

The *Feeling Good* Experience in Exercise and Sport: A Continued Search for Enhancing Participation

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R. E. Stadulis, & M. J. MacCracken



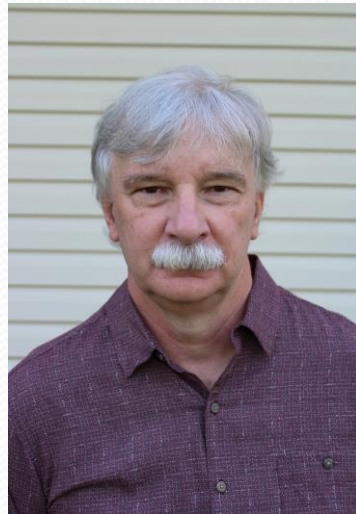
The Ohio Association for Health,
Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance

December 5, 2024

Brief Introduction: The *Feeling Good* Experience in Exercise & Sport, A Continued Search



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Maximizing the *Feeling Good* Experience in *Exercise and Sport: An Overview*

- **Goal:** Lifetime exercise participation
- **Today's topics**
 - Mood Enhancement
 - Winning vs. Fulfillment
 - Improved Self-Esteem
 - Underserved children
- **Speakers**
 - Berger, Ed.D.
 - Turner, Ph.D.
 - Stadulis, Ed.D.
 - MacCracken, Ph.D

The *Feeling Good Experience*: A Taxonomy for Mood Enhancement



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Bowling Green State University

Bonnie G. Berger

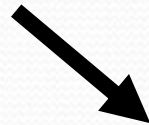
Exercise and Sport: Why Are They Important?

Physiological Benefits

- Blood pressure
- Cancer
- Coronary artery disease
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Osteoporosis

Psychological Benefits

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Enjoyment
- Flow
- Self-esteem
- Stress Management
- Vigor



Quality of Life

So Many Benefits; So Few Participants: A Serious Issue Facing Practitioners

- **24.2% of U.S. adults meet aerobic and muscle-strength guidelines**
 - Aerobic guidelines for exercise
 - 30 minutes
 - most days per week (ACSM, 2022)
 - Muscle-strength guidelines
 - For all major muscle groups
 - 2 or more days per week (ACSM, 2022)
- **46.3% of U.S. adults meet neither requirement**

(Elgaddal, Kramarow, & Reuben, 2022)

The Hedonic Paradigm of Exercise: What Is It?

- Enhance pleasure
- Avoid pain and displeasure
- Dual process theory of explicit (conscious) and implicit (non-conscious) responses to exercise

(ACSM, 2022, pp. 450-452; Calado et al., 2022; Ekkekakis et al., 2024; Kahneman, 1999)



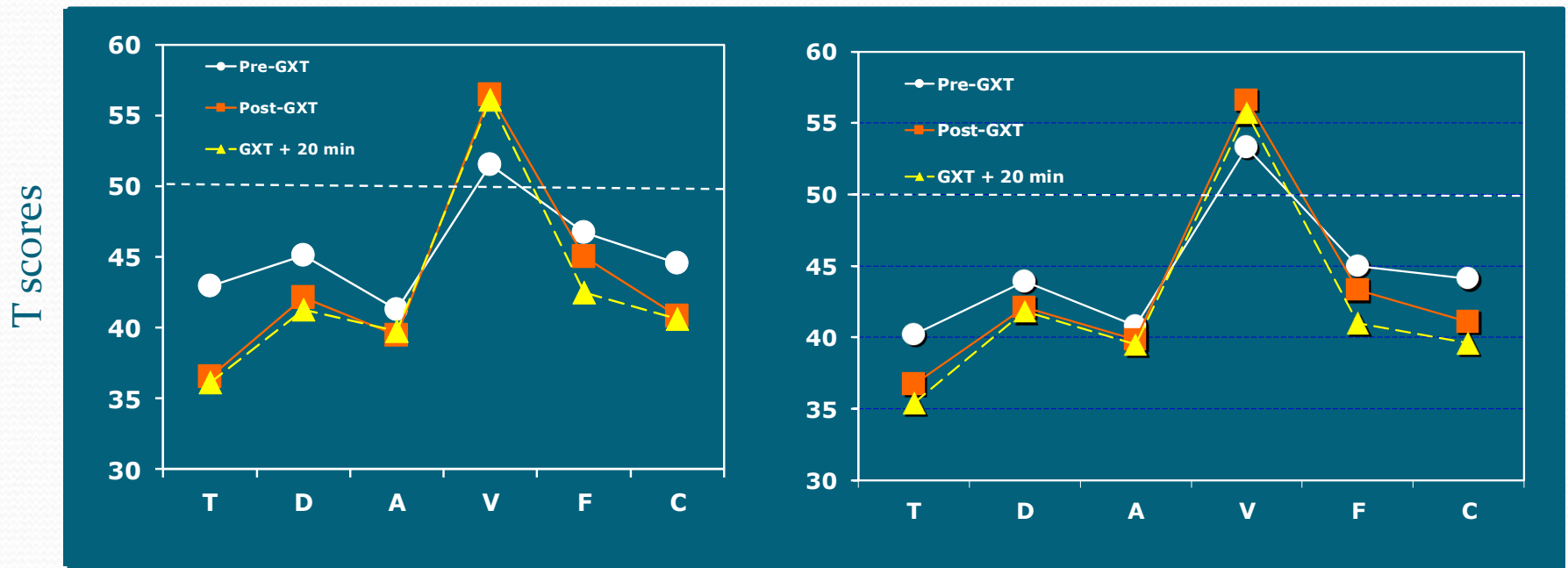
A Hedonic Paradigm Shift in Mood

Feeling Good as measured by the POMS

- Increased Vigor
- Decreased
 - Tension/anxiety
 - Depression
 - Anger
 - Fatigue
 - Confusion



MOC Mood: POMS T-Scores: Before & After Exercise



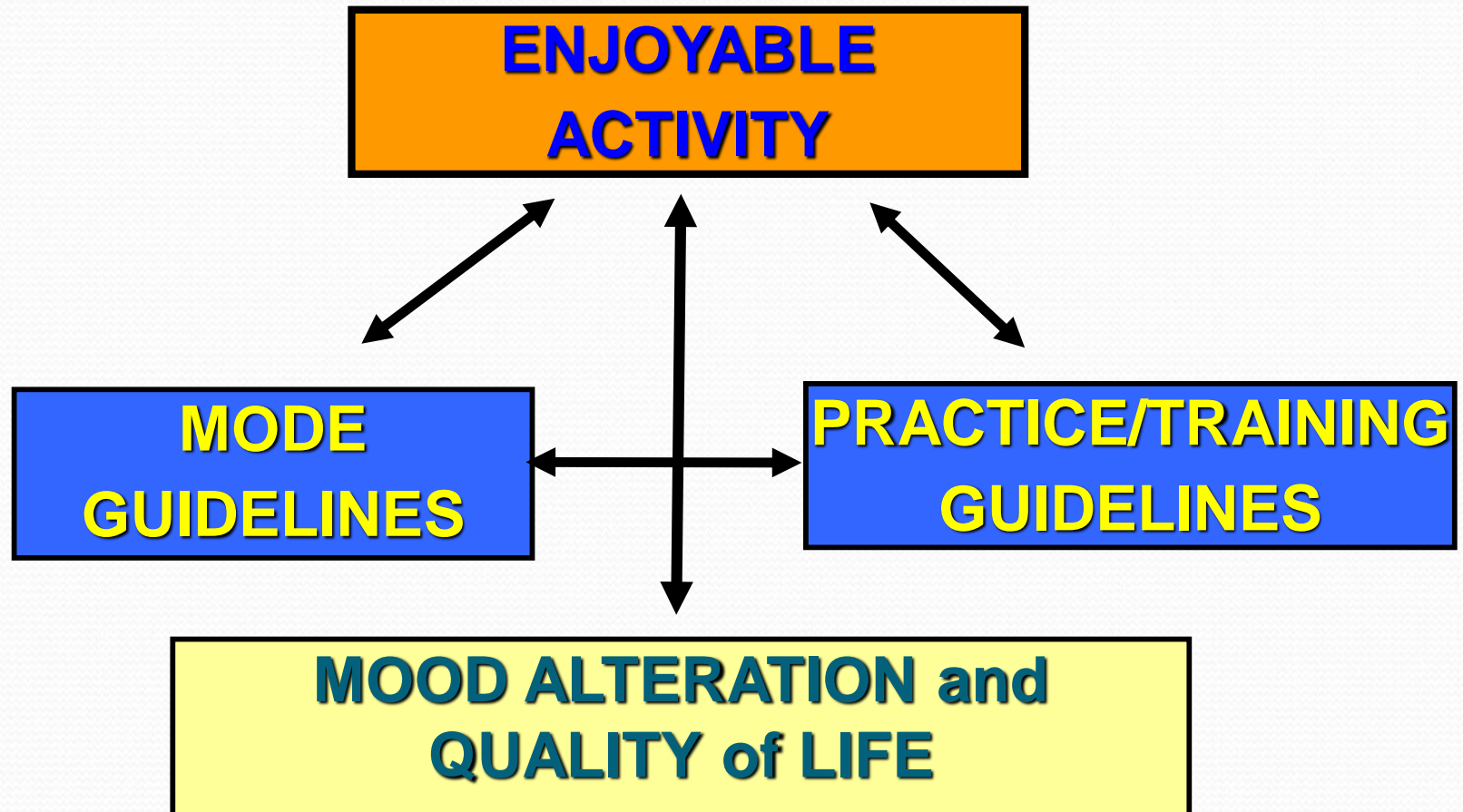
Beginning of the Study

End of the Study

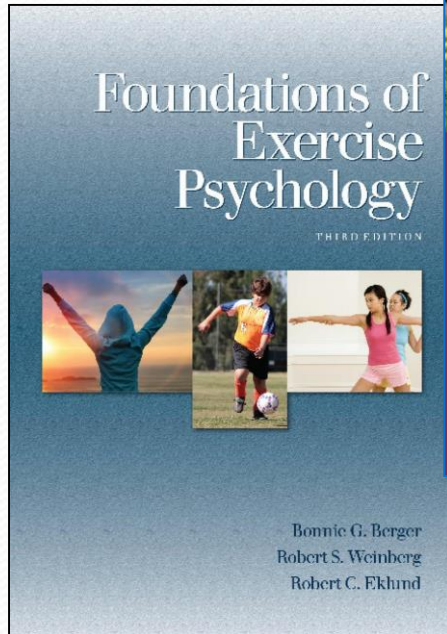
All changes in desirable directions

Berger's Exercise Taxonomy for Mood Alteration

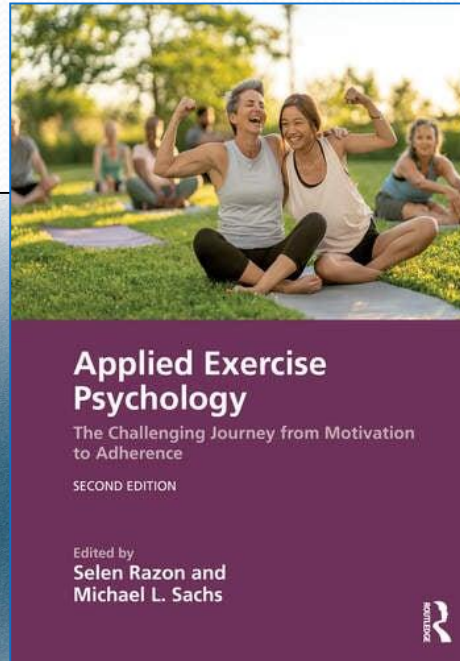
(Berger, Weinberg, & Eklund, 2015; Berger & Tobar, 2024)



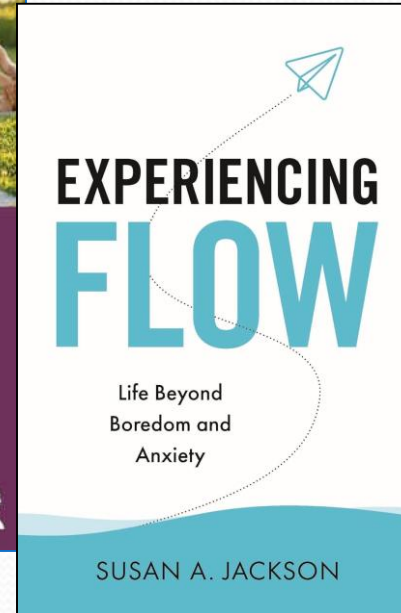
Enjoyable Activity



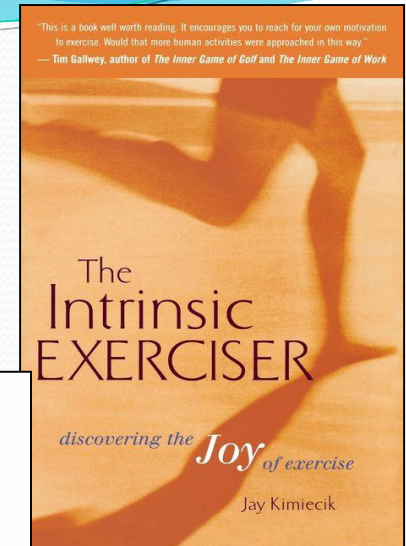
2015



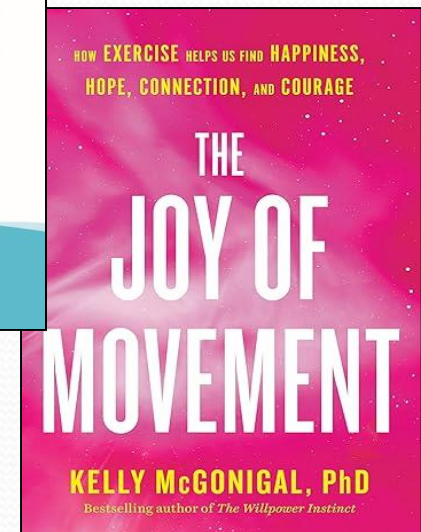
2024



2024



2002



2021

Mode Guidelines: Hedonic Experience

- **Abdominal, rhythmical breathing**
 - Stress management
- **Absence of competition**
 - Winning and losing
 - High intensity exercise
- **Predictable & repetitive movements**
 - Closed activities
 - Can plan movements in advance



(Berger, Weinberg, & Eklund, 2015; Berger & Tobar, 2024)

Practice (or Training) Guidelines: Hedonic Experience

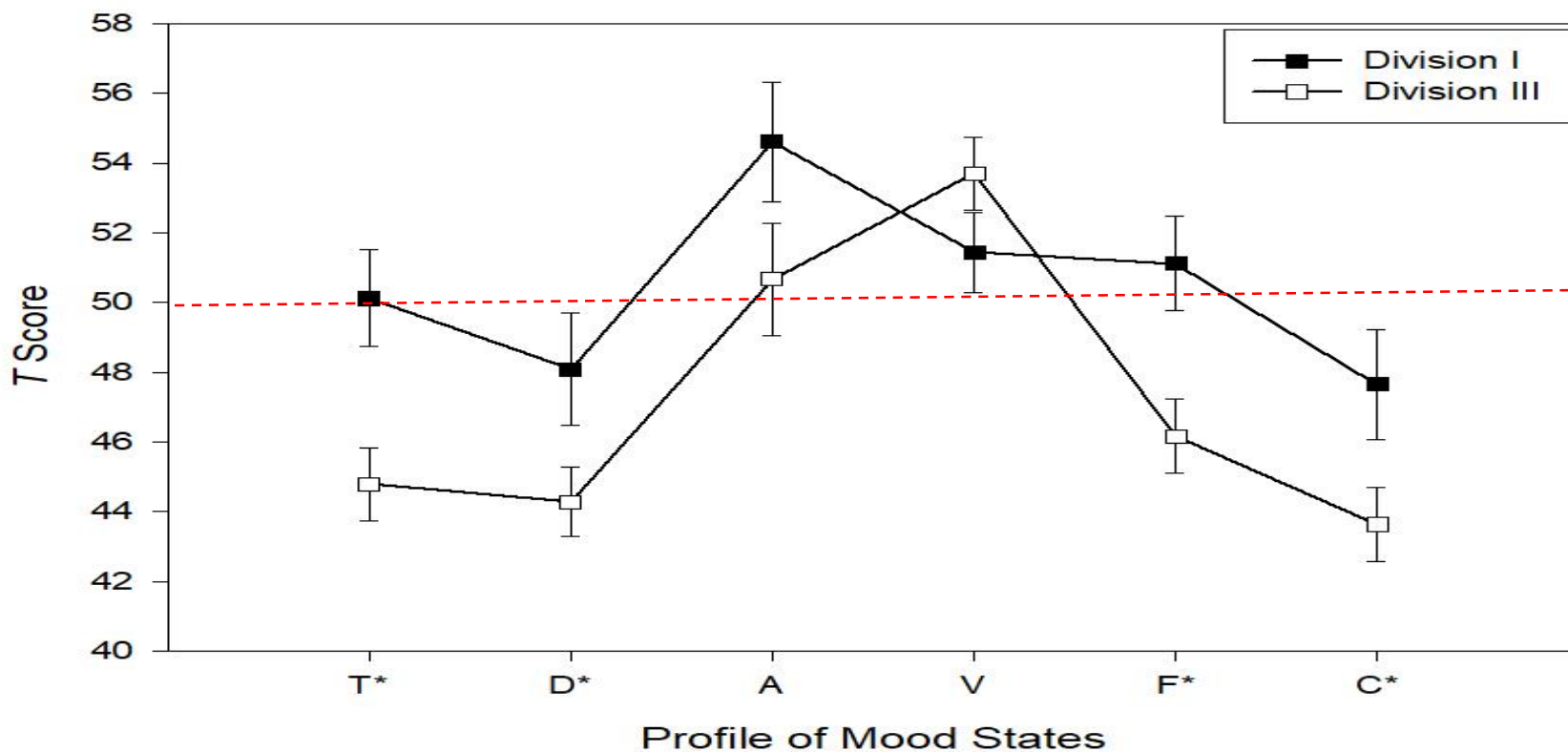
- **Intensity: Moderate range**
 - Personal enjoyment
- **Duration: At least 10-12 minutes**
 - Exercise breaks (snacks)
- **Frequency: Minimum of 3 times/week**
 - Training effect
 - Minimize pain



(Berger, Weinberg, & Eklund, 2015; Berger & Tobar, 2024; Ekkekakis et al., 2024)

D-III Athletes Had More Desirable Moods than D-I Athletes (Mathews, Berger, Darby, Owen, & Tobar, 2021)

Profile of Mood States by Division



Application of the Hedonic Model to Mood Alteration in Exercise and Sport

- Enhance **pleasure** and the *Feeling Good* experience
- Avoid **displeasure and pain**
- Focus on frequent boosts (or exercise snacks)
- Explicit and Implicit responses

Change: I **should to I **want** to exercise**

(Berger et al., *International Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 2021;
Berger & Tobar, 2024)

Conclusion:

Use the Taxonomy and *Hedonic Model* to Enhance

- Exercise pleasure and enjoyment
- Quality of life and
- Ultimately, lifetime participation





Winning vs. Fulfilment: *What Impact in Youth Sports?*

BGSU
Bowling Green State University



Adrian P. Turner

NCAA 1 Division Athletic Team

“Changing the Game Project” (O’Sullivan, 2024)

How does society judge program success?	What brings greatest fulfillment in everyday life?
Winning	Family
Championships	Friends & teammates
Individual awards	Health
Goals & assists/stats	Being successful/winning
Attention/social media	Religion/spirituality/my dog!!

External Pressures vs. Athlete Fulfillment

- If focus external—facilitates stress & anxiety in competition
- Promotes selfishness not selflessness
- Societal scorecard can push athletes away from what they value

Not Whether You Win or Lose—How You Play the Game

Focus on societal scorecard more prevalent at youth level today

How often do parents ask “Did you Win?”

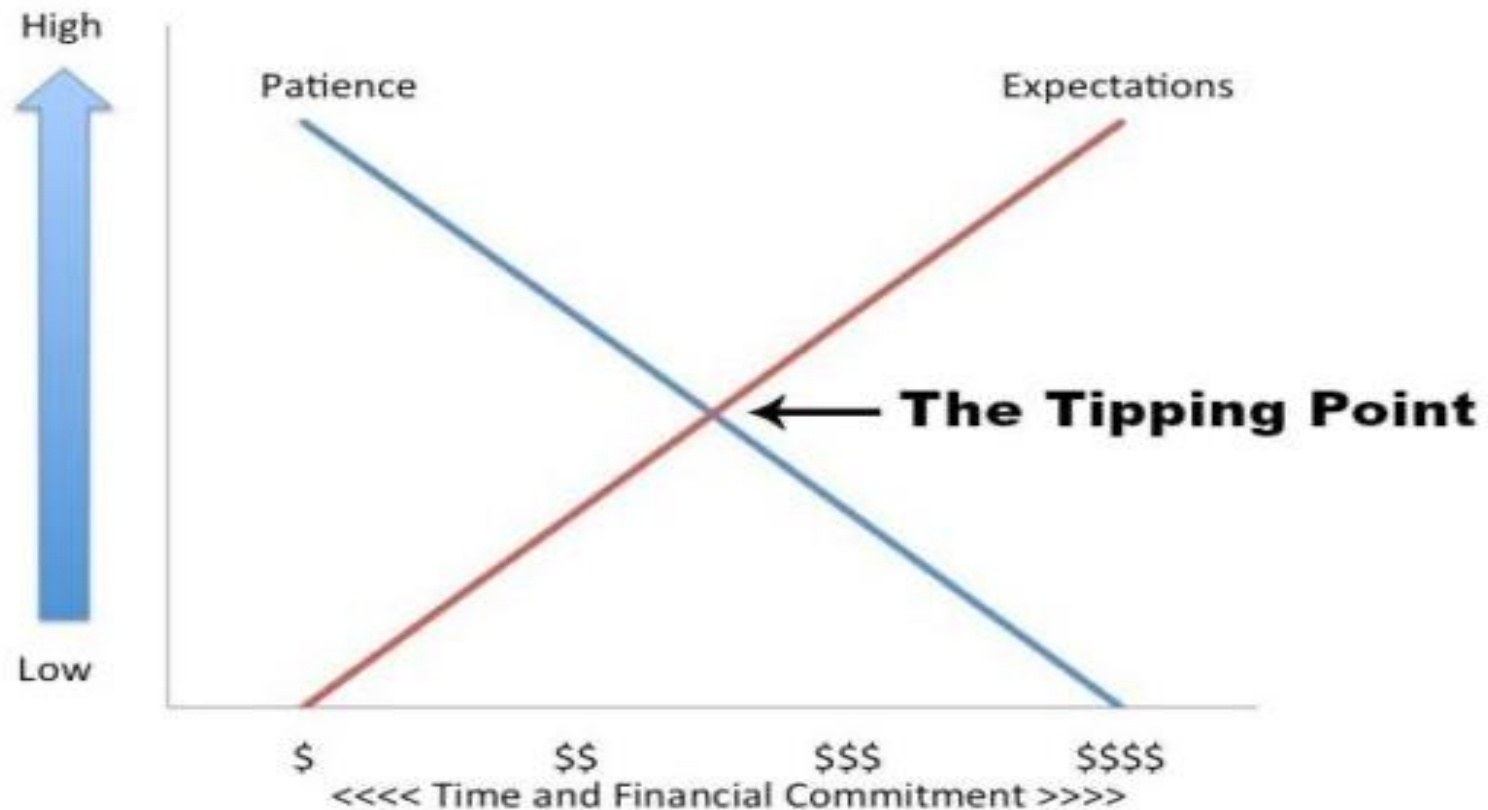
“If focus only on winning, setting youth up for failure” Etnier (2020)

- Youth sports tips from child-focused activity to “**adultified**” version of kid’s games = outcome **Win** driven!
- Youth sports focuses on results rather than development
- Coaches worry players will leave & go to winning team
- **Parents angry** with coaches/officials over results, & **patience is low**
- Parents believe paying more for youth sport program = shortcut to success

Tipping Point in Youth Sports (2024)

“Changing the Game Project” (O’Sullivan, 2024)

Patience vs. Expectations in Sport



Players Who Quit—Can't Win

Reasons children drop out of sports:

- Anxiety & nervousness (due to excessive criticism)
- Pressure to win
- Limited playing time because coaches only play stars to win
(Witt & Dangi, 2018)

Change the Message (Etnier, 2020)

- 70% of athletes quit youth sport by age 13
- **So, What do kids want?**
- **Programs play integral role in keeping them**
- **Go beyond fun in creating a team culture**
 - Enjoyable if what doing in practice or competition valued
 - Players feel recognized when performance, effort & improvement rewarded

“Fun Maps” Research

- “Fun” primary reason for participation in youth sport & it’s absence #1 reason for attrition (Visek et al., 2015, 2018, 2020)
- “What makes playing sports fun for kids?”
- Results showed that “fun” mapped into 11 fun factors (rated most to least important)

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Trying Hard | 7. Team friendships |
| 2. Positive Team Dynamics | 8. Mental bonuses |
| 3. Positive Coaching | 9. Game time support |
| 4. Learning & Improving | 10. Team rituals |
| 5. Games | 11. Swag |
| 6. Practice | |

- 81 “fun” determinants within each of 11 fun factors were listed most to least important (winning ranked #48)

Achievement Goal Theory (Nicholls, 1989) & Youth Sport Climate

- Mastery climate (effort & improvement focus) linked with prosocial behavior toward teammates, **enjoyment**, perceived competence & commitment (van de Pol et al., 2012)
- *Program encourages players to develop skills & game sense, enjoy themselves, support teammates & grow self-confidence*
- Performance climate (win/loss focus) associated with antisocial behavior toward teammates, **tension, anxiety**, low effort, and intention to drop out (Boardley & Kavussanu, 2009)
- *When programs emphasize winning, it hardens relationships between players & fuels feelings of anger & judgment when playing poorly* (Al-Yaaribi & Kavussanu, 2018)

Winning (W) in Youth Sports—in Perspective

- W does not ensure quality of performance (Wooden, 2000)
= relative to whom you play
- W in youth sports influenced by physiological maturity
- W evidenced in achievement, but, successful youth sports programs reinforce: (1) participation, (2) effort & (3) achievement
- W (in perspective)—expectation should be on character development, values and long-term athlete development
- W or L—look for good in every game/event to develop:
Grit, persistence & reduce fear of making mistakes

Athlete Development 1st, Winning 2nd

Successful youth sport programs find ways to achieve 3 objectives:

1. Help athletes develop physically, psychologically, socially
2. Help young athletes have fun
3. Have a winning team

(Martens, 2012)

“Paying more attention to mastery & improvement means players build a foundation of skills, strategies, work ethic & fortitude that will provide a chance to win”

(Etnier, 2020)



Maximizing the *Feeling Good* Experience

**Self-Esteem & Fear, Courage and
Confidence Affecting Behavior**



 KENT STATE
UNIVERSITY

Bob Stadulis

SELF-ESTEEM ENHANCEMENT

- **Many participants return to physical activity, exercise and sport. Others do not!**
- **Why?**
- **Does self-esteem/self-worth (SE/SW) explain this?**

SELF-ESTEEM

- **“Self-esteem is a realistic respect for your ability to achieve (across situations)”**
- **“A Person’s evaluation of themselves”**
- **“I am a person who has worth and value”**
- **“Strongly influenced by goal achievement.”**
- **“Major information source: feedback”**

FEEDBACK TYPES

- **Knowledge of Results (KR) and Knowledge of Performance (KP)**
- **Internal (Self), External (Others)**
- **+ Positive, – Negative or 0 Neutral**
- **Praise vs Criticism --> SE?**

FEEDBACK PRINCIPLES

(Task dependent)

- **When? Timing**
 - **Immediate vs Delayed?**
- **What? Instruction**
 - **KR vs KP?**
- **How? Style**
 - **Emphasize the +**
 - **Can - erode SE/SW?**

- **Sandwich approach**
+ then C/I then +
Purpose: empathy then
correction/instruction
then praise



- **Open-faced sandwich (Recency/Primacy)**
 - +FB then C/I - Instruction primarily
 - C/I then +FB - SE/SW primarily



FEEDBACK AFFECTS FUTURE BEHAVIOR

- **Criticism → Fear → -SE + Avoidance**
- **Praise/Achievement(if challenging) → +SE & Approach (Courage)**
- **+ SE → + Confidence**
- **Confidence: 2024 *Future Focus* “Coaching Toolbox”**



Intervention Programming to Foster a Hedonic Exercise Experience:

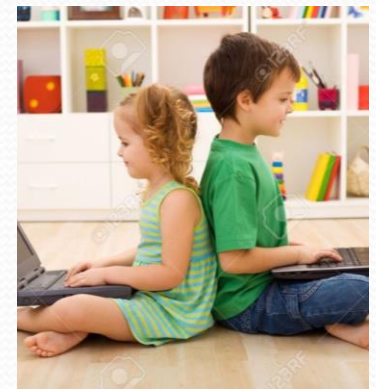
A Focus on Underserved Youth



Mary J MacCracken
OAHPERD 2024

Introduction

- **Most American youth do not meet established American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) exercise guidelines.**
- **With the explosion of cell phones, children are using the internet rather than riding bikes and shooting baskets as in years past (Raghuveer, et al., 2020).**



RESEARCH STUDIES OF 20 YEARS

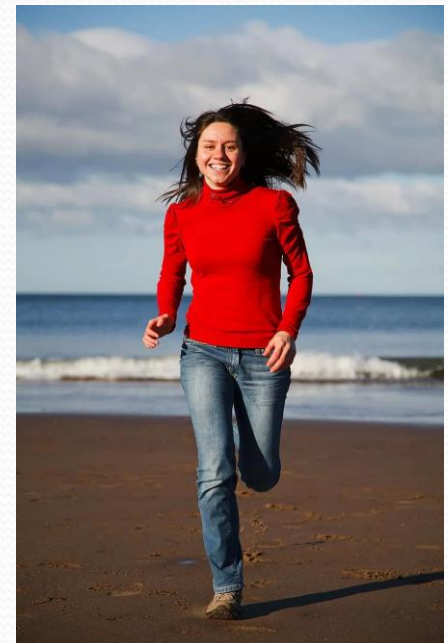
Intervention programs for the underserved focused on strategies to increase physical activity, enhance self-esteem, facilitate social interactions... funded by:

The Ohio Commission on Minority Health, USTA Serves, OAHPERD ...



Hedonic Paradigm

Findings from years of programming seem to support the possibility that the Hedonic Paradigm can be used to increase participation in physical activity (PA) across one's lifespan.



What is the Hedonic Paradigm?

When PA “feels good”, one tends to seek and repeat activities bringing pleasure and enjoyment...

and avoid activities causing displeasure or pain (ACSM, 2022; Calado et al, 2022).



Early Study: Children's Motives for Participating in Sport/Games

- **Boys and girls (N=151) ages 9-to-13 from an urban public school answered 26 questions about their motives for participating.**
- **Why did you choose to play a sport?**
- **What was your reason for continuing rather than dropping out?**

Participation Questionnaire

- On a Likert Scale, children responded from “very important” (5) to “not at all important” (1) regarding **reasons for participating** in sports/physical activity.
 - making new friends, improving skills, having fun, playing time, pleasing parents, enjoying competition????

Findings: Reasons for Participating

Study results support Hedonic Approach

- **34.2%** of the 151 children said, “**having fun**” was their most important reason for participating in sports and games. Then,
- “Learning new skills” (6.7%)
- “Staying in shape” (6.7%)
- “Improving my skills” (6.7%).

What reason did children give for deciding to drop out of a sport/game?

Children seemed to avoid activities that brought displeasure or pain:

- **“were not having fun”**
- **“lacked playing time”**
- **“too much emphasis on winning”**
- **“pressure from parents” or “injury”**

70% youth drop out of sport by age 13

50%–70% of youth in Westernized nations participate in organized sport programs...

Yet 35% leave youth sport annually...

And, by age 13, it is estimated that 70% of youth have left sport altogether.

[Battaglia, Kerr, & Tamminen, 2024 in *Kinesiology Review*, 13 (3) 345-356]

HOW MIGHT ONE INCREASE FUN??

Increase Fun Through Social Situation

- **Spectators** enhance performance for children of **higher skill** (especially boys) but not for lower skilled children (both boys and girls).
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vyFVzo_FW4c
- **Coaction (pair same-skilled) results in positive effects (increases fun) regardless of skill level.**



Another way to increase fun-- play music.



<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/WrdWZkDdYrI>

Your favorite song for exercise??

**Music often brings people together...
strengthens social bonding (Etani, 2024).
Optimal tempo is 107 – 126 bpm.**

INCREASE FUN

Keeping PACE Akron's Way: Lifestyle Intervention Programming



- An OCMH-supported program to increase PA and aid an understanding of what it means to be healthy, enhance self-esteem, and facilitate social interactions.
 - year-long
 - face-to-face in-school lessons
 - at no cost to 167 underserved children.

Focus: Lifestyle Intervention

Having a healthy lifestyle means exercising daily and eating healthy foods

167 underserved boys/girls between 3- and 14-years.
Participant heritage:
African American (75%),
Asian (10%), Hispanic (10%),
Caucasian (5%).
Pedometers were used in games/PA to add fun.

Using a pedometer motivated an increase in a child's exercise (steps)

Youth who used a pedometer:

- Took **183.2%** more steps (quarter 4 vs quarter 1) ($p = <.05$).
- Compared to older counterparts, **preschool youth aged 3-5 years** increased their steps by **494%**.



We Love To Use Our Pedometers



Older Children's Pedometer Use?

- **Older children** were initially interested in pedometer use but not like **preschoolers** who averaged **10,650** steps.
- **Older children journaled about their pedometers:** “that gadget helped improve my self-confidence and social interaction with classmates.”



Conclusion: In Support of the Hedonic Approach

Making PA fun by using coaction, music, pedometers may help children decrease their inactivity and address the conundrum of so many benefits, so few participants, in lifelong physical activity.



DO THINGS YOU ENJOY



MAKE EXERCISE FUN

Discussion:

Maximizing the **Feeling Good** Experience in Exercise and Sport



- What makes PA enjoyable for you?
- How does competition influence your mood states?
- What aspects of exercise and sport influence your self-esteem?
- What influences enjoyment in children's PA?

