

Dr Jennifer Cumming PhD, CPsychol

Senior Lecturer of Sport and Exercise Psychology

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About

Dr Jennifer Cumming is an expert in the imagery and observational learning use of athletes, exercisers, and dancers.

Feedback and office hours

Tuesday 2:00-4:00 PM or by appointment

Qualifications

B.Ed (McGill University, Canada)
M.A. (University of Ottawa, Canada)
Ph.D (University of Western Ontario, Canada)

Biography

Originally from Montreal, Canada, Jennifer joined the School in 2002 after completing her PhD at the University of Western Ontario. As a competitive ice skater, she was first exposed to sport psychology training and developed an appreciation for the mental side of her sport. After further studies and gathering more than ten years of professional coaching experience, Jennifer now lectures about the applied aspects of exercise and sport psychology to undergraduate students and supervises doctoral research students.

Teaching

Jennifer is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. She completed a Post Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education in 2010, and received high commendations for her research project that was also published in Vol. 9 of the Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education. In 2012, Jennifer was awarded the Excellence in Teaching Award for both the School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences and the College of Life Environmental Sciences.

In collaboration with Dr Victoria Burns, Jennifer received educational enhancement funds in 2010 from the Centre of Learning and Academic Development (CLAD) for teaching-related research into the transfer of teamwork skills learnt in an outdoor pursuits setting (i.e., the University's Raymond Priestley Centre) to academia. This research forms part of the **Birmingham Evaluating Skill Transfer (BEST) project (<http://www.bestskills.co.uk/>)**, which was established in 2010 in collaboration with University Sport Birmingham. They have received further funding from the HEA in 2012 to explore the experiences of home and international students participating in an outdoor groupwork skills course. In 2013, this project was nominated in for a University of Birmingham, Hospitality and Accommodation Services (HAS) OSCAR for the Support of the Year Award.

Jennifer is the module organiser of Applications of Sport and Exercise Psychology and contributes to Testing in Sport Sciences. Both of these modules form part of the BSc in Sport and Exercise Sciences offered by the School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences. She also organises the projects students undertake in their final year.

For an example of Jennifer's teaching, click [here \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/sport-exercise/teaching/imagery/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/sport-exercise/teaching/imagery/index.aspx) to watch a video lecture on imagery and download free resources.

Postgraduate supervision

Nominated for the University of Birmingham's Good Supervisor Award in 2010, Jennifer has supervised 8 PhD students to completion since 2002, with five as first or co-supervisor.

Recent graduates include Dr Mark Holland, who received the Michael K. O'Rourke PhD Publication Award for his 2010 publication featured in a Special Issue on Youth Sports for the Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology entitled, "**Mental qualities and employed mental techniques of young elite team sport athletes (<http://journals.humankinetics.com/jcsp/>)**". Another former student, Dr Sarah Williams, now a lecturer in the School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences, was named as the winner of the **Division of Sport and Exercise Psychology's Outst (http://spex.bps.org.uk/spex/awards/awards_home.cfm) an (http://spex.bps.org.uk/spex/awards/awards_home.cfm) ding (http://spex.bps.org.uk/spex/awards/awards_home.cfm) PhD Thesis for 2011 (http://spex.bps.org.uk/spex/awards/awards_home.cfm)** (British Psychological Society) for her work on "Athlete Imagery Ability and Effective Imagery Use". Current student, Sam Cooley, won the Doctoral Researcher Development Award (First Prize) in 2013 to attend two conferences in New Zealand this past November.

Jennifer welcomes applications from self-funding UK, European, and overseas students for projects related to her research interests. Students who are considering applying to the University of Birmingham to work with Jennifer should contact her by email in advance.

Research

- Imagery and observational learning in sport, exercise, and dance
- Mental skills training
- Sport performance issues (competitive anxiety, motivation, perfectionism)

Jennifer's research mainly focuses on the effective use of imagery by athletes, exercisers and dancers. She has published this work in several leading journals in the field, has served as a section editor for the European Journal of Sport Sciences and now sits on the editorial board of The Sport Psychologist and the Journal of Imagery Research in Sport and Physical Activity. Her research has been funded by charities and organisations, including AASP, Aston Villa Football Club, the British Academy, St Basils, and the Winning Scotland Foundation.

In 2012, Jennifer delivered a keynote address and a skills workshop on this research at the 40th British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP) Annual Conference at the University of Leeds. She recently served as Chair of the Sport and Exercise Psychology of the 2013 NASPSPA conference program.

Within the School, Jennifer collaborates mainly with Dr Victoria Burns and Dr Sarah Williams, as well as other colleagues from the Sport Psychology Research Group (Prof Joan Duda, Dr Cecilie Thøgersen-Ntoumani, and Dr Nikos Ntoumanis). For example, she recently concluded a project in collaboration with Prof Joan Duda to develop, implement, and evaluate a mental skills training program for youth team sport athletes.

At the national level, Jennifer is involved with the Research in Imagery and Observation (RIO) group. She also has on-going collaborations with her mentor and former supervisors, Prof Craig Hall (University of Western Ontario, Canada) and Prof Diane Ste-Marie (University of Ottawa, Canada).

Other activities

As a chartered sport and exercise psychologist, Jennifer works with developing and elite athletes and dancers in the West Midlands, and offers workshops and consultations to local schools and sport clubs. She is also one of Dance UK's recommended speakers for the healthier dance programme and has contributed to the Foundations for Excellence's resource centre for promoting health and well-being in talented young dancers and musicians. Jennifer developed and regularly teaches a course on the psychological aspects of talent development for the [Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing \(ISTD\)](http://www.istd.org/home/) (<http://www.istd.org/home/>), and guest lectured at the 2008 Move It Show and the Performers College.

Publications

A full list of publications is available on Jennifer's personal website: www.jennifercumming.com (<http://www.jennifercumming.com>). For reprints of certain papers, please visit: http://works.bepress.com/jennifer_cumming/ (http://works.bepress.com/jennifer_cumming/).

2013

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2012

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Williams, S. E., & Cumming, J. (2012a). Athletes' ease of imaging predicts their imagery and observational learning use. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 13, 362-370.

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Expertise

Imagery and other mental skills in sport, exercise and dance; applied sport psychology working with elite athletes and community members

Languages and other information

Jennifer is a chartered sport and exercise psychologist who works with developing and elite athletes and dancers in the West Midlands.

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