

## DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 471 191

CS 511 581

AUTHOR Beltman, Susan  
TITLE Researching Motivation in Context: Rethinking Methodologies.  
PUB DATE 2001-12-00  
NOTE 21p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Australian Association for Research in Education (Fremantle, Australia, December 2-6, 2001).  
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative (142) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)  
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.  
DESCRIPTORS Adults; \*Athletes; Interviews; \*Motivation; \*Musicians; Postsecondary Education; \*Qualitative Research; \*Research Methodology

## ABSTRACT

Recent theory and research on motivation has shifted in its focus from a study of more general characteristics of individuals such as personal motivational goals, to an examination of the motivation of individuals within specific domains or contexts. This change in focus has led to a broadening of the methodologies used to examine motivation. Many studies now use mixed methods. Rather than relying almost exclusively on quantitative measures such as questionnaires, researchers are incorporating qualitative measures to capture the dynamic and rich nature of learning and motivation in context. This presentation will illustrate the above trend. The presenter's work in progress will be used to discuss how insights into motivation in context might be obtained using qualitative research methodologies. Participants from the domains of sport and music have been interviewed using a range of specially designed stimulus materials and tasks to gain an understanding of their experiences within these contexts. This approach elicited participants' stories of their development and the people involved, as well as their perceptions of the different settings in which they play sport or music. Participants were asked to consider both positive and negative influences on motivation. Contains 40 references, and 3 tables and 5 figures of data. (Author/RS)

# AARE (AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION FOR RESEARCH IN EDUCATION) ANNUAL CONFERENCE, FREMANTLE, DECEMBER, 2001

## Researching Motivation in Context: Rethinking Methodologies.

Presented by

**Susan Beltman**

**Doctoral Student**

**Murdoch University**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Office of Educational Research and Improvement  
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION  
CENTER (ERIC)

- This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

S. Beltman

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

**NOTE: THIS PAPER PRESENTS STUDENT WORK-IN-PROGRESS**

**PLEASE DO NOT QUOTE WITHOUT THE AUTHOR'S PERMISSION**

contact details:

Susan Beltman

School of Education phone: 08 9360 2626

Murdoch University fax: 08 9360 6296

South St Murdoch WA 6150 email: [beltman@murdoch.edu.au](mailto:beltman@murdoch.edu.au)

**AARE (AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION FOR RESEARCH IN  
EDUCATION) ANNUAL CONFERENCE, FREMANTLE, DECEMBER,  
2001**

**Researching Motivation in Context: Rethinking Methodologies.**

**Abstract**

Recent theory and research on motivation has shifted in its focus from a study of more general characteristics of individuals such as personal motivational goals, to an examination of the motivation of individuals within specific domains or contexts. This change in focus has led to a broadening of the methodologies used to examine motivation. Many studies now use mixed methods. Rather than relying almost exclusively on quantitative measures such as questionnaires, researchers are incorporating qualitative measures to capture the dynamic and rich nature of learning and motivation in context.

This presentation will illustrate the above trend. The presenter's work in progress will be used to discuss how insights into motivation in context might be obtained using qualitative research methodologies. Participants from the domains of sport and music have been interviewed using a range of specially designed stimulus materials and tasks to gain an understanding of their experiences within these contexts. This approach elicited participants' stories of their development and the people involved, as well as their perceptions of the different settings in which they play sport or music. Participants were asked to consider both positive and negative influences on motivation.

-----

**introduction**

This paper describes work-in-progress towards a Doctoral degree in Education. The rationale behind the research questions and design is briefly presented. Tasks developed to examine the research questions are presented in detail. These reflect current conceptual and methodological aspects of research on motivation.

## **Shift in theory - the main concepts guiding this research**

### **motivation**

The construct of motivation is complex and multi-faceted. It is inextricably linked to all phases and facets of learning, and like self-regulation it has cognitive, affective and behavioural components that differ with different levels of expertise. Many theories of motivation, however, tend to focus on components of motivation rather than taking a holistic view.

### **context**

As with other psychological constructs such as self-concept, historically the theoretical focus has been on how that construct manifests itself with regard to the individual. A variety of research findings, however, has demonstrated the significance of contextual factors and their impact on motivation and learning (see for example Ames, 1990; Archer, 1992; Boekaerts, 1997; Maehr & Buck, 1993; Wigfield, Eccles & Rodriguez, 1998; Volet & Järvelä, 2001). In other words, motivation is 'situated' in particular contexts. The notion of context itself is also a multi-level, dynamic and complex one. As Billett (1996, p158) suggests, "No longer is it possible to consider cognitive activities without consideration of the social and cultural context in which cognitive activity occurs".

### **reciprocity**

A reciprocal relationship exists between the personal history and characteristics of individuals, and the contextual environments or social settings in which they participate. So different settings offer enabling or constraining features that determine whether and how particular individuals will engage with that setting. What is it that individuals bring to a setting and how do aspects of that setting enable or constrain them? What is the nature of this reciprocal relationship? From this socio-cultural perspective it may be seen that others play a crucial role in development as "individuals construct meaning for themselves but within the context of interaction with others" (Kerka, 1998, p. 2).

### **methodologies**

The traditional way of examining phenomena in educational psychology, through experimental methods and quantitative measurement, does not seem adequate when examining complex relationships. Phenomena such as motivation may be more appropriately researched by examining real life situations and how these are experienced, perceived and understood by the people within them. Qualitative methods are better able to capture a holistic perspective, the perceptions and experiences of participants and the nature of the contexts within which phenomena occur (Berg, 1995; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Patton, 1990).

## **Shift in research**

### **motivation in context**

Conceptual changes such as those above have led to an increase in the incorporation of qualitative research methods when examining constructs such as motivation. For example, as Turner (2000, p. 2) points out, traditionally motivation has been studied "as if student membership in classrooms were irrelevant or noise in data analyses." Turner then suggests that "although classroom research is messy, ... it is precisely this error variance that needs to be explored."

A qualitative, rather than quantitative, approach to data gathering is also evident in studies that aim to 'map' relationships rather than simply determine their frequency (Bø, 1996; Philip & Hendry, 1996) and to examine perceptions of athletes (Regnier, Salmela & Russell, 1993). What should be used, according to these authors, is "the collective wisdom, the rich anecdotal evidence, and the language of the sport performers themselves" (p. 291). Table 1 summarises some research studies using qualitative methods to examine situated learning and development, of which motivation is one component. The justifications for the use of qualitative methods in these studies reflect those used in the present study.

**Table 1: Examples of Qualitative Research on Aspects of Motivation**

| <b>Author(s)</b>               | <b>Research Focus</b>                | <b>Why Qualitative?</b>   |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Zimmerman (1998)               | learning in academic                 | to understand students' perspectives  |
| Ng (1998)                      | contexts                             | motivation a process not a static trait                                     |
| Locke-Davidson & Phelan (1999) | "                                    | motivation multifaceted + complex   |
| Turner (2000)                  | "                                    | need authentic learning settings  |
| Bloom (1985)                   | development of                       | motivation shaped by environments   |
| Sosniak (1985b)                | expertise in sporting + non-academic | motivation changes over time + influenced by many people                    |
| Regnier et al (1993)           | contexts                             | need to examine voices of experts   |
| Patrick et al (1999)           | "                                    | need to understand pathways of talent development as viewed by participants |
| Billett (1996)                 | "                                    | examine links between personal histories + communities of practice          |
| Philip & Hendry (1996)         | social development of young people   | need to examine perspectives of young people                                |
| Bø (1996)                      | "                                    | need to consider total setting in which young people live                   |
| Yancey (1998)                  | "                                    | need to understand real life settings                                       |

## **quantitative - qualitative issues**

Quantitative methods provide powerful, succinct, statistical portrayals, but this may oversimplify the complexities of real-world experiences, may miss major factors of importance that are not easily quantified, and may fail to portray the sense of the 'whole' situation (Patton, 1990). To address these concerns, this study adopts a qualitative approach which "gathers data on multiple aspects of the setting under study in order to assemble a comprehensive and complete picture of the social dynamic of the particular situation" (p. 50).

Some supporters of quantitative methodologies would say that qualitative research relies on "softer, interpretive methods" that are "unreliable, impressionistic, and not objective" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.5). Issues raised include the effect of the researcher on the supposedly 'natural' settings or on the individuals involved. There may also be concerns about a lack of systematic and rigorous testing of variables and theories (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983) or about a lack of scientific rigour and the credibility and usefulness of resultant research findings (Patton, 1990). Others have expressed concerns about 'soft' science which uses a personal rather than objective approach, is open to bias, and is even seen as an "attack on reason and truth" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.4).

Various authors suggest ways of addressing the possible threats to the credibility of qualitative research. For example Maxwell (1998) proposes the use of a validity checklist that allows the researcher to actively look for evidence of such threats to credibility in the data, or to investigate them directly in the research process. The checklist includes: searching for discrepant evidence and negative cases; using quasi-statistics; incorporating various forms of triangulation; obtaining feedback from the researcher's peers about the whole research process and the inferences drawn; verifying conclusions with participants; obtaining and displaying rich data; and using appropriate forms of comparison. Others suggest similar strategies, many of which will be incorporated into the present study (see for example Altheide & Johnson, 1994; Berg, 1995; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Patton, 1990; Yin, 1998).

Table 2 summarises some major differences between quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry. If viewed as a dichotomy, quantitative methods are seen to be deductive, verificative, enumerative and objective. Qualitative methods, in contrast, are seen to be inductive, generative, constructive and subjective (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). These authors suggest, however, that it is more appropriate to view the two methods as being on a continuum with respect to these features. Rather than exclusive dichotomies, they say that extremes are rare and it is more likely that various combinations will apply. Similarly Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p.5) maintain that different research styles are simply "doing the same things differently". Specific methodologies are not exclusive to any particular paradigm, theory or discipline. This study, however, does incorporate many of the features of qualitative research listed in Table 2 (adapted from Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

**Table 2: Features of Quantitative and Qualitative Methods of Inquiry**

| <b>feature</b>               | <b>quantitative</b>  | <b>qualitative</b>   |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Role of theory</b>        | Deduction: begins with theory + matches empirically to body of data  | Induction: begin with data + hope to find theory to explain data   |
| <b>Goal of research</b>      | Verification: establish extent to which proposition obtains + universe of populations to which it's applicable           | Generation: aim to discover or understand constructs and propositions using data as sources of evidence  |
| <b>Focus of research</b>     | Products: stress measurement + analysis of causal relationships between variables; inquiry in value free framework       | Processes: stress socially constructed nature of reality, relationship between researcher and what is studied, + situational constraints shaping inquiry |
| <b>Units of analysis</b>     | Enumeration: previously defined units systematically counted or enumerated   | Construction: units become apparent in course of observation + description   |
| <b>Objectivity</b>           | Objective: external observers apply externally derived conceptual categories + explanations                              | Subjective: reconstruct specific categories participants use to conceptualise own experiences  |
| <b>Position re the world</b> | Etic: seldom study world directly; base findings on probabilities from study of large numbers of randomly selected cases | Emic: see the world in action + embed findings within it; direct attention to specifics of particular cases  |
| <b>Role of detail</b>        | Reductionist: aim for generalisable abstractions   | Descriptive: believe rich description is valuable  |
| <b>Position of author</b>    | Impersonal + objective: use of third person prose in writing   | Personal + subjective: may use first person in writing   |



## **this study**

### **research questions**

The main research question for this study is: "What is the nature of the relationship between an individual and a context in relation to motivation?" This broad area of inquiry is then broken down into three further questions:

- How do aspects of an individual's personal history shape the motivation that they bring to a particular setting?
- How do aspects of contexts shape or impact on motivation?
- How is the motivation of individuals revealed in particular contexts?

### **research methods**

A qualitative approach is seen to be most appropriate to address the research questions being posed in this study. The overall method used is that of a 'collective case study' in which particular cases are selected for study because a better understanding of them will lead to a better understanding of a particular phenomenon, or will allow theorising about a larger number of cases (Stake, 1994). Two types of cases are used in this research, with each individual regarded as a case, and each level of context also regarded as a case.

Motivation is situated within contexts that differ in their levels of specificity. In this study the contexts of interest are the broad level of domain (music and sport), communities of practice (such as schools or teams), settings (such as practice or performance) and particular tasks or activities. Sport and music were selected as the domains of study because of perceived similarities between them. Both require lengthy periods of individual skill development – often beginning during early school years, both generally incorporate some individual and group activities, both demand demonstration of competence or expertise through a performance component, and experts in both fields are highly regarded in our society.

Thirty athletes and musicians were interviewed twice. Participants were all relative experts in their fields and numbers were equally divided between athletes and musicians, between males and females, and between younger and more experienced participants. These criteria were used to locate and select participants. Only those participating in teams or ensembles were selected.

The participants in this study then were individuals who are 'motivated' in the broad contexts (domains) of sport and music. Their motivational beliefs, feelings and actions were examined. In-depth interviews and specially designed tasks were used to construct their personal histories – the paths that have led them to their current situation. Their perceptions of the various contexts they have experienced were also explored to gain an understanding of how these contexts have shaped their motivation to continue in that domain.

## materials / methods

All participants were interviewed on two occasions within a twelve month period. As part of those interviews, they were asked to complete various tasks as illustrated in Table 3.

**Table 3: Tasks Developed for this Study**

| <b>Task Used in Study</b> | <b>Focus of Inquiry</b>   | <b>Interview</b>   |
|---------------------------|---|--------------------|
| Time-Line Task            | Key events in past and present ie developmental history in relation to sport or music | Interview 1        |
| Circles of Influence Task | Key people in past and present in relation to sport or music                          | Interview 1        |
| A Day in the Life Task    | Key activities and events in present and related beliefs and feelings                 | Between Interviews |
| Settings Chart Task       | Key activities and events in present and related beliefs and feelings                 | Interview 2        |
| Issues Sorting Task       | Difficulties/issues encountered in past + present and strategies used to manage them  | Interview 2        |

### The Time Line Task

The Time Line Task was designed to gain information about each participant's developmental history in relation to his or her participation in sport or music. It also aimed at activating memories of key events and people from the past in preparation for the Circles of Influence Task. The contribution of previous experiences to later involvement in the domains of sport and music has been shown to be important (Sosniak, 1985a; 1985b). The Task followed a logical order and began with questions about getting started and concluded with questions about current involvement in the domain. The Time Line Task essentially used a visual representation of the relevant stages of development (see Figure 1) on an A4 sheet of paper in conjunction with the general question "Can you remember the different stages of your involvement with sport / music?" Details about participation in school and community activities, about teachers and coaches, about the involvement of family and friends, and about special programs or awards were elicited in order to gain a comprehensive picture of development in the relevant domain.

**Figure 1: Time Line Task**

|                                  |                                     |                            |                                  |                                  |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>PRE-<br/>SCHOOL<br/>YEARS</b> | <b>PRIMARY<br/>SCHOOL<br/>YEARS</b> | <b>SECONDARY<br/>YEARS</b> | <b>EARLY<br/>ADULT<br/>YEARS</b> | <b>LATER<br/>ADULT<br/>YEARS</b> |
| <b>AGES: 0-5</b>                 | <b>AGES: 6-12</b>                   | <b>AGES: 13-17</b>         | <b>AGES: 18-21</b>               | <b>AGES: 21+</b>                 |

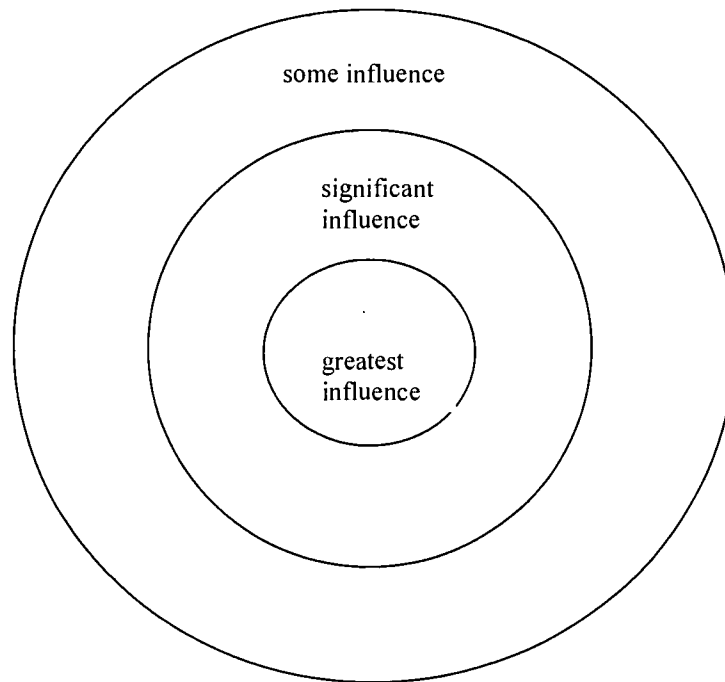
### **The Circles of Influence Task**

The Circles of Influence Task was used to determine who the influential people (both past and present) were for individuals in their development as athletes and musicians, and the nature of their influence. The task consisted of four parts (see Figure 2). Participants first were asked to write in the names of influential people in concentric circles on an A3 sheet of paper. They were then asked the nature of their relationship with all those named (eg friend, teacher, family member etc) and to give an example of how that person had influenced them. Participants were then shown a list of additional categories and asked if there was anyone else who came to mind from those categories who may have been influential. Finally participants were asked to think about anyone who might have had a negative influence – who made it more difficult for them to continue in sport or music. These names were not recorded on the circles.

Using concentric circles as a tool to develop a visual representation of social networks has been used by a number of researchers (for example Neilsen & Bowes, 1996; Pearpoint, Forest & O'Brien, 1996). Questions similar to those developed for this task have also been used extensively for similar purposes (Bø, 1996; Galbo & Demetrulias, 1996; Greenberger, Chen & Beam, 1998; Hamilton & Darling, 1989; Patrick, Ryan, Alfeld-Liro, & Fredricks, 1999; Philip & Hendry, 1996; Sosniak, 1985b; Weiss, Smith, & Theeboom, 1996). In addition, Zimmerman (1998, p.75) suggests that socially self-regulated students "are aware of how study partners, coaches, or instructors can help or hinder their learning" and the questions designed for this study assumed a level of awareness.

The present study differed from some of the above in that it focused on the domains of sport and music rather than for example asking about life in general or about friendships. Another difference is that both unprompted recollections as well as specifically determined categories of responses were used in an effort to broaden the range of those who participants might consider to be in their networks of influence. A final, relatively unique, feature of the task as used in this study is that both positive and negative examples of influences were elicited.

**Figure 2: The Circles of Influence Task**



**Instructions:**

This study is particularly interested in how other people have influenced you and I'd like you to think about people who have helped you or influenced you in your development as a musician / sportsperson.

**Circles task.**

- i) The circles represent the degree of influence with those in the centre being the most influential. Write the names of people who you think should go in each of the circles – think about past and present influences.
- ii) For each person in the circles, what is your relationship with them and in what way was this person influential?
- iii) Can you think of a specific example of when they have influenced you?
- iv) Now look at the categories of different people. Are there any people from these categories you would include in your circles of influence? – repeat ii + iii.
- v) We've been considering positive influences. Can you think of times when someone has, perhaps even unintentionally, made it more difficult for you to continue in music / sport? – repeat ii + iii.

**Other Categories**

- immediate family
- relatives
- close friends
- known directly eg coaches, tutors, teachers, team mates etc
- known less directly eg acquaintances, others in organisation
- real people not personally known eg celebrities, media reports of performances etc
- onlookers eg audience, spectators etc
- fictional characters eg via literature, TV, movies etc

## The A Day in the Life Task

The A Day in the Life Task (see Figure 3) served three purposes. It gave the researcher an indication of day to day current activities of participants and of their perceptions of those activities. The task also acted as a bridge between the two interviews. Participants were given the task on an A4 sheet of paper with an explanation at the end of Interview 1. Twenty-four of the thirty participants completed the activity.

The task allowed the participants to contribute to the research in that they were free to select any day they wished. They were asked to preferably choose a day that involved sport or music but some did not do this. Whatever day was selected, the researcher was able to ask whether it was a typical day or an unusual one and why. Questions and comments about the task were incorporated naturally into the second interview where they seemed to be most appropriate.

**Figure 3: A Day in the Life Task**

### A DAY IN THE LIFE OF .....

Imagine that a TV documentary is being made of your life. Select one day and briefly record the activities you undertake at different times, and make a note of any other people involved.

No activity is too mundane to include but some privacy is also allowed! Choose any day you wish but try and cover the whole day from beginning to end.

Space is also provided for comments such as whether this was a particularly enjoyable or boring activity, whether this is a very common or unusual activity etc. Use the back of the sheet if you need to.

When you have completed the task, please return it to me in the envelope provided.  
Thanks.

| <b>time</b>                             | <b>activity</b>                  | <b>others involved</b>     | <b>comment</b>              |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Morning</b><br><i>eg 7-7.15</i>      | <i>breakfast</i>                 | <i>family – give names</i> | <i>rushed – up too late</i> |
| <b>Afternoon</b><br><i>eg 5.00-6.00</i> | <i>practiced difficult skill</i> | <i>alone</i>               | <i>still hard!</i>          |
| <b>Evening</b><br><i>eg 7.00-8.00</i>   | <i>watched TV</i>                | <i>Joe + Flo – friends</i> | <i>good to relax</i>        |

**Date of Record:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **The Settings Chart Task**

The aim of the Settings Chart Task was to obtain an understanding of the nature of both the settings in which participants practiced and performed, and of their perceptions of those settings. In the second interview participants were presented with an A3 chart representing the various settings in which they played sport or music (see Figure 4). They were asked to assist the researcher by explaining what should be in each section of the chart for each setting in which they participated. The researcher wrote brief comments in relevant sections to use as a visual prompt. On completion of the chart participants were asked various questions comparing each setting.

**Figure 4: The Settings Chart Task and Questions**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_ **STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS: DETAILS OF SETTINGS**

| <b>SETTING</b>                 | <b>WHEN?</b><br><br>number sessions per week / length | <b>WHERE?</b><br><br>location | <b>WHO?</b><br><br>other people / roles | <b>WHAT?</b><br><br>things / equipment | <b>WHAT?</b><br><br>activities / tasks | <b>WHY?</b><br><br>who decides what + why? |
|--------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| individual training / practice |   |                               |   |  |  |  |
| group training / practice      |   |                               |   |  |  |  |
| group competition / concert    |   |                               |   |  |  |  |
| other                          |   |                               |   |  |  |  |

*Questions about settings:*

- Which setting do you find the most /least enjoyable? Why?
- Which is the most/ least interesting? Why?
- Which setting is the most / least important? Why?
- Which setting would you say you are the most ‘motivated’ to participate in? Why?
- Other comments about similarities or differences between settings?

Ideally in qualitative research methods, settings of interest are observed directly by the researcher. The participants in this study acted as observers in that they described in detail the various settings in which they practiced and performed. Even if direct observation is used, it is impossible for an observer to observe every setting or everything within a particular setting (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). An observer who is not an expert in a particular domain or not very familiar with a particular setting may miss crucial aspects of that setting, or may interpret what is seen in a different way to those who are an integral part of it. Even if direct observation by the researcher occurs, consideration of participants’ perceptions and understandings is also needed (Berg, 1995) and so it is legitimate to ask various informants about their everyday activities and about their perceptions and understandings of those activities (Altheide & Johnson, 1994; Fetterman, 1998).

The sections at the top of the chart in Figure 4 (what? when? etc) aimed at gaining a comprehensive picture of each setting and were based on ideas from a number of sources, as were the questions at the end of the task. For example Zimmerman (1998) uses the categories of "Why? How? When? What? and With Whom?" when examining the dimensions of self-regulation and discusses the importance of comparing methods of self-regulation across disciplines. When studying any social situation, Tripp (1994) suggests that there are at least five key components that must be considered: people, things, events, context and relationships. These are expressed as a four part question: (a) who, (b) with what? (c) experiences what? (d) when, where and with whom? The Settings Chart Task and related questions use a combination of the above categories.

### **The Issues Sorting Task**

During Interview 1 various issues or difficulties faced by participants during their lives as athletes and musicians were raised. The Issues Sorting Task (see Figure 5) was developed to gauge to what extent those issues were common across participants and across domains. Discussion about the various issues was used as a means to identify motivational strategies known and / or used by participants.

Problem solving tasks have been widely used in research to tap into different types of expert knowledge (see for example Billet, 1996; Regnier et al, 1993). Self-regulated learners are able to systematically adapt strategies to changing personal and contextual conditions and are able to independently choose when and how to use particular strategies (Zimmerman, 1998). The questions used in the Issues Sorting Task were designed to elicit declarative, procedural, conditional and metacognitive knowledge about motivational strategies.

The Issues Sorting Task followed the Settings Chart Task in Interview 2 and used the same distinction between individual practice, group practice / rehearsal / training and group performance / competition. A further group of issues ('Other') was included that were applicable across settings. All participants were given the same set of paper slips with the issues written on them and were asked to sort them into the same categories by placing each slip on an A4 sheet of paper with the categories on it. Blank slips were available if other issues were raised, but no suggestions were made.



**Figure 5: The Issues Sorting Task**

*Categories for Sorting Issues*

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>A. SITUATIONS<br/>NEVER<br/>ENCOUNTERED</b> | <b>B. SITUATIONS<br/>SOMETIMES OR<br/>OCCASIONALLY<br/>ENCOUNTERED</b> | <b>C. SITUATIONS<br/>OFTEN OR<br/>REGULARLY<br/>ENCOUNTERED</b> |
|--|--|---|

*Issues in Individual Practice / Training Settings*

|   |  |
|---|--|
| I.1. finding time                             | I.5. expenses involved                         |
| I.2. finding a suitable place                 | I.6. getting started                           |
| I.3. loss or change of teacher / coach        | I.7. lack of interesting or enjoyable tasks    |
| I.4. getting the right equipment / facilities | I.8. negative comments from family / onlookers |

*Issues in Group Practice / Rehearsal / Training Settings*

|  |   |
|--|---|
| GT.1. finding time   | GT.6. not getting along with coach / conductor      |
| GT.2. transport of self / equipment                        | GT.7. negative comments from coach / conductor      |
| GT.3. joining a new group or team                          | GT.8. difficult or uninteresting tasks / activities |
| GT.4. not getting along with team-mates / fellow musicians | GT.9. feelings of wasting time                      |
| GT.5. negative comments from team-mates / fellow musicians | GT.10. lack of opportunities                        |

*Issues in Group Performance / Competition Settings*

|  |   |
|--|---|
| GC.1. time / transport / expenses involved             | GC.5. errors or unfair decisions by an umpire / conductor |
| GC.2. not being selected for the competition / concert | GC.6. equipment failure                                   |
| GC.3. making an obvious error                          | GC.7. competing against better teams / groups             |
| GC.4. errors by team-mate / fellow musicians           | GC.8. negative feedback from spectators / audience        |
| GC.9. playing badly overall in that situation          |   |

### *Other Issues Across Settings*

|  |  |
|--|--|
| O.1. personal injury   | O.3. negative press reports / reviews / appraisals / adjudications |
| O.2. an important change in family circumstances such as leaving home or the breaking up of a relationship | O.4. major decision such as focusing on one instrument or sport    |

NB: these last issues were sorted as ‘encountered’ or ‘never encountered’ rather than into three categories, or they were simply discussed

### *Examples of Questions Used for Discussing Issues*

- What was the situation for you? What happened?
- How did you handle the situation? What exactly did you do?
- Was this typical of how you would respond?
- Are there any times when you didn’t or wouldn’t react this way?
- How do other people handle this type of issue?
- Does your coach / teacher ever talk about how to handle this issue?
- What advice might you give to someone in a similar situation?

NB: These questions varied depending on participants’ previous responses. In general issues said to occur most often were discussed. Some participants said no issues occurred frequently for them and so possible reasons for this were discussed.

### **conclusion**

In conclusion, when research aims to understand motivation and related constructs in terms of how they develop and are enacted in various real life settings qualitative methods are seen to be appropriate. They are able to capture the experiences of individuals over time and features of their environments, including the people within them, which have positively and negatively influenced motivation to learn and perform. Qualitative methods are better able to capture a holistic perspective, include the perceptions and experiences of participants and to reflect the contexts within which phenomena occur. Therefore a qualitative approach is most appropriate to address the research questions being posed in this study. Various tasks have been designed to gather information that will address these questions.

## references

- Altheide, D.L., & Johnson, J.M. (1994) Criteria for assessing interpretive validity in qualitative research. *Handbook of qualitative research*. N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc, chapter 30; 485-499.
- Ames, C. (1990) Motivation: What teachers need to know. *Teachers College Record* 91(3), 409-421.
- Archer, J. (1992) *Students' perceptions of classroom climate: Implications for motivation*. Annual meeting of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Deakin University, Victoria.
- Berg, B.L. (1995) *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. Needham Heights, Mass.: Allyn & Bacon.
- Billet, S. (1996) Constructing vocational knowledge: History, communities and ontogeny. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* 48(2), 141-154.
- Bloom, B.S. (1985) Generalizations about talent development. *Developing talent in young people*. B.S. Bloom. New York: Ballantyne Books, 507-549.
- Bø, I. (1996) The significant people in the social networks of adolescents. *Social problems and social contexts in adolescence*. K. Hurrelmann and S.F. Hamilton. New York: Walter de Gruyter, Inc., 107-130.
- Boekaerts, M. (1997) Self-regulated learning: A new concept embraced by researchers, policy makers, educators, teachers, and students. *Learning and instruction* 7(2), 161-186.
- Denzin, N.K., & Lincoln, Y.S. (1994) Introduction: Entering the field of qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: CA: SAGE Publications, Inc, 1-17.
- Fetterman, D.M. (1998) Ethnography. *Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods*. L. Bickman and D.J. Rog. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, chapter 16; 473-504.
- Galbo, J.J., & Demetrulias D.M. (1996). Recollections of nonparental significant adults during childhood and adolescence. *Youth & Society* 27(4), 403-420.
- Goetz, J.P., & LeCompte, M.D. (1984) Characteristics and origins of educational ethnography. *Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research*. London: Academic Press, 1-32.
- Greenburger, E., Chen, C., & Beam M. (1998). The role of "very important" nonparental adults in adolescent development. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 27(3), 321-344.

Hamilton, S.F., & Darling, N. (1989) Mentors in adolescents' lives. In K. Hurrelmann & U. Engel (Eds.) *The Social World of Adolescents: International Perspectives*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (1983) What is ethnography? *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. London: Tavistock, 1-26.

Kerka, S. (1998). *New perspectives on mentoring*. Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education.

LeCompte, M.D., & Goetz, J.P. (1982) Problems of reliability and validity in ethnographic research. *Review of Educational Research* 52(1), 31-60.

Locke-Davidson, A., & Phelan, P. (1999) Students' multiple worlds: An anthropological approach to understanding students' engagement with school. In T.C. Urda (Ed.). *Advances in motivation and achievement*. Stamford, Connecticut: JAI Press Inc. Chapter 11, 233-273.

Maehr, M.L., & Buck, R. (1993) Transforming school culture. In H. Walberg & M. Sashkin (Eds.), *Educational leadership and school culture: Current research and practice*. Berkely, CA: McCutchan, 40-57.

Maxwell, J.A. (1998) Designing a Qualitative Study. In L. Bickman & D.J. Rog (Eds.). *Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publishing, Chapter 3; 69-100.

Neilsen, C. M., & Bowes, J. M. (1996). *Children's friendship networks: Looking beyond the classroom walls*. Paper presented at the 9th Australasian Human Development Conference, Perth, Western Australia.

Ng., C. (1998) *A Diary Study of Students' Classroom Learning And Motivation*. The Annual Conference of Australian Association for Research in Education, Adelaide.

Patrick, H., Ryan, A.M., Alfeld-Liro, C., & Fredricks, J.A. (1999) Adolescents' commitment to development talent: The role of peers in continuing motivation for sports and the arts. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 28(6), 741-763.

Patton, M.Q. (1990) *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Newbury Park, California: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Pearpoint, J., Forest, M., & O'Brien, J. (1996) MAPs, Circles of Friends, and PATH. In S. Stainbach & W. Stainbach. (Eds.). *Inclusion: A guide for educators*. Baltimore, Maryland: Paul H. Brokes Publishing Co. Chapter 5; 74-77.

Philip, K., & Hendry, L.B. (1996) Young people and mentoring - towards a typology? *Journal of adolescence* 19, 189-201.

- Regnier, G., Salmela, J., & Russell, S. J. (1993) Talent detection and development in sport. In R.N. Singer, Murphey, M. & Tennant, L. K. (Eds.). *Handbook of research on sport psychology* New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.
- Sosniak, L.A. (1985a) A long-term commitment to learning. In B.S. Bloom (Ed.) *Developing talent in young people*. New York: Ballantyne Books.
- Sosniak, L.A. (1985b) Phases of learning. In B.S. Bloom (Ed.). *Developing talent in young people*. New York: Ballantyne Books, 409-438.
- Stake, R.E. (1994) Case studies. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: CA: SAGE Publications, Inc, 236-247.
- Tripp, D. (1994) Case study: Creating the data. In J.S. Smyth (Ed.) *Qualitative approaches in educational research*. Proceedings of the Mini-conference held at Flinders Institute for the Study of Teaching. Flinders University, South Australia, August, 1994.
- Turner, J.C. (2000) *Enriching and challenging motivational theory through the study of situated motivation*. The 7th Workshop on Task and Achievement Motivation, Leuven.
- Volet, S., & Järvelä, S. (Eds.) (2001) *Motivation in learning contexts: Theoretical advances and methodological implications*. London, UK: Pergamon.
- Weiss, M.R., Smith, A.L., & Theeboom, M. (1996). "That's what friends are for": Children's and teenagers' perceptions of peer relationships in the sport domain. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 18(4), 347-379.
- Wigfield, A., Eccles, J.S., & Rodriguez, D. (1998) The development of children's motivation in school contexts. *Review of research in education*. P.D. Pearson and A. Iran-Nejad. Washington: AERA. 23, 73-118.
- Yancey, A.K. (1998) Building positive self-image in adolescents in foster care: The use of role models in an interactive group approach. *Adolescence* 33(130), 253-267.
- Yin, R.K. (1998) The Abridged Version of Case Study Research. In L. Bickman & D.J. Rog (Eds.). *Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, ch 8; 229-.
- Zimmerman, B.J. (1998) Academic studying and the development of personal skill: a self-regulatory perspective. *Educational Psychologist* 33(2/3), 73-86.



**I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:**

CS 511 581

|   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Title: <i>Researching Motivation in Context: Rethinking Methodologies</i> |                                   |
| Author(s): <i>Susan Beltman</i>   |                                   |
| Corporate Source: <i>AARE Conference Paper</i>                            | Publication Date: <i>Dec 2001</i> |

**II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:**

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, Resources in Education (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign in the indicated space following.

| The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents  | The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents  | The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents  |
|--|---|---|
| <p>PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)</p> | <p>PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)</p> | <p>PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)</p> |
| Level 1  | Level 2A  | Level 2B  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>  |
| Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g. electronic) and paper copy.                   | Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only  | Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only   |

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.  
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

*I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche, or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.*

|  |  |                             |
|--|--|-----------------------------|
| Signature: <i>S. Beltman</i>   | Printed Name/Position/Title: <i>MRS SUSAN BELTMAN LECTURER</i> |                             |
| Organization/Address: <i>School of Education Murdoch University, South St, Murdoch, Western Australia 6150</i> | Telephone: <i>(61-8)-93602626</i>                              | Fax: <i>(61-8)-93606296</i> |
|  | E-mail Address: <i>beltman@murdoch.edu.au</i>                  | Date: <i>21.10.02</i>       |

**III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):**

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

### III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

|                        |
|------------------------|
| Publisher/Distributor: |
| Address:               |
| Price:                 |

### IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

|          |
|----------|
| Name:    |
| Address: |

### V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

|   |
|---|
| Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse: |
|---|

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

**ERIC Processing and Reference Facility**

4483-A Forbes Boulevard  
Lanham, Maryland 20706

Telephone: 301-552-4200  
Toll Free: 800-799-3742  
FAX: 301-552-4700  
e-mail: [info@ericfac.piccard.csc.com](mailto:info@ericfac.piccard.csc.com)  
WWW: <http://ericfacility.org>