

## **Imagery Exercise 2**

### **Classroom Activity**

Imagery used by athletes in addition to being seen from different visual perspectives, can incorporate many additional senses such as being able to hear, smell, taste, or feel characteristics within the image. Secondly, it can serve a number of other benefits which include learning skills and strategies, and other motivational purposes such as improving concentration and increasing self efficacy.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

After completing this activity, students should be able to:

1. Analyse a quote given by an elite athlete on their use of imagery
2. Identify different qualities of imagery use (e.g., sensory experience, visual perspective)

### *Classroom Imagery Exercise (Timing of Imaged Movements)*

This exercise can be employed as a teacher lead class exercise or as a small group activity.

### **Equipment and facilities needed**

1. 6 x Athlete imagery quotes
2. Response sheet

### **Procedure (for a small group activity)**

- Split the class up into groups so each group can work through one of the imagery quotes (there are 6 imagery quotes)
- Provide each group with one of the quotes on imagery by an athlete from the six provided, and ask them to analyse it as follows.
  1. Identify what type(s) of imagery appear to be present in the quote
  2. Identify what perspective the person appears to be using. Does it seem to be internal, external or both?
  3. What senses seem to be involved?

**Please note:** the perspective and senses used may not be obvious in all quotes. Students should therefore describe what they can identify/infer from the quote, whether it is obvious or not, and from the video lecture, focus on what perspective could be advisable and what senses could be used.

### **Variations**

1. This activity can also be done as a class exercise working through each imagery script
2. If wanting to run the exercise as a group activity with a small class size, groups can have more than one quote and also discuss the similarities and differences between the imagery used by the athletes.

## Imagery Quotes

### **Lori Fung, former Olympic champion in rhythmic gymnastics:**

“Sometimes I would think, Why did I miss that one move? OK, I know what happened, I pulled my body in too close to the apparatus. OK, now how do I avoid that? Then I try to see myself doing it correctly in imagery. I can actually see the apparatus coming down; I can see the stripe on the club as it rotates, the same way you’d see it when you’re doing the routine; that’s the best way. Most of the time I look at it from within, because that’s the way it’s going to be in competition. It is natural because I do the routines so many times that it’s drilled into my head, what I see and how I do it. So if I think about a certain part of my club routine, or my ribbon routine, I think of it as the way I’ve done it so many times, and that’s from within my body.”

(Taken from Orlick, T. (2000). *In pursuit of excellence: How to win in sport and life through mental training*. (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, p. 111)

### **Sylvie Bernier, a former Olympic champion in springboard diving:**

“I did my dives in my head all the time. At night, before going to sleep, I always did my dives. Ten dives. I started with a front dive, the first one that I had to do at the Olympics, and I did everything as if I was actually there. I saw myself in the pool at the Olympics doing my dives. If the dive was wrong, I went back and started over again. For me it was better than a workout. I felt like I was on the board. Sometimes I would take the weekend off and do imagery five times a day. It took me a long time to control my images and perfect my imagery, maybe a year, doing it every day. At first I couldn’t see myself, I always saw everyone else, or I would see my dives wrong all the time. I would get an image of hurting myself, or tripping on the board, or I would “see” something done really bad. As I continued to work at it, I got to the point where I could feel myself on the board doing a perfect dive and hear the crowd yelling at the Olympics. I worked at it so much, I got to the point that I could do all my dives easily. Sometimes I would even be in the middle of a conversation with someone and I would think of one of my dives and “do it” (in my mind).”

(Taken from Orlick, T. (2000). *In pursuit of excellence: How to win in sport and life through mental training*. (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, p. 110-111)

**Alex Baumann, double Olympic gold medallist and world record holder in swimming:**

“The best way I have learned to prepare mentally for competitions is to visualize the race in my mind and to put down a split time. The splits I use in my imagery are determined by my coach and myself, for each part of the race. For example, in the 200 individual medley, splits are made up for each 50 meters because after 50 meters the stroke changes. These splits are based on training times and what we feel I’m capable of doing. In my imagery I concentrate on attaining the splits I have set out to do. About 15 minutes before the race I always visualize the race in my mind and see how it will go. I see where everybody else is, and then I really focus on myself. I do not worry about anybody else. I think about my own race and nothing else. I am really swimming the race in my mind. I go up and down the pool, rehearsing all parts of the race, imagining how I actually feel in the water. I try to get those splits in my mind, and after that I am ready to go. That is what really got me the world record and Olympic medals.

(Taken from Orlick, T. (2000). *In pursuit of excellence: How to win in sport and life through mental training*. (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, p. 116)

**Bill Russell, 5-time Most Valuable Player of the NBA, and in the Basketball Hall of Fame:**

“On this particular night I was working on replays of many plays, including McKelvey’s way of taking an offensive rebound and moving quickly to the hoop. It’s a fairly simple play for any big man in basketball, but I didn’t execute it well and McKelvey did. Since I had an accurate version of his technique in my head, I started playing with the image right there on the bench, running back the picture several times and each time inserting part of me for McKelvey. Finally I saw myself making the whole move, and I ran this over and over, too. When I went into the game, I grabbed an offensive rebound and put it in the basket just the way McKelvey did. It seemed natural, almost as if I were just stepping into a film and following the signs. When the imitation worked and the ball went in, I could barely contain myself. I was so elated I thought I would float right out of the gym. Every time I’d tried to copy moves in the past, I’d dribbled the ball off my arm or committed some other goof. Now for the first time I had transferred something from my head to my body. It seemed so easy. My first dose of athletic confidence was coming to me when I was 18 years old.”

(Taken from Orlick, T. (2000). *In pursuit of excellence: How to win in sport and life through mental training*. (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, p. 113)

**Jack Nicklaus, all-time great golfer (1976):**

“Before every shot I go to the movies inside my head. Here is what I see. First, I see the ball where I want it to finish, nice and white and sitting up high on the bright green grass. Then, I see the ball going there; its path and trajectory and even its behavior on landing. The next scene shows me making the kind of swing that will turn the previous image into reality. These home movies are a key to my concentration and to my positive approach to every shot.”

(Taken from Weinberg, R.S. & Gould, D. (1999). *Foundations of Sport and Exercise Psychology*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, p. 266.)

**Al Oerter, four-time discus gold medallist in four different Olympics:**

“I used to imagine that it was the day of the Olympic trials, the day that I had spent the last four years preparing for, and that it was raining. Pouring rain. The throwing area was slippery, conditions were atrocious, and I had to go out and throw anyway. And I imagined myself throwing well. I visualized myself throwing strongly, with god technique despite the rain. Or sometimes I would imagine that I was down to my last throw in the Olympic finals. The Russian was competing right ahead of me, and with his last throw he set a world record. So to win the gold medal, I now had to set a new world record! On my last throw of the Games, I would imagine that I did just that; I would see myself setting a new world record. Those were the things I visualized. I thought about what might go wrong, and I imagined responding to the challenge.”

(Taken from Murphy, S. (1996). *The achievement zone*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, p.67)

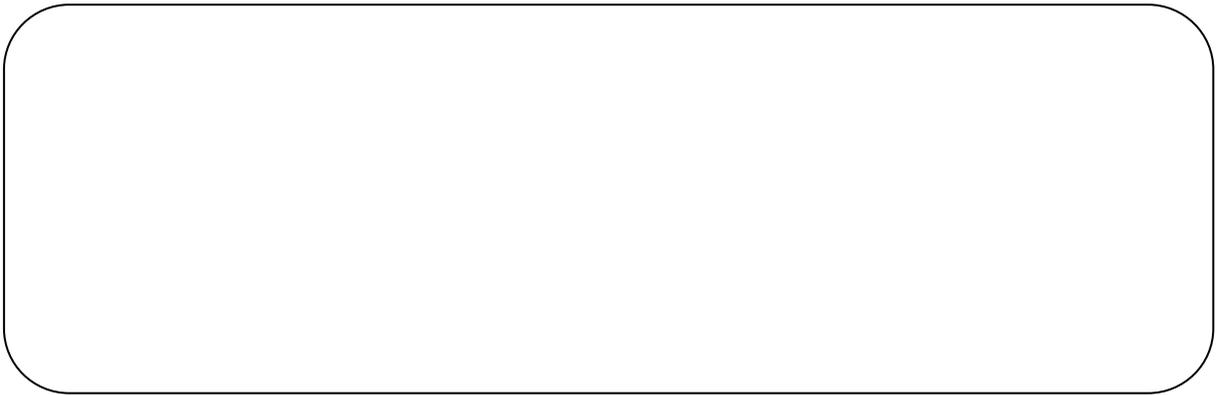
## Example Response Sheet

### Imagery Quote Analysed

**Athlete:**

**Achievement:**

What type(s) of imagery appear to be present in the quote?



What perspective does the person appear to be using? Does it seem to be internal, external or both?



What senses seem to be involved?

