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Country: Finland
Position: Professor

- Professor emeritus of education, University of Helsinki
- Well known for his studies about talent and creativity
- Awarded by the State of Finland and the Culture Fund of Finland for his career
- Has written many books on education, giftedness and creativity
- Former soccer player (VPS; HJK) and Finnish junior champion in soccer talent games

Giftedness and talent in sports: Developing talented ice hockey players

Kari Uusikylä, professor emeritus, University of Helsinki

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Which one is more important?



Giftedness (genes)

OR

Talent (training)

Giftedness: Terman 1920-

- G-factor (mostly inherited?), GENERAL INTELLIGENCE
- Unitary IQ
- Study of high IQ people over time (N= 1528)
- Stanford-Binet test & Wechsler

Howard Gardner: Multiple intelligences



1. Linguistic
2. Bodily-kinesthetic
3. Spatial
4. Musical
5. Logical-mathematical
6. Interpersonal
7. Intrapersonal
8. Naturalist

GIFTEDNESS: Confluence of three areas

1. Above average intelligence
2. Creativity
3. Task Commitment

Anders Ericsson



Giftedness= superior expert performance

Almost everybody may become an expert

Train 10 000 hours and you are on the top

Deliberate practice: Concentrate, try, rest!

There are only skills, no gifts (IS THIS TRUE?)

- Anatomical and physiological differences are not determined by unmodifiable genetic factors
- Superior power, control and speed of skills may be developed

- There is compelling evidence that egagement in domain-related activities might be needed for ten years
- The idea that some individuals enter a domain and rapidly reach high levels is false

- Some of the most striking improvements in the level of performance are found in sports
- There are changes in technical domains such as figure skating that were not even considered possible a few decades ago

Performance is difficult to improve



- After critical periods in childhood
- Fundamental techniques is easier to learn if you do not have interfering habits (adults)
- Good coaches may enable motivated students to excel
- People often underestimate the time required for learning

Francoys Gagné: gifted OR talented?



Natural abilities or GIFTS (in genes)

- Academic
- Artistic
- Social
- Psychomotor etc

TALENTS demand

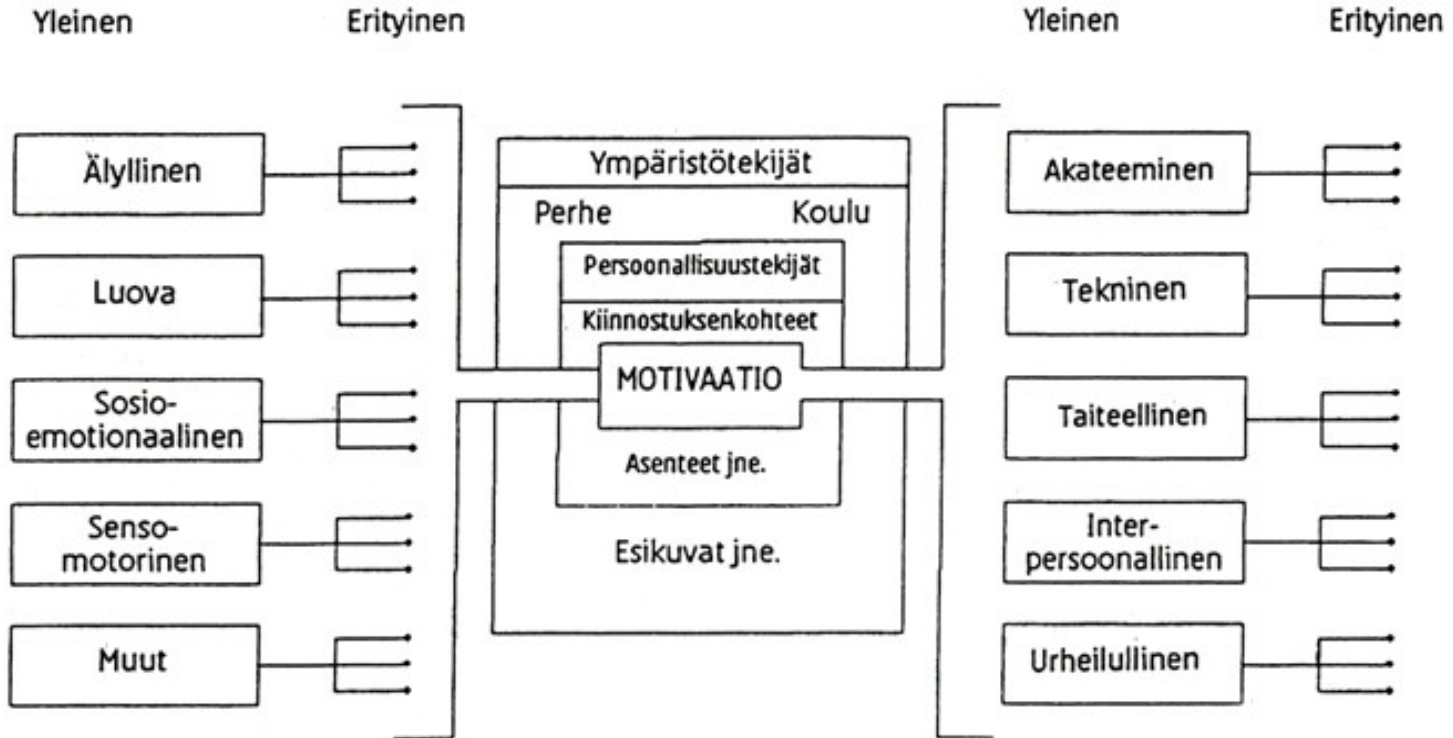
- Training, good teachers/coaches
- Intrapersonal motivation (!)
- Good environment ,supportive people, chance

F. Gagné:

SYNNYNNÄINEN LAHJAKKUUS Kykalueet

KATALYYTIT

ERITYISLAHJAKKUUS Erytisalueet



Physical challenges in sports



- Effort expenditure
- Development of capacities: strength, speed, flexibility, endurance
- Development of skills

Mental challenges

- Developmental skills: Concentration, imaginary, self-talking)
- Strategy planning
- Setting goals
- Directing motivation toward goals
- Persistence
- Knowing of sport culture

Technique and equipment

- Understanding technical requirements
- Optimizing equipment
- Personalizing technique or equipment

Benjamin Bloom: Developing talent in young people

Early years (5-10)



- Parents very important
- Practice routines and motivation
- Approval by parents and friends is a very good motivator

Middle years (11-14)



- Finding a new coach/teacher
- More practice time (3-5 hours daily)
- The coach sets very specific goals
- Feed-back detailed
- The parents do not plan any more the practice

The later years (14-)



- Finding a top coach
- Complete commitment needed
- Increasingly more responsibility for own motivation
- Performances are analyzed together with master coaches
- Outstanding peers important

THE MAJOR POINTS:

- The most talented individuals become fully committed to the field
- They need less emotional support from their parents.
- They need *practical help* for planning daily activities

What about *creative talents*?

Does an ice hockey player need creativity?

What is creativity?



- The product/process must be substantially different (novelty) within the repertoire of behavior
- The product must be appropriate (pleasing, communicative or meaningful)
- There is a difference between CREATIVITY and creativity

Depends on three things

■ Skill in the domain

■ Creative working skills

- A dedication to do the work well
- An ability to concentrate
- An persistence in the face of difficulty
- A willigness to work hard

■ Intrinsic motivation

PPPP



- Person
- Process
- Product, (GOAL)
- Press, (ENVIRONMENT)

Personal Qualities



- Is the person curious, interested, intrinsically motivated?
- Is the person divergent thinker interested in discovery?
- Does the person have the relevant personality traits?

INDEPENDENCE, COURAGE, FLEXIBILITY!

NOT AFRAID OF TAKING RISKS

2012



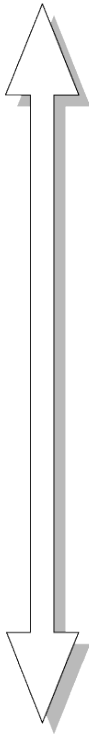
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Flow- a creative process



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ICE HOCKEY
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suuret



HAASTEET

vähäiset

AHDISTUNEISUUS

FLOW

TYLSISTYNEISYYS

heikot

TAIDOT

vahvat

Ciskszentmihalyi: FLOW



1. Challenge-skills balance
2. Action awareness merging
3. Clear goals
4. Unambiguous feedback
5. Concentration on the task at hand
6. Sense of control
7. Loss of self-consciousness
8. Transformation of time, AUTOTELIC EXPERIENCE

Creative Climate



- Challenge
- Freedom
- Idea Support
- Trust/Openness
- Play/Humor
- Debate
- Idea Time
- Risk taking

Creativity killers (Amabile)



- More results, faster!
- Evaluation pressures
- Reward systems
- Too much competition
- Restriction of choice
- Big Brother watching

Summary: The top sportsmen



- Strong interest and emotional commitment to a particular talent field
- Desire to reach a high level of attainment in the talent field
- Willingness to put the great amounts of time and effort needed to reach very high levels of achievement in the talent field

Questions



- WHY SO MANY TALENTED TOP YOUNGSTERS STOP PLAYING?
- WHY SO MANY (EX) HEROES ARE SUICIDAL, ALCOHOLICS AND NARCOMANS?
- WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HAPPINESS OF PLAYERS? IS IT IMPORTANT AT ALL?
- THERE ARE MANY TALENTED PLAYERS. DO YOU KNOW ANY PLAYER, WHO IS *WISE*?
- IS WISDOM IMPORTANT FOR SPORTSMEN?