Performance development of adolescent swimmers: A Mindfulness-Acceptance-Commitment (MAC) approach

By

Lauren Margaret Leon

A mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts

In

Counselling Psychology

In the Department of Psychology at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

SUPERVISOR: Prof. L. Human

December 2013

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

"Those who get the farthest are passionate, driven and positive. They not only aim high for themselves, they also support and lift up others."

Brooke Griffin

(Dweck, 2006)

ABSTRACT

For the past three decades performance development in sport has been steered by traditional Psychological Skills Training (PST) programmes. However, in the last decade, the Mindfulness-Acceptance-Commitment (MAC) approach to performance development in sport has been introduced. To date, there is limited research on the MAC approach and there are currently no published studies in South Africa. The goal of this study was to explore the participant's experiences of the MAC programme with reference to what they learnt through the programme, how they applied their learning to their swimming and how they transferred their learning to their lives. This study is an Interpretive Phenomenological view of five adolescent swimmers (two female and three male) at the High Performance Centre (hpc), in South Africa (SA). The participants partook in a one-day swimming-specific MAC programme and thereafter, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants. An interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used for analysing the data gained from the interviews. The findings indicate that the participants had experiences which were consistent, inconsistent or unique in relation to the literature review.

Key words: Adolescents, High School, Interpretive Phenomenology, Interviews, Mindfulness-Acceptance-Commitment (MAC), Performance Development, Psychological Skills Training (PST), South Africa, Sport, Swimming.

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Chapter	Description
ACT	Chapter 2	Acceptance Commitment Therapy
CBT	Chapter 2	Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
CEO	Chapter 4	Chief Executive Officer
DP	Chapter 3	Descriptive Phenomenology
DPRM	Chapter 3	Duquesne Phenomenological Research Method
hpc	Chapter 1	High Performance Centre
HPCSA	Chapter 1	Health Professions Council of South Africa
IP	Chapter 1	Interpretive Phenomenology
IPA	Chapter 3	Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis
MA	Chapter 1	Master of Arts
MAC	Chapter 1	Mindfulness-Acceptance-Commitment
MCS-SP	Chapter 1	Multi-level Classification System for Sport Psychology
MSPE	Chapter 2	Mindful Sport Performance Enhancement
PD	Chapter 1	Performance Development
PDy	Chapter 1	Performance Dysfunction
PI	Chapter 1	Performance Impairment
PST	Chapter 1	Psychological Skills Training
PT	Chapter 1	Performance Termination
RQ1	Chapter 1	Research Question One
RQ2	Chapter 1	Research Question Two
RQ3	Chapter 1	Research Question Three
SA	Chapter 2	South Africa
S1	Chapter 5	Swimming Participant One
S2	Chapter 6	Swimming Participant Two

v

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH POSITION

CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH INQUIRY

CHAPTER 5
FINDINGS
(PARTICIPANT ONE)

CHAPTER 6
FINDINGS
(PARTICIPANT TWO)

CHAPTER 7
FINDINGS
(PARTICIPANT THREE)

CHAPTER 8

FINDINGS

(PARTICIPANT FOUR)

CHAPTER 9
FINDINGS
(PARTICIPANT FIVE)

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 1
BACKGROUND

Introduction

This chapter explores the context of the study by means of a brief outline of the University of Pretoria (UP), the Department of Psychology and the High Performance Centre (hpc)[1]. The chapter proceeds with a discussion of the psychological services that are offered at the hpc. Subsequently, the researcher describes the problems associated with providing two diverse performance development programmes simultaneously to athletes of various sporting academies. This is followed by a proposed solution to the aforesaid problem. The chapter further discusses the sport of swimming, the research questions, goals and the motivation for the study. The chapter concludes with a structure for the mini-thesis.

1.1   CONTEXT

1.1.1   University of Pretoria

The Transvaal University College (TUC) commenced its activities in 1908, and in 1930 the TUC became the independent University of Pretoria (UP). The university currently operates in Pretoria and surrounding areas on six academic campuses, namely Hatfield, Prinshof, Onderstepoort, Groenkloof, Mamelodi and Sandton. The current research study is based on the Hatfield campus which houses the majority of faculties and student services.

There are ten faculties on the Hatfield campus, namely the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, the Faculty of Education, the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology, the Faculty of Health Sciences, the Faculty of Humanities, the Faculty of Law, the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, the

---

[1]   The official abbreviation for the High Performance Centre is "hpc" written in lower case.

Faculty of Theology, and the Faculty of Veterinary Science. This research study is situated within the Faculty of Humanities. Within this Faculty there are three broad fields, namely Arts, Social Sciences and Languages. My research study is situated within in the Department of Psychology which forms part of the Social Sciences field (University of Pretoria [UP], 2010; 2012).

1.1.2 Psychology Department

The Department of Psychology offers three professional postgraduate degrees in Psychology, namely, Master of Arts (MA) (Clinical Psychology), MA (Counselling Psychology) and MA (Research Psychology). I am a MA (Counselling Psychology) student. The MA (Counselling Psychology) degree has three core modules (Fundamentals of Psychology, Psychological Assessment and Counselling Psychology), as well as two electives (Community Psychology or Sport Psychology). Training within the MA (Counselling Psychology) programme is conducted through the researcher-practitioner model (Human, 2008; University of Pretoria [UP], 2010; 2012). I have elected to conduct this research study within Sport Psychology at the hpc of the UP.

1.1.3 High Performance Centre

1.1.3.1 Background Information

The hpc was established in May 2002. The hpc provides facilities and services to local and international athletes. The hpc also provides services to the TuksSport Academies and the TuksSport High School. The hpc accommodates the following TuksSport Academies namely, TuksGolf, TuksGymnastics, TuksSwimming, TuksTaekwondo, TuksSquash, TuksAthletics, TuksRugby, TuksCricket, TuksTennis, PGA Golf, TuksTriathlon and TuksDans.

The TuksSport High School programme comprises of learners from Grade 8 to Grade 12 (ages 13-18). This is an independent co-ed school that allows current and potential

high performing athletes to train whilst remaining in school. The aforesaid is accomplished by providing a school-day that is structured in such a manner that it allows for the high volume of training required by the athletes (University of Pretoria [UP], 2010; 2012). My research will focus on participants from the hpc who attend the TuksSport High School and partake in the TuksSwimming Academy.

1.1.3.2 Sport Psychology Services

In order for the hpc to assist all athletes competently, the hpc classifies athletes into one of four levels on the Multi-level Classification System for Sport Psychology[2] (MCS-SP)(Gardner & Moore, 2004; 2005; 2006). The hpc utilises this model to deliver both sports counselling and sport psychology services to athletes. The first three levels of the MCS-SP are Performance Termination (PT), Performance Impairment (PI) and Performance Dysfunction (PDy), all of which require sports counselling (personal development) interventions. The fourth level relates to Performance Development (PD) and requires a sport psychology (performance development) intervention (Gardner & Moore, 2004; 2005; 2006). Both Psychological Skills Training (PST) and Mindfulness-Acceptance-Commitment (MAC) programmes are used at the hpc to assist athletes on the PD level of the MCS-SP. Each of the four levels of the MCS-SP consists of two sub-levels. In the following section these two sub-levels will be elucidated.

PT accommodates athletes who need assistance with problems related to the voluntary or involuntary completion of their athletic career. The PT (1) level applies when the athlete's career ends expectedly or even voluntarily. This process may be seen as a grieving period (Gardner & Moore, 2004; 2005; 2006). Psychologists assist athletes in this process. The PT (2) level applies to athletes when their athletic careers end unexpectedly or involuntarily due to injury or non-injury related reasons. Psychologists assist these athletes that may experience a grief reaction, acute stress or post-traumatic stress (Gardner & Moore, 2004; 2005).

---

[2] The term "sport psychologist" is not an official Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) registration category. I shall use this term to refer to a registered psychologist, irrespective of the HPCSA registration category, working in the sport context in SA.

PI deals with athletes who need assistance with aspects related to the presence of clear clinical disorders that may have a negative impact on their athletic performance or cause a total inability to compete. PI (1) level refers to athletes who have clinical disorders such as anxiety, eating- or stress disorders which negatively influence the athlete's performance. PI (2) level refers to athletes with unhealthy behavioural and/or personality traits such as anger and impulse control problems, or alcohol and drug abuse. The aforementioned problems usually result in an external decision to limit the athletes' performance (short- or long-term). For example, when an athlete receives a prison sentence or when an athlete is suspended from the team (Gardner & Moore, 2004; 2005).

PD is tailored for athletes who need assistance with internal or external psychological barriers that negatively influence their athletic performance. Performance is likely to improve once the barriers are removed. PDy (1) level refers to an athlete's external barriers. These barriers occur in the athlete's environment which affects their performance such as parental divorce or death of a loved one. PDy (2) level refers to an athlete's internal barriers. These barriers are usually triggered by the pressures of their competitive environment and result in negative thinking patterns such as fear of failure or perfectionism which adversely influence the athlete's performance (Gardner & Moore, 2004; 2005).

PD is likely to best represent athletes seeking performance development services and is mostly representative of the athletes at the hpc. PD (1) level refers to athletes that are at an amateur level or youth athletes who require psychological guidance to improve their athletic performance. PD (2) level refers to athletes who are already performing at a high level and their physical and mental skills are satisfactory. However, these athletes may require psychological assistance to perform consistently and to maintain high performance levels (Gardner & Moore, 2004; 2005). My study focused on adolescent swimmers, and therefore the study falls within the PD (1) level.

1.1.3.3 Sport Psychology Services Dilemma

At the hpc the majority of athletes and more specifically the swimmers, fall within the PD level of the MCS-SP. According to the MCS-SP, athletes in the PD level require performance development services to assist in their athletic performance. In an effort to provide athletes with efficient performance development services, the hpc presents the PST and MAC programmes.

However, the hpc currently faces a dilemma in providing both the PST and MAC programmes because these programmes are fundamentally and philosophically different. Furthermore, these programmes are not sport specific therefore the same, general programmes are being presented to groups of athletes from various sporting academies. Therefore, not only are there two conflicting programmes, but these programmes are not presented sport specifically. In addition, no research has been conducted at the hpc on these programmes. Therefore it is difficult to effectively implement and monitor the outcomes of the programmes.

1.1.3.4 Sport Psychology Services Resolution

I will attempt to address the current sport psychology services dilemma at the hpc by firstly presenting a sport specific MAC programme to swimmers. Secondly, I will investigate what the swimmers learnt through their participation in the MAC programme, and how they applied what they have learnt to swimming and also how they have transferred what they have learnt to their daily lives. Thirdly, the information obtained from the athletes will then be documented in a report. Lastly, feedback will be provided to the hpc in an attempt to address the current dilemma by assisting the hpc in developing sport specific MAC programmes for all the sporting academies.

1.2   SWIMMING

Swimming is a priority sport at hpc because of the highly successful TuksSwimming training programme which aims at developing swimmers in a structured, long-term development programme. The TuksSwimming training programmes correspond to certain levels of swimming performance. As the swimmer's performance improves the swimmer progresses to a more specialised programme.

There are five levels of swimming performance which correspond to five training programmes. The starting level of the hierarchy would be athletes in the Foundation Phase who form part of the sub-junior squads within TuksSwimming. The second level is athletes in the Participation Phase who form part of the junior club squads. From the third level onwards, the hpc recognises that certain athletes have the potential to reach the highest level. The third level comprises of athletes in the Performance Development Phase who form part of the TuksSport High School and TuksSwimming Academy. The fourth level comprises of athletes in the Senior Phase who are students at a university level who qualify for sport bursaries. The final level comprises of athletes of an elite nature who compete at an international level (University of Pretoria [UP], 2010; 2012).

The swimmers who form part of my research are in the Performance Development Phase and belong to the TuksSport High School and TuksSwimming Academy. These swimmers have been identified as athletes who are talented. These swimmers follow a strict weekly training programme involving approximately 20 hours of swimming training and functional strength and power training. The athletes form part of a multi-disciplinary team, where professionals provide services in terms of bio-mechanical analysis, physiological testing, strength and conditioning coaching, sport psychology, nutrition, dietary supplementation and recovery from injury (Fick, 2004; Lohn, 2010; University of Pretoria [UP], 2010; 2012).

6

1.3   QUESTIONS

This research project entails three research questions:

1.3.1   Research Question 1 (RQ1): What did adolescent swimmers experientially learn through their participation in a swimming-specific MAC programme (i.e., mindfulness, acceptance, commitment)?

1.3.2   Research Question 2 (RQ2): How do adolescent swimmers apply their experiential learning through their participation in a MAC programme to their swimming?

1.3.3   Research Question 3 (RQ3): How do adolescent swimmers transfer their experiential learning through their participation in a MAC programme to their lives?

1.4   GOALS

1.4.1   Primary Goals

This study has four primary goals:

1.   To develop an understanding of PST and MAC programmes to performance development in sport through scholarly literature.

2.   To develop an understanding of what adolescent swimmers at the hpc experientially learnt, how they applied their experiential learning to swimming, as well as how they transferred their experiential learning to their lives.

3.   To integrate the findings from 1.4.1 (1) and 1.4.1 (2) into a research report in the form of a mini-thesis, as well as a scholarly article.

4.   To provide feedback in the form of a presentation and report the findings of the study to the hpc based on the primary goals stipulated in 1.4.1 (1) and (2).

1.4.2   Secondary Goals

This project has the following secondary goals as guidelines for achieving the four primary goals:

1.   To conduct a literature review on PST and MAC programmes in sport, as portrayed in scholarly literature (see Chapter 2).

2.   To describe the research inquiry of this research project, with reference to research context, research position, research participants, research process and research ethics (see Chapter 3).

3.   To record the findings of this research project in the form of a mini-thesis (see Chapters 5 - 9), as well as a scholarly article.

4.   To arrange a feedback session with the relevant role players at the hpc with the purpose of providing feedback regarding the research project conducted at the hpc with adolescent swimmers.

1.5   MOTIVATION

1.5.1   Academic Motivation

This research is part of the requirements for the MA (Counselling Psychology) degree at UP. The programme training is situated within the researcher-practitioner model, therefore, part of the training is the requirement of a mini-thesis which holds 50% of the

final programme mark. This research project is therefore conducted for degree purposes (Human, 2008, University of Pretoria [UP], 2010; 2012).

1.5.2   Personal Motivation

My personal motivation to conduct this research directly links to the sport psychology services dilemma at hpc. I will address the dilemma by presenting a sport specific MAC programme to swimmers and then ascertain what they learnt from the MAC programme, how they applied what they learnt to swimming and how they transferred what they learnt to their lives. The findings will be presented to the hpc to assist them in developing sport specific programmes for all the sporting academies. In Chapter 2, I shall address the research motivation in relation to scholarly literature.

1.6   OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

1.   Chapter 1: Introduction providing the research context, the three research questions, the research goals and the motivation for conducting this study.

2.   Chapter 2: Literature review on both the MAC and PST programmes providing their origin, their underpinning philosophy and their related skills or practices. Lastly, this chapter situates this research within MAC.

3.   Chapter 3: Research position describing phenomenology and the two schools of Descriptive and Interpretive Phenomenology (IP). The chapter concludes by motivating the research position of Interpretive Phenomenology.

4.   Chapter 4: Research inquiry describing the research contexts and the requirements for the participants. Thereafter, the research processes along with the ethical guidelines are stated.

5.   Chapter 5: Research findings of participant one, this chapter will describe the experiences of participant one from his participation in the MAC programme. His

experiences will be discussed with the aim of addressing the three research questions of this study.

6.   Chapter 6: Research findings of participant two, this chapter will describe the experiences of participant two from her participation in the MAC programme. Her experiences will be discussed with the aim of addressing the three research questions of this study.

7.   Chapter 7: Research findings of participant three, this chapter will describe the experiences of participant three from her participation in the MAC programme. Her experiences will be discussed with the aim of addressing the three research questions of this study.

8.   Chapter 8: Research findings of participant four, this chapter will describe the experiences of participant four from his participation in the MAC programme. His experiences will be discussed with the aim of addressing the three research questions of this study.

9.   Chapter 9: Research findings of participant five, this chapter will describe the experiences of participant five from his participation in the MAC programme. His experiences will be discussed with the aim of addressing the three research questions of this study.

10.   Chapter 10: A summary of the research findings is presented with the aim of addressing the three research questions. The summary of the findings will be situated within the existing MAC literature. Thereafter, the limitations of this study will be discussed.

Conclusion

In this chapter the context of the study was outlined by providing a brief summary of the UP, the Department of Psychology and the hpc. The chapter further explored the hpc's psychological services, the current dilemma faced by the hpc and a proposed solution. The chapter then proceeded to discuss the sport of swimming before addressing the research questions, goals and motivation. This was followed by an outline of the structure for the different chapters in the thesis. In accordance with the structure, Chapter 2 will describe the performance development programmes of PST and MAC.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In this chapter I shall discuss the two dominant sport programmes for performance development, namely Psychological Skills Training (PST) and Mindfulness-Acceptance-Commitment (MAC). The programmes will be discussed in terms of their origin, the philosophy underpinning these programmes and either the psychological skills or the psychological practices involved.

2.1   PSYCHOLOGICAL SKILLS TRAINING IN SPORT

Figure 2.1 portrays the differences between the PST and MAC programmes in terms of origin, philosophy and their related skills or practices. PST is the traditional performance development programme and MAC is the most recent performance development programme which challenges the fundamentals of PST (Gardner & Moore, 2004; 2006). The chapter will proceed with a discussion on PST programmes.
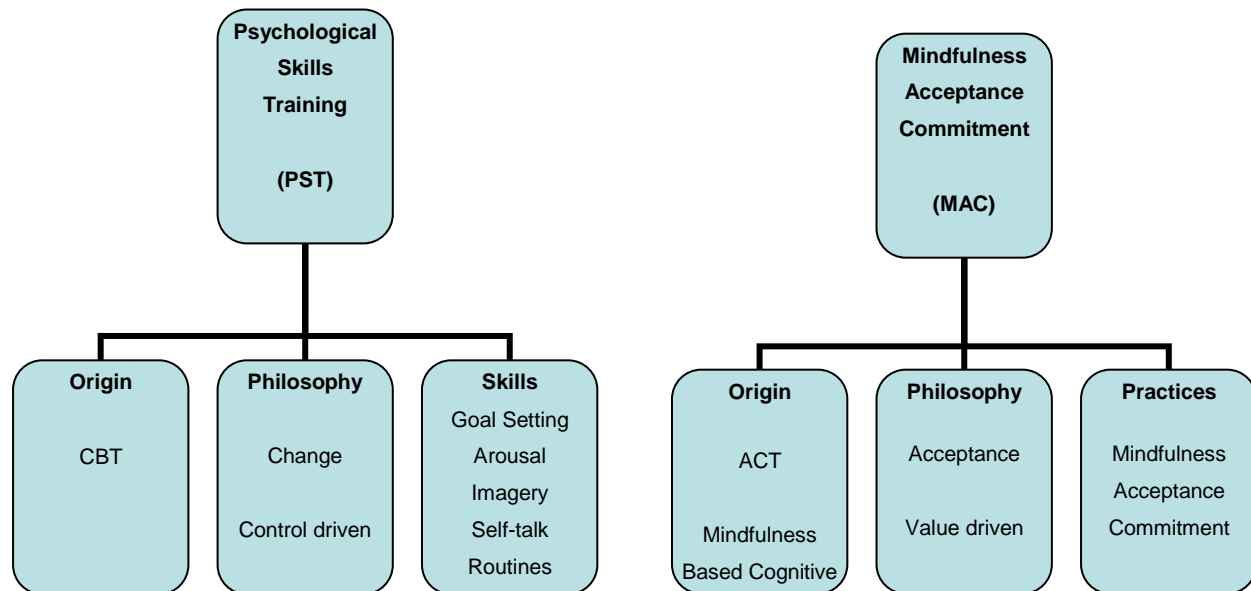
Figure 2.1. Differences between PST and MAC

2.1.1 Origin

PST programmes have dominated the sporting world for approximately 30 years. PST programmes originated from primarily second wave behaviourism, also known as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT). The origin of the PST programmes can be traced back to Suinn (1986) who developed and implemented the first PST programme in sport. Subsequently, four amended PST programmes have been developed, namely by Marten (1987); Hardy and Fazey (1990); Rushall (1992) and Morris and Summer (1995) (Kirschenbaum & Bale, 1984).

2.1.2 Philosophy

PST programmes are taught to athletes by means of a psycho-educational process and are based on mental skills of self-control. The PST programme is used to educate athletes to embrace the philosophy that in order to perform at an optimal level an absence of discomfort is required. Discomfort is usually experienced by athletes in bodily sensations, internal experiences (thoughts and feelings) and external stimuli. In order to achieve an optimal performance level where discomfort is absent, athletes are taught mental skills of self-control. The most important tenets of PST includes, goal setting, arousal management, imagery, self-talk and performance routines. In the following section, these self-control skills will be discussed in more detail (Birrier & Morgan, 2010; Gucciardi, Gordon & Dimmock, 2009; Hayslip, Petrie, MacIntire & Jones, 2010; Kamphoff, Hamson-Utley, Antoine, Knutson, Thomae & Hoenig, 2010; McCarthy, Jones, Harwood & Olivier, 2010; Thelwell, Weston, Greenlees & Hutchings, 2008; Yang, 2011).

2.1.3   Psychological Skills

2.1.3.1 Goal Setting

Goal setting is a manner in which one's time and resources are organised in a productive manner in order for the athlete to realistically achieve all performance related goals. Goal setting enhances performance by mapping out realistic progress so that athletes are able to continually monitor themselves and self-improve. The aforesaid provides an athlete with a sense of self-control in their performance rate. Goal setting assists athletes to remain motivated, focused and driven. This minimizes discomforts such as distractions, laziness and procrastination. Therefore, goal setting is a skill employed by athletes to assist them to perform in the absence of discomfort (Alfred, 2010; Babkes, 2009; Burton & Raedeke, 2008; Dosil, 2006; Hogg, 1997; Horn, 2008; Maslan, 2009; Moran, 2004).

2.1.3.2 Arousal Control

In order for athletes to reach their athletic potential, athletes have to learn how to manage their mental and physical energy levels during competition. Arousal management is a skill employed to control the body's energy levels. In line with the PST philosophy, arousal management is a self-control skill employed to control or minimise discomfort in order for an athlete to perform. If an athlete experiences discomfort, and is over or under aroused, the athlete is unable to perform at an optimal level. Therefore, arousal management is used to help athletes manage their arousal levels so that any discomfort is controlled and an improved performance level is possible (Jones, 2003; Moran, 2004; Powell, 2000; Smith & Kays, 2010; Williams, 2010).

2.1.3.3 Imagery

Imagery is also called mental rehearsal. It is a mental training technique that involves using all the senses as well as adrenaline in order to create or recreate an experience in the athlete's mind. These images should comprise of the athlete performing successfully

14

and feeling satisfied with his or her performance. Imagery is used to familiarise the athlete with unfamiliar settings, reduce negative thoughts, visualise success, stay motivated, refocus, perform more effectively and lastly to assist the athlete to obtain the maximum benefit out of the training session. Corresponding to the PST philosophy, imagery is a self-control skill utilised to create a pleasant environment that enables an athlete to think and feel positively. Athletes are able to perform optimally when discomfort is minimised, therefore imagery creates a picture of no discomfort whereby the athlete performs at an optimal level (Bizley, 1994; Davis, 2000; Galligan, 2000; Hale, 1998; McArdle, 2000).

2.1.3.4 Self-talk

Athletes use self-talk when they have an internal dialogue with themselves. The frequency and content of thoughts varies amongst athletes and from situation to situation. Self-talk is based on the principal that athletes' thoughts will directly affect how they behave. Therefore, positive and negative thoughts will directly influence performance. The skill of self-talk is a learned behavior that enables the athlete to control and organise thoughts that consequently influence athletic performance in a positive manner. In line with the PST philosophy, athletes only perform at an optimal level in the absence of discomfort. Therefore, all negative self-talk must be controlled and changed into positive self-talk in order for the athlete to perform at an optimal level (Cashmore, 2008; Clark, 2005; Hatzigeorgiadis, Zourbanos, Mpoumpaki & Theodorakis, 2009; Sturmey, 2007).

2.1.3.5 Performance Routines

A performance routine is a detailed course of action which is followed regularly, usually before tournaments or competitions. These routines are familiar acts that are performed and provide the athlete with a sense of control when entering a competition where the environment is unfamiliar. Routines are important because they can enhance an athlete's performance by minimising discomfort and providing the athlete with control

and confidence by means of a familiar routine (Blumenstein, Lidor & Tenenbaum, 2007; Cashmore, 2008; Clark, 2005).

2.1.4   Research

For the purpose of this study, a concise literature review focusing on PST programmes within swimming is investigated[1]. A PST programme is a specific, detailed intervention programme that is utilised to educate and train athletes in mental skills. The PST programmes consist of three phases, namely acquisition, practice and a post assessment phase. For the purpose of this literature review I will focus on research that has been conducted using PST programmes within a swimming context.

It is pivotal to note that there is a vast quantity of literature that does not address PST programmes in its entirety, but rather focus on a select few mental skills within the PST programme, for example, goal setting in swimming (Anderson, 2013; Troup & Daniels, 1986); arousal management in swimming (Gould & Udry, 1993; Hanton, Mellalieu & Hall, 2004); self-talk in swimming (Hardy, Gammage & Hall, 2001; Hardy, Hall & Hardy, 2004); imagery in swimming (Post, Muncie & Simpson, 2011; White, Ashton & Lewis, 1979) and performance routines (Weiss, Keren, Mort, Eilam, 2012). This literature will not be included in the literature review as I will be focusing on PST programmes in swimming and not individual PST skills within swimming.

In the following sections I shall give an overview of research conducted on the PST programmes in swimming by referring to summaries, findings and critique.

---

[1]   Literature search for Psychological Skills Training (PST) was administered on four data bases, PsychInfo, Google Scholar, Ebscohost and SPORTDiscus. There was an unlimited date range. The search terms used were 'Psychological Skills Training (PST) programmes in swimming in South Africa', Psychological Skills Training (PST) programmes in swimming' and 'Psychological Skills Training (PST) swimming'.

2.1.4.1 Research Studies

The literature review revealed scant research findings for PST programmes in the swimming context. However, in the following section five research studies will be discussed that were conducted in the field of sport psychology and specifically pertain to swimming. I will only be referring to research studies that use a full PST programme within swimming, as this is of relevance to this research study. Therefore, I will not include research studies which use selected PST skills found within a PST programme.

Sheard and Golby (2006) conducted a mixed methods study in the United Kingdom (UK) using 36 high performing (national) adolescent swimmers, aged between 10 and 18 years, both male and female. The purpose of the study was to investigate if a PST programme had an effect on performance enhancement. The findings revealed mixed results in terms of performance enhancement. Swimmers performances increased in three strokes, however, in ten other strokes there were no significant improvements.

Wang, Huddleston and Peng (2003) conducted a quantitative study in Jiangmen, China using 106 high performing (national) swimmers aged between 12 and 28 years, both male and female. The purpose of the study was twofold. Firstly, the study identified what psychological skills are being utilised by the swimmers. Secondly, the study attempted to identify why swimmers utilise different skills. The findings suggest that the Chinese swimmers do not utilise 12 out the 17 psychological skills and from the skills utilised, there were differences in terms of gender, region and specialisation.

Freigang (2002) conducted a mixed methods study in Utah, United States of America (USA) using 12 high performing (national) swimmers aged between 19 years and 23 years, and included only males. The purpose of the study was to test the effects of the PST programme on self-efficacy. The findings suggest that PST does increase self-efficacy in comparison to athletes who did not participate in a PST programme.

17

Gallagher (1999) conducted a qualitative study in the USA using 24 high performing (national) coaches, their ages and gender was not specified. The purpose of the study was to identify what psychological skills successful swimming coaches employ with their female swimming teams. Findings suggest that successful, female swimming teams who employ psychological skills training have increased performance because PST skills gives athletes an advantage to perform at an optimal level.

Parker (1997) conducted a mixed methods study in the USA using 10 high performing (national) adults aged between 18 years and 21 years, males only. The purpose of the study was to develop, implement and evaluate a PST programme to ascertain whether it would improve performance. Findings indicate that there were no significant results in improved performance. Coaches and athletes believe that the programme can be valuable but the programme needs to be refined and integrated into their training sessions.

2.1.4.2 Research Summaries

1. Context: The context in the reviewed literature, refers to where the research was conducted. This illustrates the diversity or scarcity of research published in this area. The majority of studies discussed were conducted in the USA (Freigang, 2002; Gallagher, 1999; Parker, 1997). One study was conducted from the UK (Sheard & Golby, 2006) and one study in China (Wang, Huddleston & Peng, 2003).

2. Discipline: For the purpose of this study, discipline refers to a field of study. The various academic disciplines provide numerous branches of knowledge recognised by academic journals in which research is published (Kothari, 2004). All of the studies conducted have been from the sport psychology discipline (Freigang, 2002; Gallagher, 1999; Parker, 1997; Sheard & Golby, 2006; Wang, Huddleston & Peng, 2003).

3.   Methodology: Research methodology is the science of understanding how research is conducted. This involves systematic steps and procedures which informs the research process (Kothari, 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Patton, 1990). From the reviewed studies, there were three studies that made use of a mixed methods approach (Freigang, 2002; Parker, 1997; Sheard & Golby, 2006), one study that made use of a qualitative approach (Gallagher, 1999) and one study that made use of a quantitative approach (Wang, Huddleston & Peng, 2003).

4.   Sport Level: All the participants in the reviewed studies competed at a national swimming level (Freigang, 2002; Gallagher, 1999; Parker, 1997; Sheard & Golby, 2006; Wang, Huddleston & Peng, 2003).

5.   Participants: Three of the studies reviewed utilised adult participants (Freigang, 2002; Gallagher, 1999; Parker, 1997). However, one study utilised adolescent participants (Sheard & Golby, 2006) and one study utilised both adolescent and adult participants (Wang, Huddleston & Peng, 2003).

2.1.4.3 Research Findings

1.   Negative Results: Two studies indicate that PST programmes within swimming does not increase performance. As a result, one study found that PST did not enhance athletes swimming performances (Parker, 1997) and one study found that PST programmes are not a good indicator for improved performance (Wang, Huddleston & Peng, 2003).

2.   Mixed Results: One study revealed that PST programmes in swimming produced mixed results. The findings revealed that although PST improved performance in some strokes, the majority of the strokes showed no improvement (Sheard & Golby, 2006).

3.   Positive Results: Two studies revealed that PST programmes in swimming increases performance and self-efficacy (Freigang, 2002; Gallagher, 1999). These results suggest that PST programmes are beneficial for improving athletic performance.

2.1.4.4 Research Critique

1.   Context: From the reviewed studies, there has been published research in the USA, UK and China on the PST programmes within the swimming sphere. However, to date there is no research conducted in South Africa (SA) that focuses on PST programmes in swimming. Therefore, there are limited studies focusing on PST programmes within swimming.

2.   Methodology: There is limited research conducted, however, the majority of studies discussed in this research, utilises a mixed method approach. A mixed method approach allows for both quantitative and qualitative data to be presented which provides a more holistic picture of PST programmes within swimming.

3.   Sport Level: All the studies that are mentioned in the literature review used swimming participants who compete at a national swimming level. Therefore, no studies have been conducted utilising swimming participants who compete at school level. Therefore, it is unclear whether PST programmes would be effective in enhancing swimming performance at school level in general and more specifically within South Africa.

4.   Participants: The majority of studies discussed, utilise adult swimmers as participants. Therefore, limited research has been conducted with adolescent swimming participants between the ages of years 12 and 18 years. Therefore, it is unclear whether PST programmes would be effective in enhancing swimming performance with adolescents in general and more specifically in South Africa.

20

2.2   MINDFULNESS-ACCEPTANCE-COMMITMENT IN SPORT

2.2.1   Origin

2.2.1.1 Origin of Mindfulness

The concept of mindfulness can be traced back to Buddhism. Buddha taught how mindfulness of speech, thought and action could relieve suffering and ignorance. In the Buddhist tradition, through the Eastern practices of traditional meditation, people could condition their minds to become mindful. Mindfulness underlies all traditional meditative practices in the various Buddhist streams (Brown & Ryan, 2003; 2004; Hooker & Fodor, 2008).

The traditional mindfulness meditation practices provide an opportunity for a modern interpretation of practicing mindfulness, suggesting that mindfulness is not limited to particular practices or techniques. In the Western world, the practice of mindfulness is aimed at developing our continuity of awareness in our daily activities (Brown & Ryan, 2003; 2004; Hooker & Fodor, 2008; Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Siegel, Germer, Olendzki, 2005).

2.2.1.2 Origin of Acceptance-Commitment

Acceptance Commitment Therapy (ACT) stems from the behavioural school of therapy. Behavioural therapy is divided into three generations: traditional behaviourism developed in the 1950s, cognitive therapy developed in the 1970s, and the current "third generation" or third wave of behaviourism developed in the 1980s. ACT was developed by Steven Hayes in 1986 and was one of the first of the third wave therapies. ACT represents a significant change from traditional behaviourism and CBT due to the inclusion of acceptance and mindfulness-based interventions (Harris, 2006; 2009).

2.2.1.3 Origin of Mindfulness-Acceptance-Commitment in Sport

In 2004, Frank Gardner and Zella Moore, two clinical sport psychologists, in the United States of America (USA), introduced the Mindfulness-Acceptance-Commitment (MAC) approach to performance development in sport (Gardner & Moore, 2004, 2007, 2012). The MAC approach was developed and inspired by three events. Firstly, Gardner and Moore (2004) elucidate that sport psychology has been criticised for the lack of commitment to an evidence-based approach to practice. This contributed to the development of the MAC approach. Secondly, the MAC approach was developed due to the lack of support for the effectiveness of the traditional PST model. The MAC approach provided an alternative approach to the traditional model based on acceptance and values. Thirdly, Gardner and Moore (2004) were also inspired by the developments in the "third wave" acceptance-based and mindfulness-based behavioural movement in clinical psychology. Therefore, Gardner and Moore (2004) took advantage of the growing need for an evidence-based programme in sport psychology. These researchers challenge the downfalls of PST and utilise the growing empirical research stimulated regarding the effectiveness of ACT and mindfulness (Arnkoff, Glass & Kaufman, 2009; Gardner & Moore, 2004; 2006; 2007; Hasker, 2010; Moore, 2009; Schwanhausser, 2009).

2.2.2 Philosophy

The MAC approach introduced value-driven performance development in sport. This new approach is challenging the traditional model of PST and the shortcomings of the control-driven principles. The MAC programmes are taught to athletes by a means of a psycho-educational process and are based on acceptance and value-driven principles to assist athletes in developing a different lifestyle or way-of-being known as mindfulness.

The MAC-programme is utilised in sport to educate athletes to embrace sport performance despite discomfort. The discomfort experienced by athletes is often caused by bodily sensations, internal experiences and external stimuli. Therefore, athletes adopt

a new lifestyle, in contrast to the traditional model, and they learn that they are able to perform whilst in the midst of discomfort. Consequently, when mindfulness is coupled with acceptance and valued living, the athlete is able to create a rich and meaningful life, and also accept the pain[2] that accompanies life (Belna, 2008; Blackledge, 2007; Gardner & Moore, 2004; 2006; 2012; Gooding & Gardner, 2009; Harris, 2006; 2009; Hasker, 2010; Kee & Wang, 2008; Lee, Whitehead, Ntoumanis & Hatzigeorgiadis, 2008; Romand & Pantaleon, 2007).

2.2.3   Psychological Practices

2.2.3.1 Mindfulness versus Mindlessness

1.   Mindfulness: Mindfulness means purposely paying attention in a non-judgmental manner to internal experiences, external stimuli and bodily sensations in the present moment. Mindfulness comprises of mindful-attention and mindful-awareness. Although attention and awareness are relatively constant features of normal human functioning, mindfulness is considered an enhanced attention to and awareness of present reality. Mindful-awareness means being aware of and noticing bodily sensations, internal experiences and external stimuli and being able to accept them without judgement. Mindful-awareness is dealt with through a process of acceptance. Mindful-attention means purposely paying attention to the task at hand, being fully present and focused. The aforesaid occurs when an individual's mind and body are in the same place, at the same time and focused on the same task. However, in order to have mindful-attention, commitment is required (Belna, 2008; Bernier, Thienot, Codron, & Fournier, 2009; Brown & Ryan, 2003; 2004; Gardner & Moore, 2004; 2006; Hooker & Fodor, 2008; Kabat-Zinn, 2003).

---

[2]   Acceptance of pain refers to performance pain (e.g., muscle fatigue) and does not refer to the acceptance of injury pain (e.g., torn muscles).

23

2.   Mindlessness: Mindlessness is the opposite of mindfulness. It occurs when the body and mind are in different places and focused on different tasks, indicating a lack of attention to the present moment. Thus, being mindless is a normal, yet undesirable state for athletes as it may hamper performance. In addition, mindlessness is seen in habitual behaviours, where behaviour is given no thought and the person goes through a routine without attention and awareness of what is happening in the present moment (Gardner & Moore, 2006).

2.2.3.2 Acceptance versus Avoidance

1.   Acceptance: As an athlete becomes mindfully aware of their internal experiences, bodily sensations and external stimuli, it is possible for an athlete to address their mindful-awareness in two ways namely, avoidance (PST route) or acceptance (MAC route). Acceptance of internal experiences, bodily sensations and external stimuli means having a willingness to experience discomfort without trying to control or minimise the discomfort[3] (Bernier et al., 2009; Gardner & Moore, 2004; 2006; Harris, 2009). Therefore, acceptance embraces the philosophy that athletes are able to perform in the midst of their discomfort.

2.   Avoidance: Avoidance relates to the natural human instinct to control, avoid or change painful or unpleasant internal experiences, external stimuli and bodily sensations. Traditionally it is believed that athletes should avoid unpleasant experiences in order to perform better. However, acceptance reveals that athletes are able to experience unpleasant internal and external stimuli and bodily sensations and still perform optimally (Gardner & Moore, 2004; 2006; Harris, 2009). When an athlete attempts to control or minimise their discomforts a paradoxical effect occurs. As a result, the more an athlete attempts to control

---

[3]   Acceptance of discomfort refers to performance discomfort (e.g., mental and muscle fatigue) and does not refer to the acceptance of injury discomfort.

their discomfort an increase in discomfort may occur. The aforesaid occurs because by constantly trying to control discomfort, an athlete's focus and attention remains on the discomfort and not on the task at hand (Harris, 2006; 2009; Hays & Strosahl, 2004).

2.2.3.3 Commitment versus Motivation

1. Commitment: Commitment enhances an athlete's mindful-attention. By means of goals and value-directed behaviour, athletes are able to practice mindful-attention (focusing on the task at hand). Commitment is the ability to direct one's behaviour according to values, therefore athletes need to commit to behaviour that supports their chosen values. The commitment to action, based on values, requires the breaking of habitual, avoidant behaviours. Therefore, committed behaviour is important as it results in mental toughness. Mental toughness is described as the ability to commit to value-driven behaviour even when confronted by discomfort (Gardner & Moore, 2004; 2006; Harris, 2009; Lee, Whitehead, Ntoumanis & Hatzigeorgiadis, 2008; Moore, 2009; Romand & Pantaleon, 2007).

2. Motivation: Motivation is a desire that is often not followed by action. Motivated athletes may lack the committed behaviour to reach their desired goals or outcomes. Therefore, athletes who are truly committed will act in accordance with their values to reach their goal in the end. Thus, being motivated is important, but to be committed means transforming the motivation into action (Gardner & Moore, 2004; 2006; Harris, 2009).

2.2.4   Research

Over the past 30 years PST programmes have dominated performance development in sport (Gardner & Moore, 2007). Only in the last decade has the MAC approach to performance development been introduced as an alternative approach (Gardner &

Moore, 2007; Moore, 2009). As research on MAC programmes in sport is a relatively new approach in the sport context, I have not confined my literature review to the swimming context but rather to all sport domains. In this section I shall give an overview of research done on the MAC approach by referring to summaries, findings and critique.[4]

2.2.4.1 Research Studies

The literature search revealed limited findings for MAC programmes within the sport context. All nine studies reviewed were conducted within the sport psychology discipline.

Thompson, Kaufman, De Petrillo, Glass, and Arnkoff (2011) conducted a quantitative study in the USA. The 25 participants comprise of archers, golfers and long-distance runners. The purpose of this investigation was to evaluate the long-term effects of mindful sport performance enhancement (MSPE), a program designed to improve athletic performance and psychological aspects of sport. The results propose that MSPE is a promising intervention associated with long-term changes in trait variables that may contribute to optimal athletic performance.

Hasker (2010) conducted a quantitative study in the USA. The adult participants partake in the sports of basketball, baseball, women's lacrosse, women's soccer, track and field and golf. The purpose of the study was to investigate the MAC approach for enhancing athletic performance in comparison to more traditional performance enhancement methods. The results conclude that the MAC programme did not prove to be effective in enhancing an athlete's performance.

---

[4]   Research on MAC has been limited to the past 7 years (from 2004 to 2011). Search words used were Mindfulness-Acceptance-Commitment (Programmes); Mindfulness-Acceptance-Commitment (Programmes) in Sport; Mindfulness-Acceptance-Commitment (Programmes) in Youth Sport; and Mindfulness-Acceptance-Commitment (Programmes) in Swimming. Three data bases were used for the literature search being Google Scholar, PsychInfo and SPORTDiscus.

Schwanhausser and Wolanin (2010) conducted a quantitative study in the USA. The adult participants partake in the sports of field hockey and volleyball. The aim of the study was to investigate the impact of sub-clinical psychological difficulties, as assessed by the Multilevel Classification System for Sport Psychology (MCS-SP) on the efficacy of the MAC approach. The results indicate that the MAC approach to performance enhancement is an important strategy for improvement of performance.

Arnkoff, Glass and Kaufman (2009) conducted a quantitative study in the USA. The adult participants in this study partake in the sports of archery and golf. The purpose of the study was to investigate whether mindfulness has the ability to increase 'flow' during sport performance. The findings conclude that through the MAC programme, athlete's mindfulness improved but their performance did not improve.

Arnkoff, De Petrillo, Glass and Kaufman (2009) conducted a quantitative study in the USA. The adult participants partake in the sport of long distance running. The purpose of the study was to determine the effects of MSPE on runners. The study indicated that MSPE training did increase athlete's mindfulness but did not have the same effect on their performance.

Benier, Thienot, Codron and Fournier (2009) conducted both a quantitative study and a qualitative study in France. The adult participants partake in the French national swimming team. The purpose of the study was to examine the link between mindfulness and acceptance approaches and sport performance. The findings of the study suggest that mindfulness is an effective strategy for performance enhancement.

Gardner and Gooding (2009) conducted a quantitative study in the USA. The adult participants partake in the sport of basketball. The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between mindfulness, preshot routine, trait arousal and basketball free throw shooting percentage. The research results indicated that the MAC programme proved to be an effective component of peak performance.

Schwanhausser (2009) conducted a mixed methods study in the USA. The adolescent participants partake in the sport of springboard diving. The aim of the study was to determine the efficacy of the MAC programme with an adolescent springboard diver. The results of the study showed that mindfulness is an effective strategy for performance enhancement.

Kee and Wang (2008) conducted a quantitative study in Singapore. The adult participants partake in the sports of tenpin bowling, Tae Kwando, archery and Malay martial arts. The purpose of the study was to study the relationship between mindfulness, flow dispositions and mental skills. The findings of the research suggests that there are similarities between the terms 'flow' and mindfulness and that mindfulness is an effective strategy to enhance performance.

Wolanin (2004) conducted a quantitative study in the USA comprising of adult participants in the sports of field hockey and volleyball. The purpose of the study was to investigate the potential efficacy of the MAC programme on performance enhancement. The results revealed that MAC is an effective strategy for enhanced performance.

2.2.4.2 Research Summaries

1. Context: Seven of the nine reviewed studies on the MAC approach has been conducted in the USA (Atchley, 2011; De Petrillo, Kaufman, Glass, & Arnkoff, 2009; Gooding & Gardner, 2009; Hasker, 2010; Kaufman, Glass, & Arnkoff, 2009; Schwanhausser, 2009; Wolanin & Schwanhausser, 2010), one study conducted in France (Bernier, Thienot, Codron, & Fournier, 2009) and another in Singapore (Kee & Wang, 2008).

2. Discipline: Research on the MAC approach has only been conducted within the discipline of sport psychology (Atchley, 2011; Bernier et al., 2009; De Petrillo et al., 2009; Gooding & Gardner, 2009; Hasker, 2010; Kaufman et al., 2009; Kee & Wang, 2008; Schwanhausser, 2009; Wolanin & Schwanhausser, 2010).

3.   Methodology: Eight of the nine studies reviewed are quantitative (Atchley, 2011; De Petrillo et al., 2009; Gooding & Gardner, 2009; Hasker, 2010; Kaufman et al., 2009; Kee & Wang, 2008; Schwanhausser, 2009; Wolanin & Schwanhausser, 2010). Only one study used mixed methods (Bernier et al., 2009).

4.   Sport level: Research on the MAC approach consisted of athlete participants in various sports, such as ball sports (e.g., basketball, golf, baseball, soccer, hockey); track and field (e.g., long distance running); water sports (e.g., springboard diving, swimming); martial arts (e.g., Malay martial arts, taekwondo) and other sports (e.g. archery, dragon boating; occasional exercise)(Atchley, 2011; Bernier et al., 2009; De Petrillo et al., 2009; Gooding & Gardner, 2009; Hasker, 2010; Kaufman et al., 2009; Kee & Wang, 2008; Schwanhausser, 2009; Wolanin & Schwanhausser, 2010).

However, only one research study utilised the MAC approach in conjuction with swimming participants. This study used ten elite, adult swimmers, four women and six men. They were all members of a national French training centre and ranged in age between 18 years and 24 years. The results indicated that the MAC approach has been successfully applied when pertaining to a swimming context (Bernier et al., 2009).

5.   Participants: Research on the MAC approach reveals a lack of research with adolescent participants. Seven of the reviewed studies have been conducted with adult participants (Atchley, 2011; De Petrillo et al., 2009; Gooding & Gardner, 2009; Hasker, 2010; Kaufman et al., 2009; Kee & Wang, 2008; Wolanin & Schwanhausser, 2010), one study used adolescent participants (Schwanhausser, 2009) and one study that included both adolescent and adult participants (Bernier et al., 2009).

2.2.4.3 Research Findings

1. Negative Results: Two of the nine studies reviewed indicated that MAC or mindfulness does not improve performance (Atchley, 2011; Hasker, 2010). Firstly, one study indicated that there is limited support for the MAC applicability and utility because when MAC was compared to PST for performance improvement the results were not significant (Hasker, 2010). Secondly, results from another study revealed unsupported results for the effects of mindfulness and task focused attention for performance enhancement (Atchley, 2011).

2. Mixed Results: Two of the nine studies reviewed suggested that mindfulness may not be an effective component for increased performance. These studies used MSPE to enhance mindfulness which was believed to increase performance. Both the aforeaid studies successfully increased mindfulness, however MSPE did not produce the desired outcome of increased performance (De Petrillo et al., 2009; Kaufman et al., 2009).

3. Positive Results: Five of the nine studies reviewed concluded that MAC and mindfulness were effective components for increased performance (Bernier et al., 2009; Gooding & Gardner, 2009; Kee & Wang, 2008; Schwanhausser, 2009; Wolanin & Schwanhausser, 2010).

2.2.4.4 Research Critique

1. Context: Research reviewed on the MAC approach has been conducted in the USA, France and Singapore. However, to date there is no research conducted in SA that focuses on MAC programmes in swimming. Therefore, there are limited studies focusing on MAC programmes within swimming. My research project will be conducted at the hpc situated in South African.

2. Methodology: Eight of the nine studies have been conducted from a quantitative methodology. Therefore, limited research have utilised qualitative methodologies. As a result, there is a demand for more qualitative research in the discipline of sport psychology. My research will contribute in this area, as it will be conducted from an IP approach.

3. Sport Level: From the reviewed studies, MAC programmes have been used within various sporting codes. Currently, there is only one study conducted comprising of adult, elite level swimmers (Bernier et al., 2009). Therefore, there is limited knowledge regarding MAC programmes with swimmers at school level in general and more specifically within South Africa. My research will focus on a new field, that of adolescent swimmers competing at school level.

4. Participants: There is limited research conducted with adolecent participants and no research conducted with adolescent swimmers. Therefore, there is limited knowledge regarding MAC programmes with adolescent swimmers in general and more specifically within South Africa.Therefore, my research will contribute by using adolescent swimming participants in the MAC programme.

2.3   MINDFULNESS-ACCEPTANCE-COMMITMENT AS THE APPROACH IN THIS RESEARCH

South Africa is recognised as a diverse, third-world country. The diversity is not limited to race only but is also reflected in for example the country's economics, geography and education.

1. Economy: South Africa's economy is diverse in terms of the under class, middle class and upper class groupings. It is difficult to define and measure the different groups, however, the under class represents millions of South Africans of whom seven million fail to secure employment and approximately 15 million adults have a personal income of less than R1 000 a month. Conversely, the upper

class represents South Africa's highest paid employees who are on average white men. On average, for every R7.70 a white South African receives in income, an African South African receives R1 (South African Institute of Race Relations, 2013).

2.   Geography: An investigation of South Africa's geography in terms of urban and rural households reveals that about three million rural households have inadequate access to food, over 1.5 million households live in shacks, 1.5 million do not have access to piped water, 3.5 million have substandard sanitation facilities and more than two million are without electricity. The emerging middle class and the upper class consist of households within the urban setting. Bonded home ownership is an important indicator of the middle class as it is indicative of people with sufficient income to secure finance from a lending institution to invest in fixed property (South African Institute of Race Relations, 2013).

3.   Education: There is also diversity in educational standards within South Africa. Fewer than two million adults have no schooling, approximately 18 million people, or 60% of adults, have not completed high school and half a million pupils do not complete high school education every year. There are a number of reasons provided by males and females in the age group between 7 and18 years for not attending any educational institution: 25% of learners cited a lack of money, 17,2% of households is of the opinion that poor academic performance prevented their children from obtaining an education, approximately 14% of households is of the opinion that learners left school due to family commitments, while less than 1% of households is of the opinion that the distance to school, or difficulties travelling to school were the main reasons for children not attending school. The leading problems experienced by learners who were enrolled at public schools was the lack of books (6,6%) and over populated classes (4,7%) followed by bad facilities (4,1%) (South African Institute of Race Relations, 2013).

In accordance with PST literature, in order for South Africans to perform at an optimal level their discomfort would need to be minimised or controlled first. Viewing the South African context and its related discomforts, PST with the philosophy of performing without discomfort seems somewhat unattainable within the South African context. However, MAC suggests that regardless of what discomfort the South African context may create, South Africans have the ability to learn to perform while in the midst of discomfort. Therefore, from within this diverse South African context MAC provides a new learning opportunity where South Africans have the potential to be educated to embrace the philosophy of performance despite discomfort. South Africans are faced and influenced by the unavoidable discomforts within the diverse South African context and performance in the midst of this discomfort is still required. Therefore, the MAC approach instead of the PST approach has been chosen for this research study.

Additionally and more specifically this research study focuses on adolescent swimmers. The MAC programme is utilised in this research study to teach adolescents to live according to practices of mindfulness, acceptance and commitment in sport, and to transfer their learning to their lives. Adolescence is a formative developmental stage in which this learning and transference could occur. Therefore, within this diverse South African society the MAC programme has the potential to educate adolescent athletes to live according to the MAC principals within sport and their lives. The MAC programme has the potential to create value-driven athletes in swimming and value-driven individuals within the South African society. Therefore, the MAC approach instead of the PST approach has been chosen for this research study.

2.4   PERSONAL REFLECTION

The MAC approach has the potential to facilitate change within the South African. I believe that the aforesaid should be further explored, as I personally believe in the effectiveness of the MAC approach. I also agree with the MAC principals and its philosophy of performance despite discomfort. Whilst conducting my research study, I

recognised the possibility that the MAC approach has the potential to be transferred from one performance context (sport) to other performance contexts (academics, work, and life). This made me question whether athletes in the South African context could be educated in the MAC programme for application in sport as well as other performance areas in their lives. This will result in not only developing mindful athletes through the process of acceptance and commitment, but also developing mindful students and professionals who need to perform within a diverse educational system and labour market in the SA context. Therefore, I have chosen to use the MAC approach in this research study and not the PST programme. It is my opinion that the MAC approach has the potential to facilitate change within the South African context.

Conclusion

In this chapter the performance development programmes situated within sport were discussed in order to demonstrate the differences between the two programmes and to orientate the reader in understanding the MAC programme, which is used for the research project. The two different performance development programmes, namely PST and MAC were described in terms of their origin, philosophy and their psychological skills or practices. In the following chapter, I will describe the research position of this study.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH POSITION

Introduction

This chapter embarks on describing phenomenology and the two schools of Descriptive and Interpretive Phenomenology. The chapter concludes by motivating the research position of Interpretive Phenomenology (IP) and providing a personal reflection on this. This chapter also describes my research position from a theoretical perspective.

3.1   PHENOMENOLOGY

There are two main schools within phenomenology, namely Descriptive Phenomenology (DP) and Interpretive Phenomenology (IP). While both approaches are aimed at understanding and describing human experiences, they differ on a philosophical basis. These assumptions are depicted in Table 3.1 below (Wojnar & Swanson, 2009). In the following section Table 3.1 will be discussed in more detail to demonstrate the similarities and differences between DP and IP. This research study is situated within the IP position of the Constructivism paradigm.

Table 3.1

Assumptions of Descriptive Phenomenology and Interpretive Phenomenology

	Descriptive Phenomenology (DP)	Interpretive Phenomenology (IP)
1. Origin	Edmund Husserl	Martin Heidegger
2. Ontology	Subjective Experience	Subjective Experience
3. Epistemology	Objective Epsitemology	Subjective Epistemology
4. Methodology	Qualitative Methodology	Qualitative Methodology
5. Axiology	Value-free Unbiased	Value-full Biased
6. Rhetoric	Formal Rhetoric	Informal Rhetoric

3.2 DESCRIPTIVE PHENOMENOLOGY

3.2.1 Origin

DP was established by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) who was a mathematician as well as a German philosopher. Husserl developed phenomenology to address his view that Positivism could not answer nor investigate phenomenon efficiently. Currently, one of the most influential supporters of DP is Amedeo Giorgi (Dowling, 2007; Giorgi, 1992; 1994; Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008; Lopez, 2004; Wojnar & Swanson, 2009).

3.2.2 Ontology

The ontology is concerned with the inner world of subjective experience or consciousness, with the emphasis on experience and how it presents itself in consciousness. Therefore, the researcher can only gain access to certain objective phenomenon through the participants' subjective experiences of the objective phenomenon (Giorgi, 1994; Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008; Mackey, 2005; Smith & Osborn, 2003).

3.2.3   Epistemology

The epistemology is objective as it attempts to discover the common features or universal essences in experience. The phenomenon experienced by the participant is subjective. However, the researcher is required to remain objective. Objectivity is essential in order to eliminate the researcher's personal biases and prior knowledge (reduction)(Dowling, 2007; Giorgi, 2005; 2010; Lopez, 2004; Wojnar & Swanson, 2009).

3.2.4   Methodology

1.   Questions: DP is interested in discovering the participant's experience of a phenomenon as it appears in the participants' consciousness. Therefore, questions are open-ended and general in order to eliminate the researcher's preconceptions and biases (Dowling, 2007; Giorgi, 2005; 2010; Lopez, 2004; Wojnar & Swanson, 2009).

2.   Literature: Traditionally, no prior literature review is conducted in order to prevent personal biases and aid in suspending all preconceived knowledge (reduction) of the researcher. The reason for the aforesaid is that Husserl believed that to fully grasp the lived experiences of participants the researcher should limit preconceived knowledge (Dowling, 2007; Giorgi, 2005; 2010; Lopez, 2004; Wojnar & Swanson, 2009).

3.   Purpose: The purpose of DP is to study objective phenomenon through subjective experiences to form a universal description. Husserl believes that in lived experiences there are common features known as universal essences or eidetic structures. These essences need to be identified in order for a generalised description to be made (Dowling, 2007; Lopez, 2004; Wojnar & Swanson, 2009).

© University of Pretoria

4.   Data: In a DP study, there are two methods of material collection used to gain access to a participant's subjective experiences. Namely, by the participant providing a written account of experience or an unstructured interview (Giorgi, 2005; 2010; Lawler, 1998).

5.   Analysis: The method of analysis uses reduction, bracketing, reflexivity, and free imagination to ensure an analysis of data which is absent from bias. The researcher is therefore objective in understanding the participant's subjective experiences. An example of an analysis procedure used is the Duquesne Phenomenological Research Method (DPRM)(Dukes, 1984; Elliott, Fischer & Rennie, 1999; Giorgi, 2005; 2010; Lawler, 1998).

6.   Outcome: For Husserl, the aim of Phenomenology is the rigorous and unbiased study of phenomenon as they appear, to arrive at an essential understanding of human consciousness and experience. Therefore, the desired outcome for DP research is to know more about an objective phenomenon (Dowling, 2007).

3.2.5   Axiology

Husserl holds that the researcher's bias and values need to be excluded from the research process through transcendental subjectivity. This implies that the researcher's influence on the process is constantly assessed so that it does not interfere with the outcome of the study (Dowling, 2007; Giorgi, 1992; 1994; Lopez, 2004; Wojnar & Swanson, 2009).

3.2.6   Rhetoric

The language is characterised as formal because the researcher is an objective, unbiased, value-free agent in the research process. Although researcher-participant interaction is a requirement, the interactions are not of a personal nature (Dowling, 2007; Dukes, 1984; Elliott, Fischer & Rennie, 1999; Giorgi, 1992; 1994).

3.2.7   Critique

From an IP position, DP may be criticised in that bracketing and reduction are viewed as unnecessary and impossible to achieve as the researcher cannot divorce him or herself from his or her personal biases or prior knowledge (Dowling, 2007).

3.3   INTERPRETIVE PHENOMENOLOGY

3.3.1   Origin

IP was established by Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), who was a student of Husserl. Heidegger and Husserl shared many phenomenological beliefs. However, Heidegger did not agree with Husserl's view of the importance of description rather than understanding. More recently, IP is evident in the work of Jonathan Smith, with specific reference to Interpretive Phenomeological analysis (IPA) (Dowling, 2007; Dukes, 1984; Smith, 2010; Smith & Osborn, 2003; 2007).

3.3.2   Ontology

The ontology is concerned with the inner world of subjective experience. Therefore, reality is viewed from the perspective that lived experience is an interpretive process unique to each person. Additionally, the focus is on what humans experience and not what they consciously know. As a result, IP is interested in what is unique to each participant's experience and how they understood their experience within a specific

context (Dowling, 2007; Lopez, 2004; Smith, 2010; Smith & Osborn, 2003; 2007). My research focused on how the participants made sense of, or interpreted, their learning, application and transference experiences of mindfulness, acceptance and commitment.

3.3.3   Epistemology

The epistemology is subjective as the researcher's personal knowledge is essential in guiding research. Both researcher and participant share a history and culture which will influence the research process. The aforesaid allows the researcher to use his or her personal biases and previous knowledge to understand the participants' interpretations of their experiences (Mackey, 2005; Smith, 2010; Smith & Osborn, 2003; 2007; Willig, 2001).

3.3.4   Methodology

1.   Questions: The questions are more specific because the researcher's experience leads him or her to be interested in the study. Therefore, the questions are specific in an attempt to elicit contextual interpretations of the phenomenon which reveals idiopathic meanings (Lawler, 1998; Lopez, 2004; Mackey, 2005; Smith, 2010; Smith & Osborn, 2003; 2007).

2.   Literature: A literature review is conducted prior to the study because it allows for a better understanding of the phenomenon. The literature review is a way of enhancing the researcher's knowledge and thus enhancing the study. The researcher's expert knowledge is seen as vaulable and meaningful in the research process (Lawler, 1998; Lopez, 2004; Mackey, 2005; Smith, 2010; Smith & Osborn, 2003; 2007).

3.   Purpose: The purpose of the research is to try and understand people's contextual sense-making, or interpretations, of their experiences. This has to do with double-hermeneutics (Mackey, 2005; Smith, 2010; Smith & Osborn, 2003; 2007; Willig, 2001).

4.   Data: In an interpretive study, semi-structured interviews are used in order to ascertain how the participant interprets their contextual experiences. Thus, the researcher uses their previous knowledge of the phenomenon to construct the interview schedule (Mackey, 2005; Smith, 2010; Smith & Osborn, 2003; 2007; Willig, 2001).

5.   Analysis: Smith (1996) developed the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to assist in interpreting phenomenological studies which are informed by IP. The IPA procedure is an example which allows the researcher to understand contextual interpretations and is based on co-creation and interpretation. This is important because IP advocates that analysis is a process whereby interpretation and description are interrelated (Mackey, 2005; Smith, 2010; Smith & Osborn, 2003; 2007; Willig, 2001). I made use of IPA in the analysis of my findings which is one of various methods of IP analysis.

6.   Outcome: The desired outcome is to learn about participant's contextual interpretations of subjective experiences and to discover what is unique to the participants' contextual interpretations of their experience of a phenomenon, referred to as double-hermeneutics (Mackey, 2005; Smith, 2010; Smith & Osborn, 2003; 2007; Willig, 2001).

3.3.5 Axiology

IP holds that it is impossible to be value-free and unbiased within the researcher-participant interaction. The researcher's values, bias and personal knowledge are seen as useful and necessary within the research process (Lawler, 1998; Lopez, 2004; Mackey, 2005; Smith, 2010; Smith & Osborn, 2003; 2007).

3.3.6 Rhetoric

Based on the axiology and epistemology of this position, the rhetoric is influenced by the value-full, biased and subjective researcher-participant interaction. Therefore, the language is informal and reflects the participant's personal and subjective experiences (Lawler, 1998; Lopez, 2004; Mackey, 2005; Smith, 2010; Smith & Osborn, 2003; 2007).

3.3.7 Critique

From a DP position, IP can be criticised in that the research outcome may be biased because both researcher and participant co-create the research. Also, the researcher interprets interpretations of the participants which may result in meaning being misinterpreted (Dowling, 2007; Dukes, 1984; Smith, 2010; Smith & Osborn, 2003; 2007).

3.4 INTERPRETIVE PHENOMENOLOGY AS A RESEARCH POSITION

Research within sport psychology is dominated by quantitative studies rooted within a Positivism paradigm. The Positivism paradigm attempted to legitimise sport psychology as a recognised discipline within psychology. Qualitative studies commenced in the mid-1980s. However, the traditional quantitative studies remain at the core of the sport psychology discipline (Culver, Trudel & Gilbert, 2003). Research pertaining to sport is dominated by a quantitative approach, and the opinion is that this had limited the expansion of knowledge in the sport sphere. Although qualitative research has been

conducted for many years, a balance between scientific and subjective knowledge is required. Therefore, qualitative research in sport focusing on athletes' experiences is lacking (Crust & Nesti, 2006).

Qualitative research using various methods has increased as many researchers view the traditional quantitative methods as limiting in providing a holistic picture of an athlete (Munroe-Chandler, 2005). My research aims to contribute to qualitative research in the sport psychology discipline. I have chosen to work within a Constructivism paradigm, specifically within an IP position as my research is focused on the unique experiences of athletes. The research study pertains to each athlete's individual experiences from participating in the MAC programme with regards to what they learnt, how they could apply their learning to swimming and how they could transfer their learning to life.

3.5   PERSONAL REFLECTION

Consistent with IP literature, I believe that I am not able to separate myself from my biases, experiences and prior knowledge. Furthermore, the type of researcher I am and my experiences in life will have an impact on the research. My perception as a researcher, my beliefs regarding research and the questions I ask, have been influenced by my prior knowledge, experience and environment.

Given the abovementioned, it is not possible that I may have the ability to be objective in this research study. Furthermore, objectivity is not plausible because of my training within the MAC approach as well as my invested interest in sport and the MAC approach. Therefore, my interest, training and experience make this research process more subjective than objective.

Furthermore, instead of preventing the researcher from contaminating the research process as seen within the DP position, I am acknowledging my involvement as a researcher and using my biases, experiences and prior knowledge to add value to the

research process. Therefore, what I must deal with in my research is how to control this bias so that it does not contaminate the data in a way that invalidates the study.

I have chosen to work from an IP position because who I am influences who I am as a researcher. Furthermore, the IP position is favourable because of my invested interest, experience and training in the MAC programme. From an IP position my interest, experiences and biases are viewed as contributing to the research process and not viewed as contaminating the process.

Conclusion

This chapter allowed for an exploration into phenomenology and the two schools of IP and DP. The chapter concluded by situating my research within a Constructivism, IP research position. The following chapter, Chapter 4, will describe the research inquiry that is informed by the IP position.

CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH INQUIRY

Introduction

This chapter presents the research inquiry by providing the research contexts and the requirements for the participants. Thereafter, the research processes along with the ethical guidelines are stated. The research inquiry is informed by the research position of IP in general, and more specifically Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

4.1   CONTEXTS

4.1.1   Sport Context

The hpc of the UP was the sport context for this research. The sport context refers to the setting where athlete participants were selected, where the research programme was facillitated and where the interviews occured. The hpc provided a familiar, convenient setting for participants. Written permission was granted by Mr Sutcliffe, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the hpc and by the resident sport psychologist of the hpc.

4.1.2   Academic Context

The Department of Psychology at the UP was the academic context. Furthermore, the research project was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Postgraduate and Ethics Committees in the Faculty of Humanities at the UP.

4.2   PARTICIPANTS

This section describes the sampling method and the sampling criteria of this study, which is consistent with the IPA guidelines (Smith & Osborn, 2007). In general, IPA aims to provide a detailed explanation about the experiences, perceptions and

understandings of a particular sample group which is described as idiographic (Merriam, 2002; Smith & Osborn, 2007).

4.2.1 Sampling Method

IPA researchers usually attempt to attain a small, homogeneous sample through purposive sampling. The reason for the aforesaid is that it allows for a more closely defined sample group for whom the research question will be significant and it allows for a detailed analysis procedure. Therefore, in accordance with IPA recommendation, purposive sampling was used. The resident hpc psychologist assisted in selecting participants as she is familiar with the athletic population at hpc and the swimming population (Babbie, 2005; Merriam, 2002; Smith & Osborn, 2007).

4.2.2 Sampling Criteria

IPA is commited to a detailed interpretive account of each participant, therefore a small sample group is recommended. The suggested sample size for a student researcher is between three and six particpants. Smaller groups allow for greater in-depth engagement and prevent the researcher from becoming overwhelmed by the quantity of data generated. Therefore, my sample will consist of five participants (Merriam, 2002; Smith & Osborn, 2007). The participants were selected according to the following four selection criteria:

1. The participants must be members of the TuksSport Swimming Academy.
2. The participants must currently be involved in swimming at a provincial level.
3. The participants must be between the ages of 12 and 18 years.
4. The participants must fall within the Performance Development (PD) level of the Multi Classification System for Sport Psychologist (MCS-SP). All athletes are regularly interviewed, assessed and placed into one of the four MCS-SP levels by the resident hpc psychologist.

4.2.3   Research Participants

All athletes at the hpc have exposure to the MAC programme as part of their performance development training. However, for this research study the resident psychologist and I approached specific adolescent swimmers who adhered to the aforementioned four criteria and requested their voluntary participation in the study.

4.3   PROCESS

This section presents the detailed research process for conducting and analysing data. As Figure 4.1 depicts, the research process consisted of six phases and will be discussed in the following sections.
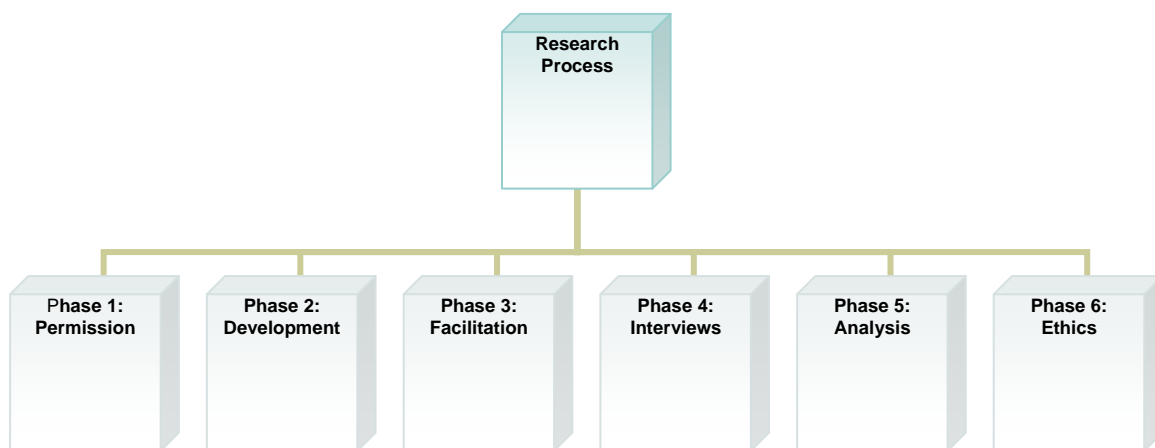
Figure 4.1. The Research Process

4.3.1   Phase 1: Permission

The first phase of the research process was to obtain permission from the relevant UP faculty to conduct the research study. I obtained permission from both the Postgraduate and Ethics Committees of the Faculty of Humanities at the UP. I also obtained permission from the CEO and resident psychologist of the hpc. Research permission had been granted from both the faculty and organisation allowing me to approach research participants and their parents.

I obtained written consent from the parents of the research participants. The consent form allowed the parents to make an informed decision, as it provided sufficient information regarding the nature of the proposed research. This included any anticipated risks, the potential benefits, as well as what was required from participant participation (Levine, 1988; O'Donohue & Ferguson, 2003; Thomas & Hersen, 2011). I also obtained written assent from the adolescent swimmers regarding their participation in the research project. Assent conveys the participants' willingness to participate in the research and also implies that the participants understand the nature of the study (Levine, 1988; O'Donohue & Ferguson, 2003; Thomas & Hersen, 2011).

After I received permission from the faculty and organisation, I approached the participants and their parents for permission. Once permission had been granted I progressed to phase two of the research process. During this stage I developed a swimming-specific MAC programme.

4.3.2　Phase 2: Development

4.3.2.1 Researcher Training

In accordance with my research position of IP, the researcher's knowledge and experience of the MAC approach is essential within the research process (Elliot, Fischer & Rennie, 1999). Therefore, in order to develop a swimming-specific MAC programme for this research study, I gained academic and practical training in the MAC approach from 2011 until 2013.

1.　In my academic training (2011) I gained knowledge about MAC through my sport psychology year module presented by the resident hpc psychologist. Additionally, I presented components of the MAC programme to the resident psychologist and five other MA (Counselling Psychology) students. I attended group supervision which allowed me the opportunity to engage in the MAC principles and its applicability to adolescent athletes. In addition, my exam for the sport psychology module involved preparing a one hour presentation of MAC and its applicability within an adolescent population. I

presented this presentation to two psychologists and received a distinction for my knowledge and ability to effectively convey the MAC theory.

2.   In my practical training (2011-2013) I worked at the hpc. I presented MAC to different groups of athletes that are in grade eleven and twelve. The presentations were psycho-educational and based on experiential learning. This provided me the opportunity to become familiar with presenting MAC and provided an opportunity to present the MAC theory to adolescent athletes. Subsequently, I developed a swimming-specific MAC programme for this research study in 2012. Moreover, I presented this programme to the first year MA (Counselling Psychology) students at the UP with the purpose of receiving feedback to adjust the programme if necessary. In 2012, the programme was presented to a group of adolescent athletes and two coaches at a sport school in Laudium, Pretoria. This enabled me to practise facilitating the programme which further highlighted areas that needed adjustment. In 2013, I facilitated the adjusted MAC programme to national adolescent athletes in Johannesburg as my final preparation before presenting the programme to my research participants of the current study.

4.3.2.2 Programme Outline

The swimming-specific MAC programme that I developed was based on Gardner and Moore's MAC programme (Gardner & Moore, 2004; 2007). The swimming-specific MAC programme was presented to the five adolescent swimmers on a Saturday morning. Each participant received this swimming-specific MAC programme in a form of a booklet (See Appendix A). The MAC programme consists of five modules, namely, module one which covered the Multi-level Classification System for Sport Psychologists (MCS-SP); module two focused on mindfulness; module three focused on acceptance; module four focused on commitment and module five was the integration. Each of the five modules within the MAC programme followed a specifc structure which entailed the learning outcomes, concepts, activities, reflection and summary. A brief explanation of the structure of each module follows.

1. Outcome: The outcome provides the participants with an overview of what they can expect to learn after completing each module.

2. Concepts: Each module introduces a new concept experientially.

3. Activities: Activities and videos are used to explain the concepts in an experiential, learning manner.

4. Reflection: The reflection section is a written section where each participant writes down their experiences and understanding of what they learnt, how they can apply their learning to swimming and how they can transfer their learning to their lives.

5. Summary: At the end of each module, a picture is used to solidify what participants have learnt in the module.

4.3.3   Phase 3: Facilitation

Learning takes place in various ways, however, according to Kolb (1984) learning is acquired through four steps. First, an experience of an event is needed. The MAC programme was the experience that was created for the athletes. Second, reflection of the event needs to occur for learning to develop. Within the MAC programme, athletes were asked to provide written reflections of their experience from their participation in the programme. The written reflections entailed what they had learnt from their participation in the programme, how they could apply their learning to swimming and further transfer their learning to their lives. Third, learning occurs by translating an experience into a meaningful concept. A week after the MAC programme, semi-structured interviews took place. The semi-structured interviews helped athletes convey what meaning they had attached to their experience of the MAC programme. Fourth, the final stage in the learning process occurs through active experimentation. Thus, actions derived as a result of reflection and evaluation of an event. From the athletes experience of the MAC programme and their reflection thereof, the athletes actively applied their learning to the swimming context and further transferred their learning to their lives (Law, Ireland & Hussain, 2007).

Within this four step learning process, experiential learning and IP were used in order to facilitate the learning process. First, this research made use of experiential learning as a means of facilitating the MAC programme as opposed to didactic

instruction. With experiential learning, participants become personally involved in the learning event and this involvement results in learning that is more effective. This type of learning arises from learners actively participating in activities and reflecting on the activities (Dismukes & Smith, 2000; Human, 2008; Kolb, 1984). The MAC programme consisted of activities and personal reflections within each of the five modules. Therefore, experiential learning was used to assist athletes in the first two steps of the learning process, where an event was created and thereafter reflection of the event. Therefore, the MAC programme through experiential learning provided athletes with an opportunity to experience an event and further reflect on the event. In order to complete the learning process, meaning and action was required. IP, the research position, allowed for the learning process to be complete. Therefore, semi-structured interviews which are in line with the IP position, allowed athletes to describe what meaning they attributed to the MAC programme and furthermore, how they applied their learning to swimming and transferred their learning to their lives. Therefore, the facilitation of the research took place according to experiential learning and IP.

4.3.4   Phase 4: Interviews

During the MAC programme the participants were asked to reflect on each module and provide written reflections about what they had learnt and how they could apply their learning to their swimming and further transfer their learning to their lives. These written reflections provided the basis for the interviews with the participants (Cassell & Symon, 2004; Kvale, 1983; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2007). A one-hour semi-structured interview was conducted with each participant at the hpc. This is a flexible data collection method most common to IPA. The semi-structured interviews allowed me to analyse how the participant's experienced the MAC programme (Kvale, 1983; Merriam, 2002; Smith & Osborn, 2007).

All semi-structured interviews were audio taped to improve transcription accuracy. Audio taping is considered essential to maintain IPA standards due to the quantity of the data generated (Kvale, 1983; Merriam, 2002; Smith & Osborn, 2007). I also transcribed the interviews to become familiar with the text as the IPA requires this

close interaction between reader and text (Merriam, 2002; Smith & Osborn, 2007; Willig, 2001).

4.3.5   Phase 5: Analysis

Analysis of the data followed the guidelines set out by the IPA. The IPA intends for the researcher to learn details about the participants' psychological world. This is achieved by analysing the interview transcripts according to the following steps (Merriam, 2002; Smith & Eatough, 2006; Smith & Osborn, 2007; Willig, 2001; Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008):

1.	Themes:	The first transcript documents emerging theme titles. The transcript is read numerous times to identify interesting or significant responses. Similarities, differences, echoes, contradictions and amplifications are documented.
2.	Connections:	The emergent themes are listed and connections are made between the themes. The aim is to capture the essential quality of what is revealed in the text. The quantity of emerging themes depicts richness within the text. The step of analysing is iterative as the researcher needs in-depth involvement with the text to make sense of the text and simultaneously monitor his or her own perceptions against the responses of the participants.
3.	Analysis:	This step involves seeking repetitive patterns within the transcript and recognising new themes. It also involves acknowledging ways in which the information from participants are similar but also different.
4.	Writing:	This section outlines the meanings discovered in the participants' experiences. IPA is a subjective process, thus it is unlikely that two researchers analysing the same data will have similar themes.

52

4.3.6   Phase 6: Ethics

4.3.6.1 Privacy

Throughout the research process I adhered to ethical procedures to provide each participant the right to privacy. Privacy entails the right to anonymity, the right to disclosure and the right to confidentiality. These principles will be discussed in the following section.

1.   Anonymity: The right to anonymity implies that the participants' identities are unknown to the researcher throughout the study. Due to the voluntary, psycho-educational nature of this research and the IPA method utilised, the right to anonymity was not warranted for participants (O'Donohue & Ferguson, 2003; Thomas & Hersen, 2011).

2.   Disclosure: The right to disclosure implies that participants have the right to decide what information they wish to share. I respected the adolescent swimmers' right to disclosure during the research process (O'Donohue & Ferguson, 2003; Thomas & Hersen, 2011).

3.   Confidentiality: The right to confidentiality implies that the information that a participant reveals is kept confidential. I respected the adolescent swimmers' right to confidentiality by making use of pseudonyms during research supervision as well in the mini-thesis and my personal journal (O'Donohue & Ferguson, 2003; Thomas & Hersen, 2011).

4.3.6.2 Roles

Dual roles implies that the researcher holds two or more relationships with a participant, either simultaneously or sequentially. The boundaries between roles may be clear, flexible or indecisive. However, it is the onus of the researcher to clarify the roles and boundaries that exist in the relationship. In the research study I held the position of a facilitator and a researcher. Initially the role of the facilitator was in the

53

foreground while I facilitated the MAC programme and the researcher role was in the background. Subsequently, the role of the researcher was in the foreground while I conducted the semi-structured interviews and the facilitator role was in the background (Chew-Graham, May & Perry, 2002; Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden, 2000).

Performing dual roles allowed me to be involved in the entire research process thus providing greater in-depth knowledge of participants which is favourable in IPA. Dual roles enables flexibility in interacting with participants but also provides challenges. The main challenge is that dual roles may confuse the participants. They may also be unsure of the boundaries and the nature of the relationship. Therefore, managing the dual roles was in the best interest of the participant. The two roles were interconnected and to manage the dual roles I received supervision. In order to make participants aware of the dual roles and the boundaries, I verbally communicated the role I was assuming before the programme and again before the interview. The participants and their parents were also cognisant of the dual roles by means of the consent and assent forms (Chew-Graham, May & Perry, 2002; Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden, 2000).

4.3.6.3 Support

There were no perceived psychological risks involved by partaking in this study as the programme and interviews are of a psycho-educational nature. However, should a participant wish to discuss what they had learnt or experienced, free support services were made available at the hpc by the resident sport psychologist (Chew-Graham, May & Perry, 2002; Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden, 2000).

4.3.6.4 Storage

All research material will be stored in the Department of Psychology at the University of Pretoria for a minimum of 15 years. Storage is for archival purposes and is in line with the UP's research requirements. This information was also provided to participants and their parents within the assent and consent forms (University of Pretoria [UP], 2010; 2012).

4.4   QUALITY

According to guidelines associated with quality standards for qualitative research, there are numerous areas where researchers have the opportunity to improve the quality of their studies (Elliot, Fischer & Rennie, 1999). In an effort to improve this research study's quality I investigated three areas namely, perspective, credibility and support. These areas will be addressed next.

1.   Perspective: In order to improve the quality of my research I proceeded to own my perspective which includes specifying my theoretical orientation and personal involvement, including personal experiences and training. The aforementioned is a process that should be monitored for the duration of the research study. Monitoring has taken place through personal journaling and supervision (Eckstein, 2003; Elliot, Fischer & Rennie, 1999; Finlay, 2009; Willig, 2001).

2.   Credibility: Providing credibility checks means verifying all aspects of the research process to ensure that ethical steps are taken to produce meaningful data. Credibility of my research will be ensured through supervision (Eckstein, 2003; Elliot, Fischer & Rennie, 1999; Willig, 2001).

3.   Support: Interpretative Phenomenology encourages the researcher to be biased and value-full. However, it is necessary to document and be aware of how the researcher influences the process (Eckstein, 2003; Elliot, Fischer & Rennie, 1999; Finlay, 2009; Willig, 2001). Therefore, I will monitor my biases and subjective viewpoints through supervision and journaling. I will keep a journal to record my experiences to monitor how I influence the research process. Additionally, I will be involved in bi-monthly supervision to discuss my research process, my experience and my journal reflection.

4.5 PERSONAL REFLECTION ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS

My MA (Counselling Psychology) degree is based on a researcher-practitioner model, whereby my degree is weighted 50% on academic and practical training and the other 50% is based on this mini-thesis. The researcher-practitioner model allows for the learning within the research context to influence the learning within the practitioner context and vice versa. Therefore, learning within the researcher-practitioner model occurs simultaneously and interdependently within the two contexts.

From the research context I have learnt valuable aspects which have influenced my learning within the practitioner context. From the research context, the research process highlighted three areas namely the interview, facilitation and doubt. These areas will now be explored.

1. The interview: I established a semi-structured interview; there was less structure which creates less predetermined paths for the interviewee to follow. This allows for the participant to be heard more accurately which aids in the researcher gaining more of a descriptive reflection of the participant's experiences. This experience has allowed me to re-evaluate how I approach therapy. This allows for the clients experiences to be in the foreground and my knowledge to be in the background.

2. Facilitation: Facilitating the MAC programme was done through experiential learning, allowing for discussions, activities and video clips. This type of learning was effective as the participants could come to terms with difficult theoretical concepts. The participants enjoyed the learning experience and were actively involved in the MAC programme. This experience made me reflect on therapy where I engage with children and more specifically adolescents. Therapy and psycho-educational topics may be effectively fostered within an experiential manner.

3. Doubt: After creating the MAC programme I had some doubts about whether the programme would be effective. The doubt stemmed from the fact that the programme was experiential and minimal theory was presented to the participants. In addition, I doubted whether participants would learn an

56

adequate amount to provide valuable data for the interview. However, through the research process I have realised that the participants provided valuable experiences for the interview data despite the minimal theory that was presented. This experience made me reflect on therapy and how my biases and doubts may hinder the therapy process. This highlighted the importance of supervision.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the research inquiry by sequentially referring to the context, the participants, the research process, research quality and concluded with my personal reflection. The following five chapters describes the research findings for each of the five participants with the aim of addressing the research questions. The following chapter proceeds with the research findings for the first participant.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

(PARTICIPANT ONE)

Introduction

This chapter will describe the experiences of Swimming Participant One (S1) from his participation in the MAC programme. His experiences will be viewed according to mindfulness, acceptance and then commitment with reference to what he learnt; how this learning was applied to swimming and further transferred to his life. Within this chapter, the findings of S1 will be discussed with the aim of addressing the three research questions of this study (see Chapter 1).

5.1   MINDFULNESS

5.1.1   Learning

RQ1: "What did S1 experientially learn about his mindfulness through his participation in a swimming-specific MAC programme?" S1 made sense of his mindfulness learning through how he learnt, what he learnt as well as identifying potential advantages and threats to his mindfulness.

5.1.1.1 Content

S1 learnt about his mindfulness through two experiential activities conducted within the MAC programme. S1's learning experience occurred through a balloon activity and a video clip that he watched. The balloon activity affirmed for S1 that his mindfulness was not where he would want it to be, by indicating, *"I thought I had a good mindfulness but the balloon activity made me realise that I need to work on my mindfulness."* From the balloon activity S1 realised that he found it difficult to stay focused on the task and that he was distracted by his thoughts. As he recalls the activity he states, *"The task was to*

keep the balloons off the ground and I was so focused on telling myself to focus that I forgot about the balloons." Furthermore, his experiential learning from the video clip confirmed that his mindfulness needed improvement because he found that he had difficulty staying in the present moment when viewing the video clip. He was distracted by thinking about the future stating, *"W*e *then watched a video… it made me think about training and how I can apply mindfulness in training so I forgot about the video. My mindfulness definitely needs some work."*

5.1.1.2 Process

Through experiential learning in the balloon activity, S1 learnt he had distractions that hindered his mindfulness which made him think about his training and distractions that hinder him. Reflecting on the balloon activity S1 comments, *"I'd get irritated with myself because you are thinking about the irritation, what's causing the irritation and then you get more irritated for being irritated… It is a distraction, it is a big distraction."* He realised that during the activity he found himself being mindless. His focus was not on the task but on his internal distractions.

Through experiential learning, S1 also watched a video clip and learnt that in order to improve his swimming performance he needed to be mindful of the details in his training. This requires him to be in the present moment and task focused. S1 reflected on the video stating, *"I watched the video and realised that Phelps actually gives thought to his training… Phelps was starting at the little things, perfecting the little things... You know I need to start doing that."* He also learnt that during tasks where he should be mindful, such as during the video clip, he was mindless. Mindfulness requires practice and effort and S1, in his frustration, states how easily he is mindless during tasks stating, *"By the end of the video I was like what happened? I don't remember what happened in the video… I don't even remember the Chinese guy's name, I don't even remember if it was a 25m pool or a 50m pool."* His experiential learning provided him with an opportunity to experience how easily he became mindless during tasks as opposed to being mindful.

59

5.1.1.3 Advantages

Through S1's experiential learning he became aware of potential advantages of utilising mindfulness. S1 believes that being mindful may assist him in improving his swimming, because mindfulness could assist him in recognising bad, habitual swimming techniques as he confirms by stating how mindfulness is "*making me dislearn bad habits that I picked up like over years ago*". This recognition then allows him to correct his technique "*so that you exercise the right muscle*" which assists in performance enhancement.

S1 also realised that mindfulness can assist a swimmer to increase performance through stroke correction. Not seen in literature, the concept of stroke corrrection can be extended and applied for rehabilitation purposes. S1 refers to stroke correction assistance in saying:

> *When you learn to swim in freestyle you tend to pull umm under your body and not next to your body. By pulling under your body you waste a lot of energy, its not very effective and if people, if coaches, dont fix that when you are younger, you can pick it up. So you have to consciously say, okay I'm gonna swim now, I'm going to stroke freestyle now, next to your body, pull next to your body and you can pull next to your body, pull next to your body.*

5.1.1.4 Threats

Through S1's learning he also mentions how being mindful is new to him, and that this would require him to approach swimming differently. His old approach to swimming relies on muscle memory where he can be mindless during training. S1 mentions, "*Usually in training you become so used to training for swimming, you don't think about it, it is just my swimming memory and you are just swimming up and down, up and down.*" His new learning of mindfulness is difficult for him because it requires a conscious effort which leaves him mentally tired. He reflects on mindfulness being a new and hard route stating, "*The hard route you actually have to put in thought… and you got*

60

to constantly think about what you are doing so that you are not doing it wrong." Although he believes mindfulness would improve his performance he also believes the change is difficult.

5.1.2 Application

RQ2: "How did S1 apply his experiential learning of mindfulness through his participation in a MAC programme to his swimming?" S1 made sense of his mindfulness learning and applied it to swimming. His mindfulness application entailed how he applied mindfulness and threats which hindered his application.

5.1.2.1 Process

From S1's experience of applying mindfulness in his swimming training, he realised that he could apply mindfulness by focusing on being in the present moment. Being in the present moment allowed him to be mindful of his technique and how to swim correctly. S1 states, *"I can really start to think about the here and now whilst training. If I was doing long distance, I can focus on my stroke, my catch, my pull, my kick, my rhythm etc."* Mindfulness requires an athlete to be in the present moment and task focused which is consistent with S1's experience of his mindfulness application.

5.1.2.2 Threats

S1 highlights that although mindfulness is needed and is applicable in his training, he has experienced that during a race mindfulness application is unnecessary. S1 believes that mindfulness is used in training which prepares you for a race. Therefore, when he approaches a race he no longer has to think, but instead he just swims. S1 states that during a race his belief is "*if you have done it a thousand times in training and you have to do it one more in a race there's no pressure, you just go, you just have to just enjoy it*". Therefore, he experienced mindfulness to have limited applicability which hinders him from being mindful in a holistic manner.

S1 further believes that mindfulness has limited applicability because he has always relied on muscle memory in a race. S1 felt that he could use mindfulness during his training stating, "*That's when you are training hard, you are consciously working hard, actively thinking…*" The aforementioned equips him to approach a race and rely on muscle memory to perform, stating that in "*the race everything is just muscle memory*". Therefore, mindfulness is challenging his previous approach to races. Thus, his uneasiness in applying mindfulness is reasonable but may threaten his willingness to consistently apply mindfulness.

5.1.3   Transference

RQ3: "How did S1 transfer his experiential learning of mindfulness through his participation in a MAC programme to his life?" S1 has not transferred his learning of mindfulness to his life. However, his anticipation of transference entails the conditions for when he may transfer mindfulness, how he would transfer his mindfulness, his perceived threats and advantages of transference.

5.1.3.1 Conditions

S1 believes that mindfulness requires a significant amount of effort and energy. Therefore, he will only consider transferring mindfulness to his life if it is during a task that is important to him and where he will be able to obtain results. S1 says, *"If it's important to me, then I will be mindful about it, I'm gonna invest effort into it. If it's not important to me, whatever, so what."* Thus, S1's mindfulness in life is limited and he does not view it as a lifestyle approach but rather a technique that will be applied only when needed.

5.1.3.2 Process

S1 indicates that he is reluctant to transfer mindfulness to his life because of the effort it requires. He imagines that mindfulness in his life would mean being consciously aware of all the details in each situation, by stating, *"The picture I have is actually going putting down my phone, okay this is where I put my phone, I talked to this person, okay, this is what you said…. So you hardly look forward to forced mindfulness."* His explanation indicates that if he were to be mindful it would be forced and effort for him.

5.1.3.3 Threats

S1 feels that transference is new to him, stating, "*It's hard, because I haven't really thought about being mindful in life,"* until his participation in the MAC programme. He is still grapling with the idea but believes *"if it's something that is important to me then I might be mindful about it".*

S1 also believes that he will need to practice transferring mindfulness to his life. According to S1 he practices being mindful when swimming because he needs to improve his performance. However, in life there is less pressure to perform, stating, *"Mindfulness is something I need to learn, I think what happens in training… it's been drilled into you… whereas with life, it just happens, no need to think about life."* Swimmers at the hpc advance in the performance hierachy based on their individual performances (See Chapter 1), therefore, swimmers have pressure to perform. As a result, a significant amount of attention, focus and time is spent on swimming performance and less time is spent on other activities. The aforesaid highlights a perceived threat to mindfulness transference.

S1 also shares his experience of struggling to be mindful in life commenting that *"once I started telling myself be mindful now, then I struggled to be mindful… and then everything just falls apart".* This makes him question his ability to transfer his mindfulness effectively.

5.1.3.4 Advantages

Despite S1's hesitation in transference, his learning has helped him realise that mindfulness would be useful and beneficial in his life, as he states, *"I think I would be able to live more efficiently. Especially with studying .. and also forgetting stuff… and I also think I do need to improve my relationship with people."* S1 was able to contemplate the benefits of transferring mindfulness to his life from his participation in the MAC programme.

5.2 ACCEPTANCE

5.2.1 Learning

RQ1: "What did S1 experientially learn about acceptance through his participation in a swimming-specific MAC programme?" S1 made sense of his learning experience of acceptance with reference to what he learnt and how he learnt.

5.2.1.1 Content

S1 learnt through his participation in the MAC programme that his level of acceptance needs improvement, stating that *"It [acceptance] needs some work. I think I just really need to accept whatever's happened and its hard saying just accept it but I think I just really need to...".*

5.2.1.2 Process

S1 experientially learnt about acceptance via two video clips. The first video depicted an Olympic runner who had external pressure to perform, S1 states that *"the Chinese athlete realised he can't change the pressure placed on him. If he wins there would be more pressure the next time and if he loses there will also be more pressure…".* S1 learnt that the Chinese athlete had two options. The athlete could either make use of

64

avoidance which required utilising energy to control the external pressure or he could utilise acceptance and use his energy to stay task focused. S1 reflects that the option of acceptance is favourable by commenting that *"you can use your energy to focus on the task at hand, that's what I think…".* The second video depicted tennis players who allowed their emotions to dictate their behaviour and distract their attention from the task at hand. S1 confirms the aforesaid by stating that *"the tennis player… completely forgot about playing tennis".* This video confirmed for S1 that acceptance is necessary to remain task focused.

From S1's learning experience in the MAC programme, this allowed for him to recall that he had heard about acceptance before. S1 learnt about acceptance from his father who often used an analogy to represent acceptance. S1 recalls this analogy by stating, *"Something my dad usually tells me, is like, big circle, small circle. The stuff you can influence, small circle, the stuff you can't influence is the big circle, so don't waste energy on the big circle."* This analogy along with the the two video clippings confirmed for S1 that acceptance is needed to remain task focused to conserve his energy.

5.2.2 Application

RQ2: "How did S1 apply his experiential learning of acceptance through his participation in a MAC programme to his swimming?" S1 made sense of his acceptance learning and then applied his learning to swimming. His acceptance application entails his perceived threats to application in his swimming.

S1 feels that sometimes he is able to use certain emotions to heighten his focus, save energy and improve his performance. These emotions are useful and therefore acceptance is not always needed. S1 recalls an example from his swimming training by explaining to *"use emotion to heighten your focus on the task at hand, so if you're tired you gonna try… to find the most efficient way to swim and that's where you save a lot of energy… so that you can win the race".* From S1's experience he has realised that he is

able to utilise his emotions to increase his performance, but this experience may also prevent him from applying acceptance to his swimming.

S1 also struggles to apply acceptance because he wants to control his emotions when necessary. This highlights that S1 makes use of avoidance which is the opposite of acceptance. Acceptance is having the ability to perform while experiencing discomfort however, he states, *"I tell myself just feel sad later, it's fine you sad now but feel sad later. You can feel depro and you can have depro thoughts but just be depro later, now you have to swim."* Therefore, S1 has difficulty in applying acceptance to his swimming because he has relied on and utilised avoidance in the past.

5.2.3   Transference

RQ3: "How did S1 anticipate transferring his experiential learning of acceptance through his participation in a MAC programme to his life?" S1 has not transferred his learning of acceptance to his life. However his anticipation of transference refers to percieved threats and how he would attempt to transfer acceptance.

5.2.3.1 Threats

S1 realised that transferring acceptance to his life is difficult because he believes that he would rather put the effort in swimming and not in other aspects in his life. He provides a comparison between school work and swimming practise, stating, *"Do I (a) work hard now and not get a demerit tomorrow morning or (b) go to sleep now and train effectively tomorrow. I mean 9 out of 10; I would take (b)."* S1 is reflecting on how he is not able to make acceptance a lifestyle approach and that he can either apply it to swimming or life. For S1 swimming performance outweighs other activities.

S1 further explains how acceptance in life is limited and that it cannot be applied consistently in all areas of his life. S1 states that *"you can't just accept, and accept and accept, one day it's just one thing, a small little thing, and then you just blow up".* S1

66

doubts the effectiveness of acceptance in life, which makes him hesitant in transferring acceptance.

S1 also explains that in life acceptance is not necessary because most of the time he is in control of his feelings. S1 also indicates that he has relied upon avoidance as opposed to acceptance. S1 believes that change in life is possible, therefore, he does not see a reason for transferring acceptance. He states that *"with life you can change stuff, you can, if you keep bumping into a chair, the simple fact, the chair is there, now move the chair"*.

5.2.3.2 Process

S1 explains that for him to use acceptance in his life he would need to be task orientated and not waste his time and energy on unpleasant tasks. He gives an example of transferring acceptance to his homework stating, *"I'm tired and need to do homework… I'm going to remind myself, it's okay to be tired, however, the homework is a task that needs to get done and I'm wasting time venting about, so I'm just gonna do my best."*

5.3   COMMITMENT

5.3.1   Learning

RQ1: "What did S1 experientially learn about commitment through his participation in a swimming-specific MAC programme?" S1 made sense of his learning expeirence of commitment with reference to what he learnt as well as indicating threats to his commitment.

5.3.1.1 Content

S1 found the concept of commitment difficult to grasp as it is the opposite of motivation which is a familiar concept to him. S1 struggled to understand the concepts of

67

commitment and motivation, debating that "*my motivation is my reason to be committed and then they take the motivation, then what do we have?*" After the MAC programme S1 reflected on his level of commitment versus his level of motivation and concluded that "*I'm not really committed*". S1 acknowledges that he is motivated but not committed.

5.3.1.2 Threats

In S1's experience, he learnt that it is difficult to be committed because it requires consistency and conscious effort. Commitment is value-driven behaviour and S1 explains that your value-driven behaviour needs to be 100 percent consistent. S1 explains this by using an example where the value of honesty is used, he states that "*I understand like you… say what you do, so if I say I am committed to honesty, I must commit to being honest. I have to be honest all the time, I can't be honest only 5 percent of the time*". Furthermore, commitment requires conscious effort whereby S1 expresses this dilemma of "*having to remind myself, am I being honest now?*" Being consistent and displaying conscious effort makes S1 reflect on the MAC programme professing that "*the thing about the whole MAC programme is being conscious all the time, I think that's the hardest thing for me to do*".

5.3.2 Application

RQ2: "How did S1 apply his experiential learning of commitment through his participation in a MAC programme to his swimming?" S1 made sense of his committment learning and then applied his learning to his swimming. His comittment application entails his perceived advantages and threats of application.

5.3.2.1 Advantages

S1 shows a willingness to apply commitment to his swimming as he believes that committed behaviour will ultimately improve his swimming performance. S1 explains a scenario in training where he swims 120 laps in a 50 metre pool and he states that "*if*

you give thirty strokes a lap, that's 3 600 strokes. Now if you didn't think and you didn't concentrate and you did something wrong, then you've just landed yourself 3 600 strokes doing something wrong". Ultimately S1 believes that if you are committed, your behaviour will reflect this and will improve your performance.

5.3.2.2 Threats

S1 realised that being committed requires conscious, consistent effort which is difficult for him to adhere to. The aforementioned leaves S1 tired. As a result, he feels he would prefer not to apply commitment to training. S1 explains that "*sometimes it gets too much… because I relax when I go train, like mentally I relax, so now having to… keep thinking about this, this and this and it gets tiring. A lot of the time you just want to shut down*".

5.3.3   Transference

RQ3: "How did S1 transfer his experiential learning of commitment through his participation in a MAC programme to his life?" From his participation in the MAC programme his transference of commitment refers to internal and external threats to his transference.

5.3.3.1 Internal Threats

S1 realises that being committed in life is challenging as it requires consistent effort and consciousness, as he acknowledges that "*it will take a lot of work on my part and effort and consciousness*". Furthermore, S1 reflects on his attitude about school and states that "I'm tired of school…". S1's irritation concerning school and teachers highlights how his attitude influences his commitment, as S1 states, "*The teachers waste my time so if you're wasting my time why am I going to do something for you if you're wasting my time.*"

5.3.3.2 External Threats

S1 admits that having friends at school and wanting to socialise often distracts him from being committed to his work. He states that if he is only committed to his work then he cannot socialise, stating, "*When you actually do the work at school you can't really socialise that much with your friends at school.*" S1's dilemma is that he would prefer not to be committed to his work and would rather socialise, stating, "*So when you have the choice of do I socialise now or work, socialising or boring work, what do I do? Socialising.*"

S1 is apprehensive of transferring commitment to his life because he is unsure whether or not he would be able to be consistent with his commitment. He believes that if he is not consistent with his commitment, peers would label him as a hypocrite as he mentions, "*I have to be committed all the time because I'm going to be a hypocrite… because if other people look to me as an example… it's a hypocritical example.*"

5.4   PERSONAL REFLECTION OF PARTICIPANT ONE

From the findings of S1, it seems as if he was able to apply and transfer his learning of mindfulness. However, it seems that he had some difficulty in his learning of acceptance and commitment which further hindered his application and transference. In reflecting on S1's findings, I think it is possible that his learning of acceptance and commitment was hindered due to the following four reasons.

1.   The MAC programme was presented in one morning and it is possible that S1 did not have a sufficient amount of time to grasp the concepts. Therefore, the initial phase of learning, whereby an experience is created such as the MAC programme, was too short. Thus, the aforesaid, could have limited his learning of and understanding of the MAC concepts.

2.   Furthermore, the process of learning did not occur over a prolonged period of time. Thus, there was an initial learning experience however no follow-up

70

sessions. This limited learning experience could have hindered S1's learning which further made application and transference challenging.

3.   Until recently, both the PST and MAC programmes were presented simultaneously to the swimming athletes, including S1, at the hpc. However, both programmes differ fundamentally and thus could have caused confusion in S1's learning experience.

4.   At the hpc, the coaches and psychologists do not work from the same performance development approach. Therefore, assistance provided to athletes from different performance development approaches could possibly cause confusion. Thus, this confusion could have contributed towards S1's difficulty in learning, applying and transferring of the MAC principals.

Conclusion

This chapter explored how S1 made sense of the MAC programme with regards to his experience of mindfulness, acceptance and commitment. His experiences were viewed according to what he learnt and how he could apply this learning to swimming and life with the aim of addressing the three research questions of this study.   The next chapter investigates the second swimming participant and how she made sense of the MAC programme.

CHAPTER 6
FINDINGS
(PARTICIPANT TWO)

Introduction

This chapter will describe the experiences of Swimming Participant Two (S2) from her participation in the MAC programme. Her experiences will be viewed according to mindfulness, acceptance and then commitment with reference to what she learnt; how this learning was applied to swimming and further transferred to her life. Within this chapter, the findings of S2 will be discussed with the aim of addressing the three research questions of this study (see Chapter 1).

6.1   MINDFULNESS

6.1.1   Learning

RQ1: "What did S2 experientially learn about her mindfulness through her participation in a swimming-specific MAC programme?" S2 made sense of her mindfulness learning via what she learnt about her own mindfulness, how she learnt about mindfulness and the potential threats to her mindfulness learning.

6.1.1.1 Content

S2 learnt that mindfulness is very important for her in order to improve her performance. However, she also realised that her mindfulness needs improvement, stating, "*I'd say my mindfulness is only about 50/50 and I'm not really happy with it.*" The reason for the aforesaid is that she loses focus and becomes distracted. She confirms this stating, "*I learnt that it's very easy to get distracted. I never realised how important mindfulness is and how much of a difference it can make and how by having mindfulness it can only benefit a person.*" S2 believes that having mindfulness is beneficial "*Because it just*

means you are focused… fully aware". S2 confirms that she often loses focuses and becomes mindless. Therefore, S2 has difficulty in maintaining mindfuness.

S2 also learnt that it is difficult for her to be mindful and that she needs to practice this concept. S2 believes that her mindfulness should be more consistent referring to her mindfulness becoming a habit. She states, "*In a way you almost want it to become a habit. You don't want it to become something you need to keep reminding yourself to do. For something to become a habit, you've got to… practise.*" S2 indicates that mindfulness should become a lifestyle approach where one is mindful without effort.

6.1.1.2 Process

S2 learnt about her own mindfulness through experiential learning. In the MAC programme two experiential activities were used, a balloon activity and then a video clip. From the balloon activity S2 learnt that mindfulness presents possibilities and options, S2 reflects this by stating, "*When you're focused on something you, all your attention is on it… And I think that's when you become fully aware of all the possibilities of anything that could happen, can happen, will happen, should happen.*" S2 shares that when she is mindless her thoughts and efforts are divided and therefore she is unable to be fully aware and attentive on the task at hand. S2 shares this experience stating, "*If you were thinking about something else, your attention is divided and only half of you is there while the other half is worrying or thinking about something else.*" From the video clip S2 learnt that being mindful is a choice that needs to be made on a daily basis. Choosing to be mindful means choosing to continually practice mindfulness so that improved performance and results are possible. Furthermore, S2 believes that mindfulness is applicable to everyone but it is based on a person's willingness and choice to be mindful and to practice this concept. S2 confirms this as she remarks about the video clip, stating, "*Just shows that if we just practiced more of it [mindfulness], you can do anything because if you practice anything you can do well in it.*"

6.1.1.3 Threats

From S2's learning experience, she believes being mindful requires her to constantly think about all the details while she is swimming. The aforesaid leaves her physically and mentally tired. S2 comments on being mindful stating, "*It was exhausting thinking about all of those things all the time…*" S2 is normally mindless during swimming which means that she is not mentally fatigued because she states, "*My mind… in a sense is automatic and I would just let my mind drift.*" For S2 being mindful results in mental fatigue which may hinder her from utilising mindfulness.

Furthermore, from S2's learning experience, she feels that she has a busy schedule which requires her to multi-task and think about many aspects of her life simultaneously. However, she acknowledges that "*Sometimes I just can't give everything all my attention...*". S2 finds that needing to think about numerous aspects often distracts her from the task at hand and therefore hinders her mindfulness. S2 explains how she becomes mindless as her thoughts race between different aspects that require her attention, stating, "*My mind will wander… to whether I've done everything I've needed to do. Whether I'm forgetting something, whether I'm going to have enough time to do something. So I think it boils down to getting distracted…*"

6.1.2   Application

RQ2: "How did S2 apply her experiential learning of mindfulness through her participation in a MAC programme to her swimming?" S2 made sense of her mindfulness learning and then applied it to swimming. Her mindfulness application entails her perceived threats and advantages to application.

6.1.2.1 Threats

S2 explains how swimming usually entails long training sets of monotonous exercises. This routine makes it difficult for S2 to be mindful as she becomes distracted. S2 recalls

74

a training moment where she became mindless, stating, "*I struggle to apply mindfulness in swimming all the time. It's because swimming can get a bit monotonous. It's the same thing over and over again. I've focused on that so if I do it again I don't really have to be mindful again.*" This example highlights that S2 is able to apply mindfulness, however, struggles to maintain her mindfulness during training.

Additionally, S2 usually approaches swimming by being mindless. During training she allows her mind to switch off and be in automatic mode where no conscious thought or awareness is involved. S2 reflects on swimming long distances and she states, "*As soon as we get to like 800's and 1500's that's when I tend to go into auto pilot and I just swim up and down. It's not really, I'm not really putting much thought into it.*" Being mindful during training requires S2 to approach swimming differently, as she is consciously aware of what she is doing and actively thinking about her training.

6.1.2.2 Advantages

Mindfulness assists S2 to focus on and improve the details of her swimming, which helps her gain a competitive edge. S2 explains how she focuses on the details of her technique in order to feel more comfortable and therefore more efficient in the water. S2 states, "*I have been very mindful to the little things… so I have been focusing on tumble turns and dives and breathing when I come out of the wall… so that I'm more aware of it at the gala.*" For S2 being mindful about the details in her swimming allows her to improve her performance which is her goal. S2 explains how being mindful of the details assists her by stating that "*The little things at this point are what make the difference. Especially because I want to qualify and I'm 0.08 split seconds away. So that's the difference between tumbling faster or touching the wall quicker".* Ultimately S2 believes that *"the little things are what give you those seconds"*.

75

6.1.3 Transference

RQ3: "How did S2 transfer her experiential learning of mindfulness through her participation in a MAC programme to her life?" S2 has transferred her learning of mindfulness to her life. Her transference entails how she transfers, her perceived advantages for transference and lastly a unique experience of transference.

6.1.3.1 Conditions

S2 believes that in order for her to transfer her mindfulness to her life it would require her to be focused on only one task. Consequently, being task focused S2 realises that this allows her to invest all her effort into one task. In order to be task focused S2 explains that this would require prioritisation and a schedule stating, "*I need to learn to accept that what I'm doing now needs my attention and there is a time in the day for this, so I might as well focus on it, if everything else is going to have time as well.*" S2 also expresses that it is often difficult to prioritise and schedule the important tasks on a daily basis. The reason for the aforementioned is that she constantly thinks and worries about everything that requires her attention, stating, "*In a way I just need to learn to reassure myself that everything will be okay and not to stress out about it.*"

6.1.3.2 Advantages

S2 has seen the results of being mindful when training and at school. S2 reflects on mindfulness stating, "*I've definitely seen what it can do and how it does help.*" From S2's familiarity of experiencing the results of mindfulness in her life, she confirms that mindfulness is beneficial, as she comments that "*So from what I have tried in the pool and at home and in the class... it's definitely worked*".

S2 has also realised that one of the most significant advantages of utilising mindfulness is that it equips her to improve her performance in swimming and in life. S2 gives an example of being mindful in class to improve her mathematic results, stating, "*It's no*

good I'm in Maths thinking about my creative essay topic. I think it's important that we do give all our attention to what's happening… so that we can improve and make it worthwhile." From S2's experience of mindfulness she believes that it is important to incorporate mindfulness as a holistic concept in all areas of her life.

6.1.3.3 Uniqueness

S2 believes that it is not necessary to be mindful at all times, but only when it is required. Her reason for this is that the choice prevents exhaustion. S2 confirms this stating, "*I found it very difficult to believe that everyone is mindful all the time, that's when I think the exhaustion would come into play as well. I think mindfulness can be… used when needed.*" Therefore, S2 confirms that being mindless during some tasks is necessary to prevent exhaustion. S2's learning experience opposes that mindfulness becomes a way of being but rather that mindfulness is a technique utilised when needed within a chosen context.

6.2   ACCEPTANCE

6.2.1   Learning

RQ1: "What did S2 experientially learn about acceptance through her participation in a swimming-specific MAC programme?" S2 made sense of her learning experience of acceptance with reference to what she learnt, how she learnt as well as her perceived threats and advantages.

6.2.1.1 Content

S2 learnt that her acceptance needs improvement because she finds that at times she struggles to accept her emotions. S2 also normally relies on avoidance, stating, "*I learnt that most of the time I do avoid accepting things and that is why I didn't think acceptance*

would work." After learning about acceptance from the MAC programme S2 admits, "*All I need to do is learn to accept*."

6.2.1.2 Process

S2 learnt about acceptance through the MAC programme from participating in a balloon activity and from watching two video clips. S2 learnt from the balloon activity that acceptance is a personal task that is different and unique for each person, as she states, "*I find it [acceptance] very personal, because we have to come to terms with what's happening or what we are feeling*." S2 therefore indicates that acceptance is different for each person and that there is not a specific guideline of how to accomplish this. Furthermore, from the first video clip S2 learnt that part of being able to accept is to please herself instead of others. As S2 reflects on the video clip portraying an Olympic male runner, she comments that "*He did it for himself. And I think that's what stood out a lot for me there*". Additionally, S2 watched a second video clip demonstrating tennis athletes who made use of avoidance as opposed to acceptance. From this video clip S2 learnt that at times her emotions prevents her from accepting and performing well, as she states, "*With the tennis players, who let their emotions get the better of them… they didn't focus all their energy and attention on the game but more on how they were feeling…*" S2 experientially learnt that acceptance is a unique experience for each person and that she needs to learn to perform for herself and not allow her emotions to distract her focus.

6.2.1.3 Threats

S2 finds that her emotions influence her behaviour. Furthermore, she learnt that she has difficulty in accepting her emotions as she comments, "*I think it's because emotions do play a huge role in our lives and for me I find it very difficult to deal with emotions*." Her difficulty with acceptance is that she finds her emotions to be unpredictable stating that her feelings are "*…not like an on and off button. You can't just fix it right away or turn them off, and I think that's where sometimes I do think emotions have an impact or a*

role or effect on how we perform". In S2's experience she tends to deal with her emotions through avoidance opposed to acceptance. Additonally, S2 would prefer to control her emotions. She has found that she is unable to accomplish this and that it has impacted on her performance. S2 is aware that her avoidance approach is not effective and she believes that acceptance would be more effective, however, she is concerned about the application of this, stating, "*Sometimes it takes me a while to accept some things and so I think that's why acceptance is very difficult for me to apply*."

6.2.1.4 Advantages

S2 finds that her emotions often influence her performance, therefore her behaviour is emotion-driven, stating, "*I let the emotions control me and control the outcome of what would have happened.*" The aforementioned made S2 realise how important acceptance is because acceptance would allow her to normalise her emotions and perform despite her emotions. S2 confirms her need for acceptance by indicating that "*at the end of the day its something that I just need to learn, to accept. To come to terms with the fact that I'm normal and I do have emotions. I'm not a stone and that I can still do what I want to do*".

6.2.2   Application

RQ2: "How did S2 apply her experiential learning of acceptance through her participation in a MAC programme to her swimming?" S2 made sense of her acceptance learning and then applied her learning to swimming. Her acceptance application entails her experience of certain threats and advantages of application.

6.2.2.1 Threats

S2 feels that she often experiences emotions and that sometimes avoidance is a better option because it has worked for her in the past. S2 relies on avoidance because she finds it beneficial to be mindless, S2 confirms this stating, "*I've performed sometimes*

79

better if I just turn my mind off." S2 experiences a significant amount of internal and external pressure from parents, coaches and peers. S2 feels as if she needs to perform to please others. S2's experience of discomfort is reflected as she expresses how "*I chose swimming because I love it… and I want to do it for myself, but… it almost feels as though you need to be doing it to keep everyone else happy, and I sometimes struggle to accept it*". Furthermore, S2 feels that acceptance is not easy because it is not a technique that can be applied at will. S2 confirms this as she states, "*It's not like a switch, and I sometimes need it to be a switch*." For her, acceptance of her feelings requires a longer period to attain as she comments that "*I think for me acceptance just takes a little longer than what I want… I want to be able to accept right then and there*". S2 explains that because she feels acceptance is not instantaneous she then relies on avoidance, stating, "*That's why I think sometimes I revert to the okay turn it all off, don't think about anything*."

6.2.2.2 Advantages

S2 reflects on how she has been taught to avoid and switch her mind off by her parents. S2 comments that her parents would say, "*Just turn your mind off it knows what to do…*" However, after the MAC programme S2 reflects on her parents teachings and believes that avoidance is for short term benefit only. According to her it allows for instant relief, whereas acceptance is beneficial in the long term. S2 confirms this stating, "*Acceptance is more long-term with helping you*." Therefore, S2 acknowledges that acceptance is beneficial in improving her performance in the long term.

6.2.3   Transference

RQ3: "How did S2 transfer her experiential learning of acceptance through her participation in a MAC programme to her life?" S2 has transferred her learning of acceptance to her life. From her experience she expresses the advantages of transferring acceptance to her life.

S1 has realised that avoidance does not always allow her to control her discomfort as she confirms that "*I don't think avoidance works all the time*". Therefore, she believes that adopting a new approach such as acceptance is an option that she is willing to invest in.

S2 also believes that acceptance allows her to behave and act in a manner that would assist her to improve performance, whereas avoidance is emotion-driven behaviour which may hinder performance. S2 believes acceptance is effective because it allows for planned action as she states, "*If you just re-direct your attention, then you're not driving your emotions, you're driving what you want to do.*"

6.3   COMMITMENT

6.3.1   Learning

RQ1: "What did S2 experientially learn about commitment through her participation in a swimming-specific MAC programme?" S2 made sense of her learning expeirence of commitment with reference to what she learnt and how she learnt.

6.3.1.1 Content

S2 learnt that she is able to recognise her own values in her life and has realised that being committed to value-driven behaviour allows her to improve her performance. S2 indicates that "*If I use my values of determination, dedication and desire and have that be the reason why I'm committed, I'll be a more a successful swimmer*".

S2 also learnt that commitment and motivation are opposite concepts. She learnt that the motivated athlete will not always do what is needed to improve their performance. However, a committed athlete will behave in a manner that will improve performance regardless of how they feel. S2 confirms this in stating, "*The motivated person might*

need to always be motivated or will always put it off, whereas committed you'll do it without fail."

6.3.1.2 Process

The balloon activity assisted in S2's learning experience where she learnt that commitment is a personal choice because her behaviour is dependent on her choice of values and goals. S2 states, "*Commitment for me is a follow through of… what you do and how you're going to do it with goals and values.*" S2 therefore struggled to fully relate commitment to the balloon activity because the activity was a team task and not an individual task.

S2 learnt about being committed to her values from her parents as she recalls, "*I think I would say I got my values from my parents,*" who from an early age taught her that dedication and giving her best is important.

6.3.2   Application

RQ2: "How did S2 apply her experiential learning of commitment through her participation in a MAC programme to her swimming?" S2 made sense of her committment learning and then applied her learning to her swimming. Her comittment application entails perceived threats to application and a unique experience.

6.3.2.1 Threats

S2 feels that she is not always able to be committed to all aspects in her life. Therefore, she often needs to compromise. In her decision to compromise, the choice is based on what task is the most important, stating, "*I think, for me, it depends on the level of importance because we do so many things, some are going to be less important than others.*" S2 explains that if she was able to be fully committed to all tasks she would, however, she has found commitment to be limited because in her experience she is not

capable of being committed to all tasks, she adds, "*It's not a fact of not being committed it's a fact of I can't fit it all in. I have to compromise.*"

S2 further explains that if she tries to be committed to all the tasks in her life she feels overwhelmed and exhausted and this hinders her ability to commit to tasks. S2 comments that "*I just feel like I'm wearing myself a bit thin or putting too much on my plate or I need a 48-hour day*". Therefore, she believes she is only committed to a select few tasks within a given time frame. S2 confirms this stating, "*I believe a person can be committed to something fully but if there are too many things that they're committed to, sometimes it can't always be done all the time.*"

6.3.2.2 Uniqueness

S2 feels that commitment is needed within recovery tasks such as sleeping and the stretching of her muscles because being committed to recovery tasks aids in her ability to be fully committed to training, S2 states, "*I do wish sometimes I was more committed with recovery… To try and not compromise on sleep. I've learnt the hard way that compromising on sleep's not an option anymore and to stretch… so you don't get stiff.*" Thus far in the MAC literature the experience of commitment within recovery tasks to improve performance has not been investigated.

6.3.3 Transference

RQ3: "How did S2 transfer her experiential learning of commitment through her participation in a MAC programme to her life?" From her participation in the MAC programme her transference of commitment refers to perceived threats to transference as well as a unique experience.

6.3.3.1 Threats

In S2's experience of being committed to value-driven behaviour, she believes that commitment is dependent on a person knowing who they are, what their values are and what they want in life. According to S2 she is able to be committed because she knows who she is, stating how her values represent "*How we do things. It's who we are…*". Furthermore, S2 explains how her value-driven behaviour helps her behave in accordance with who she is, as she states, "*For instance, if I was in a situation where I didn't like the crowd of people, I would know who I am and my values would drive me to not be influenced… and to be committed to want I wanted to do.*"

Furthermore, S2 expresses that her emotions can influence or hinder her commitment, as she states, "*Also a person's emotions can come into play with how they might be feeling on that day. So the emotions could affect their commitment in a way of, I'm tired or upset, I don't feel like going to training.*" S2 highlights that in order to be committed she would need to be able to accept her emotions, stating, "*Acceptance goes hand in hand with commitment because if you have accepted that [emotions], it's easy to be committed.*" S2's experience of understanding how commitment and acceptance are interrelated shows a deeper understanding of how MAC intergrates all three concepts of mindfulness, acceptance and commitment.

Additionally, in S2's experience, she feels that people will compromise on certain tasks depending on what they feel is more important. Therefore, commitment in certain areas such as school work or training will differ amongst athletes because athletes will rank tasks at different levels of priority. S2 confirms this stating, "*I compromised on what I saw or thought was important ... so it's what everyone, what anyone finds important and I think that could influence their commitment.*" S2 believes that each person will invest time and effort into tasks they value as important and other tasks will be neglected, as she comments, "*You get those who might find that schoolwork is more important than training…. So if they then, you know, compromise on the swimming all the time they're*

84

not going to get the results." Hence, for S2 there is no benchmark of what a committed person or athlete conforms to because commitment is a personal choice.

6.3.3.2 Uniquenes

S2 believes that it is possible to be committed to values which could either aid or hinder ones performance. S2 believes that people will only experience improved performance if they are committed to values which assist them, as she states, "*It's going to sound bad but the people who have the right values, the people who are driven and want it and are willing to not stop at anything to get it.*" The aforementioned is a unique concept within MAC literature. Currently the MAC studies have not explored how commitment to certain values may aid or hinder performance.

6.4   PERSONAL REFLECTION OF PARTICIPANT TWO

Reflecting on the findings for S2, it seems she was able to apply her learning from the MAC programme to swimming and further transfer her learning to her life. The following section provides a possible reason that I believe could have assisted in her learning, application and transference.

1.   S2 has had previous exposure to the MAC concepts, therefore, her learning of the MAC has taken place over a longer period of time which could have assisted in her understanding. Furthermore, her prolonged learning period and fuller understanding of the concepts could have assisted in her application and transference.

S2 further indicates numerous threats to her learning, application and transference of the MAC concepts. The following section provides two possible reasons that I believe could have hindered her learning, application and transference.

1. Until recently, both the PST and MAC programmes were presented simultaneously to the swimming athletes, including S2, at the hpc. However, both programmes differ fundamentally and thus could have caused confusion in S1's learning experience.

2. S2's upbringing has influenced how she approaches her swimming and life. There is possible confusion for S2 in her application and transference of MAC because her parents encourage more of a PST approach to swimming and life. Therefore, confusion occurs when significant others do not operate from the same approach as the athlete.

Conclusion

This chapter explored how S2 made sense of the MAC programme with regards to her experience of mindfulness, acceptance and commitment with the aim of addressing the three research questions of this study. The next chapter investigates the third swimming participant and how she made sense of the MAC programme.

CHAPTER 7
FINDINGS
(PARTICIPANT THREE)

Introduction

This chapter will describe the experiences of Swimming Participant Three (S3) from her participation in the MAC programme. Her experiences will be viewed according to mindfulness, acceptance and then commitment with reference to what she learnt; how this learning was applied to swimming and further transferred to her life. Within this chapter, the findings of S3 will be discussed with the aim of addressing the three research questions of this study (see Chapter 1).

7.1   MINDFULNESS

7.1.1   Learning

RQ1: "What did S3 experientially learn about her mindfulness through her participation in a swimming-specific MAC programme?" S3 made sense of her mindfulness learning via what she learnt, how she learnt and her perceived threats to mindfulness.

7.1.1.1 Content

S3 learnt that there are times when being mindful is effective as it assists her to improve her performance, she states, "*That there are times where you should focus so that your mind and your body are in the same place…. If your mind and body is in the same place you can then actually improve."* However, S3 also learnt that it was not necessary to be mindful all the time and that at times she could be mindless, as she comments, "*There are times where your mind can be somewhere else.*"

7.1.1.2 Process

S3 learnt about her mindfulness through a balloon activity in the MAC programme. From the activity she learnt that she struggled to remain mindful because she found her focus to be divided between the task and the people around her. She recalls the balloon activity and comments that her mindfulness was divided, stating, "*My mind was a bit on the balloon but more on the people around me and not totally on the balloon.*"

7.1.1.3 Threats

S3 explains that it is not always essential to be mindful as mindfulness should be utilised only during tasks which will assist her to reach her goals. S3 states, "*You can choose to be mindful or mindless.*" This confirms that S3 believes that mindfulness should be used interchangably with mindlessness.

7.1.2   Application

RQ2:   "How did S3 apply her experiential learning of mindfulness through her participation in a MAC programme to her swimming?" S3 made sense of her mindfulness learning and then applied it to swimming. Her mindfulness application entails her perceived advantages and threats.

7.1.2.1 Advantages

S3 has applied mindfulness to her swimming training and has realised that this application assists her to improve her performance. Her improved performance is a result of her being mindful of her technique when learning new strokes, she states, "*I keep on focusing on my stroke techniques and when I should pull and when I should kick…*" Furthermore, S3 is able to improve her performance by staying in the present moment and being fully aware whilst training, she comments, "*You should focus on the present and not think about the past while you are busy in the present.*"

7.1.2.2 Threats

S3 believes that mindfulness application is limited because mindfulness is only necessary when learning new techniques. However, after she has aquired this new skill she no longer finds it necessary. Therefore, S3 believes that after she has utilised mindfulness, she can become mindless. S3 refers to being in automatic mode during training as she comments that "*You just do it without even focusing or without thinking of it. It just becomes a habit*". Furthermore, S3 believes that during certain training events, such as distance sets, mindfulness is ineffective. She believes that it is more effective to be mindless during long distance exercises, stating, "*In distance… you just choose to think of what you are going to do after training or what happened during the day.*"

7.1.3   Transference

RQ3:   "How did S3 transfer her experiential learning of mindfulness through her participation in a MAC programme to her life?" S3 has transferred her learning of mindfulness to her life. Her transference entails her perceived threats and advantages.

7.1.3.1 Threats

S3 recognises that it is beneficial to be mindful during certain tasks in order to perform at school. However, she acknowledges that her feelings sometimes influence her transference. S3 gives an example of how her feelings of boredom influences her mindfulness, she states, "*Well, there are times where stuff gets boring in life… like in Maths…*"

Furthermore, S3 has experienced that her friends and peers distract her from being mindful during certain tasks, stating, "*You should be aware that there are people that can make you not… concentrate as much.*" S3 realised that being mindful requires self-

discipline otherwise her mindfulness is distracted, as she comments, "*There is time for friends and then there's time for doing your work.*"

7.1.3.2 Advantages

S3 found that if she is mindful during school and whilst doing her homework she was capable of remaining up to date with all her work. S3 recalls an example of remaining mindful during class, she states, "*In some subjects like accounting you really focus because if you miss something you're just behind.*" Furthermore, S3 realised that remaining mindful during school helped her to improve her school grades, as she comments on how mindfulness assisted her, stating, "*In school work to get your grades up…*"

7.2 ACCEPTANCE

7.2.1 Learning

RQ1: "What did S3 experientially learn about acceptance through her participation in a swimming-specific MAC programme?" S3 made sense of her learning experience of acceptance with reference to how she learnt which further highlighted certain advantages.

7.2.1.1 Process

S3 experientially learnt about acceptance from the MAC programme by firstly participating in a balloon activity and secondly watching a video clip. From the balloon activity, S3 learnt that sometimes she experiences discomfort and that if she utilises acceptance and remains task focused she is capable of performing. S3 states, "*Sometimes there is discomfort and you notice it but in a way you can still focus on the task you have been doing.*" Furthermore, S3 watched a video clip which portrayed angry tennis players who struggled to utilise acceptance. S3 learnt from the video clip that

90

sometimes her own emotions and thoughts interfere with her performance as she recalls saying, "*I suck at this race and I'm never going to swim it again.*"

7.2.1.2 Advantages

S3 has experienced the ability to perform in the midst of discomfort. S3 recalls how the discomfort of feeling sad did not prevent her from performing and remaining task focused. S3 states, "*You're sad or something but… then just go on with your main task even though you're sad.*" Furthermore, S3 acknowldeges that if she tries to avoid her discomfort, she inevitably creates a paradoxical effect whereby the discomfort increases, stating, "*You can't just tell yourself you're not sad… because you're just going to be more sad.*" S3 therefore believes that she should use acceptance to take note of her discomforts but remain task focused.

7.2.2 Application

RQ2: "How did S3 apply her experiential learning of acceptance through her participation in a MAC programme to her swimming?" S3 made sense of her acceptance learning and then applied her learning to swimming. Her acceptance application entails perceived threats and advantages.

7.2.2.1 Threats

S3 has realised that during training she utilises avoidance as opposed to acceptance. S3 recalls using self-talk to minimise her discomfort as she would tell herself not to think about the discomfort that she is experiencing, stating, "*…You could just tell yourself to not think about it and then just go on.*" Furthermore, S3 admits that she prefers to experience pleasant thoughts and emotions before a race. Therefore she tries to avoid unpleasant thoughts and emotions by diverting her focus, stating, "*You don't think about the sadness you had before the race. You're just thinking about you're going to win and you're going to feel happy afterwards.*" Additonally, S3 comments that although she

91

understands acceptance, applying acceptance when in challenging situations is difficult. As a result, she naturally tries to avoid thinking about the discomfort. S3 comments, "*Bad stuff happens, you can't let those bad things bring you down…*"

7.2.2.2 Advantages

Although S3 relies more on avoidance than acceptance, she has noticed that utilising acceptance during training allows her to invest time and effort into certain strokes that she dislikes. S3 acknowledges that acceptance is effective for "*The strokes I don't do well in and always negative about and always thinking I can't do this*". As a result, S3 is able to improve her performance because she is capable of training in the presence of discomfort.

7.2.3 Transference

RQ3: "How did S3 transfer her experiential learning of acceptance through her participation in a MAC programme to her life?" S3 has transferred her learning of acceptance to her life. As a result, she experiences many threats to her transference of acceptance.

S3 highlights that her transference is hindered by her reliance on avoidance. S3 believes that in order to perform it is more effective to focus on pleasant feelings. As a result, S3 believes that discomfort should be avoided and unpleasant feelings and thoughts should be changed. S3 states, "*If you're just going to focus on the bad things in life you're going to be negative and then your performance won't be as great.*" Furthermore, S3 found that acceptance is not always effective in life and therefore this creates doubt regarding the necessity of transference. S3 uses the following example to illustrate the limitations of acceptance, stating, "*Maybe if you really, really negative about a subject and maybe you don't really, really like the subject, I think you can't apply acceptance.*" S3 believes that acceptance in life is limited because in order to perform she needs to avoid discomfort.

92

7.3 COMMITMENT

7.3.1 Learning

RQ1: "What did S3 experientially learn about commitment through her participation in a swimming-specific MAC programme?" S3 made sense of her learning expeirence of commitment with reference to what she learnt, how she learnt and her perceived threats.

7.3.1.1 Content

From the MAC programme, S3 learnt that commitment and motivation were described as opposite concepts. S3 agrees that commitment to value-driven behaviour is essential for improved performance, however, she also believes that motivation plays an important role in her performance. S3 prefers to view commitment and motivation as concepts that are both necessary in order to improve her performance. S3 provides an example of when motivation is needed to improve her committed behaviour, stating, "*Well, I have values like to never give up but sometimes it's hard… I think if you motivate yourself you could make those values happen more, achieve those values.*"

7.3.1.2 Process

In the MAC programme a balloon activity was utilised to provide S3 with an experiential learning opportunity. S3 participated in a balloon activity whereby participants had to choose a value and then act in accordance to the value during the activity. The participants agreed that their value for the activity would be team work. From participating in the balloon activity, S3 learnt that she was not committed to the value of team work but more motivated, stating, "*You motivate the team members to achieve their values.*"

7.3.1.3 Threats

S3 utilises both commitment and motivation to improve her performance. She acknowledges that neither could be utilised without the other because they both have limits in effectiveness. S3 recalls an event in swimming when she utilised both commitment and motivation to assist her, stating, "*You don't really want to train… you motivate yourself and you tell yourself that your values are to never give up and you motivate and tell yourself go to training.*" Therefore, S3 relies on both motivation and commitment because the combination has been effective for her.

7.3.2   Application

RQ2: "How did S3 apply her experiential learning of commitment through her participation in a MAC programme to her swimming?" S3 made sense of her commitment learning and then applied her learning to her swimming. Her commitment application entails perceived threats and advantages.

7.3.2.1 Threats

S3 utilises motivation to assist her to remain committed during swimming training. S3's motivation is enhanced by external influences such as her coach. Furthermore, if her external influences fail to keep her motivated, her commitment is hindered. S3 confirms stating, "*Sometimes your coach does motivate you that makes you committed, because if he is not there you won't be committed to go.*" S3 realised that her commitment is also hindered by external influences such as her friends. She recalls how her friends are not committed to attending swimming training, which makes it difficult for her to remain committed, stating, "*Some friends, they are usually lazy and don't come to training and I also just want to sleep.*"

94

7.3.2.2 Advantages

S3 realised that in order to improve her performance she needs to achieve certain performance goals. As a result, S3 confirms that remaining committed despite how she feels will enable her to reach her goals, stating, "*If you want to get the gold medal at Olympics you should train, even though you don't feel like going to training, it is one step closer to your dream.*" S3 acknowledges that for the first time she is able to be committed whether she is motivated or not.

7.3.3 Transference

RQ3: "How did S3 transfer her experiential learning of commitment through her participation in a MAC programme to her life?" From her participation in the MAC programme her transference of commitment refers to her perceived advantages.

In life, S3 believes that being commitment is very important as it assists her in achieving her goals. Furthermore, S3 highlights that being committed allows her to perform despite how she feels, stating, "*To know being committed will make you achieve your goal.*" S3 believes that commitment to values is a recognition of the type of lifestyle she leads. S3 states that committed behaviour is value-driven behaviour therefore the values she upholds will inform her lifestyle. S3 comments, "*I also think not smoking is one of my values and getting married before having sex is also a value.*"

7.4 PERSONAL REFLECTION OF PARTICIPANT THREE

From the findings of S3, it seems as if she had some difficulty in fully understanding the concepts of MAC and furthermore, difficulty in application and transference of the MAC. In reflecting on S3's findings, I think it is possible that her learning, application and transference was hindered by the following four factors.

1. Until recently, both the PST and MAC programmes were presented simultaneously to the swimming athletes, including S3, at the hpc. However, both programmes differ fundementally and thus could have caused confusion in S3's learning experience.

2. At the hpc, the coaches and psychologists do not work from the same performance development approach. Therefore, assistance provided to athletes from different performance development approaches could possibly cause confusion. Thus, this confusion could have contributed towards S3's difficulty in learning, applying and transferring of the MAC principals.

3. S3's upbringing has influenced how she approaches her swimming and life. There is possible confusion for S3 in her application and transference of MAC because her parents encourage more of a PST approach to swimming and life. Therefore, confusion occurs when significant others operate from an approach opposite to that of MAC.

4. S3 has been exposed to both PST and MAC beforehand, however, I believe S3 prefers PST and its accompanying skills to that of MAC. I believe her preference and her reliance on PST prevented her from fully engaging in the MAC programme which therefore hindered her learning, application and transference of the MAC.

Conclusion

This chapter explored how S3 made sense of the MAC programme with regards to her experience of mindfulness, acceptance and commitment with the aim of addressing the three research questions of this study. The next chapter explores the fourth participant and his experiences.

CHAPTER 8

FINDINGS

(PARTICIPANT FOUR)

Introduction

This chapter will describe the experiences of Swimming Participant Four (S4) from his participation in the MAC programme. His experiences will be viewed according to mindfulness, acceptance and then commitment with reference to what he learnt; how this learning was applied to swimming and further transferred to his life. Within this chapter, the findings of S4 will be discussed with the aim of addressing the three research questions of this study (see Chapter 1).

8.1   MINDFULNESS

8.1.1   Learning

RQ1: "What did S4 experientially learn about his mindfulness through his participation in a swimming-specific MAC programme?" S4 made sense of his mindfulness learning through what he learnt, how he learnt and perceived threats.

8.1.1.1 Content

S4 learnt that he is not as mindful as he should be, because he is often distracted at school and when he is swimming, stating, "*Sometimes I do get distracted by other things like thinking about the past etcetera. I think I must be more focused at swimming and at school.*" S4 believes that he needs to improve his mindfulness in order to improve his performance in school and swimming.

8.1.1.2 Process

In the MAC programme, S4 learnt about his mindfulness through experiential learning by participating in a balloon activity and watching a video clip. In the balloon activity S4 learnt that he became distracted which prevented him from remaining

mindful during the activity. As a result, his distractions hindered his ability to perform in the balloon activity, stating, "*Like in the balloon game we played, I was very distracted by what the other people were doing instead of focusing on my side. When the balloon came to me I was a bit clueless on what to do.*" Furthermore, S4 watched a video clip where he learnt that being mindful and task focused equips an athlete to improve his performance, stating, "*And I could see that you need to be really focused if you want to be the best.*" Through S4's experiential learning he realised that his mindfulness needed improvement.

8.1.1.3 Threats

S4 has noticed that his mindfulness is dependent on his feelings. Therefore, if he has pleasant feelings he is able to apply mindfulness. Conversely, if he experiences unpleasant feelings this hinders his mindfulness and his performance is compromised. As a result, S4 will choose to be mindless as opposed to mindful during challenging situations, stating, "*But when I've had a bad day, like all of us do, you know, then I would like put it off. I would put my mind off.*" Therefore, S4's mindfulness is limited because it is dependent on his feelings.

8.1.2   Application

RQ2:   "How did S4 apply his experiential learning of mindfulness through his participation in a MAC programme to his swimming?" S4 made sense of his mindfulness learning and applied it to swimming. His mindfulness application entails his perceived threats and advantages.

8.1.2.1 Threats

S4 has difficulties applying mindfulness to swimming because he feels that he has limited support from his coach and family. S4 recalls an incident where he had struggled to apply mindfulness to certain strokes which needed improvement. His difficulties were related to the fact that he believed he needed to be mindful to improve these strokes. Conversely, his parents and coach believed he should focus elsewhere. S4 recalls this experience, stating, "*I get comments like from my coach*

saying I'm not good in backstroke which I totally understand and my parents… and then you just like try put focus into it but you really are just like going through the motions actually." Furthermore, S4 has adopted the belief that mindfulness is not required for strokes that he struggles with. S4 believes, similar to his parents and coach, that mindfulness is only essential for strokes that he is competent in, stating, "*My dad says what is the point of doing breast stroke, it is my worst stroke, and fly… like I put less focus and mindfulness and all that into breast stroke. And then I put more focus into the 1500 and freestyle and backstroke and all that.*" Therefore, S4 believes that mindfulness is an essential component which assists him to improve his performance in strokes that he is proficient in.

8.1.2.2 Advantages

S4 realised that applying mindfulness in swimming is beneficial as it aids him with his technique and stroke correction, which improves his swimming performance. S4 states, "*Like if I've got something wrong with my stroke and my hope is that I focus on that to try and rectify it quickly…*" As a result, S4 believes that if he applies mindfulness during swimming he can prevent learning incorrect swimming techniques. Furthermore, S4 believes that mindfulness assists him to improve his performance which will enable him to reach his goal of being in the Olympics, stating, "*You know, so that's why I am trying to focus on all my main strokes so that one day it will all pay off and I'll go to the Olympics.*" S4 believes that applying mindfulness in his swimming enables him to improve his performance.

8.1.3 Transference

Research Question 3 (RQ3): "How did S4 transfer his experiential learning of mindfulness through his participation in a MAC programme to his life?" S4 has transferred his learning of mindfulness to his life and has has experienced many threats to his transference.

S4 believes that his swimming performance is more important than performance in other areas of his life. As a result, S4 compromises his performance in life which therefore hinders his mindfulness transference, as he states, "*So in a way that we*

came here to swim with Tuks and try to push my swimming further. Um, we did come here for the education but mainly it's for the swim." Furthermore, his coach insists that swimming is more important than school, as S4 recalls, "*My coach says, you are here to swim and when you said to him like I need to get up early because I've got a Maths test or something to study for, he would say but we are here to swim.*"

Additionally, S4 has recognised that his feelings dictate whether he utilises mindfulness in life or not. S4 recalls a situation in school where his feelings hindered his mindfulness transference, stating, "*I would say that I do tend not to focus on Maths because I don't like that subject… And that's why like I put less focus on that but I would put more focus on the subject that I like.*" Therefore, S4's mindfulness transference is hindered because it is dependent on pleasant feelings as opposed to unpleasant feelings.

8.2   ACCEPTANCE

8.2.1   Learning

RQ1: "What did S4 experientially learn about acceptance through his participation in a swimming-specific MAC programme?" S4 made sense of his learning experience of acceptance with reference to what he learnt and how he learnt.

8.2.1.1 Content

S4 believes that acceptance relates to being adaptable, stating, "*Like I definitely can adapt, like, I mean, leaving all my friends there in Jo'burg… I can accept moving houses, moving schools, it's not that bad…*" However, S4 also learnt that acceptance is dependent on maturity, if a person is mature he or she will be more likely to accept. S4 states, "*Like obviously you don't expect an 11-year-old to accept death let's say for instance… but like, I do think you expect like a 16-year-old to cope with it more.*"

8.2.1.2 Process

From the MAC programme, S4 learnt about his acceptance via experiential learning. His experiential learning was based on a balloon activity and a video clip. From the balloon activity, S4 learnt that he can be distracted, stating, "*I learnt that you can get distracted by other things.*" However, S4 also is of the opinion that his level of acceptance is satisfactory, stating, "*I can accept things easily.*" S4 learnt from the video clip that sometimes his emotions, such as frustration, may hinder his ability to accept. S4 states, "*Like I definitely think that I do get frustrated with myself… after a while I can accept it.*" As a result, S4 believes that certain emotions may hinder his ability to accept situations immediately.

8.2.2   Application

RQ2: "How did S4 apply his experiential learning of acceptance through his participation in a MAC programme to his swimming?" S4 made sense of his acceptance learning and then applied his learning to swimming. His acceptance application entails how he applies acceptance to swimming and his perceived advantages thereof.

8.2.2.1 Process

S4 has applied his learning of acceptance to his swimming. As a result, S4 believes that his acceptance application entails acknowledging his discomfort and re-directing his focus. S4 recalls an example where he utilised acceptance by acknowledging his weak breast stroke and re-directing his focus to his stronger strokes, stating, "*I do accept that I'm not very good at breast stroke… I accepted that it's not my best thing. Let's move on now, let's do the back stroke, or the freestyle set, it's fine, you know.*"

8.2.2.2 Advantages

S4 utilises acceptance when he is swimming because acceptance assists him to perform while in the midst of experiencing discomfort. S4 recalls a situation in which he experienced discomfort, stating, "*I do get depressed…*" However, S4 applied

acceptance and realised that he could still perform even though he feels depressed, stating, "*Today that's the furthest I could've pushed…*"

8.2.3   Transference

RQ3: "How did S4 transfer his experiential learning of acceptance through his participation in a MAC programme to his life?" S4 has transferred his learning of acceptance to his life. As a result, his transference refers to how he transfers as well as his perceived threats and advantages thereof.

8.2.3.1 Process

S4 realised that the manner in which he was raised does not foster the utilisation of acceptance in his life. As a result, S4 believes that he has limited support in this regard from his family. S4 confirms the aforesaid, stating, "*Like my old man said get some depression pills, like happy pills in a sense.*" S4 acknowledges that his family utilises avoidance and as a result he also uses avoidance. However, S4 believes acceptance is beneficial and therefore has utilised acceptance in his life despite his upbringing, stating, "*Like I do accept things easily, and I won't be like my mom… I'm definitely not like that, you know, I just take one day at a time…*" Therefore, despite the limited support for acceptance S4 continues to utilise it.

8.2.3.2 Threats

S4 believes that acceptance is beneficial, however he has difficulty transferring acceptance to all situations. Thus, S4 believes that acceptance has limited application. S4 recalls certain situations where he had difficulty transferring acceptance, stating, "*Like for instance, let's say there's an English essay that you had to finish in two periods, you know, I would tend to worry about that when I have ample time*…" S4 believes that acceptance is limited in life because he struggles to utlise acceptance for the "*small things*" or situations.

8.2.3.3 Advantages

S4 has transferred his acceptance to significant life events which assisted him to cope in life. As a result, S4 believes acceptance is valuable. Acceptance has assisted S4 to cope as he recalls certain events, stating, "*I accept my dad lost his leg… I do accept that my dad's not the youngest guy…*"

8.3 COMMITMENT

8.3.1 Learning

RQ1: "What did S4 experientially learn about commitment through his participation in a swimming-specific MAC programme?" S4 made sense of his learning expeirence of commitment with reference to what he learnt and how he learnt.

8.3.1.1 Content

From the MAC programme, S4 learnt that remaining committed is a difficult task to master. S4 realised that his feelings may hinder his ability to commit to a task which prevents him from reaching his goals. S4 reflects that "*Staying committed is a big thing*" because his feelings influence this commitment, as he states, "*Commitment takes a lot out of you. Like, some days you think, hey lekker and some days, just, you just feel bad.*" Therefore, S4 learnt that his commitment is hindered by his feelings.

8.3.1.2 Process

From the MAC programme S4 learnt about his commitment through experiential learning. His experiential learning entailed participating in a balloon activity. From his participation, S4 learnt that commitment is observable. S4 reflects on the balloon activity commenting on how he observed committed behaviour in other participants, stating, "*I mean, she was very dedicated in that… I definitely saw dedication in her there.*" S4 could also relate the balloon activity to his swimming and an academic context. As a result, S4 believes that his commitment is observable in his swimming and school behaviour, stating, "*I definitely think that you can see dedication in*

someone when he's pushing a set, he's studying hard…" Additionally, S4 learnt that his commitment needed improvement, stating, "*I learnt that I must definitely be more dedicated to do small things like that. Doing a little bit of homework instead of just... doing nothing.*"

8.3.2 Application

RQ2: "How did S4 apply his experiential learning of commitment through his participation in a MAC programme to his swimming?" S4 made sense of his committment learning and then applied his learning to his swimming. His comittment application entails perceived threats.

From the MAC programme, S4 learnt that commitment and motivation are seen as opposing concepts (see chapter 2). S4 found it difficult to compare the concepts because he believes that both commitment and motivation are essential to improve performance, stating, "*I think if someone is committed they go far… they dig deep in themselves to go far… and that's when I think motivation plays in so you can dig even more deep... Motivation I think is what excels you.*" As a result, S4 believes that it is not possible to be committed without having motivation. S4 believes that he cannot solely rely on committment to improve his performance, stating, "*I think if someone is committed, they can go far in swimming, but I think if you are committed and motivated, you can go even further into swimming.*" Therefore, S4 believes that commitment is an essential component to improved performance, however, it is not the only component

8.3.3 Transference

RQ3: "How did S4 transfer his experiential learning of commitment through his participation in a MAC programme to his life?" From his participation in the MAC programme, S4 transferred his learning of commitment to his life. His transference of commitment refers to his perceived threats.

S4 has experienced that his commitment is hampered by difficult situations. S4 believes it is challenging to remain committed during challenging situtaions which

causes discomfort. S4 confirms this by stating, "*I think you can lose commitment but I also think you can gain commitment back when something good happens in your life.*" As a result, S4 believes that in order to remain committed during difficult times, motivation is essential.

8.4   PERSONAL REFLECTION OF PARTICIPANT FOUR

From the findings of S4, it seems as if he was able to apply and transfer his learning of acceptance. However, it seems that he had some difficulty in his learning of mindfulness and commitment which further hindered his application and transference. In reflecting on S4's findings, I think it is possible that his learning of mindfulness and commitment was hindered due to the following two reasons.

1.   The MAC programme was presented in one morning and it is possible that S4 did not have a sufficient amount of time to grasp the concepts. Therefore, the initial phase of learning, whereby an experience is created such as the MAC programme, was too short. Thus, the aforesaid, could have limited his learning of and understanding of the concepts.
2.   Until recently, both the PST and MAC programmes were presented simultaneously to the swimming athletes, including S4, at the hpc. However, both programmes differ fundamentally and thus could have caused confusion in S4's learning experience.

Conclusion

This chapter explored how S4 made sense of the MAC programme with regards to his experience of mindfulness, acceptance and commitment with the aim of addressing the three research questions of this study.   The next chapter investigates the fifth and final swimming participant and how he experienced the MAC programme.

CHAPTER 9

FINDINGS

(PARTICIPANT FIVE)

Introduction

This chapter will describe the experiences of the final participant in this research project regarding the MAC programme. Swimming Participant Five's (S5) responses will be viewed according to mindfulness, acceptance and then commitment with reference to what he learnt; how this learning was applied to swimming and further transferred to his life. The findings of S5 will be discussed with the aim of addressing the three research questions of this study (see Chapter 1).

9.1   MINDFULNESS

9.1.1   Learning

RQ1: "What did S5 experientially learn about his mindfulness through his participation in a swimming-specific MAC programme?" S5 made sense of his mindfulness learning through what he learnt and how he learnt about mindfulness.

9.1.1.1 Content

S5 learnt that his mindfulness is not continuous because he utilises mindfulness only when necessary**,** stating, "*Learning from today I only really like go into that zone when I have to. For example, like before a competition… otherwise I don't really think of it much.*" As a result, S5 believes that his mindfulness is effective as he is able to utilise mindfulness during important events. S5 recalls, "*When I have to get into that zone like for a competition or whatever I can get into it easily.*" However, S5 also learnt that his mindfulness needs to be more consistent, stating, "*It [mindfulness] is not as strong as I thought it was…*"

9.1.1.2 Process

From the MAC programme, S5 learnt about mindfulness through experiential learning. His experiential learning entailed participating in a balloon activity and watching a video clip. From the balloon activity, S5 learnt that he was not mindful during the activity because he only utilises mindfulness during significant events. Reflecting on the activity S5 states, "*It was important but not like too important that I had to really switch on and focus for it.*" Furthermore, S5 watched a video clip portraying Michael Phelps utlising mindfulness during training. S5 learnt from the video clip that even though Michael Phelps appeared to continually use mindfulness S5 did not agree. S5 believes that mindfulness should only be used during significant events and not continuously, stating, "*The video of Phelps I saw he can, he was mindful like 24/7 in what he had to do, I'm not the same. I only switch on when I need to, when it's important.*" Therefore, S5 learnt through experiential learning that his mindfulness will be utilised only during important tasks.

9.1.2   Application

RQ2:   "How did S5 apply his experiential learning of mindfulness through his participation in a MAC programme to his swimming?" S5 made sense of his mindfulness learning and applied it to swimming. His mindfulness application entails his perceived threats and advantages of his mindfulness application.

9.1.2.1 Threats

S5 applies his mindfulness learning to swimming however**r,** this application is limited to the training context. As a result, S5 believes that being mindful during training may improve his performance, stating, "*Every set I do in the afternoon I'll try focus on what is important.*" S5 believes that if he is mindful during swimming training then there is no need to be mindful during races or competitions, stating, "*As you get behind the blocks in the race… you automatically remember to do this, do that, turn quick, don't breathe, it just comes naturally, because you've trained it in training.*" Thus, S5 believes that mindfulness application is only essential in training and that mindfulness application in a swimming race or competition is nonessential.

9.1.2.2 Advantages

S5 has applied mindfulness in training and believes that this application may improve his performance. S5 recalls an incident where he applied mindfulness before a race in training, he states, "*I went fully mindful before the race. I just focused on my race and as I dived in everything went perfectly smoothly and I did well.*" S5 believes mindfulness application is essential for improved performance because he has experienced positive results.

Furthermore, S5 believes that applying mindfulness in training improved his technique. Improved technique is made possible because he becomes fully aware of his internal and external surroundings (see chapter 2). This awareness helps him to focus on his technique which assists him to feel more comfortable in the water. As a result, this improves his performance. S5 confirms the aforesaid by stating, "*If I'm tired and my stroke feels a bit off, I feel uncomfortable in the water, I have to focus more on my stroke, technique…*" S5 believes that if he is mindful in training then his technique will automatically be correct during a race, stating, "*As I dive in, I'll know automatically to, I'll know what I have to do. So if something goes wrong, then I'll automatically remember, OK, lift my hips, get aware of my kick, correct it.*"

9.1.3   Transference

RQ3: "How did S5 transfer his experiential learning of mindfulness through his participation in a MAC programme to his life?" S5 has transferred his learning of mindfulness to his life and has experienced threats and advantages, as well as a unique experience.

9.1.3.1 Threats

S4 has transferred his learning of mindfulness to his life and has realised that mindfulness is useful during important tasks such as studying and training. Thus, S5 has utilised mindfulness during important tasks, stating, "*Training, studies for exams, anything really important.*" Even though S5 recognises benefits of utilising mindfulness he believes that it is not essential to be mindful all the time, stating, "*I*

don't really need it in everyday life 24/7, only when you really need to be focused on something important." S5 sees mindfulness as a technique that is applied when needed. Therefore, S5 does not experience mindfulness as a lifestyle choice but rather a technique.

9.1.3.2 Advantages

S5 has experienced transferring mindfulness to his life and believes that this transference enables him to improve his performance in certain tasks, stating, "*It's better to be mindful before something important. It's just that you work better, you function better.*" S5 recalls an incident where he was not mindful and this hampered his performance, stating, "*Before an exam I wasn't focusing on my studies or focusing on what I had studied. And there was a few points I forgot. Because I wasn't mindful, I never tried to remember it in my head before the exam.*" In S5's experience, he has seen the effects of utilising mindfulness as well as the effects of being mindless. Therefore, S5 confirms that during important tasks where he needs to excel, utilising mindfulness is effective.

9.1.3.3 Uniqueness

In S5's experience, mindfulness requires him to actively think and be consciously aware at all times. As a result, S5 believes that mindfulness has the potential to hinder his performance as opposed to improving his performance. S5 relates this to an experience where he was mindful of an injury, stating, "*I've been injured before and I've thought about it 24/7, and I never stopped and it wasn't that serious. But I over thought about it.*" Thus, S5 would actively think and be consciously aware of his injury, this made him focus on his injury, stating, "*If you overthink… You make it worse than it is.*" As a result, S5 was hesitant to start training again and therefore S5 believes that mindfulness has the ability to hamper his performance.

9.2 ACCEPTANCE

9.2.1 Learning

RQ1: "What did S5 experientially learn about acceptance through his participation in a swimming-specific MAC programme?" From the MAC programme, S5 made sense of his acceptance learning through what he learnt which includes a unique understanding of acceptance.

9.2.1.1 Content

S5 found acceptance to be a difficult concept to comprehend because he normally relies on avoidance to come to terms with his discomfort, stating, "*I used to when I was younger just like push it to the side and bottle it up.*" However, after the MAC programme and learning about acceptance, S5 concludes that utlising avoidance is ineffective, stating, "*Bottling it up… actually made it worse.*" Therefore, after the MAC programme S5 believes that acceptance is an effective way to manage discomfort, stating, "*Thought about acceptance and I agree with it and I actually, I have only been aware of it lately but I do accept what I'm feeling in the competition and just go with it.*"

9.2.1.2 Uniqueness

S5 was raised utilising avoidance as a way of dealing with his discomfort. However, more recently S5 has challenged this way of thinking. S5's understanding of acceptance has been influenced by his understanding of and utilisation of avoidance. As a result, S5 combines aspects of acceptance and avoidance as a method to come to terms with discomfort and increasing his performance. S5 recalls an incident where he used and controlled an emotion in order to increase his performance, stating, "*SA Nationals last year. Everything was just going wrong… and I just got upset and I used that anger in the race to just push through… I used it to drive me.*" Thus, S5 disagrees that acceptance is always effective because in this incident he could utilise his emotions to improve his performance, stating, "*It bettered my times.*" Therefore, S5 is again relying on avoidance to improve his performance. However,

S5 realises that utilising avoidance is challenging because if he is unable to control the emotional intensity it could hamper his performance, stating, *"If it's too much, like if you can't handle it, it will mess up your focus, your race."* S5 also realises that utilising avoidance obstructs his ability to utilise mindfulness and acceptance, stating, *"The mindfulness goes away and the emotion takes over… Acceptance also falls away."* Therefore, S5 recognises the effectiveness and importance of acceptance but his habit of avoidance inhibits him from utilising acceptance.

9.2.2   Application

RQ2: "How did S5 apply his experiential learning of acceptance through his participation in a MAC programme to his swimming?" S5 made sense of his learning about acceptance and then applied his learning to swimming. His acceptance application entails how he applied acceptance in swimming.

S5 believes that acceptance is an effective manner for dealing with discomfort. He utilises acceptance in swimming training and uses mindfulness to assist in the process. S5 uses mindfulness to be aware of his discomfort which enables him to utilise acceptance. Thereafter, S5 utilises mindfulness to remain task focused. S5 recalls an incident, stating, *"So when the coach keeps on moaning at you, you get a little frustrated… but you accept that he's moaning at you, you're tired and everything,"* this acceptance then enables S5 to be mindful and to remain task focused. S5 explains this by stating, *"And you're still mindful so you can still focus on what you need to."* Therefore, S5 has applied his learning of acceptance to his swimming and believes that in order to apply acceptance, mindfulness is required.

9.2.3   Transference

RQ3: "How did S5 transfer his experiential learning of acceptance through his participation in a MAC programme to his life?" S5 has transferred his learning of acceptance to his life. As a result, S5 refers to his experience of threats and advantages to his transference of acceptance.

9.2.3.1 Threats

S5 explains how he has always relied on avoidance to cope with his discomfort (see Chapter 2). Therefore, to change avoidance to acceptance is a very difficult transition for him, stating, "*In life I normally avoid it [emotions], like I still bottle it up…*" S5 reiterates how avoidance has been the only way in which he addresses discomfort, stating, "*I go home, the family moans, family problems. I ignore these family problems and I'll just bottle it up. Like I'll avoid it, I'll push it aside till, I won't accept like what's going on…*" Therefore, avoidance has been an accustomed method for coping with discomfort and changing this method is demanding because avoidance has become a habit, stating, "*I think I'm just so used to it, it's like a habit.*" S5's habitual avoidant behaviour hampers his ability to utilise acceptance in life, stating, "*I don't really think of accepting it in life… I'm just so used to bottling it up or avoiding it in life as I have for all these years.*"

9.2.3.2 Advantages

Although S5 has dependend on and currently utilises avoidance as his preferred manner for dealing with discomfort, he recognises that avoidance has limitations. S5 recognises that avoidance may escalate the discomfort and that avoidance prolongs the process because he will eventually have to confront the discomfort, stating, "*If I keep ignoring what's going on at home it will eventually get worse and I'll have to deal with it. But by that time it's gone overboard.*" As a result, S5 realises that acceptance would be a more effective way of coming to terms with discomfort because it enables him to face his discomfort and continue performing, stating, "*To avoid it and bottle it up is much worse. Accept it you can keep on going.*" Therefore, S5 recognises the benefits of utilising acceptance, however, the transition from avoidance to acceptance is demanding.

9.3 COMMITMENT

9.3.1 Learning

RQ1: "What did S5 experientially learn about commitment through his participation in a swimming-specific MAC programme?" S5 made sense of his learning with reference to how he learnt and what he learnt which aided in a unique understanding of commitment.

9.3.1.1 Process

From the MAC programme, S5 experientially learnt about commitment through a balloon activity. The balloon activity confirmed for S5 that he is able to be committed, however, he also learnt that his commitment is inconsistent. S5's commitment is unreliable because it is dependent on the importance of the task. Therefore, the more important the task, the more committed he is, stating, "*During that game like, the past two games it was an exercise but it wasn't like extremely important. So I was committed to what we were doing but I wasn't doing it to the best of my ability*." Therefore, S5 states that he is able to be committed to a task, however, this does not indicate effective performance. In S5's experience commitment has different levels of effort. S5 will therefore apply more effort and be more committed if the task is important.

9.3.1.2 Content

From S5's experiential learning, he learnt that a motivated person may have the desire to behave in a certain manner but lacks the discipline to act accordingly. Whereas a committed person, has the discipline to behave in a certain manner even without the desire, stating, "*Motivation is the opposite of commitment. And most committed people will do what motivated people won't.*" S5 realised that motivation is an important component to improved performance, however, he believes that motivation is limited in effectiveness because the feelings of motivation disapate, unlike commitment, stating, "*You can't just work on the motivation. When you watch a motivative speech or whatever motivates you… But that will run out after a certain*

period. So you can't work on those feelings alone." Therefore, S5 recognises that commitment is an important component for improved performance.

9.3.1.3 Uniqueness

S5 has stated previously that both commitment and motivation are important components for improved performance. However, S5 believes that commitment and motivation are not opposing components as seen in the literature review (see chapter 2) but rather two components that collaborate to assist in performance, stating, "*By definition they are different but if you use it in a sport they both in the same category I would say.*" S5 believes that in order to be committed, motivation is required, stating, "*Say you go to a gala and you being committed… but if you don't have that drive, that motivation to reach your goal, you're not going to perform at maximum level.*" Therefore, S5 believes that commitment and motivation are both needed in order to enhance performance.

9.3.2 Application

RQ2: "How did S5 apply his experiential learning of commitment through his participation in a MAC programme to his swimming?" S5 made sense of his committment learning and then applied his learning to his swimming. His comittment application entails how he applied commitment to swimming.

S5 believes that commitment is observable, therefore, if he is committed to a task, such as attending swimming training, he will go regardless of how he feels, stating, "*If you don't want to do a race, you really do not feel like racing, you're not in the mood, you're committed though. You'll still go.*" Therefore, S5 views commitment as choosing to act in a certain manner to reach certain goals regardless of how he may feel. S5 believes that being commited will enhance his performance, stating, "*I rock up to training every session. So I will improve… So each session counts, I could say.*" S5 believes that committed behaviour is choosing to consistently act in a manner that will enable him to reach his goals, despite opposing feelings.

9.3.3   Transference

RQ3: "How did S5 transfer his experiential learning of commitment through his participation in a MAC programme to his life?" From his participation in the MAC programme, S5 transferred his learning of commitment to his life. His transference refers to perceived advantages of commitment.

S5 believes that commitment requires consistent behaviour that enables him to follow through on a task, stating, "*When committing myself to something, follow it through until the end.*" Therefore, committed behaviour aids him in reaching his goals and improving his performance. S5 recalls an incident of committed behaviour, stating, "*Everyone has troubles with Physics but what I want to study after school requires Physics and I really, I can't stand Physics and Maths. But I need to stay committed to that subject so I can reach my goal.*" S5 has realised that if he is goal-oriented, he is able to remain committed to a task even when confronted with opposing feelings and thoughts.

9.4   PERSONAL REFLECTION OF PARTICIPANT FIVE

Reflecting on the findings for S5, it seems he was able to apply his learning from the MAC programme to swimming and further transfer his learning to his life. However, S5 indicates numerous threats to his learning, application and transference of the MAC concepts. The following section provides three possible reasons that I believe could have hindered his learning, application and transference.

1.   Until recently, both the PST and MAC programmes were presented simultaneously to the swimming athletes, including S5, at the hpc. However, both programmes differ fundamentally and thus could have caused confusion in S5's learning experience.
2.   S5's upbringing has influenced how he approaches his swimming and life. There is possible confusion for S5 in his application and transference of the MAC because his parents encourage more of a PST approach to swimming and life. Therefore, confusion occurs when significant others do not operate from the same approach as the athlete.

3.   At the hpc, the coaches and psychologists do not work from the same performance development approach. Therefore, assistance provided to athletes from different performance development approaches could possibly cause confusion. Thus, this confusion could have contributed towards S5's difficulty in learning, applying and transferring of the MAC principals.

Conclusion

This chapter explored how S5 experienced the MAC programme with regards to mindfulness, acceptance and commitment with the aim of addressing the three research questions of this study.   To follow is the concluding chapter of this research study. In the following chapter the results and limitations of the study is discussed.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

Introduction

In this chapter a summary of the research findings is presented with the aim of addressing the three research questions of this study. The summary of the findings will be situated within the existing MAC literature. Thereafter, the limitations of this study will be discussed.

10.1   LEARNING

RQ1: What did adolescent swimmers experientially learn through their participation in a swimming-specific MAC programme? In addressing the first research question, the following section will investigate what all five participants learnt from the MAC programme by viewing their learning of mindfulness, acceptance and commitment individually. The findings of the five participants will be interpreted in relation to consistent, inconsistent and uniqueness to current literature.

10.1.1 Mindfulness Learning

There were findings amongst the participants which revealed experiences that were consistent with the MAC literature. The five participants learnt the following about mindfulness which is supported by literature. Firstly, one of the five participants indicated that mindfulness should become a lifestyle approach where one is mindful without effort. The aforesaid is consist with literature (see 2.2.2) which states that the MAC approach is a way of being or lifestyle. Secondly, four of the five participants felt that mindfulness improves their performance, the aforesaid is consistent with literature (see 2.2.3) which states that the MAC approach is a performance development programme aimed at improved performance. Furthermore, four of the five participants realised that their mindfulness needed improvement after participating in the MAC programme. Therefore, the findings of the current study are consistent with the literature review.

117

There were findings amongst the participants which revealed experiences that were inconsistent with the MAC literature. The inconsistent findings indicate that the participants had experiences regarding mindfulness that were different to the findings in literature. The five participants learnt the following about mindfulness. Firstly, three participants were of the opinion that mindfulness need not be a lifestyle but rather a technique applied when necessary. The aforesaid is inconsistent with the findings presented in the literature because the MAC approach is seen as a way-of-being and not a technique applied (see 2.2.2). Secondly, two of the participants believed that mindfulness and mindlessness should be used interchangeably to increase performance, which stands in contrast to the literature because mindlessness is seen to hamper performance (see 2.2.2). Thirdly, two participants felt that mindfulness caused mental fatigue as opposed to awareness and attentiveness. The aforesaid is inconsistent with literature (see 2.2.3.1). Therefore, the findings from the current study do not concur with the findings presented in the literature review.

There were findings amongst the participants which revealed experiences that were unique in comparison to the literature. Unique findings indicate experiences that have not been reported in literature. The learning of mindfulness revealed two unique experiences. Firstly, all five participants reported that they learnt about mindfulness through a process of experiential learning. Learning about mindfulness through a process of experiential learning has not been reported in literature (see Chapter 2). Secondly, one participant learnt that mindfulness could assist a swimmer to increase performance through stroke correction. Furthermore, this concept could be extended and applied for rehabilitation purposes. The idea of using mindfulness for rehabilitation purposes was not evident in the literature (See Chapter 2). Therefore, the aforementioned findings have not been mentioned in previous studies or in the literature review.

10.1.2 Acceptance Learning

There were findings amongst the participants which revealed experiences that were consistent with the MAC literature. The five participants learnt the following about acceptance which is supported by literature. Firstly, three of the participants were of

the opinion that acceptance is an effective method for improved performance. The aforesaid is consistent with literature, as MAC is a performance development programme (see 2.2.3.2). As a result, two participants realised that their acceptance needed improvement. Therefore, the findings of the current study are consistent with the literature review.

There were findings amongst the participants which revealed experiences that were inconsistent with the MAC literature. These findings indicate that the participants had experiences regarding acceptance that were different to the findings in literature. Firstly, two participants believe that avoidance is effective in dealing with discomfort. Literature indicates that avoidance is ineffective (see 2.2.3.2). Secondly, one participant believed that avoidance and acceptance were both necessary and should be used interchangeably. The literature states that acceptance is needed and that avoidance should not be utilised (see 2.2.3.2). Therefore, the findings from the current study do not concur with the findings presented in the literature review.

There were findings amongst the participants which revealed experiences that were unique in comparison to the literature. The learning of acceptance revealed three unique experiences. Firstly, one participant was of the opinion that the utilisation of acceptance was dependent on the individual's level of maturity. This has not been reported in the literature (see Chapter 2). Secondly, four of the participants learnt about acceptance via experiential learning. The literature has not reported on the learning of acceptance in an experiential manner (see Chapter 2). Thirdly, two participants mention how their upbringing influences whether they were encouraged to utilise acceptance or avoidance. Literature does not report on the significant impact of parents, who model acceptant or avoidant behaviour (see Chapter 2). Therefore, the aforementioned findings have not been mentioned in previous studies or in the literature review.

10.1.3 Commitment Learning

There were findings amongst the participants which revealed experiences that were consistent with the MAC literature. The five participants learnt the following about commitment which is supported by literature. Firstly, three of the participants were of

the opinion that commitment assists in improved performance. This is consistent with literature as MAC is a performance development programme (see 2.2.1.3). As a result, two of the participants learnt that their commitment needed improvement. Secondly, three of the participants learnt and understood that motivation and commitment were opposing concepts in MAC. These concepts are also seen as opposites in literature (see 2.2.3.1). Therefore, the findings of the current study are consistent with the literature review.

There were findings amongst the participants which revealed experiences that were inconsistent with the MAC literature. The inconsistent findings indicate that the participants had experiences regarding commitment that were different to the findings in literature. Three of the participants believed that motivation is an important component which is needed for improved performance. Literature states that motivation is not needed or efficient in improving performance (see 2.2.3.3). Therefore, the findings from the current study do not concur with the findings presented in the literature review.

There were findings amongst the participants which revealed experiences that were unique in comparison to the literature. The learning of commitment revealed three unique experiences. Firstly, one participant was of the opinion that motivation and commitment are concepts that collaborate to assist in performance enhancement. Literature has not investigated if the concepts could work collaboratively as opposed to separately (see Chapter 2). Secondly, four of the participants learnt about commitment via experiential learning. The literature has not reported on the learning of commitment in an experiential manner (see Chapter 2). Thirdly, two participants mention how their upbringing influences what values they were taught. Literature does not report on the significant impact of parents, who model value-driven behaviour (see Chapter 2). Therefore, the aforementioned findings have not been mentioned in previous studies or in the literature review.

10.2   APPLICATION

RQ2: How do adolescent swimmers anticipate applying their experiential learning through their participation in a MAC programme to their swimming? In addressing the second research question, the following section will investigate how all five participants applied their learning from the MAC programme to swimming, by viewing their mindfulness application, acceptance application and then commitment application. The findings of the five participants will be interpreted in relation to consistent, inconsistent and uniqueness to current literature.

10.2.1 Mindfulness Application

There were findings amongst the participants which revealed experiences that were consistent with the MAC literature. The five participants learnt the following about mindfulness and applied their learning to swimming. Firstly, four of the participants learnt that the application of mindfulness requires task focused attention in the present moment while swimming. The literature concurs with the participant's experience of mindfulness application (see 2.2.3.1). Secondly, three of the participants agreed that mindfulness application in swimming has improved their swimming. The literature confirms the aforementioned as MAC is a performance development programme (see 2.2.1.3). Therefore, the findings of the current study are consistent with the literature review.

There were findings amongst the participants which revealed experiences that were inconsistent with the MAC literature. The inconsistent findings indicate that the participants had experiences regarding commitment that were different to the findings in the literature. Four of the participants were of the opinion that mindfulness could only be applied to certain tasks within swimming. However, literature indicates that mindfulness is applicable to all tasks and not a select few (see 2.2.3.1). Three of the participants believed that applying mindlessness in swimming was useful and sometimes necessary. The literature indicates that mindlessness hinders performance (see 2.2.3.1). Therefore, the findings from the current study do not concur with the findings presented in the literature review.

There were findings amongst the participants which revealed experiences that were unique in comparison to the literature. One participant believed that being mindful was ineffective during certain tasks, such as distance sets. Literature has not explored the applicability and effectiveness of mindfulness in distance training in swimming (see Chapter 2). Therefore, the aforementioned has not been mentioned in previous studies or in the literature review.

10.2.2 Acceptance Application

There were findings amongst the participants which revealed experiences that were consistent with the MAC literature. The five participants learnt the following about acceptance and applied their learning to swimming. Firstly, two of the participants learnt that the application of acceptance requires the ability to be mindful. This experience reveals a deeper understanding of how the MAC concepts are interrelated (see 2.2.2). Secondly, four of the participants agreed that the application of acceptance in swimming has improved their swimming. The literature confirms this as MAC is a performance development programme (see 2.2.1.3). Thirdly, one participant learnt that acceptance application is not an instantaneous process. Literature indicates that acceptance is a process which assists in long term benefit (see 2.2.3.2). Therefore, the findings of the current study are consistent with the literature review.

There were findings amongst the participants which revealed experiences that were inconsistent with the MAC literature. The inconsistent findings indicate that the participants had experiences regarding acceptance that were different to the findings in the literature. Three of the participants were of the opinion that applying avoidance in swimming was often relied upon. However, literature indicates that avoidance hinders performance (see 2.2.3.2). Therefore, the findings from the current study do not concur with the findings presented in the literature review.

There were findings amongst the participants which revealed experiences that were unique in comparison to the literature. Firstly, one participant believed that their upbringing influenced whether they applied application acceptance or avoidance in swimming. Literature has not investigated how parental influences could dictate how

122

a swimmer approaches swimming (see Chapter 2). Secondly, three participants agreed that applying acceptance is a challenging task. The participants felt ill-equipped to apply mindfulness. Literature has not explored the practical application of acceptance in a swimming context (see Chapter 2). Therefore, the aforementioned has not been mentioned in previous studies or in the literature review.

10.2.3 Commitment Application

There were findings amongst the participants which revealed experiences that were consistent with the MAC literature. The five participants learnt the following about commitment and applied their learning to swimming. Firstly, two participants recognised that committed behaviour is observable. Literature states that value-driven behaviour is action-based which indicates that behaviour is observable (see 2.2.3.3). Secondly, three participants are of the opinion that applying commitment to their swimming would improve their performance. Literature concurs as MAC is a performance development programme (see 2.2.1.3). Therefore, the findings of the current study are consistent with the literature review.

There were findings amongst the participants which revealed experiences that were inconsistent with the MAC literature. The inconsistent findings indicate that the participants had experiences regarding commitment that were different to the findings in the literature. Firstly, two of the participants were of the opinion that applying motivation in swimming was often relied upon. However, literature indicates that motivation hinders performance (see 2.2.3.3). Secondly, one participant believed that commitment had limited applicability in swimming and therefore disagreed with the literature that indicated that commitment is a lifestyle approach (see 2.2.2.2). Therefore, the findings from the current study do not concur with the findings presented in the literature review.

There were findings amongst the participants which revealed experiences that were unique in comparison to the literature. One participant indicated that commitment to recovery tasks such as stretching of muscles was important to enhance performance. Literature does not mention how commitment to recovery tasks could assist in

improved performance (see Chapter 2). Therefore, the aforementioned has not been mentioned in previous studies or in the literature review.

10.3   TRANSFERENCE

RQ 3: How do adolescent swimmers anticipate transferring their experiential learning through their participation in a MAC programme to their lives? In addressing the third research question, the following section will investigate how all five participants transferred their learning from the MAC programme to their lives. The findings will be viewed by exploring the participant's transference of mindfulness, acceptance and then commitment. The findings of the five participants will be interpreted in relation to consistent, inconsistent and uniqueness to current literature.

10.3.1   Mindfulness Transference

There were findings amongst the participants which revealed experiences that were consistent with the MAC literature. The five participants learnt the following about mindfulness and transferred their learning to their lives. Firstly, four participants are of the opinion that transferring mindfulness to their lives would improve their performance. Literature concurs as MAC is a performance development programme (see 2.2.1.3). Secondly, three participants believe that their mindfulness is distracted by internal and external influences which hinder their transference of mindfulness. Literature indicates that internal and external distractions are related to mindlessness (see 2.2.3.1). Therefore, the findings of the current study are consistent with the literature review.

There were findings amongst the participants which revealed experiences that were inconsistent with the MAC literature. The inconsistent findings indicate that the participants had experiences regarding mindfulness that were different to the findings in the literature. Three of the participants were of the opinion that they would transfer mindfulness only for important tasks. Therefore, mindfulness was not seen as a lifestyle approach as literature indicated (see 2.2.3.1). Therefore, the findings from the current study do not concur with the findings presented in the literature review.

124

There were findings amongst the participants which revealed experiences that were unique in comparison to the literature. Firstly, one participant believes that being mindless is necessary to prevent exhaustion. This participant indicates that mindfulness may be ineffective because it may create exhaustion and therefore hinder performance. Secondly, one participant indicated that mindfulness may reduce performance if an athlete is task focused on a negative situation, such as an injury. Literature has not investigated if mindfulness could hinder or reduce athletic performance (see Chapter 2). Therefore, the aforementioned has not been mentioned in previous studies or in the literature review.

10.3.2 Acceptance Transference

There were findings amongst the participants which revealed experiences that were consistent with the MAC literature. The five participants learnt the following about acceptance and transferred their learning to their lives. Firstly, one participant is of the opinion that transferring acceptance to their life would improve their performance. Literature concurs as MAC is a performance development programme (see 2.2.1.3). Secondly, two participants believe that their transference of acceptance equips them to deal with their discomfort more effectively, therefore, helping them to cope in difficult situations. Literature indicates that acceptance is an effective method to deal with discomfort (see 2.2.3.2). Therefore, the findings of the current study are consistent with the literature review.

There were findings amongst the participants which revealed experiences that were inconsistent with the MAC literature. The inconsistent findings indicate that the participants had experiences regarding acceptance that were different to the findings in the literature. Three of the participants believed that transferring acceptance was not effective because the utilisation of acceptance is only applicable to certain situations. Therefore, the participants did not recognise that acceptance is a lifestyle approach as the literature portrays (see 2.2.3.2). Therefore, the findings from the current study do not concur with the findings presented in the literature review.

There were findings amongst the participants which revealed experiences that were unique in comparison to the literature. Unique findings indicate experiences that have

not been reported in literature. Two participants agreed that their upbringing dictated whether they would transfer acceptance to their lives. These participants utilise avoidance in life because of their upbringing. Literature has not reported findings on parental modeling of avoidance which may hinder the transference of acceptance (see Chapter 2). Therefore, the aforementioned has not been mentioned in previous studies or in the literature review.

10.3.3   Commitment Transference

There were findings amongst the participants which revealed experiences that were consistent with the MAC literature. The five participants learnt the following about commitment and transferred their learning to their lives. Firstly, two participants are of the opinion that transferring commitment to their lives would improve their performance. Literature concurs as MAC is a performance development programme (see 2.2.1.3). Secondly, three participants believe that their transference of commitment is hindered because commitment requires consistent behaviour based on conscious actions. Literature confirms the aforesaid, stating that commitment is the ability to consistently act in accordance to values (see 2.2.3.3). Therefore, the findings of the current study are consistent with the literature review.

There were findings amongst the participants which revealed experiences that were unique in comparison to the literature. Unique findings indicate experiences that have not been reported in literature. Firstly, one participant was of the opinion that being able to transfer commitment to their life was dependent on having a clear understanding of who they are and what they want to achieve. Literature has not investigated how commitment transference may be hindered due to role confusion or difficulties in forming an identity indicative of adolescent developmental phases (see Chapter 2). Secondly, one participant indicated that commitment may hinder performance if one is committed to a value which is negative. Literature has not mentioned how commitment to certain values may either hinder or assist in performance enhancement (see Chapter 2). The aforementioned has not been mentioned in previous studies or in the literature review.

10.4 LIMITATIONS

10.4.1 Sample

A limitation of this study was that only Caucasian participants were represented in the sample. The inclusion of different racial participants could have resulted in different experiences from the MAC programme in terms of what they learnt, their application and their transference. The sample also consisted of participants aged of different ages between 12 years and 18 years. The sample could have refined the age group and as a result, a comparison in experiences amongst similar-aged swimmers could have been highlighted different findings which could assist in developing age appropriate, swimming-specific MAC programmes.

10.4.2 MAC Programme Facilitation

A limitation of the study was that the facilitation of the MAC programme was only administered over a short period of time, one Saturday morning. The programme could have been administered over a longer time-frame, such as once a week for four consecutive weeks. As a result, this may have influenced the participant's ability to understand the MAC principles more comprehensively which may have enabled them to apply and transfer their learning more effectively.

Conclusion

This research project was aimed at unfolding the experiences of the adolescent swimmers who participated in a swimming-specific MAC programme. A summary of the findings was presented with the purpose of addressing the three research questions of this study. Furthermore, the limitations of this study were described.

Alfred, S. (2010). *Major benefits of goal setting in sport*. California, CA: Wadsworth.

Anderson, A. (2013). Learning strategies in physical education: Self-talk, imagery, and goal-setting. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 68,* 30-35.

Arnkoff, D.B., De Petrillo, L.A., Glass, C.R., & Kaufman, K.A. (2009). Mindfulness for long distance runners: An open trial using mindful sport performance enhancement (MSPE). *Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology*, *4*, 357–376.

Arnkoff, D.B., Glass, C.R., & Kaufman, K.A. (2009). Evaluation of Mindful Sport Performance Enhancement (MSPE): A new approach to promote flow in athletes. *Journal of Clinical Sports Psychology*, *4,* 334-356.

Atchley, A. (2011). An examination of the effects of mindfulness and task-relevant attentional focus on running performance. *Masters Theses & Specialist Projects,* 1069.

Babbie, E. (2005). *The basics of social research.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Babkes, M. Dr. (2009). *Goal setting worksheets: Sport and exercise science.* New York, NY: Greeley.

Belna, S. (2008). Mindfulness and sport participation in college students (Senior honours thesis, Ohio State University). Retrieved from https://kb.osu.edu.

Bernier, M., Thienot, E., Codron, R., & Fournier, J. F. (2009). Mindfulness and acceptance approaches in sport performance. *Journal of Clinical Sports Psychology, 4*, 320-333.

Birrer, D., & Morgan, G. (2010). Psychological skills training as a way to enhance an athlete's performance in high-intensity sports. *Journal of Medicine and Science in Sport*, *20*, 78-87.

Bizley, K. (1994). *Examining physical education*. Oxford, England: Heinemann Educational Publishers.

Blackledge, T. (2007). Disrupting verbal processes: Cognitive defusion in acceptance and commitment therapy and other mindfulness-based psychotherapies. *The Psychological Record*, *57*, 555-576.

Blumenstein, B., Lidor, R., & Tenenbaum, G. (2007). *Psychology of sport training*. Oxford, England: Meyer and Meyer Sport Publications.

Brown, K., & Ryan, R. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *84*, 822-848.

Brown, K., & Ryan, R. (2004). Perils and promise in defining and measuring mindfulness: Observations from experience. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, *11*, 242-248.

Burton, D. & Raedeke, T. (2008). *Sport psychology for coaches*. Illinios, IL: Sheridan Books.

Cashmore, E. (2008). *Sport and exercise psychology: The key concepts*. New York, NY:Routledge.

Cassell, C., & Symon, G. (2004). *Essential guide to qualitative methods in organisational research.* London, England: Sage.

Chew-Graham, C., May, C., & Perry, M. (2002). Qualitative research and the problem of judgement: Lessons from interviewing fellow professionals. *Family Practice*, *19,* 3.

Clark, A. (2005). *Psychology of moods*. New York, NY: Nova Science Publishers.

Crust, L., & Nesti, M. (2006). A review of psychological momentum in sports: Why qualitative research is needed. *Journal of Sport Psychology, 8,* 1-15*.*

Culver, D., Trudel, P., & Gilbert, W. (2003). A decade of qualitative research in sport. Psychology Journals*. Journal of Sport Psychology, 17,* 1-5.

Davis, B. (2000). *Physical education and the study of sport*. London, England: Harcourt Publishers Ltd.

De Petrillo, L. A., Kaufman, K. A., Glass, C. R., & Arnkoff, D. B. (2009). Mindfulness for long-distance runners: An open trial using Mindful Sport Performance Enhancement (MSPE). *Journal of Clinical Sports Psychology, 4,* 357-376.

Dismukes, R., & Smith, G. (2000). *Facilitation and debriefing in aviation training and operations.* Aldershot, England: Ashgate.

Dosil, J. (2006). *The sport psychologist's handbook: A guide for sport-specific performance enhancement.* London, England: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Dowling, M. (2007). From Husserl to van Manen: A review of different phenomenological approaches. *Journal of Nursing Studies*, *44*, 131-142.

Dukes, S. (1984). Phenomenological methodology in the human sciences. *Journal of Religion and Health*, *3*, 197-203.

Dweck, C. (2006). Mindset: The New psychology of success. London, Robinson: SAGE.

Eckstein, S. (2003). *Manual for research ethics committees.* Cambridge, England: Press Syndicate.

Elliot, R., Fischer, C., & Rennie, D. (1999). Evolving guidelines for publication of qualitative research studies in psychology and related fields. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, *38*, 215-229.

Fick, S. (2004). *All about South Africa.* Cape Town, South Africa: Struik Publishers.

Finlay, L. (2009). Debating phenomenological research methods. *Phenomenology & Practice, 3*, 6-25.

Freigang, D. W. (2002). *The effect of psychological skills training on self-efficacy in varsity swimmers (Doctoral dissertation).* Retrieved from Proquest (Order No 305483721).

Galligan, F. (2000). *Advanced PE for Edexcel.* London, England: Heinemann Educational Publishers.

Gallagher, M. (1999). *Psychological skills training programs of successful Division I women's swim programs (Doctoral dissertation).* Retrieved from Proquest (Order No LD2489.Z9 1999 .G355).

Gardner, F., & Gooding, A. (2009). An investigation of the relationship between mindfulness, preshot routine and basketball free throw percentage. *Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology, 4*, 303-319.

Gardner, F. L., & Moore, Z. E. (2004). A mindfulness-acceptance-commitment-based approach to athletic performance enhancement: Theoretical considerations. *Journal of Behavior Therapy, 35*, 707-723.

Gardner, F. L., & Moore, Z. E. (2005). Using a case formulation approach in sport psychology consulting. *Journal of Sport Psychology*, *19*, 430-445.

Gardner, F. L., & Moore, Z. E. (2006). *Clinical sport psychology*. Champaign, IL: Edward Brothers.

Gardner, F. L., & Moore, Z. E. (2007). *The psychology of enhancing human performance: The Mindfulness-Acceptance-Commitment (MAC) approach*. New York, NY: Springer Publishing.

Gardner, F. L, & Moore, Z. E. (2012). Mindfulness and acceptance models within sport psychology: A decade of basic and applied scientific advancements. *Journal of Sport Psychology, 4*, 309-318.

Giorgi, A. (1992). Description versus interpretation: Competing alternative strategies for qualitative research. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology, 23*, 119-135. Retrieved from http://0-web.ebscohost.com.innopac.up.ac.za.

Giorgi, A. (1994). A phenomenological perspective on certain qualitative research methods. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology, 25*, 190-220. Retrieved from http://0-web.ebscohost.com.innopac.up.ac.za.

Giorgi, A. (1997). The theory, practice and evaluation of the phenomenological method as a qualitative research. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology, 28*, 1-17.

Giorgi, A. (2005). The phenomenological movement and research in the human sciences. *Nursing Science Quarterly, 18, 75-82.doi:* 10.1177/08943184042 72112.

Giorgi, A. (2010). Phenomenology and the practice of science. *Existential Analysis, 21*, 3-22. Retrieved from http://0-web.ebscohost.com.innopac.up.ac.za.

Giorgi, A., & Giorgi, B. (2008). Phenomenology. In J. A. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods* (2nd ed.) (pp. 26-52). London, England: Sage.

Gooding, A., & Gardner, F. L. (2009). An investigation of the relationship between mindfulness, preshot routine, and basketball free throw percentage. *Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology, 4,* 303-319.

Gould, D., & Udry, E. (1993). Psychological skills for enhancing performance: Arousal regulation strategies. *Journal of the American College for Sports Medicine, 4*, 478-485.

Gucciardi, D., Gordon, S., & Dimmock, J. (2009). Evaluation of a mental toughness training program for youth-aged Australian footballers: A quantitative analysis. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, *21*, 307-323.

Hale, B. (1998). *Imagery training.* London, England: The National Coach Foundation.

Hanton, S., Mellalieu, S. D., & Hall, R. (2004). Self-confidence and anxiety interpretation: A qualitative investigation. *Journal of Sport and Exercise, 5*, 477-495.

Hardy, J., Hall, C. R., & Hardy, L. (2004). Quantifying athlete self-talk. *Journal of Sports Sciences,23*, 905-917.

Hardy, J., Gammage, K., & Hall, C. (2001). A descriptive study of athlete self-talk. *Journal of Sport Psychology, 15*, 306-318.

Harris, R. (2006). Embracing your demons: An overview of acceptance and commitment therapy. *Journal of Psychotherapy, 12*, 4-11.

Harris, R. (2009). *ACT made simple: An easy-to-read primer on acceptance and commitment therapy.* Oakland, CA: New Harbinger.

Hasker, S. M. (2010). *Evaluation of the mindfulness-acceptance-commitment approach for enhancing athletic performance* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from Psychinfo. (Order No. AAI3413164).

Hatzigeorgiadis, A., Zourbanos, N., Mpoumpaki, S., & Theodorakis, Y. (2009). Mechanisms underlying the self-talk–performance relationship: The effects of motivational self-talk on self-confidence and anxiety. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 10*, 186-192.

Hays, S., & Strosahl, K. (2004). *A practical guide to acceptance and commitment therapy.* Washington, WA: Springer Publications.

Hayslip, B., Petrie, T., MacIntire, M., & Jones, G. (2010). The influences of skill level, anxiety, and psychological skills use on amateur golfers' performances. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, *22*, 123-133.

Hogg, J. M. (1997). *Mental skills for young athletes: A mental skills workbook for athletes 12 and under*. Alberta, Canada: Sport Excel Publishing.

Hooker, K., & Fodor, I. (2008). Teaching mindfulness to children. *Journal of Gestalt*, *12*, 75-91.

Horn, T. (2008). *Advances in sport psychology*. Illinois, IL: Edwards Brothers.

Human, L. (2008). Unique outcomes in professional psychology training through an adventure experience. *Acta Academica*, *40*, 186-209.

Jones, M. (2003). Controlling emotions in sport. *The Sport Psychologist, 17*, 471-486.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (2003). Mindfulness-based interventions in context: Past, present, and future. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 10,* 144-156.

Kamphoff, C., Hamson-Utley, J., Antoine, B., Knutson R., Thomae, R., & Hoenig, C. (2010). Athletic training students' perceptions of and academic preparation in the use of psychological skills in sport injury rehabilitation. *Athletic Training Education Journal,* 5, 109-116.

Kaufman, K. A., Glass, C. R., & Arnkoff, D. B. (2009). Evaluation of Mindful Sport Performance Enhancement (MSPE): A new approach to promote flow in athletes. *Journal of Clinical Sports Psychology, 4,* 334-356.

Kee, Y., & Wang, C. (2008). Relationships between mindfulness, flow dispositions and mental skills adoption: A cluster analytic approach. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, *9*, 393-411.

Kirschenbaum, D. S., & Bale, R. (1984). *Cognitive-behavioural skills in sports: Application to golf and speculations about soccer.* New York, NY: Sport Science Associates.

Kolb, D. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development.* New Jersey, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Kothari, C. (2004). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques*. Delhi, India: New Age International Printers.

Kvale, S. (1983). The qualitative research interview: A phenomenological and hermeneutical mode of understanding. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, *14*, 117-124.

Law, H. C., Ireland, S. & Hussain, Z. (2007). *Psychology of coaching, mentoring & learning.* Chichester, England: John Wiley & Sons.

Lawler, J. (1998). Phenomenologies as research methodologies for nursing: From philosophy to researching practice. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, *5,* 104-111.

Lee, M., Whitehead, J., Ntoumanis, N., & Hatzigeorgiadis, A. (2008). Relationships among values, achievement, orientations, and attitudes in youth sport. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, *30*, 588-610.

Levine, R.J. (1988). *Ethics and regulations of clinical research*. New Haven, IN: Yale University Press.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2000). *Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions and emerging confluences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lohn, J. (2010). *Historical dictionary of competitive swimming.* Plymouth, England: Scarecrow Press.

Lopez, K. (2004). Descriptive versus interpretative phenomenology. *Journal of Qualitative Health Research*, *5*, 726-735.

Mackey, S. (2005). Phenomenological nursing research: Methodological insights derived from Hiedegger's interpretative phenomenology. *Journal of Nursing Studies*, *42*, 179-186.

Maslan, A. (2009). *Blast off! The surefire success plan to launch your dreams into reality*. California, CA: Morgan James Publishing.

McArdle, W. (2000). *Essentials of Exercise Physiology.* Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins Publishers.

McCarthy, P., Jones, M., Harwood, C., & Olivier, S. (2010). What do young athletes implicitly understand about psychological skills? *Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology*, 4, 158-172.

Merriam, S. (2002). *Introduction to qualitative research*. San Francisco, CA: Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Mertens, D., & Wilson, A. (2012). *Program evaluation theory and practice: A comprehensive guide*. New York, NY: Guilford Publications.

Moore, Z. (2009). Theoretical and empirical developments of the Mindfulness-Acceptance-Commitment (MAC) approach to performance enhancement. *Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology*, *4*, 291-302.

Moran, A. (2004). *Sport and exercise psychology: A critical introduction*. New York, NY: Routledge publishers.

Morgan, D. (2007). Paradigms lost and pragmatism regained: Methodological implications of combining qualitative and quantitative methods. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 1*, 48-76.

Munroe-Chandler, K. (2005). A discussion on qualitative research in physical activity. *Journal of Sport Psychology, 7*, 67-81.

O'Donohue, W., & Ferguson, K. (2003). *Professional ethics for psychologists.* California, CA: Sage.

Orb, A., Eisenhauer, L., & Wynaden D. (2000). Ethics in qualitative research. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship, 33,* 93-96.

Page, S. J., Sime, W., & Nordell, K. (1999). The effects of imagery on female college swimmer's perceptions of anxiety. *Journal of Sport Psychology, 13,* 458-469.

Parker, C. A. (1997). *Applied sport psychology consultation and research: Psychological skills training with collegiate swimmers (Doctoral dissertation).* Retrieved from Proquest (Order No (619251540).

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Ponterotto, J. (2005). Qualitative research in counselling psychology: A primer on research paradigms and philosophy of science. *Journal of Counselling Psychology, 52*, 126-136.

Post, P., Muncie, S., & Simpson, D. (2011). The effects of imagery training on swimming performance: An applied investigation. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 24,* 323-337.

Powell, T. (2000). *The mental health handbook*. London, England: Speechmark Publishing Ltd.

Romand, P., & Pantaleon, N. (2007). A qualitative study of rugby coaches' opinions about the display of moral character. *Journal of Sport Psychology*, *21*, 58-77.

Schwanhausser, L. (2009). Application of the Mindfulness-Acceptance-Commitment (MAC) protocol with an adolescent springboard diver. *Journal of Clinical Sports Psychology, 4*, 377-395.

Schwanhausser, L., & Wolanin, A.T. (2010). Psychological functioning as a moderator of the MAC approach to performance enhancement. *Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology, 4*, 312–322.

Sheard, M. & Golby, J. (2006). Effect of a psychological skills training program on swimming performance and positive psychological development. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 4*, 149-169.

Siegel, R., Germer, C., & Olendzki, A. (2005). *Mindfulness: What is it? Where did it come from?* New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Smart, J., & Paulsen, M. (2011). *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research*. New York, NY: Springer.

Smith, J. A. (2010). Evaluating the contribution of interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Health Psychology Review, 5*, 9-27.

Smith, J. A., & Eatough, V. (2006). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Journal of Research Methods*, *3*, 110-127.

Smith, J. A., & Osborn, M. (2003). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Qualitative psychology*. London, England: Sage.

Smith, J. A., & Osborn, M. (2007). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Qualitative psychology*. London, England: Sage.

Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research.* London, England: Sage.

Smith, L., & Kays, T. (2010). *Sport psychology for dummies.* London, England: Wiley Publishers.

South African Institute of Race Relations. (2013). *Fast Facts.* Gauteng: South Africa: Research and Policy Organisation.

Sturmey, P. (2007). *Formulation and intervention: A functional analytic approach*. New Jersey, NJ: Wiley & Sons Inc.

Thelwell, R., Weston, N., Greenlees, I., & Hutchings, N. (2008). Stressors in elite sport: A coach perspective. *Journal of Sports Sciences,* 26, 905-918.

Thomas, J., & Hersen, M. (2011). *Understanding research in clinical and counselling psychology.* New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.

Thompson, R. W., Kaufman, K. A., De Petrillo, L. A., Glass, C. R., & Arnkoff, D. B., (2011). One year follow-up of Mindful Sport Performance Enhancement (MSPE) with archers, golfers, and runners. *Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology, 5,* 99-116.

Troup, J. P., & Daniels, J. T. (1986). Swimming economy: An introductory review. *Journal of Swimming Research, 2,* 5-9.

University of Pretoria (2010). *Academic programs: TuksSport High School.* Retrieved from http://web.up.ac.za.

University of Pretoria (2012). *Academic programs: TuksSport High School*. Retrieved from http://web.up.ac.za.

Wang, L., Huddleston, S., & Peng, L. (2003). Psychological skill use by Chinese swimmers. *Journal of International Sports, 7,* 48-55.

Weiss, O., Keren, H., Mort. J., & Eilam, D. (2012). The difference between sport rituals, OCD rituals, and daily routines: The possible adaptive value of seemingly unnecessary acts. *Journal of Measuring Behaviour, 5*, 419-425.

White, K. D., Ashton, R., & Lewis, S. (1979). Learning a complex skill: Effects of mental practice, physical practice, and imagery ability. *International Journal of Sport Psychology, 10*, 2, 71-78.

Williams, J. (2010). *Applied sport psychology: Personal growth to peak performance*. California, CA: McGraw-Hill Publishers.

Willig, C. (2001). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology: Adventures in theory and method*. Buckingham, PI: Open University Press.

Wojnar, D., & Swanson, K. (2009). Phenomenology: An exploration. *Journal of Holistic Nursing, 25*, 3, 172-180.

Wolanin, A. T. (2004). Mindfulness-Acceptance-Commitment (MAC) based performance enhancement for division I collegiate athletes: A preliminary investigation. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from Psychinfo. (Order No. AAI3413164).

Wolanin, A. T., & Schwanhausser, L. A. (2010). Psychological functioning as a moderator of the MAC approach to performance enhancement. *Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology, 4*, 312-322.

141

Yang, Y. (2011). Research on three dimensional methods to psychological skills training of badminton players in college. *Journal of Advanced Material Research*, 267, 837-842.

APPENDIX A
MAC PROGRAMME

Unlock Your Best Performances

WELCOME TO THE
MAC PROGRAMME

**A Mindfulness Acceptance Commitment (MAC)
Sports Psychology Programme For Swimmers**

Presented by Lauren Leon,
Dept of Psychology,
University of Pretoria, 2013

CONTENTS

Module 1

The Multilevel Classification System
for Sport Psychology (MCS-SP)
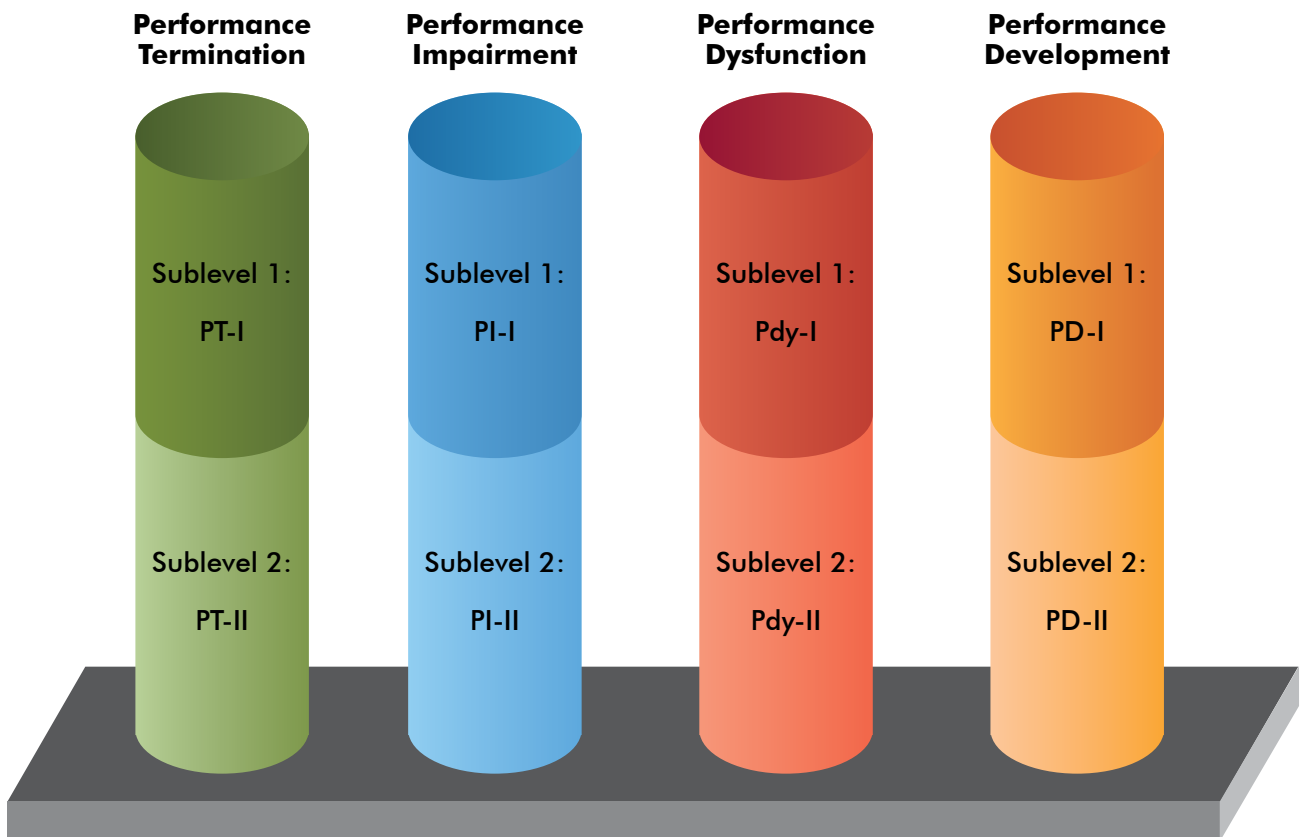

Finding My Place

1
LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this module you will be able to

1.1   Describe the Multi-level Classification System for Sport Psychology (MCS-SP).
1.2   Identify the different sublevels within the MCS-SP.
1.3   Reflect on your understanding within the various sublevels.

2
CONCEPTS

Multilevel Classification System for Sport Psychology (MCS-SP)

Performance Termination	Performance Impairment	Performance Dysfunction	Performance Development
Sublevel 1: PT-I	Sublevel 1: PI-I	Sublevel 1: Pdy-I	Sublevel 1: PD-I
Sublevel 2: PT-II	Sublevel 2: PI-II	Sublevel 2: Pdy-II	Sublevel 2: PD-II

What is the Multilevel Classification System for Sport Psychology (MCS-SP)?

The MCS-SP is a system used by psychologists to classify athletes into different categories and sublevels according to the athletes' different needs.

Knowing which group an athlete fits into helps a psychologist to determine what the best assistance will be for the athlete.

PT Category - PERFORMANCE TERMINATION

Athletes who have come to the end of their athletic career either voluntarily or involuntarily.

SUBLEVEL 1: PT-I

Athletes who voluntarily choose to end their athletic career for various reasons like age, physical skills or free choice.

SUBLEVEL 2: PT-II

Athletes who end their athletic career involuntarily or unexpectedly for various injury and non-injury related reasons.

Q: Imagine your swimming career coming to an end. How do you think this experience would differ if it were voluntary compared to if it were involuntary?

An example of an athlete whose career ended unexpectedly:
Brown, Detroit Lions

Former NFL linebacker Reggie Brown played just 32 games in the league before his career ended abruptly after suffering a spinal cord contusion in a game against the Jets.

After the hit, Brown was in an out of consciousness and lay motionless on the turf at the arena for 17 minutes before medics were able to perform life-saving CPR and get him off the field.

PI Category - PERFORMANCE IMPAIRMENT

Athletes who experience clinical issues that either reduce athletic performance or leave athletes unable to perform.

SUBLEVEL 1: PI-I

Athletes with clinical issues, like anxiety, eating disorders or stress, which reduce performance or leave athletes unable to perform.

SUBLEVEL 2: PI-II

Athletes with clinical behavioural issues like anger, drug and alcohol abuse, which usually result in an external decision to prevent performance (e.g. jail time, suspension).

Q: Can you think of an example of an athlete who would fit into this category?

Watch Eating Disorder Video

Pdy Category - PERFORMANCE DYSFUNCTION

Athletes who are not performing at their usual high level often because of internal or external barriers.

SUBLEVEL 1: Pdy-I

Athletes who experience external (outside) barriers, i.e. something from the environment that affects performance like going through a divorce.

SUBLEVEL 2: Pdy-II

Athletes who experience internal (inside) barriers, i.e. something inside the athlete that affects performance like fear of failure.

Q: Can you think of internal and external barriers that an athlete in swimming could experience?

Watch video that displays an athlete struggling with both internal and external barriers.

PD Category - PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT

Athletes who are well functioning and require some mental assistance to either improve or maintain their level of performance.

SUBLEVEL 1: PD-I

Athletes require sport psychology to further benefit and improve their performance.

SUBLEVEL 2: PD-II

Athletes on this level are already performing at a high or professional level and need assistance to maintain this.

Q: You belong in the Performance Development Category. Can you think of why sport psychology could assist swimmers like you in this category?

REFERENCES

Gardner, F. L., & Moore, Z. E. (2004). A mindfulness-acceptance-commitment-based approach to athletic performance enhancement: Theoretical considerations. Journal of Behavior Therapy, 35, 707-723.

Gardner, F. L., & Moore, Z. E. (2005). Using a case formulation approach in sport psychology consulting. Journal of Sport Psychology, 19, 430-445.

Gardner, F. L., & Moore, Z. E. (2006). Clinical sport psychology. Champaign, IL: Edward Brothers.

Gardner, F. L., & Moore, Z. E. (2007). The psychology of enhancing human performance: The mindfulness-acceptance-commitment (MAC) approach. New York, NY: Springer Publishing.

Module 2
Mindfulness

Being in the Here-and-Now

1
LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this module you will be able to

1.1   Understand the concept of **mindfulness.**
1.2   Practice **mindfulness** through **activities.**
1.3   Reflect on your learning regarding **mindfulness**.
1.4   Reflect on your application of **mindfulness** to swimming.
1.5   Reflect on your application of **mindfulness** to life.

2

CONCEPTS

2.1 MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness "Is (1) the ability to be fully present in the moment (the here-and-now) and (2) to be aware of internal and external surroundings, while (3) being fully engaged in the task at hand, therefore (4) mind and body are in the same place."

Q: Can you describe one **mindfulness** experience from your swimming?
Q: Can you describe one **mindfulness** experience from your life?

2.2 MINDLESSNESS
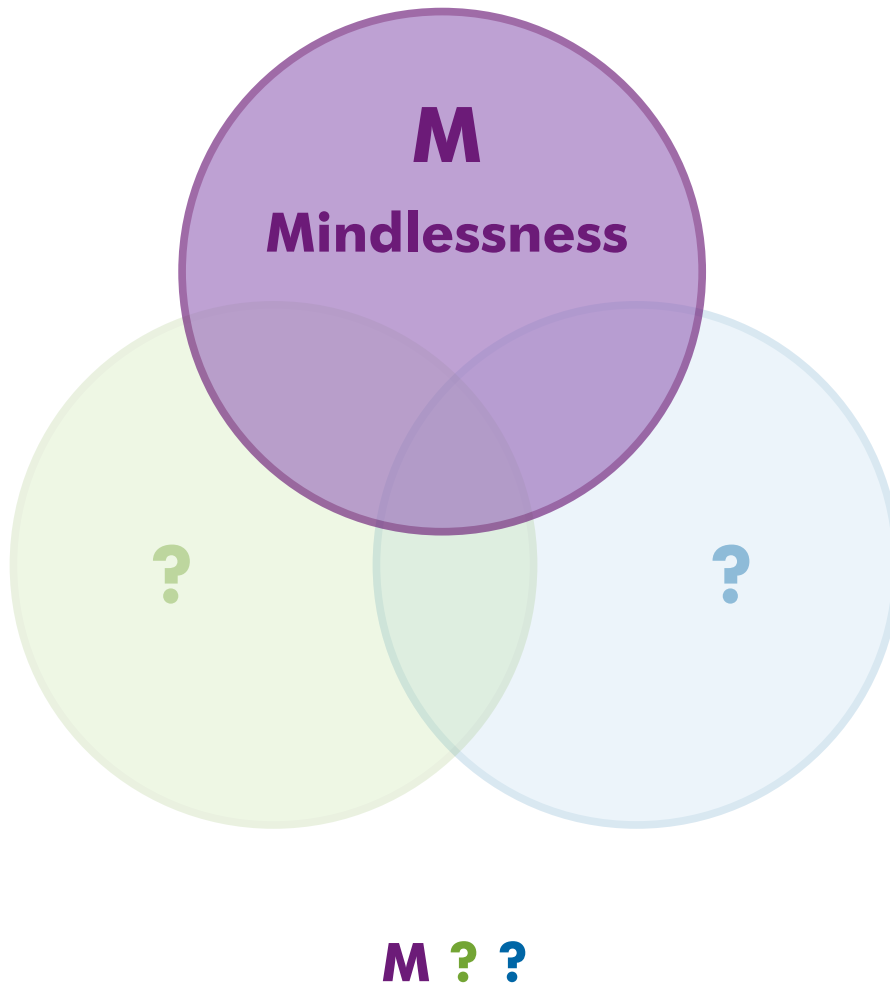
M ? ?

Mindlessness "Is (1) when mind and body are in different places, with (2) the mind either thinking of the past or the future, and therefore (3) not able to be in the present moment (the here-and-now) and (4) not fully engaged in the task at hand."

Q: Can you describe one mindlessness experience from your swimming?
Q: Can you describe one mindlessness experience from your life?

3
ACTIVITIES

3.1 MINDFULNESS ACTIVITY (Balloon Activity)

Instructions
1. Swimmers are to form in a circle holding hands.
2. The task of this activity is to keep as many balloons off of the ground as possible while maintaining the circle.
3. The swimmers can use any parts of their bodies to perform the task.
4. If a balloon touches the ground or if the circle is broken the game restarts.
5. One balloon is added to the circle and once swimmers are comfortable a second balloon is added and so forth.

Equipment
1. About 10 blown-up balloons (no helium).
2. A minimum of 4 participants is needed.

Q: What did you learn about your **mindfulness** from this activity?
Q: How can you use what you have learnt about your **mindfulness** while watching the video to follow?

3.2 WATCH MINDFULNESS VIDEO OF SWIMMER

Q: Explain why you think the swimmer in the video is mindful?
Q: What did you learn about your **mindfulness** from this activity?

4
REFLECTION

In this module mindfulness is described as "(1) the ability to be fully present in the moment (the here-and-now) and (2) to be aware of internal and external surroundings, while (3) being fully engaged in the task at hand, therefore (4) mind and body are in the same place."

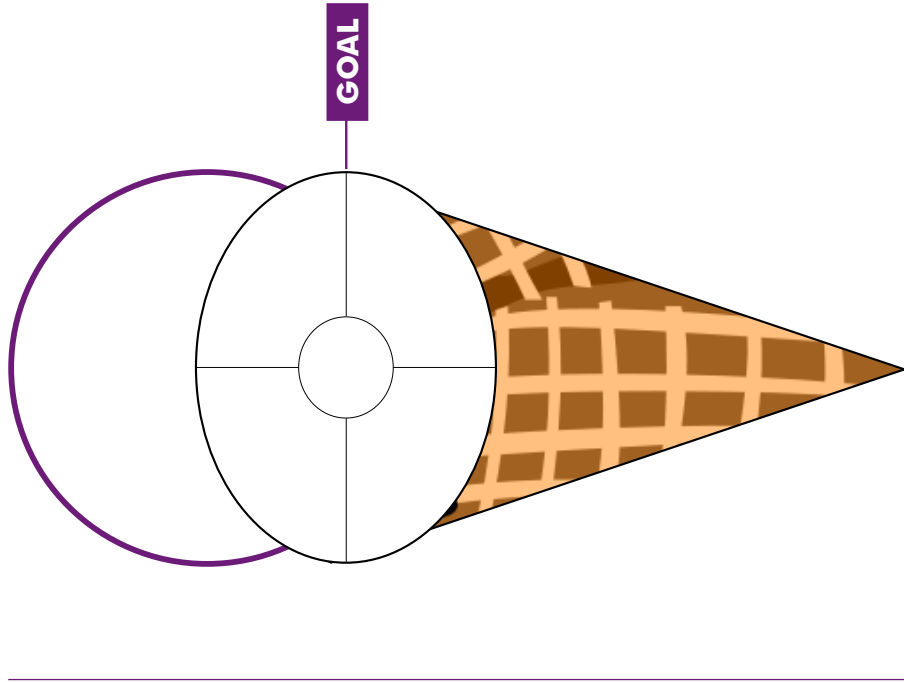| **4.1 LEARNING REFLECTION** |
| --- |
| Q: Based on this description of **mindfulness** what did you learn about your own **mindfulness** through your participation in the "Mindfulness Activities"? |

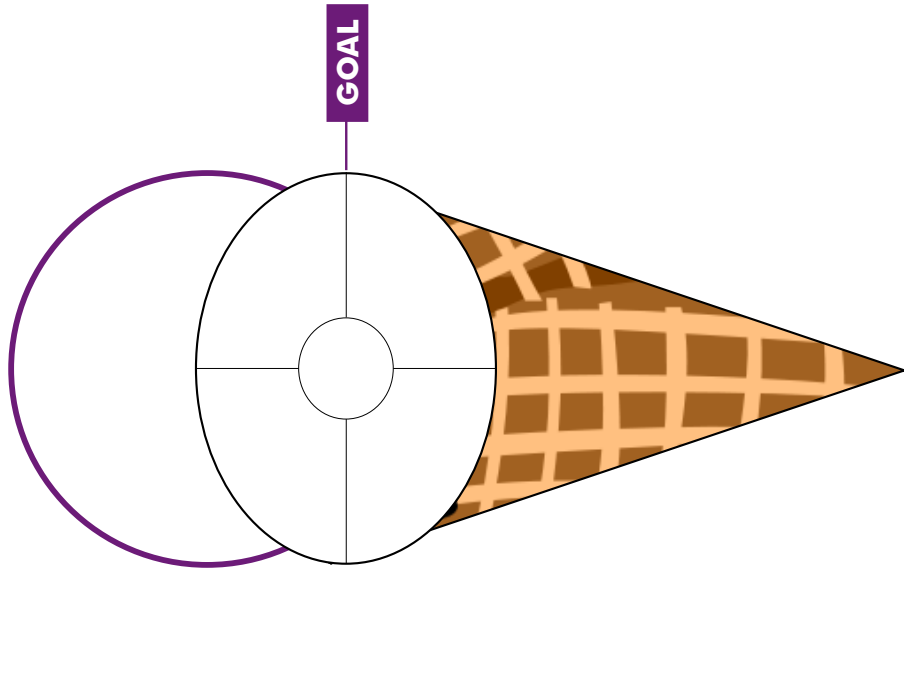| **4.2 APPLICATION REFLECTION** (Swimming) |
| --- |
| Q: Based on what you learnt about your mindfulness, how do you anticipate applying **mindfulness** to your swimming? |

4.3 APPLICATION REFLECTION (Life)
Q: Based on what you learnt about your **mindfulness,** how do you anticipate applying **mindfulness** to your life?

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

4
REFLECTION

In this module mindfulness is described as "(1) the ability to be fully present in the moment (the here-and-now) and (2) to be aware of internal and external surroundings, while (3) being fully engaged in the task at hand, therefore (4) mind and body are in the same place."

4.1 LEARNING REFLECTION

Q: Based on this description of **mindfulness** what did you learn about your own **mindfulness** through your participation in the "Mindfulness Activities"?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4.2 APPLICATION REFLECTION (Swimming)

Q: Based on what you learnt about your **mindfulness**, how do you anticipate applying **mindfulness** to your swimming?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4.3 APPLICATION REFLECTION (Life)

Q: Based on what you learnt about your **mindfulness**, how do you anticipate applying **mindfulness** to your life?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

GOAL

Mindlessness

5
SUMMARY

GOAL

Mindfulness

© University of Pretoria

REFERENCES

Brown, K., & Ryan, R. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84, 822-848.

Brown, K., & Ryan, R. (2004). Perils and promise in defining and measuring mindfulness: Observations from experience. Journal of Clinical Psychology, 11, 242-248.

Gardner, F. L., & Moore, Z. E. (2004). A mindfulness-acceptance-commitment-based approach to athletic performance enhancement: Theoretical considerations. Journal of Behavior Therapy, 35, 707-723.

Gardner, F. L., & Moore, Z. E. (2005). Using a case formulation approach in sport psychology consulting. Journal of Sport Psychology, 19, 430-445.

Gardner, F. L., & Moore, Z. E. (2006). Clinical sport psychology. Champaign, IL: Edward Brothers.Gardner, F. L., & Moore, Z. E. (2007). The psychology of enhancing human performance: The mindfulness-acceptance-commitment (MAC) approach. New York, NY: Springer Publishing.

Hooker, K., & Fodor, I. (2008). Teaching mindfulness to children. Journal of Gestalt, 12, 75-91.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (2003). Mindfulness-based interventions in context: Past, present, and future. Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 10, 144-156.

Siegel, R.; Germer, C., & Olendzki, A. (2005). Mindfulness: what is it? Where did it come from? New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Module 3

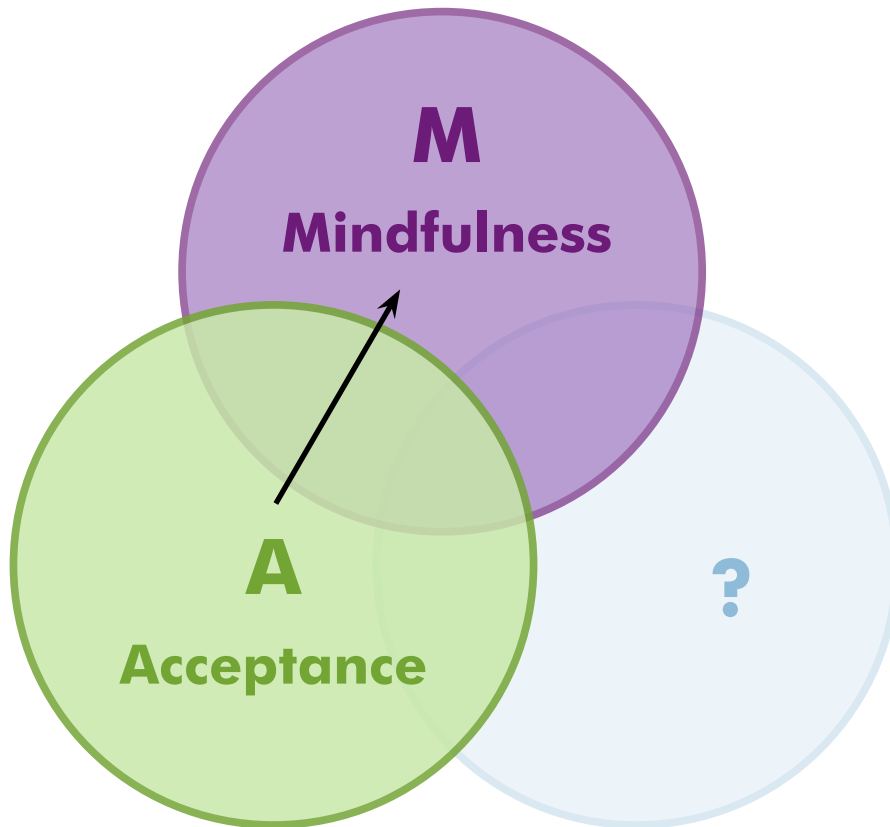# Acceptance

Facing up to it all

1
LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this module you will

1.1   Understand the concept of **acceptance**.
1.2   Practice **acceptance** through activities.
1.3   Reflect on your learning regarding **acceptance**.
1.4   Reflect on your application of **acceptance** to swimming.
1.5   Reflect on your application of **acceptance** to life.

2

CONCEPTS

2.1 ACCEPTANCE
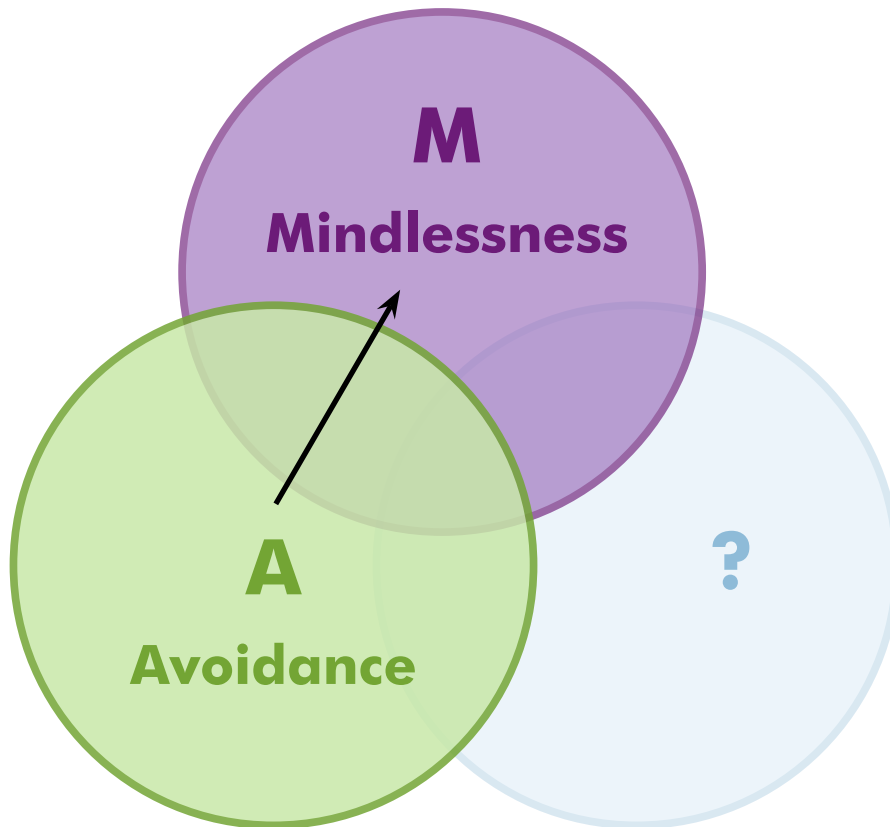

Acceptance "Is (1) the willingness to (2) neutrally experience (3) discomfort caused by bodily sensations (Body), internal experiences (Mind/thoughts & Heart/feelings) and external stimuli (World)". You can remember this with the abbreviation BMW-H"

Q: Can you describe one **acceptance** experience from your swimming?
Q: Can you describe one **acceptance** experience from your life?

2.2 AVOIDANCE

M A ?

Avoidance "Is (1) the unwillingness to (2) neutrally experience discomfort by (3) denying and/or controlling the experience of discomfort (4) which is caused by bodily sensations (Body), internal experiences (Mind/ thoughts & Heart/feelings) and external stimuli (World)". BMW-H"

Q: **Can you des**cribe one avoidance expe**rience from your** swimming?
Q: **Can you de**scribe one avoidance exp**erience from your** life?

3
ACTIVITIES

3.1 ACCEPTANCE ACTIVITY (Balloon Activity)

Instructions
1. Before the swimmers participate in the balloon activity, they will all be asked to run for 5 minutes (Bodily discomfort).
2. The balloon activity will then occur in an area where there are many spectators (Internal and External stimuli).
3. The facilitator will also be asking the swimmers questions during the activity, which they will need to respond to (Internal and External stimuli).
4. The balloon activity then commences with the same rules..

Equipment
1. About 10 blown-up balloons (no helium).
2. A minimum of 4 participants is needed.

Q: What did you learn about your **acceptance** from this activity?
Q: How can you use what you have learnt about your **acceptance** while watching the video to follow?

3.2 WATCH ACCEPTANCE VIDEO OF CHINESE ATHLETE

Q: What did you learn about this athlete's **acceptance**?
Q: What did you learn about your **acceptance** from this activity

3.3 WATCH AVOIDANCE VIDEO OF TENNIS ATHLETES

Q: What did you learn about these athletes' avoidance?
Q: How would the behaviour be different if these athletes used **acceptance**?

4

REFLECTION

In this module acceptance is described as "(1) the willingness to (2) neutrally experience (3) discomfort caused by bodily sensations (Body), internal experiences (Mind/thoughts & Heart/feelings) and external stimuli (World)". You can remember this with the abbreviation BMW-H.

4.1 LEARNING REFLECTION
Q: Based on this description of **acceptance** what did you learn about your own **acceptance** through your participation in the "Acceptance Activities"?
4.2 APPLICATION REFLECTION (Swimming)
Q: Based on what you learnt about your **acceptance**, how do you anticipate applying **acceptance** to your swimming?
4.3 APPLICATION REFLECTION (Life)
Q: Based on what you learnt about your **acceptance** , how do you anticipate applying **acceptance** to your life?

NAME: _____   DATE: _____

4
REFLECTION

In this module acceptance is described as "(1) the willingness to (2) neutrally experience (3) discomfort caused by bodily sensations (Body), internal experiences (Mind/thoughts & Heart/feelings) and external stimuli (World)". You can remember this with the abbreviation BMW-H.

4.1 LEARNING REFLECTION

Q: Based on this description of **acceptance** what did you learn about your own **acceptance** through your participation in the "Acceptance Activities"?

_____

_____

_____

_____
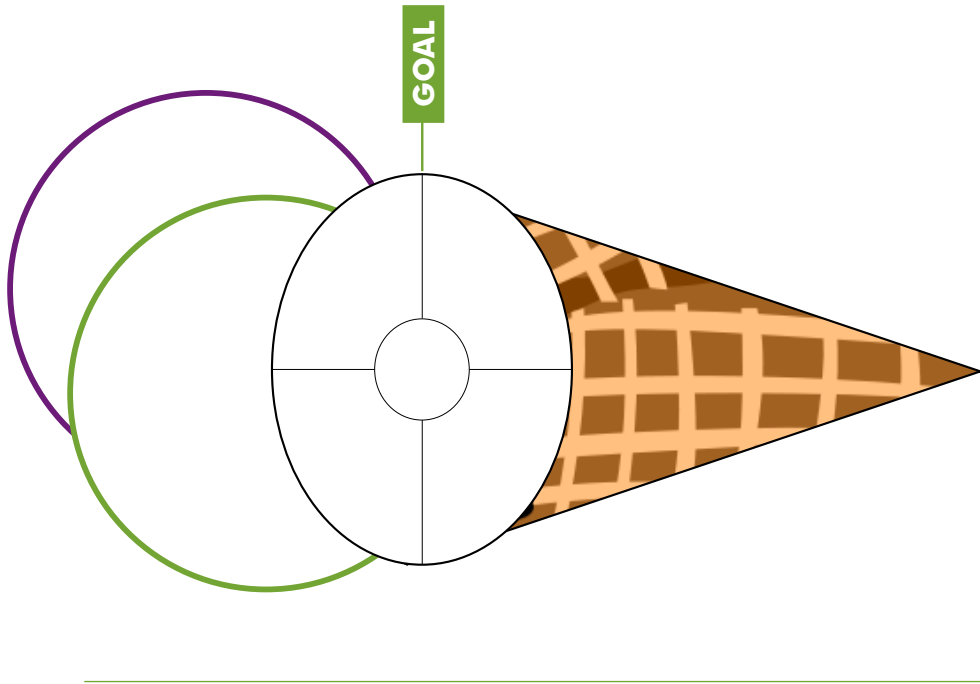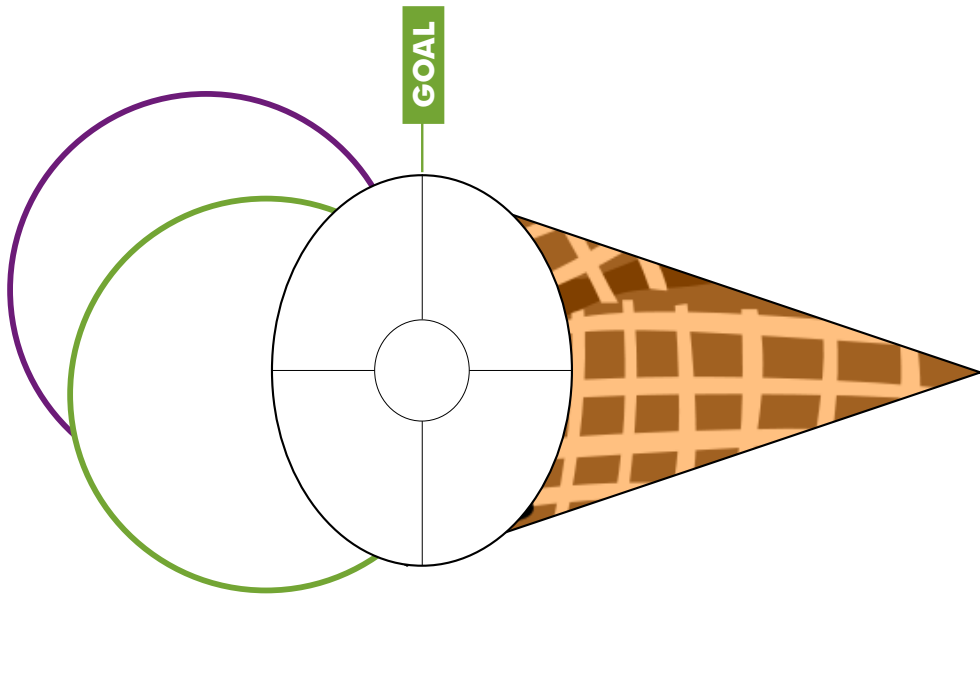
_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4.2 APPLICATION REFLECTION (Swimming)

Q: Based on what you learnt about your **acceptance**, how do you anticipate applying **acceptance** to your swimming?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4.3 APPLICATION REFLECTION (Life)

Q: Based on what you learnt about your **acceptance**, how do you anticipate applying **acceptance** to your life?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

GOAL

Avoidance

5
SUMMARY

GOAL

Acceptance

REFERENCES

Blackledge, T. (2007). Disrupting verbal processes: Cognitive defusion in acceptance and commitment therapy and other mindfulness-based psychotherapies. The Psychological   Record, 57, 555-576.

Gardner, F. L., & Moore, Z. E. (2004). A mindfulness-acceptance-commitment-based approach to athletic performance enhancement: Theoretical considerations. Journal of Behavior Therapy, 35, 707-723.

Gardner, F. L., & Moore, Z. E. (2005). Using a case formulation approach in sport psychology consulting. Journal of Sport Psychology, 19, 430-445.

Gardner, F. L., & Moore, Z. E. (2006). Clinical sport psychology. Champaign, IL: Edward Brothers.

Gardner, F. L., & Moore, Z. E. (2007). The psychology of enhancing human performance: The mindfulness-acceptance-commitment (MAC) approach. New York, NY: Springer Publishing.

Harris, R. (2006). Embracing your demons: an overview of acceptance and commitment therapy. Journal of Psychotherapy, 12, 4-11.

Harris, R. (2009). ACT made simple: An easy to read primer on acceptance and commitment therapy. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger.

Module 4
Commitment

Making Value-based, Goal-focused Choices

1
LEARNING OUTCOMES

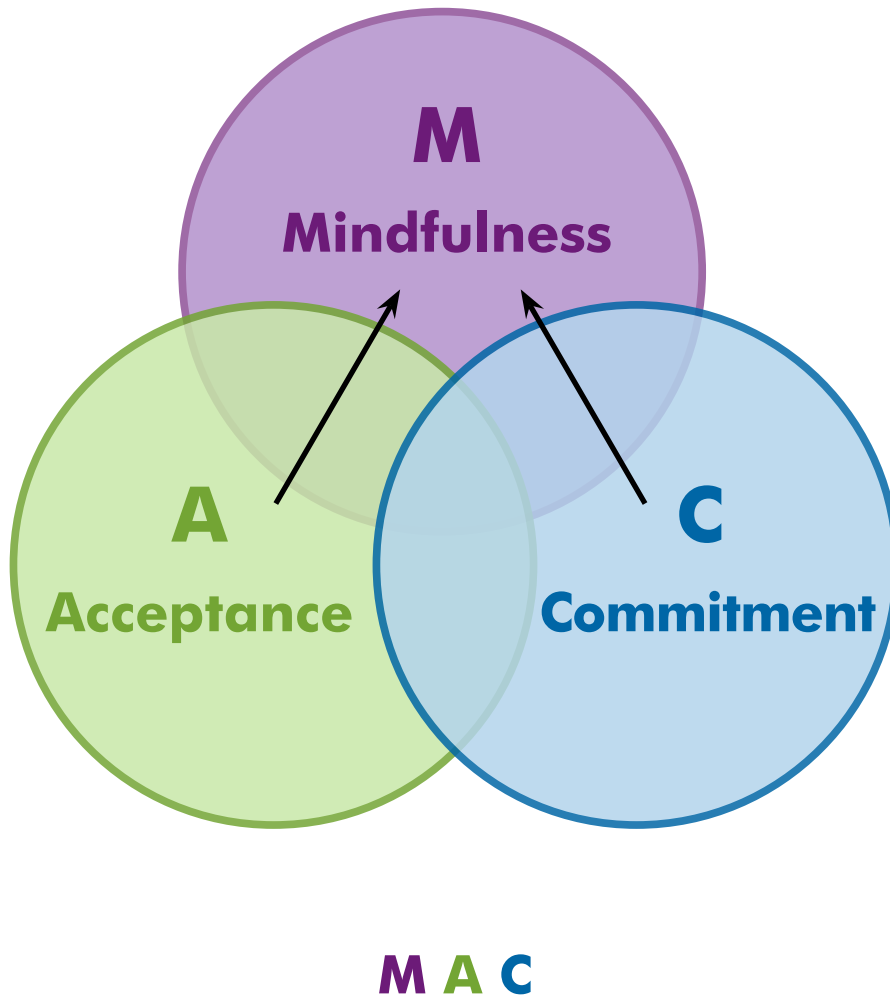On successful completion of this module you will

1.1   Understand the concept of **commitment**.
1.2   Practice **commitment** through activities.
1.3   Reflect on your learning regarding **commitment**.
1.4   Reflect on your application of **commitment** to swimming.
1.5   Reflect on your application of **commitment** to life.

2
CONCEPTS

2.1 COMMITMENT

M
Mindfulness

A
Acceptance

C
Commitment

M A C

Commitment "Is (1) the ability to direct one's behaviour according to (2) values chosen in order to (3) reach a specific goal (4) while neutrally experiencing any discomfort".

Q: Can you describe one **commitment** experience from your swimming?
Q: Can you describe one **commitment** experience from your life?

2.2 MOTIVATION

M
Mindlessness

A
Avoidance

C
Motivation
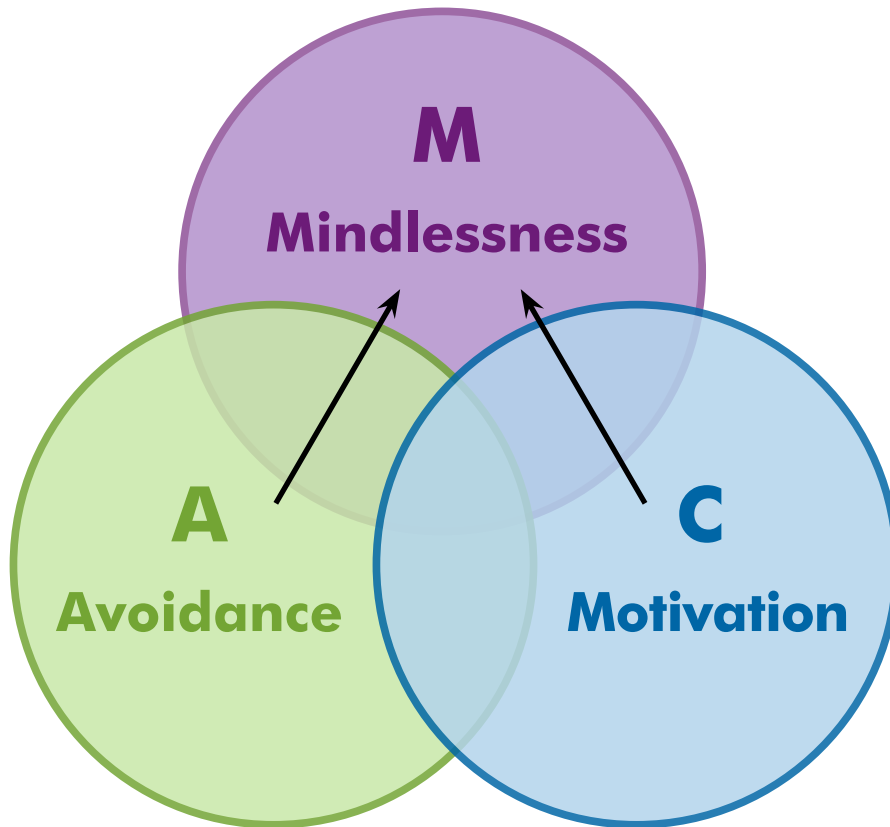
M A M

Motivation "Is (1) the inability to direct one's behaviour because (2) one's behaviour is directed by emotions (3) which hinder one from reaching one's goals.".

Q: Can you describe one motivation experience from your swimming?
Q: Can you describe one motivation experience from your life?

3
ACTIVITIES

3.1 COMMITMENT ACTIVITY (Balloon Activity)

Instructions
1. The swimmers will individually identify an important value needed to complete the activity.
2. The swimmers will discuss why these values are important and how others will be able to see that they are directing their behaviour accordingly.
3. The balloon activity is repeated.
4. After the activity the swimmers restate their values and ask the fellow swimmers to describe how they could observe this committed behaviour.

Equipment
1. About 10 blown-up balloons (no helium).
2. A minimum of 4 participants is needed.

Q: What did you learn about your **commitment** from this activity?
Q: How can you use what you have learnt about your **commitment** while watching the video to follow?

3.2 WATCH COMMITMENT VIDEO OF PARALYMPIC ATHLETES

What values do you think these athletes are committed to?

4
REFLECTION

In this module commitment is described as "(1) the ability to direct one's behaviour according to (2) values chosen in order to (3) reach a specific goal (4) while neutrally experiencing any discomfort."

4.1 LEARNING REFLECTION
Q: Based on this description of **commitment** what did you learn about your own **commitment** through your participation in the "Commitment Activities"?

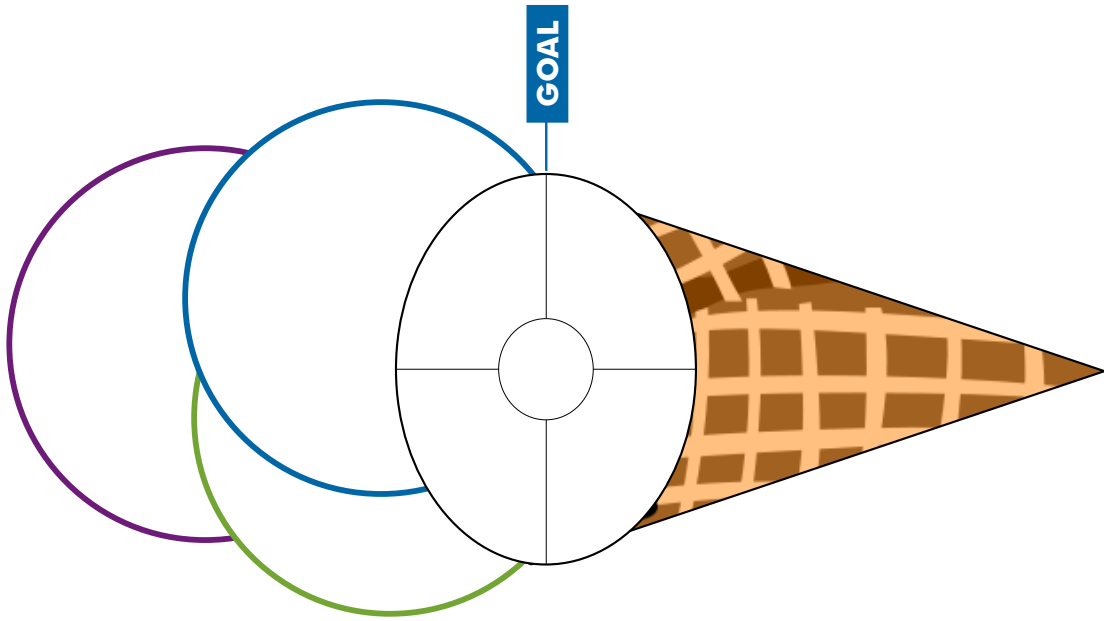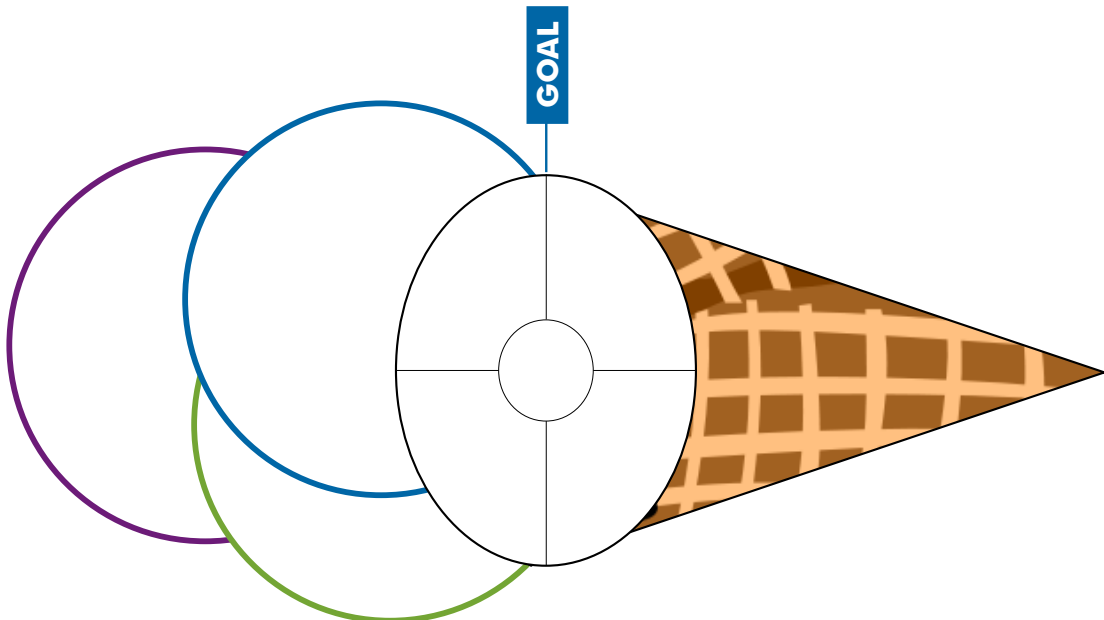| **4.2 APPLICATION REFLECTION** (Swimming) |
|---|
| Q: Based on what you learnt about your **commitment**, how do you anticipate applying **commitment** to your swimming? |

4.3 APPLICATION REFLECTION (Life)
Q: Based on what you learnt about your **commitment,** how do you anticipate applying **commitment** to your life?

NAME: _____   DATE: _____

4
REFLECTION

In this module commitment is described as "(1) the ability to direct one's behaviour according to (2) values chosen in order to (3) reach a specific goal (4) while neutrally experiencing any discomfort."

4.1 LEARNING REFLECTION

Q: Based on this description of **commitment** what did you learn about your own **commitment** through your participation in the "Commitment Activities"?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4.2 APPLICATION REFLECTION (Swimming)

Q: Based on what you learnt about your **commitment**, how do you anticipate applying **commitment** to your swimming?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4.3 APPLICATION REFLECTION (Life)

Q: Based on what you learnt about your **commitment**, how do you anticipate applying **commitment** to your life?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

GOAL

Motivation

5

SUMMARY

GOAL

Commitment

REFERENCES

Gardner, F. L., & Moore, Z. E. (2004). A mindfulness-acceptance-commitment-based approach to athletic performance enhancement: Theoretical considerations. Journal of Behavior Therapy, 35, 707-723.

Gardner, F. L., & Moore, Z. E. (2005). Using a case formulation approach in sport psychology consulting. Journal of Sport Psychology, 19, 430-445.

Gardner, F. L., & Moore, Z. E. (2006). Clinical sport psychology. Champaign, IL: Edward Brothers.

Gardner, F. L., & Moore, Z. E. (2007). The psychology of enhancing human performance: The mindfulness-acceptance-commitment (MAC) approach. New York, NY: Springer Publishing.

Lee, M., Whitehead, J., Ntoumanis, N., & Hatzigeorgiadis, A. (2008). Relationships among values, achievement, orientations, and attitudes in youth sport. Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 30, 588-610.

Romand, P., & Pantaleon, N. (2007). A qualitative study of rugby coaches' opinions about the display of moral character. Journal of Sport Psychology, 21, 58-77.

Module 5
Integration

Bringing it all together. I CAN DO THIS

1
LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this module you will

1.1   Revise the concepts of mindfulness, acceptance and commitment.
1.2   Integrate what you have learnt about mindfulness, acceptance and commitment.
1.3   Be challenged.

2
CONCEPTS

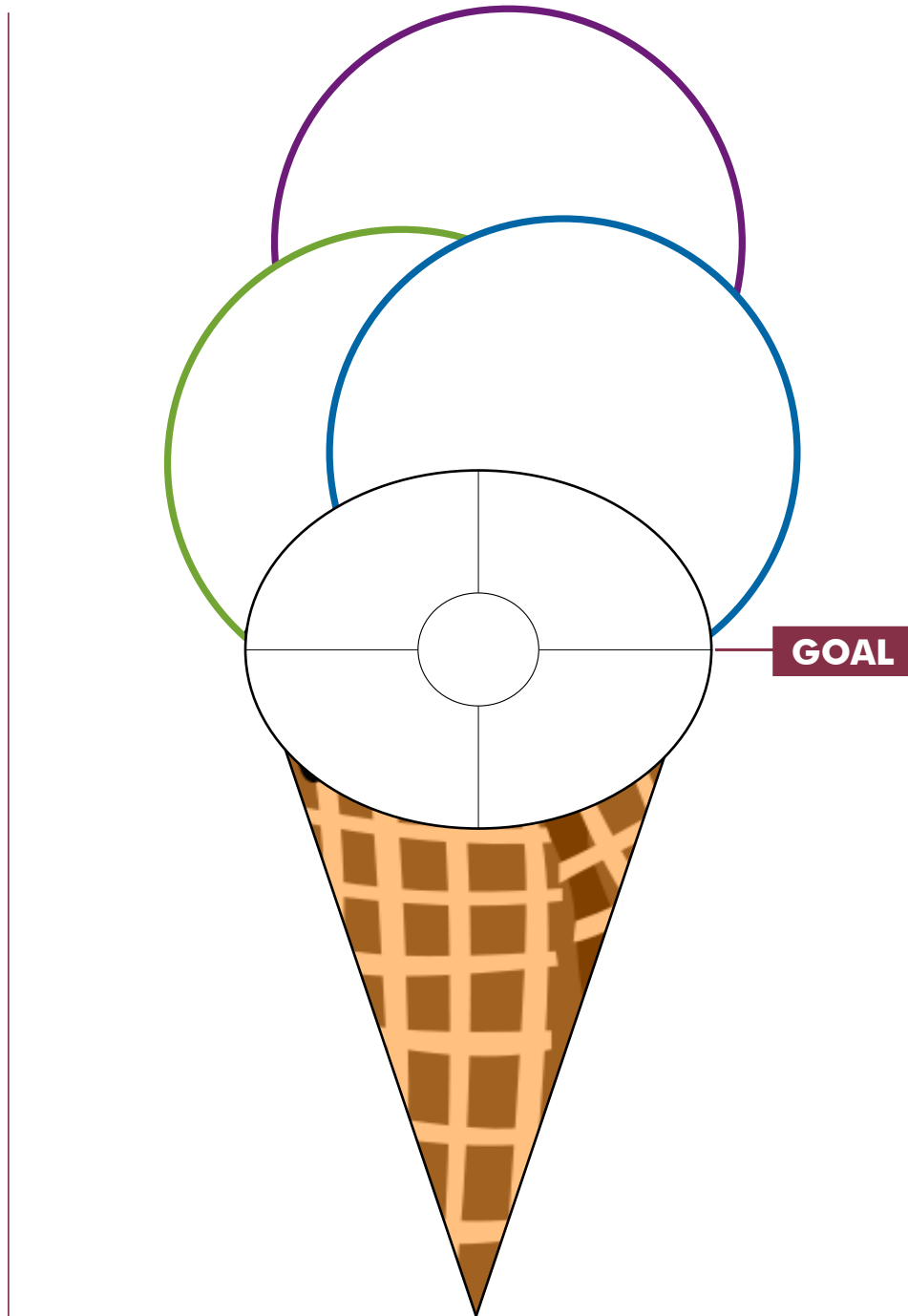|	
MINDLESSNESS "Is (1) when mind and body are in different places, with (2) the mind either thinking of the past or the future, and therefore (3) not able to be in the present moment (the here-and-now) and (4) not fully engaged in the task at hand."	**MINDFULNESS** "Is (1) the ability to be fully present in the moment (the here-and-now) and (2) to be aware of internal and external surroundings, while (3) being fully engaged in the task at hand, therefore (4) mind and body are in the same place."
AVOIDANCE "Is (1) the unwillingness to (2) neutrally experience discomfort by (3) denying and/or controlling the experience of discomfort (4) which is caused by bodily sensations (Body), internal experiences (Mind/thoughts & Heart/feelings) and external stimuli (World)". BMW-H	**ACCEPTANCE** "Is (1) the willingness to (2) neutrally experience (3) discomfort caused by bodily sensations (Body), internal experiences (Mind/thoughts & Heart/feelings) and external stimuli (World)". You can remember this with the abbreviation BMW-H.
MOTIVATION "Is (1) the inability to direct one's behaviour because (2) one's behaviour is directed by emotions (3) which hinder one from reaching one's goals."	**COMMITMENT** "Is (1) the ability to direct one's behaviour according to (2) values chosen in order to (3) reach a specific goal (4) while neutrally experiencing any discomfort."

MAM Swimmer   **OR**   **MAC** Swimmer
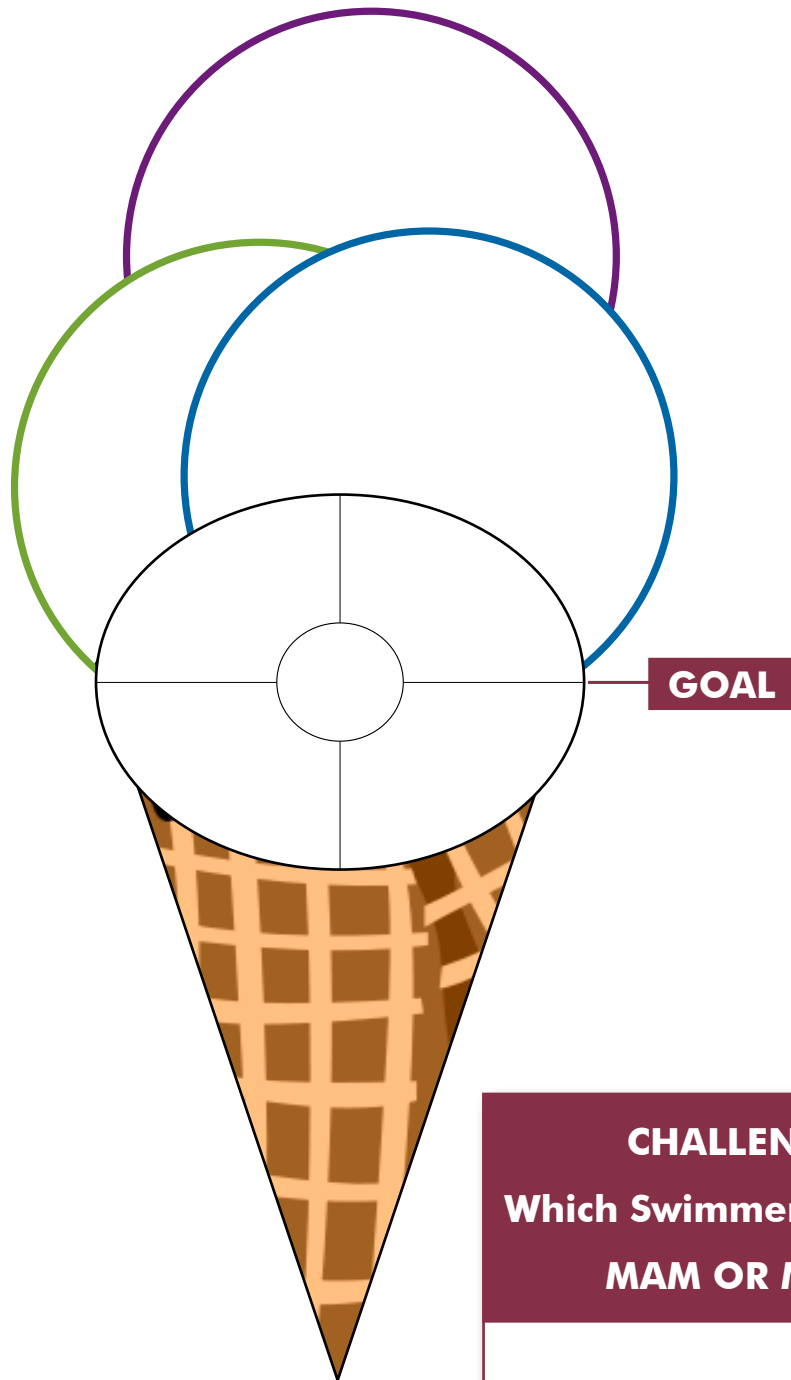
3

SUMMARY

MAM Swimmer

3
SUMMARY

MAC Swimmer

GOAL

CHALLENGE:

Which Swimmer Are You -

MAM OR MAC?

REFERENCES

Gardner, F. L., & Moore, Z. E. (2004). A mindfulness-acceptance-commitment-based approach to athletic performance enhancement: Theoretical considerations. Journal of Behavior Therapy, 35, 707-723.

Gardner, F. L., & Moore, Z. E. (2005). Using a case formulation approach in sport psychology consulting. Journal of Sport Psychology, 19, 430-445.

Gardner, F. L., & Moore, Z. E. (2006). Clinical sport psychology. Champaign, IL: Edward Brothers.

Gardner, F. L., & Moore, Z. E. (2007). The psychology of enhancing human performance: The mindfulness-acceptance-commitment (MAC) approach. New York, NY: Springer Publishing.