

Candidate Interest #1

Embodied Cognition as it Relates to Gymnastics and Artistic Expression

Embodied cognition is the notion that the mind and the consideration of its processes encompass more than simply its corresponding internal activity, but also its interaction with the body and the external environment, bridging elements of traditional behaviorism with elements of cognitive psychology. As such, we must also consider goal-directed movements, actions, and behaviors in order to more holistically understand mental processes associated with cognition and intelligent action.

Gymnastics is a challenging sport that involves considerable focus, physical agility, coordination, balance, flexibility, creativity, strength, and endurance in order to perform successfully.

Upper-level gymnasts have the freedom to choose the components of their routines and the order of the skills they choose to perform, including the music for the floor exercise, the type of vault they perform, and the various creative dance moves that they wish to incorporate into their routines.

This project will endeavor to explore artistic gymnastics and the advanced coordination, strength, and skill required for exceptional performance. Mental/emotional control is arguably just as important as physical agility and endurance when an athlete is both practicing and competing. The role of visualizing success prior to competition and practicing mindfulness prior to and during competition will also be explored.