



Competition-Coaching Introduction L2T

Step 5: Teaching and Learning Part 1



**Reference Material
for On Snow Workshop**



PARTNERS IN COACH EDUCATION

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5.1 Introduction

This section on Teaching and Learning complements the information provided in section 7 of the Introduction to Community Coaching Reference Material and section 6 of the Community Coaching Reference Material.

The teaching process is broken down into five main phases:

- ❑ designing learning activities;
- ❑ setting up the activities;
- ❑ delivering the activities;
- ❑ assessing the learning; and
- ❑ adjusting and re-tooling.

The first phase (designing learning activities) is when you plan your training and practice sessions; this is the starting point for your teaching. More information on this subject is provided in section 10 of your CCI-L2T (Dryland) Reference Material.

The present section focuses on the teaching process, and on specific aspects and skills that relate to what you do when you are with your athletes in a practice session. Of course, you must always keep in mind that the actual sport content of what you teach remains an essential part of an effective teaching process. On the other hand, you will also see in this section that the best technical knowledge or planning skills may turn out to be ineffective if certain principles of effective teaching are not respected. This section aims at providing you with opportunities to better understand these principles, while also engaging you in some reflection on your own teaching. It is also designed to equip you with tools to help you improve your teaching skills.

Although it is not realistic to expect you to improve your teaching abilities significantly in one day of training, it is possible to provide you with some concrete means to continue developing your teaching skills on your own. This will be done through the self-monitoring process shown below in Figure 5.1.

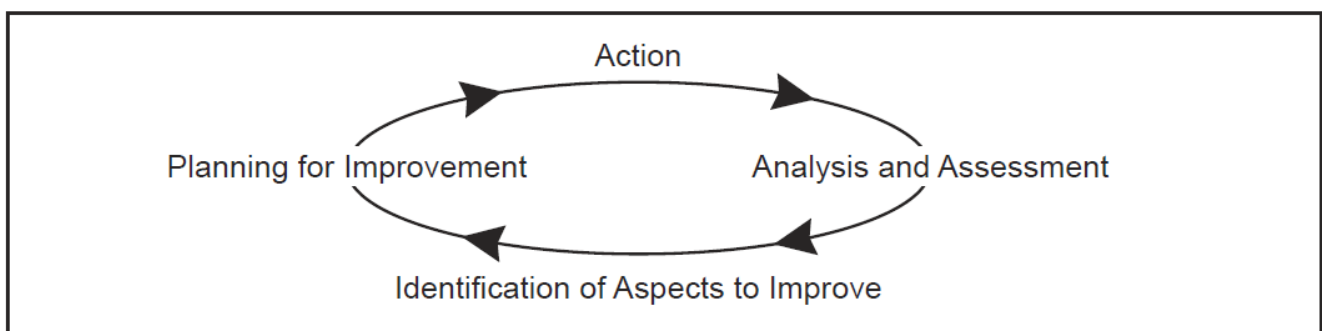
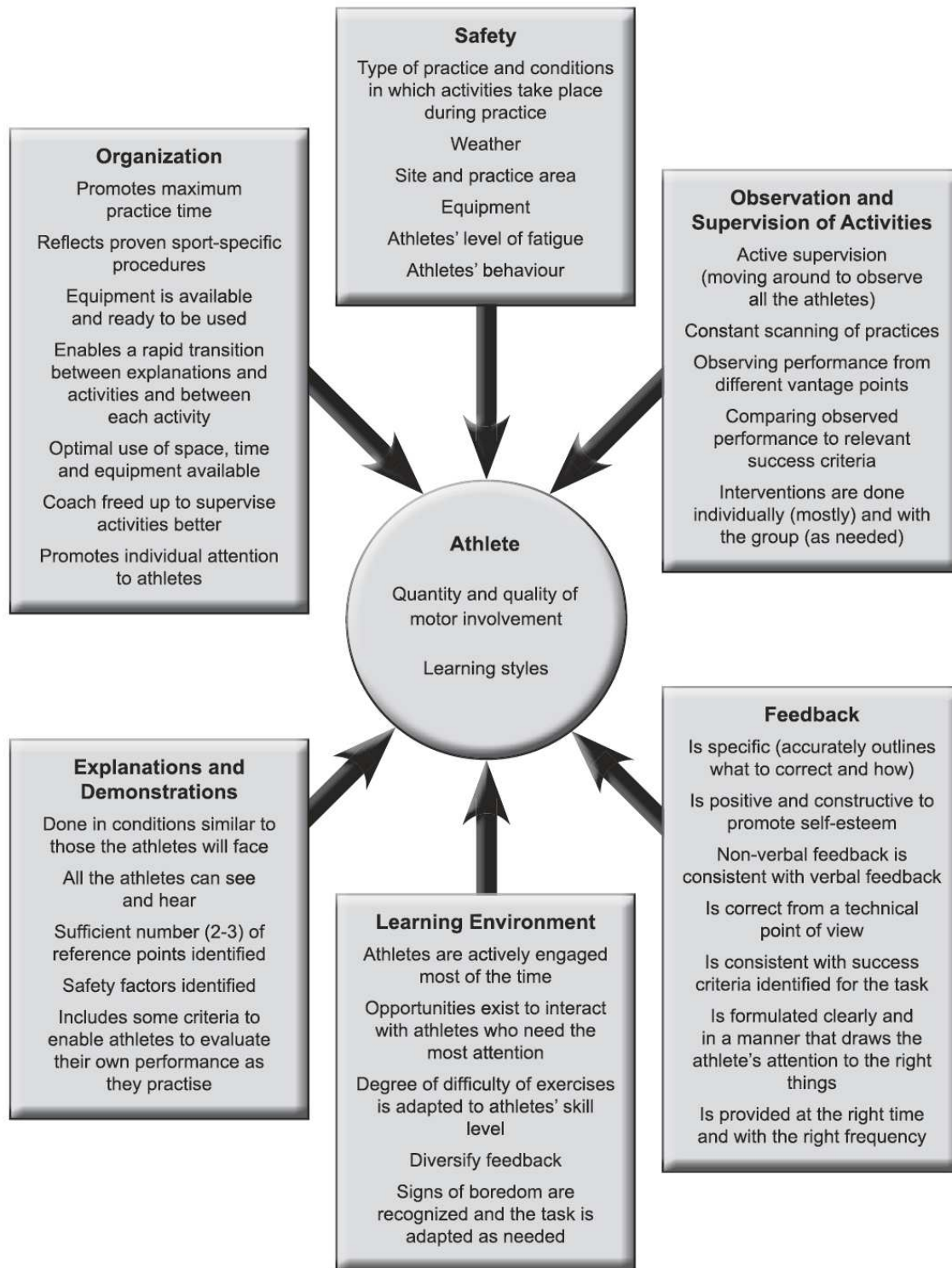


Figure 5.1

This section enables you to get involved in each step of this process by: (1) showing you how to use some tools designed to assess teaching effectiveness; (2) providing you with the opportunity to use some of these tools; and (3) showing you how to analyze data to identify specific aspects of your teaching you may wish to work on to be more effective.

5.1.1 Key Factors to Consider in Assessing the Effectiveness of Teaching



5.2 Defining Learning

5.2.1 Performance versus Learning

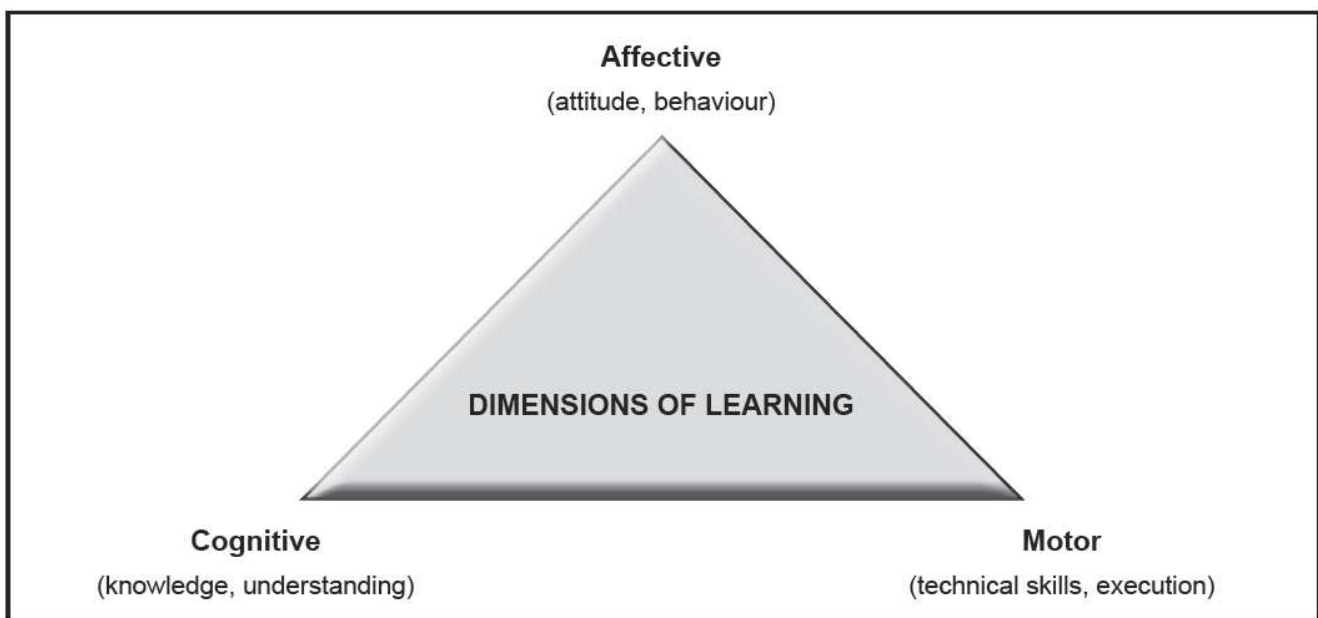
One of the principal preoccupations of coaches is how to maximize learning, even when only limited time is available. To achieve this goal, it is important to be familiar with some basic concepts related to how people learn skills and how effective coaches teach sport activities:

- ❑ Motor performance is the observable behaviour of the athlete when he or she is executing a task; it can be assessed using very precise criteria, e.g. the number of times the athlete throws and hits the target.
- ❑ Learning refers to the permanent change in motor performance or the ability to carry out certain tasks or movements that occurs as a result of practice.
- ❑ Performance observed during a practice session is not necessarily a good indication of learning by the athlete. Establishing whether learning has taken place requires reassessing performance at a future date. Additional assessments make it possible to verify skill retention, i.e. whether the skill can be executed repeatedly and consistently.
- ❑ If the coach does not appreciate the distinction between performance and learning, there is a risk of incorrectly interpreting the extent of the athlete's progress and the athlete's ability to execute a particular task consistently and independently.
- ❑ When performance assessments are done, it is important to establish a distinction between performance in practice and performance when it is most important - in competition.

Dimensions of Learning

Learning has three distinct dimensions: affective, cognitive and motor.

Figure 5.2

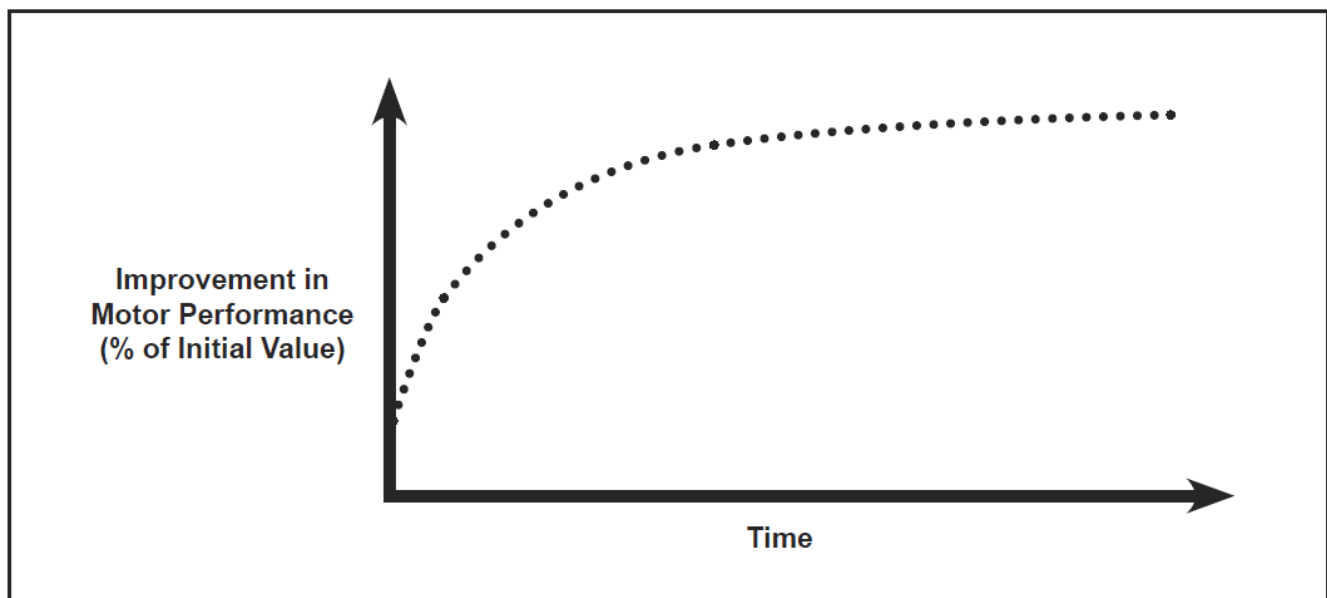


- ❑ The affective dimension - concerns learning from the point of view of attitudes, values and ethical behaviour. This dimension is closely linked to the self-esteem of athletes. Later on, we will consider how to recognize a lack of self-esteem in the athlete.
- ❑ The cognitive dimension - concerns learning from the perspective of the acquisition of knowledge, whether it be technical, tactical or strategic knowledge. This dimension is as much about what the athlete knows (or does not know) as it is about what the athlete understands (or does not understand).
- ❑ The motor dimension - concerns learning from the perspective of the execution of skills, techniques or any other form of motor performance.

Rate of Improvement Over Time

- ❑ When an athlete begins to practise, there is a rapid improvement in the ability to carry out a task or perform a particular movement, but the rate of improvement is much slower later on.
- ❑ Learning happens in stages, and the rate of improvement varies from stage to stage.
- ❑ The quantity and quality of practice, i.e. the time and the number of repetitions, are the most important factors that lead to motor performance improvements and skill learning.

Figure 5.3



Effects of Different Types of Practice on Motor Learning

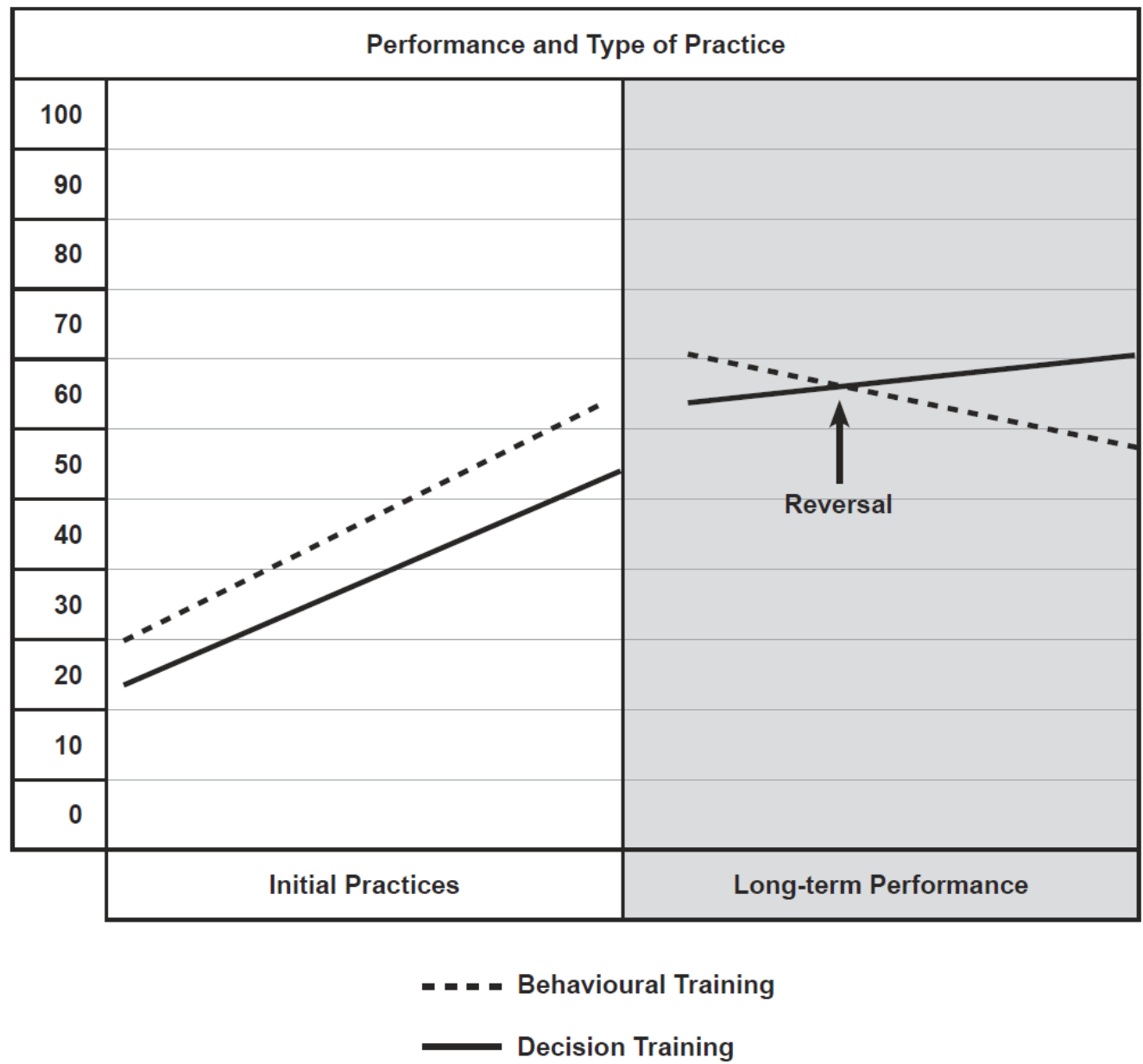
Different types of practice can be used to teach skills, and their effect on learning and performance can vary.

Practices that emphasize repeating the same task many times under the same conditions (behavioural training) usually lead to a rapid improvement in performance; however, this improvement may not be stable or maintained over time.

Practices that require some form of problem solving by the athlete (decision training) may not

produce improved motor performance as quickly early on, but may lead to superior learning and retention of skills, as well as superior transfer of skill to the competitive environment.

Figure 5.4



5.3 Maximizing Learning

5.3.1 My Preferred Learning Style - Questionnaire

The following questionnaire is designed to help you discover your preferred learning style. To a large extent, your preferred learning style is linked to the sensory channel (hearing, seeing, feeling) you use the most to learn. In the 21 situations described in the following pages, circle the option (A, B or C) that best describes your personal experience.

When you've answered all the questions, read the analysis and interpretation of your answers in sections 5.3.2 and 5.3.3 below.

What Happens When:

- 1. You are preparing a technical learning sequence for the next month:**
 - A. You make lots of gestures with your hands while you think.
 - B. You draw up a diagram to help you clarify a few key ideas.
 - C. You prepare a detailed plan of the content of the coaching sessions.
- 2. You are getting ready to read over the material for the course you are taking:**
 - A. You are taken aback by the pile of paper.
 - B. You feel tired even before you begin.
 - C. You regret waiting until now to get to the work.
- 3. You are off to practice:**
 - A. You are delighted to see that the sky is clear.
 - B. You are delighted to hear the birds singing.
 - C. You yawn and wish you could stay in bed.
- 4. You go into the coffee shop and the first thing you notice is:**
 - A. The sounds of conversations.
 - B. Your colleague's beautiful smile.
 - C. The smell of coffee.
- 5. You go to get some colleagues who are supposed to be participating in a meeting:**
 - A. You see that they are chatting and do not hear that the meeting is about to start.
 - B. You hurry them along so that they get into the room as quickly as possible.
 - C. You see that they are not ready to go into the meeting.
- 6. You walk into a room to begin a presentation:**
 - A. You hope the heating will be switched on soon; it's cold in the room.
 - B. You notice the walls are painted an ugly colour.
 - C. You are upset by the athletes who continue chatting.
- 7. You walk into a room to start a presentation:**
 - A. The whispering is intriguing.
 - B. You notice that two difficult athletes are sitting next to each other.

- C. You are not sure whether to sit down or walk back and forth.
8. An athlete comes to see you to ask you a question:
- A. The fact that he/she is looking anxious is not a surprise.
 - B. You wonder what is behind his/her approach.
 - C. You are amused that he/she is coming to see you.
9. You are writing an important article for your athletes:
- A. Your hand will go to sleep if you go on any longer.
 - B. You try to figure out if your handwriting is legible.
 - C. You really like how ball point pens roll on the paper.
10. Your athletes don't understand an explanation:
- A. You immediately think about how to explain it another way.
 - B. You are surprised at the number of puzzled faces in front of you.
 - C. You are not pleased; you don't like this kind of situation.
11. Two athletes challenge the coach, and you notice:
- A. That it makes everyone uncomfortable.
 - B. That they speak without asking permission.
 - C. That they look very angry.
12. Some athletes ask to discuss a problem that everyone in the organization is talking about:
- A. You think their request is out of line.
 - B. You are touched by their request.
 - C. You note that the other people present agree with the request.
13. The athletes are surprised when you announce the next special activity:
- A. Even though it has been in the schedule for a long time.
 - B. Even though they know what to do anyway.
 - C. Even though you had repeated it several times.
14. You are off to a competition:
- A. You notice your new shoes are very comfortable.
 - B. You are delighted to see the smiling faces of the people who are hosting you.
 - C. You perform a head count several times to be sure everyone is there.
15. You are summoned to your boss's office:
- A. You have decided to stand firm on this issue.
 - B. You wonder whether this is a good omen.
 - C. You re-read the secretary's note to see if you can find an explanation.
16. A meeting is just about to start:
- A. You notice person X isn't there.
 - B. You work out how long the meeting will last by figuring on ten minutes per agenda

C. You notice you have chosen a more comfortable seat than last time.

17. You approach the parents of some athletes with whom you have arranged a meeting:

- A. You notice that they have a slight regional accent.
- B. You extend your hand to them spontaneously.
- C. Just a moment! You thought they were older than this.

18. A supervisor walks into your work area:

- A. You find he/she has a pleasant voice.
- B. You find him/her pleasant.
- C. You have a dry throat.

19. In the cafeteria, you are swallowing the last few mouthfuls of your meal:

- A. You have enjoyed the meal.
- B. The conversation around you isn't loud. So much the better!
- C. You find the colour of the dishes brighter than usual.

20. Some athletes come and go during your presentation:

- A. You look at your notes several times to find where you were because they distracted you.
- B. You are put off by the coming and going.
- C. You are inwardly furious.

21. Once the day is over, you go home and you:

- A. Congratulate yourself for the successful moments of the day.
- B. Think back over the good moments of the day.
- C. Enjoy sitting down after a day on your feet.

5.3.2 Interpretation Table

The table below shows what kind of learning each answer in the questionnaire represents. For example, choosing the answer B for the first question indicates a visual learning style.

For each situation that was described in the questionnaire, circle the letter that corresponds to your answer. For every time you answered A, give yourself one point; give yourself two points for every time you answered B and three points for every time you answered C. Then add up the total points in each column. The column with the highest total represents your primary learning style.

| Situation | Visual | Auditory | Kinesthetic |
|--------------|--------|----------|-------------|
| 1 | B | C | A |
| 2 | A | C | B |
| 3 | A | B | C |
| 4 | B | A | C |
| 5 | C | A | B |
| 6 | B | C | A |
| 7 | B | A | C |
| 8 | A | B | C |
| 9 | B | C | A |
| 10 | B | A | C |
| 11 | C | B | A |
| 12 | C | A | B |
| 13 | A | C | B |
| 14 | B | C | A |
| 15 | C | B | A |
| 16 | A | B | C |
| 17 | C | A | B |
| 18 | B | A | C |
| 19 | C | B | A |
| 20 | A | C | B |
| 21 | B | A | C |
| Total | | | |

5.3.3 Recognizing Preferred Learning Styles

You Are Primarily a Visual Learner

☐ Your General Profile

- ✓ This means you are particularly sensitive to the visual aspects of your environment, that you live in the present, that you are aware of what is going on around you and that you very quickly bring up images of the past to make sense of what is happening to you. You are affected by art and beauty, order and disorder. You have a very fine sense of

nuances of colour and form. You pick up details: you identify your athletes' handwriting. You recognize people easily: their appearance, some aspect of how they look, their location in a particular setting are points of reference that you capture in a flash. You get athletes to stay in the same place, so that you will have time to identify them by their place in the room. So much so that when people forget and change places in the room, you may well call them by the wrong name.

- ✓ You have a good sense of direction, so you are able to locate where you are on a plan or map, and you don't have to ask the way. You don't always understand why athletes ask you to repeat feedback and drill instructions during a practice. "Just open your eyes", you tell them. You believe that a clear explanation or document requires illustrations, diagrams. When there are no visual pieces, you immediately draw something on the board: you believe it is easier, clearer than any verbal explanation.
- ✓ You are creative. There are always ideas bouncing around in your head. Athletes sometimes say you speak a little too quickly. It is not always easy to follow your explanations, which are often full of picturesque details. Sometimes you forget to define exactly where you want to go with it. However, you have a sound sense of how to synthesize information, and you are as able as anyone to describe the main points. You just allow yourself to get carried away by your rich imagination.

❑ Aspects to Which You Should Pay Particular Attention

- ✓ You have to learn how to enter the world of auditory learners. If you understand them better, you will find their long explanations less tiring. Provide just the right word, and they will be satisfied; your explanation will make more sense for them. Better still: get them to give a name to your activities or exercises or to summarize the main points of your message. That way you will satisfy their need for words, and you will frame how long they can talk; they will appreciate your activities better, and you will provide them with a meaningful opportunity to contribute to the group's dynamics.
- ✓ Kinesthetic people often seem to you to be too "slow". Use your creativity to create imaginary journeys for them: they will revel in your images... They will experience multiple sensations that they will find overwhelming. Begin your explanations by saying: "Imagine yourself walking...visiting...touching..." Any action verb will do, provided you cause them to be mentally active in the course of their reflection. Ask them what they feel when they create these images. If you are able to keep them in contact with their own feelings, they will become more creative and be more interested in your activities. They remind everyone (and yourself) that you are a person and you are also capable of experiencing sensations, feelings, needs. They will add some human depth and breadth to your sometimes overly detached view of the world.
- ✓ Teach others to use their eyes more, especially to remember movement patterns or diagrams outlining certain tactics. You excel in this area because you perceive any visually based strategy as being more effective.

You Are Primarily an Auditory Learner

❑ Your General Profile

- ✓ This means that you are particularly receptive to the auditory aspect of your environment and that you readily call up sounds and words heard in the past to help you make sense of what is happening to you.
- ✓ You are sensitive to the harmony of sounds, the meaning of words, the rhythm of things.

You have a fine sense of the various ranges of tonality: the bass and treble are very familiar to you. You recognize people primarily by the tone of their voice. You remember the names of your athletes. You have clever methods to help you do that. You like to choose just the right word. You like to talk, to tell stories. You like to sing or, at the very least, you appreciate the musicality of what you say or hear.

- ✓ You like to listen to people, discuss or play with ideas. Your athletes like your careful elocution: you take pleasure in talking. Your voice is melodious, well ordered. You usually breathe through the middle of the thorax by filling your lungs well, which enables you to maintain a regular rhythm.

❑ Aspects to Which You Should Pay Particular Attention

- ✓ The previous aspects can sometimes work against you as well: you take such pleasure explaining that you may occasionally forget that some of your athletes soon “turn off” and are unable to keep paying attention to purely auditory sources of information. From time to time, be sure to provide some visual support to revive their interest and regain their attention. It will also make their task easier when you supplement your explanations with concrete examples that will enable them to create their own internal images. Abstract terms tend to be too much in the realm of sounds alone.
- ✓ So what about kinesthetic learners? Words alone will always be an empty vessel for them, unless you can also appeal to their need for physical sensation. Choose the words that complement their preferred sense.

You Are Primarily a Kinesthetic Learner

❑ Your General Profile

- ✓ This means that among the many forms of information that you receive at any given moment, you are particularly sensitive to those that you feel. From time to time, you pause to check your feelings. This is your way of relating to what is going on around you.
- ✓ You are aware of the ambiance, the relationships between people. You have a keen sense of the state of mind of those with whom you are speaking. You are passionate: your athletes appreciate the way you “rev them up”. You are warm and spontaneous. Sometimes, you let yourself get carried away by your emotions: your athletes are afraid of your anger. You are very emotional, and you do not like delicate situations when you have to control yourself. You know how to grab the attention of your athletes because you express yourself in concrete terms, with a fairly slow delivery. You often call on your emotions and theirs.
- ✓ As you follow your inspiration of the moment, you have a tendency to improvise. The outcome is often positive. You are always available to answer your athletes’ questions. You adapt to the needs of the moment. You are able to remain attentive to them and not feel too restricted by rigid plans.

❑ Aspects to Which You Should Pay Particular Attention

- ✓ You would be even more effective if you took more frequent pauses to reframe what is being said - for example, by jotting down key ideas on a blackboard to summarize the essential elements of what is to be learned. Otherwise, your athletes may get the impression that you are changing the subject abruptly. They need to be able to be involved in the process to acquire a more global vision of the course if they are to understand the general meaning of the program.

- ✓ For primarily visual learners, your many expressions and gestures are a valuable source of information. Anecdotes or a concrete and dynamic approach will help them create vivid mental images. You can have them synthesize what has already been said or done or describe how this fits into the larger picture: they will be very good at this exercise. However the rhythm of your presentation may seem too slow to them: mental pictures are created very quickly in their minds, so much so that you may not be capable of keeping pace with the way they interpret information. Have your athletes speak from time to time, so that the rest of the group can benefit from their brightly coloured examples and images.
- ✓ Athletes who are primarily auditory may become frustrated: they like structured practices and well planned activities that are described in precise, well-thought-out terms. Have them comment on a technique or summarize an important explanation, because they often link things in a subtle way. Don't hesitate to recognize your differences in your conception of knowledge, so learn to rely on their strong points: "What word would you use to describe this?", "How would you classify the various ideas we've heard today?" Thanks to your primarily kinesthetic sense, you practise your profession with great sensitivity. This is one of your great attributes: to teach in a lively, unexpected and sometimes unusual way. You epitomize this picturesque Chinese proverb: "Teaching that only enters the eyes and ears is like an imaginary meal".

Visual Learners

General Observations

- ☐ They often do better when you show them rather than tell them. They may have difficulty understanding oral directions.
- ☐ They may have difficulty with oral directions or appear confused with a great deal of auditory stimuli.
- ☐ They have a tendency to watch your face when you read or speak to them.
- ☐ They like to look at books and pictures.
- ☐ They like things orderly and neat. They often dress in an attractive manner.
- ☐ They can generally find things that are lost and seldom misplace their own things.
- ☐ They can often recall where they saw something some time ago.
- ☐ They notice details. They are good proofreaders, see typing errors and notice if your clothing has a flaw.
- ☐ They can find pages or places in a book quite easily.
- ☐ They often draw reasonably well — at least with good balance and symmetry.
- ☐ They may use few words when responding to questions; they may rarely talk in class.
- ☐ Recommended Teaching Methods
- ☐ Give visual directions and demonstrations as often as possible.
- ☐ Use visual aids such as film, videos, images, overheads, books, magazines, slides, panel boards, etc.
- ☐ Use colour-coding systems and visual aids.

Auditory Learners

General Observations

- ☐ They are often referred to as talkers and are seldom quiet. They tell jokes and tall tales and are full of excuses for why something isn't done.
- ☐ They follow oral instructions easily.
- ☐ They may have difficulty with written work and copying. They often have rather poor handwriting and may draw badly. They have trouble reproducing figures and letters they have seen, and they generally have poor visual memory.
- ☐ They remember spoken words or ideas quite well. They may answer better when questions are explained to them verbally compared to when they must read them.
- ☐ They like musical and rhythmic activities.
- ☐ They tend to memorize easily, and they often know all the words to songs.
- ☐ They may appear physically awkward. They often have a poor perception of space and may get lost in unfamiliar surroundings.
- ☐ They often have poor perception of time and space and often do not keep track of time easily.
- ☐ They often have mixed laterality (left hand – right footed).

Recommended Teaching Methods

- ☐ Teach them to talk through the steps in a task or activity.
- ☐ Encourage them to think out loud, and listen to what they are saying.
- ☐ Use tape-recorded instructions.
- ☐ Use lots of audio equipment in the learning process.
- ☐ Pair the individual with a visual learner.

Kinesthetic Learners

General Observations

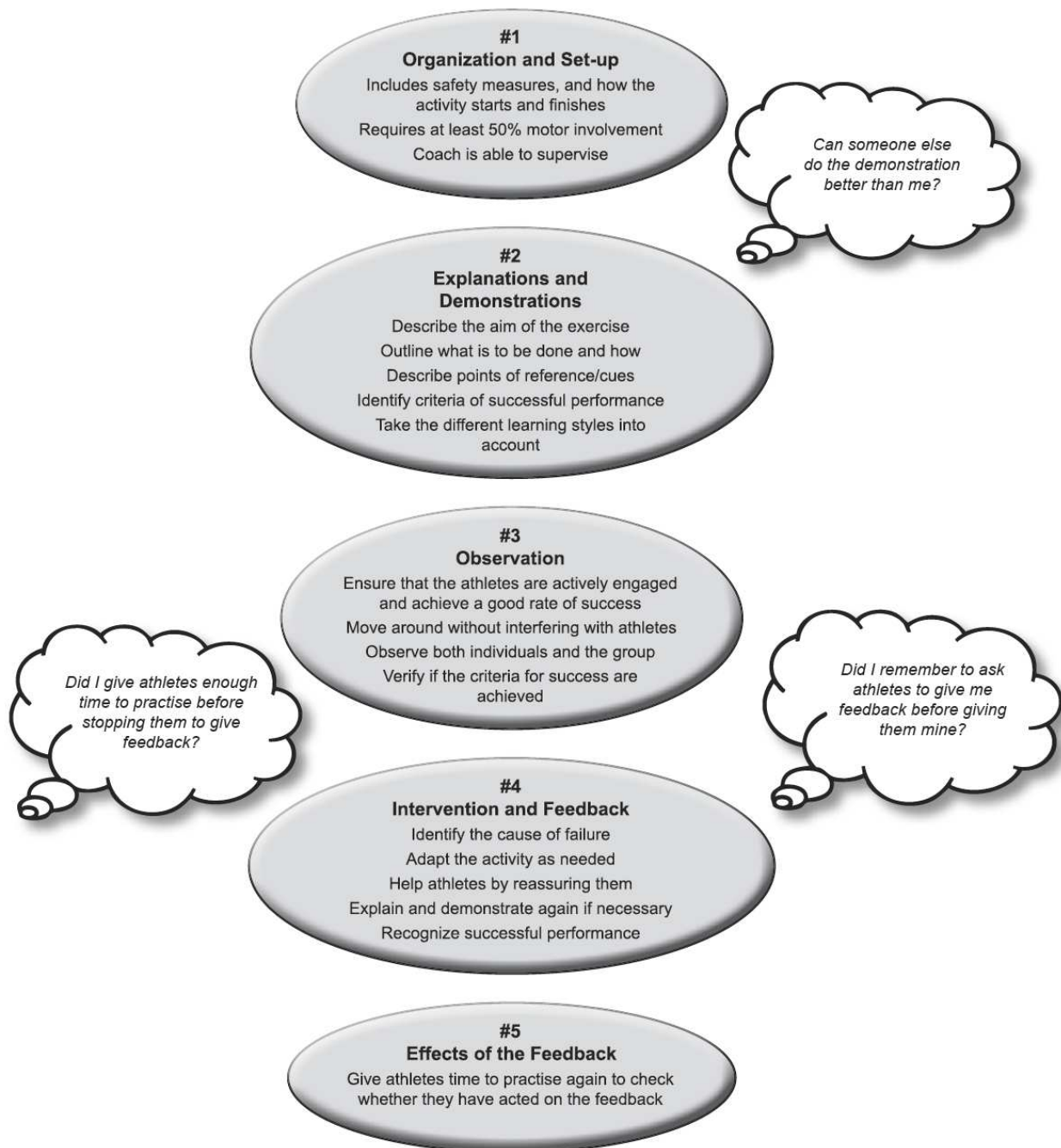
- ☐ They move around a lot and are considered hyperactive.
- ☐ They seem to want to feel and touch everything.
- ☐ They are usually quite well co-ordinated.
- ☐ They enjoy working with their hands. They like to take things apart and to put things together.
- ☐ They may truly enjoy writing things down.
- ☐ They use concrete objects as learning aids, especially ones that can be manipulated easily.
- ☐ They learn best by doing and exploring the environment.

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Recommended Teaching Methods

- ☐ Use movement exploration.
- ☐ Have them tap tempos.
- ☐ Use all the concrete, manipulative devices possible in the teaching/learning mode.
- ☐ Employ role playing where possible.
- ☐ Let them help you create learning aids.

5.4 The Teaching Process



5.4.1 Organization and Set-Up

- ☐ Always think about how to start and finish an activity or a drill.
- ☐ Always take into account the safety issues of the activity or drill.
- ☐ Organize the activity in a way that allows each athlete to remain active during at least 50% of practice time.
- ☐ Organize the activity in a way that enables athletes to progress at their own pace.
- ☐ Set up the environment so that you can move around and see every athlete without interfering.
- ☐ Ensure each athlete has the maximum possible amount of practice time (number of repetitions).
- ☐ Always plan what equipment to use during the activity or the drill, prepare it ahead of time and make sure it is available at the time of the activity.



Self-Assessment Tool for Coaches:

| Ask Yourself These Questions Before and After the Practice |
|---|
| <p>Did I set up the practice or the activity in a way that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Enabled each of the athletes to be actively engaged for at least 50% of the time? <input type="checkbox"/> Allowed me to spend more than half my time with individual athletes? <input type="checkbox"/> Enabled each athlete to progress at his or her own pace, respecting the athlete's starting point? <input type="checkbox"/> Gave me sufficient time to observe the athletes? |

5.4.2 Explanations and Demonstrations

- ☐ Tell athletes the object of the exercise or drill.
- ☐ Always give athletes some cues or reference points (what they should look for or feel while performing). Effective cues are short, clear, simple and few (two or three).
- ☐ A cue is a precise piece of information that enables the performer to comprehend and control a movement. It must be observable by the coach and easily understood by the athlete. There are two types of cues: external and internal.
 - ✓ An external cue can be seen or identified by the athlete. It generally relates to the desired outcome of a movement or sequence of movements, providing the context for the movement(s) (also known as internal cues – see next bullet below). It also serves to explain to the athlete why a component of technique is being performed in a specified way.
 - ✓ An internal cue is perceived or felt internally by the athlete (kinesthetic sensations). It generally equates to an input (or inputs) required to generate a desired outcome or result.

It is meaningful primarily within the context of the intended outcome (or external cue).

- ☐ Suggest to athletes that while executing the movement or movements (i.e. with internal cues) as instructed, it is essential they always be conscious of the desired outcome or purpose (i.e. perceived through an external cue). The external cue will often be expressed relative to something external to the athlete's body. For instance, in shooting a basketball, the external cue would relate to the basket; in cross-country skiing, external cues might be expressed in terms of distance covered or slopes climbed while skiing. In motor learning, this type of instruction is called external focus of attention.
- ☐ Always show and tell the athlete what successful performance will look and feel like (how will the athlete know that he or she has succeeded?).
- ☐ Be sure to use appropriate words, movements or visuals (if possible) to take into account the preferred learning style of each athlete (visual, auditory, kinesthetic).

Self-Assessment Tool for Coaches:

| Ask Yourself These Questions During and After the Practice |
|--|
| <p>Did my explanations and demonstrations enable me to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Create a clear picture of what I wanted to see happen and how?<input type="checkbox"/> Describe the logistical and organizational aspects of the drill/activity?<input type="checkbox"/> Emphasize the most important aspects (reference points, external focus)?<input type="checkbox"/> Pass on information on the “why” of things (e.g. the reasons why a movement should be done in a particular way)?<input type="checkbox"/> Respect the athletes' individual learning styles?<input type="checkbox"/> Check for understanding? |

Key Points on Giving Instructions

Recent research in motor learning has focused on the effectiveness of different ways of giving instructions. Among other areas of interest, researchers have tried to determine what athletes should focus on *during* the execution of a motor task: (1) on the way the movement or skill is performed (internal focus); or (2) on an external element or the anticipated effect of the movement (external focus).

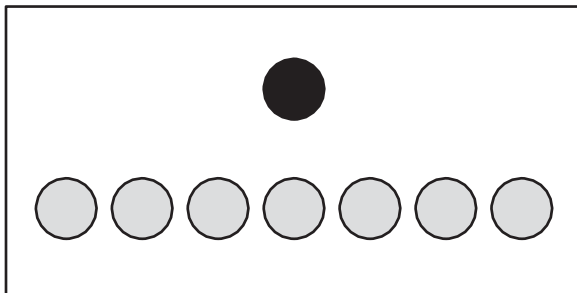
- ☐ To promote learning, instructions should be given in a way that focuses the athlete's attention on some external factor or on the anticipated effect of his or her movement, rather than on the way the movement is executed.
- ☐ Focusing too much on how to perform a particular movement, e.g. focusing on how to position the elbow or flick the wrist at the end of the movement, can be detrimental to motor learning. During the execution of the movement, it seems to be more effective to pay attention to some external factor (e.g. the target to hit) or to the expected outcome of the movement (like the particular trajectory of a ball) rather than to internal elements (e.g. feeling each phase of the movement during its execution). This topic is known as “focus of attention”.

- ❑ There is ample evidence that instructions asking the athlete to focus on some element external to his or her body have a positive impact on both short-term performance (i.e. during the practice session) and longer term performance; this type of instruction therefore appears to promote both learning and retention of skill. In addition, instructions of this type appear to be effective for most sports skills and all performers. Finally, the positive effects of this type of instruction on both performance and learning do not appear to negatively affect the form of the movements; in other words, the quality of the execution does not appear to suffer.
- ❑ If possible, external focus should be directed toward an element, an anticipated effect or an outcome that is far from the performer's body.
- ❑ Current research suggests that the most effective approach requires the learner to focus on an expected outcome situated as far as possible from the athlete's body that can still be directly linked to the movement itself.

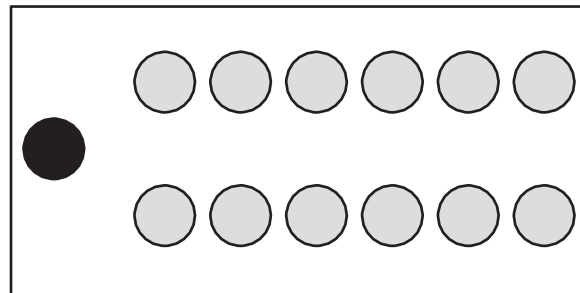
Choosing a Formation for Explanations or Demonstrations

It is important to choose a formation that allows athletes to see and hear you. The choice of formation depends on the space available, the kind of message (e.g. information, explanation, demonstration), the number of athletes and whether the athletes are on a soccer field or on snow with skis on. The diagrams below show common “dryland” formations.

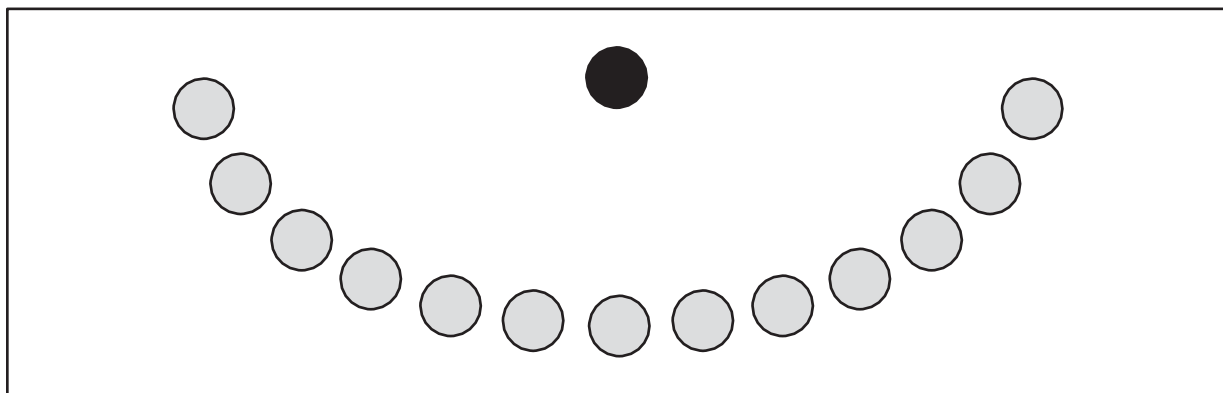
Straight Line

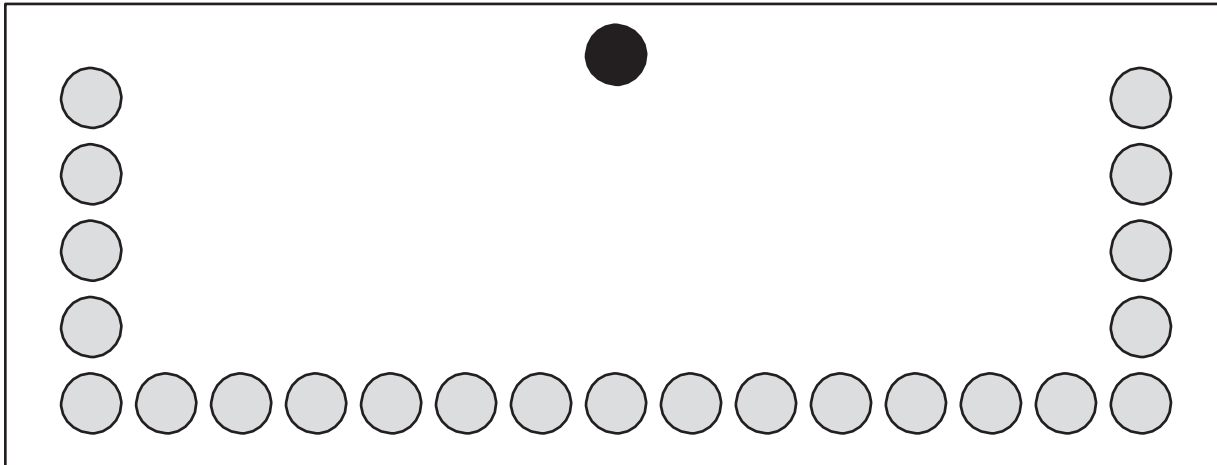


Two Lines



Semi-Circle





Adapting the Basic Formations

- ☐ These basic formations need to be adapted to the situation. For examples of teaching and observation formations for on-snow sessions, refer to section 3 of this Reference Material.
- ☐ Formations can also be adapted to meet the needs of larger groups, for example:
 - ✓ Make two rows: the front row kneeling or sitting, the second row standing.
 - ✓ Make three rows: front row sitting, second row kneeling and third row standing.

Control Distractions

- ☐ Athletes must be arranged with potential distractions behind them, for example:
 - ✓ Sun in their eyes.
 - ✓ Reflections.
 - ✓ Other groups of athletes training.
 - ✓ Spectators.

Choose a Good Vantage Point for the Athletes

- ☐ It is important to ensure that athletes have a good vantage point for watching the demonstration. Think of the best vantage points for athletes in relation to the formation you have chosen before you begin the demonstration.
- ☐ If you need to, turn 90 or 180 degrees, and do the demonstration again so that everyone can have several views of the demonstration and can observe from the best vantage point. However, avoid doing the demonstration too many times, as it may take too much time, and the athletes who have already seen it enough may “switch off”.

Explanations and Demonstrations Assessment Grid (sample)

Coach: _____ Observer: _____

| | | Demo #1 | | Demo #2 | |
|----|--|---------|----|---------|----|
| 1 | Equipment was ready for the start of the demonstration | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 2 | Organization of the athletes was appropriate | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 3 | Demonstration gave a good general idea of the technique or movement | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 4 | Demonstration directed athletes' attention to an external focus (target, outcome, expected effect) | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 5 | Coach pointed out what not to do (negative example) | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 6 | Demonstration was repeated from different angles | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 7 | Athletes were involved in the demonstration in an appropriate way | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 8 | Coach identified internal and external points of reference | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 9 | Coach explained the reason for doing the activity/drill (link with previous practices, etc.) | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 10 | Coach checked that the athletes had a good understanding of what needs to be done | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 11 | Technical elements of the demonstration were executed correctly | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 12 | Amount of information provided by the coach was appropriate (clear, short, accurate) | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 13 | Coach used vocabulary respecting the three learning styles | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 14 | Coach emphasized safety aspects when appropriate | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 15 | Coach's voice was loud enough and projected well enough | Yes | No | Yes | No |

Comments:

Overall Assessment:

- () Excellent performance
- () Good performance, some adjustments required, but generally well done
- () One or two serious mistakes, room for improvement, but acceptable
- () Not acceptable, several serious mistakes

Explanations and Demonstrations Assessment Grid (working copy)

Coach: _____ Observer: _____

| | | Demo #1 | | Demo #2 | |
|----|--|---------|----|---------|----|
| 1 | Equipment was ready for the start of the demonstration | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 2 | Organization of the athletes was appropriate | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 3 | Demonstration gave a good general idea of the technique or movement | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 4 | Demonstration directed athletes' attention to an external focus (target, outcome, expected effect) | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 5 | Coach pointed out what not to do (negative example) | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 6 | Demonstration was repeated from different angles | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 7 | Athletes were involved in the demonstration in an appropriate way | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 8 | Coach identified internal and external points of reference | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 9 | Coach explained the reason for doing the activity/drill (link with previous practices, etc.) | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 10 | Coach checked that the athletes had a good understanding of what needs to be done | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 11 | Technical elements of the demonstration were executed correctly | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 12 | Amount of information provided by the coach was appropriate (clear, short, accurate) | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 13 | Coach used vocabulary respecting the three learning styles | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 14 | Coach emphasized safety aspects when appropriate | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 15 | Coach's voice was loud enough and projected well enough | Yes | No | Yes | No |

Comments:

Overall Assessment:

- () Excellent performance
- () Good performance, some adjustments required, but generally well done
- () One or two serious mistakes, room for improvement, but acceptable
- () Not acceptable, several serious mistakes

5.4.3 Observation

- ☐ Ensure that athletes get involved in the activity quickly (rapid transition).
- ☐ Always ensure athletes understand the instructions you provide.
- ☐ Always ensure that the activity or drill is appropriate for athletes' skill level.
- ☐ Always ensure that there is a good rate of success among the athletes, i.e. most of the athletes are able to achieve the desired outcome.
- ☐ Actively supervise athletes so you see ALL the athletes during the activity. Scanning the activity and moving around to watch what is going on from different vantage points will enable you to be actively involved. (Note: During sport-specific workshops, find out what is the best way of moving around and observing athletes without interfering with them).
- ☐ Be sure to watch individual athletes so that you can be aware of individual differences in performance and provide individualized feedback.
- ☐ Find out if the athletes have fun, or if they are bored or discouraged.

Self-Assessment Tool for Coaches:

| Ask Yourself These Questions During and After the Practice |
|--|
| <p>Did my observation enable me to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Keep athletes actively engaged in the activity?<input type="checkbox"/> See all athletes as a group and individually?<input type="checkbox"/> Observe key reference points and success criteria from different vantage points?<input type="checkbox"/> Be sure everyone is safe?<input type="checkbox"/> Evaluate athletes' degree of success in the execution of the activity or drill? |

5.4.4 Intervention and Feedback

In this section, we will present several steps to enable the coach to give appropriate feedback.

- ☐ **First Step:** Success or Failure? Before providing any feedback, you must first determine whether the athlete is succeeding in the activity.
- ☐ **Second Step:** Types of Intervention. Once you have determined whether the athlete is experiencing success, you need to choose an appropriate type of intervention. Various types of intervention are listed in the table below. The first type (inhibiting) is obviously not appropriate and therefore should not be used. Among the other options, some are more effective when the athlete cannot perform the task successfully, and others are more appropriate when he/ she can. These particular aspects are dealt with in the following pages.

Five Types of Intervention

| Type of Intervention | Behaviours or Actions by the Coach |
|----------------------|--|
| A. Inhibiting | Do nothing. Shout, rebuke. |
| B. Repeating | Repeat instructions. Demonstrate or repeat previous demonstration. |
| C. Explaining | Explain how to do it right (verbal or reference point). Question the athlete. |
| D. Helping | Reassure, encourage. Have the athlete start again. |
| E. Adapting | Use different equipment in practice areas. Reduce difficulty level or give more time. |

Intervention Skills

The most important intervention skills recognized by the majority of researchers are the following:

☐ **Planning**

- ✓ The content of the session must have some relation to the overall program.
- ✓ The coach must know his/her stuff.
- ✓ The objectives of the practice must be clearly defined.
- ✓ The key elements of the practice and criteria for success must be clearly defined.
- ✓ Exercises must be varied and progressive.
- ✓ Exercises must be adapted to the level of the athletes.

☐ **Organization and Set-up**

- ✓ Ensure there is enough appropriate equipment.
- ✓ Choose the right formation for explanations and demonstrations.
- ✓ Be stimulating and lively (have fun!).
- ✓ Be sure that the practice area is safe throughout the session.

☐ **Explanations and Demonstrations**

- ✓ Explanations must be brief and clear.
- ✓ Explanations must be complete (organization of the group, how the practice will go, the duration of the practice, etc.).
- ✓ The context must be appropriate (quiet, respectful; the learner must be paying attention in order to learn, but must also be open to receiving and assimilating the explanation being

- ✓ The coach must be in the right position during the explanation.
- ✓ The words used must be correct and adapted to meet the needs of the targeted group
- ✓ (don't use words or terminology that only you know).
- ✓ Delivery must be controlled: speak slowly, loud enough and with enthusiasm; ask athletes
- ✓ if your voice carries well enough.
- ✓ Demonstrations serve above all to create a mental picture of the movement. Obviously, this picture must be as accurate as possible, as it is the basis of all learning. A good demonstration has the following characteristics: the movement is well executed; the timing is right; the demonstration is carried out in the right place; and everyone can see it.
- ✓ Give clear instructions such as: "Make as many passes as possible in the time given, and keep moving!"
- ✓ Ask questions to check whether your instructions have been understood, for example,
- ✓ "What must you do during this drill?"
- ✓ Check that athletes understand the purpose of the exercise before they try it again.

❑ Managing the Group

- ✓ Ensure that athletes are aware of the rules to follow and the code of conduct.
- ✓ Be sure to inform athletes of the rules and of the consequences of not following them; the consequences must be reasonable and must take into account the age of athletes, as well as the nature of the infraction.
- ✓ Watch out for signs of undisciplined behaviour and react quickly and appropriately to such behaviour.
- ✓ Apply the rules and impose the appropriate penalty for breaking the rules (that you have already established).
- ✓ Adapt quickly to maintain control of the group at all times.

❑ Observation

- ✓ Pick your spot and move around to see all athletes. By maintaining good visual and auditory contact, it is possible to know what is really happening in the group. Constant scanning of the group is the basis for sound observation. Visual contact is the primary way of capturing attention. Although it is important to watch, you must also think about what is going on. You must learn to recognize signs of boredom, disagreement and tiredness so that you can deal with them quickly.
- ✓ You must learn to pick up indications or signs of sound execution – or the lack of it – and
- ✓ intervene quickly to correct the situation.
- ✓ When you give feedback, remember the following criteria:
 - Specific, not general.
 - Positive and constructive, not destructive or negative.
 - Focus on behaviour that can be improved.
 - Clear and informative.

November 13th 2017

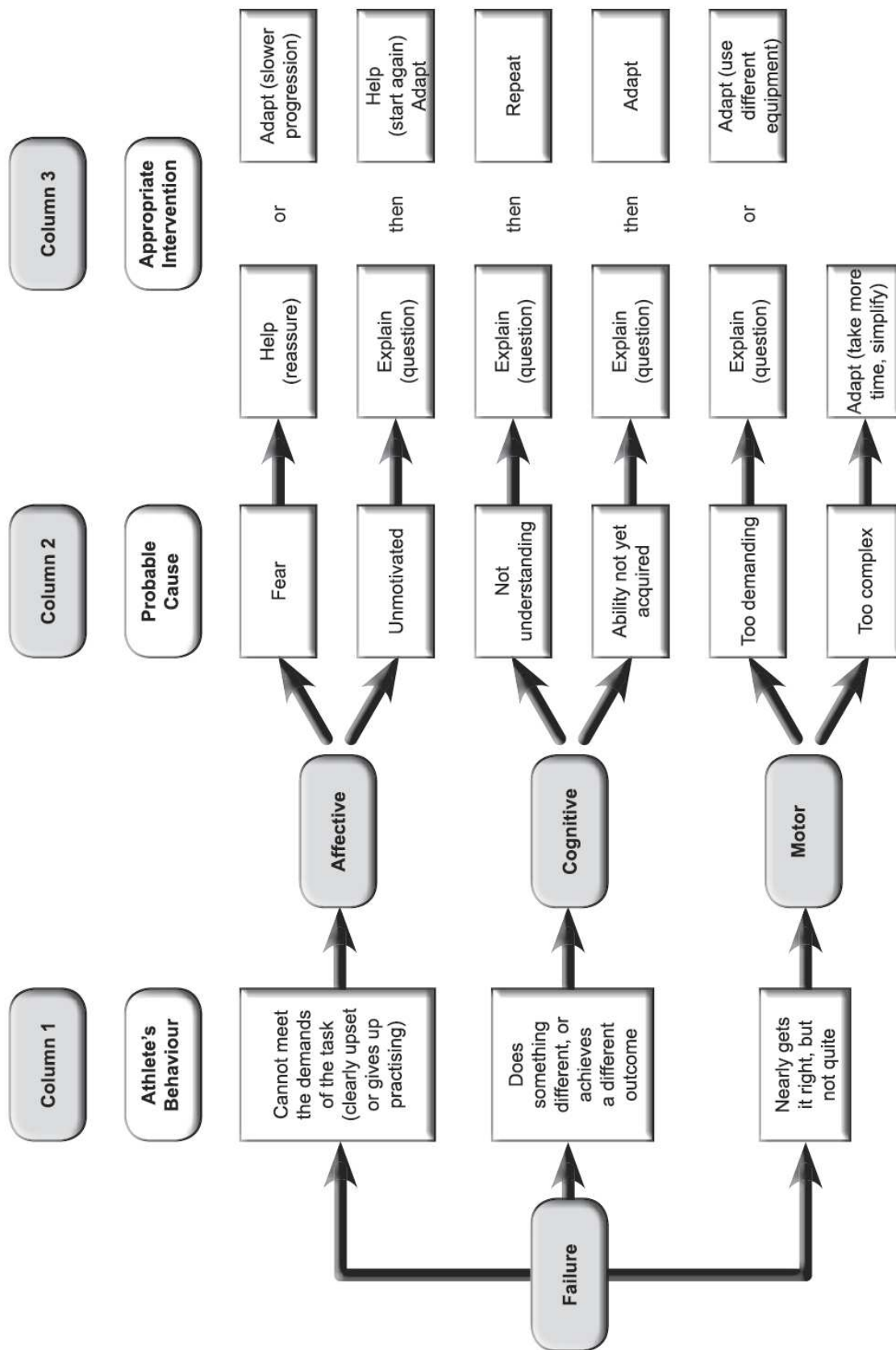
- Formulated so that the athlete's focus of attention is on an external element in addition to the technical elements being practiced.
- Feedback is given in a summary fashion after several repetitions rather than after each repetition.
- Sandwich approach: positive comments on what the athlete is doing well, things to work on, encouragement or some other positive aspect.

Note: Although feedback is important, don't overdo it, as it is important to allow athletes to practise and perform without intervention or constant interruption.

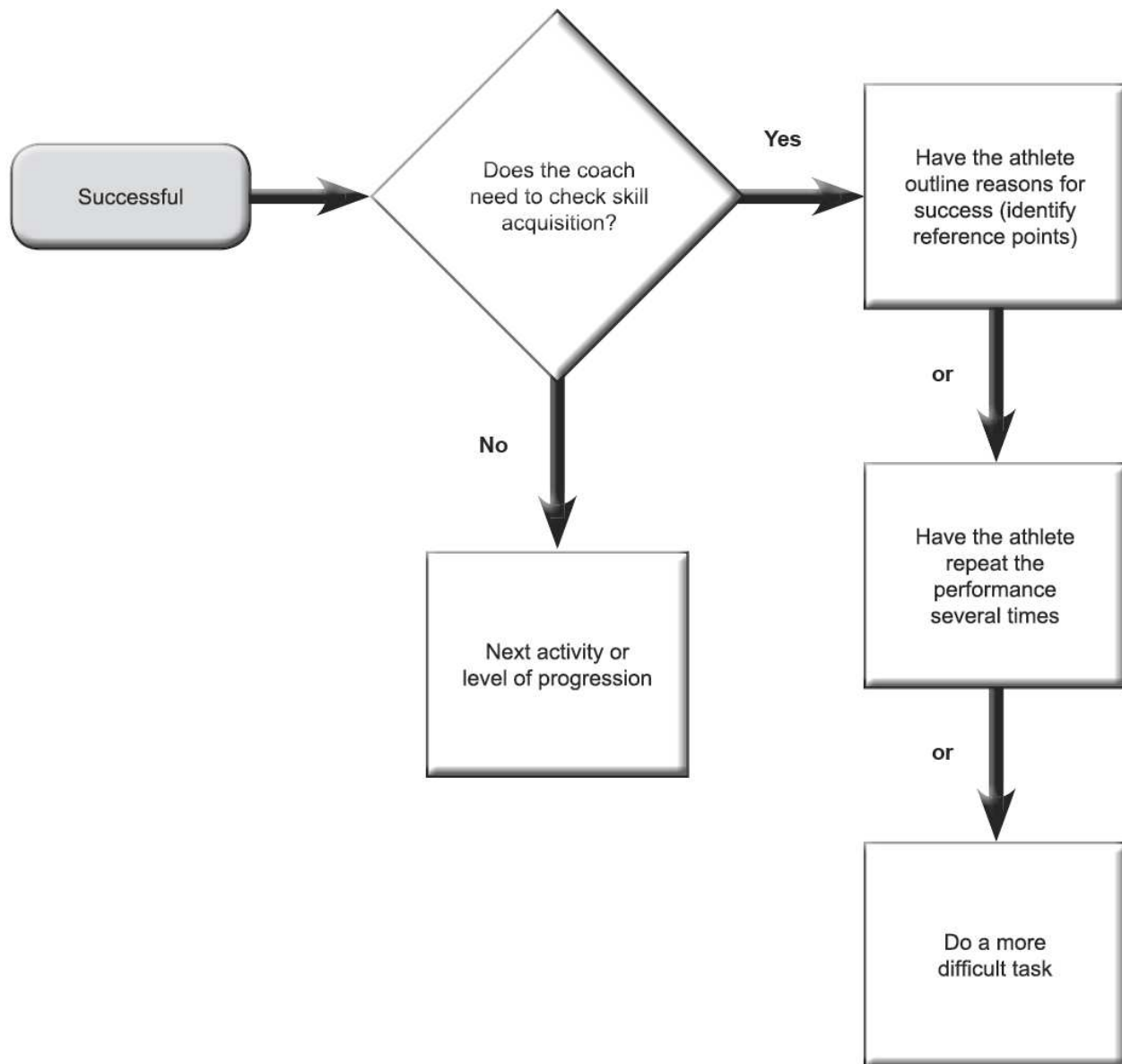
❑ **Conclusion**

- ✓ The competence of the coach can be assessed on the basis of the following:
 - The environment created in the practice session is positive.
 - The amount of athletes' motor activity is high (50% or more).
 - Athletes' learning.

Intervention When the Athlete is Not Experiencing Success



Intervention When the Athlete is Succeeding



5.4.5 Observation of the Coach's Feedback (sample)

Coach: _____

Number of athletes: _____ Length of time coach under observation: _____

| Type of Feedback | Definitions | Examples | |
|------------------|--|--|--|
| Evaluative | The coach assesses the quality of the performance, so the coach makes some kind of assessment or judgement | That's fine! Good job! | No, not like that! Not good enough! |
| Prescriptive | The coach tells the athlete how to execute the skill next time | Throw it higher! (general) Kick further! | Get your arm higher! (specific) |
| Descriptive | The coach describes to the athlete what he or she has just done | The build-up was too slow (general) | Your legs were really extended (specific) |

| Type of Feedback | Occurrence (Checkmark) | Total | # Minute |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-------|----------|
| Positive Evaluative | | | |
| Negative Evaluative | | | |
| General Prescriptive | | | |
| Specific Prescriptive | | | |
| General Descriptive | | | |
| Specific Descriptive | | | |

Observation of the Coach's Feedback (working copy)

Coach: _____

Number of athletes: _____ Length of time coach under observation: _____

| Type of Feedback | Definitions | Examples | |
|------------------|--|--|--|
| Evaluative | The coach assesses the quality of the performance, so the coach makes some kind of assessment or judgement | That's fine! Good job! | No, not like that! Not good enough! |
| Prescriptive | The coach tells the athlete how to execute the skill next time | Throw it higher! (general) Kick further! | Get your arm higher! (specific) |
| Descriptive | The coach describes to the athlete what he or she has just done | The build-up was too slow (general) | Your legs were really extended (specific) |

| Type of Feedback | Occurrence (Checkmark) | Total | # Minute |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-------|----------|
| Positive Evaluative | | | |
| Negative Evaluative | | | |
| General Prescriptive | | | |
| Specific Prescriptive | | | |
| General Descriptive | | | |
| Specific Descriptive | | | |

Key Points on Giving Feedback

Until recently, the vast majority of coaching publications recommended providing feedback:

- ☐ As often as possible.
- ☐ As soon as possible after the execution of the movement or task.
- ☐ In the most precise manner possible.

During recent years, however, researchers have re-examined some of these recommendations on the grounds that they were based on studies of short-term improvement in performance, not longer term learning. Longer term learning is the ultimate aim of coaching.

While the recommendation regarding providing precise feedback remains unchanged, the most recent research on feedback indicates that:

- ☐ **Feedback must require some reflection or cognitive effort on the part of the learner.** Feedback must be seen as supporting information that the learner is expected to interpret and use in an active way; it should therefore require some analysis and decision-making by the learner. Feedback must encourage the athlete to be an independent and autonomous learner and to look for solutions to the particular challenges posed by the practice. The longer term objective is for the athlete to be able to maintain and modify performance without the coach's intervention.
- ☐ **Very frequent feedback does not promote learning.** A comparison between intermittent feedback (after every two or three repetitions or even less frequently) and frequent feedback (after every repetition or attempt) shows that very frequent feedback does not promote learning. In other words, more is not necessarily better.
- ☐ **Feedback given during the execution of the task may lead to short-term performance improvement but is not optimal for promoting learning.** Feedback provided while an athlete performs a task appears to boost performance in the short term, but actually degrades learning compared to feedback provided after the execution of the task. (In this case, it is particularly important to understand the difference between performance and learning to get things in perspective.)
- ☐ **The least effective approach: frequent feedback during execution.** The negative effect of the phenomenon described in the preceding paragraph is even more evident when feedback is given very often while the learner is practicing. This may lead to short-term improvement, but it also tends to create dependency on this kind of feedback, which can impair longer term learning.
- ☐ **In the short term, summary feedback is not as effective as instantaneous feedback, but it does lead to superior learning and retention of skills.** Summary feedback involves giving feedback after several attempts at or repetitions of a task in a way that gives: (1) an objective view of tendencies observed during execution of a movement; or (2) information about the average performance achieved after several repetitions. Compared with instantaneous feedback (that is, feedback given after every repetition), summary feedback does not lead to rapid, short-term acquisition of new motor skills; however, it leads to superior long-term learning and better retention of skills.
- ☐ **To promote learning, feedback should be given only when the difference between the athlete's performance and the desired result requires it.** Bandwidth feedback refers to the

practice of providing feedback only when performance is outside an acceptable range of correctness, for instance if performance is more than 25% worse than the acceptable target result. The target result can be either the form of the movement or the precision of the execution. Motor learning research indicates that using a relatively large bandwidth is beneficial for learning. This tends to: (1) reduce the frequency with which feedback is provided; (2) promote summary feedback, which may encourage the athlete to compare less successful attempts with those that fell within the acceptable range of performance; and (3) develop a degree of autonomy in the athlete, as well as the ability to analyze his or her performance. In this last case, the coach may ask the athlete to compare his or her self-analysis with the coach's information about correct or incorrect execution of the task.

- ❑ **Another aspect of feedback that has been studied recently is the nature of feedback.** Among other things, researchers have sought to determine what athletes should be told to concentrate on during the execution of a motor activity. This topic is known as “focus of attention”. As explained earlier in section 5.4.2, there are two types of focal points (with corresponding cues): (1) the way the movement is performed (internal focus); and (2) the desired outcome(s) of the action (involving an external focus). Major research findings in this area may be summarized as follows:
 - ❑ **To promote greater learning, feedback must include directing the attention of the learner to some external focus of attention or to the expected effects of the movement.** When a movement is being performed, focusing exclusively on the way it is being executed (for example, thinking about the exact position of the elbow and the flick of the wrist at the end of the movement) may delay motor learning. When the details of a movement are taught, they must be placed in the context of the desired outcome. Then during the execution of the movement, it is important to draw the athlete's attention to some external element (e.g. the generation of glide and of speed down the track) or to the expected outcome of the movement (e.g. the maintenance of momentum) rather than solely to internal elements (e.g. feeling each phase of the movement during its execution). There is good evidence to suggest that feedback directed toward an external focus of attention has a positive impact on both short-term performance (during the session) and longer term performance, so it promotes both learning and retention of skills. Furthermore, feedback directed toward an external focus of attention appears to be effective for most sport skills, whatever the level of the athlete. Finally, the effectiveness of this type of feedback does not appear to have any negative effect on the movements themselves; in other words, the quality of execution does not seem to be negatively affected.
 - ❑ **If possible, external focus should be directed toward an element or an anticipated effect that is far away from the performer.** Current research suggests that the most effective approach requires the learner to focus on an expected outcome situated as far as possible from the athlete's body but that can still be directly linked to the movement itself.

| Examples of Situations that Refer to an Internal Focus of Attention | Examples of Situations That Refer to an External Focus of Attention |
|---|--|
| <p>Concentrating on ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Foot location and kick timing during the kick phase of Diagonal Stride <input type="checkbox"/> Not bobbing the head or rocking shoulders from side to side <input type="checkbox"/> Focusing on knee angle and leg extension <input type="checkbox"/> Paying attention to the arm's position and hand action during the diagonal stride | <p>Concentrating on ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The force exerted on the snow during the kick phase of Diagonal Stride <input type="checkbox"/> Maintaining a "quiet" body position, while still executing a positive weight shift <input type="checkbox"/> Focusing on the length of the glide and the desired direction of travel <input type="checkbox"/> Paying attention to the pendulum-like action of an arm movement in diagonal stride |

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