

LESSONS LEARNED FROM ATHLETICS: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF INDUSTRY
LEADERS FOCUSING ON THE ROLE INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS PLAYED IN
THEIR LIVES

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ABSTRACT

Brett J. Botta: Lessons Learned from Athletics: A Qualitative Analysis of Industry Leaders
Focusing on the Role Intercollegiate Athletics Played in Their Lives
(Under the direction of Erianne Weight)

The purpose of this study aims to explore the intersection of athletics and academics with the overall education, personal growth, and professional futures of student-athletes. The study pursues this purpose through three research questions which are answered using case study methodology of five high-profile participants. The subjects were Lynn Elsenhans, Mary Schapiro, Vaughn Bryson, Beth Brooke-Marciniak, and Andy Hill. Each participant played intercollegiate athletics and went on to be a CEO or President of highly touted organizations. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and the qualitative data was coded for emergent themes. The findings revealed a number of key themes about what was learned from intercollegiate athletics and how these lessons were useful in their careers. This study not only serves as a valuable addition to previous literature about the educational value of intercollegiate athletics but also provides unique and in-depth stories of how skills are learned and applied in the workplace.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	vii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of Purpose.....	2
Research Questions	3
Definition of Terms	3
Assumptions	4
Limitations	4
Delimitations	4
Significance of Study	5
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE	6
Learning Theories	6
Effective Educational Practices.....	10
Educational Benefits and Criticisms of College Sport.....	11
College Sport as Education	16
Conclusion.....	19
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY	20
Qualitative Methods	20
Participants/Inclusion Criteria.....	21
Data Collection.....	21
Participant Selection	21
Establishing Contact	22

In-Depth Individual Interviews	22
Secondary Sources.....	24
Data Analysis	24
CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS	26
Participant Background Information.....	26
Lynn Elsenhans.....	28
Mary Schapiro	29
Vaughn Bryson	30
Beth Brooke-Marciniak	31
Andy Hill	31
Emergent Themes.....	33
How to Lead	33
Teamwork.....	34
Commitment to Goals.....	35
Time Management & Priorities	36
The Discipline and Humility it Takes to Win.....	36
Resiliency and Overcoming Failure	37
Preparation.....	38
Confidence.....	38
Other Important Lessons Learned	39
Elsenhans	39
Schapiro	40
Bryson.....	40
Brooke-Marciniak.....	41
Andy Hill	41

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION.....	43
Gender	43
Emergent Themes.....	45
How to Lead	45
Teamwork	46
Time Management & Priorities	47
Resiliency & Overcoming Failure	48
Preparation.....	49
Confidence.....	50
Competition	51
Conclusion.....	52
Limitations.....	53
Future Research	53
REFERENCES	55

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Basic Participant Demographic Information	27
Table 2: Participant Information	33
Table 3: Emergent Themes	42

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan played college basketball at Harvard and has never been shy about his passion for the sport. Those who follow basketball closely may remember watching Arne Duncan show off his basketball skills in recent years' NBA All-Star Weekend Celebrity Basketball Games. Not only did Duncan participate alongside former NBA and WNBA players, musicians, actors and actresses, and other prominent figures, but he was crowned the MVP of the game in 2013 and 2014. Witnessing this experience was foundational to the research questions pursued within this thesis. Not only did basketball help Duncan get a degree at Harvard and meet his wife, it helped develop him into the man and leader he is today- "So much of what I've learned in life, I learned on a basketball court. It helped shape me" (Brady, 2010). Duncan has been on record that he strongly believes that basketball, and athletics in general, both builds and reveals character. Duncan is an advocate for student-athlete education because he realizes what kind of opportunity it is. In an interview with USA Today, Duncan reflected on his experience at Harvard. He stated, "I'm so lucky to have been a student-athlete, to have an extraordinary experience, one that was absolutely formative" (Brady, 2010). Learning about Arne Duncan and his first person views on the student athlete experience makes one wonder: what other CEO's, politicians, entertainers, and additional high profile individuals have been student-athletes and how did that experience shape who they have become?

The majority of participants in intercollegiate athletics will say that they learned something from their time as a student-athlete, but the question remains, what is it that was actually learned? Athletics has been demonstrated to be a positive and influential factor in an individual's academic and overall success (Robst & Keil, 2000); and athletes have been shown to learn important life lessons by playing organized sports at any age (Henderson, Olbrecht, & Polachek, 2006). Most skills learned from athletics are transferable past the years as a student-athlete and into the professional and 'real' world (Chalfin, Weight, Osborne & Johnson, 2014; Barratt & Frederick, 2012).

In today's culture of multi-billion dollar television deals and increased commercialization of college athletics, individuals are becoming increasingly cynical about the current state of intercollegiate athletics and role of athletics in higher education (Bowen & Levin, 2003; Gayles, & Hu, 2009; Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Thelin, 1994; Wolverton, 2008). While a great amount of effort is spent observing and highlighting the shortcomings of intercollegiate athletics, particularly in the competitive and media driven world that is today, much less energy is spent uncovering or reporting the many successes stories of intercollegiate athletics (Williams, Sarraf, & Umbach, 2006). This study will use detailed examples to explore the specific benefits and lessons former student-athletes associate with their participation in intercollegiate athletics at the highest level.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study aims to explore the intersection of athletics and academics with the overall education, personal growth, and professional futures of student-athletes. Furthermore, this study looks to gain further insight into what lessons are learned through intercollegiate

athletics and how they have been directly applied toward success in a career outside of sports. Ultimately, the goal is to portray the stories of high-profile leaders in today's society who played intercollegiate athletics and used that as a spearhead to their success.

Research Questions

Based on a review of literature, the following research questions guided this research.

[RQ 1] What lessons did select industry leaders learn from participation in intercollegiate athletics?

[RQ 2] Based on the experiences of select industry leaders, how are lessons learned through participation in intercollegiate athletics?

[RQ 3] How do select industry leaders use specific experiences from participation in intercollegiate athletics to guide and sustain them in the workplace and in life?

Definition of Terms

- 1) **Former Student-Athlete** – For the purpose of this study, the term “former student-athlete” will be defined as anyone who participated in an intercollegiate sport at the varsity level for at least two years.
- 2) **“Successful” Former Student-Athlete** – For the purpose of this study, this term will be defined as one who has achieved national recognition for success in their career.
- 3) **Student-Athlete Experience** – Refers to the time a student spends in college as a student-athlete. It is a combination of athletic, academic, and social experiences.
- 4) **NCAA** - The National Collegiate Athletic Association is a voluntary membership organizational of higher education universities and institutions that participate in

intercollegiate athletics. The NCAA is the general governing body that develops, monitors, and enforces rules and regulations for all member institutions.

- 5) **Secondary/Outside Sources** – For the purpose of this study, secondary (or outside) sources will be defined as other resources and documents used as qualitative data in addition to the interview transcripts.

Assumptions

- 1) The research methods used are valid, reliable, and done thoroughly.
- 2) All questions are answered openly and honestly by the subjects.
- 3) There is no bias of re-phrasing of subject responses by the researcher.

Limitations

- 1) Access to “high profile” former student athletes is limited and difficult which narrows the pool of subjects to choose from.
- 2) Time will serve as a limitation in this study. This research must be completed in a given amount of time which also may limit which subjects can be used and interviewed.

Delimitations

- 1) This study only examines the experiences of five specific former student athletes.
- 2) This study focuses solely on the student athlete experience of those who have gone on to be successful in their given career choice.
- 3) This study only gives insight into the student athlete experiences at five different institutions.

Significance of Study

With rapidly growing support for the pay for play and the commercialism of college athletics, it is becoming more and more pertinent that research is done on the benefits of participation. The results of this study provide backing for the argument that intercollegiate athletics aid in the development of leaders and therefore, confirm the alignment with higher education (Brand, 2006; Chalfin et al., 2014; Duderstadt, 2009; Henderson et al., 2006).

Although most believe that life skills and leadership qualities are established and developed as a student-athlete, there is minimal empirical evidence to support this belief. Additionally, very little research has been conducted to identify these specific skills.

This study finds its significance in two main areas. First, athletics is largely publicly subsidized, and as a visible area of the American University system, it seems as though we should have a better understanding of the educational outcomes and purposes of athletics. This study will clearly show these outcomes. In addition, this study seeks to bring to light specific skills that can be developed through participation in intercollegiate athletics and how these skills have been applied in life real scenarios. This study will also highlight how the education was imparted and through that understanding we will be able to further engrain educational emphases within the organizational structure of intercollegiate athletics.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter provides a detailed review of existing literature pertaining to lessons and values learned through participation in intercollegiate athletics. First, a conceptual overview of a number of learning theories provides the lens and theoretical framework in which this study is conducted. Next, the literature discussing effective educational practices will be explored with a specific focus on student-athlete social, academic, and athletic engagement. The following section will outline the educational benefits and criticisms of participation in intercollegiate athletics. Lastly, college sport as education research will be presented in a thorough and detailed manner. The four sections of this literature review provide an overview of the foundation that guided this study.

Learning Theories

There are numerous learning theories that can and will be applied to this study. Before getting deep into the learning theories, one must first understand that the act of playing has been shown to improve development in children. Lev Vygotsky is known for many psychological theories, one being the social development theory in which he cites “play” as a key factor in development (Vygotsky, 1967). A number of research studies have been done to build upon Vygotsky’s theory and show how it helps children improve their social ability and emotional development (Blasi & Hurwitz, 2002; Erickson, 1985; Pellegrini & Smith, 1998). Blasi &

Hurwitz (2002) provides research which shows that play as a young child helps develop hand-eye coordination which aid in learning to hold a pencil, read, and write. Additionally, the study revealed that play can even aid in learning basic math skills and number concepts (Blasi & Hurwitz, 2002). Understanding how play serves as a factor in childhood development is important to this study because of the comparisons that can be made to the lessons learned from participation in intercollegiate athletics as a teen and young adult.

Building upon this Vygotsky's scaffolding learning theory is an important concept to look at. Scaffolding learning typically takes place early in child development but the concept can be applied similarly to situations later in life. Scaffolding in its simplest form is based from the idea that before a child is able to walk without assistant and complete tasks on their own, adults must first provide the support or assistance needed for the child to become independent and complete tasks independently (Way & Winsler, 2005). Scaffolding learning has been shown to increase a sense of excellence, independence, determination, and task enjoyment, as well as new ideas about how to plan and organize problems how to work well with other individuals (Berk & Winsler, 1995; Wood & Middleton, 1975).

Way & Winsler explains the key features of scaffolding learning which was originally developed by Vygotsky and developed by other philosophers over the years. The key features include:

- (a) adult-child joint collaboration on a challenging and culturally meaningful problem-solving activity;
- (b) the presence of what is called intersubjectivity—when both adult and child are trying to accomplish the same thing or share the same goals for the task;
- (c) the adult contingently adjusting the amount and type of assistance provided to be as minimal

as possible, depending on the child's moment-to-moment competence with the task; and
(d) an active attempt by the adult to sensitively withdraw his or her assistance as the
child's skills increase over time to allow the child as much autonomy as possible (2005).

The concept of scaffolding can be applied to small-group situations and will be related to
coach/player relationships and experiences learned from participation in sports later in the
research.

Case-based reasoning, an extension of scaffolding learning, is the theory that learners can
use similar past experiences to aid them when situations arise in which they have no previous
familiarity (Schank, Berman & Macpherson, 1999). When humans come across a new challenge
or experience, they first look in their memory for similar cases they have previously dealt with
(Polya, 1957). Case-based reasoning explains that knowledge and memory is programmed in the
brain as stories about specific happenings and experiences (Schank, Berman & Macpherson,
1999, Schank, 1990). Additionally, learners use related cases to serve as advice to themselves in
areas such as personal success, struggles, failure, and what works in certain situations and what
does not (Kolodner, 1993). College athletes consistently deal with success and failure, both on
and off the athletic playing surface. Therefore, based on case-based reasoning, these individuals
naturally store feelings associated with success and failure in their memory and can refer back to
them when facing similar situations later in life.

Building on previous concepts discussed in both case-based and scaffolding learning
theories, experiential learning theory explains learning through the combination of grasping and
transforming experience. According to the experiential learning theory, learning can be defined
as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.

Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience” (Kolb, 1984). Many believe learning to be the process of knowledge and information being taught and in turn, learned. However, learning involves more a body of knowledge, it is all around us and what we do and experience helps shape who we are through personal commitment, social interaction, problem solving, and much more (Cohen, 1993). There has been significant research done to show that experiential learning is beneficial, the goal of this study is to portray individual experiences in college athletics and see what was learned and how it was applied to life after college and outside of sports (Kolb, 1984; Southall, Nagel, LeGrande, & Han, 2003).

Many of the concepts discussed within these theories have been put to practice in the athletics realm by Coach John Wooden in his coaching and teaching philosophy. He shared this philosophy by the statement, “You have not taught until they have learned” (Wooden, Tobin & Walton, 1988). The goal of Wooden’s educational philosophy was for all his players to be creative and confident problem-solvers (Nater & Gallimore, 2005). Wooden focused his efforts on his players being grounded in fundamentals and prepared for anything that may arise in a game. Wooden famously said, he “wanted to be as surprised as our opponent at what my team came up with when confronted with an unexpected challenge” (Nater & Gallimore, 2005). Athletes who establish the habit of being prepared to take on any challenge on the court will in turn apply that concept to situations off the court as well (Wooden & Jamison, 2005).

In conclusion, Coach Wooden’s coaching philosophy is a clear application of the scaffolding, case-based, and experiential learning theories presented above. Coach Wooden used scaffolding because he believed his players needed to be properly taught before being able to be successful on their own on the court. Meanwhile experiential learning is seen in his philosophy in that fact that it increased ones creativity and confidence, especially when problem solving.

Lastly, Wooden's philosophy of being prepared for all situations is aided by case-based reasoning in that individuals store past experiences to apply to situations in the future.

Effective Educational Practices

Athletics (Gayles & Hu, 2009), extracurricular activities (Roberts & McNeese, 2010), service learning (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), and diversity experiences (Zhao & Kuh, 2004) all have been shown to promote student engagement on campus, success in the classroom, and degree completion. This literature will be explored by focusing on specific effective educational practices and how they can be applied to athletics.

Student involvement on a college campus has positive effects on the overall college education (Gayles & Hu, 2009). The amount of engagement which a student has in educationally purposeful activities while in college is important to both gaining knowledge and developing personally (Astin, 1993; Gayles & Hu, 2009; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005). Gayles and Hu (2009) found that engagement in several types of educationally purposeful activities resulted in different effects on different types of outcomes. Furthermore, the activities that student-athletes become involved in have been shown to increase personal self-concept, learning, and communication skills. These greater impacts result in noteworthy and positive effects on the college experience for student-athletes, regardless of a specific athlete's personal characteristics (Gayles & Hu, 2009; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). To produce the optimal benefit for all students, engagement must be viewed as a combination of factors: the function of the institution's actions and the effort of the students (Astin, 1993; Kuh, 2001; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005; Umbach, Palmer, Kuh & Hannah, 2006).

Studies have been conducted to examine whether student-athletes vary in their engagement in comparison to non-athletes. These studies have produced differing results, some studies conclude that student-athletes do not differ greatly from non-athletes, others found there is no difference between student-athletes and non-athletes, and yet others found that student-athletes engage more so than non-athletes (Umbach et al., 2006; Umbach & Kuh, 2004; Williams, Sarraf, & Umbach, 2006; Wolniak, Pierson, & Pascarella, 2001). Williams et al. (2006) used a sample of approximately 66,900 respondents, 6 percent that indicated they were competing in a NCAA championship sport, spanning across 195 NCAA Division I institutions. Athletes in the study consistently reported positive perceptions of their campus environment and personal gains in various social, educational and practical competencies (William et al., 2006). The study used eight different scales, sub-classified into three areas measuring student engagement, perception of campus environment, and self-reported gains in learning and intellectual development. The researchers used the above scales to test if differences existed between high-profile student-athletes and non-athletes. The study was conducted on a broad student population and the researchers were surprised by the highly positive findings related to intercollegiate athletics. The combination of the findings from various studies indicates that athletes do engage in effective educational practices rather than the belief that they do not get as much out of their college experience (Umbach et al., 2006).

Educational Benefits and Criticisms of College Sport

Supporters for intercollegiate athletics as an integral part of the college experience would claim that athletics helps to define the culture of colleges and universities in addition to helping them work toward their mission and goals (Gerdy, 2002; Toma, 1999). Student-athletes are given many great opportunities that other students do not have access to. In addition, values and

lessons such as hard work, sacrifice, team-work, integrity, and leadership are often developed. Not only can these qualities be developed, but they are tremendously beneficial throughout life (Duderstadt, 2000; Olivia, 1989). These supporters emphasize that college athletics offers student-athletes the necessary resources to develop into individuals who will succeed in a life after college.

Various studies have identified a number of ways that athletics benefit a university as a whole (Brand, 2006; Gayles & Hu, 2009; Henderson, Olbrecht & Polachek, 2006; Miller, 2003; Sperber, 1990). First, sports aid the overall development of young people (Gayles & Hu, 2009; Henderson et al., 2006; Brand, 2006). Secondly, participation in athletics contributes to improved academic performance and potential for occupational success (Miller, 2003; Long & Caudill, 1991; Chalfin et al., in press). Numerous studies have revealed greater overall graduation rates and GPAs for athletes in comparison to non-athletes (Long & Caudill, 1991); in Division I (Duderstadt, 2009), and Division III (Robst & Keil, 2000).

Other often cited benefits of college sports are that they generate money for the university, draw attention to the school, increase the school's academic prestige, boost student enrollment and improve school spirit (Clotfelter, 2011; Duderstadt, 2009; Miller, 2003; Sack & Staurowsky, 1998; Sperber, 1990;). While coaches, athletes, athletic administrators and even scholars often refer to this long list of ways that sports can benefit a university, there is minimal empirical evidence to support these popular notions.

In addition, numerous studies have shown student-athletes participation has a positive impact on personal self-concept, which increases the likelihood of growth and development in other areas (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Gayles & Hu, 2009; Pascarella, Smart, Ethington &

Nettles, 1987). Dr. Will Barratt and Dr. Mark Frederick at Indiana State University conducted a lengthy study with over 250,000 subjects which measured educational growth in students among all ages, races, genders, majors, backgrounds, and school sizes (Barratt & Frederick, 2011). The purpose of the study was to learn more about the general student population, however, the researchers discovered that student-athletes progress at nearly twice the speed of non-athletes in seven intangible academic categories. The seven skills are critical thinking, self-awareness, communication, diversity, citizenship, relationship and leadership. Barratt and Frederick believe these skills are indicators of success in work and life after college (Barratt & Frederick, 2012). “I’m the faculty member who used to say athletics is a waste of time and it’s stupid,” Barratt said. “Once I looked at this data, I realized I was wrong. I still don’t go to games, but I do understand the educational value behind athletics” (McCann 2012). Frederick added “We’re rather convinced that student-athletes are far more ready to face the world than non-athletes” (McCann, 2012).

A 1999 study by Pascarella, Truett, Miller, Nora, Terenzini, Edison, and Hagedorn opposes some of these findings by concluding that football and men’s basketball players show a tendency toward having considerably lower levels of writing skills, critical thinking and reading comprehension than non-athletes or athletes in other sports. Meanwhile, the study found that Olympic sport athletes, both male and female, did not differ from non-athletes with regard to intellectual development (Pascarella et al., 1999). Therefore, Pascarella et al. concluded that “any negative cognitive influence of participation in intercollegiate athletics may be largely a function of the distinct disadvantages that accrue to football and basketball players” (Pascarella et al., 1999).

Numerous scholars counter some of the proposed benefits of college sport, while others attempt to show that athletics conflict with the mission of higher education (Clotfelter, 2011; Chu & Seagrave, 1985; Gayles & Hu, 2009; Miller, 2003; Sack & Staurowsky, 1998; Sperber, 2000; Thelin, 1994). The ever growing business of college athletics creates increased pressures to win which in turn can create a disconnect between athletics and academics (Sack and Staurowsky, 1998). Saffici and Pellegrino (2012) argue that the most pertinent issue with student-athletes and education is the increasing emphasis on sustaining a highly successful athletic program which is compromising the type of students being accepted into institutions. The educational benefits of college athletics have becoming increasingly questioned because of issues such as decreased graduation rates, delinquency, and academic scandals (Clotfelter, 2011; Gayles & Hu, 2009; Sack & Staurowsky, 1998; Sperber, 2000; Thelin, 1994). Additionally Chu (1989) provides a further argument against student athletes having increased graduation rates by emphasizing recruiting violations, grade falsification, and the opportunity for athletes to enroll in easier courses.

Another common argument is that participants in college athletics are more “athlete-students” than they are student-athletes. The argument that they are athletes before they are students is backed by researchers pointing out the amount of time student-athletes dedicate to their sports (Duderstadt, 2009; Sack & Staurowsky, 1998; Wolverton, 2008). A study done by the NCAA (2011) came to the conclusion that FBS football players reported a time commitment of 43.4 hours per week, the highest of any sport. Additionally, Division I baseball and FCS football players reported more than 40 in season hours per week, while Division I men’s basketball players showed about 39 hours per week. Lastly, Division III athletes were shown to average about 30 hours per week on their respective sport.

Chu et al. (1985) conducted a study over an eight year period and the results showed no evidence in support of the ideas that participation in athletics builds character. The same study pointed out several conditions that are commonly found in athletes. The study explained the “con-man athlete” as an individual who will do whatever it takes, including cheating, to win or be ahead of their competition. Meanwhile, the “hyper-anxious athlete” gets very nervous and puts extensive pressure on themselves to play well. Furthermore, they describe the “athlete who resists coaching” as not teachable, while the “injury-prone athlete” will use injury or other excuses to blame their lack of good performance (Chu et al., 1985). Although many studies would show that athletics has a positive impact on the development of student athletes (Gayles & Hu, 2009; Henderson et al., 2006; Brand, 2006), the research of Chu, Segrave and Becker shows that athletics may hinder personal development.

It seems as though researchers are split as to whether or not there are educational benefits to participation in intercollegiate athletics. Therefore, there is a need for further research regarding the overall experience of student-athletes and what types of activities and involvement best foster learning and personal development (Gayles & Hu, 2009). As previously stated, education of student-athletes is currently one of the biggest debates in collegiate athletics. “This issue is particularly important as the public becomes increasingly skeptical about the quality of education for college athletes and distrustful about the role of athletics in American higher education” (Bowen & Levin, 2003). However, this study is not as concerned about a student-athlete’s academic performance during their undergraduate years, but instead looks at how the experiences gained as a student-athlete, both academically and athletically, prepared them for their futures and to be successful and productive in life after college.

College Sport as Education

Former NCAA President Myles Brand held to the belief that intercollegiate athletics are undervalued within colleges and universities (Brand, 2006). He argued many of the problems within the academy relative to intercollegiate athletics stem from a view which sees athletics as an auxiliary which he termed the standard view (Brand, 2006). Seeking to expand the perspective of those within the academy, Brand presented an alternative integrated view, which holds that athletics should be viewed as a part of the educational environment of the university and that the bias against physical development should be eliminated. Brand's essay and other research has been used to prove that intercollegiate athletics are aligned with the goals of higher education as they help develop student-athletes into future leaders (Brand, 2006; Duderstadt, 2009; Long & Caudill, 1991; Ryan, 1989). Therefore, this section will open with a summary of Brand's essay followed by a thorough review of the literature both supporting and disputing his theory regarding college sport as education.

There has been research done which further Brand's integrated view theory. A 2009 study done by Ann Rosewater showed that participation in athletics is positively correlated with the cognitive development which leads to academic skills such as concentration, memory and goal-directed behavior (Rosewater, 2009). The study analyzed a number of data sets dealing with organized sports and the effects on scholarly achievement. Furthermore, another study revealed that the intellectual skills acquired through participation in athletics can have an effect on information processing in everyday life (Chaddock, Neider, Voss, Gasper & Kramer, 2011). The study was an extremely unique one in that it required subjects to navigate trafficked roads by walking on a treadmill in a virtual world. Eighteen student-athletes and eighteen non student-athletes were chosen as subjects to see how they handle this challenge which requires multi-

tasking and rapid information processing. The results showed athletes had greater street crossing success rates than nonathletes. In addition, athletes also showed significantly more advanced mental processing speed on a computer-based test of reaction time (Chaddoack et al., 2011). This study shows that through participation in athletics, athletes develop life skills and mental processing at a higher rate, increasing their chance for success in a career after college.

Attempting to compare learning and personal development that occurs in college is very difficult and usually inaccurate because of factors such as grades between institutions, academic majors, or even the difference between student-athletes and non-athletes (Pascarella, Truckenmiller, Nora, Terenizini, Edison, & Hagedorn, 1999). Specifically, the process of simply comparing students from different colleges based on GPA will often provide misleading results (Warren, 1984). When looking at the classroom alone, student-athletes complete their education in a generally traditional sense. However, what is often lost is how the education of these athletes is accompanied by invaluable lessons that can be learned on the field or court (Wooden & Jamison, 2005; Soshnick, 2013). Participation in intercollege athletics, in reality, is an extension of the educational experience (Brand, 2006). Athletes have the opportunity to learn skills such as discipline and teamwork which in the long run has just as much benefit than the classroom work itself (Brand 2006; Chalfin et al., in press; Warren 1984). Therefore, despite the time constraints and other mental and physical activities, do college athletes learn skills through participation that could be considered as education and add value to their degree and personal development?

Some employers feel the answer to this question is yes and the intangible skills possessed by athletes make them a more coveted hire (Chalfin et al., in press). Athletes possess a distinctive mentality which they develop over years of training, practice, and high competition

(McCann, 2012). As previously mentioned, simply comparing GPA or standardized test scores is inaccurate usually produces skewed results due to a number of factors (Sellers, 1992). As researchers have become more and more skeptical of using GPA and standardized test scores, there has become an increased emphasis in professional research to look at other factors that may better serve as better gauges for educational success (Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont & Stephens, 2003; Gayles & Hu, 2009).

A number of studies have been done to show that employers target athletes when looking to make a hire. Depending on the employer, there are several reasons why athletes are becoming a more and more appealing hire. Some state that the cut-throat competitiveness of athletics along with the discipline and long hours required to do well as an athlete is what makes them appealing and successful in the work force (La Roche, 2013). Going along the same lines, athletes are taught resiliency through losses and how to handle criticism (McCann 2012; La Roche, 2013; Soshnick, 2013). Meanwhile, David K. Williams, a well-known entrepreneur, argues the hypothesis that athletes make great entrepreneurs. He believes this is the case because of their ability to focus on goals and to think and act strategically (Williams, 2013). The last quality which has been commonly noted as a reason for athletes being popular hires is their ability to be a part of and work as a team (Soshnick, 2013). It can be clearly seen that athletes gain and possess qualities that make them good candidates for jobs but this study will focus on looking at how they do once hired and what qualities make them successful in their job.

Through the findings of several research studies, it has been shown that participation in college athletics teaches lessons and skills such as discipline, dedication, sacrifice, integrity, leadership, ambition, perseverance, teamwork, work ethic, and drive to succeed (Long & Caudill, 1991; Henderson et al., 2006; Ryan, 1989; Duderstadt, 2009; Soshnick, 2013; Williams, 2013).

Keith Murnighan, Professor of Management and Organization at Northwestern University summarized many of these qualities by describing student-athletes as “people who are disciplined, used to taking direction but able to take initiative” (Soshnick, 2013). These skills and lessons learned by student-athletes will be useful in the real world after college and will not only help them find jobs, but be highly successful in these jobs (Henderson et al., 2006; Long & Caudill, 1991).

Conclusion

The purpose of this review of literature is to lay a foundational framework for this study. It is clear that there are differing opinions regarding the benefits of participation in intercollegiate athletics. As previously stated, the goal of this study will be to add to the literature done on this study to serve as a reference for future researchers, student-athletes, working professionals, and others. This study will be guided by the methods outlined in the following chapter to provide details regarding the student-athlete experience and how the lessons learned can be applied to a life and a career outside of sports.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Methods

Qualitative research can be conducted by using an assortment of data collection methods or by choosing one specific strategy. Marshall and Rossman (1999) proposed that data collection techniques in qualitative research could be categorized into four types: (a) participation in the setting, (b) direct observation, (c) in-depth interviews, and (d) document analysis. For the purpose of this research, a case study approach to qualitative research was chosen, employing one-on-one interviews as the primary method of data collection.

This study was conducted under the method of case study research. A case study is an in-depth study of a particular research problem rather than a sweeping statistical survey (Yin, 2003). Using a case study approach is a great way to aid in the understanding of a complex issue through specific analysis of a small number of events or in this case, real life situations and scenarios (Yin, 2003; Andrew, Peterson & McEvoy, 2011). While using the case study design, in-depth interviews were applied as the primary data source and the study relied upon an assortment of secondary sources to further investigate and answer the research questions. Interviews aided as a tool to get detailed information from the subjects which could not otherwise be obtained. The reason for using this method was to provide thorough descriptions of specific and interesting cases. However, the drawback of the selected research design is that it

may offer little basis for establishing reliability and there is a chance it may not be representative of the larger population (Andrew et al., 2011).

Participants/Inclusion Criteria

The target population for this study was former NCAA student-athletes who went on to have a successful career outside the realm of sports. Specifically, someone who works or has worked at the “C-level”, which is a term used in reference to corporations highest senior level executives. The sample for this study was five individuals who are among the above population. More specifically, the five individuals were those who have been commonly acknowledged as a highly touted leader in their industry and have spoken publically in some way about their participation as a student-athlete. All of the subjects are or were CEO’s, Presidents, or Chairman of highly touted businesses or organizations.

Data Collection

The data collection of this study was broken down into criteria establishment, recruitment and selection of participants, establishing contact and gathering consent from subjects, conducting interviews, and doing outside research to gather additional data about the individuals being interviewed.

Participant Selection

Based on the criteria discussed above, the selection process began by creating a list of eligible subjects. Once the list was created, an Institutional Review Board approved email was sent to twelve individuals to request participation. Some thought was given to accessibility of the potential subjects when selecting individuals to contact about this research project. The initial

email explained who the researcher was, some specifics about the research, and why this research was being conducted before asking for their participation. The email stated that the interview would last thirty minutes to one hour and would be preferable in a face-to-face setting although a phone call would be acceptable as well. The goal was to have 3-5 subjects recruited for this study and that goal was met by confirming the participation of five individuals.

Establishing Contact

To ensure that interviews were successfully accomplished, the primary researcher made sure to have communicated and confirmed with the participant the meeting place and/or phone call time, including time zone. In addition, a suitable space and necessary equipment (voice recorder) were reserved well in advance for each interview. Other than the initial recruitment email, contact was established with each individual at the beginning of the interview. Each interview would begin with an introduction, a brief description of the purpose of the study, and the obtaining of verbal consent from the participant.

In-Depth Individual Interviews

In order to fully understand the participant's perspectives and stories related to their student-athlete and work experiences, one-on-one interviews were conducted, each lasting between thirty minutes and one hour. The semi-structured interviews were conducted either over the phone or face-to-face, varying by participant. Additionally, each interview was audio taped in order to preserve the data until it was transcribed. Semi-structured interviews were beneficial in this study because there were pre-set interview questions that helped answer the specific research questions but also let the subject have the freedom to expand or go in a different direction and also allowed the researcher to ask follow up questions when appropriate. The specific questions

explored were sent to the subjects ahead of time and served as a basis for the interview conversation. The interview outline questions are listed below:

- 1) I have read your biography and some other online information but could you please tell me a little bit about your career path after college and what you do today?
- 2) What specific lessons did you learn from your participation in college athletics?
- 3) Do you use these lessons in your career? If so, how do you use these lessons daily? How has it helped define who you are?
- 4) What experiences in athletics have helped sustain you during challenges (can be professional or personal challenges)? Are there any specific stories or instances that you can point to directly?
- 5) What are some of your bad memories/worst experiences as a student athlete? Did you learn anything from these experiences?
- 6) How did you start your journey into athletics? Did you have any influential mentors along the way?
- 7) What do you feel is the most beneficial aspect of the student-athlete experience?

Each interview had a different feel to it based on the personality and experiences of the participant. Therefore, the follow up questions and conversations differed between the five subjects. Once each interview was completed, the voice recording was transcribed from oral to written format and saved electronically for data analysis.

Secondary Sources

As discussed above, in order to conduct full case studies, a multitude of data sources must be used. The interview transcripts served as the primary data source for this study but other resources were used and will be referred to as “secondary sources”. This additional data came from online articles written by or about the subjects, biographies, interviews previously conducted with the subjects, speeches, books, and conversations with others close to these individuals (former teammates, friends, family, or colleagues). These secondary sources were brought together and coded along with the interview transcripts during data analysis.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research has two primary purposes: 1) to understand the subjects’ perspectives and opinions and 2) to answer the research questions (Andrew et al., 2011; Yin, 2003). After interviewing each participant and collecting demographic data, a profile of each participant was constructed. These profiles included general information about their experiences, opinions, backgrounds, personality characteristics, and current professional status in order to aid in the data analysis. The first step in analyzing the data was demographics. It was important to look at gender, race, hometown, college attended, sport played, work locations, and more for each of the subjects before getting too deep into the data analysis.

Prior to beginning the data analysis, member-checking was attempted by showing the transcripts to the participants. This was done to ensure reliability of the transcribed data. The true data analysis took place once all interviews had been transcribed, subject profiles created, and secondary data sources were collected and organized. All of the comprehensive data was coded for key themes using ATLAS.ti software. The ATLAS.ti software assisted with the process of

data collection which included reducing the data, visually laying out quotations from all documents, linking key concepts (using codes), and incorporating the theory used in the literature review of this study. In addition to the coding of the primary researcher, a panel of experts reviewed a sample of the transcripts and coded them to further ensure reliability. The findings and key themes remained consistent between the panel and the primary researcher. Finally, the linking of themes through coding helped construct and organize findings and draw conclusions about the data which is presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore the intersection of athletics and academics with the overall education, personal growth, and professional futures of student-athletes. This purpose was pursued by examining specific lessons learned through participation in intercollegiate athletics from personal, first-hand, examples and stories. In-depth case studies of five individuals were conducted to explore the lessons taken away from intercollegiate athletic participation and what impact they had on the participants' careers outside the realm of sports. The study used qualitative research based primarily on semi-structured interviews with five individual participants. The findings from the interviews are presented in this chapter beginning with demographic and background information on each of the participants. The remainder of the chapter is broken down by the key themes discovered through the coding of the interview transcripts. These themes will serve as primary findings which will aid in answering the research questions of the study. Chapter 5 will then provide an in-depth and detailed discussion of the findings and will include additional and supporting information from data sources other than just the interviews.

Participant Background Information

A total of twelve individuals who met the criteria for this study were contacted for participation. Of those twelve, one responded and declined to participate due to time restraints, six failed to respond to initial or follow-up communication, and five responded and agreed to

participate. Therefore, the response rate was 41.7%. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with those five individuals during the data collection process. The participants all have unique stories and backgrounds which they contributed to the study. The gender breakdown was two males and three females. There was a baseball player, a lacrosse and field hockey player, and three basketball playing student-athletes in the study. The age range for the five participants was 55-71 years of age. Four of the five played college athletics at the Division I level while the other one played at the Division III level. See Table 1 for a complete breakdown of the basic participant demographics.

Table 1
Basic Participant Demographic Information

	%	<i>n</i>
Sex		
Male	40.0%	2
Female	60.0%	3
Age		
0-49	0.0%	0
50-59	60.0%	3
60-69	20.0%	1
70+	20.0%	1
College Sport Played		
Basketball	60.0%	3
Baseball	20.0%	1
Field Hockey & Lacrosse	20.0%	1
Other	0.0%	0
Level of Competition		
NCAA DI	80.0%	4
NCAA DII	0.0%	0
NCAA DIII	20.0%	1

Each participant gave verbal consent to use their name and story in the study, thus background information on each participant is listed below (listed in the order in which interviews were conducted). Most of the information below was provided by the respective participants during their interview. However, additional outside sources are incorporated to support the background information and inclusion criteria for each participant. All other secondary data sources related to the emergent themes will be tied in to the discussion section. See Table 2 for a summary of participant by participant information.

Lynn Elsenhans

Lynn Elsenhans (“Elsenhans”) attended Rice University in Houston, TX where she was a student-athlete on the first varsity women’s basketball team in the history of the school. Elsenhans played just one season of basketball at Rice before making the tough decision to commit her time fully to academics. This decision will be discussed in the next chapter. After graduating she went on to get her MBA from Harvard University before beginning her long and successful career in the oil refinery industry. She spent many years working in numerous leadership roles at Shell before later becoming the CEO of Sunoco, one of the largest petroleum manufacturers in the world. Elsenhans has been featured by Forbes on their yearly “World’s 100 Most Powerful Women” list four times, peaking at #10 in 2009 (Gordreau, 2014). She is now retired and serves on a number of boards for both profit and non-profit organizations in addition to running her own one-on-one mentorship program.

A key aspect of the inclusion criteria for this study is that participants must have spoken publically about the benefits of their participation in intercollegiate athletics. In a 2008 issue of *The Magazine of Rice University*, Elsenhans was quoted saying, “For me, Rice was the total

experience, both athletically and in the classroom. My experiences there as a student-athlete prepared me extremely well and is a part of my success” (Dow, 2008). The interview with Elsenhans for this study was conducted on February 10, 2015.

Mary Schapiro

Mary Schapiro (“Schapiro”) attended Franklin & Marshall College (“F&M”) in Lancaster, PA where she was a student-athlete on both the field hockey and lacrosse teams. Schapiro played both sports for all four years while at F&M. She intentionally chose a Division III school because she wanted the opportunity to play intercollegiate athletics while also getting a well-rounded academic experience. Schapiro admitted she never would have been good enough to play at a higher level. She went on to get her J.D. from George Washington University Law School. Schapiro then served in a number of financial services roles during the administrations of President Reagan, Bush, and Clinton. Eventually, in 2009, she was appointed by President Obama as Chairman of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (“SEC”). She held that position until 2012 and is currently the Advisor Board Vice Chair at Promontory Financial Group. Schapiro has also made multiple appearances on Forbes yearly “World’s 100 Most Powerful Women” release, peaking at #24 in 2011 (Gordreau, 2014).

Schapiro met the inclusion criteria based on an interview she did with Lacrosse.com and a speech she gave at Franklin & Marshall in 2011 at the inauguration ceremony of their new president. During the speech, Schapiro stated, “I left F&M with a deep, deep appreciation for the amazing things that teamwork can produce, combining the energy, skills and special capability of diverse people. The teamwork values I honed as a student-athlete at F&M have served me

well every single day”. (Schapiro, 2011). The interview with Schapiro was conducted on February 23, 2015.

Vaughn Bryson

Vaughn Bryson (“Bryson”) attended the University of North Carolina (“UNC”) in Chapel Hill, NC where he played four seasons of baseball (three varsity) and majored in Pharmacy. Bryson made the freshman team in his first year of college and expected that to be his only year as a student-athlete because of the time constraints of Pharmacy school and feeling as though he was not good enough to make varsity. He ended up starting all three seasons at 1st base and was a member of the 1960 team that made it to the College World Series for the first time in school history. Upon graduating, Bryson worked a part-time pharmaceutical job and played minor league baseball for one year before dropping baseball and moving forward in his career. He worked for the world-renown pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly for 32 years. In 1991, Bryson was promoted to President and CEO of Eli Lilly. Bryson is now retired, lives in Florida, and remains an avid North Carolina baseball supporter while also serving on a number of boards throughout the country and at UNC.

Bryson did an interview with the University Of North Carolina Office Of Development which was published in 2001. During that interview, he made a few statements which made him eligible to participate in this study. He stated, “I loved the camaraderie with my teammates, and baseball gave me a range of friends and experiences outside of pharmacy school. I am not bashful about saying intercollegiate athletics has a place in student life” (Travis, 2001). The one on one interview with Bryson was conducted in person on March 5, 2015.

Beth Brooke-Marciniak

Beth Brooke-Marciniak (“Brooke-Marciniak”) attended Purdue University in West Lafayette, IN. She was a student-athlete and played four seasons of varsity basketball and was the first woman to receive a basketball scholarship at Purdue. Brooke-Marciniak has held a number of leadership roles including Global and Americas Vice Chair for Public Policy and working in the US Department of the Treasury during the Clinton administration where she was responsible for all tax policy matters related to insurance and managed care. She is now the Global Vice Chair for Public Policy at EY (formerly Ernst & Young). Brooke-Marciniak has also been featured on Forbes’ “World’s 100 Most Powerful Women” list, including the most recent list at #98.

Brooke-Marciniak has shared her opinions about the benefits of intercollegiate athletics openly and often throughout her career. In a 2015 article published by the NCAA, Brooke-Marciniak talked extensively about the lessons she and others learned as college athletes. “As an athlete you develop that confidence,” she said. “You know the recipe for success – practice, teamwork, hard work and the ability to be coached and mentored” (Hayes, 2015). Additionally, Brooke-Marciniak spearheads the Women Athletes Business Network which aids women student-athletes in their post-graduate careers. The interview with Brooke-Marciniak was conducted over the phone on March 25, 2015.

Andy Hill

Andy Hill (“Hill”) attended the University of California Los Angeles (“UCLA”) where he was a student-athlete on the men’s basketball team for three years and played under legendary coach, John Wooden. During his time at UCLA, Hill won three national championships and had

a cumulative record of 87-3. Upon graduating from UCLA, Hill went into the entertainment business, with a focus on TV production. He eventually became the President of CBS Productions and was responsible for successful programming such as *Touched by an Angel* and *Walker, Texas Ranger*. He later left the entertainment industry to co-author the book *Be Quick – But Don't Hurry* with Coach John Wooden. Hill now serves on a number of national boards and travels the country as a motivational speaker.

Each of the other participants had talked sporadically about their student-athlete experience and what they learned from it while Hill serves as an outlier because he wrote an entire book about his experience. Hill explained that his student-athlete experience was a challenge at times due to lack of playing time but realized what he had learned from it much later in life:

I had been away from basketball and Coach Wooden for nearly twenty-five years before I realized that virtually everything I believed in and used in my professional life was derived from my years playing a simple game. I was almost chagrined the day I had the epiphany that sent me running back to see Coach with my great revelation that every lesson I learned playing basketball had led directly to my success in business (Hill & Wooden, 2001).

Hill has a unique and special story in regards to the lessons he learned from intercollegiate athletics because he played for John Wooden who is known as much for his life lessons and teaching as he is for his basketball coaching and knowledge. This provides a diverse perspective in comparison to some of the other participants.

Table 2
Participant Information

Participant	College	Sport	Highest Work Position
Lynn Elsenhans	Rice University	Basketball	CEO - Sunoco
Mary Schapiro	Franklin & Marshall College	Field Hockey & Lacrosse	Chairman - U.S. Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC)
Vaughn Bryson	University of North Carolina	Baseball	CEO - Eli Lilly
Beth Brooke-Marciniak	Purdue University	Basketball	Global Vice Chair of Public Policy - Ernst & Young
Andy Hill	UCLA	Basketball	President - CBS Productions

Emergent Themes

For the purpose of this study, “emergent themes” will refer to the lessons learned through participation in intercollegiate athletics that were most readily discussed throughout the interviews. Below is a summary of each emergent theme. See Table 3 for a complete summary of the findings where n = the number of participants that discussed that specific lesson in their interview.

How to Lead

A few of the participants had very specific thoughts and stories about how athletics taught them to lead, with an emphasis on communication and relationships. Elsenhans explained that she learned how to lead by influence rather than position. She explained that anyone can be a leader based on how you treat others and how you communicate verbally and nonverbally. Elsenhans noted that she undoubtedly learned that concept through participation in athletics. Schapiro said that her experience as team captain fostered an ability to communicate what the bigger vision is

and the importance of mutual support as a leadership quality. She explained, “It helps me be conscious when I communicate with my employees now, I ask myself ‘am I communicating consistently and clearly?’” Brooke-Marciniak discussed relationships as the most important leadership quality. She continued to say that being on a college basketball team put her in a position that forced her to learn how to build relationships with failure as the only alternative. She said if she hadn’t developed that skill, she would not have been able make the impact she has as a leader. Lastly, Hill explained that participation in intercollegiate athletics gives you a leg up in the business world because he called it a “four year leadership course”. He continued by explaining that leadership takes place from the top all the way to the bottom and that he was thankful to learn that through basketball. The concept of learning how to lead through participation in intercollegiate athletics was one discussed by all five of the participants.

Teamwork

As one might expect, one of the most prominent and reoccurring themes from the interviews was teamwork and the importance of it. Elsenhans discussed the correlation between her success in business and her participation in team sports. She stated “I not only learned how to be part of a team and work together, I learned the importance of every member on the team”. Schapiro had much to say about what she learned from teamwork including the sense of belonging she gained from being on a team, the comradery she had with her teammates both on and off the playing field, and how the physical dynamics of teamwork in athletics translated to the mental aspect of teamwork required of her to be successful in her career. Bryson too discussed what he learned about teamwork during his time as a student-athlete adding, “Baseball is a unique game with a lot of individual personalities and motives yet still a team sport. It forced me to learn how to relate to and work with different personality types which was vital in my career”. Hill had quite

possibly the strongest comments about the importance of teamwork and what he learned about it during his student-athlete experience. Hill did not get much playing time and it really bothered him during his time at UCLA. He went on to say that when he went into business, he realized truly how important every member of a team is. “Looking back” Hill stated, “you cannot have five players who win and seven that do not matter, that just is not how it works. Every player matters, I was the 10th or 11th guy on the team and felt I did not contribute much but how did that work out? We went 87-3, it must have worked just fine”. In total, four out of the five participants talked in-depth about teamwork as a lesson learned from their participation in intercollegiate athletics.

Commitment to Goals

Another topic that was commonly discussed, and somewhat of a sub-theme of teamwork, was the concept of shared goals and commitment to them. Elsenhans did not go too in-depth but did state that she learned how to truly be committed toward something and come together with a group to pursue a common goal. Schapiro stressed time and time again how thankful she was that she learned this lesson, stating “a shared mission, a shared goal, a reason to support the people around me - that is what I learned from athletics and it has been highly critical to my success”. Bryson echoed similar feelings by discussing that his teams had goals and things they wanted to accomplish as a group and therefore were forced to learn how to work towards those goals in order to achieve success. He also talked about that goal setting in the workplace is equally as important as goal setting in athletics. Lastly, Hill added, “In working towards a common goal you have to find ways to develop the weaknesses of some parts of your squad or in other cases you need to get teammates to feel like they are committed to the common goal as opposed to the personal goal”. Again, four out of the five interviews talked quite a bit about what they learned about commitment and especially shared goals with a group of people.

Time Management & Priorities

Another commonly discussed benefit of participation in intercollegiate athletics is learning time management skills and the ability to prioritize. The findings of this study aided that notion as it was a common theme. Elsenhans stated that “In order to be successful during my time as a student-athlete, I had no choice but to get really good at managing my time. This is a necessary life skill and something I greatly improved on during my time at Rice”. Schapiro talked about her experience at the Division III level and how academics were emphasized and incredibly important but at the same time, missing practice was not a feasible option. She went on to say that it was a challenge to find ways to balance and make it all happen but that challenge is something she will forever be thankful for. Bryson was in Pharmacy school while playing baseball at North Carolina which only increased his challenge of balancing both academics and athletics. He said he not only learned time management but also how to prioritize and stick to a schedule because without that ability, he never would have been able to balance both. Brooke-Marciniak started off by saying, “I think anyone would tell you this but the importance of learning how to balance is truly invaluable and a skill that every student-athlete is forced to learn”. She said she learned how to prioritize by getting ahead on school work early on in the fall semester so that when basketball season began, she wouldn’t be quite as overwhelmed. Four of the five subjects talked about how they learned time management and the importance of prioritizing during their interview.

The Discipline and Humility it Takes to Win

The phrase “how to win” was one that came up often during the interviews and encompasses much more than simply winning games. When the participants said that athletics

taught them how to win, almost every time they were referring to the discipline and humility it takes to win. Elsenhans said that one her biggest takeaways from her intercollegiate athletics experience was how to win and how to lose. On the win side, she discussed that she learned how to give credit to others and how to share success with those around her. Schapiro talked in-depth about the hard work and discipline she developed as an athlete and thinks this is standard across the board in college athletes. Brooke-Marciniak echoed what Elsenhans and Schapiro stated and said that without that discipline, she never could have been successful in athletics or in business. Lastly, Hill focused more on humility and how important that is to “winning” in all aspects of life. He explained that he and his teammates were supremely confident in their ability and fundamentals but completely understood and recognized the importance of humility. He explained, “We did not showboat, argue with each other, or talk trash to the other team. We simply were confident in our ability, understood what it took to win, and were humble in victory, something Coach Wooden stressed time and time again”. Four of the five participants explained they learned “how to win”, in regards to discipline and humility, from their student-athlete experience.

Resiliency and Overcoming Failure

To build on Elsenhans’ quote that she learned both how to win and how to lose, she explained “I learned how to lose with grace and how to work through disappointment in a mature way”. She continued by explaining that if she hadn’t learned how to respond when things weren’t going well on the basketball court, she never would have been able to handle situations thrown her way in her career. Bryson said he learned to be accountable for his own actions and performance. He learned how to handle playing poorly and how to bounce back from it. Brooke-Marciniak explained that, “Losing is feedback, as an athlete I was forced to understand that a

loss is not the end of the world, instead it was, ‘I better learn from this and adjust’. Over time, that just was built into my DNA”. She also talked about taking criticism and learning from it, “getting told by my coach that I couldn’t play ball for the Haggard School for the blind, that was pretty demoralizing, but it motivated and toughened me”. As stated previously, Hill went 87-3 during his time as a basketball player at UCLA but he still felt very strongly that his student-athlete experience prepared him for rejection and failure in the workplace. Once again, four of the five participants made comments about how they learned “how to lose” in reference to overcoming failure and adversity and handling criticism.

Preparation

One of the more interesting themes that came from this study was how preparation was learned during the student-athlete experience. Schapiro discussed how she learned preparation through strengths and weaknesses of hers, her teammates, and her opponents. She said she had to be observant of her teammate’s tendencies and her personal strengths and weaknesses in order to be better prepared for anything that may happen during competition. Brooke-Marciniak also talked about how she learned to be totally prepared, even being over prepared, because that provided her a distinctive advantage. Hill echoed that he also learned how to prepare, but differed in the fact that he learned how to be so well prepared fundamentally that it really did not matter what the other team would do. This is something that comes directly from the coaching philosophy of John Wooden and will be discussed further later in the study. Three of the five subjects talked very thoroughly about how they learned to prepare as a student-athlete and how they have been able to use it day in and day out in their respective careers.

Confidence

Many of the participants agreed that they became more confident during their time as a student-athlete but differed in how they established this confidence. Elsenhans said that in her experience as a student-athlete, it forced her to be “a little tough skinned”. She explained that gaining this type of tough skin in college gave her a unique confidence, especially as a female, in the workplace. Brooke-Marciniak explained that athletics gave her the confidence to take risks. She explained the importance of risk taking in order to be successful and how she has never been afraid to take risks because of what she developed during her time at Purdue. Hill talked quite a bit about the difference between confidence and arrogance. He explained that confidence is a strong sense of belief in yourself or your team while arrogance usually involves comparisons and putting others down. Hill says this was one of the most important lessons he learned from his days playing basketball at UCLA. In total, three of the five participants discussed the confidence they established as a student-athlete and how they built it.

Other Important Lessons Learned

Each of the eight themes listed above were lessons and values which reoccurred and were commonly brought up during most, if not all, of the interviews. However, each participant provided at least one or two unique takeaways or lessons they learned from their participation in intercollegiate athletics. These individual-specific lessons are included below.

Elsenhans

Elsenhans discussed some of the more obvious lessons she learned such as teamwork, discipline, and time management but then said there were some more subtle lessons that she felt were equally important. She said one of the most valuable lessons she learned from athletics was

how to have a critical eye for talent. Elsenhans stated, “I got really good at understanding what good is and what to strive for”. She added that she learned how to quickly pick out what others do well and what they do not do well so that if it was a teammate, she knew how to help or if it was an opponent, she knew what to exploit. Elsenhans was also the only participant that credited her family and upbringing when asked about how she started her journey into athletics.

Schapiro

Some of the more unique talking points during the Schapiro interview included how she learned to be coached, that competition is a good thing, and the ability to determine personal motivators. She said that prior to college she saw sports as something fun that she enjoyed but by the time she completed her time at Franklin & Marshall, she had realized the benefits of competition and how it brings out the best in her. Schapiro also said that her time as a student-athlete honed her personal awareness and she was able to learn what motivated her to work harder and also how to motivate others in a variety of ways.

Bryson

Bryson talked about how he learned the importance of the work/life balance that he developed while playing baseball at North Carolina. He talked about how it could have been very easy to focus more on baseball and less on academics but he knew he should stick with Pharmacy school despite the challenges. He said the Dean of Pharmacy worked with him and the coaching staff in making his course schedule fit and without this experience, Bryson said, “I may have never understood the importance of balancing work and life outside of work. Although in college it was baseball and academics, I was able to apply it to my marriage/family life and work

later in life”. Like Schapiro, Bryson too touched on competitiveness and how he learned how to hone it and use it for his advantage.

Brooke-Marciniak

The one thing that Brooke-Marciniak felt very strongly about was that her intercollegiate athletic experience helped serve as a gender neutralizer in her career. She discussed the natural bias in the business workplace between males and females but felt that her experience as a former-student athlete helped her be drastically included rather than excluded. She explained that everyone wanted to talk sports with her or wanted her on her team for golf outings which gave her a unique advantage in the early stages of her business career.

Andy Hill

Andy Hill has a unique story which is told in his book, *Be Quick, But Don't Hurry*. His book will be referenced and discussed further in the following chapter. The one theme of the entire interview with Hill was that he learned how to be coached and the importance of establishing a philosophy and sticking to it. He said, “Coach Wooden never strayed away from his philosophy. He taught us repetition and the tremendous dedication to clear fundamentals”. He continued by explaining that they very rarely talked about what the other team was going to do and instead focused on improving themselves day in and day out. Hill concluded by stating that these lessons are things he took with him and were directly applicable in his career in the entertainment business.

Table 3*Emergent Themes*

Lesson Learned	%	<i>n</i>
How to Lead	100.0%	5
Teamwork	80.0%	4
Commitment to Goals	80.0%	4
Time Management & Priorities	80.0%	4
Discipline & Humility it Takes to Win	80.0%	4
Resiliency & Overcoming Failure	80.0%	4
Preparation	60.0%	3
Confidence	60.0%	3
Competition	40.0%	2
How to be Coached/Mentored	40.0%	2
How to Evaluate Talent	20.0%	1
Repetition & Fundamentals	20.0%	1

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Semi-structured interviews were used to gather unique information from the five participants that could not be found elsewhere. The purpose of the interviews was to receive answers and acquire data from the participants which would answer the research questions and ultimately fulfill the purpose of this study. As a reminder, the research questions are as follows:

[RQ 1] What lessons did select industry leaders learn from participation in intercollegiate athletics?

[RQ 2] Based on the experiences of select industry leaders, how are lessons learned through participation in intercollegiate athletics?

[RQ 3] How do select industry leaders use specific experiences from participation in intercollegiate athletics to guide and sustain them in the workplace and in life?

The goal of this discussion chapter is to build on the findings presented in chapter 4 and to aid in further answering the questions above. This will be done by discussing specific stories from the participants along with outside sources and previously presented literature.

Gender

Before getting into discussion of the emergent themes in regards to lessons learned through intercollegiate athletics, it is important to discuss differences in opinion between genders

which were discovered in the study. The three women participants felt especially strong about the benefits of intercollegiate athletics for females. As presented in chapter 4, they expressed that athletics helped them develop a tough skin and a confidence which they desperately needed to survive in a male-dominated business world. Elsenhans, Schapiro, and Brooke-Marciniak all made several comments about the benefits of intercollegiate athletics to them and women as a whole during their interviews.

In an interview done with genConnect.com, Brooke-Marciniak helped put in perspective how intercollegiate athletics specifically benefits women. She told a story of how Michelle Marciniak and Chris Webber were both national high school players of the year in 1991. Michelle went on to play basketball at Tennessee where she eventually won a NCAA National Championship while Chris Webber went to Michigan and did not win a championship. After leaving college, Webber was drafted into the NBA where he signed a contract guaranteeing him \$13,000,000 while Michelle made \$25,000 during her first season in the WNBA (Brooke-Marciniak, 2014). During the interview, Brooke-Marciniak stated,

Women athletes have to be entrepreneurial because they very rarely can succeed on professional sport salaries. They actually have to piece their life together financially. So I started to see a correlation between former female student-athletes and success in business because of the takeaways and lessons we have discussed. Failure for athletes is not an option so even if they do not know a lot about business, they figure it out.

This discussion was in reference to the Women Athletes Business Network which Brooke-Marciniak oversees. The vision of the Network is to help build a connection between elite athletes and top women leaders and inspire and encourage female athletes across the globe to

pursue meaningful careers. This unique gender-specific theme may be an area for future research which will be discussed toward the end of this chapter.

Emergent Themes

Before getting too far into the discussion, it is important to reiterate a few of the learning theories discussed in chapter II in order to see how they apply to the findings of this study. Scaffolding learning is the concept of providing support and encouragement before letting the individual out on their own to complete tasks independently. Case-based reasoning is an extension of scaffolding learning and is the theory that learners can use similar past experiences to aid them when situations arise in which they have no previous familiarity. The experiential learning theory explains learning through the combination of grasping and transforming experience and ultimately gaining knowledge. Each of these learning theories can and will be clearly seen in this study by analyzing and discussing the emergent themes of the lessons learned and applied by the five participants in this study.

How to Lead

The results of this study support previous research to show that leadership skills are not only developed through intercollegiate athletics, but can be applied in work and business as well (Barratt & Frederick, 2011; Chaddock et al., 2011; Toma, 1999, Long & Caudill, 1991, Chalfin et al., 2014). As discussed in the previous chapter, all of the participants explained how their participation in intercollegiate athletics taught them how to be a better leader. This echoes the 2012 study done by Barratt & Frederick which revealed that student-athletes progress at nearly twice the speed of non-athletes in seven intangible categories, including communication, relationship building, and overall leadership (Barratt & Frederick, 2012). During the interview

with Schapiro, she discussed the challenges of leading 3,000 employees while Chairman of the SEC. She said although it was difficult at times, she was ready for the challenge, stating, “I had the ability to take the organization and help it move together in one direction because of what I learned as lacrosse team captain. Sure, the group was larger and the goals were different, but the principles were the exact same”.

Teamwork

Another great point of discussion is brought up by looking at the consistencies between what the participants learned and what others had to say about them in that regard. When discussing teamwork, Bryson recalled from his baseball playing days at UNC, learning how to relate to and work with a variety of personality types which he used often in his career. Dick Baddour, former Athletic Director at North Carolina, supplemented Bryson’s comments. “I did not know Vaughn as a student-athlete but I worked closely with him during the renovation of Boshamer Stadium. He was on the renovation work team and I was highly impressed with his collaboration and efficiency within the diverse group” (D. Baddour, personal communication, March 31, 2015). This serves as a prime example of how Bryson learned and established a skill as a student-athlete and used it toward success, so much that others take notice and recognize that about him.

Andy Hill talked about teamwork, the importance of it, and how he learned it during his basketball career. He echoes these thoughts and adds to them in his book in Chapter 15 which is titled “Teamwork is not a Preference, It’s a Necessity” (Hill & Wooden, 2001). He tells stories of some of his most talented teammates being benched because they were not buying into the team concept. He saw how great their teams were when everyone bought in and how they

struggled and had conflict when one or two individuals did not. Therefore, Hill explained that when he took over Channel One Network, “The first thing I did was gather everyone together to give them a sense of my expectations and first on the list was teamwork” (Hill & Wooden, 2001). He explained the joy it brought him to turn an atmosphere of selfishness, poor communication, and missed deadlines into one of sharing ideas, helping others, meeting deadlines, and ultimately quality programming. Once again, you can see a clear correlation between the lessons these participants learned through intercollegiate athletics and their philosophies and leadership styles in the workplace (Barratt & Frederick, 2011; Chaddock et al., 2011; La Roche, 2013).

Time Management & Priorities

Chapter II provided a summary of a study done by the NCAA (2011) which came to the conclusion that Division I baseball and FCS football players reported spending more than 40 in season hours per week, while Division I men’s basketball players showed about 39 hours per week. It also stated that Division III athletes were shown to average about 30 hours per week on their respective sport. Furthermore, when combining the time commitment of athletics and academics, Division I ranges from 73-81 hours/week while Division III averages 65-71 hours/week (NCAA, 2011). To put that in perspective, student-athletes spend nearly double the amount of time on their athletic and academic work than an average, full-time, 40 hour/week employee. These numbers make it clear that participation in intercollegiate athletics, regardless of sport or division, requires an immense time requirement. Therefore, in order to be successful, student-athletes must learn how to prioritize, balance, and manage their time. Even though the participants in this study were student-athletes decades ago in a different culture, this was an outcome from their experiences that resounded throughout the four of the five interviews.

When talking on this topic, Elsenhans shared an intriguing story about how she learned the importance of priorities and time management. She explained how one day she was hanging out with a friend and lost track of time and then got stuck in traffic and was late to practice. Her team had a big game against a rival a few days later and she was benched and did not play at all because she was late to practice, despite being the best player on her team. She stated, “I have never forgotten that. To this day, I get it. I realize the importance of priorities and what it takes to manage my time efficiently and effectively. I have never been late to anything since”. Learning lessons and skills the way Elsenhans described in this story is something that makes athletics a special tool for preparing an individual for success in his or her career (Barratt & Frederick, 2011; McCann, 2012; Soshnick, 2013; Williams, 2013).

Resiliency & Overcoming Failure

Multiple studies in the literature review discussed how athletes are taught resiliency through losses and because of this seem better equipped to handle criticism (La Roche, 2013; McCann 2012; Soshnick, 2013). Once again, this study provided further evidence and detailed examples of how these lessons can be learned and applied. Bryson shared a story about his senior season that he said truly taught him resilience and how to handle playing poorly. In the first game of the regional series, he and his team lost 19-0 to Florida. He said it was an absolute embarrassment and would have been easy to crumble and give up. Instead, he and his teammates dug deep, put the loss behind them, and won the next two games to advance to the College World Series for the first time in school history. Just as the case-based reasoning learning theory explains, Bryson was able to take what he learned from that situation and use it in his career. He explained that while he was working his way up within Eli Lilly, he ran into a supervisor who was incredibly difficult to work with. The supervisor had Bryson transferred to a different

location at a lower position. Bryson said he easily could have become bitter or defeated from this but instead he embraced the resiliency he had learned previously and made the most of the new position. He credits the work he did and connections he made at the new position with ultimately putting him on track to becoming CEO.

Preparation

In the earlier referenced study done by Barratt & Frederick, they also found that athletes possess a distinctive mentality which they develop over years of training, practice, preparation, and high competition (2012). Brooke-Marciniak echoed these findings during her interview for this study. She stated, “I thought about all of the angles, what plays are they going to run? Those are the things that are just so innate for athletes. Non-athletes do not do that as naturally. I cannot tell you how many meetings I have been in that my preparation far exceeded others and gave me a leg up”. Additionally, Brooke-Marciniak’s preparation was evident during the interview process. Basic outline questions were sent to her ahead of time and not only did she prepare and think through answers prior to the interview, she added additional information she thought would be beneficial. This type of preparation was consistent across the board with all of the participant interviews.

The review of literature for this study was written prior to knowing who the participants would be. During chapter II, John Wooden’s leadership philosophy was used as a learning theory. He believed strongly that athletes who establish the habit of being prepared to take on any challenge on the court will in turn apply that concept to situations off the court as well (Wooden & Jamison, 2005). The consistencies with his philosophy and what Hill talked about in his interview are truly astounding. Not only did Hill say he learned the importance of

preparation, but he used Coach Wooden's famous mantra "failing to prepare is preparing to fail" multiple times during the interview with him. As a follow up, Hill was asked to give some specifics about this, both as an athlete and in his career. He talked about how quality preparation serves as a talent equalizer on the basketball court. A less talented team can beat a more talented team if they have committed themselves to the process of preparation. He said he carried that over into his career by the way he prepared for meetings with his writers when he was a producer. Hill explained that he would meet with his creative executives first and discuss the script and hash out details and disagreements then so that he was thoroughly prepared to stay on task and accomplish the goal when he sat down with the writer.

Confidence

The idea that intercollegiate athletics builds confidence is a complicated one. Some would argue that by not earning playing time or by not winning games, student-athletes can actually become less confident. However, this study helped show that is not always the case. Hill very rarely played during his time at UCLA. He was embarrassed and frustrated at the time but looking back, he credits that for helping mold him into the confident leader he is today. Athletics are very much like life in general, things are not always going your way so it is all about how you respond to those situations (Williams, 2013; Wooden & Jamison, 2005). It seems that more times than not, athletes have an increased confidence which allows them to bounce back, take risks, and ultimately succeed in life outside of sports. Schapiro reiterated this belief in a speech she gave during the inauguration of a new President at Franklin & Marshall. She stated, "My senior year I was elected captain, and we went 7 and 4. It was one of my proudest achievements at F&M, and it taught me to take risks, knowing that I could succeed" (Schapiro, 2011).

Brooke-Marciniak told a story which supports the natural confidence possessed by athletes, especially when it comes to taking risks. She explains how she was working in Africa for a few years and after a while, a woman approached her and said “I have observed the way you lead and do things, you do not seem to be afraid. You seem to take risks with confidence. Aren’t you scared? Do you not have fear?” Brooke-Marciniak at first was kind of shocked by this type of statement but she said she just instinctively replied, “No, I am not afraid, I am an athlete, that is just how we are. I have failed before and know the recipe for success, I am confident in that”. Stories like this provide specific examples to go along with the numerous studies that have shown student-athletes participation has a positive impact on personal self-confidence, which increases the likelihood of growth and development in other areas (Chalfin et al., 2015; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Gayles & Hu, 2009; Pascarella, Smart, Ethington & Nettles, 1987).

Competition

Another skill deeply innate to athletes is competitiveness. Both Bryson and Schapiro mentioned how competition is a good thing and how it relates to other areas outside of athletics. Not only did the participants admit to honing their competitiveness through athletics, others have noticed it about them as well. Nancy Cross who is now a Senior Associate Athletic Director at Purdue, was an assistant basketball coach while Brooke-Marciniak was a player. She said, “She was already competitive but I saw that increase during her time here at Purdue. She worked unbelievably hard and was very cerebral” (N. Cross, email communication, March 27, 2015). Hearing this type of statement from someone close to one of the participants increases the reliability and validity of the findings of this study.

Conclusion

In today's culture of multi-billion dollar television deals and increased commercialization of college athletics, individuals are becoming increasingly cynical about the current state of intercollegiate athletics and role of athletics in higher education (Bowen & Levin, 2003; Gayles, & Hu, 2009; Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Thelin, 1994; Wolverton, 2008). However, the results of this study provide backing for the argument that intercollegiate athletics aid in the development of leaders and therefore, confirm the alignment with higher education (Chalfin et al., 2014; Brand, 2006; Duderstadt, 2009; Henderson et al., 2006). This study accomplished its purpose of exploring the intersection of athletics and academics with the overall education, personal growth, and professional futures of student-athletes.

This study accomplished its purpose in a unique way by bringing to light some specific examples of how highly successful leaders have used the lessons they learned through intercollegiate athletics along the way. It now offers benefit to both the academic and athletic communities alike because it provides further research and material regarding the benefits of intercollegiate athletics and how those benefits can be applied toward success in business and other careers outside the realm of athletics. This study revealed that some of the most common skills learned through participation in intercollegiate athletics are leadership, time management, preparation, teamwork, and resiliency. It further showed that not only are these skills learned, they are readily used and applied in a variety of ways in the workplace. Finally, this study served as a stepping stone and avenue toward conducting other research studies. These ideas for future research are discussed below.

Limitations

There were a number of major limitations throughout this study. First, gaining access to individuals of this level of success was difficult. Over half of the potential participants who were contacted did not respond to any communication. The individuals who did participate made themselves available for only about thirty minutes each which limited the depth of the questions which were asked. Additionally, after the interviews, four of the five participants were contacted in an attempt to ask a few follow-up questions and only two responded. Another limitation was the lack of diversity within the five participants. The male/female ratio was good but the diversity lacked in other areas which limited the study. For example, all of the participants were white, all between the ages of 56 and 71, and three of the five were basketball players. The strongest limitation of this group would be the age of the participants as the scope, culture, and time commitment of intercollegiate athletics has changed so drastically over the past 30-40 years. A more diverse group in terms of race, age, and sport played would have been ideal and provided unique perspectives and additional information.

Future Research

A number of ideas for future research came about from this study. In a way, this served as an exploratory, or pilot, study for others in the future. Similar studies can be done with more depth and more diversity and in time, key themes will begin to be significant. With a broader sample, additional analysis can be conducted. For example, a gender comparison between the lessons learned through participation. There could be interesting results between males and females as a whole in regards to what they learned. Additionally, one could study the lessons learned through athletics on a sport by sport or decade by decade basis. On the sport side, it

would be fascinating to see the differences between what a football player and golfer would say about what they learned through athletics. On the decade side, it would be interesting to explore what a basketball student-athlete from the 1970s would say in comparison to one in the 2000s. These are studies that could be done through either quantitative or qualitative research. Lastly, this study can be expanded upon and ultimately turned in to a book. The primary reason this study was conducted was to help depict some specifics in regards to the perceived benefits of intercollegiate athletics. A book which describes the stories and lives of 10-12 high-profile leaders who played intercollegiate athletics would be both beneficial and captivating.

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