

The Impact of a Mental Skills Training Program for Enhanced Performance on a Varsity Intercollegiate Volleyball Team: A Case Study Program Evaluation of an Educational Intervention

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Education: Curriculum and Instruction

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November 29, 2005

Blacksburg, Virginia

Keywords: Program evaluation, mental skills, mental skills training program, mixed methods, performance enhancement, mental toughness

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this case study was to answer 5 primary questions in order to determine the impact (efficacy, efficiency, and value) of the educational intervention known as the mental skills training program (MSTP) as implemented with the NCAA Division I volleyball team. The primary evaluation questions are (1) Was individual and/or team performance enhanced during the season? (2) How did the intervention of the MSTP impact individual and team mental toughness? (3) How did the intervention of the MSTP impact team communication and team chemistry? (4) How did the coaches and student-athletes view the investment of time and effort (value/worth)? (5) Was the program delivered effectively and efficiently?

The core mental skills that comprise the MSTP are goal setting, visualization, feelazation, energy management, and effective thinking which when integrated encourage mental toughness. The program evaluation contains an instructional design (ID) that incorporated a flexible curriculum to meet the weekly needs of the team. A modified Gerlach and Ely (1980) ID model is utilized to direct the design process and also as a prescriptive evaluation guide.

The evaluation utilized quantitative instruments including surveys, questionnaires, and assessments of the effectiveness and efficiency of delivery by the mental skills trainer. Qualitative data includes interviews and field notes consisting of observations, member checks, and peer debriefing.

The results of the data indicate individual performance and mental toughness were enhanced; team performance and mental toughness may have been improved. Team chemistry was enhanced while team communication was not. The program was considered valuable and worthwhile and was delivered effectively and efficiently. The decision components of the program yielded an 84.69% positive program evaluation rating.

In discussion of these results, team communication may be improved with a greater emphasis on teambuilding early in the program. Gains in mental toughness exceeded expectations, and a foothold has been established for future research in this area. Regarding team performance, expanding categories in survey instruments may yield a more positive evaluation. Finally, program evaluation may provide a viable research vehicle for applied sport psychology to demonstrate the efficacy of mental skills training for performance enhancement.

For more information on this Dissertation & its components please don't hesitate to contact Bob Reese, PhD, at bob@nextstepfacilitations.com