



# Self-Talk and Imagery

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Henry Titley-Wall



# Objectives

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- Understand the different types of self-talk and imagery
- Be able to apply principles of Imagery and Self-talk to enhance performance.

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# The SCORE Study

The SCOuting and Recruitment Efficacy Study



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- PhD (Student) Sports Psychology at University of Essex
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The Football Performance Lab





# What is self-talk?

- Self-statements
  - What athletes say to themselves  
(internal self-statements & dialogue)
- Thought content
  - Anytime you think about something, you are in a sense talking to yourself

(Hardy et al, 1996)

# Types of Self-Talk:



Positive

“I can do this”



Instructional

“Strong core”



Negative

“That was stupid”



Motivational

“come on, just one more”



Controlling

“I need this last point”



Informational

“take your time, there is plenty”

What might  
they be  
saying to  
themselves?

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# Your turn

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IN THE TABLE PROVIDED BELOW, MAKE A LIST OF POSITIVE PERSONAL AFFIRMATIONS RELATED TO YOUR SPORTING EXPERIENCE.

<b>PERSONAL SPORT AFFIRMATIONS</b>	
1)	
2)	
3)	
4)	
5)	
6)	
7)	
8)	
9)	
10)	
11)	
12)	

READ AND REPEAT THESE POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS ON A REGULAR BASIS, AND LEARN OFF BY HEART.

ADAPTED FROM: Bull, S. J (1996). THE MENTAL GAME PLAN Getting Psyched for Sport. Eastbourne, Sports Dynamics.

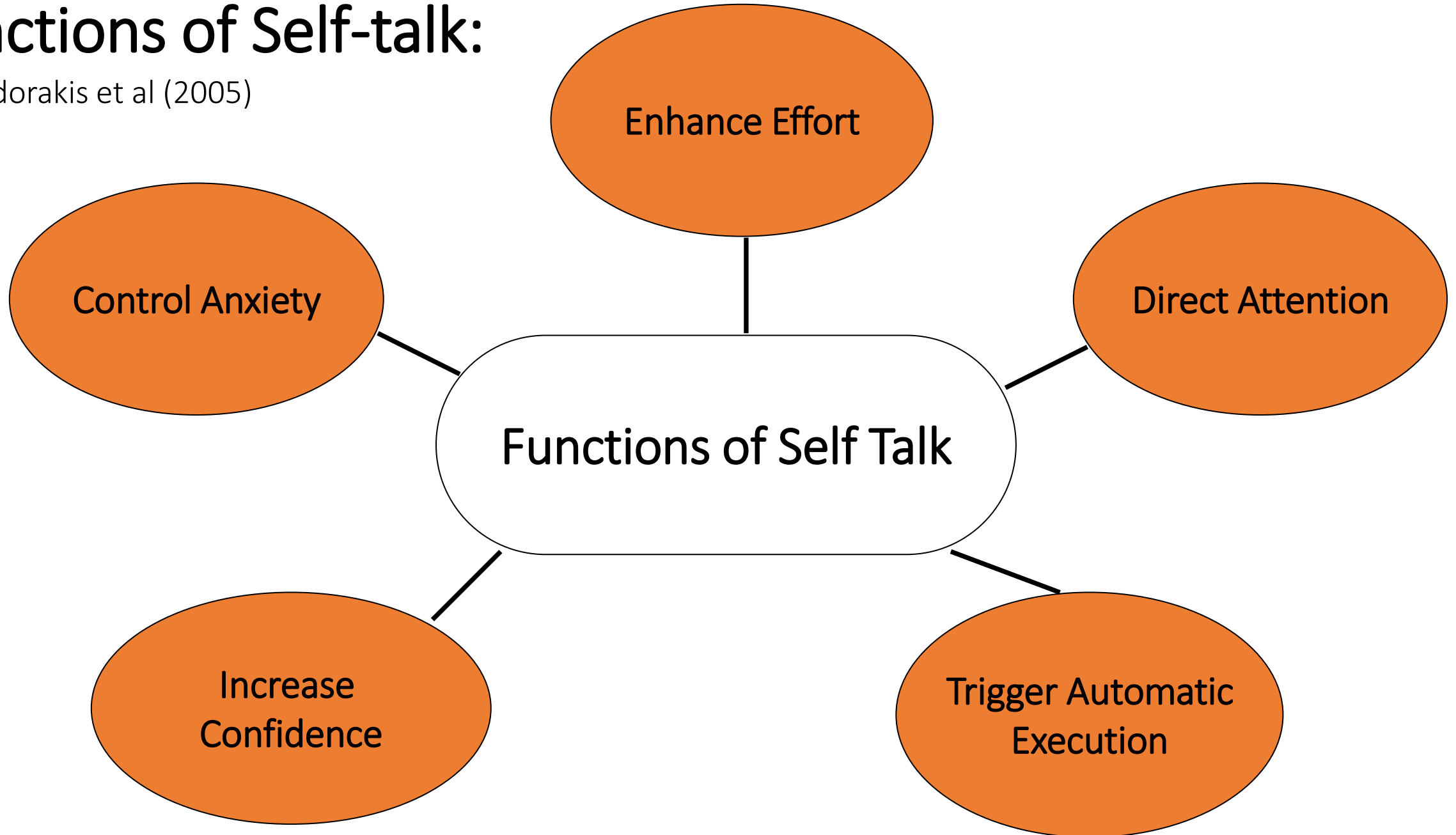
# Benefits of Self-talk

- Athletes have been found to use more self-talk in **competition** than practice scenarios (Hardy, Hall & Hardy, 2005)
- Higher levels of **critical self-talk** have been reported in **novices** compared to more experienced therapists (Williams et al., 2003)
- Individuals use private speech more in more **difficult tasks** (Behrend et al., 1989)
- Tennis players used self-talk more **following a lost point** (Van Raalte et al., 1995), ST was a significant positive predictor of Emotional intelligence



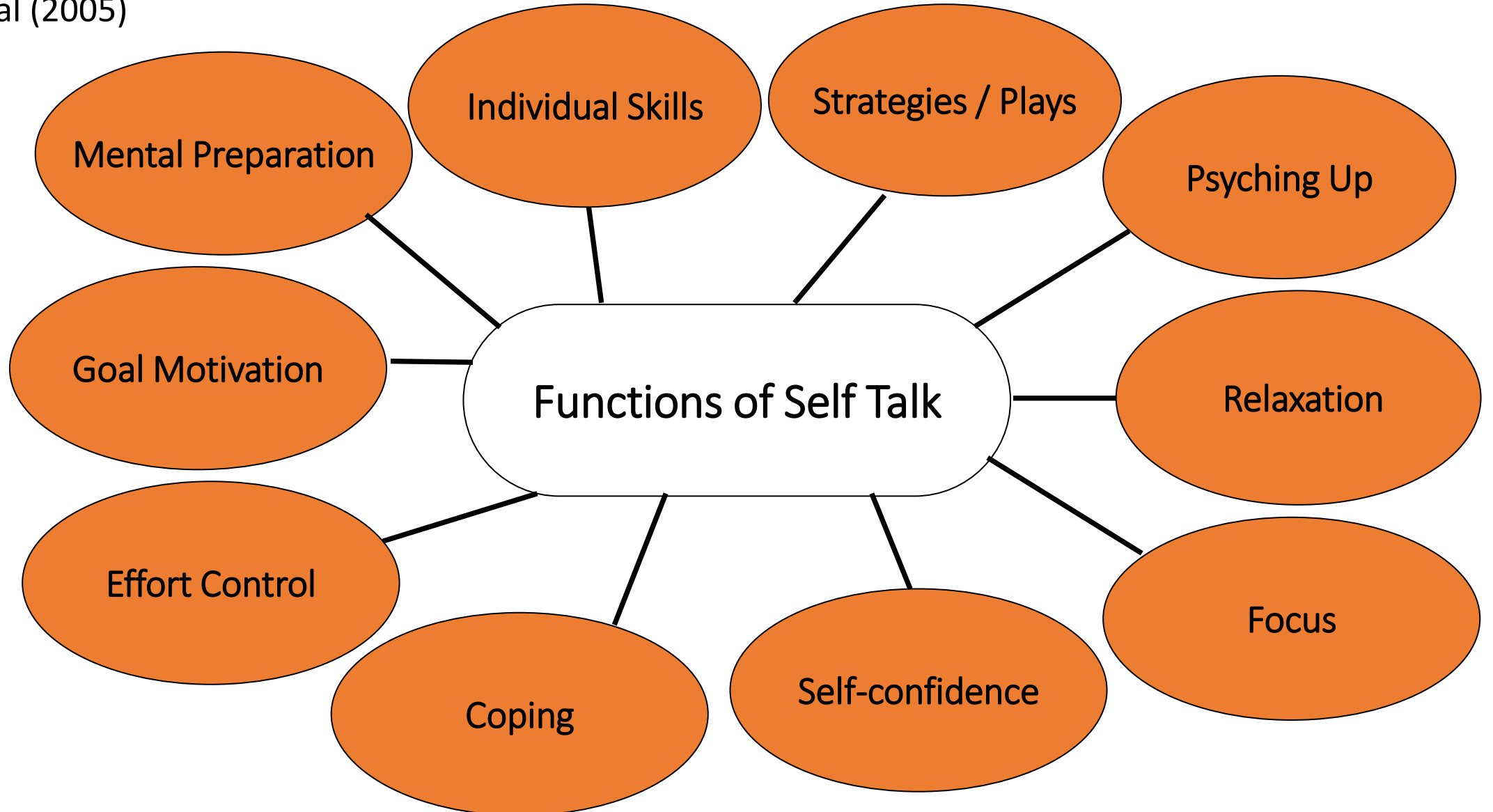
# Functions of Self-talk:

Theodorakis et al (2005)



# Functions of Self-talk

Hardy et al (2005)







# Imagery

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What is it?





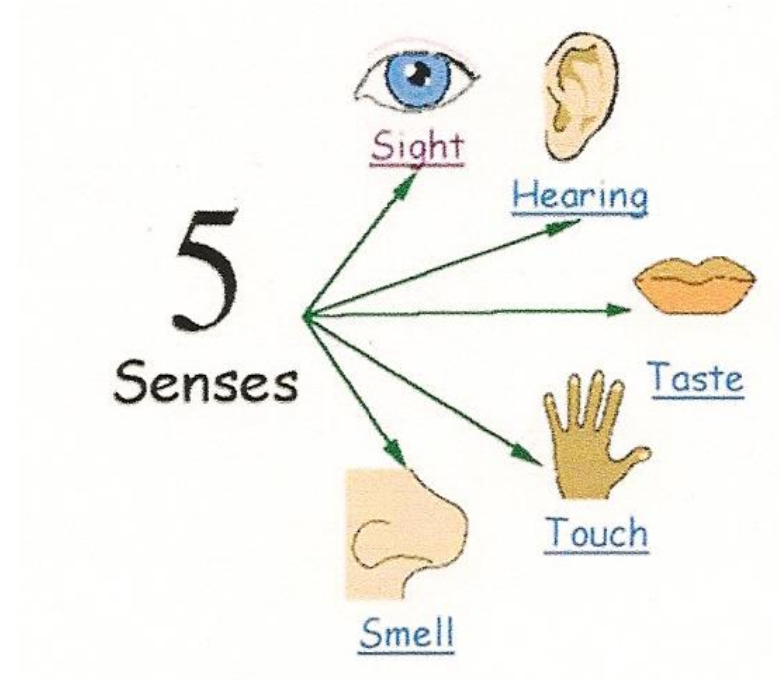
What's the  
difference  
between  
visualisation and  
imagery?

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# Types of Self-talk

Visualisation simply creates an image

Imagery involves “Using all the senses to recreate or create an experience in the mind” (Vealyer & Greenleaf, 2001, p 248).



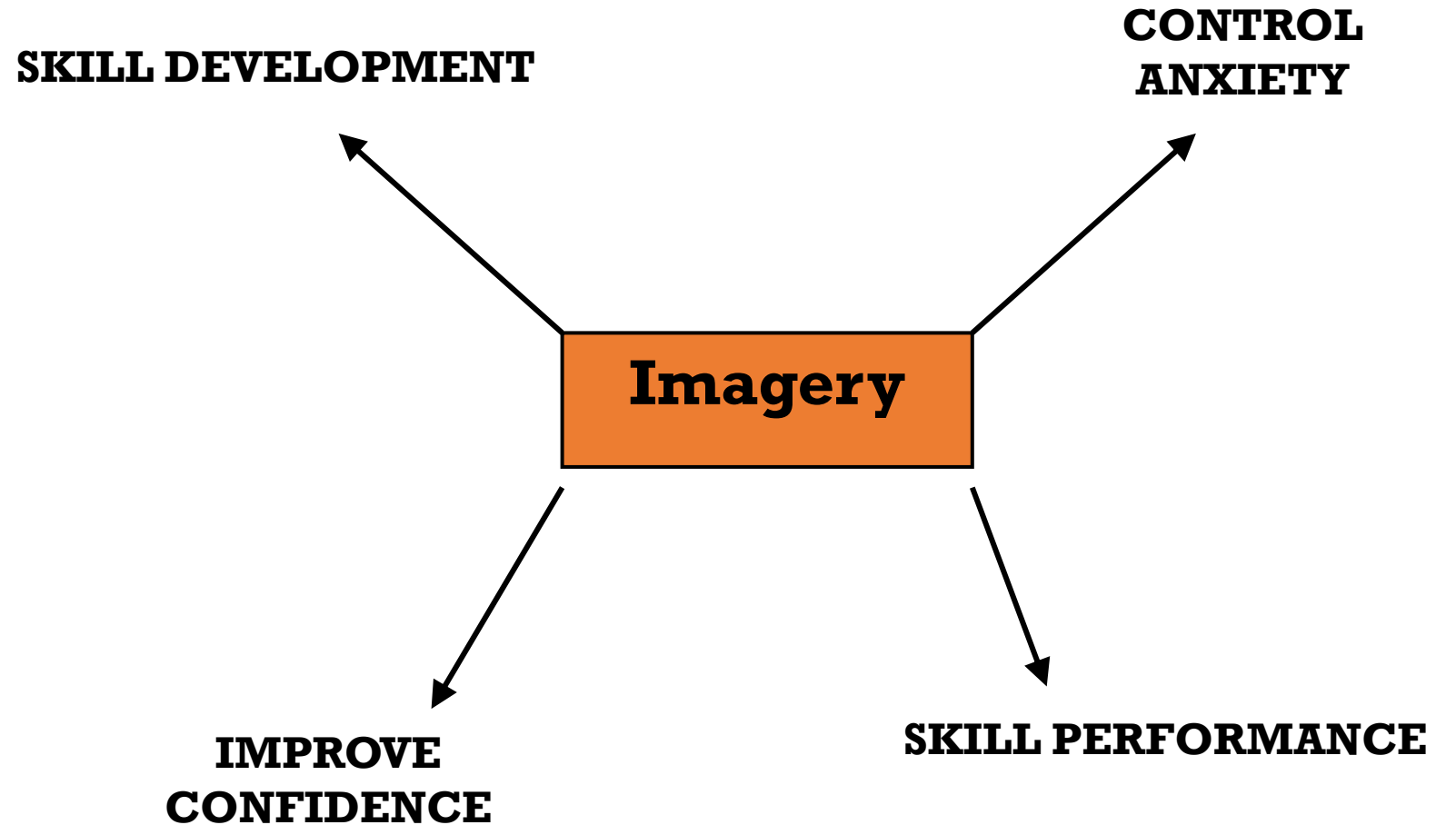
• *“In the sport of skeleton, visualisation is key. When you’re sliding down the ice, you run faster, than a car goes down the freeway, to be successful and for your own safety, you need to be completely focussed and in the moment. Visualisation like anything gets better with practise and ultimately I was able to use the skill to prepare for the sequence of turns on a given track as well as to gain my focus for what I was about to do. Through visualisation I also trained myself to be very relaxed on the sled, which is critical to generating speed”*

• **Duff Gibson** (Winter Olympic gold medallist 2006)





# Imagery



Cumming et al. (2013)

# How does it work?

**Psycho-Neuromuscular Model:** Muscular activity created by imagining a skills and carrying out a skill are similar (mixed evidence)

**Cognitive Approach:** Strengthens the brains blueprint of a movement. Helps the brain to create motor programmes rather than activate muscles.

**Bio-informational theory:** Inter-relationship between the environment, feeling felt during performance and importance of the skill. Feeling and experiencing the event prior to it happening.

THE HIGH  
PERFORMANCE  
FOCUS

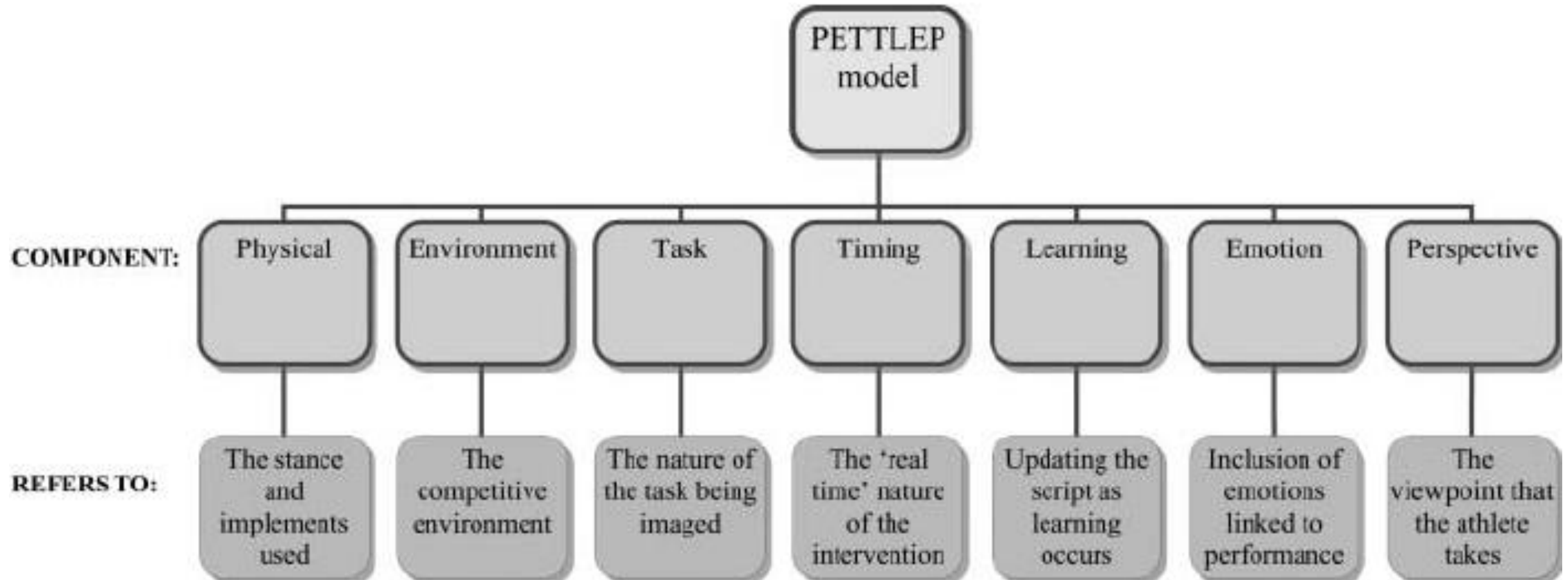
SIR CHRIS HOY

'WHAT IF THEY  
BREAK THE  
WORLD RECORD  
BEFORE YOU?'



# PETTLEP Model of Imagery

(Holmes & Collins, 2001)



# PETTLEP Model of Imagery

(Holmes & Collins, 2001)

<b>Element</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Example</b>
Physical	Physical nature of imagery, including body position, clothing, and sport equipment specific to task/situation.	Occupy position to receive serve while wearing tennis clothes and holding his/her racquet.
Environment	Physical environment where imagery is performed.	Perform imagery on the tennis court where match will occur.
Task	Characteristics of the task and expertise level.	Preview shots typically made in response to serve.
Timing	Temporal nature of imagery.	Perform imagery in real-time.
Learning	Imagery content evolves with learning and refinement of behavior.	Makes technical correction to shots in response to feedback.
Emotion	Affective and emotional response to situation.	Feel positive, confident, and in control of the situation.
Perspective	Visual perspective adopted (1PP vs. 3PP).	View images through 3PP analyze body position then switch to 1PP to anticipate service reception.



# Test of Performance Strategies (TOPS)

The 64-item self-report instrument is designed to measure an athlete's use of psychological skills and strategies during competition and practice (Thomas et al., 1999)

1. Goal-setting
2. Automaticity
3. Emotional Control
4. Imagery
5. Activation
6. Self-Talk
7. Relaxation
8. Negative Thinking
8. Attentional Control



## Test of Performance Strategies (TOPS): Instrument refinement using confirmatory factor analysis

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### ARTICLE INFO

**Article history:**  
Received 24 November 2008  
Received in revised form  
2 March 2009  
Accepted 23 April 2009  
Available online 3 May 2009

**Keywords:**  
Sport psychology  
Questionnaire  
Psychological skills  
Practice  
Competition

### ABSTRACT

**Background and purpose:** A recent confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the Test of Performance Strategies (TOPS) by Lane, Harwood, Terry, and Karageorghis [2004. Confirmatory factor analysis of the Test of Performance Strategies (TOPS) among adolescent athletes. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 22, 803–812] provided only mixed support for structural integrity of the TOPS. The objectives of the present paper were to further examine the instrument's structural integrity and enhance it if necessary.

**Method and results:** In a pilot study, a sample of North American athletes completed the TOPS. Results revealed poor fits during analysis of the competition and practice subscales. In Study 1, a number of new items were developed and a new competition subscale (distractibility) introduced, to address the problems identified and create the TOPS 2. CFAs of responses from a sample of Australian, North American and British athletes provided much stronger support for the factorial validity of the TOPS 2 inventory. However, the distractibility subscale suffered from poor factor loadings and reliability, and so was removed from further analysis. In Study 2, the factorial validity of the TOPS 2 was confirmed on a new sample of Australian athletes.

**Conclusions:** The TOPS 2 appears to be an improvement over the TOPS. Implications of the results for practitioners are discussed, and future research directions are recommended.

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Psychological inventories, based on athlete self-report, are an important means of assessing the cognitive and affective states of athletes (Vealey & Garner-Holman, 1998). Indeed, some argue that psychological assessment is an essential requirement for any sport psychology intervention (e.g., Beckmann & Kellmann, 2003). Traditional forms of assessment in sport psychology were based on the assumption that personality traits or states determine an individual's pattern of behaviour (Tkachuk, Leslie-Toogood, & Martin, 2003). Thus, sport psychologists used some instruments from clinical and counselling psychology, such as the 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire (Cattell, 1949), the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger, Gorsuch, & Lushene, 1970), and the Profile of

(Martens, 1977). However, the suitability of these measures in sport psychology research and practice has been questioned because of their clinical focus, absence of athlete norms, questionable psychometric properties, and inconsistencies in findings (Ford & Summers, 1992; LeUnes & Nation, 1989; Tkachuk et al., 2003).

Many sport psychologists have turned to inventories that measure sport-related behaviours rather than any underlying personality dimensions that might be linked to those behaviours. There is considerable interest in instruments targeting psychological skills and strategies in sport as they are likely to differentiate more and less successful athletes, and provide evidence regarding the efficacy of psychological skills training programs. Such instru-

# Thank You

Any questions?



