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1. Course Description and Overview

Students will be introduced to the intricacies of how the mind, body and spirit are inter-related during all types of performances. Students will gain an understanding of how to reach their “peak performance” through in-class and out-of-class (lab) activities which will encourage an introspective look at sports, games, athletics and play. Further, students will critically explore what role those concepts have in their personal lives, evaluating their own behavior, identity and choices in use of leisure.
2. Rationale and Linkage

Youth participation is one of the most researched areas in sport studies. There is ample evidence indicating that many youth participants come away from their sport experience with a negative outlook toward it, and even themselves. The causes of this are many and varied with some of the fault being placed on the infrastructure of the sport leagues, manned by coaches and parents with good intentions, who may be untrained in the proper modalities of working with young athletes.

It is important therefore that young athletes are able to become aware of their situation, make informed decisions about their own sport involvement and pursue a recreational experience akin to their own values, morals, ethics and beliefs. The content of sport psychology facilitates this transition away from a learned helplessness attitude toward an ownership model. More than just sport performance enhancement, sport psychology teaches motor behavior, mature cognitive skills, affective discernment and healthy lifestyle choices which we seek to have match the quality of life the participant wishes to obtain.

Further, it has become more difficult to meet the required state and national standards in physical education. Budget constraints, loss of instruction time with students, and other demands have encouraged the advent of this course to help support our physical education curriculum. This course is needed to meet those Content Standards which are not able to be met during physical education instructional time.

Those Physical Education Content Standards (CS) are:

2. Human Movement: Students will understand and apply principles of human movement to the learning and development of motor skills.

and

4. Responsible Behavior: Students will exhibit responsible personal and social behaviors in physical activity settings.

Within CS 2 are Performance Standards, which Sport Psychology directly addresses.
[Sport Psychology] experiences will assure that students:

- understand and apply discipline-specific information to their own performance;
- identify and apply characteristics of highly skilled performance to enable the development of movement competence and proficiency;
- display an understanding of the connection between the purpose of movement and its effect on performance;
- understand various offensive and defensive strategies for game forms;
- analyze and improve performance of themselves and others; and
- understand and apply pertinent scientifically based information regarding movement performance.

Within CS 4 are **Performance Standards** which Sport Psychology directly addresses.

[Sport Psychology] experiences will assure that students

- demonstrate leadership and cooperate in order to accomplish goals;
- accept the decisions and respect the role of an official;
- balance the goal of winning with other established goals of participation; and
- initiate responsible behaviors and function independently while being a positive influence on the behaviors of others in physical activity settings.

Along with our State and National Standards, this course serves the Ledyard High School community well, in that students will be given opportunity to meet the **Academic and Civic and Social Expectations** Standards as set by the Mission of Ledyard High School. Specifically, students will be taught to:

- read and write critically
- speak clearly and communicate ideas accurately
- employ problem solving skills
- demonstrate critical thinking skills

and

- take responsibility for their life long learning
- employ effective work skills in independent and collaborative settings
- demonstrate effective autonomy by appropriate decision making and goal setting
- demonstrate responsible behavior and citizenship
- respect human and cultural diversity for self and others
- make appropriate choices concerning personal health and well being.
Interdisciplinary Links

This course also addresses the following content standards for grades 9-12 in English/Language Arts, Social Studies and Science as delineated by the Connecticut State Department of Education.

English Language Arts:

Reading and Responding: 1.1c, 1.1e, 1.1f, 1.2a, 1.2b, 1.2c, 1.2d, 1.2e,
1.2f, 1.3c, 1.3d, 1.4a, 1.4b

Exploring and Responding to Literature: 2.2a, 2.2b, 2.3b, 2.4c

Communicating with Others: 3.1a, 3.1c, 3.2b, 3.2d

Applying English Language Conventions: 4.2a, 4.3b

Social Studies:

Applying History CS 4.5

Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens CS 6.5

Science:

Structure and Function CS 10.1
3. Segmented Units and Pacing

| Pacing: by # of classes |

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A. History and Philosophy of Sport

Abstract: It is important to know where we have come from in order to well plan where we are going. This is true from an academic standpoint as well. So, the course begins with a thumbnail sketch of where and why sports even exist. From the days of hunting and gathering to modern day professional sports, we explore the terms: work, games, sport, athletics, leisure, recreation, and play, among others in order to set the stage for common language in the classroom discussions.

Essential Question: What is “play” and what role does it have in the human condition?

Focus Questions: 1. How have other cultures viewed play?

2. Historically, how has this country viewed play?

3. How is the concept of play, related to the pillars of society?

4. How is ones leisure a reflection of ones values?

5. How does living reflect game conditions?

Benchmarks:

The students will be able to:

- differentiate between play and participation.
- define games, sports, recreation, work, athletics and make connections to everyday life.
- appraise four types of games.
- explain the five parameters in which games take place.
- Evaluate Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory.
- compare and contrast activities into 3 game interactions.
- distinguish between 2 game formats.
- discriminate between 4 game environments.
- Support the universality of play.
Required Activities


Read: Doing Something is Nothing: Anna Quinlan.

View: “Promise of Play” I

Read: Deep Play. Ackermann

Suggested Activities

Read: The Nature of Sport: A Definitional Effort. Loy.

Assessment Tasks

Class discussion: Is Man Alone?

Journal Entry: How do you spend your leisure? What does this say about what you value? Do you think your values will change as you age? What will you do with your leisure in ten years?

Essay: Assess the qualities, characteristics and nature of play and judge its relevance in your own life with support from in class and out of class readings.
B. Sociology of Sport

Abstract: Sport in contemporary society has a strong following. In this unit we will explore what sport is to us today, and how it helps shape our society. Racial and gender issues will be touched upon as well as “big time athletics”, religion in sport, amateurism politics in sport, professionalism and institutionalized games with an emphasis on youth sport. A wide array of social concerns as it relates to sport will set the stage for the advent and need for sport psychology especially for young athletes.

Essential Question: What is the business of sport?

Focus Questions: What are fans and what purpose do they serve?

Why do women coaches get paid less than men?

Is there a physiological difference between the African American athlete and Caucasians?

Why is the national anthem played before competitions?

What is the likelihood of a young person making a living playing a sport?

Who is to blame for the high salaries athletes make?

Native American Mascots? Badge or Blasphemy?

What does beer have to do with football, and cars with golf?

What do young people learn through the media about sport?

What do parents want their children to learn about sport?

What about the “football is a religion” T-shirts?

Benchmarks: Students will be able to:

- Cite three historical accounts where politics and sport collided.
- Make a clear connection between the fan and corporations.
- Reproduce the model of the sport culture “monster”.
- Defend Critical Theorists of youth sport.
- Articulate where their personal identity comes from and list the dangers of finding it in what one does.
- Assess the adult centered youth sport model and concur or critique it.
- Examine the problem of vicarious living as it relates to play.
- Rank the ten Athlete’s Bill of Rights with reference to personal importance.
• Trace the theory of Social Facilitation leading to the practice of applied Sport Psychology.
• Identify the “father of sport psychology”

Required activities:

#1. Read: “Who’s Killing Kid’s Sports”? U.S. News and World Report

#2. Read: “Fixing Youth Sports” - Newsweek.

View: Playing to Extremes

View: Reversal - Film

Analyze: Athletes Bill of Rights - National Youth Sports Council

Read: “NCAA contradicts the educational Mission of a University” Facts on file

Read: “The Early Entry Controversy” Facts on File

Read: Perspectives on Sport Specialization. Watts, Jay. JOPERD 10-02

Suggested Activities: View: Women in Sport

View: The Journey of the African American Athlete

View: Hoop Dreams

View: Loneliness of a Long Distance Runner

View: On the Ropes

Read: “Being a Good Sport Parent” Parent Magazine

Read: Seasons of Life. Marx, Jeff.

Assessment Tasks:

Small group discussion and presentation of findings of #1 and #2

Journal Entry: “What is playing to Extreme?”

Written quiz: Reversal Movie.

Essay: Persuade the reader that, “the aims of youth sport are not fulfilled using the current youth sport model” referencing class discussion, and readings from class.
C. The Brain and Mind

Abstract: The human brain, while similar to other primates, is far superior in every way. Understanding the different anatomical parts of the brain, their functions and how it interacts with the primary and secondary nervous systems is key to understanding how a person acts, reacts and thinks about their surroundings during performance.

Essential Question: How do we learn?

Focus Questions:
- What is the brain?, and how does it differ from the mind?
- Are all people really cross wired?
- What are neurons?
- Under what conditions does the brain best function?
- How do neurons talk to each other?
- What part of the brain is most responsible for kinesthetics?
- What are the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems?
- Do all people learn the same way?
- What are motor pathways?
- Is motor learning different than cognitive processes?
- Why do different people have different outlooks on the same situation?

Benchmarks:

Students will be able to:
- Identify five ‘centers’ of the brain and their functions.
- List and explain the three stage of motor skill acquisition (Fits and Posner).
- Compare the characteristics of right and left brained dominant thinkers.
- Characterize three different learning styles.
- Identify their own hemisphere dominance and learning style.
- Examine the behaviors of the optimist, pessimist, introvert, extrovert, A/B and learned helplessness achievement styles.
- Identify their own personality type.
- Diagram a motor pathway.
Required Activities:

Complete: left brain/right brain inventory
Complete: optimist/pessimist inventory
Complete: Type A/B inventory
Read: Developing Optimism skills to Help Youth Overcome Adversity. Steinberg. JOPERD. 5-03
Complete: Introvert Extrovert inventory
Complete: Learning style inventory
Read: How to Fill a Half Empty Glass. Reilly.

Suggested Activities:

Thumbs up
Ankylacrosis
Jugglers Are Us
Read: The Power of Positive Thinking. Peale

Assessment Tasks:

Inventories completed and handed in.
Oral Quiz: Fitts and Posner Research.
Oral Quiz: Anatomy of the Brain.
Teacher generated objective SECTION TEST aligned with focus questions.
D. Peak Performance and Flow

Abstract: Every performer's goal should be a peak performance every time, yet this elusive state is difficult to repeat. In this brief unit we examine the condition under which peak performances take place which are many, varied and unpredictable. Yet we can prepare for peak performance at least by being sure that we strive for “play”

Essential Question: As performers, what are we really striving for?

Focus Questions:
What is a peak performance?
When does it happen?
Why does it occur?
Who does it happen to?
What have been some historic peak performances?
Is there a minimal recipe for achieving Flow?
How are the mind and body connected toward this end?

Benchmarks: Students will be able to:

• Define the terms Peak Performance and Flow.
• Explain and elaborate what performers can do to achieve a peak performance, using the Martens Model of Peak Performance.
• Recount a personal peak performance.

Required Activities:
Read: There is an Ethical Unconscious. Seigel. Aesthetic Realism. 6-00
View: selected scenes from Running Brave
View: selected scenes from Miracle
View: selected scenes from For Love of the Game
Journal: “Your most memorable Flow Experience or Peak Performance”.

Suggested Activities: View: Great Olympic Moments. (Mills, Retton, Louganis)

Assessment Tasks: Essay: Using video clips, readings, class discussions, newly acquired terminology and text support, revisit “Your most memorable Flow Experience or Peak Performance”, and reshape your original description into a more informed narration.
Abstract: All performances are said to be influenced by three factors which all other sub-factors fall under: The coach, the environment and the athlete themselves. This unit explores the environment and all that is beneficial to our performance, as well as the obstacles it brings. The unit emphasizes the coach and his/her influence upon a given performance. The athlete themself will be the focus for the remainder of the course.

Essential Question: What factors influence my performance?

Focus questions: From where do these factors come?

Who is responsible for these factors?

What can I control in my environment?

How do I approach the things I can not control?

What is my coach’s coaching/leadership style?

How do they relate with me and my teammates?

What is their personality type?

What is their sport philosophy?

How do they react to winning/losing, and how does it affect me?

Do I consider them a motivator?

How do they try to motivate me?

What is their reputation?

What are characteristics of highly effective coaches?
Benchmarks:

The students will be able to:

- Compare three different leadership styles and make a prediction as to what style they will lean toward.
- Analyze their coach’s motives and methods.
- Identify three different practice styles and justify the benefits of each.
- Discern the difference between suggestion and manipulation.
- Define the terms Learning, Practice and muscle memory and connect to personal experience.
- Recommend three characteristics of highly effective coaches.

Required Activities:

Attend an LHS athletic event and observe coaching methodology.

View: selected scenes from “Miracle”.

View selected scenes from “Without Limits”.

Suggested Activities:

Read a book about or by a professional coach.

Read: 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. - Covey

Read: 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens. - Covey

Interview a coach of their choosing with questionnaire template.

Assessment tasks:

Write a letter: To your most influential “coach” using the characteristics of highly effective coaches discussed in class and support your analysis with examples.

Write a letter to your least motivating coach and tell them what they could improve upon.
F. Arousal

Abstract: Arousal is the body's way of getting ready for performance. However, if not controlled, arousal can become a distractor, which has a positive feedback system. Over arousal is often a problem for young athletes who have learned that more emotion is better. This unit will explore why arousal is actually a good stress, but how we control and guide that stress is the difference between success and failure.

Essential Question: How can I remain calm in pressure situations?

Focus Questions:

What is pressure?

Do all people feel the same pressure?

Do different people react differently to stressful situations?

What is stress?

How can it be good?

When is it bad?

What is “choking”?

What are some historical references to over aroused performances?

What are the symptoms of over arousal?

What are the theories of arousal?

Which theory of arousal best describes me?

What allows me to “psych up”?

What are three classic methods of “bringing down” the body?

Benchmarks: The students will be able to:

- Define stress and differentiate between the two types.
- Analyze the sources of stress during their own performance area.
- Diagram three theories regarding stress in athletics.
- Argue why the “immutables” are a hindrance to many young performers.
- Apply three techniques which reduce the likelihood of over arousal.
- Refer to one historical case of choking, panic and “yips”.
- List 7 physiological responses to stress.
- Identify the “yip” equivalent in student’s own performance area.
Required Activities:

Read: “Mental Blauch”.
Read: “The Right of Aesthetic Realism”.

Journal:
In class simulations and demonstrations.

Suggested Activities:

Read: “A baseball’s Worst Nightmare”.
Read: Yips may have Psychological Causes.
Read: “Motivate Winners by Moderating Anxiety”. Baard. Sport Spectrum. 5-05

Assessment tasks:

Small Group Case Study: Assessment of given athlete with arousal regulation problems. Oral recommendations for said athlete.

Essay: Revisit your journal entry How do I prepare for a performance?, and critically analyze your pre-game routine supporting your corrections with psychological theory.
G. Behavior Control

Abstract: Human behavior is generally driven by some type of motivation. Students will be exposed to classic psychological research which seeks to explain how to control behavior in a training environment. Food, money, glory, and love have all been motivators in and out of athletics. Coaches use these and other carrots for their athletes to obtain their goals.

Essential Question: How do some people get others to do what they need them to do?

Focus Questions:

- How are people motivated?
- Are athletes any different?
- What are some motivators that seem to work for many people?
- What is my motivation to participate in athletics?
- What are some often used motivators which seem to have poor results?
- What are the different types of motivational styles?
- Are there guidelines for both punishment and reinforcement?
- Is there a difference between punishment and discipline?

Benchmarks:

The students will be able to:

- Justify why the five classic motivators are so powerful using examples from class discussion.
- Choose one definition of Motivation used in class, and explain why they chose that one.
- Apply three motivators to a performance setting.
- Contrast positive reinforcement with negative reinforcement.
- Differentiate between punishment and discipline.
- Reproduce the ABC’s model of behavior control.
- Define extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and formulate an opinion as to where they their motivation is rooted.
- Explain the power of suggestion using examples from your own experience.
Required Activities:

Read: Successful Coaches’ views on Motivation. Hansen. JOPERD. 10-03

View: Selected scenes from “Miracle”.

View: Selected scenes from “Everest”

Read: “Three Coaching Keys to Self Motivation.” Baard. Sport Spectrum. 4-05

Suggested Activities:

Read: Coach Biography. Examples. Wooden. They Call Me Coach

Armstrong. It’s Not About the Bike

Assessment Tasks:

Journal Entry: What best motivates me in light of the classic motivators?

Small Group discussion: Person by situation interaction.

You are a newly hired coach. Write a letter to your players and their parents, explaining how you intend to motivate them through the season, citing both Baard and Hanson articles.
H. Goal Setting

Abstract: Once we understand that the athlete wants to be where they are, we seek to identify what thoughts dominate their mind during performance. Goals are essential to helping keep the athlete focused and ultimately in a playful state.

Essential Question: What do goals do for us as performers?

Focus Questions:

What are goals?
Are goals for everyone?
How should I set goals?
Is it possible to set bad goals?
What are characteristics of good goals?
What if I fail?
What is a good time frame for goals to be achieved within?

Benchmarks:

Students will be able to:

- Create a goal for each of the three types of goals using the three good goal setting characteristics for each.
- Clearly articulate why goal setting is useful in performance settings.
- Positively link motivation to goal setting
- Evaluate, adjust and narrow their own goals after a single performance.
- Coach a peer through a goal setting session.
- Psychologically acclimatize themselves to new situations through goal setting.

Required Activities:

Goal Setting worksheets 1,2,3.

Peer Review and Feedback.
Daily Progress Journal.

View: Selected scenes from “Without Limits”.

**Suggested Activities:**

Goal setting session with coach to review, revise and update goals


View: selected scenes from *Playing to Extremes*

Read: *Oh, the Places You’ll Go* Seuss

Guest Speaker: Invite a coach to share their thoughts and insights on goal setting, with students preparing questions ahead of time, to be followed up with an oral analysis of their presentation.

**Assessment Tasks:**

Scenario trouble shooting: An athlete comes to you thinking of quitting the team. Narrate what a conversation with them might be like, helping them stay on the team, (in this case) using goal setting techniques to motivate them.
I. Concentration

Abstract: The word concentrate is often over used by athletes and parents. Understanding what concentration is, is the first step. The second step is understanding what to attend to at any given time, and the third step is to train our minds to focus on what we intend to focus on. We will find that concentration, simply put, is play.

Essential Question: How can I become more focused?

Focus Questions: What is concentration?

Do I have a difficult time keeping it?

When do I lose it?

Under what circumstances do I retain it?

Can I train myself to be more focused?

What are the four domains of attention?

When do I use each domain for my benefit?

How does concentration relate to goals?

How does focus relate to arousal?

What are strategies coaches use to keep performers focused?

Benchmarks:

Students will be able to:

- Elaborate upon the terms concentration, focus, attentional control and how they interplay.
- Name the four attentional domains, and appropriately identify when each is used at different times during performance.
- Apply three methods of regaining concentration when it has been lost.
Required Activities:

In class simulations and demonstrations.

Number grid exercises

Read: Zeigler: *Attentional Training, our Best Kept Secret*

Suggested Activities:

Goldberg: *Sports Slump Busting*, Chapter 7

View: Ultimate Athlete

Assessment Tasks:

After viewing a scene from the movie “For Love of the Game”, explain the changing of attentional focus as he pitches the perfect game, using correct terminology and psychological theory.
Abstract: In dealing with underachieving performance issues, we first must rule out all non-mental causes. Once determined that the cause is mental we can use mental performance enhancement strategies. It is no secret that the mind and the body work in concert. One is often but not always a reflection of the other. Training the mind to think other than what the body is telling it to think and feel, will have at the very least, a confidence effect, if not an actual somatic effect being realized in muscle tension, respiration rate, heart rate, blood pressure, stroke volume etc.

Essential Question: Given two performers of equal skill, who will have the better performance if a sport psychologist intervenes on one performers behalf with visualization/deep breathing exercises/muscle relaxation exercises?

Focus Questions: What is visualization and what different types are there?

How does visualization allow me to practice?

Is there a difference between rehearsal and practice?

How does visualization help regulate my breathing?

What is the HPA hormonal Axis?

How does breathing influence visualization?

What does muscle tension suggest is happening in my cerebral cortex?

How does my thinking reinforce what happens to my body?

What does cortisol research indicate about stress reduction and performance?

Benchmarks:

Students will be able to:

- Define visualization/muscle relaxation/respiratory control and demonstrate their relatedness.
- Determine appropriate times to use each particular intervention.
- Differentiate between internal and external visualization.
- Apply both internal and external visualization modalities to personal performance area.
• Connect physiological reactions between the brain and the body during exercise.
• Determine what techniques have the greatest positive effect for them.

**Required Activities:**

View: Ultimate Athlete

In class simulations and demonstrations.

Performance Profile Self Assessment

**Suggested Activities:**

Read: *The Three Questions.*


Read: *Think Yourself Big.* Kallen. Men’s Fitness. 12-01

**Assessment Tasks:**

Journal Entry: After each performance enhancement technique, (intervention) completed in class through teacher guided scripts,

Journal: “What did I see, hear, taste, touch, smell?”

“What did I see in myself that I never knew before?”
Abstract: Here we leave the individual for a time to understand how people work together in performance environments. Teams are a subset of groups and their behavior is partially predictable dependent upon several variables, including the leader of the group and their style of leadership.

Essential Question: What is a team and how does it function?

Focus Questions: What is leadership?

What influence do I have upon my group members?

And what influence do they have on me?

What are the characteristics of a “unified” team?

What are the four classic styles of leadership?

What role do captains or managers play?

Does a strong team bond mean we will be successful?

What happens when the team chemistry is acidic?

Or worse, neutral?

What are the predictable stages of groups according to Tuckman?

Bench Marks:

Students will be able to:

- Express the importance of role clarification in a team setting.
- Assess their own contribution to their team’s success and failure.
- Explain Tuckman’s four stages of team cohesion.
- Select and defend their choices of activities which may lead to team cohesion and a healthy team environment.
- Name the four classic leadership styles and give examples of successful coaches who exemplified each.
Required Activities:

View: selected scenes from Miracle

Read: Leadership Characteristics. Sugarman.

Leadership self evaluation #1

In class demonstrations and simulations.

Participation in team simulation with self report analysis sheet.

Suggested Activities:

Leadership survey #2

Assessment Tasks:

Case Study: Small group presentation. Using group dynamic principles, solve a given case study involving interaction between teammates and coaches.

In class simulation: Analyze your groups progress through Tuckmann’s four stages of group behavior. Was two weeks long enough to get through all four stages? Why or why not? Assess your contribution to your team’s final ranking. Did the captain use you to your fullest potential? Was your role well defined? Evaluate the relationship between leadership style and team cohesion.
Abstract: The sport Psychologist must be prepared to deal with issues other than mere performance enhancement. In this unit we explore what some of those issues are, where and how an athlete can get help, who is qualified to give clinical advice and what a peer can do to help another in need. Signs and symptoms as well as prevalence of the issues will be discussed.

Essential Question: What else can a sport psychologist expect to encounter in his/her sessions with athletes?

Focus Questions: What are eating disorders?

What are the signs and symptoms of each?

In what activities is weight of primary concern?

What activities lend themselves to substance abuse?

What are the substances specific to locker rooms?

Why would an athlete with lots of money get depressed?

What is athletic burnout?

What are the signs of burnout, and what is the treatment for such an ailment?

Benchmarks:

Students will be able to:

- Compare and contrast: anorexia, bulimia, and compulsive exercise disorder.
- Summarize common side effects of anabolic steroid use.
- Recommend specific social services for clinical issues.
- Empathize with depression victims.
- Develop an argument as to why the culture of certain activities lends themselves to certain deviant behaviors.
Required Activities:

View: selected scenes from *Dying to be Thin*

Read: Voight: *Combating Training Stress Syndrome*. JOPERD. 3-02

Read: *Sportsmanship from Four Basic Angles*. Hedlund. Coach and Athletic Director.

Group Library Research: 1 day on selected topic.

Suggested Activities:

Round table discussion: It there a problem in this High School with (Steroids, eating disorders, burnout, depression?)

Guest Speaker from Stonington Institute, Ledgelight Health Clinic.

Assessment Tasks

Informational Group Presentation: 3-5 page paper detailing Clinical issues in Sport Psychology using PowerPoint, role playing, dramatization, and lecture or poster art.
APPENDIX

a. Ledyard High School Statement of Purpose

b. Ledyard High School Expectations for Student Learning.

c. Policy 6177 - Multimedia Policy.

d. Final Exam Example.

e. Articles - Hard copies by unit.

f. Rubrics.

g. In class simulations (Labs) by topic.

h. Bibliography.

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES