4.10 Concentration, Selective Attention and Positive Self-Talk: 30-minute Pack

Total Marks

AQA 8582 · Calculators not allowed · about 30 minutes

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Show all your working.

1 State one clear difference between positive self-talk and negative self-talk for a track sprinter about to start a race.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 A cricketer batting in a long innings can be distracted by both INTERNAL and EXTERNAL sources. Give one example of each for this batter.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

3 Describe how a football goalkeeper could use selective attention when facing a corner kick in a match to improve performance.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

4 A footballer about to take a penalty says out loud 'smooth approach, trust the kick'. Give one reason why saying such a short phrase aloud can help, applied to the penalty situation.

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

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5 A rugby kicker misses an earlier kick at goal and starts to doubt their own ability before their next attempt. Explain how this self-doubt could disrupt the kicker's concentration, and describe one way the kicker could refocus before the next kick.

(Total for Question 5 is 2 marks)

6 A footballer running towards goal needs to widen their attention to check where teammates are making runs, then narrow their attention onto the ball just before shooting. Describe why the footballer's selective attention needs to change in this way as they get closer to shooting.

(Total for Question 6 is 2 marks)

7 A cricket fielder spends long periods in the outfield with the ball rarely coming to them during a match. Explain one way the fielder could maintain concentration during this quiet period of play.

(Total for Question 7 is 2 marks)

8 A swimmer has a poor previous length in a race and needs to refocus before pushing off the wall for the next length. Explain how a short concentration routine at each wall could help the swimmer refocus.

(Total for Question 8 is 2 marks)

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9 A footballer misses a good scoring chance and says to themselves 'I always mess this up'. Explain why this kind of negative self-talk can be harmful to the footballer's future performance.

(Total for Question 9 is 2 marks)

10 Explain one way a coach could help a young player replace negative self-talk with positive self-talk during training.

(Total for Question 10 is 2 marks)

11 A hockey goalkeeper faces a penalty stroke in a noisy stadium. Explain how selective attention could help the goalkeeper ignore the crowd noise and focus on the striker's body shape as they approach the ball.

(Total for Question 11 is 2 marks)

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12 Discuss how the footballer could use concentration techniques, selective attention and self-talk together to prepare for this penalty, applying your answer to their history of a previous miss, and reach a judgement about which of these approaches is likely to matter most in this specific situation.

(Total for Question 12 is 6 marks)

13 Discuss how concentration techniques could help a weightlifter perform a clean and jerk at a national competition with an attentive crowd. Use the weightlifter as the named performer in your answer and make a judgement.

(Total for Question 13 is 6 marks)

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Mark scheme · 4.10 Concentration, Selective Attention and Positive Self-Talk: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

positive self-talk uses encouraging, task-focused statements that increase confidence, oe **B1**

negative self-talk uses critical or fearful statements that increase anxiety and reduce focus, oe **B1**

Answer: Positive self-talk uses encouraging, task-focused statements that increase confidence, while negative self-talk uses critical or fearful statements that increase anxiety and reduce focus.

Question 2

internal, e.g. worrying thoughts about getting out, tiredness, or replaying an earlier mistake in their mind, oe **B1**

external, e.g. crowd noise, the fielding team's chatter/sledging, or a change in the weather or light, oe **B1**

Answer: Internal: worrying thoughts about getting out or replaying an earlier mistake. External: crowd noise or the fielding team's chatter.

Question 3

focus on relevant cues such as the kicker's body position and the flight of the ball, oe **B1**

ignore irrelevant stimuli like crowd noise or other players shouting, allowing faster reaction to the ball, oe **B1**

Answer: Focus on relevant cues such as the kicker's body position and the flight of the ball, and ignore irrelevant stimuli like crowd noise or players shouting so the goalkeeper can react faster to the ball.

Question 4

it acts as a trigger or cue to focus attention on technique and block out distractions, oe **B1**

development: saying it aloud reinforces confidence and creates a consistent routine that calms nerves before the kick, oe **B1**

Answer: Saying a short phrase aloud acts as a trigger to focus attention on technique and block out distractions; saying it aloud also reinforces confidence and creates a consistent routine that calms nerves before the kick.

Question 5

self-doubt is an internal distraction that takes the kicker's attention away from the relevant technical cues needed to kick well, oe **B1**

refocus method, e.g. using a short, practised concentration routine or a positive cue word before the next kick to bring attention back to the task, oe **B1**

Answer: Self-doubt is an internal distraction that takes the kicker's attention away from the relevant technical cues, so using a short, practised routine or a positive cue word before the next kick can help bring their attention back to the task.

Question 6

earlier on, a wide focus lets the player take in more relevant information (teammates, space, opponents) to decide what to do, oe **B1**

closer to shooting, a narrow focus on the ball (and the target) removes distracting information and allows precise technical execution of the shot, oe **B1**

Answer: A wide focus earlier on lets the player take in relevant information such as where teammates and opponents are, while a narrow focus closer to shooting removes distracting information and allows precise, technical execution of the shot.

Question 7

the fielder could keep actively thinking about their role for each ball bowled, e.g. mentally rehearsing what they would do if the ball came to them, oe **B1**

this keeps their attention on relevant, task-focused cues rather than letting their mind wander during the quiet period, reducing the chance of missing their moment when the ball does arrive, oe **B1**

Answer: The fielder could keep actively thinking about their role for each ball bowled, mentally preparing what they would do if the ball came to them, which keeps their attention task-focused rather than letting their mind wander.

Question 8

a short, practised routine at each wall (e.g. a fixed sequence of actions or thoughts) gives the swimmer something familiar and task-focused to concentrate on, oe **B1**

this stops the swimmer dwelling on the previous poor length and helps direct attention back onto the technique needed for the next length, oe **B1**

Answer: A short, practised routine at each wall gives the swimmer something familiar and task-focused to concentrate on, stopping them dwelling on the previous poor length and directing their attention back onto the technique for the next length.

Question 9

it can reduce the player's confidence and self-belief going into their next chance, oe **B1**

it can also create unhelpful pressure/anxiety that makes them more likely to make a similar mistake again, becoming a repeating pattern, oe **B1**

Answer: Negative self-talk like this can reduce the player's confidence going into their next chance, and can create unhelpful pressure that makes them more likely to make a similar mistake again, becoming a repeating pattern.

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Question 10

the coach could notice/point out when the player uses negative self-talk and ask them to immediately replace it with a specific positive phrase instead, oe **B1**

repeated practice of catching and replacing negative thoughts in training can make positive self-talk a more automatic habit for the player in matches, oe **B1**

Answer: The coach could notice when the player uses negative self-talk and ask them to immediately replace it with a specific positive phrase, and repeated practice of this in training can make positive self-talk a more automatic habit in matches.

Question 11

selective attention means deliberately filtering out irrelevant stimuli (the crowd noise) so it does not distract the goalkeeper, oe **B1**

instead directing attention onto the relevant cue, the striker's body shape and approach, which gives information about the direction of the shot, oe **B1**

Answer: Selective attention means deliberately filtering out irrelevant stimuli, such as the crowd noise, so it does not distract the goalkeeper, and instead directing attention onto the relevant cue, the striker's body shape, which gives information about the direction of the shot.

Question 12

Level 3 A well-developed discussion that applies concentration, selective attention and self-talk clearly to the footballer's specific situation, including the earlier missed penalty, and reaches a well-justified judgement about which approach matters most here. **5-6**

Level 2 Some accurate application of at least two of the three techniques to the footballer's situation, with a judgement offered but only partly justified or with limited reference to the earlier miss. **3-4**

Level 1 Basic or generic statements about concentration and self-talk with little application to this specific footballer's situation, and no clear judgement. **1-2**

Level 0 No relevant content. **0**

Indicative content:

- The memory of the earlier missed penalty is likely to act as an internal distraction, creating self-doubt and negative self-talk (e.g. 'I am going to miss again') if it is not managed before this kick.
- Positive self-talk can directly counter this by replacing the negative thought with a confident, task-focused phrase, helping restore self-belief before the run-up.
- Selective attention allows the footballer to filter out the crowd noise and the pressure of the occasion, focusing instead on the relevant technical cues, such as the goalkeeper's positioning and their own planned technique.
- A short, familiar concentration routine (e.g. a fixed number of steps back, a breath, a cue word) used consistently regardless of past results can give the footballer something practised to rely on rather than dwelling on the previous miss.
- A balanced judgement might argue that managing the internal distraction of the earlier miss through positive self-talk matters most here, since it is the specific psychological barrier this player faces, more than a generic need for selective attention that any penalty taker would have.
- An alternative judgement could argue the concentration routine matters most, since it structures and contains the moment regardless of what has happened before, giving the footballer a reliable process under maximum pressure.

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Question 13

Level 3 A clear, well developed discussion that explains multiple concentration techniques applied to the named weightlifter, evaluates likely benefits in the competition setting, and reaches a supported judgement about overall effectiveness.	**5-6**
Level 2 Some relevant techniques are explained with application to the weightlifter and some assessment of benefits, but development or judgement is limited.	**3-4**
Level 1 One or two basic points about concentration techniques are made with minimal application to the weightlifter and little or no judgement.	**1-2**
Level 0 No relevant content.	**0**

Indicative content:

- Possible techniques: pre-lift routine (same steps before every lift), controlled breathing, single-word focus cues, and visual focus on a fixed point on the bar or the floor marking.
- Application: a weightlifter could use a consistent pre-lift routine to cue muscle memory and reduce thinking under pressure, helping when the crowd is loud.
- Benefit evaluation: routines and breathing reduce anxiety and help maintain motor control for precise coordination in the clean and jerk, improving chance of successful lift.
- Selective attention application: focusing on the bar and body position while filtering out crowd noise prevents distraction and maintains technique under load.
- Limitations: extreme anxiety or unexpected distractions may still disrupt concentration; over-reliance on one cue might fail if that cue is removed.
- Judgement: a balanced conclusion could state that concentration techniques are likely to substantially improve performance for the named weightlifter in a national competition, while noting they are most effective when practised and combined with confidence-building self-talk.

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