Abstract
During their sports career some athletes combine their sporting activities with their academic and vocational career, while others do not. To explain this phenomenon we based our research on Wylleman and Lavallee’s holistic model of transitions (2003) and incorporated the concept of strategy (Mintzberg, Quinn and Voyer, 1997) as a central theoretical element. From 26 in-depth interviews and a telephone survey conducted on 94 Olympic athletes (67 men and 27 women) we observed two different situations. On the one hand, there are athletes who are aware of their future, who have a deep understanding of their work environment and who set simple, coherent, long term goals to combine studies and sport. They also perform actions (time management, class attendance, syllabus streaming, one-to-one classes, occasional reduction of training, etc.) to make this possible, thanks, principally, to the influence of their family. On the other hand, there are those who do not combine a career in sports with an academic and vocational career. The key difference is that they are not aware of the need to prepare their future careers and they do not develop strategies to do so. These findings suggest developing programs and catering to sportspeople according to the characteristics of the profiles identified. The article ends with some suggestions regarding the characteristics of these programs.

Keywords
Strategy, Transition, Academic career, Athletic career.