Achievement motivation

**Horseriding -Choosing your line (Cutting in) to ride a successful jump off**

**C1: Cause – Achievement motivation**

For this particular skill I lack the right type of achievement motivation. Achievement motivation is the theory that an individual’s behaviour is determined by their interaction with the environment and their desire to succeed. The theory states that we have within our personality a need to achieve or a need to avoid failure. Achievement motivation is an example of the Interactionalist theory. Achievement is influenced by the environment as well as my own traits e.g. the place of competition and the size of crowd. Competitiveness’s is a key factor and although I obviously would like to win, I am not very competitive because I would rather jump a clear jump off in a slower time, than increase the chance of making an error, such as having a pole down or a refusal at a fence when turning in tight, giving a short stride to the next fence to get a quick time. I avoid situations with a lower probability of success, preferring to choose a course of action where task difficulty is lower. I have a need to avoid failure as I have the motivation to avoid failure. I show avoidance behaviours as I want to jump clear in my jump off and not have a pole down or a refusal at a jump and not the fastest time possible allowing me to win. Again this is because of my lack of competitiveness as well. I avoid situations where success is 50:50. The environment effects this as when performing in front of a large audience I avoid failure by taking the longer routes to jump clear, however when jumping at home in front of no audience there is no pressure as it is not a competitive situation and I enjoy practicing tight turns into jumps. This shows that I have some slight elements of a need to achieve when I am at home with no audience, which has benefits but I am more a need to avoid failure. This links with the fact that I avoid difficult lines into fences in competitions due to me feeling as though I am being evaluated. I perform worse when I am being evaluated and I avoid the challenging task of making tight turns into fences and prefer to take the easier task and ride longer safer routes into fences which give me guaranteed success of jumping clear.

Motivation to succeed, in particular to achieve specific goals for example jumping a clear round. I show approach behaviours and I am concerned with the standards of my performance and excellence, especially when performing in front of a large crowd which I do not like, as I want them to see me riding at my best. I want to jump the jump off round as neatly and perfectly as I can, this again is why I don’t like turning tight into fences because it can make my position look untidy and increase the chances of errors occurring. I have task persistence as I don’t mind my jump off taking longer than others as I like to keep going until I perform to the best of my ability. I like to get feedback from others as it allows me to improve my performance for the next time and allows me to educate my horse correctly. I am task orientated as I see my success as being predominantly internal because of my own efforts and abilities, so I don’t mind losing as long as I have gained a personal satisfaction and a clear jump off.

**C2: Corrective measure – Goal setting**

As I am task orientated, strategies to improve my performance would be that I need to set myself goals related to my personal performance criteria. I can set goals by the using the **SMARTER** principle. This means that my goals should be **S**pecific and detailed and exact to target my weakness. The goals I set must be **M**easurable and quantifiable to track my progress e.g. cutting into a fence twice in the next jump off. It also should be **A**greed and concurred by myself and the coach so that we both have shared responsibility for achieving my goal of cutting into fences and also my goals must be within my reach so that they are **R**ealistic in order to increase my confidence e.g. cutting in three times into a fence in a jump off making my jump off time 3 seconds quicker than normal. The goal must be **T**ime phased; I must set a period that’s stated when my goal should be reached, to allow my progression to be monitored and evaluated e.g. cutting into 3 fences in a jump off by the end of next month. My goal must be **E**xciting so that it is motivational for me in order to stop me from becoming bored and plateau in my learning. Finally my goals should be **R**ecorded, my progress should be written down, to account for progress. For example, my coach should document the amount of cutting into fences in a jump off so that my progress can be evaluated. This will work by providing a direction for my efforts which will increase my motivation, enforcing task persistence in time increasing my self-confidence reducing my anxiety.

The goals me and my coach set must be realistic and achievable so that I am not aiming too high and by not reaching them could result in me losing my confidence. Achievement of an outcome goal will depend on me getting a particular result e.g. qualifying for the next round by winning a competition. It’s not the method that’s important, it’s the outcome. Achieving goals like this will increase my motivation. The problem with this technique is that the outcome will mostly be out of my control. I will be unable to do anything about the opposition, the course structure and the weather and so the conditions and environment may not be in my advantage and so lower the probability of me winning however hard I try. If after repeated attempts I am still unable to reach the goal set there will be an increase in my anxiety, especially as I have avoidance behaviours. So outcome goals may not be totally beneficial to me. Performance goals would be where my attempts are judged against others or against myself. It could be as simple as getting a certain jump off time regardless to whether I win or not. By setting realistic performance goals I will be able to concentrate on the aspect of my performance (cutting in) and distract myself from the stress-inducing encounters like only finishing fourth in the competition. By me achieving the set performance goal my motivation will be maintained and even increased. Process goals will concentrate on my techniques and tactics. These types of goals will often influence performance goals. For example by giving myself the process goal of cutting in to just one fence in the jump off may improve the overall efficiency of my ride resulting in achievement of the performance goal of cutting into a fence and giving me a quick jump off time. My coach can help me by setting me more challenges and making me more wanting the need to achieve which will give the motivation to succeed or attain particular goals. Extra training will help to build my confidence. Training at home consisting of tight turns into fences will help educate my horse and myself. It will give us both the confidence to make these tight turns into fences when out competing as I know that I can do it and so can my horse. This in turn will increase my competitiveness and I will want the quick times, along with the clear rounds. Learning how to make these tight turns properly while keeping my horse on its hocks will be very beneficial. I need to learn how to value feedback as this will help in my overall riding performance. I need to build my own self esteem which will increase my internal motivation and help me to perform well in front of a large crowd and not get nervous. Therefore goal setting will help to improve my performance of this skill as I will be able to set myself goals which I will strive to reach, allowing me to cut into fences, decreasing my jump off times and allowing me to become placed in a competition.

Horseriding – choosing your line

Choosing your line to a fence

C1- Achievement Motivation

Achievement motivation is a theory that a person’s behaviour can be determined by their desire to succeed in things such as a sport, learning a skill or winning a competition. I have a high achievement motivation in most things that I do. There are two parts to the achievement motivation theory; there is the need to achieve (nAch) part and the need to avoid failure (nAf). In the need to achieve part of the theory people are likely to set themselves with challenges that they know they can achieve. This will be done by setting the challenge to a standard they are capable of achieving.

The people who are classed in the need to avoid failure part will set challenges that are very high in difficulty. This is so that if they do not succeed in the challenge they do not feel like they have failed due to the task being so high in difficulty that they were not likely to pass in the first place. When I am choosing a line to ride if I am unsure about it I tend to ride very tight lines that are not necessarily possible. I feel that I do this because if I have the fence down as a result to the line that I rode or my poor riding it doesn’t matter as much due to there only being a small chance that I would have ridden that line successfully. They may also set challenges that are easy enough that they know they will achieve them. This allows the people to either have guaranteed success or guaranteed failure. I also tend to do this. For example when choosing the lines I am going to ride I will either go for a very simple line that I know I am going to be able to do easily, for example a wider and longer line allowing my horse to get straight to the fence.

A person that has the achievement motivation of the nAf theory will try and avoid situations where they do not know if success is going to be the outcome. When people who are classed in the nAf theory are being assessed they will not perform to their full potential. When I am being watched by people such as team selectors I tend to perform below my potential. This is due to feeling pressured and anxious. So therefor when choosing my line to a fence when I am being assessed I tend to ride badly because I’m nervous. This causes me to not achieve. I also tend to be very negative about a performance if it has not gone well. For example if I ride a poor line to a fence and it causes me to have a knock down or a refusal I will focus on the negative and not how I managed to correct this and carry on with the jumping round.

C2- Goal Setting

To help my performance not be effected by my achievement motivation setting goals will minimise the negative impact they have.

To set goals I will use the acronym of SMARTER. This stands for:

* Specific
* Measurable
* Agreed
* Realistic
* Timed
* Exciting
* Recorded

When I am setting my goals I will make them specific to my sport and the skill I am trying to improve. For example I will work on increasing my confidence and self-belief in my ability to jump a fence from a close distance. This will allow me to choose to ride tighter lines when competing so I am more competitive.

I will also make sure that I can measure my goals. This will allow me to know when I have achieved them. For example I may jump the same course for a week gradually making my lines tighter and saving time. I will make this measurable by timing each jumping round I do and seeing if it is getting less.

I will make sure that my goals are agreed. This will involve talking to my coach, and deciding which goals I need to prioritise and focus on. We will also agree how long I have to achieve the goal.

When I am setting these goals I need to ensure that they are realistic. For example making sure I allow myself enough time to achieve them and also make them achievable to reach. For example if I said that I wanted to save ten seconds on my round by choosing to ride a tighter line in one day it would not be realistic as it is very unlikely that I would be able to achieve it.

I need to make sure that my goals are have a time limit on then. For example I need to reach them within a certain amount of time. For example I can set myself a goal to ride a course of jumps with 10 less strides and 10s faster and I have to achieve this within three weeks when I re-do the same course.

When I set my goals I need them to be exciting. If they are not exciting it may cause me to become bored and therefore not be as likely to achieve them.

While I am working on achieving my goals I must record my progress. For example I will time how long it takes me to jump a round of jumps. I will then write this down and also write a comment on how I feel I did. I will keep recording my progress or if I am not progressing I will record my weaknesses and state why I think this is the case. If I did not record this information it would be hard to tell my progress or work out how I have achieved the certain goals.