

CHAPTER 5: CREATING A PEDAGOGICAL CLIMATE





MOOC 1: Developing Effective Environments for Youth Sport

Study Guide

**An Intellectual Output of iCoachKids:
*Innovative Education & Training for a Specialist Children & Youth
Coaching Workforce***

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iCoachKids MOOC 1 Study Guide

Introduction

“A coach’s primary mission is to help sport participants develop not only as athletes, but also as people. To fulfil that aim, a coach needs functional and task-related competences that are underpinned by knowledge and reflection.”

From the European Sports Coach Framework (p. 39)

Congratulations Coach, by engaging in the iCoachKids MOOC 1, you have demonstrated that you have an open mind to learning more about coaching children and to further developing your own coaching skills.

Improving your coaching takes time and effort. Coach development should proceed in a progressive and sustainable way. Such an approach takes into consideration your stage of development as a coach, how you learn and which participants the coach is working with.

How Coaches Learn

In this MOOC, we recognise that learning is a lifelong process and that multiple experiences can facilitate the development of your coaching ability. During your progress through MOOC 1 we have included a variety of learning experiences to meet the needs of coaches and how they learn.

A coach is not a blank slate. Whether through personal experiences as participant or spectator, you arrive to coaching with your own conception of what it is and how it should happen. The following task will allow you to consider what you are bringing to your coaching.



STUDY GUIDE TASK: What Are You Bringing to You Coaching?

(There are no right or wrong replies. This exercise is about you taking stock of your previous experiences.)

Coaches Learn Best When...	Your Learning and How you Like to Learn
List Your Sports Experience	What Does This Bring to Your Coaching?
Your Education	What Does This Bring to Your Coaching?
Life Experience/Learning	What Does This Bring to Your Coaching?
Other Things You Think/Feel Reflect You	What Does This Bring to Your Coaching?

Your Learning

In the early stages of coach development, you may benefit strongly from learning opportunities provided through formal education – in MOOC 1 this is reflected in what you read and the personal tasks that you undertake in applying this knowledge into your coaching. This can be seen as laying a knowledge foundation. These activities challenge or confirm initial personal theories and support the creation of a child-centred framework that helps coaches organise and make sense of their coaching practice.

As you continue to develop as a coach, non-formal learning opportunities become more relevant. Your interaction with the children, other coaches, parents, mentors and open source material provides a chance to check and challenge your emerging philosophy and way of doing things as well as gaining new knowledge. In MOOC 1 this is reflected in activities and tasks you do with others and in your environment.

It is important to note that much of coaches' learning takes place on the job. As a coach, your self-awareness and your ability to reflect on your experiences are essential to this.



STUDY GUIDE TASK: How Coaches Learn Best and How You Like to Learn

The column on the left is what research says about how coaches learn best. The column on the right is for you to: reflect on these statements; identify whether they may apply to YOU; and if they mean anything for YOUR LEARNING. This will develop you SELF-AWARENESS of how you like to learn:

Coaches Learn Best When...	Your Learning and How you Like to Learn
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their prior experiences and abilities are recognised and they are encouraged to reflect and build on them	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They are motivated to take responsibility for learning and are given opportunities to drive it and direct it to their own needs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The application of what is being learned to the practical context in which they coach is clear and facilitated	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The topics and learning materials are clearly relevant	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The climate is positive and supportive to minimise anxiety, encourage experimentation and challenge them appropriately	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interaction and sharing with other coaches is promoted	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A variety of learning activities is offered	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They experience some success and gain feedback that builds their self-confidence	

If you have completed these two STUDY GUIDE TASKS you will have started to engage in the learning process promoted in the iCoachKids MOOCs. You will have identified what you are bringing to coaching children; and how you learn.

Well done and read on to learn more about how the MOOC 1 Study Guide is laid out to assist you in your learning, how the content can be applied into you coaching and to your growth as a CHILD-CENTRED COACH of children.

MOOC 1 Study Guide Structure

In MOOC 1, your development as a coach is promoted using a blended learning package composed of various activities to foster learning (for example, reality-based activities, problem-based learning, practical-coaching opportunities and reflection in/on action). This will promote knowledge gains and behavioural change and encourage you to seek additional self-directed learning opportunities.

The following HEADINGS and icons will signify different activities you will undertake in the MOOC 1 Study Guide:



VIEW – This is the video track linked to the Chapter and Section of the Study Guide you are considering



READ – This is the content knowledge that is outlined in the video track. It gives you the opportunity to examine the content at your own pace and/or to review in writing what is verbally outlined in the video



STUDY GUIDE TASK – This is an activity that will get you to consider how the content you have viewed/read may apply during your coaching with the children that you coach, and reflect on how you may change your coaching behaviours



PERSONAL COACHING TASK: This is an activity that will get you to apply the content into your coaching, with the children you coach, and to reflect on how it went for the children and for you. You may need to do these tasks a number of times and reflect on them to be able to fully apply the content into your coaching, in line with your coaching philosophy and to the benefit of the children



COACHING WITH OTHERS – This is an activity that will get you to engage other coaches you work with to discuss, apply, try, observe, get feedback from and reflect on how they see/feel your coaching is developing, and how the content can be applied by you and the other coaches. It may also encourage you to engage other relevant people, like parents, referees, club officials and even the children you coach!



COACHING IN YOUR ENVIRONMENT – This is an activity that will get you to consider how child-centred is the approach of your

club/school/community group. You will then consider/discuss what changes may be made to become a more child-centred coach.



QUIZ – At the end of each chapter there will be a quiz for you to complete. This will give you a chance to re-enforce your learning by getting you to re-visit some of the main ideas covered in the chapter and how they can apply to your coaching. Approach the questions in an ‘open-book’ format; which allows you to re-read the sections of the study guide before you write your answer.



CHAPTER CLOSING TASKS – Each chapter will end with some tasks that will get you to consider/apply the ideas and coaching tools covered in the chapter into your coaching. The tasks may include:



PERSONAL COACHING TASKS



COACHING WITH OTHERS



COACHING IN YOUR ENVIRONMENT



FURTHER VIEWING/READING – By its nature, only a certain amount of content is included in the MOOC. If you want to learn more about a topic, this will direct you to additional materials to view or read

YOUR DEVELOPMENT JOURNEY AS A CHILDREN’S COACH

Working with children can be a very worthwhile and positive experience for people. With the growing knowledge and the approach put forward in the iCoachKids MOOCs, this experience can be positive for each and every child, as well as for each and every coach.









It’s over to you now to take the responsibility to grow your coaching knowledge and ability. Enjoy the journey coach!

iCoachKids: MOOC 1 Study Guide - Learner Activity Tracker: Chapter No 5

Name: _____

Date: _____

As you complete each of the activities in each of the sections, please put a tick  in the circle. This will allow you to track what you have completed and where you can restart when you return to the Study Guide after a break.

Study Guide / Chapter Section	VIEW / READ 	PRE-CHAPTER / STUDY GUIDE TASK 	PERSONAL COACHING TASK 	COACHING WITH OTHERS 	COACHING IN YOUR ENVIRONMENT 	QUIZ 	CHAPTER CLOSING TASKS 	FURTHER VIEW / READ 
Introduction	<input type="checkbox"/>							
Section 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Section 2	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>					
Section 3	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>					
Section 4	<input type="checkbox"/>							
Section 5	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>					
Summary / Conclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>		

If you have completed each of the activities in each section and the Learner Activity Grid is complete. **WELL DONE!** You can move to the next chapter.

Chapter 5 Introduction



VIEW AND/OR READ

You can [view this section on the online MOOC](#) or you can read it in the Study Guide. If it re-enforces your learning, you can do both.

As you know, the whole course is about how to best develop effective environments for children in sport. In Chapters 1 to 3 we looked at the importance of coaches as human beings, their values, beliefs, behaviours and even their strategic planning.

In Chapter 4 we changed direction and went on to explore the benefits that sports may provide for children. This was not only about physical fitness and motor development, but also about social and psychological growth. I hope you agree by now that sport is a fantastic arena to support children's development.

In chapter 5 we are going to focus on the "how" of the sports environment. How coaches can build positive pedagogical environments and make children develop holistically as well-rounded human beings. This is important, because iCoachKids wants to help you connect theory and practice on the field, the pool, the track, or wherever you coach.



Figure 5.1 - Adapted from Abraham et al. (2015) and reproduced from European Sport Coaching Framework (Lara-Bercial et al., 2017)

It is important that you know that the term 'pedagogical' in this chapter is understood in the 'child development' sense of the word, rather than in the more anglophile usage related to 'teaching strategies'.

By the end of Chapter 5 you will be able to:

- Explain what is meant by a pedagogical environment and why it makes a big difference for children
- Understand the key elements of a positive pedagogical environment in the sport context
- Make the connection from theoretical principles to practice
- Create training sessions and competition based on sound pedagogical principles.

The core purpose of this chapter is to help you understand that as a children's coach, all of your decisions, plans, drills and interactions with people can have positive impact on the pedagogical environment. But, we have to be honest with you. Your decisions can also hinder it and that's of course not what you want!

You coach children, you have their best interest at heart, and you are one of the key people that make the difference in their life.

Let's move on and get this chapter started, have fun!

Chapter 5 - Section 1

Your View of the Pedagogical Climate



VIEW AND/OR READ

You can [view this section on the online MOOC](#) or you can read it in the Study Guide. If it re-enforces your learning, you can do both.

Now it is time to explore what the pedagogical climate means for you. We are going to start from scratch. However, you may already have some experience in coaching Children, or maybe you were coached yourself as a child. So, you are not a total novice. Please use your personal experiences to complete this task.

Ok, so what are we going to do?



ACTIVITY 2.1 - STUDY GUIDE TASK

First, you are going to answer a couple of questions. Write your answers down, because you may use them again later. You may want to watch the video in full and then come back to it and stop it after each question. Or you may want to start and stop as we go through it. Here come the questions!

Question 1: Think of the best coach you can remember? Write down what made this coach so special. We are looking for the characteristics of a good coach.

If you don't have practical experience of coaching or being coached, you can just use your imagination to think of what makes for you a good children's coach or maybe think of a good teacher. Please take a few minutes to think this through.

Question 2: Please connect your experiences of previous coaches to feelings, and answer this question: How did your coach make you feel like? If you have never been coached, again, maybe think about a teacher or your boss or manager at work. You may answer things like:

"I had a coach I liked very much, because he did not yell at me. This made me feel safe and comfortable and I was not afraid to ask questions"

Or you may say:

"I had a coach who laughed all the time and made funny jokes, and this made me feel happy and cheerful. I always wanted to go to training"

--

These characteristics of your previous coaches, teachers or managers, have brought back certain feelings, which identify the connection this coach made with you. Coaching children is also about emotions!

Ok let's put some order in your list of coach's characteristics. Re-write the list of characteristics, but this time put them in order of importance and explain why you order them in that particular way, what made you put some things above others.

Coach Characteristics

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

7.	
8.	

Now, we are very curious about your list and how you ranked the various items. Did you say anything about having fun, the coach's disposition and ability to listen to you, or was it more about how well the coach was able to help you progress? Maybe he knew exactly what you needed for the next step in your skills?

Do you know why your coaches behaved as they did? Was it because of their natural personality or character or did they create a good atmosphere on purpose?

Most coaches admit they are guided by intuition, and they may be able to have a great impact on the sports environment doing it that way. But what if the situation turns out to be very complex? What if your intuition is wrong or non-existent? Maybe you don't think you are born with that natural instinct to 'just get it right'!

Don't worry. You can still create positive learning climates because you understand the why and how! This chapter will help you achieve just that.

Chapter 5, Section 2: What Is The Pedagogical Climate?



VIEW AND/OR READ

You can [view this section on the online MOOC](#) or you can read it in the Study Guide. If it re-enforces your learning, you can do both.

In this section, we are going to explore the characteristics of a pedagogical climate. The majority of this chapter is based on the work of iCoachKids member, Professor Dr Nicolette Schipper-Van Veldhoven. Nicolette works at Windesheim University of Applied Sciences and the Netherlands Olympic Committee* Netherlands Sport Confederation (NOC*NSF), and her research is going to help us understand what is meant by the pedagogical climate. Nicolette is one of the world's foremost experts in this area. We will go on a journey through the key theoretical principles of a pedagogical climate, and more importantly, the practical ways in which we can actually make it happen.

The below are excerpts from a very insightful interview with Nicolette that you can watch in full in our YouTube channel

WHAT IS A PEDAGOGICAL CLIMATE?

It's about creating a sports environment that's good for children. Pedagogical means that you want to contribute to the development of children. It's not just being a technical trainer in sport; it is being a good coach for children.

The Four Pillars of The Pedagogical Climate

1. LOOKING AT CHILDREN HOLISTICALLY, NOT JUST AS ATHLETES, IT'S DEVELOPING PEOPLE.

The first pillar is a child development orientation, you have to be child centred and to want to develop children holistically and that means not only physically or motor skills that you use in sport, but also psychologically, socially or cognitively, you want to be part of the development of the child holistically. THE FIRST PILLAR IS THAT WE HAVE TO RECOGNISE THAT WE ARE IN THIS TO DEVELOP THE CHILD AS A WHOLE. WE ARE NOT ONLY ABOUT PHYSICAL OR MOTOR SKILLS THAT'S WHAT COACHES HAVE TO UNDERSTAND FIRST AND FOREMOST. Coaches are educators.

2. CREATING A CARING CLIMATE

You are there for all children and you care for the athlete, you want to do the best for them, so it's a caring climate.

3. YOU ALSO WANT TO CREATE A MOTIVATING CLIMATE so that it is a positive learning climate, you want to teach them something, the sports skills of course but also the social skills and the psychological skills.

4. SAFEGUARDING: The fourth part is also a very important pillar, it is safe guarding. You want to create a safe climate. You can be a coach and you can create a safe environment. For instance, you may touch children in your sessions, but that physical contact can be good, bad or even ugly and the ugly part and the bad part we want out of the sport and especially with children because we have to protect our children in the sports environment.

A Pedagogical Sports Climate

Below is an extract from a paper, "**A Pedagogical Sports Climate**", written by Nicolette and Marieke Fix, another iCoachKids member and researcher. It expands on the ideas Nicolette has introduced in the video. The complete paper is also available to download from our MOOC pages.

Practicing a sport is quite good for you! Adults who do sport experience fewer physical health symptoms, are less overweight and feel happier than those who do not practice sports. This applies without any doubt to the youth as well. Apart from the physical advantages, youth sport is praised for the positive effects on the social-emotional development of children. In this respect, think about handling emotions, a positive self-image and meeting new friends. However, these positive effects are not just there all of a sudden: we have to do something about it. It requires a sports context which fits with the development of the child; it requires a pedagogical sports climate.

The term pedagogy is a derivative of 'pedagogia', which means child education. It is about the practice of education during and by sports.

In order to assess a pedagogical sports climate, we distinguish four relevant pedagogical pillars:

- **Development-oriented climate:** *practicing sports contributes to the personal and social development of youngsters and focuses on autonomy and self-regulation. 'The child first, sports in the second place'. Exercise material is offered in an appropriate structure.*
- **Caring climate:** *sports are practiced in a caring environment, in which communication and interaction are central factors (moral atmosphere). The pedagogical relation between the coach and the athlete is essential in this respect. The coach has the best intentions with his pupil, is aware of his own training style and reaches clear agreements.*
- **Motivational climate:** *practicing sports is stimulated from the fun-factor in sports as the most important supporting factor to (continue to) practice a sport. The motivation to practice a sport is especially stimulated when successful experiences can be attributed to one's own capacity, from the goals which are close to the heart of the individual (autonomous motivation).*
- **Safe social environment:** *practicing a sport in a safe environment and preventing unacceptable behavior such as (sexual intimidation), bullying and physical violence.*

In order to guarantee that children practice sports and that they will do so for a longer period of time, the sport has an important task to fulfill: make sure that sports for children and youngsters are primarily offered from a pedagogical

perspective, that practicing sports is great fun! Then the following saying applies in the long run: what is learnt in the cradle stays to the tomb!

In this respect, joy means more than just having fun, which could suggest that practicing sports only serves the purpose of having a good time. It makes sense that this definition of fun raises questions in youth sports and, especially, in competitive sports. That is to say, the young athlete should also learn how to persevere and be persistent in order to reach the final goal. And that is really not always fun at all. However, having fun and working hard are a perfect combination and many athletes stress the importance of joy in order to reach their ambitious goals. Sven Kramer (a Dutch ice-skater) was quite clear after the Winter Olympic Games in 2018: 'If I did not enjoy it anymore, I would have quit a long time ago; having fun keeps me going'.

Having fun in sports has many different dimensions. Some athletes just enjoy practicing sports and do not necessarily need to improve themselves. They feel good when they have a physical workout. Other athletes want to bring out the best in themselves and work hard to improve their technique or tactics. In this case, highs and lows alternate and the athlete enjoys the struggle and has to carry on in order to improve. There are athletes as well who truly enjoy playing matches: they experience the buzz in the struggle as a source of fun, especially perhaps because of the risk that they may lose the match.

Thus, in view of the above, it is right to say that practicing a sport brings joy to all athletes: young and old, talented or not. Since fun does not only mean nice and cozy, but also because fun gives you room to develop, to learn, to practice and to set your own goals, regardless of ambition or talent. With this form of joy, all components are connected in youth sports: the children, the coach, the exercises, the rules, the instruction and feedback, but also falling and getting back up again and the development. Thus, in order to stay motivated to practice sports, fun is crucial and whether athletes have fun in exercising depends on the coach to a large extent! This is why we discuss below how a coach can enhance the joy of his athletes.

Ok, so with all these ideas in mind, please complete the relevant activities in the study guide and I will see you in the next video. Thanks for watching!



ACTIVITY 2.0 - PERSONAL COACHING TASK

VIEW AND/OR READ

Read the linked paper prepared by Prof Nicolette Schipper Van Veldhoven and Marieke Fix and answer the following reflective questions.

1. What are the 4 pillars of the Pedagogical Climate?

2. How do you currently foster the 4 pillars of the pedagogical climate?

3. Which of the 4 pillars do you find most difficult to promote and why? What could you do differently?

Chapter 5 - Section 3

How to Create Fun



VIEW AND/OR READ

You can [view this section on the online MOOC](#) or you can read it in the Study Guide. If it re-enforces your learning, you can do both.

For this practical exercise, let's assume that you are actually already coaching children. If you are not, think back to your time as child in your sport or in PE lessons. Again, stop the video as we go along, or watch it and then come back.



ACTIVITY 2.1 - PERSONAL COACHING TASK

1. First, write down 3 of the most successful activities, drills or games you have run in the past. The only criterium is that children must love them.

2. Second, please analyse these 3 activities on the why and how. WHY do these activities contribute to pleasure and fun and HOW does this work? Maybe it is about the game, maybe it is about challenging each other, maybe it is something social that the kids like in the activity. Fun can have a lot of faces.

3. Third and final, think about your own role. Did you contribute to fun? How did or didn't you stimulate it? What are your beliefs towards 'having fun' in training sessions or competition?

Hopefully, after this exercise, you may have realised that fun has a very important role to play in your practice. There are many ways to have fun. In chapter 1 we talked about fun makers and fun killers. Please review that section for more specifics about how to keep your sessions fun and lively.

Now, time to come clean. Honestly, we have to confess that a lot of the times when we are planning our sessions, we always start thinking about technical and tactical skills first. The good news is that this doesn't necessarily have to go against having fun! Learning new skills can be a source of fun for a lot of children.

Okay, here is the trick, if you can prepare sessions where every child can learn and explore at their own pace, this may evoke very pleasant feelings in all children. And that is a win-win situation.

Ok, hope that was fun! Before moving on to the next section, please complete the relevant activities in the study guide.

Chapter 5, Section 4

The Role of Goal-Setting and Feedback In the Pedagogical Climate



VIEW AND/OR READ

You can [view this section on the online MOOC](#) or you can read it in the Study Guide. If it re-enforces your learning, you can do both.

In the previous video we gave you a lot of information about the important role that fun plays in sport. Actually, the sense of elation we get from playing tends to be the main reason why most of us do sport.

As you now know, fun can't be taken for granted. It does not always show up in sport. The good news is that as a coach, you can really stimulate and create it. It depends on the choices you make.

Can you see the importance of all the little decisions that you have up to now made on gut feeling and intuition? These little things make or break the pedagogical environment. Realising that is a big step, so well done!

Your pedagogical choices are also expressed in the types of goals you choose for your participants and the kind of feedback you provide for them. This section will help you understand the role goal-setting and feedback play in developing a sound pedagogical climate. These two elements can have gigantic impact on what children make out of sport and are very powerful learning tools.

Again, we are very lucky that Professor Nicolette Schipper Van Veldhoven is going to give us a helping hand. She explains this better than anyone I know! It's back to Nicolette!

Goal Setting

Thank you Nicolette for joining me again,

The next thing I wanted to talk to you about, reading your work, you always emphasise the impact we can have on the children we coach through appropriate feedback and appropriate goal setting, could you give us a whistle stop tour of Goal Setting and Feedback.

Goal setting:

Well if you look at sport the main goal is winning as it's primarily set in a competitive structure, set on the game or competition, and it's a short-term goal.

What we want to achieve, what we want is a long-term goal, so you can win and we have competition, and it's good.

But when working with children the main goal is not just winning but developing the children, so your main goals are the development of the children, physically, motor skills development so the children can be better at sports technique, but also psychologically and socially and here is the Holistic part again within the goal settings it's the whole child and the goals reach the whole child.

It's a long-term process and development is a long term process, it's not about winning the next game, so you must sit on the bench, and you play because I want to win, this is how we lose half of the children. The goals should be for all children not just the good and talented ones.

Feedback

A few ideas:

What kind of Feedback should we be providing as a coach working with younger children?

That's up to the pedagogical climate - You have to be caring, you have to be motivated, you have to be safe. As a Coach the feedback is included within this framework and it's set on the process, so you say "wow that was a good jump, maybe you should lift your arm" instead of "that jump was not so good - do it again"

You give attention to the way things should be done; you give feedback that helps the process of the child, not the result. You don't say it's a good or bad jump, you can use that but then you give attention to do something better or say "it wasn't a good jump next time try this and this" Or say "well we did a good thing but the goal this time was working together" so you have to pay attention to work together.

So in the feedback you not only pay attention to the technical part but you also pay attention to the social part of working together or in the psychological part or that you say to a child "I see you don't feel too good today; what is it?"

The feedback is helping the child to grow. This feedback is process based, is positive and is holistic.

Thanks Nicolette!

Ok, so what do you make of that? Hopefully, you now have a much better sense of how to set appropriate goals and provide great feedback for children.

Before we go onto the next section, please have a look at the full paper by Nicolette and Marieke below. Then complete the reflective activity where you will be able to apply this to your coaching practice.

Thanks again for joining us!

Insert 2 (A Pedagogical Sports Climate, Nicolette Schipper-Van Veldhoven & Marieke Fix, 2018)

Motivational Sports Climate

In order to understand how a motivational sports climate is established, we use the self-determination theory (SDT). This theory explains why individuals act in a certain way or what motivates them to do something. To this end, a distinction is made between motivation originated by an external stimulus and motivation which completely originates from the individual himself.

We give the example of a child who comes to a swimming practice. This child can be sent by his parents with the argument that practicing a sport is good for your health; the motivation to come to the practice has been imposed by the parents and has, therefore, been extrinsically regulated (arisen from outside the child). If the same child comes to a swimming practice because he likes swimming quite a lot or he wants to learn different strokes, then the motivation arises from joy or interest, and this is called intrinsic motivation.

The distinction is not made that easily in a third situation. Imagine that the child comes to a swimming practice because he feels embarrassed about his ability to swim and he wants to learn how to improve his swimming capacities. This seems an intrinsic motivation (which arises from the child itself), but it should be viewed as extrinsically regulated just as motivation regulated by fear, pride or a feeling of guilt. This type of regulations are of a compelling and binding nature indeed, for the child feels guilty or afraid if he does not come to the swimming practice.

When you do something, for instance a certain sport because you think it is interesting, important or just fun, then it is not that difficult to be motivated: it happens just like that (self-regulating). However, if you practice sports for extrinsic reasons, then you practice sports just to please others, to prevent punishment or to satisfy your inner voice.

It is difficult to determine why children come and practice sports and it raises the question whether 'good' and 'bad' motivation exists. In any case, it is clear that both types of motivation (extrinsic and intrinsic) can motivate children to practice sports and that alone is good news.

However, if sport participation by children is only based on extrinsic motivation, then the motivation disappears as soon as the stimulus disappears as well. If the motivation to practice sports is not internalized and it becomes more an intrinsic desire, then the sports behavior will not last very long. However, when children practice sports guided by good coaches, then the opposite often occurs: children experience joy and learn skills as a result of which they develop an intrinsic desire and motivation to practice sports!

This intrinsic motivation of the individual himself turns out to be a solid predictor for long-lasting sports participation, or in other words, children and youngsters who practice sports with joy, pursue in doing this at an older age. In addition, intrinsically motivated athletes have better performances, which is something the sports world deems very important. Therefore, stimulating intrinsic motivation is something which should be the focus of every youth coach!

To be motivated is a characteristic each child has; nearly each child which is exercising echoes enthusiasm when he is active in the field or the sports hall. However, this intrinsic motivation can be particularly influenced by, for instance, the continuous awards or punishments. Children who receive extra awards when they win (for instance, with candy, compliments or recognition), the award becomes the reason to do your best in the long run. In that situation, children learn that you can only be happy when you have won or when you have scored. Consequently, this external motivation (the award) can replace the original intrinsic motivation (having fun in practicing sports).

In addition, children can develop feelings of fear, embarrassment or guilt at the moment when the objective is not reached, for instance in case of a match that has been lost. This is especially the case when this goes hand in hand with 'punishment', such as a punishment training, but also an angry coach or unhappy parents. It is superfluous to say, but that is absolutely undesirable from a pedagogical development perspective.

Motivation is a very flexible term, so children can vary in their motivation. One day, they enjoy the training more than another day (the amount of motivation), but as we mentioned above, the motivation also differs in form (intrinsic and extrinsic motivation). This imposes a large responsibility on coaches: they are entrusted with the unwritten task to enhance the intrinsic motivation of children. However, this turns out to be rather difficult in practice. The self-determination theory (SDT) provides a number of starting points which are described below.

Intrinsic motivation

According to the self-determination theory, intrinsic motivation can be enhanced when the coach considers the psychological needs of his athletes. These are also called the three basic needs: the need for autonomy, competence and the need for a relationship.

Autonomy

Autonomy means that the child feels that he can reach his own decisions and that his ideas are taken seriously and appreciated. To this end, it concerns ideas, feeling and opinions from the children. It also means that children experience a certain freedom of choice and self-regulation. In this respect, you do not have to think about complex situations; it can be very simple to enhance autonomy, for

instance by allowing children to choose the sequence of the exercises or to select with whom they cooperate. Children can also find a solution for a certain question themselves. You can involve the older youngsters in setting goals or a tactics.

Competence

Competence in sports is often the 'drive' from the athlete. Children can put a lot of energy in exercising and trying to master a certain skill and to improve themselves. It is most important in this respect that they experience success, the feeling that they have succeeded. That is meant with the need for competence, namely the feeling that you can reach your goal.

It is quite important that the goals a child strives for are also important to himself. When children have to develop something that does not interest them, then they will lose their 'drive'. Thus, the coach has to search for interesting yet attainable targets for his young athletes in order to make sure that they will continue to find the motivation to practice, even when they do not immediately succeed!

Relationships (Belonging)

Just like adults, children also feel the need for a relationship or involvement at the sports club. In this respect, it concerns a warm interaction and connection with other people. For children, a bond with his coach and his co-athletes is most obvious, since they simply spend the most amount of time with each other. A coach who listens, is present, openly and honestly communicates, lays the foundation for this contact. It is also a rule of thumb that friendly coaches, who are joking once in a while as well, build good relationships more easily with their athletes.

These three needs are very closely related. Prior to the moment when a child dares to give his opinion (autonomy), he will have to experience a safe relationship with the trainer and the other children (relationship). In addition, the following rule applies that the feeling of competence (experiencing success) is enhanced if you can attribute this success to your own input (autonomy). Therefore, the coach should not only support the needs of the children, but he should also be aware of the connectivity between these needs. A match that was won could increase the feeling of competence, but then it must be clear what has been the input of each child.

The three basic needs for autonomy, competence and relationship are universal, in other words: each human being has these needs. The implementation of the individual needs is determined by age, experience, character and the background of the child. A 14-year-old child has other needs for a relationship than a 4-year-old child. And the need for competence changes when children are more experienced in a certain sport. Therefore, supporting the needs comes down to an individual approach, because each child is different. This is quite

challenging for a coach, especially when he has many different children in his exercise group. A set of advices has been drawn up which are described below.

Goal-Setting

In order to fulfil the needs of each child, the trainer has to set individual goals based on experience, interests and talents of children. Goals which are well-adjusted and feasible ensure that children can develop their feeling for competence, for achieving a goal gives the child an experience of success. That is not only important for developing sport competences, but also for developing a positive self-image and self-confidence (social-emotional development). The choice for a certain goal by the coach influences the motivation of children and the various types of goals even determine the types of motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic). There are two different types of goals, i.e. the result-orientation goals and the skills-orientation goals.

Result-oriented goals

Result-oriented goals or ego-orientation goals focus on the performance, and mostly, this is winning or losing. As regards these goals, the match is an important element and satisfaction is related to either winning the match or not. Most of the times, the final result is a satisfied winner and a dissatisfied loser. This type of goals can yield a high motivation with children, for instance look at the passionate play of children when something is at stake. However, this primarily applies to children from the age of six and older; the feeling for winning or losing is less developed among young children.

These result-oriented goals are not that suitable for the development of children. The focus on the final result can lead to a feeling of pressure, less self-confidence and the fear to fail, because the result provides information about the inability of the child. Setting result-orientation goals mostly happens vis-à-vis others, where the child is perceived stronger, faster or more skilled than the opponent. Comparing children vis-à-vis others often happens within one team or exercise group.

Young athletes who are constantly compared with others and who are viewed as the inferior athlete, do not experience a feeling of success or competence. They can develop the tendency to play it safe and only participate when they know that they can succeed. This results in a reduced motivation to try new things, to stretch the boundaries and to make mistakes, and, therefore, it has a limiting effect on the development of children. Making choices which do not automatically yield success has become frightening for these children. This is why generally in sports, and especially within youth sports, preference is given to setting task-orientation or skills-goals.

Task-orientation or skills-oriented goals

Goals which focus on learning skills or tasks with children are called task-orientation or skills-oriented goals. In this respect, the success depends on the right performance of tasks or skills of the individual athlete and the development which has been made to this end.

In this respect, the assumption is made that increasing skills with (young) athletes ultimately results in better performances. By setting task-oriented goals, the athlete has the idea that he or she can influence the match, which results in more self-confidence and a feeling of autonomy and competence. Therefore, a good coach does not make the development of athletes and his own satisfaction dependent on the performances, but on the individual development of tasks and skills compared to a previous period. For instance, they can explain to children that they have improved their technical skills over the last month or that they have improved their skills to cooperate. Individual goals stimulate the motivation because they better fit with the individual needs of children, and give a better chance of success. In addition, children believe that they can contribute themselves which increases their feeling for autonomy.

One always reasons from the perspective of the individual child in a pedagogical climate; each child counts in this respect. Winning a match is of minor significance as regards the development of children. This approach is not common in the sports world and quite regularly, coaches have to defend themselves to others, for instance parents or the board of a sports club. This is even more so when a match has been lost for several times in a row. Therefore, it is very important that coaches are able to justify their choices based on his vision and starting points.

Chapter 5, Section 5

The Pedagogical Climate in Practice



VIEW AND/OR READ

You can [view this section on the online MOOC](#) or you can read it in the Study Guide. If it re-enforces your learning, you can do both.

After this shower of information, the time has come to get our hands dirty and make it all more practical. If you only learn on paper, you are not going to change children's lives, are you?

There are a lot of useful tools and strategies to create a pedagogical climate on the ground. Here, we are going to focus on **four main strategies**. We have to warn you! These strategies may require you to change or adapt some of your old habits. Are you ready for that coach? Here they come.

Strategy 1 - Organization and Structure of Sessions

What do a sports field, sports hall, athletics track, ice rink or swimming pool all have in common? They all inspire us to play, perform, run, feel free and let go of our worries. They can make us happy, because that's actually one of the original purposes of sport! On the other hand, sport participants also need some structure and clarity of boundaries. This is actually quite important for young participants or it can quickly descend into total chaos.

An appropriate practice structure creates space for all to be free, happy and comfortable during a session. The brakes in a car are what allow the car to go at high speed... Without brakes the car would crash. Good structure in the sport environment is like the breaks in the car. Without clear rules and a common understanding, there will be chaos and confusion: Kids need to know what's expected of them? What is permitted and what's not? How the activity is supposed to run and what their role is within it? Or how long it is meant to last for?

Structure gives you grip: you and the children you coach can hang on to it when you need to. Here are some practical tools to set up a positive structure in practice?

1. Have clear expectations of participant behaviour: For instance, how do we interact with each other? or How do we treat the equipment?

2. Agree on key practical issues: what time training starts and finishes, who can take part, and what equipment or attire is required are some examples.

3. Communicate clear rules of engagement for parents: what exactly can you expect from each other? What is their role as a sport parent? They are there to support their child in a positive manner. You, the coach, provide instruction and guide their learning.

4. If any children or parents don't respect the rules, address it as soon as you can. Be consistent and treat everyone fairly... and

5. Lead by example: Follow your own rules, communicate in an appropriate way, act professionally in your setting. Don't break the rules!

Strategy 2 – Provide Support and Encouragement

“Make sure you win!”; “What a bad pass!”; “Run faster!” Too many times we hear things like this shouted at kids at sporting venues by coaches and parents. It seems we have the tendency to highlight the things that go wrong. This is a problem: research shows that placing the focus on the negatives does not lead to improved outcomes: “what gets attention will grow”, even the negative things! On the other hand, positive support and reinforcement will bring out the best in children. If you compliment kids regularly in your role as a coach, you will enhance fun and raise their self-esteem. And fun and self-esteem will enhance motivation for learning entering a virtuous cycle!

In practical terms, it means that you, as a coach, should positively support your athletes and make honest and concrete compliments. Be optimistic, motivate and challenge them. Treat everyone with respect. Children will do the same in return. Emphasise development and growth over winning and competition. Help participants be proud of the skills they learn and make sure they know mistakes are a fundamental part of the learning journey.

Would you like some practical tools in this area? Ok, here go some.

- 1. Give specific compliments and target effort instead of the results:** For instance, “Fantastic how you tried to get that ball”.
- 2. Focus on the process over the results, and execution over outcome:** For example, “It was great how you served that ball”.
- 3. Value and evidence personal development.** For instance, “Excellent that you asked for the ball so often during this match. You have improved a lot in this area”.
- 4. Provide task and action-focused feedback which makes clear what they need to do to improve:** For instance, “Try to gain more speed before the jump”.
- 5. And finally, try to compliment or say something positive before providing feedback or advice.** Try this: “I loved the effort on that last play; next time try to anticipate the move a bit earlier”

Strategy 3 - Personal coaching and Individual attention

Everyone wants and needs to be seen. Children’s development is stimulated when adults pay attention and notice them. They also grow when they feel part of a group. This is true also for the quieter child or the day-dreamer. Being unnoticed or neglected can be a very negative experience.

That’s why it is important to pay attention to each and every child in your group, before, during and after sessions and matches. Sometimes, a wink or nod is all it takes! Go out of your way to pay attention to the more quiet or shy children and not only the most skilled or confident ones.

This strategy is also important because every child is different. Personality, motivation, and learning preferences may differ. Some children are real go getters and others need constant support and encouragement.

Adapting your sessions to the development stage of every individual child is difficult. However, as we saw in the SPEC model and the Coaching Zones in chapter 4, if you don’t, it is a recipe for disaster! Recognising the differences and trying to adapt and differentiate your sessions to the different individuals pays off big time!

How do we do this in practice?

- 1. Proactively pay positive attention to each and every child in your session.** Make sure everyone feels noticed and appreciated. Pay them compliments, make eye contact, call names and generally show an interest.
- 2. Adapt your coaching, instruction, drills and feedback to the characteristics and developmental stage of every individual child.**
- 3. Appreciate the differences in your group or between your athletes.** Let children experience learn from each other and help each other.
- 4. Not only appreciate the differences between children but even positively highlight what every individual child contributes to the group!** One is enthusiastic, another has persistence and a third has technical skills. Show them how this makes the team or group stronger!

Strategy 4 - Transfer responsibility to the children: make them responsible for their development

As a coach, it is very tempting to want to tell your athletes exactly what to do all the time. It gives you a sense of control and direction. However, challenging children to think about drills and sessions will greatly contribute to their development.

When you engage athletes in the decision-making process, you enhance self-responsibility for their own development. The child learns to self-reflect: what is my best skill? what do I have to learn in future and how am I going to achieve that? It is children's nature to try things and practice to get better.

So, how can you transfer responsibility in practice?

- 1. Engage children as much as possible in the organisation of the sessions.** Ask them to help with the equipment or suggest drills.
- 2. Create training and competition goals together**
- 3. Challenge athletes to formulate their own development goals.** Make sure the goals are SMART goals. Remember the strategy section in Chapter 3!
- 4. Ask open and higher-level questions that lead to deeper thinking and reflection.** For instance, "tell me how you saw that last shot?" rather than "what will you do next time?"
- 5. Provide choice in your session:** for example, regarding the organisation or goals and...
- 6. Allow athletes to reflect before you offer your feedback.**

Ok, so that's it. This chapter has provided a lot of ideas and practical tips about creating a pedagogical climate. Before you go onto the summary video, please have a look at the study guide and complete any relevant activities.



ACTIVITY 5.1 - PERSONAL COACHING TASK

Develop 3 linked session plans and explain how a positive pedagogical climate will be created.

- Think about the following key elements:
 - Are all athletes in the centre?
 - How are relationships supported in the session?
 - What is fun about the session?
 - How do you monitor feelings and emotions of athletes?
 - What successes are expected for all athletes?
 - What goals are set for the training?
 - How do 4 insights of coaching appear in the session?
 - Organisation and structure of the session
 - Transferring responsibility to the athlete
 - Personal coaching and individual attention
 - Stimulating and encouraging

Insert 3 (A Pedagogical Sports Climate, Nicolette Schipper-Van & Marieke Fix, 2018)

Pedagogical Practice in the Field

In their practice, trainers often have a clear idea as to how their training should look like: they want children to have fun, and they want to give attention to each child while they coach in a positive way. In addition, most coaches find respect and sportsmanship important elements in their trainings or matches.

A small group among the coaches actually succeeds in fulfilling these actions. Most of the time, the practices are disorganized without a clear goal during which the coaches sometimes excel in giving negative feedback and primarily focus on everything which should have been done in a better way. It turns out from the foregoing that coaches are aware of important matters for a pedagogical sports climate, but despite their good intentions, they do not succeed in the difficult, complex practice of the sports field or in the sports hall. Below, four practical advices are provided which can enhance a pedagogical sports climate.

Offering structure and clarity (caring and safe sports climate)

The sports field or sports hall usually is a cheerful chaos with children who are moving around. However, in order to make sure that everyone feels safe and comfortable, a number of things have to be fully clear. In this respect, you could say that structure truly provides the opportunity, namely to be yourself. The sports environment needs rules and agreements to create the opportunity to try and learn skills and tasks. Without rules and agreements, unclarity arises about expectations and the course of the exercise. Especially in those situations, structure gives something to hold on to. The following three golden rules apply to this end:

- 1) Express yourself: as a coach, you speak out loud what you expect, for instance, and which rules apply;
- 2) Reach agreements: you reach agreements what this means for each child, and
- 3) Address: you ensure that you address someone who does not follow the rules.

What does this mean in practice?

- The coach makes clear arrangements with his athlete about behavior, manners and boundaries in behavior. What is allowed and what not, think about making fun of someone, giving feedback, showing respect and so on.

- The coach makes clear arrangements with his athletes about practical issues: what time, who, what and when. In this respect, make sure that one verifies whether everyone has understood it!
- If needed, the coach also makes clear arrangements with parents: which role do the parents play and what is expected from them?
- The coach addresses his athletes when they do fail to meet their commitments or when they cross the line. This shall be done timely and consistently and make sure that everyone feels treated equally.
- The coach has to be an example himself. This means that commitments shall be honored and the coach has to communicate when he is unable to do so. In addition, the coach complies with the rules as these apply in the sports hall, also after his official 'time in the office'.

Stimulation (Motivational Sports Climate)

Stimulation, among other things, means giving compliments and positive encouragements for this brings out the best in children. When the coach gives positive feedback or compliments, this results in more fun and self-confidence with young athletes and especially these two components are extremely important in learning and the development of children. So, this means in practice that the coach is encouraging and that he gives fair compliments. A coach who is stimulating his athletes is optimistic, motivates and enthuses the children. In addition, he challenges children to bring out the best in themselves. The coach stimulates positive, respectful behavior among the children and also shows this himself in the first place.

In addition, the coach's approach is based on the principle 'development is the real benefit', where more focus is given to the development of children than to performing and winning. Making mistakes is part of it and the coach shows that he is proud of all which the children have learned.

What does this mean in practice?

- The coach gives concrete compliments based on the commitment of the child instead of the result (for instance: "Wonderful how hard you tried your best to keep the ball in the field").
- The coach mainly talks about tasks instead of results, also to parents or other individuals. Encouragements or compliments focus on the execution of a specific task ("Great how you took the free kick").
- The coach appreciates the individual progress among the children ("Good job that you were often moving freely to receive the ball").
- The coach always gives his advice in the form of an assignment, an option, task or a tip: how can something be carried out in a better way? ("Try to take off just a little stronger before you jump").
- However, advice for improvement always follows a compliment: the compliment is given before an advice.

Giving each child attention (Caring Climate)

All children want to be recognized; this applies both to older children, but also to very young children. A friendly nod or a word can sometimes be enough to let the child feel that he has been seen. When you don't feel seen or when you even feel ignored, this can be painful. This applies to all children: the talented children, the ever-active children, but also the quiet dreamers in the back row. Therefore, it is very important that a coach is aware of the fact that he gives all children attention during a training or a match, either before, during or after the practice.

A very important insight should be borne in mind in giving attention, namely that each child is different. The first child loves playing matches, whilst the other child needs a lot of support or encouragement, and the third one learns quickly and really wants a more difficult exercise. It seems an almost impossible task to address all these children in their individual needs, apart from character or mood. However, it is important that the coach is aware of the necessity to address each child individually and to give them attention during each training or match again.

What does this mean in practice?

- The coach makes sure that every child receives positive attention and that he feels appreciated.
- The coach tries to align his coaching, practices and his feedback with the individual and his or her world of experience and development.
- The coach is positive about the fact that everyone is different; he values the differences and teaches the children in which way they can learn from each other. Diversity makes a team strong.

Making the athlete responsible (development-oriented sports climate)

When children are involved themselves in decision-making about exercises, technical skills or their own development, you give them the opportunity to bear responsibility for their own growth. Thus, children learn to think about their competences, their interests and the question: "What have I already learned? And what not yet?" The child learns to think about his own next step and the way this step can be realized. However, in practice, this is truly difficult for coaches, for they have to step back. This means less advice, guidance, delaying feedback and asking questions.

In addition, these questions have to result in the fact that the children start to think for themselves and, therefore, will mainly have 'open' ends; this way, children can find or propose the solution themselves.

What does this mean in practice?

- Give children a voice in the course of the exercises.
- Teach children to set their goals which aim at their development rather than a result.
- Ask open questions, starting with how, what, why, which one, and involve children in the goal-setting of a practice.
- Delay your feedback, give children time to reflect themselves.
- Ask the children for feedback on your role during the training or match and ask in which way you can adjust to their goals.

The stubborn reality

As described above, four practical pedagogical basic points are nicely explained and they seem logical and structured. However, the working environment of the coach is more complex and uncompromising with unpredictable elements and the dynamics of a group. Sometimes, the coach does not have much time to use his basic points, and sometimes things seem to contradict each other, such as:

- You cannot provide too much structure, because the children have to feel free as well.
- Having fun is paramount, but sometimes a learning process requires activities which are just not fun to do at all, let alone when boundaries are set. In those cases, situations can arise which are not pleasant.
- To which extent will the children have to determine their own learning route and what does the coach determine in this respect, and what not?
- How do you give individual attention during a practice to a group of fifteen young children?
- Given compliments and a positive approach are key, but how do you explain to children when they have done something wrong?

It is impossible to be just as strong in each of the four areas (providing a structure, motivating, giving attention, and transferring leadership). The coach who is excellent in offering a structure to his group of children may find it difficult to let go and to give them freedom. Some coaches are excellent in connecting with young children, whilst others are better with the older youngsters. One coach masters the technique of giving compliments, whilst another is more inclined to focus on what went wrong. The best coach is not the one who thinks he knows all the answers and who has gathered experience and a lot of knowledge over the years, but the one who poses the best questions and who continues to give feedback to himself and who continuously wants to develop.

Chapter 5

Creating a Positive Pedagogical Climate - Summary and Conclusions



VIEW AND/OR READ

You [can view this section on the online MOOC](#) or you can read it in the Study Guide. If it re-enforces your learning, you can do both.

In this chapter, you learned about the pedagogical climate, you now know that creating a positive environment requires coaches to be intentional and to plan what they are going to do and how.

You, as a coach, have to deliberately invest in building positive relationships with the children you coach. Make them feel respected, recognized and appreciated. This is even more important for those children that are quieter or shier. A good environment engages each and every child in your session.

You also learned in this section that fun is a fundamental driver for every child. However, fun can mean something different for every kid. And that's where the coach's 'art' comes in; finding out what fun means for a group and each individual child! The prize for getting it right is huge: increased learning and sustained participation, surely a good investment!

You also learned that goal setting and appropriate feedback can increase fun too.

Remember, every decision you make as a coach will influence the fun element of the pedagogical climate. YOU, coach, are the KEY!

And that's exactly why we challenged you to look at yourself and think about:

- What kind of coach are you?
- What do you do well regarding the pedagogical climate and what you need to get better at?

Self-reflection and self-awareness are probably the biggest thing for a coach, particularly for the PEDAGOGICAL COACH!

I hope you enjoyed this chapter. You should be proud of yourself, not only because you finished the chapter, but because of the amazing impact you will make on the children you coach. They will never forget you!

Before moving on to chapter 6 “Safeguarding and protecting children” make sure you do the end of chapter quiz and that you complete any relevant activities in the study guide.



STUDY GUIDE TASK: QUIZ

1. Write a short paragraph on how you as the coaches can build positive pedagogical environments that helps the children you coach develop holistically as well-rounded human beings.

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2. There are a lot of useful tools and strategies to create a pedagogical climate on the ground. In this Chapter we focused on four main strategies, identify the strategies

1.
2.
3.
4.

3. Identify 5 Characteristics of a good Children's Coach

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.



Q2

There are a lot of useful tools and strategies to create a pedagogical climate on the ground. In this Chapter we focused on **four main strategies, identify the strategies:**

Strategy 1 - Organization and Structure of Sessions

Strategy 2 – Provide Support and Encouragement

Strategy 3 - Personal coaching and Individual attention

Strategy 4 - Transfer responsibility to the children: make them responsible for their development