

Assignment 1: Single Subject Article Review

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Assignment 1

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Single-Subject Evaluation of a Self-Talk Package for Improving Figure Skating Performance

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Purpose, Subject(s), Setting(s)

The purpose of the study was to show if planned self-talk could aid the achievement of skill acquisition with four competitive figure skaters. These participants ranged in age from 11 to 13 years old. Two of the participants were considered pre-novice level (Participants 1, 2) and the other two were considered novice (Participants 3,4). Three of the four participants (Participants 1, 2, 3) identified as female and Participant 4 identified as male. All participants were from the Winnipeg Winter Club, Canada. Criteria for selection in the research required a coaches recommendation, were identified as “needing help,” expressed an interest in sport psychology, and were beginning to learn a new set of “figures” for competitive routines. The study occurred in 1996.

Method

The dependent variable observed the tracing left on the ice after a skater performed a newly learned and developing figure. The researchers assessed the components of the circles, symmetry, and quality of turns on the ice modeled

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after the *Figure Judging Manual* of the Canadian Figure Skating Association (1986). Baseline occurred over a two-week period.

A within-subject, multi-element design was used for this study. After baseline, the skaters were asked to memorize key words and phrases describing the mechanics of the figures to be executed (i.e., “check shoulders”). Skaters were asked to perform the figures using these words mentally before practice sessions and vocalizing them during the on-ice practices. The study was conducted over five weeks. Skaters practiced five days per week, 1.7 hours on-ice per day. In addition, two off-ice mental practice sessions per week occurred. In the article data was proved with line graphs for each participant (four graphs in total showing divided phase lines of “standard practice,” “treatment,” and “standard practice”). Interobserver agreement averaged 88%.

Results and Discussion

The authors concluded that self-talk can be effective in improving young figure skaters. Each skater showed an improved mean score over baseline of 8 – 32 percent. The researchers indicated the improvement was due to the treatment package and not extraneous variables. The authors do question whether the off-ice practice component, on-ice component, or combinations of the two were the cause of the improvements. Follow-up questionnaires were sent to the coaches and participants six months after the conclusion of the

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study and reevaluated again at the one-year mark. All four skaters indicated they continued to use off-ice practices.

The authors are keen to hold their study in higher regards than replication studies of similar design occurring prior to the article reviewed here. There are comparisons to previous studies limitations and how their study created more validity. The results were significant in their words and believed a correlation exists between the use of self-talk and athletic achievement. The article was published in 1996 and there may have been follow-up and/or replication to this study. There is room for replication of this study with other subgroups within athletics and other performance mediums.