

Call for Papers for an Edited Volume

Edited by Jordan Thibodeaux and Judy Van Raalte

The study of self-talk in athletes is perhaps one of the most remarkable ventures of modern sport scholarship. Since the 1970s, researchers have developed a rich body of literature originating from early experimentation self-talk trials to improve elite athlete performance, and then evolving into cognitive-behavioral approaches helping to increase positive thinking and reduce negative thinking in athletes at all levels. A recent surge of theoretical and empirical work suggests modeling phrases experimentally in the lab or applying self-talk from individualistically focused cognitive-behavioral approaches cannot fully capture the ways in which athletes talk to themselves and experience their own self-talk (Van Raalte, Vincent, & Dickens, 2019). As evidenced by popular interest, there remains an ongoing dialogue around how people talk to themselves, and how talking to the self can benefit the diverse experiences of athletes and exercisers (see “The Power of Positive Thinking” by Norman Vincent Peale and “The Power of Negative Thinking” by Bob Knight and Bob Hammel).

The latest wave of interest in self-talk challenges current scholarly conventions, and some questions remain. Researchers have tended to focus on one method (e.g., surveys) as opposed to multiple methods. Studies typically conveniently use mono-ethnic and cultural samples, and typically pursue laboratory approaches with an unclear application in the field and an uncertain purpose for diverse athletes and exercisers. Problems of generalizability and diversity within the literature are perhaps reinventing historical issues in the research, and limiting the impact of progress and connection to an ever-growing sport world.

This volume (proposed title: *Many Voices in Sport and Exercise: Self-Talk from Diverse Perspectives and Approaches*) provides readers with a synergistic opportunity to consider self-talk from multiple perspectives, enriching understanding, and providing the foundation for applied work and scholarship. The volume is aimed at the question, “What are the diverse ways of studying self-talk within various scholarly frameworks and applications, and how can these diverse approaches help to connect self-talk to a broader conversation on the inner mental experience in sport and exercise?” We seek theoretical and empirical contributions from diverse academic disciplines in order to capture self-talk in the critical moments and experiences of athletes and exercisers in their real environments.

Proposed Theme of Volume

Part 1: Discovering the many voices on self-talk

The first section will address the multiple and converging views of self-talk in sport and exercise. A representative selection of theoretical perspectives is sought after for this section, but emphasis is on the debate around self-talk from multiple perspectives. Chapters in this section can help to elucidate the relations between self-talk, the various sport contexts of athlete self-talk, and the athlete individual differences and behaviors explored in this volume. Work within the scope of ecological and phenomenological realities considered in this lead section can help researchers to

expand how they investigate self-talk, and help athletes and exercisers in how they understand and apply their self-talk.

Part 2: Articulating the voice itself: Self-talk, concepts, and definitions

The second part concerns the foundations of self-talk, and the ways in which self-talk is defined currently for this volume and the empirical research in sport and exercise psychology. Chapters desired here are to cover definitional and conceptual issues in self-talk, and its content, form, function, and dimensions (e.g., types of inner dialogue and speech) used by investigators for research and application. Chapters on the use of taxonomy and operational definitions from quantitative and qualitative approaches focused on real environments are desired.

Part 3: Capturing the chatter around self-talk in sport and exercise

Self-talk largely concerns the self, the individual exerciser or athlete, but there are socially mediated aspects of self-talk that concern people and situations around the athlete. The chapters in this section will focus on the relation between self-talk in the individual athlete and the coach, team, and parental influences on self-talk. Chapters in this section can be on athlete views of self-talk and the social interactions (face-to-face and technological) that lead to the development of self-talk in athletes (e.g., coach encouragement, team cohesion/group identity, scaffolding, motivational climate, sport culture). Chapters that approach self-talk from in-depth studies of individual differences in skill, motivation, and perception of sport are also welcome. With the study of self-talk being largely driven by Western Educated Industrialized Rich Developed (i.e., WEIRD) populations, we seek chapters addressing work with diverse populations.

Part 4: Studying self-talk with methods in real-world settings

Here, the goal of the volume is to integrate the preceding sections of the volume with methodological considerations. Chapters of interest include the various methodological approaches used to study self-talk, and how to use such methods for triangulating self-talk within larger events in the real sport environments as opposed to isolating self-talk in laboratory contexts. Emphasis will be put on approaches adding to the breadth and depth of understanding the athlete's self-talk as a real-world mental experience. Chapters welcome include critiques of existing literature with mixed (e.g., quantitative and qualitative), multiple, and novel methodological approaches such as descriptive experience sampling, thought probing, and sampling methods (e.g., think aloud protocol). Research agendas desired will look to build upon studying self-talk "online", during or immediately after events, rather than retrospectively via questionnaire. We also seek researchers considering the advantages and disadvantages of real controlled (e.g., athletic training, sport skill training) and less controlled (e.g., competition, rest and recovery) sport environments. Some chapters from preceding parts (Part 2 and 3) could also be considered for Part 4.

Part 5: Uniting future voices: Multi-disciplinary approaches in the field of self-talk

The main goal of the volume is to capture diverse perspectives on self-talk in sport and exercise, but in this part, we seek contributions from outside the immediate vicinity of sport and exercise

self-talk specialties. Chapters of interest will discuss the development of self-talk in the larger scope of language, discourse, and communication processes analyzed from other disciplinary lenses (e.g., sociological, sport communication disciplines). We ultimately aim to present a future of self-talk research with respect to diverse methods and approaches, and how the research can help build scientific discovery and interventions that expand the self-talk research into multidisciplinary and stakeholder perspectives. We are also in search of the use of technology to access new ways of studying and conceptualizing self-talk.

Suggested Chapters Themes

- Self-talk in diverse psychological processes (e.g., private speech, mind wandering, affective forecasting) of sport, exercise, and health activity
- Self-talk in diverse settings of sport, exercise, and recreational activity
- Self-talk from coach and parent perspectives and interactions with athlete in youth sport
- How to study self-talk “online” in sport performance, using primarily non-questionnaire and novel mixed method approaches.
- Psychophysiological and technological approaches
- Self-talk in wide ranging abilities and backgrounds (beginner to elite; youth to aging).
- Self-talk in minority athletes (e.g., Black, Latino, non-Western)
- Self-talk in para- and adaptive sports and exercise
- Self-talk in sport and exercise considered from multiple disciplinary perspectives

Additional Themes Welcome

The proposed outline for the volume is currently taking shape, and is not exhaustive. We are in search of scholars from diverse perspectives, and what they are doing on the issue of self-talk in sport and health activity domains. Please contact us if your work involves self-talk in sport, exercise, athletics, and other forms of health activity, and it may add to disciplinary knowledge base or enhance the work of many involved in sport, exercise, health, and leisure.

Abstract and Chapter Submissions

Please send extended abstracts OR chapter proposals/samples of entries (500-750 words including research questions, relevant literature, preliminary results) to Jordan Thibodeaux (jthibodeaux@atu.edu). Collaborative proposals with co-authors are welcome. The deadline for submission of abstracts is September 1st. If the submission will be considered for the volume, authors will be notified by the end of October, and then work will begin on the chapter selection. The final deadline for chapter submission is projected for Spring 2021.

Publishing Plan

We are currently contacting and corresponding with potential publishers of our volume, which include the American Psychological Association, Cambridge University Press, and Human Kinetics. Please distribute this CFP to anyone who may be interested in contributing.