

Accepted author manuscript version reprinted, by permission, from *The Sport Psychologist*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1123/tsp.2020-0085>. © Human Kinetics, Inc.

1 Stories of Critical Moments Contributing to the Development of Applied Sport
2 Psychology Practitioners

3 **Abstract**

4 This study explored the stories of critical moments experienced by applied sport psychology
5 practitioners. The 13 recruited practitioners (eight male and five female) were in different
6 stages of their development (trainee, neophyte, and experienced) and were asked to tell one
7 story about a critical moment that significantly contributed to their development as applied
8 practitioners. Narrative analysis was used to explore the stories of critical moments. Four
9 distinct narrative structures were evident; *Re-birth*, *Rags to Riches*, *Tragedy*, and *The Quest*.
10 There was one consistent narrative feature that supported these plots: *critical moments*
11 *contribute towards an alignment between a practitioner's beliefs and behaviour, which*
12 *supports the development of a congruent philosophy of practice and the environment they*
13 *choose to work within*. We recommend future research, such as the use of narrative analysis
14 to explore alternative narrative structures and the investigation of successful and unsuccessful
15 consultancy experiences.

16 *Keywords:* critical moments, practitioner individuation, identity, applied sport psychology,
17 narrative analysis

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26 **Stories of Critical Moments Contributing to the Development of Applied Sport**
27 **Psychology Practitioners**

28 Applied sport psychology practitioners are one of the key instruments to successful
29 service-delivery within elite sporting environments (Poczwardowski, 2017). In turn, the
30 development of competence as an applied practitioner is directly related to the person behind
31 the practitioner (Poczwardowski & Sherman, 2011). Practitioners whom demonstrate high
32 levels of self-knowledge and self-awareness in relation to their core values and beliefs are
33 able to develop a congruent philosophy of practice (Lindsay et al., 2007), a coherent
34 professional identity (Tod et al., 2017), and demonstrate authenticity in their careers (Friesen
35 & Orlick, 2010). Individuals are presented with an opportunity to develop their self-
36 knowledge at key moments throughout their lives, in both a personal and professional
37 capacity (Ronkainen et al., 2015).

38 These personal and professional moments have been described in the existential
39 literature as boundary situations (Jaspers, 1932). Karl Jaspers wrote extensively about how
40 these boundary situations (like death and suffering) were an unavoidable part of human life.
41 Through these boundary situations, people have the opportunity to realise the purpose and
42 meaning of their own lives. When faced with these ever-present boundary situations an
43 individual must demonstrate courage in the face of anxiety and adversity. This courage is
44 fundamental to successfully navigating these situations, as individuals are aware that action
45 (and inaction) can and will have unknown consequences that an individual must take
46 responsibility for. Ultimately, these boundary situations require an individual to reflect on
47 themselves and the world around them. This reflection can allow the individual to experience
48 growth, and usually results in a change to a person's belief systems and view of the world.

49 These moments have been described in the sport psychology literature as critical
50 moments (Nesti et al., 2012). Critical moments can be small or large, intended or unintended,
51 positive or negative, but always cause an individual to confront anxiety associated with

52 changes to their identity (Nesti et al., 2012; Ronkainen & Nesti, 2017). These critical
53 moments can provide individuals with the opportunity to reflect on their belief systems and
54 ultimately who they are as an individual (Nesti et al., 2012). Critical moments have been
55 explored in the sport psychology literature in a variety of individuals and contexts, including;
56 professional football (Nesti et al., 2012), coaches (Ronkainen et al., 2015), and elite
57 endurance sports (Ronkainen et al., 2013) The exploration of critical moments experienced
58 by applied sport psychology practitioners could be essential in better understanding their
59 optimal development, given the importance the practitioner has on successful applied service
60 delivery (Poczwadowski & Sherman, 2011).

61 Recently, McEwan and Tod (2015) highlighted the similarities between the training
62 and development of counselling psychologists and sport and exercise psychologists. Theories
63 of counsellor development (Carlsson, 2012; Carlsson et al., 2011; Ronnestad & Skovholt,
64 2013; Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2009; Worthington, 1987) could provide a framework to help
65 us better understand the symbiotic relationship between the person and their role and how
66 this differs in practitioners at distinct stages of development. For example, Ronnestad and
67 Skovholt (2013), who adopted a life-span perspective on counsellor development, found that
68 optimal practitioner development involves the integration of the personal self with the
69 professional self. This integration means there is an increasing consistency between
70 practitioners' values and beliefs (and development of a congruent philosophy of practice) and
71 their behaviour. Furthermore, with experience, practitioners are more likely to engage in
72 professional roles where they can act freely and naturally; demonstrating an enhanced
73 alignment between themselves and their environment where professional and personal beliefs
74 align, and congruence is reached. This alignment between practitioner (core values and
75 beliefs, behaviour) and the context (the roles they choose to engage in) has been described as
76 practitioner individuation (McEwan et al., 2019).

77 McEwan, Tod, and Eubank (2019) explored practitioner individuation in trainee and
78 experienced sport psychology practitioners. They found that the trainee practitioners were
79 still attempting to identify a method of working that aligned with their own view of the world
80 and were more likely to change their approach to fit the role. Experienced practitioners
81 seemed to approach their work without feeling the need to separate who they were from their
82 approach in an applied setting and were more likely to choose a role that fit with their own
83 values and beliefs. As they gain experience, practitioners are more likely to develop a
84 philosophy of practice that is congruent with their own values and beliefs (Tod et al., 2009).
85 There then becomes an alignment between the practitioners' beliefs, behaviours, and the
86 environment they choose to work in. This alignment has been found to occur in a number of
87 practitioners immediately following formal training and education (Lindsay et al. 2007; Tod
88 & Bond, 2010), where the practitioner begins to practice in a way that represents their core
89 self. As practitioner individuation occurs, practitioners start to develop an enhanced sense of
90 confidence and learn to trust their own professional approach to practice (Tod et al., 2011).
91 This process occurs over time with experience and reflection, during which the practitioner
92 experiences a variety of personal and professional critical moments (Ronnestad & Skovholt,
93 2013) and attempts to find meaning and purpose in their professional lives (Tod et al., 2017).

94 Whilst the collection of studies exploring the development of sport psychologists has
95 grown in recent years (e.g., Fogaca et al., 2018; Johnson & Andersen, 2019), there remains a
96 lack of research that focuses on the critical moments experienced by practitioners and how
97 these critical moments contribute towards practitioner development. Practitioner development
98 literature has typically explored the characteristics of applied sport psychology practitioners
99 (Woolway & Harwood, 2018) or has focused on the skills required of applied practitioners
100 (Hutter et al., 2017). Furthermore, a lot of the practitioner development literature to date has
101 focused on trainees or experienced practitioners (Tod et al., 2011). There is a lack of research

102 that has explored the development of newly qualified practitioners (Fortin-Guichard,
103 Boudreault et al., 2018). By including practitioners in different stages of their development
104 (trainee, neophyte, and experienced) we will be better positioned to identify the critical
105 moments experienced by practitioners at distinct stages throughout their career (McEwan et
106 al., 2019; Tod et al., 2011) and provide a more in-depth insight into the optimal development
107 of sport psychology practitioners. Understanding the critical moments experienced by
108 practitioners at distinct stages of development could also help inform and improve the
109 learning and education pathways for applied sport psychology practitioners (Hutter et al.,
110 2017) by providing support and supervision tailored to practitioners' unique experiences and
111 challenges. Improving the training and development of applied sport psychology practitioners
112 could; enhance trainees' learning experiences, contribute towards the optimal development of
113 competent practitioners, improve client outcomes, and grow the reputation of the discipline
114 as a whole (McEwan & Tod, 2015).

115 The purpose of this study is to explore stories, told by applied sport psychology
116 practitioners, of critical moments that have contributed towards their overall development.
117 The specific aims of the study are to understand; (a) *how* applied sport psychology
118 practitioners tell their stories about these critical moments and (b) what features of those
119 stories reflect beliefs about why those critical moments might contribute to personal and
120 professional development. Practitioners at distinct stages of development (trainee, neophyte,
121 and experienced) have been included because it is likely they have experienced different
122 critical moments, leading to a variety of stories being told, and a deeper insight into how and
123 why critical moments contribute towards overall development.

124 **Method**

125 **Philosophical Assumptions**

126 A “narrative is taken to mean a complex genre that routinely contains a point and
127 characters along with a plot connecting events that unfold sequentially over time and in space
128 to provide an overarching explanation or consequence” (Smith & Sparkes, 2009b: p.2).
129 Narrative inquiry is underpinned by interpretivism and acknowledges the co-construction of
130 narratives between people, contexts, and time (Smith & Sparkes, 2009b). Investigating
131 narratives allows us to understand the meaning attributed to an experience. Our narrative
132 analysis is grounded in an interpretivist paradigm (Sparkes & Smith, 2013), informed by
133 ontological relativism and epistemological constructivism, which allowed the primary
134 researcher to adopt an approach to data collection and analysis that focused on the
135 participants’ co-constructed story (Cohen & Manion, 1994; Creswell, 2003). Understanding
136 the participants’ experiences and acknowledging the co-construction of meaning between
137 participant and the primary researcher allowed for a more in-depth understanding of the topic
138 under investigation (Yilmaz, 2013). For example, conducting a narrative analysis on the
139 interview transcripts allowed the primary researcher to understand how the participants
140 perceived their reality and made sense of the world through the stories they told (Jowett &
141 Frost, 2007). Furthermore, by understanding the structure or plot of the stories and
142 identifying narrative features underpinning these plots, the primary researcher was able to
143 shift between the narrative (how is the story being told?) and the product of the story (what is
144 being said?) (Smith & Sparkes, 2009a) to achieve the primary purpose of the research.

145 **Participants**

146 A total of 13 participants (eight male and five female) took part in the research (five
147 trainee, five neophyte, and three experienced practitioners). To be included in the study,
148 participants needed to be enrolled on, or have completed, the British Psychological Society
149 (BPS) Stage Two pathway or the British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences
150 (BASES) training pathway and have a full-time or part-time role working within professional

151 sport. The participants belonged in three distinct categories based on their differing
152 development stages. These stages were designed to allow the primary author to identify
153 narratives features that were unique to each stage of practitioner development and to align
154 with the development stages identified by Rønnestad and Skovholt (2013) (Table 1).

155 The trainee practitioners ranged between 24 and 32 years of age ($M = 28.6$ years).
156 Four of the participants were enrolled on the BPS Stage Two pathway. Two of the
157 participants were undertaking this training by means of a Professional Doctorate in Sport and
158 Exercise Psychology. One of the trainee participants was enrolled on the BASES training
159 pathway. The trainee practitioners had been enrolled on their respective training pathways
160 between three and 20 months ($M = 15$ months). The neophyte practitioners ranged between
161 27 and 37 years of age ($M = 30.4$ years) and had been qualified for between 12 and 42
162 months ($M = 24$ months). Three of the neophyte participants were BPS chartered
163 Psychologists and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) Registered Sport and
164 Exercise Psychologists and two were BASES chartered Scientists and BASES accredited
165 Sport and Exercise Scientists (Psychology). The trainee and neophyte practitioners adopted a
166 range of applied roles at the time of the interview, including; working in professional youth
167 football, supporting Olympic athletes, and owning their own private practices. The
168 experienced practitioners ranged from 36 to 52 years of age ($M = 44.0$ years) and had been
169 consulting in an applied capacity for an average of 14 years. One of the participants was BPS
170 chartered and HCPC registered, one was BASES accredited, and one participant held dual
171 accreditation. All of the experienced practitioners worked at a higher education institute, as
172 well as engaging in applied practice with sports such as gymnastics, swimming, and football.

173 **Information Power**

174 The primary author used the concept of information power to determine the sample
175 size for the current study (Malterud et al., 2016). Information power can be determined by

176 five overlapping factors: 1.) study aim (is the aim of the study broad or narrow?), 2.) sample
177 specificity (do the participants possess extensive experience and knowledge of the
178 phenomenon under investigation?), 3.) use of established theory (is the study underpinned by
179 relevant theoretical knowledge?), 4.) quality of dialogue (is the communication between the
180 participant and researcher strong?), and 5.) analysis strategy (how in-depth is the analysis of
181 the data collected?).

182 The primary author concluded that the information power for the current study was
183 high for a number of reasons. Firstly, the aim of study was clearly stated and was specific in
184 nature. Secondly, the participants were purposefully recruited to take part in the study
185 because of their knowledge and experience of the phenomenon under investigation;
186 increasing the sample specificity. Furthermore, the study was guided by Ronnestad and
187 Skovholt's (2013) theory of counsellor development, as well as literature related to
188 practitioner individuation (McEwan et al., 2019) and critical moments (Nesti et al., 2012) and
189 so had consistent use of established theory and research. The quality of the dialogue between
190 the researcher and all participants was determined to be high based on the EPICURE
191 (*engagement* (the researcher's relationship to the phenomenon being studied), *processing*
192 (process of producing, ordering, analysing, and preserving empirical material), *interpretation*
193 (act of creating meaning by identifying patterns and developing contexts for understanding of
194 experiences), *critique* (appraisal of merits and limits of research), *usefulness* (value in
195 relation to practical contexts), *relevance* (how the study contributes to the development of the
196 field), and *ethics* (values and morals that are integrated in actions and reflections within the
197 research)) framework (Stige et al., 2009), which focuses on developing and interpreting
198 stories that facilitate change. Furthermore, the primary researcher had experience of
199 conducting qualitative interviews, had seven years' experience of conducting applied one-to-
200 one sessions (so was able to confidently build effective relationships with people to facilitate

201 communication), and had his own experiences of the phenomenon being discussed. This
202 contributed towards the quality of the dialogue and the length of the interviews. Finally, the
203 choice to conduct narrative analysis (through use of literacy theory (Bell, 2004; Booker,
204 2004) ensured that the analysis strategy was detailed and in-depth. These five factors
205 combined contribute towards a high information power for the study. When information
206 power is perceived to be high, a study needs a small number of participants (Malterud et al.,
207 2016). 13 participants were chosen to take part in this study because it allowed the primary
208 researcher to recruit; (a) enough practitioners to represent the experiences of the distinct
209 stages of development (trainee, neophyte, and experienced), (b) practitioners on both BPS
210 and BASES accreditation routes, and (c) enough practitioners to collect data on a variety of
211 stories and experiences to meet the purpose and aim of the study.

212 **Procedure**

213 The study received ethical approval from an institutional review board. The
214 participants were then recruited using a purposeful sampling technique (Sparkes & Smith,
215 2013) to identify individuals who had applied sport psychology experience and fit the
216 inclusion criteria for the study. The primary researcher emailed all potential participants and
217 arranged the interviews at a time and place that suited each participant. The participants who
218 agreed to take part in the study participated in one interview, during which they were asked to
219 tell the primary author one story of a critical moment (professional or personal) they had
220 experienced throughout their life. Each participant was provided with an outline of the
221 interview process in advance of the interview to allow them time to reflect on their histories.
222 Only the primary author and the participant were present at the interview. The interviews
223 lasted between 36 and 66 minutes ($M = 48$ minutes), were audio recorded using a dictaphone,
224 and transcribed verbatim. The transcription of the interviews included the dialogue between
225 interviewer and interviewee, including the participants' extended pauses, laughter, partial

226 utterances, and speech repairs (Emerson & Frosch, 2004). The opening question (“can you
227 tell me a story about a critical moment in your career that you feel has contributed towards
228 your development as a practitioner?”) was purposefully broad to allow the participant to
229 direct the interview and tell a story about their development that was significant and
230 meaningful to them (Smith, 2010). The primary researcher had no pre-planned prompts and
231 adopted the position of active listener throughout the interview, encouraging the participants
232 to tell their story and on occasion prompting to ensure clarity of meaning (Carless &
233 Douglas, 2009). Transcriptions were returned to each participant upon request for use as a
234 reflective prompt and personal development (not for each participant to verify the
235 information in the transcriptions (Smith & McGannon, 2018)).

236 **Data Analysis**

237 Analysis of the data began with the primary author reading and re-reading the
238 transcripts and immersing himself in the participants’ stories to gain a deeper understanding
239 of their perspectives. The primary author examined each participant’s story one at a time and
240 then moved onto cross case analysis (Riessman, 2008). The research team acted as ‘critical
241 friends’ throughout the data analysis process, reviewing the data collected and critically
242 examining the primary researcher’s decisions regarding which plot best represented the
243 stories being told.

244 *Narrative Structure*

245 The structural narrative analysis of the data began by identifying the beginning,
246 middle, and end of each story within the dataset to ensure each participant had told a
247 complete story. The primary author then drew on literacy theorists’ (Bell, 2004, Booker,
248 2004) discussion of plot to better understand the structure of the participants’ stories. All
249 participants’ stories followed a similar generic structure; a) the participant was working
250 towards a goal, b) they experienced an obstacle or a threat, c) they experienced growth and/or

251 change in attempting to overcome this obstacle, and d) there was an outcome or ending to the
252 story. Finally, to review any distinctions between the participants' narratives, the primary
253 author re-read all the transcriptions again and explored how the stories paralleled common
254 storytelling plots (Booker, 2004).

255 For example, the *Re-birth* plot underpinned nine of the 13 participants' stories. This
256 plot can be understood in five distinct stages; (a) the main character starts the story
257 incomplete in some way and falls under a 'dark shadow', (b) the shadow over the main
258 character begins to grow, (c) the darkness reveals its true effect and completely takes hold of
259 the main character, (d) the main character battles with this darkness, and finally, (e) the main
260 character emerges from the struggle and is reborn. The Seven Basic Plots (Booker, 2004)
261 were used as a framework to help the primary author understand how the participants were
262 telling their story. These plots also provided the primary author with an opportunity to
263 represent the common narratives in a creative, transparent, and meaningful way.

264 *Narrative Features*

265 The final stage of the narrative analysis involved the primary author looking for
266 narrative features that underpinned the identified plots. This involved looking for the key
267 aspects (themes) within the stories that focused on the participants' views relating to their
268 critical moments and how it contributed towards their development as both people and
269 applied practitioners. This part of the analysis allowed the primary author to understand *what*
270 was being said. This process was similar to that of thematic content analysis (Braun &
271 Clarke, 2006). The primary author re-read the transcripts and noted any emerging areas of
272 interest in relation to the focus of the research. The primary author then built upon these
273 emerging areas of interest by creating initial codes and themes that represented patterned
274 responses from the interview transcripts. The dominant narrative feature present in all of the
275 13 stories was; *critical moments contribute towards an alignment between a practitioner's*

276 *beliefs and behaviour, which supports the development of a congruent philosophy of practice*
277 Hence, the primary author also explored connections (and differences based on experience
278 level) between the participants' stories that would allow for meaning to be constructed across
279 participants' experiences and a more in-depth perspective to be provided. Throughout this
280 stage of the structural narrative analysis process the primary author adopted the stance of
281 story analyst; identifying narrative features within the stories being told and making initial
282 links between these segments and the existing practitioner development literature (Sparkes,
283 2005). This allowed the primary researcher to add an extra layer of analysis to the stories
284 under investigation and further acknowledged the ontological and epistemological stance
285 adopted throughout this study (Smith & Sparkes, 2006).

286 **Quality Criteria**

287 We adopted a non-foundational approach to judge the quality of the present study
288 (Sparkes & Smith, 2013). This was achieved by first exploring the aims of the study and
289 beliefs and values of the primary author (Smith, 1993). After reading and reflecting on
290 Tracy's (2010) 'big tent' criteria, a number of values were identified that resonated with the
291 primary author: *interesting, honest, innovative, expressive, and meaningful*, which were then
292 aligned to five key criteria: *engaging, transparent, novel, rich description, and reflective*
293 (Table 2).

294 We designed the study to meet these values/criteria in a number of ways. Engagement
295 of the reader was achieved by representing all participants' stories in a novel and creative
296 way. The use of detailed quotes and description surrounding each participants' context
297 provides the reader with an opportunity to relate to and understand each participants' story.
298 Transparency and rich description have been achieved by providing quotes directly from the
299 interviews to highlight the narrative structure and key narrative features and by providing
300 detail about the methods used throughout the study. Rich description was also improved by

301 providing in-depth details and context surrounding the participants' experiences and how this
302 contributed towards the key findings of the study. Moreover, this is the first time that
303 narrative analysis has been used as a method to explore practitioners' critical moments;
304 adding to existing knowledge (from both a theoretical and practical perspective) and
305 contributing towards the innovative nature of the research. Finally, the primary researcher
306 consistently acknowledged and reflected on how their own experiences as an applied
307 practitioner (and the critical moments they had experienced) contributed towards the co-
308 construction of the narrative features within the stories, ensuring the study was consistently
309 reflective in nature. The primary author achieved this by asking himself (and noting down) all
310 the critical moments he had experienced in his career and how they had contributed towards
311 his development as an applied practitioner.

312 **Results**

313 The results will be divided into two sub-sections: (a) the narrative structures of the
314 participants' stories will be identified, and examples will be provided and (b) the narrative
315 feature underpinning these narrative structures will be discussed.

316 **Narrative Structure**

317 Four distinct narrative structures were evident following analysis of the stories; *Re-*
318 *birth, Rags to Riches, Tragedy, and The Quest.*

319 ***Re-Birth***

320 Nine of the 13 stories told followed a narrative structure best represented by the *Re-*
321 *birth* plot. Four out of five of the trainee practitioners, three out of five of the neophyte
322 practitioners, and two out of three of the experienced practitioners told their stories in this
323 way. For example, *Neophyte 1's* story began with them working for an organisation where
324 they had very little freedom over their practice philosophy. They experienced a sense of
325 inauthenticity within this environment (they fell under a dark shadow) and the tension

326 between their approach to practice and the approach of the organisation continued to grow.

327 They then decided to quit their role within the organisation and set up their own private

328 practice:

329 So I made the decision to leave at the same time as renovating a house, with one kid

330 and another on the way, because I just, I just knew I needed to...I couldn't carry on

331 justifying that sort of, being restrained...working the equivalent of a 9-5 I

332 suppose...long hours...average reward, but the biggest thing was not really...not

333 developing at all...and starting to get more frustrated because you're at a point in

334 your career where you're qualified now and you want to do different things and you

335 want to did it your way, in terms of your philosophy, and practice your approach and

336 your values...

337 Whilst this was not without its challenges (worries about paying the mortgage and providing

338 for a partner and two young children), the practitioner experienced a sense of authenticity for

339 the first time in their professional career, as they were able to adopt an approach to practice

340 that was congruent with their own core values and beliefs. The practitioner was re-born and

341 was able to align their values and beliefs as an individual with their approach to applied

342 practice:

343 I feel much more congruent...I was working in the past to a framework where you

344 deliver some corporate work, some sports work, some education work, but it's kind of

345 the same stuff, like very formulaic...I don't mind following a framework, but now I

346 can set the framework myself... 100% I'm more congruent now and I feel more

347 confident

348 Another good example of the *Re-birth* plot was demonstrated by *Trainee 4's* story. They

349 began their story by reflecting on their personal traits and characteristics as a person. They

350 felt as though others perceived them to be ‘awkward’, ‘cold’, and ‘uncaring’; traits that do
351 not transfer well into a career as a Sport and Exercise Psychologist:

352 Throughout my life, because I’ve always been like awkward, people would look at me
353 as like cold and calculated a lot and like not necessarily caring...which obviously
354 doesn’t fit with what we do...

355 However, when their family unexpectedly experienced multiple deaths in a short space of
356 time (they fell under a dark shadow), they instinctively took charge of the situation and cared
357 for all family members. Through this critical moment they were able to reveal their true self.
358 They were re-born and able to reveal themselves as a caring individual:

359 We experienced several deaths in the family, the past four or five years, which I think
360 has had a massive effect on me...so, first my husband’s father passed away, then six
361 months later his Grandpa passed away and then two months after that his aunt passed
362 away, my mother in law’s husband, father and sister passed away all within ten
363 months...and I essentially held the family together at that point and I recognised how
364 important it was for me to take care of other people

365 They were then able to transfer this caring nature into their applied consultancy with their
366 clients, contributing towards their effectiveness and development as an applied sport
367 psychology practitioner:

368 it’s about being authentic and being yourself, so if I was being one person one minute
369 and one person the next minute, how would I be effective in anyway? Especially if
370 someone saw me as two different things, how could they trust who I am? So, I think
371 it’s trusting yourself to do the right thing and being grounded in philosophy and ethics
372 all the time

373 These professional and personal critical moments experienced by the practitioners in the
374 examples above, perfectly highlight the opportunity these moments provide practitioners to

375 reflect and consider their values, beliefs, and behaviours (Nesti et al., 2012). In both of these
376 examples, the practitioners' beliefs and values were challenged, causing them to reflect on
377 their current practice, resulting in a more authentic and congruent applied practitioner.

378 ***Rags to Riches***

379 One of the trainee practitioners told a story that was best represented by the *Rags to*
380 *Riches* plot. They started their story by discussing their initial success of gaining a place at
381 University, despite being from a less "affluent area":

382 I was the first, the first person in my family to go to University, erm... you know,
383 grew up on a council estate in [place name], which is not one of the most affluent
384 areas in the world, believe it or not [laughter], so yeah, typically, erm... there aren't
385 that many people from that area, that go onto...to go to University, erm, so I was kind
386 of the first from my family to do it, to go to University and I think that was, that was a
387 big step forward

388 Following successful completion of their undergraduate and postgraduate courses, they
389 gained full-time employment within professional sport, whilst also working towards
390 becoming a chartered Sport and Exercise Psychologist. However, despite this initial success,
391 there was still a sense that they were not quite ready to reach their final destination. Finding a
392 balance between their studies, their applied work, and their personal life became an
393 increasing challenge:

394 I was always in a rush, there was never a time where, I was chilled...I'm still like that
395 now, because I'm terrible, because what happens is, you end up spending more time
396 at work, because I live closer, you end up spending more time here [the club], which
397 is not always great, but, erm, yeah I did always feel like I was constantly in a rush,
398 erm, and I felt like I was under pressure all the time, because it was like, I need to get
399 away before the traffic starts or wait to the traffic finishes, but then you're knackered

400 and you want to get home and you're not getting in while, 8:30, 9 O'clock and then
401 pfft... so that type of work-life balance, I don't think is good and definitely not
402 productive, or doesn't help you to be productive.

403 With time, they were able to find a better balance between their studies, applied work, and
404 personal lives and become more authentic as a practitioner:

405 I guess as a function of maybe being here for a period of time, I think you can be,
406 maybe more, authentic, more yourself maybe, because your position is, again,
407 whether it is ever secure is questionable, but you are a little bit... I personally feel like
408 my role at the minute is, erm... has grown and developed and is well embedded into
409 what the academy does, I think part of that I guess, helps you to feel a little bit more
410 secure about what you do and enables you to be yourself, more and I think, yeah
411 that's probably a learning thing as well, where you become a little bit more
412 comfortable in who you are, what you can do and what you can't do

413 ***Tragedy***

414 Two of the neophyte practitioners told a story that was best represented by the
415 *Tragedy* plot. For example, *Neophyte 3* became aware of a safeguarding issue at the
416 organisation in which they worked and as a result, found themselves experiencing a
417 progressive misalignment between their beliefs, values, and behaviour. This experience
418 prevented them being the practitioner they wanted to be in an applied capacity:

419 I think before all this happened...I think me as a practitioner was me as a person,
420 whereas I think now no, I engage in role play and I act, to be seen as the professional
421 practitioner as opposed to me as a person and I actually think me as a person is a
422 better practitioner than me the practitioner. I've think I've gone from somebody
423 who's quite care free, quite open, had a laugh and find it really easy to get good
424 relationships with people, to someone who is quite distant and takes time and doesn't

425 trust very easy and it takes me a while to figure things out. I am rigid and I am more
426 intense... I try to stick to the book a lot more

427 Having experienced this challenging critical moment, they began to purposefully disassociate
428 themselves from their professional role in an attempt to protect themselves. They clearly
429 wanted to be able to demonstrate more authenticity in their applied role, but had not been
430 able to achieve this at the time of the interview:

431 I hope it changes in time...with more and more experience and interactions and
432 confidence and understanding that people want me to behave in a way like I always
433 have behaved... and there was nothing wrong with that... but, you're just conscious
434 of what you do and how you conduct yourself and I think the person I was in that
435 environment at that time, I always feel associated with it and may have taken some
436 element of blame, although it wasn't going on when I was there, so I don't know if
437 I'll take it with me or not...I don't know...

438 *Neophyte 5* also told a story that was best represented by the *Tragedy* plot. Just like
439 *Neophyte 3*, they began to disassociate themselves from the organisation at which they
440 worked, because of an incident with one of the younger players at the club. This critical
441 moment made them question whether their own values and beliefs were aligned with the
442 culture of the sport itself:

443 What really got to me was... how normal this was for him, he was sick, got himself
444 together, and went and played at the age of eight... and I came home and rang my
445 mum and said...what industry are we working in when kids the age of eight are sick
446 and feeling like that's just what they have to do to be a [sport] and I just thought, god,
447 can I continue to work in this industry? I just thought, what are we doing? What are
448 we actually doing?

449 *The Quest*

450 One of the experienced practitioners told a story that was best represented by *The*
451 *Quest* plot. They were diagnosed with a chronic and debilitating health issue a number of
452 years prior to the interview, which made it challenging for them to engage in the applied
453 settings that they normally would. As a result of this, they decided to go on their own journey
454 as a client, by engaging in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). This journey allowed them
455 to experience what it was like to be “on the other side” of the consultancy process and
456 allowed them to empathise more with their own clients:

457 It’s been a difficult few years and I think, once you’ve been through that process, and
458 erm...as you grow with experience, sometimes you can forget what it’s like to be
459 somebody who needs support, I think we lose touch with that and that support for me
460 was important...I think we lose a sense of, what it’s like to be a client or a participant,
461 but also how we learn...as part of it [recovery] I took up [hobby] and it was so hard
462 and there was this big event in front of 1,500 people and it was scary and you think,
463 athletes go through this [performance anxiety] every single week! I wouldn’t want
464 anyone to go through what I’ve been through, but it does change your perspective and
465 as I say, from that came something really good...I can understand and empathise
466 more closely with athletes now

467 **Narrative Features**

468 Once the structure of each story had been established, the primary author identified
469 narrative features from each participants’ stories that underpinned and reinforced the four
470 plots identified. One prominent narrative feature was evident throughout the transcripts
471 (regardless of the way the participants’ told their stories); *critical moments contribute*
472 *towards an alignment between a practitioner’s beliefs and behaviour, which supports the*
473 *development of a congruent philosophy of practice and the environment they choose to work*
474 *within*. This narrative feature, which represents the on-going practitioner individuation

475 process and the participants' search for a professional identity, was discussed by practitioners
476 regardless of experience. However, practitioners in different stages of development were
477 clearly at unique and distinct points of this practitioner individuation process.

478 *Trainee Practitioners*

479 For the majority of the trainee practitioners, a distinction still existed between how
480 they viewed themselves as a person and how they viewed themselves as a practitioner.
481 However, most individuals recognised this as something they wanted to change as they
482 progressed throughout their training. *Trainee 2* was over halfway through their BPS Stage
483 Two training experience and had worked with a number of clients where they had struggled
484 to be authentic during the consultancy process:

485 The thing I'm finding really hard at the minute, and I'm planning on taking this to
486 supervision, is I'm trying to work out how to be professional and how to be authentic
487 as a person. For me, I want to try and find a nice sweet spot between practitioner and
488 person and the sooner the better! That's something at the minute that I've been
489 finding quite conflicted. (**Trainee 2**)

490 This distinction between person and practitioner caused some of the trainees to
491 experience a sense of inauthenticity within their applied roles. *Trainee 1* worked full-time at a
492 professional football club and often found it difficult to be authentic within this environment
493 through a lack of confidence in his own abilities:

494 There have been times, particularly earlier on in my role, where I was maybe playing
495 more of a role and when you're doing that, you're being inauthentic and it's like
496 wearing clothes that don't fit, it just doesn't feel right, it can cause you to experience
497 a lot of anxiety (**Trainee 1**)

498 The trainee practitioners were beginning to explore how they, as both people and
499 practitioners, fitted into their environment. Without fully understanding how their values and

500 beliefs influenced their philosophy of practice, individuals at this stage of development were
501 experiencing a level of inauthenticity and anxiety around their applied practice. However, as
502 the trainees progressed with their training, there was an acknowledgement that this distinction
503 between person and practitioner was beginning to recede. In an attempt to reduce the
504 distinction between person and practitioner, the trainee practitioners seemed to first reflect
505 upon their core belief system and then on how their values influenced their applied practice
506 and the development of a congruent philosophy of practice:

507 Know yourself, so actually know yourself, know your values, so in the sport
508 psychology world, get to know that core values level of the philosophy and know who
509 you are, because having that means you can develop a clear philosophy of practice
510 and that has been the biggest thing that has contributed towards my development,
511 because, it's not actually my development as a practitioner that I'm talking about, it's
512 me as a person (**Trainee 2**)

513 By reflecting on their core belief systems, the trainee practitioners were beginning to
514 develop a congruent philosophy of practice, which was positively influencing the practitioner
515 individuation process by helping them understand how their approach translated into practice.
516 One of the trainee practitioners, whilst discussing a critical moment, reflected on their
517 transition out of sport as an athlete, which resulted in a loss of identity. This experience
518 demonstrated that this particular individual had already experienced challenges to their
519 identity as an athlete; contributing towards the development of a more coherent and authentic
520 professional self:

521 You can't separate them and I think that's what I learnt, when I reflect back on
522 gaining that knowledge of what I went through as an athlete I'm quite sure of the
523 person who I am, who I want to be, who I aspire to be on a daily basis and what's
524 interesting is, I feel I could go into any sporting environment, any academic

525 environment and not necessarily change who I am, you know, be confident with who
526 I am and just be content with that environment (**Trainee 5**)

527 This participant seemed to show he had progressed further along the individuation
528 process by demonstrating high levels of self-awareness regarding his own values and beliefs
529 and how they translated into their professional practice. This progress may have been due to
530 their age (oldest of the trainees), their proximity to finishing the BASES training pathway
531 (near completion), or their variety of challenging life experiences (being released from a
532 professional football club). Their narrative was more aligned to the neophyte practitioners'
533 experiences, suggesting that ones' personal experiences can influence an individuals' applied
534 capabilities above and beyond the formal training pathway alone.

535 *Neophyte Practitioners*

536 Becoming qualified through their respective training pathways and being older (and
537 more experienced than the trainees) seemed to expose the neophyte practitioners to a number
538 of different critical moments, such as; leaving their jobs, divorce, and experiencing a loss of
539 family members and friends. Four individuals in this stage of development discussed how
540 their values and beliefs were becoming more closely aligned to their applied practice. It was
541 evident that these individuals were further along the practitioner individuation process in
542 comparison to the trainee practitioners, possibly due to the unique critical moments they had
543 experienced and/or the increased experience they had as people and practitioners. For
544 example, *Neophyte 2* had recently started a new applied role in an attempt to establish a more
545 authentic approach to practice:

546 Practicing psychology is an expression of myself, it's an expression of myself and I
547 think the practitioner has to be sown into who I am as a person. I think if you try and
548 split the two, I wonder if others will see you as fraudulent and if you start splitting

549 them out it can eat into your values and what you think is important in life (**Neophyte**
550 **2)**

551 By discussing their applied practice as an expression of themselves, the neophyte
552 practitioners were demonstrating a closer alignment between their values and their approach
553 to applied practice. This alignment between values, beliefs, and behaviour seem to enhance
554 the neophyte practitioners' confidence in their abilities as applied practitioners and was also
555 beginning to make each individual question how their own approach to practice fitted with
556 the environment (and the role) they were currently in. One participant decided to stop
557 working in their current applied role and set up their own private practice. This allowed them
558 to demonstrate congruence and authenticity in their professional practice:

559 You feel more confident and you feel much more congruent, because they [*clients*]
560 are just expecting you, they're not expecting a business or something that they've
561 seen someone else do... so you're not having to live up to the expectations of the
562 style and the approach of someone else, you're just being you, you have no choice,
563 but to be authentic really and if people are going to buy-in to it, they're going to buy
564 into what I do... if I'm genuine and I come out of a meeting and was very honest and
565 true to myself, whether you get the work or not, it's easier to accept (**Neophyte 1)**

566 Similar to the trainee practitioners, the neophyte practitioners were attempting to
567 negotiate a fit between their values and beliefs and the values of the environment they were
568 situated within. However, instead of changing their approach to practice to fit the role, they
569 were more likely to find a role that allowed them to be more authentic as a practitioner. This
570 demonstrates the vital interaction that occurs between the individual and their context. As
571 practitioners, we are able to act on the environment to suit our needs, but the environment
572 and context also acts upon us. Based on the stories told, neophyte practitioners were able to

573 negotiate a better fit with the contexts in which they were situated in comparison to the
574 trainee practitioners.

575 Throughout the interviews, practitioners also began to tell stories of critical moments
576 that occurred outside of sport (death of family and friends, relationship break-ups, and having
577 children) and how this had contributed towards their development and approach as applied
578 sport psychology practitioners. These personal challenges seemed to give them a new
579 perspective on their life and careers, by making the participants reflect on what was important
580 to them as people:

581 So, it took me a while to figure out, but for a long time and I admit this freely, I have
582 put my wife second in my ambitions. I always said she was top of my list, but she
583 wasn't, but now with what we've been through [*losing a child and a close friend in a*
584 *very short space of time*] I understand where I really have to put my time and effort
585 and it's into building a personal life, because you can create like a paper mâché house,
586 you think... I have a home, I have a wife, I have a car, so I take that for granted, so I
587 can really focus on my career, but the house will just disintegrate and all you'll be left
588 with is a hollowed out shell, so we have to be careful not to put the career at the top of
589 the list...for me anyway...I'm becoming a happier, better human being, for not doing
590 that. What really needs my attention, what really is important to me, is the stuff that
591 goes on when I close the door at night, that's the stuff that will really rip you in half, it
592 won't be because some young athlete decides that they don't want to work with you
593 anymore and I suppose there's a part of me that, if I have to...if I have to walk away
594 from it all, in terms of my PhD or as a psychologist and never use it and I walk away
595 for personal reasons, then I'm happy to do that and that's a strange thing to say after
596 putting in that much work, because I started to realise that the bigger stuff, like my

597 relationship with my wife now does come first, I do believe that, but it's taken me a
598 long time to get there (**Neophyte 2**)
599 It got to the point where I would be leaving the house at 5 o'clock in the morning and
600 not getting home until 10 o'clock at night and that was six days a week, so obviously
601 that has a major impact on you and your relationship... eventually we got divorced
602 and it makes you question everything...is this really all worth it? With time I came to
603 understand that the personal stuff was more important, and it actually doesn't have to
604 come at the detriment of your career, it actually makes you a better practitioner if
605 anything (**Neophyte 4**)

606 Both of these neophyte practitioners' stories provide strong support for the *Re-birth*
607 plot. It was evident that their values and beliefs had been challenged and consequently
608 changed whilst experiencing very personal critical moments. Both practitioners seemed to
609 possess a strong professional identity that was having a significantly negative impact on their
610 broader life. This highlights how vital it is for applied practitioners to develop self-awareness,
611 so they can prioritise self-care and the care of their significant others.

612 *Experienced Practitioners*

613 Those in the experienced category, continued to demonstrate progression throughout the
614 practitioner individuation process. Each participant in this stage of development was able to
615 reflect on an increasing alignment between their beliefs, values, and behaviours as they
616 progressed throughout their careers:

617 I remember saying to someone years and years ago, you've got to be a chameleon to
618 be effective and I don't know how they interpreted that [*laughter*], but what I was
619 trying to communicate is the fact that you have to flex to the client, but I think the
620 way I would describe it now, compared to then, is that...whilst maintaining your own
621 personal qualities and preferences, you have to flex to meet you clients' needs, but the

622 amount of flex you need to give can take you too far away from who you are... so
623 that shift over time...I think I'm more aware of the connectiveness between me as a
624 person and me as a professional... (**Experienced 1**)

625 The experienced practitioners also seemed to have very high levels of self-awareness in
626 relation to how their philosophy of practice was a representation of their core values and how
627 this had been influenced by key critical moments throughout their lives:

628 Philosophy is not necessarily about the way you practice, it's more about who you are
629 as an individual... it's about the values you hold and values for me are fundamental to
630 what I do. All of those experiences I've had as a child, firstly led me into sport
631 psychology as a profession, but I think more importantly, informed me of the fact that
632 those other elements are more important, so those life experiences are important to
633 how I practice now (**Experienced 2**)

634 Just like the neophyte practitioners, the experienced practitioners used their awareness
635 of how they practiced and reflected on the compatibility with their applied roles. One
636 participant, just like some of the neophyte practitioners, left their role, because their approach
637 did not fit with the culture of the sport:

638 The work was difficult, because of the personalities in the system and the culture, the
639 actual working one-to-one with the athletes was fine, but you just felt you were
640 constantly battling against the system in a way, so I left and I don't see myself working
641 with an organisation in that sense again (**Experienced 3**)

642 However, one distinction between the neophyte and experienced practitioners was that
643 the experienced practitioners were at a stage in their career where they were more inclined to
644 discuss their role in the development of other practitioners:

645 I mean philosophy, you can very quickly be taught philosophy and I think we probably
646 do it the wrong way round actually, we teach philosophy, but I actually don't know if

647 teaching philosophy is the right thing...people need to discover philosophy...what I
648 mean by that is, based upon your experiences, you have an understanding of the world
649 and what it is and what you know and then you should start to think about how that
650 then informs what you do (**Experienced 2**)

651 I feel that that is a great contribution you can make to any industry, any profession, to
652 train the next generation...and I hope that that's what I can do, I hope I am part of doing
653 that anyway, already, but, that's really the heart of what I do now (**Experienced 1**)

654 Given their roles with higher education institutes, the experienced practitioners seemed to be
655 experiencing a second re-birth. The first saw the merging of the person and practitioner earlier
656 in their careers, and the second, was beginning to see them transition from applied practitioners
657 to supervisors and mentors.

658 **Discussion**

659 The present study explored stories of critical moments that contributed towards the
660 development of applied sport psychology practitioners. After analysing the narrative
661 structure, four plots were evident; *Re-birth*, *Rags to Riches*, *Tragedy*, and *The Quest*. Nine of
662 the 13 stories were best represented by the *Re-birth* plot. Furthermore, the consistent
663 narrative feature underpinning all plots, highlighted an alignment between values, beliefs,
664 and behaviours that was facilitated by the critical moments experienced. The results add to
665 existing knowledge in a number of ways.

666 The first way this research adds to knowledge, is by providing an insight into what the
667 practitioner individuation pathway might involve and how this might change depending on
668 the experience level of the practitioner and the critical moments they experience. By
669 including practitioners of differing developmental stages, the research team were able to
670 identify the different critical moments experienced at different stages of development and
671 how they contributed towards an alignment between beliefs, values, and behaviours. For

672 example, the trainee practitioners were still attempting to understand how their own values
673 and beliefs contributed towards the development of a congruent philosophy of practice
674 (Poczwadowski et al., 2004). Without fully aligning their values to their philosophy of
675 practice, a distinction between the person and practitioner still existed. This lack of a
676 coherent professional identity seemed to cause them to experience inauthenticity when
677 engaging in applied practice and meant they were more likely to change their approach to
678 practice, and experience anxiety, as opposed to finding an environment that aligned with their
679 core values and beliefs (McEwan et al., 2019). Further along the career spectrum, the
680 neophyte practitioners demonstrated a closer alignment between their values and philosophy
681 of practice. This seemed to contribute towards less of a distinction between person and
682 practitioner and allowed them to experience an increased sense of authenticity and
683 confidence (Lindsay et al., 2007). This suggests that the practitioner individuation process is
684 supported through formal training pathways (Tod & Bond, 2010), but also through personal
685 and professional critical moments. By understanding the stories of practitioners in different
686 stages of development, we can highlight unique experiences and tailor support to contribute
687 towards the continuing development of practitioners' dependent on their personal and
688 professional needs.

689 The second way these results add to our knowledge, is by demonstrating how
690 development theories can apply to sport psychology practitioners' development. For
691 example, the first of Ronnestad and Skovholt's (2013) themes highlights that optimal
692 practitioner development involves the merging of the person and the practitioner. The
693 similarities between their findings and the findings of the current study further strengthens
694 the parallels between the development of counselling psychologists and the development of
695 sport psychologists (McEwan & Tod, 2015) and provides us with more confidence that the
696 counselling literature can provide a framework, within the unique culture and context of

697 applied sport psychology, to understand the optimal development of applied sport psychology
698 practitioners.

699 Another way these findings add to existing knowledge is through the use of narrative
700 analysis. By using narrative analysis, the primary researcher was able to explore and
701 understand each of the participants' subjective experiences and how experiencing these
702 critical moments throughout their personal and professional lives, changed their view of the
703 world (Jowett & Frost, 2007). Furthermore, this approach to the data analysis process placed
704 practitioner identity development as a central focus of the study. This was achieved in the
705 knowledge that the stories people tell, provide meaning to their lived experiences (Smith &
706 Sparkes, 2009a). Furthermore, human beings lead storied lives (Sarbin, 1986) and these
707 stories provide a lens into our identities as individuals (Smith & Sparkes, 2009b). Moreover,
708 stories help individuals understand themselves (Smith, 2010) and reveal how we are
709 influenced through our social and cultural settings (Frank, 1995). Therefore, by
710 understanding what practitioners experience and how they tell their stories, we are in a better
711 position to understand how our dominant narrative contributes towards who we are and how
712 we develop as applied sport psychology practitioners. For example, the dominant and most
713 consistent narrative from the participants' stories was that of the *Re-birth* plot. This suggests
714 that, as practitioners experience critical moments in both a professional and personal
715 capacity, they are forced to consider who they are and who they want to be (Nesti et al.,
716 2012). Hence, these critical moments are integral to the development of a coherent and
717 authentic practitioner identity (Tod et al., 2017).

718 Narrative analysis was chosen as the method of data analysis for this study as it
719 provided the primary author with an insight into how critical moments influenced the
720 participants' development. Whilst one narrative plot seemed to define the majority of the
721 participants' stories, it is possible that the participants chose to silence other narratives in an

722 attempt to tell a more meaningful story. It is possible that other narratives exist that could
723 provide us with key information about how practitioners develop as they experience critical
724 moments. However, these narratives may have been marginalised as a result of how the data
725 was collected (only being asked to tell one story) or because of what they reveal about the
726 individual. Perhaps, these stories were not as positive or were perceived to provide less of a
727 meaningful contribution. Nonetheless, they may still be influential in helping us understand
728 the optimal development of applied sport psychology practitioners.

729 Future research should continue with the use of narrative analysis, in an attempt to
730 investigate and explore some of these alternative narratives. Furthermore, more attention
731 could be dedicated to understanding how the context and culture surrounding the
732 development of practitioners, influences the stories that are told. Understanding the cultural
733 construction of these stories, would not only allow for more individualised practitioner
734 support, but would also allow education providers to reflect on the environments they are
735 creating when educating and developing applied sport psychology practitioners. For example,
736 the sample of the current study overcomes flaws in previous studies by including
737 practitioners from both the BPS and BASES accreditation routines. However, the sample still
738 only includes participants from the United Kingdom (UK). Future research should include
739 participants from an international sample to identify if these alternative practitioner
740 development pathways are comparable to the UK routes investigated in this study.

741 Future research could also use narrative analysis to explore other aspects of practitioner
742 development, such as; stories of supervision, stories of successful/unsuccessful consultancy
743 experiences, and stories of non-optimal practitioner development. Moreover, if a longitudinal
744 approach to the research design was adopted, we would be able to observe how these stories
745 change over time and the impact this had on practitioner development. Finally, there may be
746 value in measuring the frequency at which applied sport psychology practitioners experience

747 critical moments in their careers. This may allow researchers to establish a connection
748 between the quantity of critical moments experienced and the perceived effectiveness of
749 practitioners in an applied setting.

750 This study explored the stories of critical moments experienced by applied sport
751 psychology practitioners. The results provide a critical insight into the experiences and
752 challenges faced throughout the developmental process and highlight how practitioners
753 evolve along the practitioner individuation process over time. The majority of the stories told
754 were most closely represented by the *Re-birth* plot, which highlighted the on-going
755 development of a coherent practitioner identity. Narrative features were presented that were
756 unique and distinct to each stage of development (trainee, neophyte, and experienced).
757 Finally, future research was suggested such as: use of narrative analysis to understand
758 alternative narrative structures and themes, exploration of successful and unsuccessful
759 consultancy experiences, and the use of quantitative methods to measure the frequency and
760 impact of critical moments on the development of applied practitioners.

761

762

763

764

765

766

767

768

769

770

771

772 References

- 773 Bell, J. S. (2004). Plot and structure: Techniques and exercises for crafting a plot that grips
774 readers from start to finish. Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books
- 775 Booker, C. (2004). *The seven basic plots: Why we tell stories*. New York: Bloomsbury
776 Continuum.
- 777 Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research*
778 *in Psychology*, 3(1), 77–101. doi:10.1191/1478088706qp063oa
- 779 Carless, D., & Douglas, K. (2009). “We haven't got a seat on the bus for you' or “all the seats
780 are mine”": Narratives and career transition in professional golf. *Qualitative Research in*
781 *Sport and Exercise*, 1(1), 51–66. doi:10.1080/19398440802567949
- 782 Carlsson, J. (2012). Research on psychotherapists' professional development during and after
783 training. *Nordic Psychology* 64(1), 150–167. doi.org/10.1080/19012276.2012.731310.
- 784 Carlsson, J., Norberg, J., Schubert, J., & Sandell, R. (2011). The development of therapeutic
785 attitudes during and after psychotherapy training. *European Journal of Psychotherapy*
786 *& Counselling* 13(1), 213–229. https://doi.org/10.1080/13642537.2011.596722.
- 787 Cohen, L., & Manion, L. (1994). *Research methods in education*. New York: Routledge.
- 788 Creswell, J.W. (2003). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods
789 approaches. (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- 790 Emerson, P., & Frosh, S. (2004). *Critical narrative analysis in psychology: A guide to*
791 *practice*. Springer.
- 792 Fogaca, J.L., Zizzi, S.J., & Andersen, M.B. (2018). Walking multiple paths of supervision in
793 American sport psychology: A qualitative tale of novice supervisees' development. *The*
794 *Sport Psychologist* 32(1), 156–165. doi.org/10.1123/tsp.2017-0048.

- 795 Fortin-Guichard, D., Boudreault, V., Gagnon, S., & Trottier, C. (2017). Experience,
796 effectiveness, and perceptions toward sport psychology consultants: A critical review
797 of peer-reviewed articles. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 30(1), 3–22.
798 doi:10.1080/10413200.2017.1318416
- 799 Frank, A. (1995). *The wounded storyteller*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- 800 Friesen, A., & Orlick, T. (2010). A qualitative analysis of holistic sport psychology
801 consultants' professional philosophies. *The Sport Psychologist*, 24(2), 227–244.
802 doi:10.1123/tsp.24.2.227
- 803 Hutter, R. I. (Vana), Oldenhof-Veldman, T., Pijpers, J. R. (Rob), & Oudejans, R. R. D.
804 (2016). Professional development in sport psychology: Relating learning experiences to
805 learning outcomes. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 29(1), 1–16.
806 doi:10.1080/10413200.2016.1183152
- 807 Jaspers, K. (1932). Boundary situations. (EB Ashton, Trans.). *Philosophy*, 2.
- 808 Johnson, U., & Andersen, M. (2019). On the Swedish road to becoming a professional
809 practitioner in sport and exercise psychology: Students' views, hopes, dreams, and
810 worries. *The Sport Psychologist*, 33(1), 75–83. doi:10.1123/tsp.2017-0137
- 811 Jowett, S., & Frost, T. (2007). Race/ethnicity in the all-male coach-athlete relationship: Black
812 footballers' narratives. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 5(3),
813 255–269. doi:10.1080/1612197x.2007.9671835
- 814 Lindsay, P., Breckon, J. D., Thomas, O., & Maynard, I. W. (2007). In pursuit of congruence:
815 A personal reflection on methods and philosophy in applied practice. *The Sport*
816 *Psychologist*, 21(3), 335–352. doi:10.1123/tsp.21.3.335
- 817 Malterud, K., & Dirk Siersma, V. (2016). Dorrit Guassora A. *Sample size in qualitative*
818 *interview studies: Guided by information power*. *Innovative Methods*, 26(13), 1753-60.

- 819 McEwan, H. E., & Tod, D. (2015). Learning experiences contributing to service-delivery
820 competence in applied psychologists: Lessons for sport psychologists. *Journal of*
821 *Applied Sport Psychology*, 27(1), 79–93. doi:10.1080/10413200.2014.952460
- 822 McEwan, H. E., Tod, D., & Eubank, M. (2019). The rocky road to individuation: Sport
823 psychologists' perspectives on professional development. *Psychology of Sport and*
824 *Exercise*, 45(1), 101542. doi:10.1016/j.psychsport.2019.101542
- 825 Nesti, M., Littlewood, M., O'Halloran, L., Eubank, M. & Richardson, D. (2012). Critical
826 moments in elite premiership football: Who do you think you are? *Physical Culture*
827 *and Sport. Studies and Research*, 56(1), 23-32. doi:10.2478/v10141-012-0027-y
- 828 Poczwardowski, A. (2017). Deconstructing sport and performance psychology consultant:
829 Expert, person, performer, and self-regulator. *International Journal of Sport and*
830 *Exercise Psychology*, 17(5), 427–444. doi:10.1080/1612197x.2017.1390484
- 831 Poczwardowski, A., & Sherman, C. P. (2011). Revisions to the sport psychology service
832 delivery (SPSD) heuristic: Explorations with experienced consultants. *The Sport*
833 *Psychologist*, 25(4), 511–531. doi:10.1123/tsp.25.4.511
- 834 Poczwardowski, A., Sherman, C. P., & Ravizza, K. (2004). Professional philosophy in the sp
835 ort psychology service delivery: Building on theory and practice. *The Sport Psychologi*
836 *st*, 18(4), 445–463. doi:10.1123/tsp.18.4.445
- 837 Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Sage.
- 838 Ronkainen, N. J., Ryba, T. V., & Nesti, M. S. (2013). “The engine just started coughing!” —
839 Limits of physical performance, aging and career continuity in elite endurance sports.
840 *Journal of Aging Studies*, 27(4), 387–397. doi:10.1016/j.jaging.2013.09.001
- 841 Ronkainen, N. J., Tikkanen, O., Littlewood, M. & Nesti, M. S. (2015). An existential
842 perspective on meaning, spirituality, and authenticity in athletic careers. *Qualitative*

- 843 *Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 7(2), 253-270.
844 doi:10.1080/2159676x.2014.926970
- 845 Ronkainen, N. J., & Nesti, M. S. (2017). An existential approach to sport psychology: Theory
846 and applied practice. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 15(1),
847 12–24. doi: 10.1080/1612197X.2015.1055288
- 848 Ronnestad, M. H., & Skovholt, T. M. (2013). *The developing practitioner: Growth and*
849 *stagnation of therapists and counselors*. Routledge.
- 850 Sarbin, T. (Ed.). (1986). *Narrative psychology*. New York: Praeger.
- 851 Smith, J. K. (1993). *After the demise of empiricism: The problem of judging social and*
852 *education inquiry*. England: Ablex Publishing Corporation
- 853 Smith, B., & McGannon, K. R. (2018). Developing rigor in qualitative research: Problems
854 and opportunities within sport and exercise psychology. *International Review of Sport*
855 *and Exercise Psychology*, 11(1), 101-121. doi:10.1080/1750984x.2017.1317357
- 856 Smith, B., & Sparkes, A. C. (2006). Narrative inquiry in psychology: Exploring the tensions
857 within. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(3), 169–192.
858 doi:10.1191/1478088706qrp068oa
- 859 Smith, B. (2010). Narrative inquiry: Ongoing conversations and questions for sport and
860 exercise psychology research. *International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology*,
861 3(1), 87–107. doi:10.1080/17509840903390937
- 862 Smith, B., & Sparkes, A. C. (2009a). Narrative analysis and sport and exercise psychology:
863 Understanding lives in diverse ways. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 10(2), 279–
864 288. doi:10.1016/j.psychsport.2008.07.012

- 865 Smith, B., & Sparkes, A. C. (2009b). Narrative inquiry in sport and exercise psychology:
866 What can it mean, and why might we do it? *Psychology of sport and exercise*, 10(1), 1-
867 11. doi:10.1016/j.psychsport.2008.01.004
- 868 Sparkes, A.C. (2005). Narrative analysis: Exploring the what's and the how's of personal
869 stories. In I. Holloway, (Ed.). *Qualitative research in health care* (pp. 191-209).
870 Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- 871 Sparkes, A. & Smith, B. (2013). *Qualitative research in sport, exercise & health sciences.*
872 From process to product. London: Routledge.
- 873 Stige, B., Malterud, K., & Midtgarden, T. (2009). Toward an Agenda for Evaluation of
874 Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 19(10), 1504–1516.
875 doi:10.1177/1049732309348501
- 876 Stoltenberg, C. D., & McNeill, B. W. (2009). *IDM supervision: An integrative*
877 *developmental model for supervising counselors and therapists* (3rd ed.). London:
878 Routledge.
- 879 Tod, D., Andersen, M.B. & Marchant, D.B. (2009). A longitudinal examination of neophyte
880 applied sport psychologists' development. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology* 21(1),
881 1–16. doi.org/10.1080/10413200802593604.
- 882 Tod, D., Andersen, M.B. & Marchant, D.B. (2011). Six years up: Applied sport
883 psychologists surviving (and thriving) after graduation. *Journal of Applied Sport*
884 *Psychology* 23(1), 93–109. https://doi.org/10.1080/10413200.2010.534543.
- 885 Tod, D. & Bond, K. (2010). A longitudinal examination of a British neophyte sport
886 psychologist's development. *The Sport Psychologist* 24(1), 35–51. doi.org/10.1123/tsp.
887 24.1.35.

- 888 Tod, D., Hutter, R.I. & Eubank, M. (2017). Professional development for sport psychology
889 practice. *Current Opinion in Psychology* 16(1), 134–137. doi.org/10.1016/2017.
890 05.007.
- 891 Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight “big-tent” criteria for excellent qualitative
892 research. *Qualitative inquiry*, 16(10), 837-851.
893 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410383121>
- 894 Woolway, T., & Harwood, C. G. (2018). Consultant characteristics in sport psychology
895 service provision: A critical review and future research directions. *International*
896 *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 1(1), 1–18.
897 doi:10.1080/1612197x.2018.1462230
- 898 Worthington, E. L., Jr. (1987). Changes in supervision as counselors and supervisors gain
899 experience: A review. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 18(1), 189-
900 208. doi:10.1037/0735-7028.18.3.189
- 901 Yilmaz, K. (2013). Comparison of quantitative and qualitative research traditions:
902 Epistemological, theoretical, and methodological differences. *European Journal of*
903 *Education*, 48(2), 311–325. doi:10.1111/ejed.12