Practising in sport – what is it and why does it matter?

Practice makes perfect (Übung macht den Meister), as the saying goes. But what does it mean to be practising (sich üben)? And why would the phenomenon deserve attention from sport scientists? In this talk, I will discuss various answers to these questions based on my work on practising in sport and related areas, such as adapted physical activity and physical education. Rooted in a phenomenological understanding of practising, I will show how it can throw new light on learning and development in sport, with implications for the classic debate about early specialisation in talent development. I will also give examples of how the phenomenon of practising can inspire new understandings of sport and movement practices and how it can inform new working methods for coaches and sport pedagogues.

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