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Preliminary Investigation of the Continuous Self-Improvement Cognitive Process & Clinical Performance Behaviors

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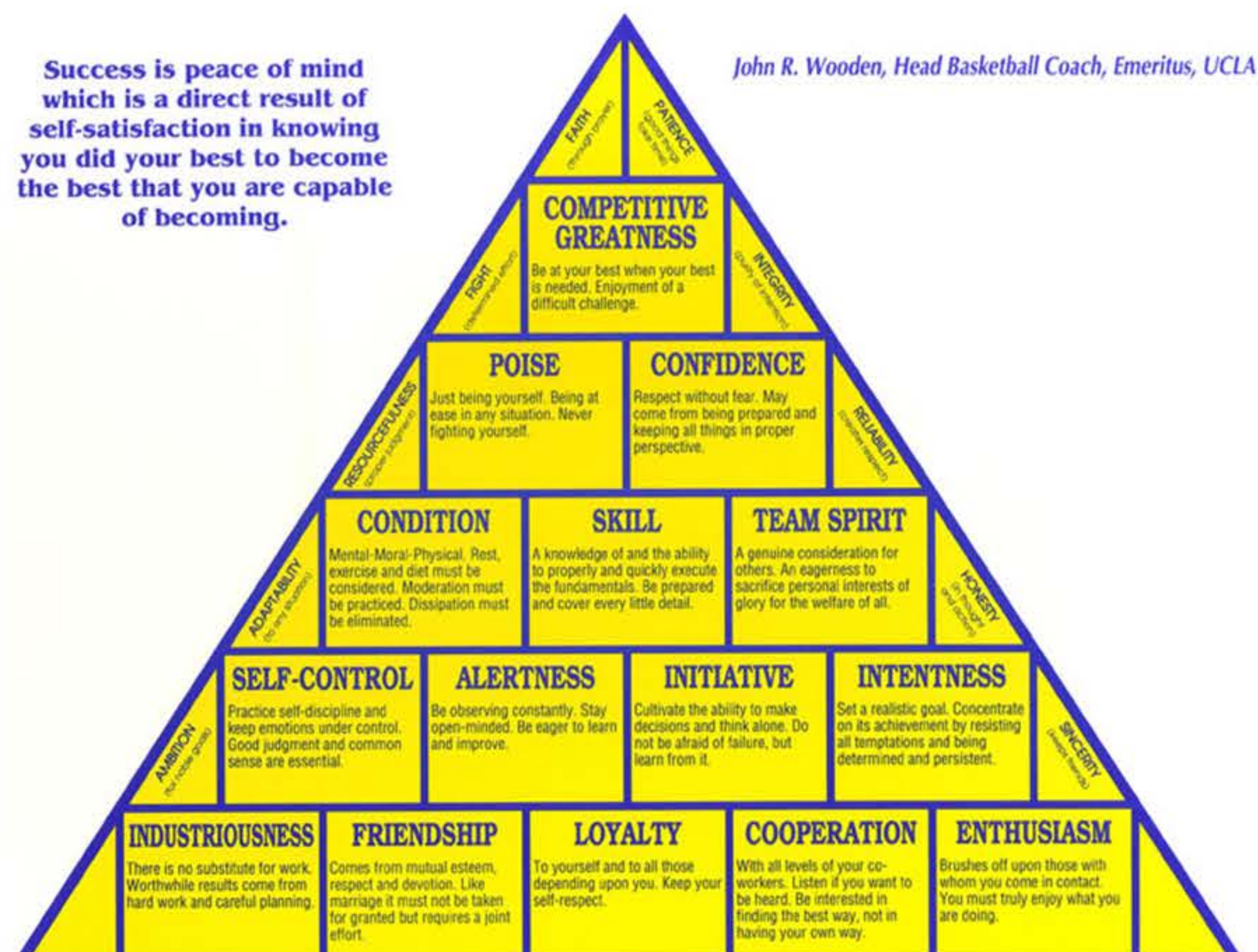
Background

Competitive Greatness

John R. Wooden's father shared two principles which were a major influence for his life: (1) "Don't try to be better than someone else, and (2) Always try to be the best you can be" (Wooden & Carty, 2005, p. 17). The first principle was a reminder that a successful life does not find peace of mind by comparing one's self to others. There is an interconnection between the second principle and Wooden's competitive greatness construct (CG). The definition of CG: "Be at your best when your best is needed. Enjoyment of a difficult challenge" (Wooden & Carty, 2005, p. 90).

Competitive greatness is linked to continuous self-improvement. By making the focus of life primarily on individual growth and development, there are endless opportunities to expand our skills and abilities. In Wooden's words: "We don't have to be superstars or win championships to reach competitive greatness. All we have to do is learn to rise to every occasion, give your best effort and make those around us better as we do it. It's not about winning. It's about learning to give all we have to give" (Wooden & Carty, 2005, p. 91).

Wooden created a pyramid of success as guide to the continuous self-improvement process. In his books, Wooden provides explanations for each of the 15 building blocks. Key words for each block are: (1) hard work and planning (Industriousness), (2) enjoyment (Enthusiasm), (3)



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mutual esteem & devotion (Friendship), (4) beneficial work (Cooperation), (5) self-respect (Loyalty), (6) discipline (Self-Control), (7) observation & open-mindedness (Alertness), (8) decisions & action (Initiative), (9) realistic goals (Intentness), (10) physical, mental, moral, & spiritual (Condition), (11) timing & performance (Skill), (12) eagerness & sacrifice (Team Spirit), (13) true to self (Poise), (14) respect without fear (Confidence), and (15) loving a difficult challenge (Competitive Greatness).

10-80-10 Principle

According to Urban Meyer (2015, pp. 161-162),

There is a theory about human behavior called the 10-80-10 principle ... Think of your team or your organization as a big circle. At the very center of it, the nucleus, are the top 10 percenters, people who give all they've got all the time, who are the essence of self-discipline, self-respect, and the relentless pursuit of improvement. They are the elite—the most powerful component of any organization ... Outside the nucleus are the 80 percenters. They are the majority—people who go to work, do a good job, and are relatively reliable. The 80 percenters are for the most part trustworthy and dutiful, but they simply don't have the drive and the unbending will ... The leadership challenge is to move as many of the 80 percenters into the nucleus as you can. If you can expand the top 10 percent into 15 percent or 20 percent, you are going to see a measurable increase in the performance of your team.

Continuous Self-Improvement (CSI)

In the academic environment, Wooden's competitive greatness can be linked to Continuous Self-Improvement (CSI). By focusing on individual growth and development, there are endless opportunities to expand our skills and abilities. Meyer's 10-80-10 principle estimates that 10 percent are in "... relentless pursuit of improvement" or CSI. In Figure 1, we have an example of a CSI nursing student functioning at an exceptional level of engagement, deeper learning processing of material from textbook readings and lecture presentations. Using an intrinsic reward system, they internalize content and concepts and continuously apply them in new, unique ways. These students appear to feel the satisfaction and receive the validation they are going to be excellent nurses. Not only do they understand the scientific and theoretical aspects of nursing, but they also demonstrate the art and caring nature of an excellent and compassionate nurse.

CSI & CPE

The CSI tool was created to identify behaviors (R1-R7) of students in the clinical setting that demonstrated CSI. The CPE tool was created to track students' natural progression toward the completion of eight objectives as they relate to program objectives. Within those eight objectives are 86 behaviors, and of the 86, 36 were identified as behaviors influenced by CSI. That is, those behaviors focused less on

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performance or clinical tasks and more on higher-order thinking and personal growth. Since students can receive a rating of 0 (dependent) – 4 (self-directed) on the CPE tool, it was determined that students who achieve a 3 (competent/proficient) or below are non-CSI performers, while students who are rated above a 3 are CSI performers. The thinking is that all students are required to achieve a rating of 3 in all behaviors on the CPE tool by the end of the semester. Students who achieve a rating higher than 3 exhibit behaviors that match the thinking process of CSI performers. From there, a comparison was made between students' ratings on the CSI tool and the ratings they achieved in the associating 36 behaviors of the CPE tool.

Methods

The second author evaluated nursing students on a weekly basis regarding their clinical performance in providing patient care. Evaluations were based on seven operational behaviors. Since the medical-surgical course is a 16-week course, he was able to collect weekly intervals of how the CSI (Meyer's 10% estimate) and non-CSI (Meyer's 80% estimate) students spent their time on clinical setting objectives and behaviors. The evaluation used three criteria: on intermittent direct observation, the clinical evaluation tool, and the electronic health record. Student performance on the seven behaviors provided a weekly behavioral measurement.

Findings & Discussion

Using SPSS 25 correlational analysis, a preliminary comparison of the CSI tool was compared with the CPE behaviors tool. The initial analysis revealed a correlation coefficient of .410. This preliminary educational intervention will be continued with data collection during the next 18 to 24 months.

References

- Meyer, U. with Coffey, W. (2015). Above the line: Lessons in leadership and life from a championship season. New York: Penguin Press.
- Wooden, J. & Carty, J. (2005). Coach Wooden's pyramid of success. Ventura, CA: Regal Books.