

Artifact Review and Analysis

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SPP 6570 Capstone

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August 18, 2024

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Program Learning Outcome (PLO) #1: *Evaluate the predominant theories and emergent trends within the discipline of Sport and Performance Psychology.*

Artifact Title(s): Bull Durham Film Analysis and Personal Performance Enhancement Project

Artifact Description: The *Bull Durham* (Shelton, 1988) film analysis and the Personal Performance Enhancement (PPEP) project were assignments focused on applying sport psychology theories and skills to events depicted in the movie and real-life experiences. The *Bull Durham* (Shelton, 1988) paper analyzes specific scenes from the film through the lens of the theories we studied. The PPEP project involved applying these theories and skills to my personal life, specifically as I worked to establish a daily stretching routine to improve certain aspects of my well-being.

Artifact Objectives: The *Bull Durham* (Shelton, 1988) project aimed to apply the sport psychology theories we were learning in class to scenes from the movie *Bull Durham* (Shelton, 1988). This exercise provided a valuable opportunity to see how these theories could be applied in real-life scenarios. The PPEP project took this a step further by allowing me to apply these theories and skills to my own life, helping me improve specific areas of my well-being.

Reflection and Analysis

PLO #1 emphasizes the importance of evaluating sport psychology theories. This learning outcome is crucial because our work as consultants must be grounded in science and research rooted in these theories. Theories provide the foundation for our work with athletes; a solid understanding of them makes it easier to be an effective consultant. The artifacts I worked on allowed me to take the theories and skills I was learning in class and apply them to fictional and real-life situations.

As someone who has spent my life coaching, I have taught various mental performance skills to athletes, but I had never focused on the underlying theories. One of the reasons I decided to return to school was to learn and understand the theories behind the skills I was teaching. Initially, I struggled because I was trying to find scenes that fit the theories rather than analyzing the scenes and identifying the theories that explained the behavior. Over time, especially as I worked on my PPEP, I improved in analyzing situations, identifying what was happening, considering the relevant theories, and applying skills for self-improvement.

Before learning about theories, I might have recognized that a character like Nuke in the movie has anxiety when his dad attends the game, but I would not have understood why. Learning about the Cusp Catastrophe Theory (CAT)(Hardy, 1990, as cited in Horn & Smith) provided me with the explanation behind his anxiety. The PPEP project was crucial because it placed me in the same position as the athletes I will work with, allowing me to experience what it is like to apply theories and skills to enhance performance. In my case, self-talk was instrumental in my performance. Although I had taught self-talk skills and strategies, I had never applied them to myself. I had not realized the significant impact of productive self-talk on achieving goals.

These assignments offered me valuable opportunities to bridge theory with practice, whether through natural or fictional events. The *Bull Durham* (Shelton, 1988) project, one of my first major assignments in the master's program, highlighted a challenge I initially faced: trying to force theories to fit situations rather than starting with a thorough assessment of the situation and identifying which theory best explains it. This approach is crucial in consulting, where it is essential to analyze situations holistically, determine the most fitting theory, and then select appropriate skills to assist the athlete. It is unfair to the athlete to choose a theory first and try to

mold the situation around it. The PPEP reinforced this skill and gave me invaluable experience in applying various mental training techniques and understanding what it is like to be on the receiving end of mental performance training. Additionally, I learned how difficult it can be to serve as your own consultant.

In conclusion, these experiences have equipped me with a deeper understanding of applying theoretical frameworks in real-world scenarios. They have also underscored the importance of adaptability and the need to approach each situation with an open mind, ensuring that the athlete's needs remain the primary focus.

Program Learning Outcome #2: *Distinguish between various ethical codes within the mental health counseling and performance consulting professions, and articulate the rationale for disparities among them.*

Artifact Title(s): Advocacy Plan, Professional Development Plan, and Ethical Case Analysis
Part 3

Artifact Description: These three artifacts emphasize the importance of ethics in the field of sport psychology. I examined ethical dilemmas and discussed an ethical decision-making framework to use when faced with ethical dilemmas in the Ethical Case Analysis. The Advocacy Plan discusses the ethical issues consultants face when advocating for student-athletes. The Professional Development Plan highlights my career plans and commitment to ethical practice and continuing education.

Artifact Objectives: The objective of these artifacts was to help me become familiar with various professional ethics codes and prepare for the ethical challenges that I will face as a mental performance consultant.

Reflection and Analysis

This PLO is foundational to the responsible and effective delivery of sport psychology services, as it equips professionals with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate the complex ethical landscape of their work. Sport psychologists work with athletes, coaches, and teams in various settings, each presenting unique ethical challenges. For instance, maintaining confidentiality, managing dual relationships, and ensuring competency are critical concerns that must be navigated carefully to protect clients' well-being. The ability to distinguish between ethical codes, such as those provided by the American Counseling Association (ACA) and the Association of Applied Sport Psychology (AASP), is essential for practitioners to address these challenges effectively.

It is inevitable that throughout my work as a mental performance consultant, I will face many ethical dilemmas. These assignments allowed me to become familiar with various ethics codes and learn about frameworks that will help me navigate these dilemmas and make ethical decisions. All three of these assignments allowed me to think critically about ethics. The case analysis allowed me to analyze an ethical dilemma and apply a framework to make a decision. The advocacy plan and the personal development plan allowed me to do some if/then planning and prepare myself for when I am faced with ethical dilemmas. I also became more aware of the boundaries of my competency and now know how to handle situations outside my competencies.

These three assignments have been invaluable in my journey to becoming a mental performance consultant. They required me to critically examine the role of ethics in this profession, which I had previously struggled with, particularly the idea of being unable to serve as both a counselor and a consultant for the same athlete. Through these assignments, I now

understand why this separation is crucial for the athlete's best interest. I am also grateful for the resources and frameworks these assignments provided, which I can rely on when faced with ethical dilemmas. Using my mentors and peers as sounding boards in such situations is essential. The advocacy plan and professional development plan will serve as ongoing references, helping me stay accountable to the ethical standards of this profession and motivating me to learn and grow in my career.

Program Learning Outcome #3: *Demonstrate, through presentation and in writing, the development of a professional consulting philosophy integrating the disciplines of psychology, sport science, and counseling.*

Artifact Title(s): Theoretical Orientation Paper and Developmental Case Conceptualization

Artifact Description: These assignments were designed to aid in the development of my consulting philosophy. The case conceptualization project emphasized the significance of understanding human development in counseling and consulting, highlighting the importance of integrating counseling theories into my work with athletes. The theoretical orientation paper encouraged me to reflect on my personal experiences and beliefs, guiding me to identify therapeutic models that align with my personality and approach to consulting.

Artifact Objectives: These assignments were designed to help me develop a consulting philosophy by integrating psychological theories, counseling techniques, and self-reflection. The case conceptualization project focused on applying developmental theories to understand and address client needs, reinforcing the importance of human development in counseling athletes. The theoretical orientation paper encouraged me to explore and align therapeutic models with my values and beliefs, ensuring my consulting approach is effective and authentic.

Reflection and Analysis

A professional consulting philosophy is essential to my growth as a mental performance consultant because it enables me to holistically tailor interventions that address the athlete's emotional and physical needs. To achieve this, it is crucial to understand both psychological and sport science theories and integrate them into interventions that help athletes overcome performance barriers. With many different models available, it is essential to identify those that best align with my personality and professional goals. These two projects provided an opportunity for self-reflection and helped me identify the models that best fit my approach to consulting.

Using attachment theory and Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory, I analyzed an individual's developmental history and its impact on her mental health. This approach allowed me to integrate these theories to understand the individual's current behaviors better. Additionally, I examined the individual through a cultural lens, recognizing that every person is shaped by their cultural background and past experiences. As a consultant, this awareness is crucial because it enables me to develop more personalized interventions that cater to each client's unique needs.

The theoretical orientation paper played a significant role in my development as a consultant by prompting deep self-reflection to explore therapeutic models that align with my personality and style. This process gave me greater clarity on the direction I want to take in my consulting practice. Before these assignments, I had limited knowledge of developmental theories and needed to fully appreciate how an athlete's culture and upbringing influence their behavior and performance. I also needed to understand the importance of having a well-defined professional philosophy. My approach used to be more haphazard, often trying different methods

without a clear focus, like throwing spaghetti on a wall to see what sticks. While I remain open to exploring other models beyond ACT and CBT, I feel more confident that I can consistently rely on a couple of go-to approaches. This newfound focus enhances my expertise and ensures that my consulting practice is more effective and grounded in solid theoretical foundations.

Program Learning Outcome #4: *Create performance enhancement interventions incorporating a variety of research-supported techniques to enhance performance and improve overall wellness.*

Artifact Title(s): Client and Program Evaluation and Case Analysis #2

Artifact Description: These documents demonstrate an approach to creating and evaluating interventions grounded in research-supported techniques. They highlight the importance of tailoring interventions to individual client needs, continually assessing their effectiveness, and making adjustments as necessary to achieve optimal outcomes.

Artifact Objectives: These papers' objectives were to allow me to effectively apply, evaluate, and refine research-supported techniques in their professional practice, leading to improved client outcomes in both performance and wellness.

Reflection and Analysis

This PLO is relevant to sports psychology because it focuses on developing and implementing performance-enhancement interventions grounded in research-supported techniques. In sports psychology, consultants work with athletes and performers to optimize their mental and physical performance, manage stress, and improve overall well-being. Creating effective, evidence-based interventions is essential for helping clients overcome psychological barriers, achieve their goals, and maintain long-term mental health and resilience.

The applied case study paper allowed me to apply Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), a key component of my professional philosophy and a research-supported therapeutic model, to a fictional case study. I chose ACT because it has been proven effective in treating anxiety and depression, with the overall goal of helping the individual develop greater psychological flexibility and enhance her well-being. The client and program evaluation assignment allowed me to create an assessment tool to evaluate the quality of sessions and the effectiveness of my work with the athlete. Additionally, I selected two established assessments to track the client's progress over time. My responsibility as a consultant is to develop interventions and ensure they are effective and that the athlete is satisfied with their progress.

These two assignments were crucial to my growth as a consultant. They allowed me to move beyond merely reading about theories and frameworks and instead apply ACT in a practical context, developing techniques to improve an individual's well-being and performance. Once an intervention is implemented, evaluating its effectiveness is essential. By creating a plan to measure improvement and satisfaction using established assessments and those I developed, I hold myself accountable for ensuring that the interventions are effective and achieve their intended purpose. These examples highlight the importance of creating, evaluating, and refining evidence-based and client-centered interventions, which are essential skills for any sport psychology practitioner.

These projects significantly contributed to my development as a counselor by providing practical experience in applying ACT to a real-world scenario. Following a step-by-step intervention, I gained insight into how it might work. I also learned the importance of regularly assessing the effectiveness of interventions rather than relying solely on intuition. Life is

constantly changing, which can impact performance, and consultants must have a reliable method for measuring the effectiveness of their work and making adjustments when necessary.

Program Learning Outcome #5: *Develop culturally responsive consulting strategies based upon the relationships, issues, and trends within a multicultural society.*

Artifact Title(s): Clinical Application Part 1, Clinical Application Part 2, and Cultural Self Project

Artifact Description: The purpose of these papers is to demonstrate culturally responsive consulting strategies within a multicultural society. I applied multicultural counseling theory to real-world case studies, addressing power and privilege dynamics in consulting relationships and engaging in self-reflection to identify and mitigate personal cultural biases.

Artifact Objectives: These papers applied multicultural counseling theories to real-world scenarios, ensuring that interventions are relevant and effective for clients from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, the papers emphasize the importance of recognizing and addressing power dynamics and privilege within the consulting relationship, promoting equity and fairness. Finally, these objectives highlight the need for ongoing self-reflection to identify and mitigate personal cultural biases, ensuring that consulting strategies are culturally responsive and ethically sound.

Reflection and Analysis

This PLO, which focuses on multiculturalism and diversity, is crucial because it highlights the importance of cultural competence in consulting. In our diverse society, consultants need to understand and respect their clients' cultural backgrounds, values, and beliefs. Cultural competence is the foundation for building trust and establishing a solid working relationship with clients. Understanding a client's culture and background is vital for providing

relevant and effective interventions. Additionally, this PLO encourages me to critically examine my biases and recognize how they might impact my role as a consultant.

These papers allowed me to apply multicultural counseling theories to real-world case studies, enabling me to recognize the power and privilege dynamics that can become intertwined within the consulting relationship. This process also forced me to examine myself, identifying and mitigating any personal cultural biases and beliefs. In "Clinical Application Part I" and "Clinical Application Part II," I applied theoretical concepts to practical case studies, which allowed me to put theory into action and understand the critical importance of cultural competency. These papers also demonstrated how power and privilege influence the consulting relationship and the client's environment. By examining factors such as family heritage, religious beliefs, and the impact of acculturation, I applied multicultural theories to navigate issues that could affect the client and the effectiveness of interventions. "Clinical Application Part II" specifically explored the role of power and privilege in the consulting relationship, highlighting the need to keep these dynamics in check and constantly reflect on them to ensure equity in the consulting process. The "Cultural Self Project" complemented these papers by encouraging me to explore my biases and how they could impact my work as a consultant. This project introduced me to the ADDRESSING model, which examines nine cultural elements that can influence a person's perspective (Hays, 1996).

These papers underscored the importance of becoming more culturally competent. Although I have always considered myself open-minded and aware of my privileged background, I had not fully considered how my privilege might impact my role as a consultant. The ADDRESSING model (Hays, 1996) was particularly valuable, providing a framework for reflecting on and addressing my biases. It made me more aware of how my culture has shaped

me and highlighted areas where I need to improve my cultural competence. These papers challenged me to grow as a person and consultant by recognizing my biases and weaknesses. Moving forward, I recognize the need to challenge myself further by seeking out uncomfortable situations to learn from them and explore other cultures and environments. This commitment to continuous growth is essential for becoming a more effective and culturally competent consultant.

Final Thoughts on All PLO's

Although each PLO has a distinct learning objective, they are all interconnected. PLO #1, which focuses on theories, links directly to PLO #4 because interventions are often grounded in theoretical frameworks. PLO #2, centered on ethics, is crucial when developing a professional philosophy, as ethical considerations shape the foundation of that philosophy, which is the focus of PLO #3. My philosophy, informed by theories and ethics, plays a crucial role in formulating interventions and must account for cultural diversity. PLO #4, which addresses interventions, connects to all the other PLOs because interventions are theory-based, ethically sound, aligned with my consulting philosophy, and sensitive to cultural diversity. Cultural competence (PLO #5) influences how I analyze theories, create interventions, and develop a professional philosophy. In addition, cultural awareness helps me maintain ethical integrity. These PLOs are closely connected and work together. They allow me to create a comprehensive approach to sports performance and psychology.

References

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