

Excellence Through Collaboration

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Dr John Partington was a Professor in Psychology at Carleton University in Ottawa for 27 years. He recently retired from his University position. His insights and courses in sport and performance psychology, social psychology, and play were highly regarded by colleagues and students at the graduate and undergraduate level. For 25 years John collaborated closely with Terry Orlick on a number of innovative projects which brought out the best in both of them. John is still as active as ever both mentally and physically and enjoying his retirement pursuits.

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Abstract

Collaboration is an extremely important issue in the real world of excellence that has rarely been addressed in the literature. In this article, the value of and obstacles to collaboration are discussed. A series of specific examples of successful collaboration are presented. Implications are drawn that can lead to higher levels of collaboration and excellence in many applied fields. Note: This content of the article was based on a keynote address entitled Excellence through Collaboration which Dr John Partington delivered to the 1998 AAASP Conference in Hyannis, Massachusetts.

Introduction

I want to share some thoughts with you about an important topic that has rarely been addressed - excellence through collaboration. When you approach your retirement years, you know that you're not finished, but it certainly is a time to reflect, and to take stock of what you have done, and what is left to do. Looking back on my career, brought me face-to-face with something I've felt a little uncomfortable about, which is that the work I am most satisfied with, and proud of, has generally been done in collaboration with others, including patients, students, athletes and other performers, and of course colleagues. Why should that bother me? Would other sport psychologists feel the same way if they had generally worked with others rather than working in-

dependently? Does our culture play a role in this?

In an essay by Len Zakowski "On Becoming an Expert in Sport and Exercise Psychology", he advised students to become "scientist-practitioners" by developing a strong theoretical orientation, as well as skills in modes of inquiry, knowledge about psychometrics, and working experience through well-supervised internship training. The successful graduate of this curriculum could be truly self-sufficient and independent. When I compared this image to my own experience, I had to conclude that only now, after thirty four years of post-doctoral on-the-job training, do I begin to approximate the skills of the scientist-practitioner model in a sort of 60-40 ratio. So how did I get any useful work done, and avoid screwing

up clients during this long period of development? Answer: I collaborated most of the time. The pooling of skills, sharing of responsibility, and resultant increase in efficacy always helped to get the job done, by bridging the gap between my personal deficits and the challenges of the project.

What pushed me to write on the topic of collaboration was that the essay by Dr. Zakowski made no explicit reference to training the prerequisite skills for collaboration. I believe that if we work together we can significantly improve training for excellence in sport, exercise psychology and other disciplines.

My paper provides a reconstruction of several samples of my collaborative work, selected to represent different points in my career. Through these accounts I hope to give you the opportunity to begin to consider some of the individual, interpersonal, situational, and cultural factors which may have an effect on the likelihood that expert and fruitful collaboration can occur.

The first example of collaborative work is from my days as a social/clinical psychologist in the late 1960's. During my first two post-Ph.D. years I had worked at an alcohol and drug addiction center as a researcher/counsellor. I was mostly doing clinic-level program evaluations to provide feedback for counsellors, but my published research was still quite academic. One of my (1970) research reports was entitled, "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. High: Multidimensional Scaling of Alcoholics' Self-Evaluations". I did this study for the wrong reasons - to keep using a then novel judgment-analytical procedure which I'd used in my Ph.D. thesis on personality impression formation, and also to make a flashy impression in the literature, thereby impressing my boss. Though the study was nominated for a

Raymond Cattell young scientist award, it was still a dumb study, because it did nothing but confirm the then current stereotype about the alcoholic passive-aggressive personality pattern disorder. These results are "pretty", but what do you do with them?

After three more years of post-Ph.D. jerking around like this, trying to find my own way, I re-examined these findings and I asked myself what I could do to understand an individual with serious drinking symptoms, and what I could do to help him, with the aid of this personal understanding. In retrospect, I think that this question set me free; free from much of what I had learned in graduate school. Now, rather than being driven to seek homothetic quasi-understanding to build theory, and thereby gain recognition and power within the profession, I was ready to break loose and try whatever research or intervention approach was feasible to help someone in need.

For the first time in several years I became excited about the possibility of doing research. I was now at a university in a different city, I contacted a different addiction center and asked whether I could work with a recently admitted, and statistically typical alcoholic (i.e., male, early 40s, married with two children). The clinic director agreed, with the proviso that I treat the client in collaboration with one of their case workers. The social worker, in turn, suggested that the client's wife be involved. During our first team meeting, after listening to the usual history of concerns, I explained why I was there, and proposed that, as a team, our goal could be to help the client develop toward an ideal self, one whose actions he could live with, and whose actions would make life better not only for him, but also for his wife and daughters. I explained that we could identify an ideal self, efficiently, by regular team discussions of the validity

and implications of findings from several psychological tests, which I could administer to the client. I further explained that the three of us, social worker, wife, and me, could serve as drama coaches to help the client learn to enact his new self-ideal role comfortably and consistently. Following discussion, this plan was accepted by the client and other team members. We executed it over a period of sessions. We used both traditional and novel measures, and the role-play psychodrama included both in-office coaching of simulated situations, as well as pre- and -post coaching for dealing with specifically targeted problematic situations in the client's life.

Let's very briefly examine findings about the client's ideal self from Jackson's traditional Personality Research Form. The client wished to become more socially connected, i.e., more affiliative, less aggressive, less autonomous, more nurturant, and also to become more stable or mature.

For the novel measure, I listed, on a hand-out, fifteen types of people. These included a paragraph to represent an alcoholic, together with fourteen other person labels. The client was asked to represent, in his own mind, each of the following fourteen persons: your father, mother, wife, and work supervisor, your favourite male and female actors, your sports hero, a respected public figure, someone you fear, someone you admire, and someone you love deeply, as well as your sober, high, and ideal self. I then asked the client to make numerical judgments of similarity between the person types; e.g., "How similar or dissimilar is your ideal self to your sport hero"

It took about three weeks for an acceptable self ideal role to emerge from our team discussions of these various measures of ideal self. This process was unlike anything I'd

learned from tests and measurement courses. For example, we'd all gather around a table and study the profiles and the people maps, in a spirit of curiosity and discovery. We would decide whether we agreed or disagreed with that representation. The numerical data were merely the starting point for us. The facts were always friendly because ultimately it was us, together, who generated the facts consensually. What applied value can be found in an empirically-based fact, like a score on a personality trait measure, if the individual who needs and wants to develop and to change for the better, can't understand and therefore can't "own" or incorporate that information? Our process, though unscientific in the traditional natural science sense, led to personal knowledge in the form of exciting possibilities or hypotheses to guide the client's growth. After several weeks of drama-style coaching to help the client learn his new role, the client announced that he was ready to try it alone. He explained that he had borrowed a tent trailer and intended to take his family on their very first vacation. One year later, a home visit found the client still sober, in good standing at work, and playing recreational hockey two nights a week for fun. The daughters had improved school grades, and his wife seemed a bit less distant. She mentioned that her husband had repaired the back gate and recovered the living room furniture.

I had never before seen such a positive outcome for an alcoholic in treatment with me. I believe that the readiness to collaborate among all team members had a lot to do with this. It took a while for all of us to click, especially me. At first I would feel irritated by the social worker's stereotypical phrases like, "How does that make you FEEEL? (with eyeballs rolling up into her head), but later I had to acknowledge that her client-centered style helped things along.

Similarly, at first, I couldn't remain open to the wife. She seemed aloof and held herself apart, not sharing in some of the humour. But later I began to appreciate her matter-of-fact, no-nonsense, survival-based contributions. This case taught me that collaboration requires tolerance of individual differences, and patience to allow things to happen. Collaboration in this case paid off for all concerned.

Next I'll discuss collaboration with students. I have selected only two illustrations from the hundreds possible. The first began in the spring of 1975 when I was approached by Betsy & Debby, two undergraduates enrolled in my Study of Play course. They breathlessly explained that the Carleton University Daycare Center might lose its government funding due to lack of an outdoor play space. Although the university had designated a small plot adjacent to the center, the center's director insisted that the area be made safe and conducive to the development of the children's social, cognitive, and physical skills, as is the case for the design of the indoor daycare facility. The students wanted me to serve as their advisor so as to enable them to apply for a government Opportunities for Youth grant to cover summer work salaries for six students to design and build a creative playground for toddlers. The student's firm and passionate commitment to do something good was infectious. It brought out the good in me. So I got involved and together we prepared the proposal, which secured funds to pay for student salaries.

We then organized a playground planning workshop, inviting a couple of professors, as well as several experienced and well-placed professionals from the Canadian Council on Children and Youth, and the Provincial Ministry of Sport, Culture, and Recreation. We also hired four additional students to

bring in expertise from the Schools of Architecture and Engineering.

To prepare ourselves for the workshop we quickly devised an observational protocol to assist in making systematic observations of toddlers at play in several local parks and in other outdoor daycare facilities. We also sought input from teachers at the center, and from parents whose children were attending the center.

The planning workshop generated super concepts. Then our team held several lengthy meetings to sort through all the ideas, because each proposed play structure had to be considered not just in terms of safety, and developmental potential, but also in terms of cost, since the grant money was for salaries only.

The play space required fourteen weeks to design and construct. One student assumed the role of construction superintendent, another did the accounting, and the rest of us did the labouring and scrounging for materials and construction equipment. The building stage involved a happy mixture of fun in the sun, hard physical labour, and cold one's at days end (what I mean here is cold Perrier). Translating our formal knowledge about playfulness and design, into concrete realities was rewarding for all of us. Other fruits of this collaboration included the following:

- A play space which literally saved our Day Care Center, and provided a safe outdoor environment within which the toddlers could explore, discover, create, and learn to get along with each other with minimal adult intervention.
- A Handbook designed by our team to assist community groups to develop

their own toddler play spaces. This handbook, complete with hints and graphs, was made available through the provincial Ministry of Sport and Recreation.

- A meaningful and exciting multi disciplinary learning experience for six students, as well as summer salaries.
- Materials and data for two honours student theses and for a journal publication.

The second example of collaboration was my last masters thesis student, Debbie Stewart. At our first meeting, when I asked about her previous research, she outlined in rather dull tones the research question, method, and findings of her honours thesis. Apparently, her study had contributed more to her advisers program of research than to her own interests. Then I asked if there was anything related to sport and performance about which she was truly curious. She quickly told me about her concern for her boyfriend, a football player from our local University of Ottawa. Apparently, he was struggling to make the huge leap into the National Football League (NFL). After playing briefly for a professional team in Texas he was now on the injured list and worried about ever successfully making the pro transition. When I suggested that she might like to do her master's research on this problem, she asked, "How can you do an experiment on that"? So started her nine month conversion toward qualitative methods, a conversion which for me had taken thirty four years.

In parallel with her philosophy of science and methodological readings, we also reviewed literature on career transitions in general. Based on some of this, we soon

developed a structured, open-ended interview schedule which Debbie used as a guide for interviews with her boyfriend and three retired professional football players available in the area.

Next, we contacted a top NFL agent to explain our purpose and to seek advice about how to contact other NFL players. In order to provide conceptual leverage for our future content analyses, we decided to seek input from three types of players: a) veteran pros who had made the transition and successfully established themselves; b) pros who had passed the main part of the transition but who were still struggling to secure a solid footing; c) and finally, we also looked for a few players who had been equally great at college, invited to camps, but were ultimately unsuccessful in the transition.

With help from agents, and from a growing social network of contacts among pro players, we managed to involve twenty-one players as informant-collaborators. Of the six successful veterans, five had been All-American at college, and four had received professional awards, such as All-Pro and All-Madden. We contacted athletes through their agents, or through other pros. We explained to each player why we needed his collaboration. This was done either via telephone when possible, or by letter. We arranged to secure their input through audio-taped self-interviews, guided by an improved interview schedule. This procedure was convenient for them, and realistic for us. When necessary, clarification was obtained by follow-up telephone calls. Some may ask at this point, does being an interviewee-informant constitute collaboration? In my view, the answer depends on how the participant is approached and oriented, how the questions are asked (open or closed), and whether a two-way channel remains open between investigators and informants. Lis-

ten to how Debbie approached her informants, and judge for yourself:

I'm a sport psychology student working on my masters thesis. After I graduate I'd like to work with athletes. Maybe one thing I can help them with is adjusting to things in their sport life, like overcoming injuries, and handling big career changes like moving from amateur to pro sport, handling big career changes like moving from amateur to pro sport, getting traded, and retiring. For my thesis I'd like to find out what its like for players like you to move up from college to pro football. I've talked to four pro players who have gone through this change, and they've helped me to know some of the important questions to ask.

... When answering the questions feel free to say everything that comes to mind, even if you think that it may be off-topic. You are the expert on this subject, and everything you have to say is important.

... If you want to talk a bit more about this change in your career, or if you have any questions just call me collect or call my advisor, John Partington

When the data came in, Debbie and I worked together on the content analyses of the transcripts. She would attempt to identify categories and code lists of typical reports. Then she would come to me, often in despair. We would usually play around with other possibilities for hours, in a very loose, open atmosphere of discovery. Usually during this process, Debbie would start smiling again. We developed a really great give and take style; when I would run out of gas, she would come on strong, and vice-versa. Two heads are truly better than one if both can maintain a playful attitude. Before doing final content analyses Debbie con-

vinced eight friends to work independently to see whether their independent reading of the transcripts would generate similar categories. Once satisfied that we understood the findings, we wrote them up, along with implications and recommended advice. We then re-contacted two players from the successful group and three from the struggling group to have them review our preliminary draft report to ensure that our advice would be useful to other players in transition.

This project involved Debbie and I as collaborators, several agents and pro players as helpful contact people, twenty one players as informant-collaborators, with five of these also serving as experts to review our recommendations, as well as eight of Debbie's friends assisting in data analyses. Cooperation from everybody was important.

Collaboration also appears in the findings and implementation of the findings. We found that the most important element in successful transition to the NFL is the new players' openness and willingness to seek advice from the veteran players. During all stages of the transition, from before the draft to after team cuts, players who made a successful transition into the NFL asked questions of experienced players, received answers, and were open to this advice. One player put it this way:

I got to meet a lot of NFL players in their off-season when they came back to my university to work-out or take classes. I could ask them anything. I learned a lot. I took two classes with one of the guys and I would ask him all kinds of stuff when we'd go to lunch - how he worked out, what their schedule was like, how he went about picking an agent, how he invested his money, just everything that I knew I would have to do if I made it to that point. So that was the biggest part of my preparation.

Another finding may also be related to this advice seeking - i.e., when facing the transition, those who made it, reported not feeling equal to other players in the league in their particular playing position. They knew they lacked experience and they recognized that there were many outstanding veterans from whom they could gain valuable advice. They tried to make friends with experienced players and treated them as mentors. Whereas players in the unsuccessful group reported feeling equal to other players. They made friends with them, but were less likely to seek their advice.

In any event, it seems that collaboration among players, in terms of seeking and giving advice is a key element in facilitating the transition from amateur to pro football.

Fruits of collaboration from this project include the following: Debbie got her degree and helped her boyfriend. Many other players will soon be helped in their transition by advice in a Handbook currently in preparation, which Debbie will make available to agents. Finally, working on this project helped me through the transition to life beyond my university career. There are rich intrinsic personal gains available from working in collaboration with others. Now retired, I will miss the opportunity to collaborate with all my students

Turning next to collaboration with colleagues, I have to say that the best team of people I've ever worked with, outside my family, were people most of you know - Terry Orlick, Cal Botterill, Wayne Halliwell, and John Salmela. At our 1977 Canadian Sport Psychology Conference, Salmela, as a member of the International Society for Sport Psychology (ISSP) Managing Council, called for bids to host the 1981 ISSP meeting. Orlick and I put together an Ottawa bid which beat others in Canada, and the next

year Salmela and I flew to Munich where we presented our bid. It took our combined efforts and resources to win the honour to host the Fifth World Sport Psychology Congress in Ottawa, Canada. John was, and still is, very well respected and well-connected at the international level of our discipline, and he is, as you know, both energetic, and socially adroit, at times bordering on the Machiavellian. My contribution was a professional-looking bid, an exciting short film prepared to show the wonders of Ottawa, and I believe the clincher was at the right moment I distributed 12 bottles of Double Dimple scotch all around the table.

After our return to Canada, Cal, Wayne, Terry, John and I began to meet regularly for the next three years to conceptualize and plan the program, and to identify and contact productive and influential speakers from both within and outside our discipline. Anyone who has been involved in this kind of ambitious, long-range project knows the importance of collaboration. You can't alone. For example, the aura and critical mass of a well-prepared team presentation can sell the conference message and thereby gain endorsements better than most individuals could do. Moreover, throughout the long-haul, momentum can be sustained, even when one or two individuals fall sick or become over committed.

What made our lengthy collaboration work in my view was the mutual commitment in our team to three goals for this conference: First, to firmly establish the discipline of sport psychology as a central and powerful force in the mental preparation of athletes. The second goal was to raise public awareness and concern over the erosion of values in sport, with the hope of getting sport back in perspective. That, in fact, was the title of our conference (Sport in Perspective). Our third implicit goal was to boost the work of

sport psychologists in our country. In addition to these common goals, another factor in our successful collaboration was our similarity. In those days, each of us loved to work hard and to play hard; we all liked to take a chance, break some rules, and try to make a statement or have an impact through what we were doing. These similarities generated mutual respect and liking, which in turn, facilitated the resolution of issues when they arose. We were generally able to keep our big egos out of the way. In the count-down months before the conference, Carol Anne Letherin joined our team and, provided super-efficient management (Carol Anne went on to become the first female President of the Canadian Olympic Association). Finally, on-site, our team was strengthened with the addition of a large company of very bright and energetic sport psychology graduate students from the University of Ottawa.

The congress attracted participants and delegates from many disciplines, and from 42 countries, including Papua New Guinea, each of the FEPSAC countries, including those behind the then “iron curtain”, and even two from the People’s Republic of China. Our charismatic Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau, gave the opening speech, and then the well-known figure skater, Toller Cranston, provided a dazzling performance to get us all into the spirit of sport and performance.

We also sought children’s input for getting sport in perspective at the conference and initiated a national art contest to have children send in drawings of their favourite moments in sport and physical activity. The three published volumes of proceedings reflected world-wide input on motor learning and control, coaching, and on value issues in sport. Through collaboration we made sig-

nificant progress toward achieving each of our conference goals.

Before moving on, I want to insert an addendum. As Co-chairmen for the conference, Terry and I experienced great difficulty in maintaining our role as equal-status collaborators, especially when dealing with large bureaucratic organizations, for example, when seeking funds from our Federal Government through Sport Canada. The usual first question was, who is in charge? When we answered, “we both are”, the trouble would begin. It seems that people in formal organizations don’t understand or accept the pre-fix, “co”, which Webster defines as implying, “together with”. This is one indication that there may be subtle cultural pressures against collaboration.

Magic Moments

Now to conclude I will try to recapture some of the magic, and some of the magical moments which I’ve experienced through twenty five years of association with my colleague Terry Orlick. During those twenty- five years Terry has accomplished a prodigious amount of influential work without me, and I to have done some useful work without him both inside and outside the sport domain. However, in a recent conversation, Terry and I agreed that we always feel most inspired when working together. I’ll touch on two examples of our collaboration. My purpose is to provide you with evidence to help you understand what made our collaboration both necessary and possible.

My initial encounter with Terry was at the First National Conference on the Child in Sport and Physical Activity. That brief contact led me to ask him to join a panel I was organizing to discuss the role of play and games in child development. The panel was for elementary school teachers as part of their professional development program.

Later that year, Terry invited me to accompany him to Montreal to attend another first national conference, this one on the Movement Sciences. You can see from all the First National Conferences that interest in play and sport was exploding at that time. During this brief period of acquaintance Terry and I became aware of our common applied interests. We were certainly on the same wave-length in our joint concern about the growing trend in sport toward antagonistic, rivalrous competition.

At the Montreal conference I met an old football teammate of mine, Harvey Scott, who had turned into a Sport Sociologist. It turned out that he was a colleague of Terry's on a project involving native youth in the high arctic. As things should happen at any conference, Harvey and Terry started talking shop, and I jumped in raising questions about the goals of the program, and about the methodology. In a soft spoken put-up or shut-up tones they invited me to become involved.

I will now tell you about this first arctic project we worked on together. At that time native children in the arctic at around the grade 6 level or earlier were taken from their home settlements and placed for 9-10 months in large regional schools. They were supervised and taught by non-native teachers using a "southern" curriculum like that in Edmonton Alberta. Needless to say there was a very high drop out rate, with the drop-outs ill-equipped to fit back into a traditional life-style. Over the years as these youth became adult, alcoholism and wife and child abuse increased. To counter this trend the North West Territories recreation department initiated the Territorial Experimental Ski Training Program (TEST). The goal of this competitive cross-country ski program was to motivate northern youth to greater general achievement in life. The authorities

recognized that the schools were failing to do this. The Board of Directors of TEST hoped to give Indian and Inuit youth a better chance to compete in the rapidly approaching "modern" world. The program began in the urban government town of Inuvik in 1967. Unfortunately, the first evaluation phase from 1971 to 1973 had yielded little, because no prior baseline measures had been obtained and because measures had been used which were inappropriate to children from a native culture.

Terry and I wanted to study program effects on younger native youth in small settlements, because such kids were more likely to hold traditional values at the outset. Our timing was fortuitous because the TEST Board members were thinking of introducing the program into settlements the next year. Our challenge then was to develop some appropriate psycho-social measures quickly, and to obtain baseline measures before the kids started skiing. Thankfully, Terry had already made several prior visits to the north, so he knew what the children were like. My contribution would be experience in test construction, after work with Doug Jackson.

This phase of the project would require us to work hard, fast, long, and closely together. Such a situation involves more than two "scientist-practitioners" combining their expertise and professionalism. Rather we were, and still are two very, human, beings, each with different needs. In those days Terry could work forever without a break. In contrast I've always looked forward to a tea and pee break about every seventy five minutes, a good run or ski at noon, and I like to eat now and then. If not, watch out. Most grandchildren call their grandfather something nice like, "Papa", at dinner-time mine call me "Grumpy John". To his credit, Terry has learned to read and respond to my

needs. I too have learned to accommodate to Terry's work style. Thus, at the person-to-person level, collaboration demands interpersonal sensitivity, and both courage and social skills to communicate your feelings when necessary.

While telling you about the measures we developed, I'll keep emphasizing the importance of collaboration. Our initial discussion of the scope to be covered by the measures showed that we both like to err in the direction of thoroughness. Thus we decided to use multiple indices both at the individual and social level.

For our social level assessment of change in achievement motivation, we decided to perform McClelland-style content analyses of children's stories which were re-regularly published in the monthly newsletter of the settlement under the headings, Town News, Bush News, and Sport News. There are 12 native adult education students who do the editing. Naturally, we recognized that the school teachers would have to collaborate with us on this because of their familiarity with the children's idiosyncrasies in the way they expressed themselves when using our language.

The other social-level measure was taken from Roger Barker's work on behaviour settings. The social opportunities in a community and any changes therein can be identified by listing and describing all the behaviour settings in a community. We all know that the school gym is one place, physically and geographically. But depending on social changes in activity, leadership, and participants, the gym could represent several different behaviour settings, such as for bingos, for dances and for adult aerobics classes, in short a variety of social opportunities. Would the introduction of the TEST program change the social opportu-

nity structure of a small settlement? To answer this question, once again, we would need collaboration from several native and non-native residents who were well-acquainted with and accepted by the people and places in the settlement.

Turning next to our individual-level measures, the first was to determine whether there would be an association between skiing achievement and social acceptance by peers. We decided to use the usual sociometric device which asks children to list three others who you'd like to be your friend. For a measure of school achievement the usual indices like grades were useless because grades were seldom assigned, students of several ages were all mixed together in the same class, and some bright students were doing work to catch up due to periods of absence out in the bush with their family, trapping and hunting. Thus, all that we could do was to discuss our need to collaborate with teachers as soon as we arrived in the north, so that we could put our heads together to identify some qualitative indices of students, school performance and attitudes. That is what we did when we got up there, we collaborated with the teachers.

This brings us to the development of a culturally appropriate individual measure to assess change in self conception and in attitudes relevant to the self-change goals of the TEST program. In our first work session on this, Terry and I found ourselves finding good reasons to crap on everything available, which was easy to do. Actually this initial strategy has become a ritual for us now. We always have to clear things away in order to create. This is easy for the two of us because of our similar attitudes. For example, each of us has come to the conclusion that it is important to beware of any and all tests and measures. There is nothing

mean-spirited about this. It's just that this kind of attitude helps us to keep focused on clients needs, rather than becoming ensnared by an over-concern for using the "in" methodology of the day.

After we wiped the slate clean, the first few minutes were difficult. Where do we go from here? We started with just a general awareness of how settlement kids might be functioning now, and of how they might be functioning after being influenced by the ski program. How can I describe what happened next? You know how writers in the play literature talk about kids entering a play state? That is what it was like for us. Each of us seemed to slip across a boundary, to a place of mind which didn't concern itself with rules and consequences. At this point, usually one, then the other will cast an idea out onto the still waters of our mutual focus. Sometimes it happens faster. We toss our ideas back and forth like kids playing catch. But right from that first work session, and certainly more so now, we tend to be gentle with each other's ideas.

I can best explain this by reference to how a concertmaster put it to me in one of our interviews. He was recalling a situation in which he had been trying to allow his body to discover something it didn't yet know, that is, the way to produce a particular musical statement through the violin. He spoke as follows:

What you are doing is exploring. You are trying out different stuff. And then there always comes a time when it happens, almost by accident. Now if you're cool, and not tense, and with a little bit of luck, you may be able to just notice it. You go, "Oh jeez, it happened. What was I doing then"? If you don't pounce on it with both feet, if you just see if it will slide by you again... sort of while you're looking over

here, maybe that thing will happen over there, and maybe you'll be able to sort of catch it.

That is what I mean by Terry and I being gentle. We don't pounce on seemingly great ideas, nor do we stifle those which, at the moment, appear less promising, because later on that idea might fit. We have learned to nurture our ideas.

As I recall, in this first test development experience, I talked about Osgood's Semantic Differential as a general format, because it has been used to measure how people evaluate and define a wide range of concepts. I scribbled "Me" at the top of a page, and scribbled a few bi-polar scales down the page, like "active-lazy", "cooperative-competitive" Terry said, "yah, maybe we should hold on to that". He liked the fact that we could insert dimension labels that the kids could understand. But then he reminded me about how northern kids love reading comic books way more than reading school books because they like action pictures better than words. I connected that suggestion to Hadly Cantrill's pictorial measure of life satisfaction. It was developed to use with African people to predict their discontent, and thereby to anticipate revolution. The measure shows a picture of a mountain, with the top being an ideal place to be. The respondent is asked to show where he is now on the mountain and where he thinks he'll be in two or five years. I'm a little unclear about how long the next creative step took, but I do remember Terry showing me a day or two later some sketches which he produced. The sketches showed stick figures on skis, one at each end of a wiggly line representing a ski trail. Each figure was saying something, like they do in comic books. Euroka! The "Skimetric Differential" was born. The final twenty-two dimensions included self-attributes, and attitudes important to tradi-

tional Northerners, as we had gleaned from writings of the Canadian cultural anthropologists who had spent long periods of time doing field work in the high arctic. The items represent the importance of sharing and team work, attitudes about winning and being humble in victory, and man struggling with nature rather than competing against man, and the importance of helping others over beating others.

Once drafts of the skimetric test were available we held a series of interviews with Indian and Inuit children to determine whether each child could understand each item, and if not, how could the item be changed. I'll never forget those fun-filled collaboration sessions.

Finally, armed with potentially decent measures, and with permission from the TEST Board and the School Board, we obtained test-retest and criterion validity data from a sample of 380 native students in Inuvik. This turned out to be very hard work, since we could only deal with three or four children at a time, and they liked to lie down together on the floor while filling out their tests, wiggling and giggling. To assess criterion validity we asked three long-standing northerners, who were familiar with the families of many of the school children, to select two extreme samples to represent students from low and high achievement oriented homes. Our Skimetric test found that kids from non-achieving homes were more traditional in the sense of being more collectively and sharing oriented. These findings encouraged us to think that our new test might be sensitive to personal changes associated with the ski training program.

I mentioned that we worked hard on this trip, but I didn't mention how cold and dark it was all night and all day too. Such conditions provide another reason why it's im-

portant to collaborate with someone you know and like. A research mate really helps when working in the field, especially far away from home and in a different culture. This lesson was particularly reinforced for us years later in a double culture-shock situation when we were asked to work with tank and armoured reconnaissance units in preparation for NATO war games in Germany.

My last item about collaboration in this study concerns what I call "honey-bucket" diplomacy. On our first night in Inuvik, after our meeting with the TEST Board of Directors, I was asked by one of the key board members to critically review the methodology of an opinion survey. It seems that the largely white city fathers intended to use the survey as a means of obtaining ammunition to support new restrictions on the use of beer and alcohol, restrictions unpopular to many in this community. I was tired and a bit put off, but Terry knew that it was best for me to do it because he knew from experience that in the north you are expected to give help. Terry had learned this previously when he wanted to study northern games. Yes, he could observe the games at the big event, but he had to join the honey-bucket brigade to carry away and dispose of human waste. Collaboration, it seems, begets collaboration.

Lets move on to our work in the small settlement of Tulita (Fort Norman) where over a three year period 1973-1975 we made several site-visits to assess effects of the TEST program, through our measures, and by observing skiers while training there, and also as they competed up in Inuvik at the Top of the World Games. With all of our measures and observations though we learned a tremendous amount we failed to find support for the expected effects of the program. If anything, those children most actively in-

volved with TEST seemed to become more, not less, traditional. One explanation for this is that the school principal, and coach, allowed the kids to take skis out on the trap lines when their family left town to live in the bush. Another possible explanation emerged from our detailed investigation of one particular case. This boy in 1973, at base-line testing, had a marginal sociometric status; i.e., only 7% wanted him as their friend. Later though, after he started to become a good skier, his popularity increased from 7% to 18%. However, in 1975, when he really began to excel in skiing, his popularity dropped back to 7%. This suggested to us that there may be normative peer pressures against too much achievement in non-traditional activities like competitive skiing (and possibly even school work). Greater light was shed on this when we interviewed the mother of a national caliber skier who had been trained by the TEST program. Her sad comment was, “He doesn’t come home much anymore”. The son’s achievement and success in modern world sport had taken him away from her, and from her community. Remember, in these traditional settlements people are still very interdependent. They still need each other for physical and cultural survival. So the question was raised, do natives have an achievement program, or do they just have a problem with our kind of achievement?

To sum up, this study illustrates three things: First, the collaboration between Terry and I was both necessary and fruitful; second, our willingness to collaborate and work on the opinion survey actually opened the door for us to do our work in the settlements; and third, our findings suggest that perhaps the individual winning, competitive-ethnic variety of achievement is antithetical to traditional native valuing of interdependence, and is therefore threatening and disruptive to

those whose native and life necessity predicate collaboration.

I will now move on quickly to one last example of what I have learned about how collaboration can lead to excellence. This example is focused on the evaluation which Terry and I conducted of our elite amateur sport system, as reflected in the mental preparation of our athletes for the 1984 Olympic Games. Many of you by now have probably read about this in the article, “Mental Links to Excellence”. Thus, I won’t rehash the methodology and findings. Rather, I’ll stick to items relevant to collaboration.

First, how and why did Terry and I become involved in this as collaborators? The answer is that in the fall of 1984, Abby Hoffman our new Director General of Sport Canada, the head— of amateur sport, wished to investigate horror stories she had been hearing through the grape-vine concerning the possibility that some of our Olympic athletes had had their heads and performances screwed up by a few clinical and a few sport psychologists, a few coaches, and a few quacks. I’m sure she invited Terry in because she was aware of his broad and intimate knowledge of coaches and athletes at the national level in about nine sports, and because she knew that he had been seeking funds to find out exactly why some of our athletes had done so well at the ‘84 Games. I was called in because Abby had heard me give an invited talk at a recent SCAAPS meeting on “Evaluating Sport Psyching” and Terry recommended me as “an essential part of the project”.

From that talk she would know that I had broad knowledge of evaluation methodology, that I had never worked with elite athletes (thus I was naive), and finally, she probably sensed in me the same reservations

that she herself had about the value of mental training. Another possible reason why she brought us in together rather than separately may be because we were seen as a credible team, following our visible co-hosting of the Fifth World Congress. As it turned out, having the two of us made it possible for me to interview all those athletes with whom Terry had worked, thus censuring a bit more validity to the interviewing part of our procedure.

The key thing which I suggested at our first meeting was for Abby to strike both a steering committee and a working committee to ensure that all client groups likely to be affected by the study would have input into the formulation and execution of the investigation. I learned this strategy from the work of Michael Patton. When people are involved as collaborators, study findings are more useful, because those involved feel a sense of ownership of the study, and are therefore much more likely to respond constructively to study recommendations in the Final Report.

To illustrate client involvement, do you know who formulated the opening question for our interview schedule, and survey questionnaire? At one of our working committee meetings we were trying to decide whether or not to use brief video clips of the start of each athlete's Olympic performance to get them back into the spirit of the competition, so that their interview recall might be sharpened. Abby, our top client (and former Olympian), piped up, "Why not just ask them, when you got to the line, were you ready?" When we tried that question out the next day with a couple of local Olympic athletes you could just see their hair stand on end, and their nostrils flare. No videos necessary, thanks to Abby's insightful collaboration. How could Abby,

later on, not feel that she had played a significant role in the study?

By making sure that key figures in sport were personally involved like John Bales who was, then Technical Director for the Coaching Association of Canada, and some top national coaches, and athlete representatives, it was possible for us to convince Abby to broaden the scope of our investigation to encompass, not just the horror stories, not just what went wrong, but also the success stories, so as to learn how athletes prepared mentally to achieve excellence at the Olympic Games. Moreover, the committee collaboration also ensured that after the findings were in, analyzed, and the Final Report written, we were given support to do a number of other things. First, to present the findings at the National Coaches Seminar, after which Jack Donohue, head coach for Men's Basketball, rushed up to tell us that he'd already telephoned home some rich quotes to be put up on the player's bulletin board. Next, we wrote the book, **Psyched: Inner Views of Winning**, and we subsequently received support from Sport Canada and the Coaching Association not only to print it, but also to make free copies available to all national coaches and to every single carded athlete in Canada. Thus our findings didn't just sit in a drawer. They reached those who could profit directly and immediately from them.

Let me insert a little anecdote here. When Abby first brought us in for this study, it was no secret that she had little respect for certain sport psychologists, and held serious reservations about our discipline. Moreover, we knew that she believed that athletes should train very hard physically and try to make it on their own. This is probably because that's what she had done as a middle-distance competitor. After our book was completed, before it went to press, I asked

her for a piece to include. One of the things she wrote was, “The stories in this book demonstrate that if we neglect the mental side of high performance, we will do so at our peril”. I believe that this statement represents a slight shift in her attitude toward athlete preparation, and I further believe that her active collaboration in our study had something to do with it, as it did for changes in my own attitudes.

The fruits of our extended collaboration on this project continued to materialize. After the book, came a Sport Canada funded workshop organized by Terry and I for sport psychologists slated to work with athletes at the 1988 Olympics; this was to enable them to share their goals and strategies. Next we developed and published the Consultant Evaluation Form designed to enable consultants to receive feedback from clients on concrete behaviours and characteristics related to their effectiveness. Subsequently Terry and I developed Mental Training Exercises to help athletes determine their present level of mental readiness, both for quality practice as well as for successful competitive performance. These exercises were designed to model what our best athletes have reported doing. Hence, the athlete respondent can know at once not only where he is strong and where he is weak, but also what he needs to do more of to improve. Our collaboration with athletes in the past, has made it possible for us to build a collaborative bridge, called the Mental Training Exercises, to enable a seeking athlete to symbolically link up with procedural knowledge of former athletes, and thus find a key to more successful performance.

Now I simply must insert the next few remarks. It took me all summer to dump the negative moments of my career, before I could go on to write this happy account you’ve read to this point. I’ve given you a

sanitized version of things. I admit that there have been terrible moments as well as magic moments through my many collaborations. Moments filled with jealousy, suspicion and disappointment in others, and sometimes even white hot rage. But as I examined each of these memories, I was able to realize in retrospect that those occasions could have been avoided if I had been trained to assert myself to negotiate, and above all to forgive. With such simple personal skills training I could have accomplished so much more. I never collaborated with many professors in my own department because I couldn’t trust them. What a waste. I couldn’t trust them with my ignorance.

To conclude I would like to return to two as yet unanswered questions which I raised at the beginning of the talk; i.e., why, before writing this paper I have never felt truly comfortable knowing that most of my work has not been done independently, and why didn’t Len Zakowski mention the importance of training to be collaborative in his essay?

At the beginning of this article I hinted about possible cultural influences. Please don’t groan, but I want to take us back to a 1977 article by a sociologist, Ed Sampson from Clark University. The article was entitled, “Psychology and the American Ideal”. Sampson was criticizing American personality psychologists of that era. He started out by observing that the American cultural ideal at that time was to be entirely self-sufficient, to be able to stand alone, to be able to succeed and become “number one” through individual striving. Let me insert anecdotally that around this time an NBC camera crew came up to Ottawa to record a program on Terry Orlick’s cooperative games. When the play leader explained the cooperative rules, a camera man was overheard to say, “Why, that’s down-

right Un American”. Now back to Sampson. He singled out the then current research focus on Androgyny. He explained that the androgynous personality represents a synthesis, within an individual, of the best of culturally defined male and female dispositions. Such an individual would certainly be socially self-sufficient. The research was showing that androgynous Americans were very successful and well adjusted. The interpretation of these findings was that this kind of personality synthesis was a valued goal for everybody. But Sampson chided psychologists for falling into a cultural trap. Of course socially self-sufficient, androgynous individuals fit comfortably within the American culture, which values individual self-sufficiency. But then Sampson asked, what if this cultural imperative of self-sufficiency is flawed? What if such a cultural expectation results in more and more people dropping out, because they can't manage to “get it all together” and thus they can't make the grade? And what if the American ideal of standing tall and independent may become a less and less realistic strategy for dealing with the increasingly complex challenges of our modern world? Sampson urged American personality psychologists to recognize and accept their role to be social leaders through their research, rather than just being social commentators of what seems to be working now. He asserted that if Americans have a better chance of survival through interdependent, collaborative efforts, then psychologists should be leading the way, by learning through their research how to prepare people to join their individual talents together so as to provide a productive group level synthesis of talents for dealing with problems.

When I read Len's essay about the scientist-practitioner, I saw Len's model through Sampson's eyes; i.e., as a model of different skills synthesized within an individual sport

psychologist. Naturally, I have to ask the following questions: Are we being realistic to expect all of our students to incorporate a synthesis of the best dispositions and skills of both the scientist and the practitioner? As an aside, are they expected to learn the rules and procedures of natural, or human science, or both? Will a student's striving to achieve his or her own personal synthesis of these skills make him or her less likely to learn important social skills through opportunities to work together with others on team projects? Will our students curricula be so loaded with theory courses, psychometric courses, stats courses, content analysis and qualitative research courses, and counseling courses, that our students will have little energy left, or motivation to learn how to join, or synthesize, their skills with those of others, by working together on truly changing and all-consuming applied projects, to solve real problems being experienced by real people?

I want to finish by passing on a related lesson which I learned from an interview with Robert Cram, principal flutist for our National Arts Center orchestra and Director of the University of Ottawa School of Music. He was talking about preparation of those students who actually want to make music, in the performance sense, as opposed to teaching or composing. In our terms, these students would be like our applied students, who want to go out and work with athletes. He said the following:

The thing that is really pushed in school is the mechanics, how you do it, how it's going to work. There is one layer after another that is given, basically all mechanical. One of the main problems in teaching students (to actually make emotionally meaningful music) is that they think that they are going to learn, by adding stuff on; pick up a bushel of this and a basket of that; dump it on top

of what you already have, and they are going to become great flute players. I find that the hardest part of teaching is to teach kids that they have to get rid of all that stuff, so that you can start giving them something that actually does the job for them. It's like wanting to learn how to swim - first, you have to take off your clothes.

Robert Cram was saying that too much training about technique or mechanics and too much formal theory can get in the way of being able to make a personal connection with the music on an emotional level, which is absolutely necessary for making music in a performance situation. The lessons that

Robert Cram said his students really needed, included learning personal dispositions and skills like having patience to be able to listen deeply to the music so as to feel what the composer is saying through the dots on the musical score. Only through such non-academic but very essential skills can anyone make music which may inspire others. Is there a parallel here to what we are trying to accomplish with our applied students? Are we guilty of piling too much on? What can we do to help our students to collaborate with athletes, to listen patiently, to feel with them, and ultimately to inspire and be inspired by them?