WCRA) from the influence of the assessors (exam committee versus supervisors) on the interrater reliability outcomes.

We concluded that WCRA by the exam committee is problematic, because often the written report left them with too little information to score the criteria. In the current study we did not investigate whether the same would be true for WCRA by supervisors. Since supervisors only completed WCRA, and not SCPA, we have no data on how often supervisors felt they could not give a score based on the information they had, and whether proper scoring would ideally require additional discussion. Without this information it is unclear whether the combination of the report with the information gained in supervision suffices for proper WCRA by supervisors. It would be interesting to investigate whether a SCPA meeting, centred around assessment instead of supervision, would be as beneficial for assessment by supervisors as it seems to be for assessment by the exam committee.

Another limitation is that we chose to survey the opinion of students and assessors after each completed assessment, instead of once for each student or assessor in the study. We envisaged that the perception of validity, transparency, and feedback function of the assessments might differ from assessment to assessment, or might change with experience. As a downside, however, fair statistical comparison is complicated with multiple data from single participants. The lack of statistical comparison means that only cautious conclusions regarding validity, transparency, and feedback function could be drawn from the study.

Implications

Implications for the post-master program. The results of the study have led to changes in the assessment of casework in the post master program. The program management values assessment by different assessors (i.e., both supervisor and exam committee) and this preference is shared by students and assessors. The main question therefore is how to retain the added value of multiple assessors, while overcoming the obstacle that exam committee members have relatively little information available for their evaluation. SCPA seems to offer a potential solution, given that assessment by the exam committee SCPA provided better assessment than WCRA.

Based on these results the steering committee decided to discontinue WCRA by the exam committee. All cases that are assessed by the exam committee will now be evaluated as described in the SCPA procedure. SCPA assessment by the exam committee requires a larger time commitment and budget for the assessment of

competence in the post-master program in applied sport psychology. The steering committee finds this larger demand on resources justified, considering the benefits of SCPA by the exam committee in terms of reliability, transparency, (perceived) validity and feedback function.

The interrater reliability of the assessments remains an issue of concern, also with SCPA by the exam committee, and when evaluating agreement between SCPA of the exam committee and WCRA evaluation of the supervisor. To try to resolve this issue further, the next step that will be taken is to modify the criteria lists. The criteria lists are currently used in an analytic fashion, that is, separate judgements are made for each item, and the separate judgements combined determine the overall grade (e.g., Sadler, 2009). In holistic assessment, there are no separate judgements made for individual criteria. Instead the assessor scores the quality of the work as a whole directly with a grade (e.g., Sadler, 2009). In the post-master program we will adapt the analytic use of the criteria lists. The domains of assessment in the criteria lists will be retained (e.g., *professional vision and working model/framework*, *treatment plan*, and *reflective practice and communication*) and the former items of each domain will be used to define the domain. Assessors will be asked to give a holistic score for the domain as a whole. The domain scores will be used analytically to establish the overall grade for the case. Systematic evaluation of this modified use of the criteria lists will have to show whether reliability of assessment will improve by this change.

Future directions for the field. As outlined in the introduction, there is currently a dearth of literature on the assessment of competencies in sport psychology. Our study illustrates that critical evaluation of assessment methods and comparison between methods can lead to improvement of assessment in sport psychology education. More studies, preferably on a variety of assessment methods, and for different levels of competence, are needed to further advance assessment, education, and qualification in our field. To shape such studies, we may make use of the evidence available in related fields, such as medicine and professional psychology. Recommendations from this field include the use of multisource feedback (e.g., Andrews et al., 2013), assessment programs rather than single methods (e.g., Dijkstra et al., 2009; Epstein, 2007; Schuwirth & van der Vleuten, 2011), descriptions of trainee performance levels in vignettes (Gonsalvez et al., 2013), and standardised situations such as standardised role-play (Muse & McManus, 2013), computer simulation (Newell et al., 2013), or objective structured observations (Yap et al., 2012). We took the CSPPA (Petti, 2008) from the field of clinical psychology, and tested this method in our sport psychology program, which led to the conclusion that the method is applicable and useful in sport psychology.

Apart from transferring specific methods from related fields, we may look at the

process through which assessment of competence has progressed in these related fields. Of particular interest is the culture shift that has taken place in professional psychology (Roberts et al., 2005). In short, the route taken in professional psychology is that competencies were clearly established (e.g., Rodolfa et al., 2005), operationally defined (e.g., Fouad et al, 2009), and appropriate methods to measure the competencies established (e.g., Kaslow et al., 2009). Fletcher and Maher (2013) recommended following a similar path in sport psychology, that is, to progress to clearer consensus and better operationalization of competencies, and to discuss and investigate assessment methods. The current study aimed to contribute to this recommended journey in sport psychology in a number of ways. First, in the study our assessment criteria were shared, which may contribute to the debate on, and operationalization of competency domains, and competency components. Second, in the study different methods of assessment were investigated (i.e., written case report assessment and structured case presentations), contributing to the knowledge base of different assessment methods. The study illustrates that assessment of competency can be improved when written examinations are substituted by structured case presentations. SCPA seems particularly useful for assessment by external assessors, for example exam committee members, or other non-supervising assessors. Third, our study and findings may encourage other educators to share their methods, challenges and experiences. For us, the process of taking a critical look at our original assessment method, trying out an alternative, and comparing these methods systematically, has been very valuable. The study has increased the awareness of students, assessors, and program management of good competency assessment, and increased the knowledge of these stakeholders on the matter. With the study, methodology, and outcomes, we hope to inspire stakeholders to set out on a journey towards high quality assessment of competencies in sport psychology.

Appendix C. Criteria lists for case-reports and session-reports.

Case Report Criteria		Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good
Exam committee/Supervisor's name:				
Trainee's name:				
Case number:				
Intake session and presenting concern: the trainee...				
Has probed the presenting concern to sufficient extent				
Bases the presenting concern on the intake information				
Formulates the presenting concern adequately, clearly and concisely				
Conducts a structured intake session				
Describes the 'sports history of the client				
Uses psychodiagnostic methods				
Substantiates the choice of the psychodiagnostic instruments used				
'Describes the psycho-diagnostic assessment in line with the standards of the course psychodiagnostics'				
Draws conclusions from the psychodiagnostic assessment				
Integrates the conclusions from the psychodiagnostic assessment into the treatment/intervention outline				
Vision and working model: the trainee...				
Works with a clear vision throughout the case				
Establishes and describes a case-concept of the client				
Works with a clear vision or working model that fits with the client				
Varies consulting style and approach with client				
Adapts consulting style and approach to the client				
Substantiates the choice for the consulting style and approach				
Describes the different sources of information about the client and integrates these in the treatment/intervention outline				
Goal: the trainee...				
Establishes a clear and feasible overall goal for the case				
Establishes an overall goal that is appropriate for the client and the presenting concern				
Establishes an overall goal that follows logically from the intake information and psychodiagnostic assessment				
Uses the overall goal as a guiding thread throughout				
Treatment/intervention plan: the trainee...				
Formulates a clear and realistic intervention plan				
Formulates an intervention plan that is appropriate for the client				
Formulates an intervention plan that is appropriate for the treatment or intervention goal				
Executes the case according to the intervention plan				
Adapts, where necessary, the intervention plan and justifies the reason for adaptation				

	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good
Evaluation: the trainee...			
Uses an adequate method to evaluate the case			
Evaluates whether the overall goal has been achieved			
Describes and interprets the evaluation by the client			
Evaluates the case on both content and process level			
Reflective practice: the trainee...			
Describes thoughts and feelings about the case			
Describes thoughts and feelings about the client			
Reflects on the consequences of these thoughts and feelings for his/her professional actions			
Recognizes potential transference and countertransference processes			
Notices potential discrepancies between the behavior of the client and the case-concept, and acts upon it			
Reflects on coherence and discrepancies between different sessions			
Applies issues that were addressed in supervision			
Describes strong and weak points of the case			
Describes possibilities for improvements related to the strong and weak points			
Overall score			
Feedback and remarks			

Session reports criteria

Exam committee / Supervisor's name:
Trainee's name:
Case number:

Unsatisfactory
Satisfactory
Good

Goal of the session: the trainee...

- Establishes a clear goal for the session
- Establishes a goal that fits the presenting concern
- Establishes a goal that fits the treatment/intervention plan
- Uses the goal of the session as a guiding thread throughout the session
- Achieves the goal of the session

Mental skills: the trainee...

- Checks whether the client masters skills that have been addressed previously
- Implements a skill that fits the presenting concern
- Implements a skill that fits in the intervention plan
- Trains a skill in adequate steps
- Establishes whether the skill and practice material is understood by the client
- Adapts the session and the consulting style to the client's skill level
- Substantiates the skill, and the style of training the skill, with contemporary, relevant literature.
- Gives clear homework assignments
- Gives homework assignments that contribute to the mastery of the skill

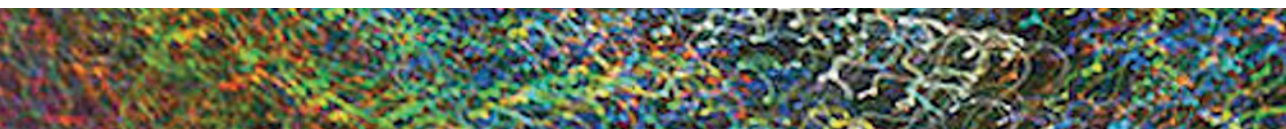
Reflective practice and communication: the trainee...

- Describes thoughts and feelings about the session
- Describes thoughts and feelings about the client
- Describes strong and weak points of the session
- Describes possibilities for improvements related to the strong and weak points
- Is guided by a clear working vision in the session
- Recognizes potential transference and countertransference processes
- Notices potential discrepancies between the behavior of the client and the case-concept, and acts upon it
- Notices potential discrepancies within the behavior of the client, and acts upon it
- Applies issues that were addressed in supervision in the session
- Reflects on the effectiveness of communication (e.g., listening, showing empathy, following)

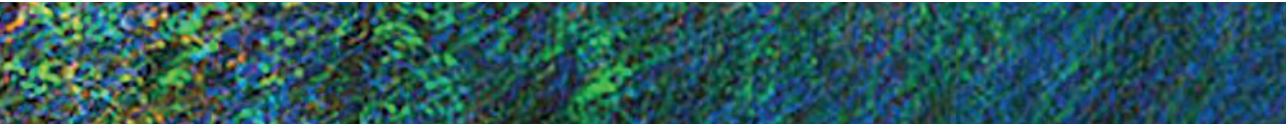
Overall score

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Feedback and remarks



Chapter 6. **Sport Psychology Supervision in the Netherlands: Starting from Scratch**



Hutter, R. I. (2014).
Sport psychology supervision in the Netherlands: Starting from scratch.
In J. G. Cremades & L. S. Tashman (Eds.), *Becoming a sport, exercise, and
performance psychology professional: A global perspective* (pp. 260-267).
New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Sport Psychology Supervision in the Netherlands: Starting from Scratch

Education and Registration in ASP in the Netherlands

The field of applied practice in sport psychology has been rising for the last decades in the Netherlands, with increasing demands for sport psychology services, and an increased interest in the profession of sport psychologist. In 2005, the Dutch association for sport psychology (VSPN) installed a register for applied sport psychologists (SPs). Currently there are about 75 registered SPs.

The demands for registration formed the backbone of the curriculum of the post-master program in applied sport psychology at VU University Amsterdam. The author is one of the founders of the program and managed the program the first four years of its existence.

An important part in training SPs for practice is actually working in practice. Students of the post-master program in applied sport psychology have to complete seven cases, under guidance of a supervisor. Supervision was not formally or regularly used in sport psychology in the Netherlands before the start of the post-master program, meaning that, to build the program, supervision had to be developed from scratch. Choices to be made were, for instance: who were to become supervisors, how much supervision was required, should the emphasis be on direct or indirect supervision, and how to assess the trainee's progress. Deciding on these choices was a balancing act between research-based knowledge about optimal supervision and practical feasibility.

This chapter will discuss the ethical issues that we, and our supervisors, encountered, the lessons learned, and attempts to improve the supervision.

Ethical Issues for Program Managers: Selecting the Right Supervisors

Supervision is a complex and dynamic process, and effective supervision is no easy task for either supervisor or TSP. The challenge of selecting the right supervisors starts with establishing which competencies are required for supervisors. The literature on the competencies that supervisors need in the sport psychology context is limited, but provides a useful starting point.

The Sport Psychology Supervisory Skills Inventory (Andersen et al., 1994) sums up the tasks of supervisors in five main domains of behaviors: providing information and technical support, fulfilling supervisory responsibilities, facilitating interpersonal communication, fostering student autonomy, and providing a professional model. More recently, Watson et al. (2004) summarized the tasks of supervisors as being responsible for helping their supervisees to mold and integrate into the professional field, acting as gatekeepers by controlling the quality of their supervisees, and (as such) protect potential clients and the field from incompetent practitioners.

In addition to Andersen et al.'s (1994) and Watson et al.'s (2004) task descriptions, competencies for supervision were borrowed from other professional areas. The Dutch national association for supervision and coaching (LVSB) has developed a competency profile for supervisors. In Table 9 the competencies of the profile are outlined, and per competency examples are given for possible acts within the competency.

An assessment procedure was developed for candidate supervisors based on the competency profile of supervisors outlined in Table 9. A criterion-based interview was chosen, with the competencies from the competency profile serving as the criteria for the interview.

Table 9. Competency profile of supervisors

Competency: the supervisor...	Examples
creates a productive working alliance	Clarifies expectations and the supervision contract
	Confronts the supervisee
	Recognizes, criticizes and handles transference and counter transference
deals with diversity of supervisees	Recognizes and handles differences in learning-style, culture, gender, status, etc.
	Discriminates between opinions, motives and principles
	Discriminates between debate and dialogue
phases the supervision	Adds structure (beginning, middle, end) to the whole supervision trajectory and per session
	Controls the rhythm of the session
	Oversees completion of the supervision
creates a powerful learning environment	Directs reflective practice, e.g. of personal norms and values
	Demonstrates role-behaviour
	Evaluates and assesses
develops the input of the supervisee into a supervision question and guards the boundaries of the question	Takes care that supervisions stays supervision (communicates boundaries and refers if necessary)
	Copes with supervisee's life-events and estimates the impact of them
	Explains (and lets supervisees experience) what supervision is compared to other consultation
handles the professional, supervision and other contexts	Oversees pre-conditions for transfer from the supervision to the supervisee's practice
	Stimulates the supervisee to report the results of supervision
	Organizes preconditions for supervision
explicates and justifies own actions as supervisor	Is open to feedback
	Abides by relevant codes of conduct
	Explicates guiding principles as supervisor
shapes own professional development as supervisor	Preserves time for own development
	Assesses self in a realistic manner
	Uses own, and others', experiences for development

The competencies were ‘translated’ into specific questions for the interview, for example:

- What would the difference be in your approach in supervision of a TSP from a sport science background and a TSP with a psychology background? (Dealing with diversity: supervisors should be able to outline expected differences, use the advantage the TSP’s specific background offers, while aiming to work on what is less covered in the background education).
- Can you give me examples of how you would deal with a TSP that asks you ‘what to do next with the client’? How would you act on this question in early supervision, and what would you do differently when the TSP is more experienced? (Phasing supervision: supervisors should be able to outline a learning process in supervision, and realize that in early supervision TSPs may need quite directive advice to function, whereas in a later stage TSPs are more guided to find their own solutions and working methods).
- Imagine your TSP panics about the next session with a client and in general suffers from low self-esteem. What goals would you set for the supervision session and where would you start with the TSP? (Develop and maintain the TSP’s input into a supervision question and guard the boundaries of the question: Supervisors should use conversational skills to try to get to the core of the issue, develop the issue into a question together with the TSP, and start from what the TSP does know (as opposed to what he/she doesn’t know).
- What would you do if the TSP is regularly late for the sessions? (Handle the professional context, supervision context, and other contexts: Supervisors should realize the model function of their behavior, to address in a professional matter, the TSP’s behavior of coming late, and attempt to find out any ‘hidden’ reasons).

In addition to the interview part of the assessment, candidates were asked to conduct a supervision session in a role-play. A former student of the program was asked to act as TSP, and one of her actual case descriptions and supervision issues was used as the script for the role-play. The level of competencies of candidate supervisors became apparent in both the criterion-based interview and the role-play. Miller (1990) illustrated the different levels of competency in a pyramid with four layers: ‘to know,’ ‘to know how,’ ‘to show how,’ and ‘to do.’ Using this framework, the following was assessed: supervisors know what is required in order to carry out the professional functions required in supervision (supervisor knows), supervisors know how to use the knowledge they demonstrated to have on the professional functions (supervisor knows how), supervisors actually execute the professional functions (supervisor shows how), and supervisor does (during role-playing). By combining the interview and role-play, the competencies of the candidate were assessed on all four levels of Miller’s (1990)

pyramid. In some cases, candidates showed competence on the level of 'knowing how' in the criterion-based interview, but failed to 'show' or 'do' the required action in the role-play. For example, in the interview, one of the candidates advocated guided self-exploration and reflective practice. When the TSP in the role-play started to gather her thoughts on possible actions to address the lack of the client's commitment, the supervisor did not encourage exploration of those options as he said he would, but instead started to instruct the TSP on motivational techniques (supervisor *knows how*, but *does not* create a powerful learning environment).

Lessons learned/recommendations for selecting supervisors:

- General competency profile for supervisors is deemed suitable for the selection of supervisors in the sport psychology context.
- A competency profile offers a sound base for the criterion-based interview.
- The role-play with a realistic case provides good insight into the context-specific competencies of the candidate-supervisor.
- Based on our experiences, we highly recommend assessing competencies of supervisors with a combination of assessment techniques (e.g., criterion-based interviews and role play).

Ethical Issues for Neophyte Supervisors (and Perhaps Seasoned Ones as Well)

Dual Roles as Supervisor (Part I): Friend or Foe?

In the supervision structure chosen for the post-master program in applied sport psychology, the supervisor has an important role in assessing the TSP's progress. In this structure, the supervisor has (at least) two distinct roles: the role of consultant, and the role of assessor. During the supervision sessions the supervisor aids the TSP in his or her development (consultant). This role usually suits the supervisors well; they can draw from their competencies and experience as an SP aiding athletes. At the end of each case, however, they assess the quality of the service delivery of the TSP (role of assessor). First of all, neophyte supervisors are not familiar (and therefore perhaps uncomfortable) with expressing who is 'ready for the job' and who is not (yet). Second, supervisors fear that their role as assessor may impair the openness and honesty supervision requires. Watson discusses different dual role combinations (Watson, Clement, Harris, Leffingwell, & Hurst, 2006) and mentions the role of gatekeeper for supervisors (Watson et al., 2004) but, to our knowledge, there is no literature available in the sport psychology domain on combining the role of supervisor and assessor.

Though the combination of these two roles may be unfamiliar for sport psychology supervisors, it is quite common for teachers, who during the teaching process aid students to develop and in the end (or throughout) evaluate them on the result. We drew from the educational field to help supervisors resolve the role conflict

they often experienced. In one of the training sessions for supervisors, the concepts ‘assessing for progress’ and ‘assessing for qualification’ were introduced (similar to the concepts of assessment *for* learning and assessment *of* learning (Earl & Katz, 2006; for more information, see www.wncp.ca/media/40539/rethink.pdf). We explained that in the role of consultant, a supervisor continuously assesses the progress of a TSP, to guide the developmental process taking place in supervision. A supervisor will try to establish what the TSP is already capable of, and what still needs development, to decide on the next step in supervision. This ‘assessing for progress’ is meant to help the TSP develop and is part of the job for the supervisor as consultant. In the role of assessor, the supervisor also tries to establish the competencies of the TSP, but in this case needs to determine whether the TSP is competent enough to proceed or graduate. This is what is meant by ‘assessing for qualification.’ In the training session for supervisors, the attendants discussed what knowledge, skills, attitudes, and responsibilities entailed for each concept (‘assessing for progress’ and ‘assessing for qualification’). Then they were asked to reflect on their self-efficacy concerning the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and responsibilities listed, and look for potential conflicts. The supervisors discovered that they felt capable of executing both roles and encountered virtually no conflicts between the defined roles. This elaboration is thought to have helped the supervisors resolve their role conflict.

Dual Roles as Supervisor (Part II): Am I Assessing My Own Work?

A second issue that evolves from the dual roles of consultant and assessor has to do with difficulties in contrasting supervisor’s input and TSP’s outcome of the supervision process. The supervisor advises and guides the TSPs in their work with athlete clients (e.g., through input from the supervisor). The TSP takes the supervisor’s input on board and incorporates (at least parts of) the input into his or her actions. For the assessment of the casework, the TSP then reports on his or her actions to the supervisor (TSP’s output). In this chain of events, the reported TSP’s output has been influenced by the input of the supervisor, and therefore supervisors may feel that they are actually assessing their own work.

The strong impact of the supervisor on the TSP’s output may especially be the case in early supervision, when the focus in sessions is often on the technical ‘what and how’ in working with clients, making the supervision usually quite directive in nature. Moreover, in the early stage of professional development, TSPs typically cling to role models and imitate their supervisors (Tod, 2007). Assessing the quality of service delivery in a phase in which TSPs rely heavily on the supervisor’s input and the role model the supervisor provides, requires supervisors to be self-critical and educated on the developmental stages of TSPs (see Tod, 2007, for developmental stages in SPs).

Although it may not be easy to discriminate the supervisor’s input and the TSP’s

output, supervisors should be encouraged to look beyond the actions described, for instance at the quality of implementation of the supervisor's suggestions, the TSP's reflections on their actions, and the level of the TSP's autonomy. Moreover, supervisors could be encouraged to actively reflect on the legitimization of their assessment. The goal of these actions would be a fair and valid way of assessing the TSP's work, by excluding the supervisor's own input, insecurities, and needs from the assessment. In the post-master program in applied sport psychology, the first case a TSP concludes with a supervisor is assessed by both supervisor and exam committee, and the assessment of both parties has to be positive for the TSP to pass. This procedure is hoped to facilitate the supervisor's reflective process and provide him/her with a benchmark.

However, there are cases in which students are understandably unsatisfied with their grade or feedback, despite all the efforts to grade in a fair and valid way. Take, for instance, the case in which a TSP worked with a group of swimming coaches. The coaches were of different levels of coaching, but belonged to the same club. The TSP discussed his plan with the supervisor and felt they had agreed on the goals and the outline of the planned sessions. The supervisor felt she had given the TSP feedback on the plan and expected the TSP to reflect on this feedback and subsequently adapt the working plan. Throughout the case, the different supervision sessions focused on the separate sessions with the coaches and the time management issues the TSP was dealing with. When the TSP handed in the case-report, the supervisor realized that the main goals and basis for the case were not adapted as she had expected, and were in fact sub-par. This came as a surprise to the TSP, because he thought he executed the case according to an agreed plan. The question to be answered in this case is: Who is accountable for the sub-par service delivery to the coaches? Is it the TSP who did not sufficiently incorporate the supervisor's input to his plan and actions? Is it the supervisor who lost the bigger picture of the case, and therefore did not stop the TSP in his steps? Or are both supervisor and TSP to blame for not checking if they were clear on the case and the approach, as they should have done? In this case, it was concluded that all parties involved had a share in the outcome, the supervisor was reprimanded, the TSP had to redo his case (with a different coach) and was allowed to choose a different supervisor for the new case, and the education program had to pay the costs for the extra supervision.

Lessons learned/recommendations for the dual roles as supervisor:

- Assessing and evaluating service delivery quality provides a challenge for sport psychologists who become supervisors, for they are unfamiliar with the role, and struggle with combining the assessor role with the consultant role.
- Elaboration on the similarities and differences between 'assessing for progress' and

‘assessing for qualification’ may help supervisors resolve their perceived role-conflict and facilitate role clarity in the supervision context.

- When the influence of the supervisor on the TSP is at the highest peak (typically in the early stage of supervision) a supervisor may struggle to contrast the output of the TSP from the input of the supervisor.
- Looking for signs of development of autonomy in the casework may help the supervisor to discriminate his own input from the TSP’s outcome.

Assessing Quality of Service Delivery From a Distance

The Written Report and the Reality

Indirect supervision was chosen for the post-master program in applied sport psychology, that is, the supervisor is not present at the TSP-client contact sessions. Consequently, the supervisor does not see the TSP in action.

Until 2013, written case-reports were used in the program for the assessment of each case. This type of assessment (as opposed to video-evaluations for instance) added even more ‘distance’ for the supervisors and left room for discrepancies between the written report and the reality in different ways. TSPs may not be able to communicate clearly in writing the what, why, and how of their work, therefore painting a worse picture than their actual level of competency. In addition, TSPs may try to paint a rosier picture, especially when explaining the choices they have made, they may use hindsight contemplations in their written report as if the contemplations actually guided them ‘in action.’

Assessing the TSP’s work from a distance was found to be unsatisfactory for the exam committee, supervisors, and TSPs alike. TSPs are eager to get feedback on their actual actions, want to be fairly assessed and are not too keen on the paperwork involved in the written reports. The supervisors and exam committee also strive for fair and valid assessment of quality and generally agree that record reviews fail to capture all procedures, interventions, and treatment components of a case (see also Kaslow et al., 2009).

The set-up of a ‘structured case presentation’ (Petti, 2008) seems a promising alternative to the written case report. In a study comparing four models of oral examination for assessment of professional competency, it was concluded that both interns and examiners were most satisfied with the structured case presentation model (Goldberg et al., 2011). In a structured case presentation the TSP writes a short report on the case (maximum 12 pages) and is then interviewed by two assessors about the case. The interview is informed by an assessment form, and the assessors make sure that all the criteria included in the form are covered, either by the report, the interview, or both. We are currently running a pilot to test the applicability of this oral examination procedure in ASP.

The Assessment Form

In education, we have the responsibility to make assessments as objective as possible. In a complex and varied profession such as sport psychology, this is no easy task. The reality is in fact, that different supervisors may assess TSPs differently. To enable at least a minimum of standardization in the assessment of written reports, an elaborated assessment form is indispensable. Ideally, an assessment form lists all the relevant quality parameters of the report, plus an operationalization and examples of insufficient, sufficient, and excellent quality. To establish the relevant quality parameters of a sport psychology case report, the question to be answered is what does 'good practice' look like? Knowledge on effective practice and effective consultants in sport psychology is evolving (Tod et al., 2007; Wardet al., 2005; Wylleman, et al., 2009) as are evaluation methods in sport psychology (Anderson et al., 2002; 2004; Partington & Orlick, 1987). After consulting the literature, and based on previous experiences with case-reports, the program's exam committee designed a new assessment form. The committee members discussed 'what good practice looks like,' 'what a good session looks like,' and 'what a good case report looks like,' and listed all characteristics mentioned. Based on the outcomes of the discussions, two distinct steps were decided upon: first, to split the assessment form in two parts, one for the overall case description and one for the session reports; and second, a list of conditional criteria was composed, meaning that case-reports would only be fully assessed when the conditional criteria were met. The conditional criteria outlined specifically which components had to be in the report; for instance, the demand that 'the guiding principles are described and recognizable in the report' or 'for each session, time, place and duration must be listed.' This provided the program's administration with the option to check if all required information was present in the reports, before the assessment of the actual service delivery quality was processed by supervisors and exam committee.

All the characteristics listed in the discussion on 'good practice,' 'good sessions,' and 'good case-reports' were separated as they applied to two separate assessment forms: the session report and the case description form. Each one of these forms was then categorized into lower-order and higher-order themes. From this categorization, a session report form emerged consisting of the three main assessment areas or higher-order themes: 'session-goal,' 'interventions,' and 'reflective practice and communication.' In regards to the case description form, the main assessment areas or higher order themes were: 'intake session and presenting concern,' 'professional vision and working model/framework,' 'goals,' 'treatment plan,' 'evaluation,' and 'reflective practice.' See the following website link for access to both assessment forms: <http://www.exposz.nl/sport/checklists/>

Both assessment forms (i.e., session report and case description) have been used for over two years. Although in some very specific cases the forms have their shortcomings, the overall the impression is that both forms are broadly applicable and offer a proper standardization of assessment. Additionally, these forms are used as part of the assessment for the oral examination procedure described above. After discussing and assessing the whole trajectory with the case description form, the committee chooses one session for the oral examination and uses the session report form to guide the assessment on the chosen session.

Lessons learned/recommendations about assessing quality of service delivery from a distance

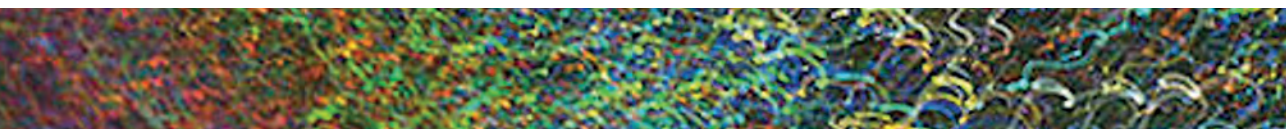
- Objective and realistic assessment of service delivery quality from a distance is challenging. Minimal requirements are training of supervisors and a grounded assessment form.
- Competency assessment in psychology is still under debate. Even less is known about adequate assessment of competence in the ASP setting. The overviews by Fouad et al. (2009) and Kaslow et al. (2009) are highly recommended in this respect.

Conclusion

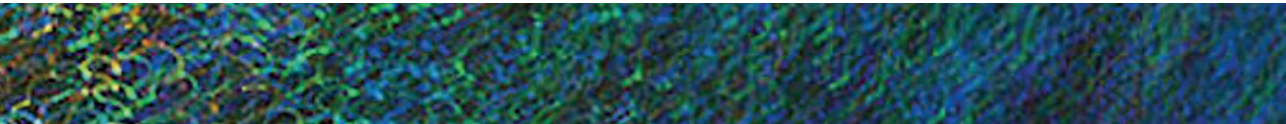
Building supervision from scratch is an exciting and challenging journey. Challenges present themselves on many different levels, whether they are organizational, managerial, educational, or individual in nature. This chapter discusses examples of issues that program managers and supervisors struggle with in starting supervision. Some of these issues were anticipated, others were not and occurred 'as we went.' It seems impossible to anticipate and solve all possible issues beforehand; a leap of faith is therefore needed to get a program started. In the authors' experience, issues that evolve can almost always be resolved by collective effort from the program management and supervisors. An optimistic approach and, perhaps most importantly, a broad knowledge of, and interest in supervision, education, competency development, and assessment are helpful in developing a successful supervision program.

Take-Home Messages

- In resolving ethical issues in supervision, one must use the knowledge available from other professional fields, especially counseling psychology and education.
- Supervisors must practice what they preach/teach; if supervisors want TSPs to work with evidence-based service delivery, so should supervisors and educators. Solutions for issues should be as evidence-based as possible.
- Supervision, education, and competency assessment in sport psychology can be enhanced by sharing practices and learning from each other; thereby, ultimately enhancing the future field of ASP.



Chapter 7. **Supervising the Millennial**



Hutter, R.I. (V.) & de Bruin, A.P. (2016).
Supervising the Millennial.

In J. G. Cremades & L. S. Tashman (Eds.), *Global practices and training in applied, sport, exercise, and performance psychology: A case study approach* (pp. 262-270). New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Supervising the Millennial

Statler: We really look like something from the rock age!

Waldorf: No, we look more like something from the Stone Age!

Has it always been that supervisors are confronted with generation gaps? Most probably they have. We are therefore at risk of sounding like a broken record to older supervisors when we wonder how to supervise a next generation. However, isn't it interesting to realize that the generation that is now entering sport psychology practice has probably never heard an actual broken record (Howe & Strauss, 2000)? The generation of the 'Millennials' is currently climbing the ranks as young professionals, joining the baby boomers and Generation X-ers in the workplace. As the successors of Generation X they have also been named Generation Y (among many other names), but 'Millennials' does more justice to their unique identity. Children born in 1982 were the ones to become the high-school class of the millennial year 2000, hence the name that now applies to the generation (roughly) born between 1982 and 2004.

Howe and Strauss (2000, 2007) described seven core traits of Millennials; they are raised as special, sheltered, but pressured, and are confident, team-oriented, conventional, and achieving. Many of these traits mean good news for the future of sport psychology. As educators and supervisors, it is our task to foster and build on traits that make for good professionals, such as confidence and team-orientation. When supervisors stem from a previous generation than supervisees, a match between the virtues of the generations that are currently supervisors and the virtues of the millennial supervisees is not a given. In this chapter we will discuss supervising Millennials and use a number of stereotypes. We are aware that stereotypes are overly simplistic and reflect only a part of reality. However, for the purpose of framing the supervision case and our experiences, the stereotypes of the Millennials are convenient, and hopefully contribute to a recognizable read. We have tried not to seem like grumpy Muppets Statler and Waldorf quoted at the start of the chapter. However, the reader should be aware that we (the authors) are members of generation X. We carry the stereotype patch of being latchkey children with high hopes, but pessimistic views of the future. If we, at times, sound like grannies reminiscing that everything used to be better, we are only fitting our own stereotype of cynical GenX-ers; therefore, we request you bear with us in these instances.

One of the (stereotypic) descriptions of Millennials is that they value self-expression over self-control. Moreover they are said to have high self-esteem and tend to relish responsibility at the workplace. According to the Telegraph "this is a selfish, self-regarding generation. 'Let me take a Selfie,' is their catchphrase" (Wallop, 2014). In Dutch this generation is often referred to as 'generatie grenzeloos' (e.g.,

Spangenberg & Lampert, 2009), meaning 'generation with no limits or boundaries'. This label refers to two sides of Millennials: their ambitious, achieving core attitude, but also the impression that they challenge or overstep limits and boundaries that are self-evident for, and respected by, previous generations. In supervising neophyte sport psychologists, we regularly recognize the stereotype of the Millennial and are challenged by aspects of it. Take for instance the supervisee whose client was reluctant of the supervisee visiting her practice. The supervisee went anyway because she felt that observing the client in practice would benefit their work together⁹. Or the supervisee who agreed to 'replace' the parents of a young athlete at international tournaments. These examples reflect the stereotypical high self-esteem, strong tendency towards ownership of responsibilities, and the apparent lack of self-control of Millennials. Similar issues challenged us in the case of Nigel (pseudonym) and the cycling team, which we will discuss in more detail in this chapter.

Background Information

Nigel was a student in the post-master program in applied sport psychology (ASP) in the Netherlands. Karin de Bruin (KB) is a supervisor of the program and Vana Hutter (VH) was the program manager at the time Nigel was in the program. To complete the program, trainees conduct at least seven different cases under supervision; the total requirement is a minimum of 70 client contact hours. Cases are supervised in an indirect matter, that is, the supervisor is not present at the client contact. Supervision sessions take place between supervisor and student in separate sessions. For more information on the specific supervision setting and more general supervision challenges within the post-master program see Hutter (2014).

In our case study, KB has supervised Nigel over a period of a year. During this time, Nigel worked with five cases, three of them were formally supervised by KB. KB and Nigel met nine times for a supervision sessions. One of Nigel's cases that KB supervised was a semi-professional team of cyclists. Nigel had previously worked as an assistant-trainer for the same team, a profession he was also qualified for. He was currently working with the team in the role of sport psychologist, as part of his training to become an ASP practitioner. During the casework, the team manager asked Nigel to travel with the team to a training camp abroad. Nigel was (implicitly) expected to both serve as an assistant-trainer and sport psychologist at the training camp. The team manager felt Nigel was a 'two-for-one' bargain for the team, and Nigel was happy to be of such great use for them. Moreover, Nigel was expected to share a hotel room with one of the athletes for budgetary reasons. At the time the request of the team manager came, Nigel and KB had not met for supervision for a while.

⁹ We obtained informed consent of the supervisees presented, details have been changed for reasons of anonymity

Description of the Case

KB initiated contact with Nigel three months after their last supervision session. Nigel, as a student in the post-master program, was obliged to keep his supervisor updated on casework, but had failed to do so. KB requested Nigel to inform her on the status of his practical casework. It appeared that Nigel was busy with his second and third case and that everything went, according to his information, smoothly. He didn't feel the necessity to meet for supervision at this point, but he suggested they meet again in a month's time. KB urged him to make an appointment in the short term and to send her more details about the cases, including the case with the cycling team.

A few stereotypical Millennial challenges may already become apparent. First, we recognize that Millennials want to be (self)responsible. The need to keep supervisors updated, and to have regular supervision sessions was not self-evident to Nigel. He is no exception in this respect, VH has frequently overheard supervisees saying that 'they don't have an issue or question for supervision' as a reason for not contacting their supervisor regularly. The general high self-esteem noted in Millennials is reflected in the lack of contact with the supervisor and the contention that supervisees 'don't need supervision'.

Supervisees in the program are required to prepare a supervision sheet, including a supervision question before meeting with their supervisors (see Hutter et al., 2015). The questions Nigel prepared for the supervision session that followed were about the optimal content of the mental training sessions (e.g., how to introduce teambuilding, what kind of material to use for communication training, how much time to spend on attention skills, etc.). It was only in the supervision meeting itself that it became clear that Nigel was supposed to join the team at their training camp and that he planned to execute the final five sport psychological sessions at the camp. Thus, Nigel came in for supervision wanting to discuss the content of the sport psychology sessions with the team, the supervisor then "stumbled upon" the new information of joining the team, sharing a hotel room, and combining different roles and dual responsibilities, and decided to address the ethical issues involved.

In terms of Millennial issues, Nigel showed high self-esteem in his conviction that he would be successful in separating the roles of assistant-trainer and sport psychologist and circumventing ethical issues of sharing a room with a client. He did not doubt his ability for professional conduct in the complex context he was about to enter. Moreover, the issue of self-control emerged in the case. Nigel did not feel that combining different roles, traveling with a team, and sharing a hotel room, was something to reflect on before making decisions about such issues, or to share these aspects of his experience in supervision first. Rather, he jumped to the occasion, anticipating benefits for himself, without contemplating ethical dilemmas or potential

downsides of the choice, for either himself or the team.

Placing the Case in Perspective

Nigel's situation is far from unique, although the request to share a room with an athlete may be uncommon, even in the world of sport psychology. As sport psychologists, we work in unusual environments, and these environments come with specific challenges in terms of boundaries, multiple roles, and ethical issues. Multiple roles occur often, and may not pose problems as long as they are incidental and/or the nature of sport psychology services is clearly defined and separated at the onset (Andersen, van Raalte, & Brewer, 2001). However, Andersen et al. also stated that boundaries are inevitably stretched or broken when sport psychologists are entering dual roles. They outline a number of threats to effective service delivery, such as the teams' perception of the sport psychologist as 'team buddy', over-identification with the team, and a blurred perspective of the 'hat' the sport psychologist is wearing in various situations, leaving both the client and the practitioner confused.

There are clear benefits and clear risks of traveling with teams. Haberl and Peterson (2010) pointed out that traveling with teams maximizes opportunities for effective contact, establishing trust, and accelerating the working relationships. However, they also warned that conversations constantly have to be monitored, and that the close interaction with the team can lead to situations that are uncomfortable for both the sport psychologists and the team.

The different accounts in the literature share a number of conclusions. The atypical environment in which sport psychology operates offers unique possibilities but also poses specific challenges. Most of these challenges are less-than-ideal situations, but can be overcome. However, to do so requires self-awareness, being quick at problem solving, setting clear and explicit rules of engagement and terms of service delivery, and constant monitoring of ourselves, our ongoing processes, and danger zones. Andersen et al. recommended that sport psychologists "learn to work in nontraditional time segments and locations" (2001, p. 17). We agree with this recommendation. However, we also contend that there is a time and place to do so, and feel that for trainees like Nigel it might be too early to enter the complexity of combining roles and to travel with the team as a sport psychologist. The supervisees in our program, such as Nigel, are conducting their first cases as a sport psychologist. We want them to work with cases that provide a powerful and safe learning environment, and that fit well with their current level of competence and confidence. Moreover, in these cases the welfare of the client should not be (extra) jeopardized because the TSP is challenged beyond what can be expected of him or her.

Approach / Philosophy

Generally speaking, KB adopts a process approach in supervision. The supervisee's question is the starting point of every session and through listening, summation, and probing questions the essential issues and its connections gradually become clearer to both the supervisor and the supervisee. If the supervisee's question is about the athlete-client, then the supervisee is challenged and asked to reflect upon the actual meaning of the question: What does it say about the supervisee him/herself? This philosophy requires a basic reflective attitude and a relationship of trust between supervisor and supervisee. Moreover, there has to be a mutual understanding that it has merit for both parties (i.e., supervisor and supervisee) to keep the supervisor informed. These aspects, however, vary depending on the supervisor-supervisee professional relationship. For example, in the case of the supervisee who agreed to 'replace' the parents of a young athlete at international tournaments, the supervisee immediately called his supervisor during the weekend to discuss the parents' request and to reflect upon the necessary considerations he had to make around this request. Subsequently, issues such as the risks of combining different roles, traveling with a younger female athlete, and possible implications upon their relationship were discussed before making his final decision. The supervisee was challenged to make the appropriate considerations and to put these into specific agreements with the athlete and her parents. The supervisor and supervisee did not agree on the chosen outcome, but both were pleased with the process. On the contrary, Nigel seemed naïve to possible ethical issues and possible pitfalls of the situation he was about to enter, and they had to be imposed upon him by KB.

The importance of role clarity of ASP practitioners, respect for personal integrity, and refraining from unnecessary invasion of privacy, are norms and values that are of particular importance to the supervisor, and these were clearly challenged in this case. The supervisor felt that the effectiveness of Nigel's work and the professional image of sport psychology could be compromised if he combined both roles. From the supervisor's perspective, Nigel would fail to meet her personal minimum standards for professional conduct if he chose to travel with the team under the proposed conditions. The supervisee's perspective, on the other hand, was that of being offered a chance that he did not want to miss out on. He regarded the opportunity to travel with the team as a valuable learning experience and good practice as he planned to make combined use of his different qualifications (trainer and ASP practitioner) in future practice. He did not seem to conceive ethical dilemmas with his actions or fully understand the supervisor's issues with them. In fact, he appeared upset and also slightly offended that the supervisor questioned his capacity to separate both roles, challenged him on self-awareness, and urged him to practice self-control in this case.

Preparation / Planning

KB was not able to anticipate the issue since it only arose during the session. Therefore, KB reacted with a sense of immediacy, feeling that there was only limited time for a process approach in which the supervisee would slowly develop himself towards a far more balanced standpoint. KB and Nigel discussed pros and cons of his decision to join the team at their camp as well as taking dual roles, and the supervisor explicitly mentioned the ethical code aspects that were at stake here. KB also mentioned that she would ask the educational program management to share their view on executing different roles during the ASP casework.

Supervision Process / Experience

Nigel agreed to contact the program manager (VH). VH informed KB and Nigel that she agreed that it was not desirable to combine different roles, and that she preferred that these were not to be executed simultaneously (or after each other) in cases that were part of the post-master program. Two weeks later the next appointment between Nigel and KB took place. Nigel was well prepared and he discussed his feelings about the last meeting. Although he had gained new insights during the supervision, he was also annoyed that opportunities to develop his practical ASP skills were not addressed. He shared that his self-confidence was negatively affected, while he felt that supervision should instead be focused on increasing his confidence. Furthermore, he stressed that he had not changed his mind about combining the roles and traveling with the team, but did arrange for separate rooms at the training camp. In this meeting KB was also able to discuss her uncomfortable feelings about being kept in the dark for months while Nigel overstepped professional limits. In the end, this mutual sharing of thoughts and feelings increased their understanding of each other and strengthened their working alliance. From that point on, Nigel did inform the supervisor better about the sessions he had with the athletes. In subsequent meetings, KB and Nigel further discussed the combination of roles and possible underlying reasons to do so (e.g., Nigel's desire to fulfill the coach's request and to please him, and the fact that he felt more competent as assistant-trainer than as sport psychologist). They also used role-play, which Nigel thoroughly prepared, in order to work out the various reactions and actions he would undertake as a sport psychologist and as an assistant-trainer when athletes came to him with problems. They also addressed Nigel's feelings of uncertainty as ASP practitioner, his urge to act flawlessly, and his need for recognition, which he slowly started to identify and discuss in more depth. This process reflects a pattern noted more often in Millennials, which entails a slow, process to establish deeply trusting relationships (Rickes, 2010). In his argument, Rickes points out the contrast between this slow process for developing trusting relationships face-to-face with the no-holds-barred approach to openness while engaging in online

communications or relationships.

Reflection

Reflective practice helps sport psychology practitioners to explore decisions and experiences with the aim of increasing the practitioners' understanding and management of themselves and their practice (Anderson, Knowles, & Gilbourne, 2004). The same holds true for sport psychology supervisors; KB and VH reflected on Nigel's case to come to a deeper understanding of the case itself, the processes in supervision, and the self as supervisors. We adopted a process that can best be compared to Socratic questioning. As a result of our reflective dialogue a number of 'core issues' emerged. Since "it is not the answer that enlightens, but the question" (Eugene Ionesco, *Découvertes*, 1969), we will share the themes and questions that emerged in our reflections on the case.

Core Theme I: the Personal Lower Limit of Professional Conduct and 'Guilt by Association'

As supervisors we are co-responsible for the supervisees' client's welfare and have a co-responsibility in gatekeeping to professional practice. Therefore, supervisees will have to meet our minimum limit of professional conduct. In this case, Nigel was pushing the supervisor's limits. In reflecting on this aspect of the case, we discussed the following questions:

- How should we deal with unacceptable behavior of supervisees (i.e., behavior that 'trespasses' the ethical and professional standards of the supervisor)? Nigel's plan of action with the team was clearly unacceptable for the supervisor, yet to restrain him appeared very challenging and difficult.
- Perfectionism may be a common trait in sport psychologists and sport psychology supervisors. Moreover, sport psychologists that become supervisors may have 'stronger than average' moral sense, ethical beliefs, and quality of service delivery. Could it be that perfectionistic traits and high professional standards of supervisors raise the lower limit of professional conduct for trainees to undesirable or unattainable high levels? In this case, could it be that KB's own personal high standards for conduct were a bit too strict or firm for Nigel, as a beginner in the field, and she was in fact too harsh on him?
- Unethical, or ineffective, behavior of supervisees can have an impact on the supervisor's professional image. How might fear of 'guilt by association' play a role in the supervisor's assessment of the situation? Apart from possible negative outcomes of unethical behavior for Nigel and the team, there may also be negative outcomes for the supervisor, particularly when she's seen as 'approving' of Nigel's undesired actions. In other words, how much of KB and VH's actions are led by the responsibility for Nigel and his client, and how much is guided by fear for

disrepute of the supervisor and program (perhaps typical for pessimistic Generation-X-ers)?

- Millennial supervisees have the tendency to assume responsibility. Does this tendency conflict with the role of gatekeeper? Is KB capable of assessing Nigel's competence, if Nigel does not provide her with regular and complete information on his casework and follows up on supervisory advice?

Core Theme II: Empowering and Restraining Millennials

As supervisors we want to encourage supervisees to become autonomous and nurture their self-confidence. We may well remember our own uncertainties and the lack of confidence in our early career, and the stifling effect it had on us (e.g., Tod, 2007; Tonn & Harmison, 2004). In projecting our own experiences on the supervisees, we may expect that supervisees would rather need to be encouraged than curbed in their actions. From this anticipation, the general high self-esteem of Millennials and subsequent 'daring' attitude may come as a surprise. Departing from our own early career experiences, we may not be prepared to confine supervisees, and may lack experience and role models to do so. Add to this the fact that Millennials grew up on praise and confirmation and may not have received a lot of critique or feedback. In the words of Howe and Strauss (2000), they have a sense of specialness and they are wanted, protected, and worthy children. In supervision, this may leave us with a supervisor who is not prepared to restrain the supervisee and a supervisee who is unfamiliar and uncomfortable with being restrained. In reflecting on the matters of empowering and restraining in the case of Nigel, we asked ourselves a number of questions:

- How can we optimally empower Millennials? Quite often supervisees verbally express uncertainties about themselves and their level of competency, but their actions don't always reflect these uncertainties. In the case of Nigel, the insecurities were clearly there and uncovered in more depth later in supervision, but his insecurities were hidden by his actions and overruled by his tendency to be self-responsible.
- How do we tap into the correct cavities in professional self-esteem of Millennials, who are typically high on self-esteem, and may even be overestimating themselves in some areas of competency? Apart from the ethical issues involved, KB felt that Nigel had too much confidence in his ability to deal with the complex situation he was about to enter. When she questioned this ability, Nigel felt belittled, and expressed that his confidence was damaged. How could we have helped Nigel to openly and safely come to a better perspective of the boundaries of his competence? How can we help supervisees, such as Nigel, to honestly monitor, face, and use their professional uncertainties and self-doubt in an effective,

formative way?

- Millennials respect authority and want to comply with rules, but their discomfort with change-oriented feedback and accompanying ego-threat can be a true obstacle for learning and the working alliance in supervision. In Nigel's case, the critique of KB hit him quite hard, and had a clear impact on his ego. He may have 'shut down' at the particular supervision session, only to recover from this in the next session when both supervisor and supervisee expressed their feelings about the session. We therefore wondered how do we restrain Millennials when needed, while keeping the supervision context safe, open, and facilitative of learning?
- In sum, the challenge is: How do we balance empowering the supervisee on one hand, while on the other hand stepping in when they behave inappropriately or lack self-restraint?

Core Theme III: Jumping Through Hoops or Deep Learning?

We guess that each supervisor wonders every now and then whether supervisees actually learn and change in supervision, or that we merely make them jump through hoops while under supervision. If supervisees correct their steps due to intervention by the supervisor, it might be just because they feel they 'have to', not because they feel or understand the need to do so. Remember that the Millennial generation has a much stronger tendency to comply with parents, teachers, etc. than for instance generation-X. The questions relating to deep learning in supervision that emerged are therefore perhaps more pressing now than with previous, more rebellious generations:

- How do we separate actions that are corrected because supervisees were told to, from instilled values that make them correct their course because they 'want to' or at least 'understand the need to'? Do we really shape the professional attitudes of supervisees or do we make them go through the right moves as long as we're present and checking? Is this distinction between true learning and socially desired temporary change further complicated when supervisors also act as assessors of the supervisee (as is the case in our post-master program)? And how do we fulfill the role of gatekeeping as a supervisor, when we are unsure how much supervisees are complying with our advice due to control, instead of learning? Nigel knew that KB would assess the case as a whole, and that he would probably not pass the case if he didn't comply with at least parts of her recommendations. This extra (extrinsic) motivation to comply with the supervisor/assessor makes it even harder to determine whether a supervisee adapts his actions due to change of perspective, or as a result of the control of the supervisor. We therefore have no guarantee that the supervision has instilled insight and actual change in Nigel. To act as good gatekeepers, we would ideally be able to predict future behaviors of supervisees with a better assessment of the supervisees' competencies.

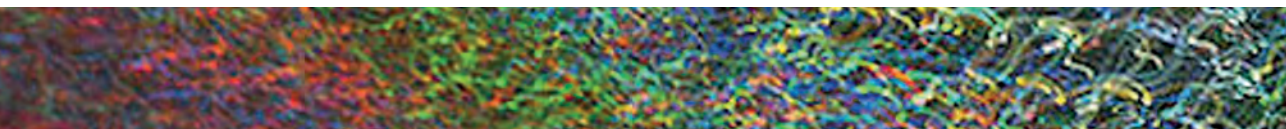
Resolving Supervising Dilemmas

To conclude this chapter, we would like to share a number of actions that we have found to be helpful when encountering supervising dilemmas. The first three actions relate to seeking advice from others. Throughout various cases we have sought help and advice from international colleagues with more expertise and experience on the specific matter and on supervision in general. A network of sport psychology experts, and expert supervisors, is indispensable, in our opinion. For simpler issues, or issues where no specific expertise is available, peer consultation of supervisors can be used. In structured peer consultation for supervisors (in our case using the “incident method” protocol) the issue discussed is clarified, placed in a broader context, and advice is gained from peer supervisors. Last, advice, or rather guidance, can be found in supervision of the supervisor, which has been reported in the literature as meta-supervision (Barney & Andersen, 2014). In meta-supervision, supervisors become supervisees and can explore issues encountered in their supervision practice with their supervisor.

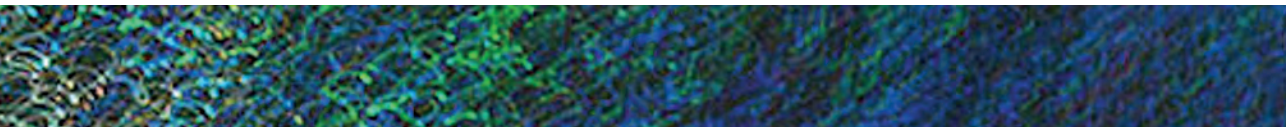
Sometimes the issues encountered in supervision call for quite immediate and combined action by the supervisor and the program management. For instance, when the welfare of the trainees’ clients is at stake, ethical boundaries are crossed, or when the proper functioning of a trainee cannot be warranted. A good line of communication between supervisors and program management is a prerequisite for intervention in such instances. In our setup, supervisors can signal that gatekeeping may be needed, and the program management acts upon these signals. For example, in some cases additional measures are taken, or additional demands agreed upon with the trainee. For example trainees can be required to work under extra supervision, or to audio or video record their sessions and discuss them in detail with supervisors. In other cases the trainee has to be put ‘on hold’. A pause in the casework gives the trainee, supervisor, and program management the time to work on deficiencies or problems in the professional practice of the trainee. Although putting trainees ‘on hold’ is always a hard and complex process, our experiences with it are rather positive. Trainees may arrive at the conclusion that the profession, or the demands of the education program, is not for them, and may decide to withdraw from the program. More often though, the pause is used by the trainee as a break, to recover from the stressful situation they are in, and to grow personally. In these cases we see trainees successfully complete the program after they resume their casework. These cases are very dear to us, and make some of the difficult decisions we have to make concerning supervision and gatekeeping worthwhile.

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Appendix. **Assessing Competence in Sport Psychology: An Action Research Account**



Hutter, R.I. (V.), Pijpers, J.R., & Oudejans, R.R.D. (in press).
Assessing competence in sport psychology: An action research account.
Journal of Sport Psychology in Action.

Assessing Competence in Sport Psychology: An Action Research Account

Abstract

Competent practice in sport psychology is of utmost importance for the professional status of the field, and hence proper assessment of competence for sport psychology practice is needed. We describe three cycles of action research to improve the assessment of competence in a sport psychology education program. The cycles were directed at (a) empowering supervisors in their assessing role, (b) improving the assessment checklist, and (c) investigating an alternative assessment method. Although challenges remain (e.g., improve the still low interrater reliability), the action research has contributed to an improved quality and higher acceptability of the assessment in the education program.

Assessing Competence in Sport Psychology: An Action Research Account

Sport psychology consultants work in a “highly professional environment, often under the public eye and under high time pressure and efficiency requirements” (FEPSAC, 2006, p.1). Therefore, consultants need to be “on the highest level of competence and to maintain this level over time.” (FEPSAC, 2006, p.1). Various other authors have also expressed that competent practice is of utmost importance for the field (e.g., Andersen, et al., 2000; Cropley et al., 2010; Fletcher & Maher, 2013). This cognizance of competence and competent practice raises the question of what competence in sport psychology actually is. In general terms, professional competence was defined as: “the habitual and judicious use of communication, knowledge, technical skills, clinical reasoning, emotions, values and reflection in daily practice for the benefit of the individual and community being served.” (Epstein & Hundert, 2002, p. 226). Competence can be considered to consist of subcomponents called competencies. Competencies are context-dependent ability constructs (Klieme, Hartig, & Rauch, 2008). More precisely, Fletcher and Maher (2013, p. 267; 2014, p. 172) defined competencies as “complex and dynamically interactive clusters of integrated knowledge, skills, and abilities; behaviors and strategies; attitudes, beliefs, and values; dispositions and personal characteristics; self-perceptions; and motivations (Mentkowski & Associates, 2000) that enable an individual to execute a professional activity (Marrelli, 1998)”.

Not unlike professional psychology (e.g., Nash & Larkin, 2012; Roberts, Borden, Christiansen, & Lopez, 2005), the field of sport psychology appears to be struggling with delineating competence for its practitioners (Fletcher & Maher, 2013; Portenga, 2011). Important efforts have however been made to understand and define competence, for instance by studying characteristics of practitioners (e.g., Fifer et al., 2008; Sharp & Hodge, 2011), preferences of clientele (e.g., Anderson, Miles, Robinson, & Mahoney, 2004; Pain & Harwood, 2004), developmental stages (e.g., Tod, 2007; Tod et al., 2011) and particularly novice consultants (e.g., Hutter et al., 2015; Stambulova & Johnson, 2010; Tod et al., 2009); by defining (effective) practice (e.g., Aoyagi et al., 2012; Cropley et al., 2010; Practice Committee, Division 47, Exercise and Sport Psychology, American Psychological Association, 2011); and by outlining competencies (e.g., American Psychological Association, 2005; Association for Applied Sport Psychology, 2012; Ward et al., 2005; see Fletcher & Maher, 2013 for a summary and critique of these competency outlines). Drawing on these efforts, Tod, et al. (2007) conceptualized competent service delivery as “a multidimensional process in which practitioners (a) meet clients’ needs and expectations, (b) develop and maintain mutually beneficial relationships [...] (c) understand psychological interventions and apply them to assist athletes in specific situations, (d) empathize with

athletes' situations and interpret them through the lens of suitable theory [...], and (e) reflect on how they (the practitioners) have influenced the interactions and outcomes of service provision" (p. 318).

From an educational or licensing perspective, the question of defining competence and delineating competencies should go hand in hand with the question of how to assess competence and/or competencies (e.g., Gonsalvez et al., 2013; Kaslow et al., 2007; Leigh et al., 2007). According to Kaslow (2004) "the assessment of competence fosters learning, evaluates progress, assists in determining the effectiveness of the curriculum and training program, and protects the public." (p. 778). Moreover, it was argued that assessment of competence is a prerequisite for empirical evaluation of protocols and interventions, because of the vital role that practitioners' competence plays in the delivery of these protocols and interventions (Muse & McManus, 2013). This seems of particular importance for sport psychology, because a firm evidence basis of sport psychological interventions is still a work in progress (e.g., Moore, 2007). Finally, Fitzpatrick et al. (2015) stated that the field will be advanced professionally if sport psychology graduates develop into productive professionals. Proper assessment of competence in training and at graduation will aid putting those candidates on the market that have the potential to become productive professionals.

Assessment of competence thus serves many functions that could directly or indirectly contribute to professional status and quality of sport psychology practice. In other fields (e.g., professional psychology, medicine, nursing, teaching) assessment of competence is a topic of study, debate, and development. In sport psychology, the literature and debate on the assessment of competence are limited at best. With this article we aim to contribute to a debate on assessment, encourage educators and institutions to share their views and practices, and in general bring the importance of assessment of competence to the attention of readers. We are in different roles responsible for assessment of competence of students in the post-master program in applied sport psychology in the Netherlands. The program's aim is to provide students with the knowledge and skills needed in sport psychology practice. Graduates are accredited as sport psychology practitioners by the national sport psychology association. To graduate, students are required to complete seven cases with athletes, coaches and teams, during which experienced sport psychologists supervise them. The program's mission states that graduates should be highly qualified professionals, ready to work in the field of sports (e.g., Postacademische opleiding tot praktijksportpsycholoog, n.d.). This implies a responsibility of the program to assess a sufficient level of competence of trainee sport psychologists at the time of graduation, a responsibility that should not be treated lightly, and one that has challenged us to critically reflect on the assessment methods applied in the program.

Here, we share our journey towards better assessment of competence as demonstrated in the casework of students. Our journey fits the purposes and framework of action research. Action research is participatory in nature; practitioners conduct research in their practical contexts, with the aim of improving both (Townsend, 2014). Coghlan and Brannick (2014) described a cycle for action research, in which first the context and purpose of the action research are established, after which a cycle takes place of constructing an issue, planning action, taking action, and evaluating the action. This cycle may lead to a new construction of an issue, new planning of action, etcetera (see Figure 2). This manuscript follows Coghlan and Brannick's structure of action research. First the context and purpose are described, and then three cycles of our action research. In addition to our aim to contribute to the knowledgebase on assessment of competence in sport psychology, we hope that the manuscript illustrates the merits of action research for sport psychology education.

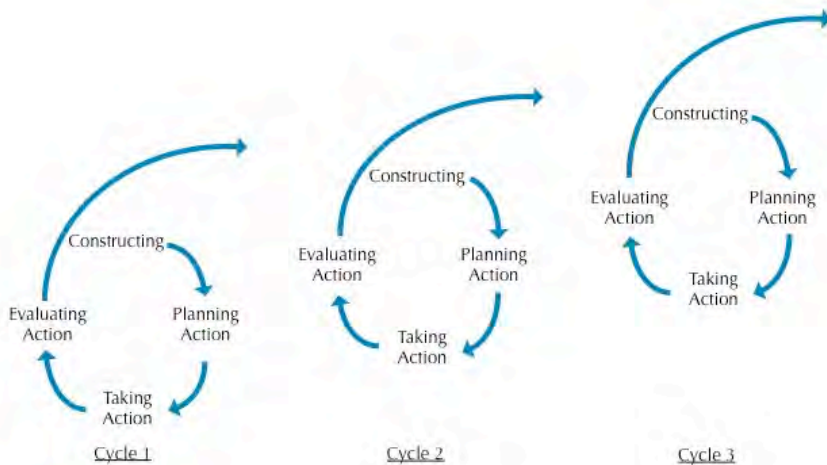


Figure 2. Coghlan & Brannick's (2014) spiral of action research cycles, retrieved from: <https://staticssl.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/Figure%201.3.pdf> (reprinted with permission).

Establishing Context and Purpose of our Action Research on Assessing Competence

Context of the Action Research

The context in which our action research takes place is the post-master program, and the applied framework for casework of the program. These include a number of distinct features:

- A central role for supervisors in the guidance of the casework;
- A facilitative role of the program management in the casework, that is facilitating both supervisees and supervisors in the execution of their respective

tasks;

- The use of external supervisors who are selected on the basis of specific criteria (i.e., an assessment using a competency profile for supervisors [see Hutter, 2014], the requirement to be currently practicing as a sport psychologist, have a minimum experience of five years as an applied sport psychologist and a minimum of fifty completed cases, and taking yearly training provided by the program);
- A model of indirect supervision of supervisees, meaning that supervisees execute the casework without the supervisor directly observing their actions;
- Assessment by both the supervisor and a more distant/objective assessor, that is, a member of the exam committee.

The competence assessment literature in professional psychology generally distinguishes three developmental levels: readiness for practicum, readiness for internship, and readiness for entry to practice (e.g., Fouad et al., 2009; Kaslow et al., 2009). The current study focuses on assessment of competence for entry to practice.

Purpose of the Action Research

Kemmis (2009) stated that “action research aims at changing three things: practitioners’ practices, their understandings of their practices, and the conditions in which they practice [sic].” (p. 463). The purpose of our action research was threefold, and aligns well with Kemmis’ description. The purposes of our action research were to:

- Strive for optimal assessment of competence, as demonstrated in the casework of supervisees. More precisely, we strive for assessment that is valid, reliable, objective, and transparent (e.g., van Berkel & Bax, 2015; Kaslow et al., 2007), and that provides valuable feedback for professional development of supervisees (e.g., Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Roberts et al., 2005). This purpose relates to changing practitioners’ practices;
- Empower the assessors in fulfilling their assessing role. We aim to contribute to a better understanding and knowledgebase of assessment by the assessors, and the development of self-efficacy of the assessors for their assessing tasks (e.g., Kaslow et al., 2007; Roberts et al., 2005). This purpose relates to changing practitioners’ understandings of their practice, and (thereby) the conditions in which they practice;
- Develop a positive assessment culture, by which we mean a culture of acceptability and accountability. This purpose relates to changing the conditions in which practitioners practice. The assessment applied should be highly accepted by the people involved (e.g., van der Vleuten, 1996), in our context students, assessors, program management, and the local field of sport psychology practitioners. By accountability we mean that assessors should be

able and willing to reflect on, clarify, and substantiate the outcome of their assessment (e.g., Gonsalvez et al., 2013; Roberts et al., 2005).

Three Cycles of Action Research

So far three cycles of action research on assessment of competence have taken place in the post-master program. Parts of these have been reported in other publications (Hutter, 2014; Hutter et al., 2016) and parts have only been reported internally, within the program and to its collaborators. In this overview each cycle is described in terms of Coghlan and Brannick's (2014) cycle for action research.

Cycle 1

1a Constructing the issue. At the start of the program, the supervisors struggled with their role as assessors. Almost all were neophyte supervisors and were not familiar with judging who is 'ready for the job' and who is not (yet). Moreover, supervisors feared that their role as assessor might impair the openness and honesty that is required for effective supervision. They were uncomfortable with combining the role of 'helper/consultant' and the role of 'examiner/judge'. To summarize, the supervisors felt awkward and unequipped in their role as assessors (see also, Hutter, 2014).

Assessments by supervisors are credible and have high ecological validity (Gonsalvez et al., 2013), but can indeed come with a number of challenges. First of all, assessors may need training to become effective, accountable evaluators (Roberts et al., 2005). Moreover, the combination of supervision and assessment may have a negative impact on three different levels: the supervisee, the supervisor, and the assessment. Collins et al. (2014) warned that assessment may compromise learning, and argued that assessment may hinder criticality, openness and experimenting on the part of the trainee (comparable to the fear of our supervisors that their assessment role inhibited openness of the supervisees). However, we argue (with Fletcher & Maher, 2014; Kaslow; 2004; Kaslow et al., 2007) that assessment can facilitate learning, as long as it is guided by a developmental perspective, and summative and formative assessments are appropriately integrated. Second, the combination of supervision and assessment requires the supervisor to take on dual roles: They perform both formative evaluation (ongoing, developmentally informed feedback during training to ensure learning and performance improvement) and summative evaluation (an end point or outcome measure; Roberts et al., 2005; Kaslow et al., 2007). Supervisors have to manage these dual roles (Kaslow et al., 2007). Third, the combination of supervision and assessment may bias the assessment. Halo and leniency biases have been reported to be a serious concern in assessment by supervisors (Gonsalvez et al., 2013).

Despite these challenges, it is recommended to include supervisors in the assessment of supervisees, among other reasons because of their professional

qualifications and practice-expertise (Gonsalvez et al., 2013). Moreover, formative and summative evaluations are considered mutually informative processes, and therefore it is strongly recommended to integrate them (e.g., Kaslow, 2004; Kaslow et al., 2004; 2007; Roberts et al., 2005). The challenge thus is to equip supervisors optimally for their supervising and assessing role, and the combination of both.

1b Planning action. We explored ways to resolve the issues encountered by the supervisors in our program, by first talking to the supervisors to come to a better understanding of their perceived lacunas, barriers, and needs. We then turned to expertise from the field of educational sciences to learn more about the assessment role, and looked into the assessing role as fulfilled by teachers. As a result, we explicated the concepts of ‘assessing for progress’ and ‘assessing for qualification’ (similar to the concepts of assessment for learning and assessment of learning [Earl & Katz, 2006], and formative and summative evaluation as described above). We felt that these concepts could be useful to help supervisors manage dual roles, and planned to introduce them to the supervisors.

1c Taking action. A workshop was convened with the supervisors in which we introduced the concepts of ‘assessing for progress’ and ‘assessing for qualification’. We explained that in the role of consultant, a supervisor continuously assesses the progress of a supervisee, to guide the developmental process in supervision. The supervisor will try to establish what the supervisee is already capable of, and what still needs development, to decide on the next step in supervision. This ‘assessing for progress’ is meant to help the supervisee develop and is part of the job of the supervisor as consultant. In the role of examiner, the supervisor also tries to establish the competence of the supervisee, but in this case needs to determine whether the supervisee is competent enough to proceed or graduate. This is what is meant by ‘assessing for qualification’.

In the workshop, the supervisors discussed what knowledge, skills, attitudes, and responsibilities were needed for each concept (‘assessing for progress’ and ‘assessing for qualification’). Then they were asked to reflect on their self-efficacy concerning the outlined knowledge, skills, attitudes, and responsibilities listed, and look for potential conflicts. The supervisors discovered that they felt capable of executing both roles and saw virtually no conflicts between the roles as defined in the workshop.

1d Evaluating action. Within the workshop we checked whether the presentation, and the reflective discussion that followed, had been helpful to the participants. The supervisors appeared to feel more capable of executing and separating both roles. The

elaboration in the workshop is thought to have helped the supervisors resolve (part of) their role conflict. Having resolved, at least partly, the matter of combining the supervision role with an assessment task, we evaluated which issues remained. This then led to the second cycle of action research.

Cycle 2

2a Constructing the issue. Although the supervisors were more comfortable with their role as examiners, they indicated that they still struggled with judging who is 'ready for the job' and who is not. Supervisors were required to fill out an assessment checklist to assess the casework of their supervisees. Checklists or rating forms are commonly used to assess competence in the completing stages of training, for they are normally easy to use, inexpensive, and versatile enough (Gonsalvez et al., 2013). However, the supervisors found the assessment checklist hard to use, and perceived it as inadequate for proper assessment. This is not an uncommon problem in the field of sport psychology. Fletcher and Maher (2014) summarized that the checklists in the existing training and development documentation lack individual and contextual sensitivity. Other authors have warned that checklist style assessments may fail to capture the intricacies of problem solving, professional judgment and decision making (e.g., Thompson, Moss, & Applegate, 2014). These were indeed the problems with the original checklist used for assessment: It was perceived to be too rigid to apply to the complex nature of service delivery, and failed to assess problem solving and decision making skills.

The exam committee and the program management shared this sentiment. There was a need for a better and easier to use assessment checklist. Fletcher and Maher (2014) and Kaslow et al. (2007) advocated collaboration between multiple organizations to develop assessment methods, instead of isolated initiatives. We agree that collaborative efforts could strongly advance assessment of competence in sport psychology, but in the absence of such collaborative initiatives progressed within our program.

2b Planning action. We decided to design a new assessment checklist, rather than to adapt the old one. In collaboration with an external expert on assessment methods we designed a two step approach to design a new checklist. The first step was to have the exam committee compile a draft of a new assessment checklist. The second step was to discuss the draft with the supervisors, and adapt the draft accordingly. We scheduled two meetings with the exam committee, and one meeting with supervisors.

2c Taking action. Kaslow et al. (2007), in their guiding principles for the assessment of competence, stated that assessment must reflect fidelity to practice. In addition, several

authors have stressed that competence (and competencies) should be broken down into essential components (e.g., Fletcher & Maher, 2014; Fouad et al., 2009). Congruent with both these guidelines the first meeting of the exam committee was centered on the questions: What does 'good casework' look like? The committee members discussed 'what good practice looks like', 'what a good session looks like', and 'what a good case report looks like'; and listed all characteristics emerging from the discussion. Based on the outcomes of the discussions, two distinct steps were decided upon: First, to split the assessment form in two parts, one for the overall case description and one for the session reports; Second, to compose a list of conditional criteria, meaning that case reports would only be fully assessed when the conditional criteria were met. The conditional criteria outlined specifically which components had to be in the report; for instance, the demand that 'the guiding principles are described and recognizable in the report' or 'for each session, time, place and duration must be listed.' These conditional criteria enabled the program management to check if all required information was present in the reports, before the assessment by supervisors and exam committee proceeded.

In the second meeting of the exam committee, all the characteristics listed in the first meeting (i.e., the components of competence) were separated as they applied to two separate assessment checklists: the session checklist and the case description checklist. The characteristics on each of these forms was then clustered and categorized. From this categorization, the drafts of checklists emerged with higher order themes as main assessment areas, and lower order themes as separate assessment criteria within the assessment areas.

Kaslow, Falender, and Grus (2012) advocated transformational leadership to foster a culture shift towards assessment of competence. They recommended to involve all relevant parties in the process, and to ensure buy-in at all levels. We agree that the commitment of the supervisors to the assessment method and material is crucial, and their expertise invaluable, and therefore included them in the process of designing the assessment checklist. In a meeting with the supervisors, the structure and content of the drafts were discussed and criteria adapted (i.e., formulated differently, omitted, or added). The definite checklists were established, and subsequently used in the program (see Appendix C of Chapter 5).

With the checklist, we broke competence down into subcomponents and essential elements (i.e., the higher order assessment areas and lower order assessment items on the checklists). The next step to be taken was to formulate benchmarks or behavioral anchors for the assessment of competence (e.g., Fletcher & Maher, 2013; 2014; Fouad et al., 2009; Muse & McManus, 2013). We attempted to collectively formulate behavioral anchors or operational definitions of when to evaluate each

criterion as unsatisfactory, satisfactory, or good. By behavioral anchors we mean a description of what supervisees should demonstrate, or fail to demonstrate, to obtain a particular score. According to Kaslow et al. (2007): "This entails careful analysis of which competencies and aspects of these competencies should be mastered at which stages of professional development (e.g., novice, intermediate, advanced, proficient, expert, master). This will result in benchmarks, behavioral indicators associated with each domain that provide descriptions and examples of expected performance at each developmental stage. Such an analysis will incorporate an understanding of the gradations of competence at each level, ranging from competence problems, to minimum threshold of competence, to highly distinctive performance." (p. 443)

The formulation of behavioral anchors turned out to be very challenging. Supervisors found it hard to describe explicitly what actions, reflections, or behaviors of the supervisee would lead to which score. They mainly attributed their struggle to the diversity of sport psychology practice and the importance of the specific context in determining what is good practice and what not (in line with the lack of individual and contextual sensitivity observed by Fletcher and Maher, 2013). They felt, therefore, that generalizable anchors or operational definitions were hard, or even impossible, to generate.

Because of the importance of behavioral anchors for proper assessment (e.g., Fletcher & Maher, 2013; 2014; Fouad et al., 2009; Kaslow et al., 2007; 2009) it was then decided to include an action research cycle within the current cycle. All assessors were sent the same case report and session report, and asked to score the reports using the new criteria lists and to substantiate their scores by explicating three things:

- What the trainee showed in the reports that made them decide to give the score that they did;
- An example or explanation of what the trainee could or should have shown to obtain a higher score (if the highest score of 'good' was given this question could be ignored);
- An example or explanation of what the trainee could have shown that would have resulted in a lower score (if the lowest score of 'unsatisfactory' was given this question could be ignored).

We had hoped to use the answers of the supervisors to supplement the new checklists with descriptions of what constituted unsatisfactory, satisfactory, and good performance on each criterion. Such descriptions may help standardize scoring between assessors. Moreover they would be beneficial for supervisees to better understand what actually constitutes competent practice at their level, and as such could strongly support the learning and feedback function of assessment. According to Hattie and Timperley (2007) feedback should address the three questions of where am

I going, how am I going, and where to go next. The combination of obtained scores and descriptors of insufficient, sufficient and good performance may provide supervisees with answers to these questions, thus providing valuable feedback.

Unfortunately only a few supervisors completed this exercise, even though all supervisors that were present at the workshop agreed upon this step. The reasons that were given for not completing the exercise were lack of time, and not seeing the feasibility, benefit, or importance.

2d Evaluating action. We were successful in designing a new assessment checklist, or rather two new checklists. The collaborative approach to designing the checklists is thought to have contributed to the quality and acceptability of the new checklists. Moreover, the conditional criteria for the case and session reports were perceived to work well. The program management (i.e., the assistant of the program manager) was able to check at a glance whether the reports met the conditional criteria and assessors were relieved from evaluating incomplete reports. They felt therefore that they were better able to assess the quality of the work, instead of giving feedback on information that had to be added to the reports. In addition, the conditional criteria provided the supervisees with a template or structure for their reports. This has been perceived as both a pro and a con: Although supervisees welcomed a clear structure for the report, some shared that the conditional criteria were too directive or rigid.

We were unsuccessful in establishing anchors for the different scores of unsatisfactory, satisfactory, and good. This lack of operationalization of the criteria scores led to concerns about the validity and interrater reliability of the assessment checklists. This concern was strengthened over time, when we gained more experience with the use of the new checklists by supervisors and exam committee members. Together, this led us to undertake Cycle 3 of our action research.

Cycle 3 (also reported in Hutter et al., 2016)

3a Constructing the issue. The issue for the third cycle stemmed partly from Cycle 2, and partly from additional experiences with assessment of casework in the post-master program. Moreover, we acknowledge the call of Kaslow et al. (2007) that education programs should provide evidence about the validity of the methods being used. They recommended to investigate the development of assessment methodologies that are psychometrically sound and comprehensive; and to investigate fidelity, reliability, validity, utility, and cost-benefit balance of various methods. The impetus for the third cycle was our wish to take a critical look at the assessment method applied in the program, and to investigate an alternative way of assessing competence.

At the time of this cycle of our action research, the casework of students was assessed by means of a written case report. Both students and assessors had the

impression that the written reports do not completely capture the how, what, and why of the students' professional actions (see also Hutter, 2014). This concern may partly emerge from the fact that not all information is included in the reports (e.g., Kaslow et al., 2009), but may also be inherent to the assessment of written case reports (e.g., Muse & McManus, 2013). In some cases (wide) discrepancies occurred between the assessment of the supervisor and the exam committee. The available literature suggests that over 50% of score variability may stem from measurement error, and stresses that assessors need considerable practice to be able to produce a reliable score (see Muse & McManus, 2013). On a pragmatic level, both students and assessors perceived the written reports to be time consuming and tedious.

Although the previous action research cycles had improved some aspects of the assessment, room for improvement remained. Particular issues of concern that persisted were the acceptability, validity, and reliability of the written case report assessment.

3b Planning action. We planned to take two simultaneous actions. The first refers to our growing concern on the interrater reliability of the checklists. We planned to select a number of cases that were assessed by the supervisor and a member of the exam committee, and to calculate interrater reliability (see Hutter et al., 2016). The second action we planned was to explore different ways of assessing casework of supervisees. We discussed the needs, challenges, and available methods for assessment with stakeholders (such as students, assessors, and supervisors). In addition, we conducted a study of literature on competency assessment in sport psychology (e.g., Fletcher & Maher, 2013; 2014; Tashman, 2010), professional psychology (e.g., Fouad et al., 2009; Gonsalvez et al., 2013; Kaslow et al., 2009; Muse & McManus, 2013; M. L. Newell, Newell, & Looser, 2013; Petti, 2008; Schulte & Daly, 2009; Yap, Bearman, Thomas, & Hay, 2012), and medicine (e.g., Andrews, Violato, Ansari, Donnon, & Pugliese, 2013; Dijkstra, van der Vleuten, & Schuwirth, 2009; Epstein, 2007; McMullan et al., 2003; Schuwirth & van der Vleuten, 2011).

As a result we decided to try out the structured case presentation assessment (SCPA) as described by Petti (2008). In SCPA, cases are assessed on the basis of a combination of a written report and a structured case presentation meeting between assessor(s) and trainee. Assessors first read the written presentation of the case. Next, a 60 minute meeting with the students takes place to discuss the case in more detail, after which the final evaluation is completed. This assessment method was first described by Swope (1987, as cited in Petti, 2008). Dienst and Armstrong (1998) stated that a written report combined with an interview would render an assessment with high fidelity and validity. Recently, Goldberg, DeLamatre, and Young (2011) compared SCPA to two other assessment methods for the performance of interns in clinical

psychology. They concluded that SCPA was the superior method; SCPA provided most clarity, was simplest, and had high fidelity. Finally, it was stated that case presentations are helpful to evaluate several different competencies, such as case conceptualization, metaknowledge, and reflective skills (Hadjistavropoulos, Kehler, Peluso, Loutzenhiser, & Hadjistavropoulos, 2010).

Based on the evidence base of SCPA, we hoped and expected that SCPA would improve some of the troublesome aspects with assessment of competence in our program. Moreover, SCPA fitted well with the existing assessment logistics within our program. We agree with Kaslow et al. (2007) that assessment methodologies should be practical and feasible in terms of administration, cost, and burden; and SCPA seemed both practical and feasible. To put this cycle of action research in motion, the approval was sought and obtained from the steering committee of the post-master program to assess a number of cases with both SCPA and assessment of written report only (WRA, which was the method of assessment applied thus far).

3c Taking action. A number of 18 cases were assessed with both SCPA and WRA. In each SCPA meeting the assessed students were asked about their experience of the meeting and invited to give feedback to the assessors. In addition, assessors often discussed (informally and among themselves) how the meeting went. They reflected typically on the communication flow of the meeting, and were able to give each other feedback on style of questioning, timekeeping, etc. After the SCPA an online questionnaire was sent to assessors and assessed students to obtain information on (perceived) transparency, (perceived) validity and feedback function of SCPA and WRA.

3d Evaluating action. We evaluated the assessments methods applied in this cycle of action research on two aspects: interrater reliability and the perception of the methods by assessors and supervisees. Interrater reliability was calculated for WCR assessment by supervisor and exam committee, and for SCPA assessment by the exam committee members. The interrater reliability of the original method (WCR) was indeed problematic. That is, the evaluation by the supervisor and the evaluation of a member of the exam committee of the same report varied widely. When members of the exam committee conducted a SCPA, their assessment was still not consistent with the WCR assessment by the supervisor, but interrater reliability between members of the exam committee improved significantly with SCPA. Therefore we concluded that SCPA improved interrater reliability of assessment by the exam committee. However, interrater reliability was still fairly low, and thus remains an issue of concern, as also reported elsewhere in the literature (e.g., Hutter et al., 2016; Jonsson & Svingby, 2007; Muse & McManus, 2013).

For evaluation of the assessors' and supervisees' perception of the assessment methods, we asked supervisors, supervisees, and exam committee members for their opinion on the assessment methods. They rated the applied assessment methods on transparency, (perceived) validity, and feedback function, and expressed their preference for assessment methods. For assessment by the exam committee, both students and assessors rated the transparency, validity, and feedback function of SCPA higher than WRA. In addition, they generally expressed a higher preference for SCPA. In the introduction of this manuscript the importance of acceptability of assessment methods was highlighted. We argue that the preference for, and the higher perceived transparency and validity of SCPA contributes to the acceptability of this assessment method. In addition, we wish to emphasize the importance of the feedback function of assessment. We strongly agree with the guideline that assessment of competence should be built on a developmental perspective (Kaslow et al., 2007). Epstein and Hundert (2002) aptly stated that "good assessment is a form of learning and should provide guidance and support to address learning needs" (p. 229). Proper assessment of competence has the ability to inform supervisees about their strengths and weaknesses, and thus contribute to their professional development (e.g., Gonsalvez et al., 2013; Muse & McManus, 2013), particularly when combined with remediation and learning plans (Epstein & Hundert, 2002; Fletcher & Maher, 2013; 2014). Thus, the higher rating of the feedback function of SCPA compared to WRA was an important finding to us. Overall, we concluded that structured case presentations was the preferable method for assessment by the exam committee, and therefore SCPA is now applied in the post-master program (Hutter et al., 2016).

Where to Next?

With our Post-master Program in Applied Sport Psychology

The evaluation of the actions has led to a number of changes in the assessment of casework in the post-master program. In assessments in which both the supervisor and the exam committee are involved, assessment by the exam committee will be done by SCPA. However, the interrater reliability of the assessments is still fairly low, also with SCPA. The next step that will be taken and evaluated is to adapt the use of the criteria lists from analytic to semi-holistic assessment, meaning that instead of scoring each criterion on the assessment lists separately, scores will be given for clusters of criteria on the lists (for an explanation of analytic and holistic assessment see e.g. Sadler, 2009). In fact a fourth action research cycle is already in motion in which we address the issue of the interrater reliability of the SCPA, have planned and taken action by switching to the semi-holistic assessment, and will evaluate whether this switch successfully raises the interrater reliability in assessment further. With this fourth cycle of action research we continue our journey towards high-quality

assessment in terms of validity, reliability, objectivity, transparency, and feedback function; empowerment of the assessors; and a positive assessment culture of acceptability and accountability.

As a concluding point of this section, we would like to briefly reflect on the action research methodology adopted. In our strivings for better assessment of supervisees we have found action research a highly valuable, and very practical methodology to direct our efforts. Action research is commonly applied to educational research (see for example the journal "Educational action research"), and based on our experiences we recommend educators and training institutions to consider action research as a method to improve aspects of training.

With the Field of Applied Sport Psychology

Fletcher and Maher (2013) suggested that the field of sport psychology should follow the lead taken in professional psychology towards competency-based training and professional development. More particularly, they suggested to adopt the cube model of competencies in professional psychology (Rodolfa et al., 2005), to organize an international conference to discuss competence and competencies for applied sport psychology, to break down competence and competencies in essential components and to define behavioral anchors for each, and to discuss assessment of competence. We strongly agree that these recommendations would contribute to a focus on competence in training and education for sport psychology and would advance the field. In addition to these recommendations, we suggest to also include the criticism that has been uttered in professional psychology (see below), and, in line with the scope of this manuscript, particularly draw attention to the assessment of competence.

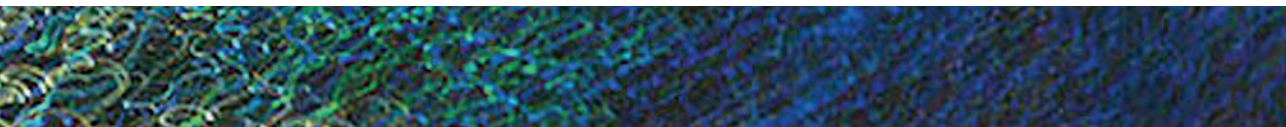
Authors have warned against overoptimistic views on available assessment methods and their ability to inform decisions on competence (e.g., DeMers, 2009; McCutcheon, 2009; Schulte & Daly, 2009). Schulte and Daly (2009) make an appealing case to first analyze the specific decisions that have to be made in training, and then match or develop appropriate assessment methods for each decision. For sport psychology this could entail establishing different professional development levels at which competence should be assessed, and to establish whether these assessments serve a formative or summative function. Summative assessment would, for example, be required for the selection of students to enter a sport psychology training program. Fletcher and Maher (2013) briefly discuss that training may not be able, or designed, to remediate specific deficiencies of students at the onset of training, underlining the importance of appropriate assessment for admission of students. As another example, summative assessment of competence would be required for licensing purposes. For licensing, typically a minimum level of competence is established, and assessment would have to ensure that the minimum level is warranted

in the assessed person. Fletcher and Maher (2013; 2014) aptly contrast the summative assessment of minimum requirements with the more expertise-directed goal of “optimal” practice. They contend that professionals should, throughout their career, strive for a goal that will never be fully achieved. This requires formative, rather than summative, assessment of competence and the decisions involved (by either the professionals themselves, training institutions, sport psychology or other (licensing) organizations) are markedly different from the previous examples. The example of formative assessment of competence throughout the career hopefully illustrates that the benefits of a culture of competence and competence assessment are not limited to initial training. Rather, assessment of competence also has the potential to inspire and direct continued professional development efforts of practitioners.

To summarize, we suggest with Schulte and Daly (2009) that analysis of the decisions to be made in training and professional development for sport psychology practice is an important starting point for better assessment of competence. Next, appropriate assessment methods should be developed to fulfill the outlined functions. Several authors have made the call for psychometrically sound instruments (e.g., Kaslow et al., 2009; DeMers, 2009). In line with DeMers (2009), we recommend to negotiate which assessment methodologies fit which purposes. To be able to do so, more has to be known about assessment practices in sport psychology. We therefore hope this manuscript will inspire others to share their views and practices on assessment of competence, and would like to support the call of Fletcher and Maher (2013) to convene an international conference directed at competence in sport psychology, and the assessment of competence of sport psychology students and practitioners.



Epilogue



Epilogue

The work presented in this thesis covers a broad range of aspects of training and assessment for sport psychology practice. Collectively, the studies and chapters shed light on the different pillars of constructive alignment, namely intended learning outcomes (Chapter 3), teaching / learning activities (Chapters 4, 6, and 7) and assessments for sport psychology practice (Chapters 5 and the Appendix). As stated in the Introduction, the general aim was to gain more insight into training and education for sport psychology practice. In particular, we sought to explore and chart existing education, to identify what future practitioners have to learn, how they learn, and how to assess whether and what they have learned. Altogether, answers to these questions can contribute to high quality training and assessment in education for sport psychology practice.

The topic of the thesis, its ensuing aims, and the studies described in it, were born from the ambitious and inspiring task to develop high quality training and assessment in the post-master program for applied sport psychology at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. In Chapter 6 we explicitly described this as “starting from scratch”. In that chapter we referred to the development of a supervision system, but in fact we have been building the entire education program “from scratch”. Where possible, we exerted evidence-based practice, and made use of available knowledge on training and assessment for sport psychology practice. However, as emphasized repeatedly in this thesis, the knowledge base of training and assessment practices for the specialized field of sport psychology is limited.

Aims of the Studies in the Thesis

Throughout the thesis, we outlined different goals for the different stages of our journey. The common denominator of the studies is that we aimed to extend the available knowledge on training and assessment for sport psychology practice, to contribute to (or instigate) a debate on the matter, and to share information: on available training programs, on assessment criteria and methodology, on supervision experiences, methods we applied to develop our program, etcetera. More precisely, our aims were to gain insight into available education routes (Chapter 2), supervisory issues in applied sport psychology (ASP) (Chapter 3), learning experiences and their contribution to specific learning outcomes (Chapter 4), and assessment issues and possible solutions (Chapter 5 and the Appendix). Moreover, we have shared our attempts to improve training (in particular supervision, Chapter 6) and assessment (Chapter 5 and the Appendix), and reflections on supervising the new generation of sport psychologists (Chapter 7). Throughout our endeavour, we have called upon others in the field of education in sport psychology to reflect on, share, and examine

their practices, views, and methods in training and assessment for sport psychology practice.

Methods of Study

Our various aims resulted in the application of different methods in different parts of the thesis. Surveys were used to explore the available education routes, the possibility of a network for educators in applied sport psychology (both Chapter 1), and the preference of students and assessors for assessment methods (Chapter 5). Action research methodology was applied to improve our assessment methods (Appendix), and within this action research an empirical study was conducted to compare two assessment methods (Chapter 5). A narrative account (Chapter 6) and a case study (Chapter 7) were the forms of choice to present the challenges experienced in building supervision from scratch and supervising the new generation of Millennials. Qualitative methods, such as content analysis, were used to analyze data from supervision preparation sheets to develop a model of supervisory issues (Chapter 3), or interviews to investigate learning experiences (Chapter 4). Quantitative methods, such as calculations of interrater reliability, were used to check whether the supervisory issues in sport psychology fitted with existing models of supervisory issues in counseling psychology (Chapter 3), and to compare written case report assessment to structured case presentation assessment (Chapter 5). Moreover, we have quantitized qualitative data to explore the relative contribution of learning experiences to learning outcomes (Chapter 4), and to obtain general descriptors of education routes (Chapter 1).

The diversity of qualitative, quantitative and mixed methodologies may seem eclectic. This eclecticism is grounded in a pragmatist epistemology that fed the work described in the thesis. Pragmatism is concerned with functionality, with what works (see also Chapter 4), and a pragmatic departure point arose naturally with our task to develop and improve the post-master program in applied sport psychology.

The ‘what-works’ stance of pragmatism allows for, or even invites, the application of different research methods. It will depend on the research question at hand, which methodology is best suited to find useful answers (i.e., ‘what works’) for a given research question. As Sparkes (2015) noted, for pragmatists: “the quantitative and qualitative paradigms and their associated methodologies are compatible and can fruitfully be used in conjunction with one another within a ‘what-works’ approach” (p. 51).

Conclusions and Results of the Studies in the Thesis

The first study in this thesis (Chapter 2) describes the education programs that are available in Europe. Information was gathered on 35 different programs and presented in a comprehensive overview. This overview is useful as it may help prospective students to locate and compare programs, and to facilitate interaction

between professionals in sport psychology education. We concluded that education in ASP is available in most European countries, although programs and courses are very diverse. They vary in level, size, and applied focus. In the study we were able to contact 72 persons involved in education for ASP, and 59 of them shared their view on a potential network for educators in ASP. From their responses we concluded that educators in ASP are interested in interacting and networking. Their objectives included: forming a network; collaborate; exchange knowledge, experiences, staff and students; and working on international quality standards.

The studies described in Chapter 3 and 4 focused on supervisory issues and learning experiences. In terms of constructive alignment they relate to the pillars intended learning outcomes (Chapter 3), teaching / learning activities (Chapter 4), as well as the alignment between these two (Chapter 4). In Chapter 3 we analyzed the questions supervisees ask their supervisors. The analysis revealed that these questions do not fit well with the (to our knowledge) only existing model of supervisory issues, which is Loganbill et al.'s (1982) model for counseling psychology. Therefore we proposed an alternative model, based on the supervision questions posed by trainee sport psychologists (TSPs). The model consists of two higher order categories, six lower-order categories and 19 themes (see Table 4). The two higher order categories are know-how and professional development. The questions within the category 'Know-how' were linked quite directly to the TSPs' cases. In contrast, questions in the category 'Professional development' were more directed at the TSPs themselves, rather than their case. We concluded that the themes and categories in the model often occur and with different TSPs, despite the heterogeneous nature of the included TSPs. Further preliminary support for the model was found in the fact that the themes and categories of the model generally fit well with the literature on (supervised) practicum experiences in ASP.

The model of supervisory issues was subsequently used to investigate learning experiences of TSPs, and to explore which learning experiences are useful for which learning outcomes. The study rendered 22 different learning experiences that novice consultants (i.e., graduates of the post-master program in applied sport psychology) found useful for development on the supervisory issues. We determined the associations between different types of learning experiences and the supervisory issues. The results suggested that traditional learning experiences such as courses, teachers, and literature, are most useful for development on know-how themes. In addition, practical experience and reflective activities (e.g., casework, supervision, experience with clients, peer consultation) appeared useful for learning on both know-how and professional development themes. The professional development themes were associated less with traditional learning. Learning from others (e.g., colleagues, fellow

students, people outside sport psychology) was associated with development on professional development themes. Learning from others seemed of limited value for mastering know-how.

In a constructivist view on learning (as adopted in constructive alignment) the learner has an active, central role in the creation of meaning and construction of knowledge. Consistent with this view, both the issues in the model for supervisory issues in sport psychology and the impact of learning experiences on professional development were obtained from the perspective of sport psychology trainees. Chapters 6 and 7 present a different perspective, namely that of a program manager (myself) and a supervisor (Karin de Bruin), in particular on the teaching / learning activity of supervision. In the narrative account of starting up a supervision system as a program manager (Chapter 6), I concluded that building supervision from scratch is an exciting and challenging journey. I was challenged by the task of ‘hiring’ high quality supervisors for the program and found a competency profile of supervisors (see Table 9) useful in this pursuit. Moreover, I advocated the use of role play in a selection assessment of supervisors. While working with the selected supervisors it became apparent that they struggled with their duty to assess the supervisees’ cases (see also Appendix). Based on my experiences in managing our program, I recommended to reflect with the supervisors on demands, similarities, and differences between ‘assessing for progress’ and ‘assessing for qualification’. In addition, I advised supervisors to look for the implementation of feedback, and the development of autonomy by supervisees when supervisors struggle to discriminate their input from the input of the supervisees themselves. This may be especially relevant in early supervision, when supervisees rely heavily on the supervisor’s guidance.

The case study in Chapter 7 presents the reflections of a supervisor (i.e., Karin de Bruin) and a program manager (myself), on the challenges we experienced. To frame the case, and elaborate on common experiences with supervisees/trainees, we used the characteristics that are ascribed to the generation that is currently entering sport psychology practice, that is the Millennials (Howe & Strauss, 2000; 2007). Karin and I established that a match between the generations that are currently supervisors and the Millennial supervisees is not self-evident. We discovered that it was helpful for us to gain knowledge on the characteristics of Millennials, and to reflect on the case in more depth. We present our reflections in three core themes, that is the personal lower limit of professional conduct and ‘guilt by association’, empowering and restraining Millennials, and the question of jumping through hoops or deep learning. In the conclusion of the case study we recommend consulting with experts, peer consultation, and meta-supervision for supervisors and program managers who try to alleviate problems encountered in supervision.

Chapter 5 focusses on the assessment of competence of TSPs, the final pillar of constructive alignment. We defined that high quality assessment is valid, reliable, objective, transparent, and provides useful feedback. We outlined that, in the post-master program, we strive for high quality assessment, empowerment of assessors for their role, and a positive assessment culture of acceptability and accountability. We found that action research, and in particular the action research cycle of Coghlan and Brannick (e.g., 2014), provided a useful and readily applicable method to direct our strivings (see Appendix).

As a specific step in our action research we empirically compared assessment of competence of TSPs by means of written reports only, with a combination of written reports and a discussion meeting (i.e., the structured case presentation assessment method). We found that, when external examiners (e.g., members of the exam committee) assessed written reports only, they often lacked information for proper scoring. In addition we found that, with assessment of written cases only, the interrater reliability between the assessment of the exam committee and the assessment of a supervisor was low. We tested the structured case presentation assessment method as an alternative and concluded that assessment by external examiners can be improved when written examinations are complemented with a discussion meeting between TSP and the examiners, as in structured case presentation assessment.

Theoretical Implications and Practical Recommendations

Theoretical Implications

The studies in the current thesis add to the existing knowledge base on training and assessment for sport psychology practice and collectively address the three pillars of curriculum development outlined by constructive alignment (i.e., intended learning outcomes, teaching/ learning activities and assessments). A number of theoretical implications can be distilled from the studies. In Chapter 3 we have demonstrated that supervisory issues that occur in sport psychology supervision are not fully captured by the model of supervisory issues from counseling psychology (Loganbill et al., 1982; Rabinowitz et al., 1986). This finding suggests that different models are needed for a better understanding of what sport psychology supervisees want to learn. We have developed an alternative model, based on the sport psychology setting and with the learning needs of supervisees as the departure point. This model should be tested further in future work.

Chapter 4 discusses learning experiences of sport psychology students and novice consultants. Our study confirmed a number of findings of the existing literature on learning experiences (e.g., the importance of practical experience and supervision, the specific applicability of literature, the role that experts such as teachers play in learning). This is a meaningful addition to the existing literature because the context in

which we studied learning experiences is substantially different from previous studies. Previous studies were conducted in Australia (Tod et al., 2007; 2009; 2011), the UK (McEwan & Tod, 2014; Owton et al., 2014; Tod & Bond, 2010), and the United States (e.g., Fifer et al., 2008; Simons & Andersen, 1994). These countries have a strong tradition in education of sport psychologists and / or extensive legislative demands for practice. In the Netherlands, as in many other countries worldwide, the status of education and professionalization of sport psychology practice is less advanced. Indeed, Owton et al. (2014) contended that research in other contexts could broaden and fortify previous findings, and offer an international perspective on learning and professional development. Our study illustrated that the majority of findings in the existing literature resonated well with the findings in our local, less developed, context.

More importantly, we have taken the study of learning experiences one step further by linking learning experiences to learning outcomes. Prior research (McEwan & Tod, 2014; Owton et al., 2014; Tod & Bond, 2010; Tod et al., 2007; 2009; 2011) investigated learning experiences for development in general. In the Introduction, we adopted the framework of constructive alignment (e.g., Biggs, 1996) to structure the work presented in this thesis. By looking into the specific contribution of learning experiences to specific learning outcomes, we have contributed to a basis for constructive alignment between teaching / learning activities and intended learning outcomes.

Chapter 5 focusses on assessment for sport psychology practice. Competence assessment is a crucial topic for the professional development, and accountability, of sport psychology (e.g., Aoyagi et al., 2012; Cropley et al., 2007). However, there is currently hardly any literature on assessment for sport psychology practice. The studies presented may form a starting point for further discussion of, and research on, assessment in sport psychology. For starters, we have shown that the structured case presentations assessment method is applicable in the assessment of casework of TSPs, and that the method results in an improvement of important aspects of assessment in comparison to written case reports assessment.

The different studies illustrate different methods and methodologies to scrutinize learning processes, curricula, assessment methods, and so on. The studies were not directed at evaluating these methods and methodologies. Nevertheless, we believe that the studies provide examples of how education and assessment may be investigated, and, from a pragmatic point of view, contend that the methods and methodologies that were applied are suitable and useful.

Practical Implications and Recommendations

The studies in the current thesis have led to a number of changes locally, in the context in which they took place. Throughout the thesis we implicitly and explicitly

advocated supervision and reflective practice. We contend that it is important for TSPs to receive training in reflective practice and to learn how to prepare for supervision. The model of supervisory issues from Chapter 3 is currently used in education in sport psychology at both the master and post-master level at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. We believe that the model helps master students grasp the complexities of sport psychology practice, and helps trainees in the post-master program to both prepare and understand their supervisory issues. In addition, we are currently planning to use the model of supervisory issues for the further advancement of the supervision system and professional development of supervisors.

The assessment of written case reports by the exam committee was discontinued as a result of the study described in Chapter 5. The exam committee is currently assessing cases using the structured case presentation assessment method. We are now executing a fourth cycle of action research towards better assessment of competence, which includes the structured case presentation method and an adapted use of the assessment checklists described in Chapter 5 and 6.

The results presented in Chapter 4 are used to critically evaluate the learning activities in our post-master program in applied sport psychology. Specifically, we will use the study's results to better align the learning experiences with the intended learning outcomes of courses in the program.

Apart from these local changes, practical implications can be inferred from the thesis that are more broadly applicable, or have been applied internationally. The discussion of supervisory issues, assessment methods, assessment checklists, learning experiences, organisation of supervision, etcetera may aid educators, supervisors, and program managers in other contexts than the one in which the study took place.

In Chapter 2 the foundation of the network for Educators in Applied Sport psychology (EASY-network) is described. To have further impact on training for sport psychology practice, the network now needs a pro-active contribution of network members. In line with Seiler and Wylleman (2009) and Wylleman et al. (2009), we suggested that the European Federation for Sport and Exercise Psychology (FEPSAC) should support the network. We would like to continue the collaboration with FEPSAC, and have been pleased with their on-going support, to further work on the impact of the EASY-network. As a result of the study in Chapter 2, an interactive map of education in applied sport psychology is now available online (see https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=zm68MsWZW_1s.k7n5d9LOyHbE).

As a last example of a wider practical implementation, the model of supervisory issues from Chapter 3 has been used as a training tool in different international workshops for TSPs. The aim of these workshops was to help trainees reflect on their professional development and explore strategies and resources for such strategies. The

themes in the model were highly recognised by participants, and thus provided a useful starting point for the assignments in the workshops.

Future Directions

In the Introduction of the current thesis we stated that relatively little is known about training and assessment for sport psychology practice, and we adopted the framework of constructive alignment (see Figure 1) to position the different chapters of this thesis. To help advance the field of applied sport psychology, and for applied sport psychology to become an established, respected profession, it is important to (further) enhance the quality of training and assessment. Although important progress has been made in defining competence and competencies in sport psychology practice, and in understanding learning experiences of TSPs, much work remains to be done. We need a firmer knowledge base for all three pillars in the constructive alignment framework: the intended learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities, and assessments. It seems important that these topics are studied, and study outcomes shared, from different contexts (e.g., cultures, training models, levels of maturation, establishment, and acceptance of sport psychology practice in the context). From the current available foundations, and fortification of them by additional studies, we should then start to dive into the interrelations between learning outcomes, learning experiences and assessments, to evolve towards constructively aligned training and assessment for sport psychology practice.

Throughout the work in the current thesis, we have borrowed and adapted constructs and knowledge from related fields. We took, for example, the structured case presentation assessment method from clinical psychology, the competency profile for supervisors from the professional field of supervision, the constructs of formal, non-formal and informal learning from educational sciences, and the depiction of the Millennials from sociology. Sport psychology is a truly multidisciplinary field (e.g., Andersen & Williams-Rice, 1996). To advance training and assessment we may make good use of our multidisciplinary culture, habits, and skills. As the current thesis hopefully illustrates, there is much to learn from training and assessment in related fields such as sport sciences, professional or counseling psychology, and medicine. In addition, educational sciences offer models and methodologies to adequately study and shape training and education, and it would be good practice to make use of these.

At the start of this epilogue, I shared that the work in the current thesis was born out of the task to build an education program in applied sport psychology from scratch. The journey continues, both for the field as a whole and ourselves. I would therefore like to leave you with the wise words of American football coach Dennis Green: "The secret of success is to start from scratch and keep on scratching".

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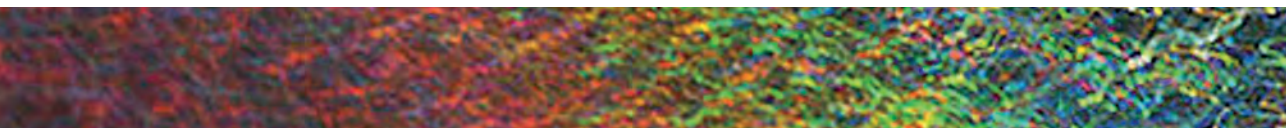
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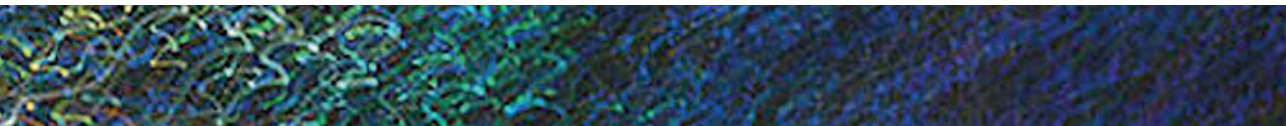
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Summary/ Samenvatting



Summary

The aim of the work presented in this thesis was to gain more insight into training and education for sport psychology practice. Specifically, the aim was to explore existing education, to gain insight into what future practitioners have to learn, how they learn, and how to assess whether and what they have learned. Answers to these questions can contribute to high quality training and assessment in education for sport psychology practice.

In Chapter 2 the training routes that are available in applied sport psychology in Europe were outlined. Findings illustrated that education in applied sport psychology is available in most European countries, but programs and courses vary widely in terms of level, size, and applied focus. In addition to the overview of available training, the study marked the start of a network for educators in applied sport psychology, the EASY network. The participants of the study indicated that they were interested to form a network, to collaborate, and to exchange knowledge, staff, students, experiences, and quality standards.

Chapter 3 and 4 investigated what trainee sport psychologists want to learn, and which learning experiences they find helpful. A model of supervision questions was developed, which consisted of two higher-order categories ('Know-how' and 'Professional development'), six lower-order categories ('Intake', 'Treatment plan', 'Execution', 'Reflections', 'Working principles', and 'Coping with dilemmas') and 19 separate themes. These 19 themes were subsequently presented to neophyte sport psychologists, who were asked which learning experiences had helped them to develop on these themes. It was found that traditional learning experiences (e.g., courses, teachers) were related to the development of practical know-how. Learning from others (e.g., peers, colleagues) was related to professional development (i.e., dealing with issues, challenges, and dilemmas that occur in sport psychology practice). Practical experience and reflective activities were related to both know-how and professional development. Together, Chapter 3 and 4 shed light on issues that trainee sport psychologists find challenging during their first professional strides, and which learning experiences help them to develop on these issues.

Chapter 5 and the Appendix focus on assessment of competence for sport psychology practice. As part of an action research to improve the assessment methods in our sport psychology education program, two assessment methods were compared: written case report assessment, and the so-called structured case presentation assessment. In structured case presentation assessments the assessment of written case reports is combined with a discussion with the trainee about the case. It was concluded that, for assessment by external assessors such as an exam committee, structured case presentations provided a more reliable and acceptable method of assessment than

written case reports only.

Chapter 6 and 7 are accounts of experiences obtained in the post-master program in applied sport psychology. In Chapter 6 the challenges, and our solutions, of starting a supervision system from scratch were presented. In addition to our struggles with assessment (see also Chapter 5 and Appendix), I shared how a competency profile for supervisors gave us a solid basis to select the right supervisors. Chapter 7 discusses challenges that supervisors may encounter in supervising the new generation of sport psychology practitioners: the Millennials. We reflected on personal limits for professional conduct and the fear for 'guilt by association' that supervisors may experience. We admitted how we struggle to find a balance in empowering and restraining Millennials, and questioned whether supervision actually contributes to deep learning or merely makes Millennials jump through the hoops we hold for them.

Collectively, the chapters shed light on all relevant aspects of training in applied sport psychology –learning outcomes, learning activities (learning experiences in general and supervision specifically), and assessment –, and provide a starting point for exploring the relations among these aspects of training. In this manner, the work presented in this thesis seeks to contribute to the advancement of training and assessment for sport psychology practice.

Samenvatting

Het doel van de studies in dit proefschrift was om meer inzicht te verwerven in de opleiding en professionele ontwikkeling van praktijksportpsychologen. Meer in het bijzonder was het doel om bestaande opleidingen in kaart te brengen, inzicht te krijgen in wat aankomende sportpsychologen moeten leren, hoe ze leren en hoe we kunnen toetsen of ze geleerd hebben. Antwoorden op deze vragen kunnen bijdragen aan hoogwaardige training en toetsing voor de sportpsychologiepraktijk.

In Hoofdstuk 2 wordt een overzicht gegeven van de opleidingsmogelijkheden die er zijn in de (praktijk)sportpsychologie in Europa. De resultaten laten zien dat in de meeste Europese landen educatie wordt aangeboden, maar dat de beschikbare programma's sterk variëren in niveau, omvang, en praktische focus. De studie markeerde tevens de start van een netwerk voor opleiders in de praktijksportpsychologie, het zogeheten EASY netwerk (Educators in Applied Sport psychologY-netwerk). De deelnemers gaven aan dat zij geïnteresseerd zijn om een netwerk te vormen, dat ze willen samenwerken en dat ze kennis, stafleden, studenten, ervaringen en kwaliteitseisen zouden willen uitwisselen.

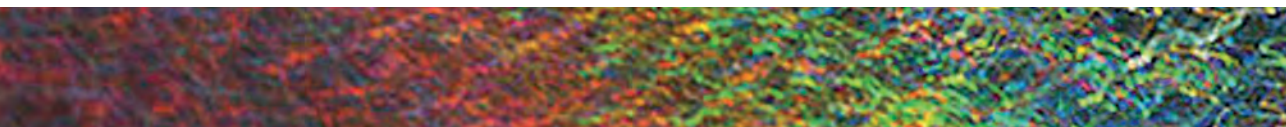
De Hoofdstukken 3 en 4 beschrijven onderzoek naar wat sportpsychologen in opleiding willen leren, en welke leerervaringen zij nuttig vinden. We ontwikkelden een model van supervisie vragen, bestaande uit twee hogere orde categorieën ('Knowhow' en 'Professionele ontwikkeling'), zes lagere orde categorieën ('Intake', 'Behandelplan', 'Uitvoering', 'Reflectie', 'Professionele principes' en 'Omgaan met dilemma's') en 19 verschillende thema's. De 19 thema's werden vervolgens voorgelegd aan beginnende sportpsychologen en hen werd gevraagd welke leerervaringen geholpen hadden om zich te ontwikkelen op deze thema's. De resultaten lieten zien dat traditionele leerervaringen (bijv. modules, docenten) hielpen bij het opdoen van praktische knowhow. Leren van anderen (bv. studiegenoten, collega's) hing samen met professionele ontwikkeling (d.w.z. het omgaan met issues, uitdagingen en dilemma's die zich voordoen in de sportpsychologiepraktijk). Praktijkervaring en reflectie hingen samen met zowel het ontwikkelen van knowhow als professionele ontwikkeling. Tezamen laten Hoofdstuk 3 en 4 zien welke zaken sportpsychologen in opleiding uitdagend vinden bij hun eerste professionele stappen, en welke leerervaringen hen helpen om zich hierop te ontwikkelen.

Hoofdstuk 5 en de Appendix zijn gericht op het toetsen van bekwaamheid voor de sportpsychologiepraktijk. Een onderdeel van een actieonderzoek om de toetsing in onze sportpsychologie-opleiding te verbeteren was het vergelijken van twee toetsingsmethoden: toetsing van een casusverslag en toetsing met een zogenoemde 'structured case presentation'. Bij structured case presentation toetsing wordt de toetsing van een verslag aangevuld met een gesprek met de cursist over de casus. De

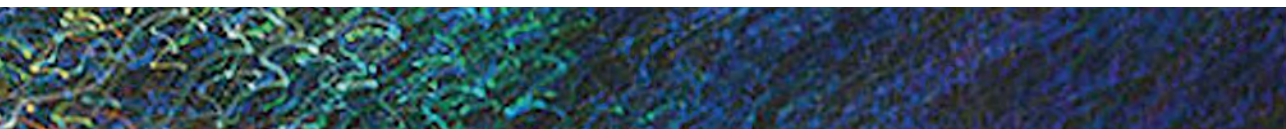
conclusie luidde dat voor toetsing door externe assessoren zoals bijvoorbeeld de examencommissie, structured case presentations een betrouwbaardere en acceptabelere manier van toetsing is dan uitsluitend schriftelijke toetsing.

Hoofdstuk 6 en 7 bevatten beschrijvingen van ervaringen zoals die zijn opgedaan in de postgraduate opleiding tot praktijksportpsycholoog. In Hoofdstuk 6 worden de uitdagingen, en onze oplossingen, gepresenteerd die komen kijken bij het vanaf nul opbouwen van een supervisiesysteem. Naast onze worsteling met toetsing (zie ook Hoofdstuk 5 en Appendix), laat ik in dit hoofdstuk zien hoe een competentieprofiel voor supervisors ons hielp bij het selecteren van de juiste supervisors. Hoofdstuk 7 bespreekt de uitdagingen die supervisors tegen kunnen komen wanneer ze de nieuwe generatie sportpsychologen, de zogenoemde Millennials, in supervisie treffen. We reflecteren op de ondergrenzen van acceptabel professioneel gedrag en op de angst voor ‘medeplichtigheid’ die supervisors kunnen ervaren. We beschrijven onze worsteling met de balans tussen bekrachtiging en beteugeling van Millennial supervisanten en vragen ons af of supervisie daadwerkelijk bijdraagt aan diepgaand leren, of dat we supervisanten vooral uitnodigen om een kunstje te doen dat ons bevalt.

Samen belichten de hoofdstukken alle relevante aspecten van het opleiden voor de sportpsychologiepraktijk –eindtermen, leeractiviteiten (leerervaringen in het algemeen, en supervisie in het bijzonder) en toetsing– en bieden ze een startpunt om de relatie tussen deze aspecten te gaan verkennen. Op deze wijze beoogt dit proefschrift bij te dragen aan verdere verbetering in het opleiden en toetsen voor de sportpsychologiepraktijk.



About the author



About the Author



Rebecca Ivana (Vana) Hutter

Brouwersgracht 248p

1013 HE Amsterdam

The Netherlands

+31-6-24811603

v.hutter@vu.nl

Born: 04-06-1975, Castricum, The Netherlands

Education and qualifications

- 2015 “Basis Kwalificatie Onderwijs” (diploma), Proof of didactical capacity of teaching in academia.
- 2008 Registration as sport psychology practitioner (SPORTPSYCHOLOOG VSPN®) and sport psychology teacher by the Dutch association for sport psychology (VSPN).
- 1999 ‘Basisaantekening’ sport psychology, awarded by the Dutch association for sport psychology (VSPN). Credential of 30 EC sport psychology education on ‘doctoraal’ (i.e., master’s) level.
- 1993-1999 Faculty of Human Movement Sciences, VU University Amsterdam
I obtained the title of ‘doctorandus’ and the ‘doctoraal’ certificate.
- 1998-1999 European Masters in Sport and Exercise Psychology, awarded with a Socrates certificate.
- 1993-1995 Faculty of Human Movement Sciences, VU University Amsterdam
Propaedeutic diploma.

Executive roles

- 2016-current Member of the Advisory Board of the open-access journal “Current Issues in Sport Science”.
- 2015 Member of the organizing committee of the 14th European Congress of Sport Psychology: Theories and Applications for Performance, Health and Humanity. Bern, Zwitserland: FEPSAC.
- 2011-2015 General member of the managing council of the European Federation for sport and exercise psychology (FEPSAC)
- 2014 Member of the scientific committee of the 19th Congress of the European College of Sport Science: Sport science around the canals. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: ECSS.
- 2013 Member of the scientific committee of the European Conference of Sport Psychology: The Development of Expertise and Excellence in Applied

Sport Psychology. Paris, France: FEPSAC.

- 2010-2011 President (ad interim) of the Dutch association for sport psychology (VSPN)
- 2005-2011 Member of the board of the Dutch association for sport psychology (VSPN)
- 2005-2007 Member of the Curriculum Development committee of the European Master program in sport and exercise psychology

Publications

Scientific publications

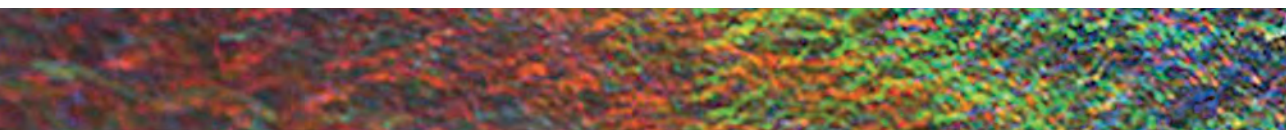
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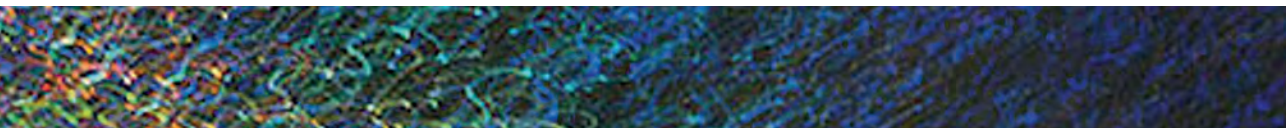
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- Hutter, R.I. (V.) (2015). Reflections on learning to become a novice professional. Oral presentation at the 14th European congress of sport psychology: Theories and applications for performance, health and humanity. Bern, Switzerland.
- Hutter, R.I. (V.) (2015). Accreditation and training in Europe. Chair of debate at the 14th European congress of sport psychology: Theories and applications for performance, health and humanity. Bern, Switzerland.
- Hutter, R.I. (V.) (2015). Becoming a competent practitioner: Typical challenges and effective learning experiences. Invited symposium at the 20th annual congress of the European college of sport sciences: Sustainable sport. Malmö, Sweden.
- Hutter, R.I. (V.) & van der Zande, J.J. (2014). A network for educators in applied sport psychology: EASY. Invited oral presentation at the 46th annual conference of the German sport psychology association: Performing Under Pressure - International and Interdisciplinary Symposium. Munich, Germany: ASP & Art in motion.
- Hutter, R.I. (V.) (2013). Education in Applied Sport Psychology. Oral presentation in invited symposium at the 13th ISSP World Congress of Sport Psychology. Beijing, China.
- Hatzigeorgiadis, A. & Hutter, R.I. (V.) (2013). Education in sport psychology. In *Proceedings of the conference: The Development of Expertise and Excellence in Applied Sport Psychology* (p. 7). Paris, France: FEPSAC
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Acknowledgements/ Dankwoord



Acknowledgements / Dankwoord

Ik heb zo ontzettend veel om dankbaar voor te zijn...

Laat ik beginnen met de drie mensen zonder wie dit proefschrift er (nu) niet geweest zou zijn. Inge, jij hebt je nek uitgestoken door mij tijd te gunnen om aan het onderzoek te werken. Ik vind dat heel bijzonder en ben ook daarom blij en trots dat dit tot het gewenste eindresultaat heeft geleid. Marc, op dag 1 stonden we samen enveloppen te vouwen voor de brieven aan de proefpersonen en in de eindfase bekeek jij stapels lettertypen en regelafstanden voor dit proefschrift. De hele weg daartussen heb ik mogen rekenen en leunen op jouw liefde, humor en zorgzaamheid. Zonder jou was ik niet waar en wie ik nu ben. Tanja, jij mailde mij met de vraag of ik niet een leuke klus voor je had om je tijd mee in te vullen. Inmiddels zijn er twee publicaties gebaseerd op dat 'klusje'. Jouw inzet en commitment is echt de katalysator geweest van mijn promotie en ik kan je daar niet genoeg voor bedanken.

Inge, Marc en Tanja, wat jullie gemeen hebben is dat jullie, naast alle praktische bijdragen, een soort achteloos vertrouwen in mij uitstralen. Dat heeft mijn eigen vertrouwen in het klaren van deze klus enorm versterkt, meer dan jullie misschien zelf denken. Dank jullie wel!

Hetzelfde vertrouwen heb ik ook gevoeld bij mijn copromotoren Raoul en Rob. Raoul, onze samenwerking gaat ver terug. Misschien hadden we ooit wel eens gedacht dat jij mij zou begeleiden bij een promotie-onderzoek, maar dat dat nu en op dit onderwerp zou zijn, hadden we allebei niet kunnen bevroeden. Ik ben blij dat je er was als copromotor toen mijn tijd kwam om serieus werk te gaan maken van mijn promotie. Ik ervaar onze samenwerking als beter dan ooit en ben dankbaar voor je pragmatische insteek en flexibiliteit als begeleider. Rob, samen hebben we aan de wieg gestaan van de POPS. Dat heeft ons vijf mooie leergangen (and counting...) gebracht en nu dus ook indirect dit proefschrift. Jij was al de ideale copromotor voordat je het officieel werd; een trouwe en enthousiaste supporter, altijd bereid om mee te denken en mee te lezen. Je bent bovendien de scherpste APA-details-checker die ik ken. Je vindt het zelf een grote grap dat je je Doctorstitel nu formeel aanwendt om mijn copromotor te zijn, maar ik ben vooral blij dat je deel uit maakt van mijn team.

Peter, dank je wel dat je de taak van promotor op je hebt willen nemen. Ik waardeer het zeer dat je je hebt willen verbinden aan mijn eigenwijze route en dat jouw naam op mijn proefschrift prijkt.

Een promotieteam is niet compleet zonder paranimfen en ik heb het geluk bijgestaan te worden door twee superintelligente, maar ook hele lieve en grappige exemplaren.

"Keep your eyes on the prize" is een gezegde in de sport dat moet helpen om door te zetten wanneer het allemaal niet vanzelf gaat. De lol die wij onder het genot van een drankje hadden over het feit dat jullie paranimf zouden worden, heeft steeds geholpen om de eindstreep weer even voor me te zien en door te zetten. Ook zonder jurken (maar liever met ☺) heb ik jullie graag bij me.

“Tegenover” het promotieteam staat de oppositie. Martijn Meeter en Nico van Yperen, hartelijk dank dat jullie zitting in de leescommissie hebben genomen. Natalia Stambulova, Martin Eubank, and Ani Chroni thank you for the inspiring encounters over the years, I am grateful that you are part of the thesis committee. Frank Bakker, mijn sportpsychologiepad is bij jou begonnen en ik vind het heel bijzonder dat jij nu ook deel uitmaakt van deze belangrijke mijlpaal. Zowel op het vlak van de sportpsychologie als het onderwijs, twee onderwerpen die in dit proefschrift samen komen, heb ik veel van je geleerd.

Voor de verschillende onderdelen in dit proefschrift heb ik met fantastische mensen mogen samenwerken. Tanja, Jesse en Karin, ik vind het een voorrecht om jullie zowel als vrienden als als co-auteur te hebben, dank voor jullie input en voor de inspirerende samenwerking. Paul, bedankt voor de steun die jij als (voormalig) voorzitter van de FEPSAC geeft en gaf aan het EASY netwerk. Nathalie, jouw snelle, betrokken en adequate inbreng voor het EASY artikel is van grote waarde voor mij geweest. David Tod has been an invaluable inspiration for the work in the thesis. David, you have opened my eyes for research in the area of professional development for sport psychology. You have been nothing but supportive from my very first steps in this area, and have treated me like a colleague when I still felt like an absolute beginner. Thank you.

Het onderzoek in dit proefschrift is sterk verbonden met de POPS en ik wil dan ook alle POPSers bedanken. Jullie betrokkenheid bij de opleiding, ook nadat jullie deze hebben afgerond, is veelzeggend en inspirerend. Vele oud-POPSers hebben als proefpersoon bovendien een belangrijke bijdrage geleverd aan het onderzoek, dat is beschreven in dit proefschrift. In het bijzonder wil ik de cursisten bedanken die in dit proefschrift opgevoerd worden als “Nigel” en alle oud-POPSers die de tijd namen om ons over hun leerervaringen te vertellen. De interviews naar de leerervaringen moesten uitgetypt worden en naar het blijkt heb je daar familie voor. Mama en Demi, dank jullie wel voor het geploeter met de opnames en de keurig uitgewerkte teksten. Voor de analyse van de leerervaringen ben ik dank verschuldigd aan Charlotte, Marlijn, Emma en Yoram, voor jullie vele werk en het verdragen van de Atlas.ti-frustratie. Mark en Joyce, jullie hebben als leden van de examencommissie meegewerkt aan het onderzoek naar de structured case presentations. Erg fijn dat jullie bereid waren tot de pilot en het terugkoppelen van jullie bevindingen. Het is me een genoegen om met jullie, en Sandra, de examencommissie te vormen. Ook wil ik de andere supervisors van de opleiding bedanken voor hun input voor de verschillende onderdelen van dit proefschrift. Tot slot is goede ondersteuning essentieel voor het reilen en zeilen van de POPS en daarmee indirect of direct voor het onderzoek. Bregje legde als eerste coördinator de basis van de opleiding, waarna Rob en ik het stokje overgenomen hebben. Door de jaren heen zijn wij fabuleus bijgestaan door Marcel, Nini, Leontien en Corine. Dank jullie allen, het succes van de opleiding is mede te danken aan jullie werk.

Ik zei het al, ik heb veel om dankbaar voor te zijn, en niet in de laatste plaats voor de mensen met wie ik werk. EXPres was de reden dat ik terugkeerde op de faculteit en via EXPOSZ zijn we inmiddels bij het Universitair Centrum voor Gedrag en Bewegen beland. EXPOSZ staat voor de combinatie tussen vakinhoud en onderwijs en daarmee is de kiem voor mijn onderzoek gelegd. De EXPOSZers zijn stuk voor stuk bevoegen professionals, harde werkers, keien in wat ze doen, en vormen bovendien een gezellig team. Mijn oud-roomies Marit en Laura maakten zelfs van een spuuglelijke kamer met kansloos uitzicht een fijne plek. Ook de andere collega's Liesbeth, Marjan, Marjolein, Inge, Geert, Peter, Jirka, Marijke, Judith, Stan, Mary, Allard, Marthe, Wouter, Susan en natuurlijk Sjoukje, zijn toppers.

Het mooie van de terugkeer op het FBW-nest was dat het mij ook herenigde met vele oude (en een aantal nieuwe) bekenden. Er werkt een bijzondere club mensen bij BW, eigenlijk te veel om op te noemen. Ik wil toch een paar uitzonderingen maken, want het leven op de VU (en de vrijdag- of willekeurig welke andere dag- borrels, lunches, batavierenraces en andere activiteiten) zou niet hetzelfde zijn zonder Kirsten, Maarten, Jeroen, Andreas, Jaap, Trienke, Dirk Jan, Mirjam, Karin, Henk, Brenda, Marco, Sjoerd, de juniordocenten en vele anderen.

Er is (gelukkig) ook een leven naast de VU en ik kijk ernaar uit om na de afronding van dit proefschrift daar meer tijd en energie voor te hebben. Hoewel ze vakgenoten zijn zorgen Wendy, Sanne en Oliver altijd voor goede gesprekken over alles behalve sportpsychologie. Dank jullie wel, jullie vriendschap is misschien wel het mooiste dat de sportpsychologie me gebracht heeft. Peter en Jeroen, ik beschouw jullie al sinds jaar en dag als mijn twee beste vriendjes en ben ongelofelijk blij met jullie. Met Lotte erbij is de dinerclub compleet. De gezelligheid, harde en/of flauwe grappen, avonden met veel te veel eten en drank, vaartochtjes, borrels, etcetera zijn nooit marathon sessies en altijd goud waard.

Ik heb de mazzel gehad in een heel warm nest geboren te worden en heb me altijd gesteund en geliefd gevoeld door mijn fantastische zus en even fantastische ouders. Jiri, pap, mam, hoewel onze werelden soms best ver uit elkaar liggen zijn jullie me dierbaarder dan wat dan ook.

Tot slot, Marc, jou slechts één keer bedanken in dit dankwoord zou veel te weinig zijn. Sterker nog, dankwoorden schieten sowieso te kort. Jij bent lief, sterk, energiek, stoer, grappig, mooi, zorgzaam, gedreven, geduldig en geweldig. Jij vormt de fijnste thuishaven die er is en ik weet echt niet waar ik jou aan te danken heb. "Dankewel" voor alles.