



# QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ON DUAL CAREER FOR PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES IN LATVIA: INDUCTIVE APPROACH

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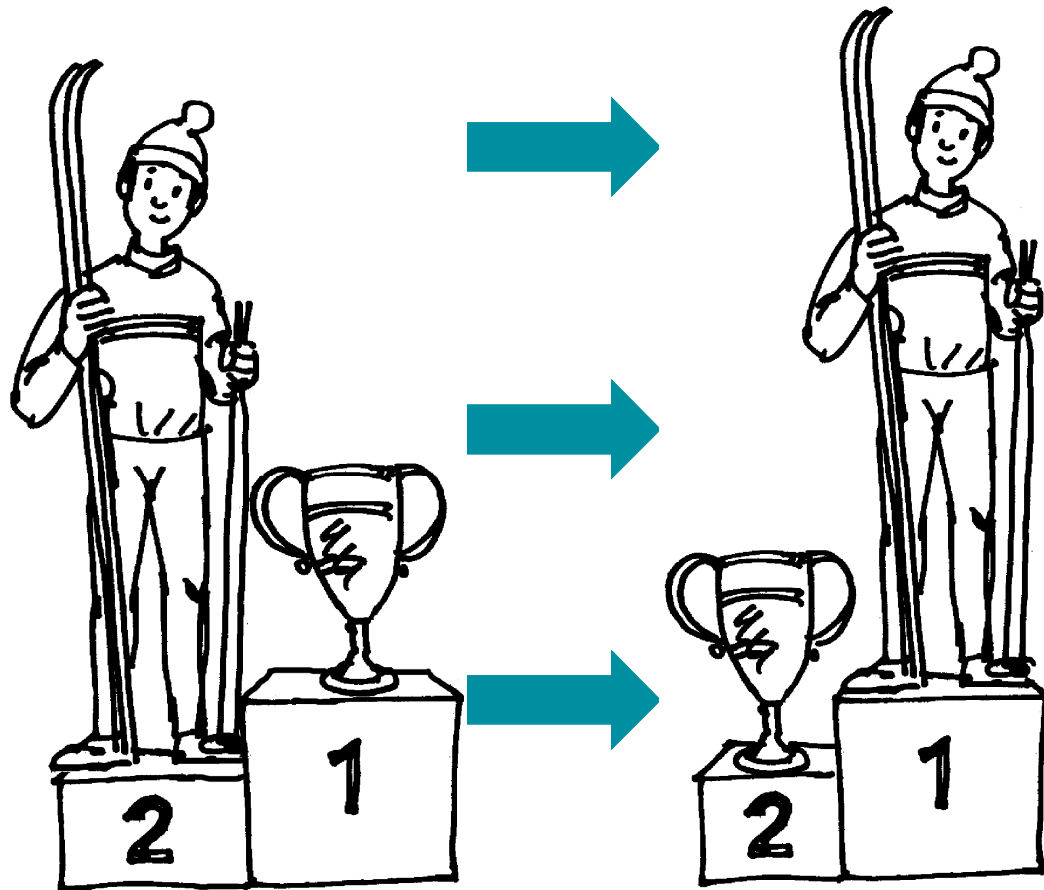
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**A dual career in sports and studies is the focus of our innovative project, aimed at establishing best practice in sport training and education, so as to increase the possibilities for young athletes in Europe to pursue a double career.**

***“I reached both my dreams – becoming a World Champion and a doctor.”***

**Helena Jansson  
World Champion 2009 in Orienteering**



Still in our society sport specialists follow old habits.

In Latvia gradually we start to emphasize not only the fact how many victories are won in sport, but also how many of the athletes with the help of sport have learned to become winners in their further life.



**“Victory – first, the athlete – second”**

**For example:**

**329 (78) applicants applied for studies in sport science at LASE, the competition was 4 per 1 budget place (2011).**

**27 of these applicants had insufficient marks in chemistry and physics and etc. in the gymnasium certificate. These students automatically lost the rights to be in the budget group (supported by the state).**

**LASE organizes courses (to be paid) for students to acquire these subjects and be able to follow LASE study courses.**



When we ask students of sport universities or trainers of different sports the following question: “What is an idea of Dual Career?” we observe confusion and silence in the class.

After a few moments we proceed with generating ideas step by step and defining “Dual Career” term to understand what it currently means to us.

Based on authors’ subjective observations, the term “Dual Career” is partially or even totally unfamiliar for Latvian sports professionals and coaches.

**Our group from Latvia - have started:**

- **Survey on Dual Career initiatives in Latvian universities**



## Latvian students in the Olympic Games ([www.olimpiade.lv](http://www.olimpiade.lv))

### OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES

**2006, TORINO**

58 PARTICIPANTS, 22 OF THEM ARE STUDENTS-ATHLETES ( **38%** )

**2010, VANCOUVER**

59 PARTICIPANTS, 19 OF THEM ARE STUDENTS-ATHLETES ( **32 %** )

**2014, SOCHI**

58 PARTICIPANTS, 27 OF THEM ARE STUDENTS-ATHLETES ( **47 %** )

### OLYMPIC SUMMER GAMES

**2004, ATHENS**

32 PARTICIPANTS, 22 OF THEM ARE STUDENTS-ATHLETES ( **69 %** )

**2008, BEIJING**

47 PARTICIPANTS, 25 OF THEM ARE STUDENTS-ATHLETES ( **52 %** )

**2012, LONDON**

46 PARTICIPANTS, 22 OF THEM ARE STUDENTS-ATHLETES ( **48 %** )

## Identified properties of Higher Education Dual Career in Latvia

NO.	PRIVILEGES FOR HIGH-CLASS STUDENT-ATHLETES	LU 19095*	RTU 15735*	LLU 6900*	LASE 1300*	LIEPU 1737*	VEA 880*	DU 4185*	RHEI 2500*
1.	ADMISSION TO THE BUDGET PLACE WITH NO ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS	X			X			X	
2.	TUITION FEE DISCOUNT (50% - 100%)	X	X	X	X		X	X	
3.	POSSIBILITY TO EXTEND THE PERIOD OF FINAL EXAMS**		X	X	X		X	X	
4.	COVERING TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION EXPENSES FOR PARTICIPATION IN COMPETITIONS		X	X	X				
5.	FREE OF CHARGE WORKOUT FACILITIES		X	X	X			X	
6.	PROVIDING INDIVIDUAL SPORTS EQUIPMENT (SPECIFIC)		X	X					
7.	INDIVIDUAL STUDY PLANS	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
8.	SPORT FACILITIES ARE OWNED BY THE UNIVERSITY			X	X			X	X
9.	SPORT FACILITIES ARE RENTED BY THE UNIVERSITY	X	X			X	X		



**Our group from Latvia - have started:**

- **Life story interviews with high-class student-athletes**



## LIFE STORIES: THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF DATA

- **Life story** – *extensive data about person's life in terms of different aspects that surface during an interview* (Atkinson, 1998; Creswell 1998; Denzin 1989; Denzin & Lincoln 1994; Kvale & Birkmann 2009; Kvale 1996; Merriam & associates 2002; Seidman 1991; Weiss 1992)
- **Life stories** have a beginning, middle, and end, and in this study are in the format of **narratives**
- **Narratives**–*first-person accounts of experiences* (Merriam & associates 2002, 286) – our focus to understand and interpret experience and expectations of professional athletes

# GUIDELINES OF LIFE STORY INTERVIEW:

- **significant events** in personal education/professional career;
- **significant moments** in personal sport career;
- **personal professional growth**;
- **future intentions** in personal professional career, or **life after** personal professional career

## PARTICIPANTS OF LIFE STORY INTERVIEWS

Name	Sex	Age	Geo	Sport	Education or professional qualification	Occupation
James	M	24	Riga	Wrestling	Bachelor in pedagogy	Master student
Kentons	M	29	Riga	Handball	Bachelor in pedagogy	Professional athlete
Ralfs	M	32	Liepaja	Bobsleigh	-	Professional athlete
Ievucis	F	27	Riga	Basketball	Master in sport science	Professional athlete
Aleksandrs	M	25	Jurmala	Beach volleyball	Master in finances	Professional athlete
Intars	M	40	Riga	Biathlon	Bachelor in sport science health	Coach
Aivars	M	36	Riga	Track and field athletic	Bachelor in health care	Physiotherapist

## **THEMES DEVELOPED FROM LIFE STORY INTERVIEWS:**

- 1. SPORT AND EDUCATION – TWO LIVES IN ONE**
- 2. SPORT AND EDUCATION – SIMILARITY IN DIVERSITY**
- 3. SPORT AND EDUCATION – MUTUAL BENEFITS**
- 4. SPORT AND EDUCATION – COMBINING MOTIFS**
- 5. SPORT, NOT EDUCATION – REASONS OF LEAVING BEHIND**
- 6. LIFE AFTER SPORT CAREER**

## *THEMES DEVELOPED FROM LIFE STORY INTERVIEWS:*

### Theme 1. **Sport and education – two lives in one (1)**

*... I approached what I wanted **in a very stubborn way**. Each day after my classes I had trainings and trainings and trainings ...on Friday nights **I had trainings, when others had fun**. I had trainings on Saturday mornings when others were waking up. ...and when others were going out, I went to training... after training that usually ended at seven, eight at night, my way home was through night clubs in Riga. However, I passed them by... I walked through all Old Riga part with my bag of training equipment. And in a way I looked back – you, lucky ones, who have weekends and days off, tomorrow morning I have to go to training... Ralfs*

## *THEMES DEVELOPED FROM LIFE STORY INTERVIEWS:*

# Theme 1. **Sport and education – two lives in one (2)**

What makes this combination easier...

*...those people who are at universities, who are responsible about education... **when you go and simply talk to them about your situation**, that you participate in sport and do not want to leave studies... I believe and know that they will be helpful... so you can pass exams that you are not able to attend. [It is important] that you never say that you do not need it [studies] that sport is more important to you, but that **you say that studies are also important to you...** James*

## *THEMES DEVELOPED FROM LIFE STORY INTERVIEWS:*

# Theme 2. **Sport and education – similarity in diversity**

### ***Sport excludes education***

- *Difficulties in dividing attention*

### ***Sport - prior, education - subordinate***

- *Everything, even studies is subordinate to Olympics*
- *Sport cannot be a relief from studies*

### ***Sport and education have similarities***

- *Usefulness of the title of Olympian is similar to usefulness of scientific degree*

### ***Sport and education are opposites***

- *During studies you memorize a lot, during sport – you should let go a lot*
- *Learning in sport is somehow masochistic unlike learning at university*<sub>6</sub>



## ***THEMES DEVELOPED FROM LIFE STORY INTERVIEWS:***

### **Theme 3. Sport and education – mutual benefits**

*...possible that it also can **prevent from the thing that professional sport becomes harmful to your health** both in a way that you leave behind your intellectual development and you can do something else besides sport...and also that you as a athlete feel something like a pressure... for example, you are an honest athlete but all that kind of sport federation or trainers have decided that they need results, and then they illegally try out different kind of things...[it is important] that in that moment you can say: You know, guys, all these things are excellent, sport is cool, and it is outstanding to be an Olympic champion, but I would rather honestly loose then non-honestly win... And **it is what you have learned from your studies, where you see people's experience not only in sport but also in life...it [education] helps to participate in sport in a clean and reasonable way...** James*

## *THEMES DEVELOPED FROM LIFE STORY INTERVIEWS:*

### Theme 4. **Sport and education – combining motifs**

- ***Cognitive*** - *To prevent your brain from atrophy*
- ***Sustainable*** - *Education benefits last longer than sport career*

*...yes, I want to finish it because **education will never be a burden**. Because you will not be in sport forever... and **it [education] is another line that is many years longer than your career in professional sport**. And this line should be taken care of... when you finish with sport and suddenly discover that you wanted to be an engineer for example, but you cannot... Aleksandrs*

- ***Academic*** – *bad grades reason in forbidden sport*
- ***Financial*** - *Father financed sport when I continued studies*

## *THEMES DEVELOPED FROM LIFE STORY INTERVIEWS:*

### Theme 5. **Sport, not education—reasons of leaving behind**

- **Financial** - *The more paying is way of sport, the less motivation you have to study*
- **Pragmatic** - *There are professions where you can work without diploma*

*...i do not think that now I have time of 4 years to sit at university. I definitely know that I will take some courses about what I need...I consider that the paper [diploma] is important for doctors, lawyers, policemen, where you cannot without it...**in some other spheres**, I do not know, in entrepreneurship, **it does not matter what [diploma] you have...** Kentons*

- **Motivational** - *Lack of motivation to study suggests that education disturbs sport*

## *THEMES DEVELOPED FROM LIFE STORY INTERVIEWS:*

# Theme 6. Life after sport career

*...and then those real dreams about life, about some other things [than sport]...**the thing that is longed for by everybody – some kind of stability.** Especially in this period of time. Therefore it seems that I have choosed maybe work. Some kind of work...I know that I work to get some experience...then definitely after some time **to have some occupation to work only for myself**...to have time to go somewhere, I do not know, to watch handball in Cologne... Kentons*

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## World Champion 2012 in Orienteering

<b>Name</b>	Edgars Bertuks
<b>Date of birth</b>	January 1, 1985
<b>Place of birth</b>	Alūksne, Latvia
<b>Home</b>	Rīga, Latvia
<b>Weight</b>	75 kg
<b>Height</b>	187 cm
<b>Education</b>	Bachelor of engineering sciences in chemical engineering





**THANKS FOR  
ATTENTION!**