



MOOC 3

Coaching on the Ground: Planning, Doing and Reviewing

Chapter 1

Planning for Success





MOOC 3: Coaching on the Ground: Planning, Doing and Reviewing

Study Guide

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

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iCoachKids MOOC 3 - Chapter 1

Planning for Success

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iCoachKids MOOC 3 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 3, 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 MOOCs 1 and 2 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 Your 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 3 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 3 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 3 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 3 Study Guide Structure

In MOOC 3, 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 3 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 3 Study Guide - Learner Activity Tracker: Chapter No 1

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 Activity / Chapter Section	VIEW / READ 	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 1.1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Section 1.2	<input type="checkbox"/>							
Section 1.3	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Section 1.4	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Summary / Conclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>					<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 1, Introduction – Planning for Success



VIEW AND/OR READ

You can view this section on the online MOOC <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1gptpab3p6w> or you can read it in the Study Guide. If it re-enforces your learning, you can do both.

Introduction

Welcome to MOOC 3 of the iCoachKids e-learning programme: “**Coaching on the Ground: Planning, Doing and Reviewing**”. This is Chapter 1: “**Planning for Success**”.

The truth is we are all extremely good planners, even if we don’t realise it. Every day we wake up and we start planning our day. Some of us even do it the night before! We decide what we are going to wear, what we will have for breakfast and which route we will take to work. We will take into consideration the weather, potential roadworks and what meetings we have that day.



Why do we do this? Well because, planning is the only way to exert a little bit of control over our environment so we can achieve whatever goals we have for that day. Otherwise there is chaos and improvisation, and that is exhausting and loaded with chances for something to go wrong.

Planning = Control the Environment = Reach our Goals

In coaching we plan for the same reasons. Even the origin of the word 'coaching' implies planning as a key component of the coaching process. The term coaching was originally coined by a bunch of lecturers at Oxford University to refer to the process of taking students from where they were to where they wanted to be in the future.



Coaching is therefore less about the episodic delivery of a coaching session, and more about long-term development, which may take months and years. It follows that in order to facilitate development, coaches must be able to look beyond the daily planning of sessions and embark in some sort of mid- to long-term goal setting exercise.

Coaching = Goal Setting = Long-Term Development

And that's what this chapter is all about: ensuring that when developing a session plan, coaches can see how each of the activities link, not only to the learning objectives of

that particular session, but to mid- and long-term goals. This helps coaches and participants stay on track and to remain focused on the bigger picture.

**Activities ->
Linked to Session Goals ->
Linked to Mid & Long-Term Goals ->
Focus on Big Picture**

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

1. **Build a model of your sport:** Explore the key elements of your sport in depth to build a working model you can refer to in your planning.
2. **Create session plans:** Understand and use the key elements of season planning.
3. **Design activities linked to mid and long-term plans:** Be able to design sessions and activities clearly linked to medium and long-term objectives.

Planning is Central to Success

Trust us, this is no small feat. In our experience, planning is one of the elements of coaching that coaches struggle with the most. Whether that is because of a lack of time to plan, or because we are reluctant to think forward and stare at a blank page, planning is central to success. Remember these two adages:

Failing to plan is planning to fail

And

The first thing you need to plan is making time to plan

Ok, let us crack on with the first section.

Remember:

Keep Calm and Coach On!

Chapter 1, Section 1.1 – What you need to know about your sport before you plan



VIEW AND/OR READ

You can view this section on the online MOOC <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sq0pYU55CvQ&t=78s> or you can read it in the study guide. If it re-enforces your learning, you can do both.

Introduction

Hi there coach! Thank you for exploring some ideas about planning in your coaching.

Every sport is unique in some way, and this originality is born from two concepts:

1. The ultimate aim of the sport or how you win.
2. The rules of the sport, which in modern sport may differ between ages and sexes or between formats of the same original sport.

So, as an example, the aim of most invasion games, such as basketball, rugby union or netball is to score more points than your opponent. But the ways in which players can achieve this aim is directed by the rules that govern it.

In basketball, for instance, you can only take two steps with the ball before it has to be dribbled, passed or shot. In rugby union, you can run with the ball, but it can only be passed in a backward direction. In netball you are not permitted to travel or move when in possession of the ball, but only to pivot on one foot.



If we compare these three sports, we begin to see that despite having the same overall goal, a single sport-specific rule equates to three very different legal ways of moving.

This seems fairly obvious right? So, why is this important?

Well, we can make the informed assumption that sports are complex and that they take a long time to be fully understood. Consequently, it is coaches, first and foremost, that are tasked with gaining this complete understanding. Not only that, coaches are then also required to develop strategies to educate and develop their players so they can also understand and learn the sport and perform optimally.

**Coaches must understand the complexity of their sport
before they can coach it**

This is an extremely difficult task and one that many coaches struggle with. But, if coaches can break down, capture and simplify the complexity of their unique sport, they then become better placed to educate and develop others.

So how can this be done?

Breaking Down A Sport

The rules of a sport create problems for coaches and participants alike that need solutions. For instance, in tennis there is a rule that the ball must travel over the net and bounce more than once to score a point. This creates a problem of scoring a point. Then other rules permit how this can be achieved which leads to coaches encouraging the forehand shot, backhand shot or drop shot in particular situations.

Another example is in rugby union. The rules demand that players can only pass the ball backwards, which creates a problem of progressing the ball up the field towards the try line. Therefore, players then must stand behind each other to receive, take the ball forward and pass it again.

So, the aim of a coach should be to identify all the tactical problems that are created as a result of the sport specific rules. It is then the coaches' job to provide their participants with effective tactical and technical solutions to each problem or to help them come up with their own.

Coaches must identify the tactical problems of the sport based on its rules

But let me stress this: tactical solutions drive technical requirements and these may look very different for a 6-year-old to a 12-year-old or in different adapted formats of the sport. For example, 5 v 5 and 3 v 3 basketball present very different problems as do Rugby 15s and Rugby 7s.

Tactical Solutions Drive Technical Requirements

This is why we like to encourage coaches to ask themselves and answer the following questions before they construct a coaching curriculum or plan for their players/children they coach.

1. **What is the ultimate aim of your sport?**
2. **What are the rules of your sport?**
3. **What problems do these rules create?**
4. **What tactical and technical solutions can you or your players provide to solve the problems?**
5. **And most importantly, are these tactical and technical solutions appropriate for the age and stage of development of your participants?**

In answering these questions coaches can begin to construct a clear model of their sport that not only simplifies its complexity, but a model that presents what that sport may look like for the age and context that they are coaching.

An example can be found on the Basketball England website at the following link - <https://www.basketballengland.co.uk/talent/player-development-framework/>.

In other words, only in this way can the coach have clarity about the tactical and technical solutions available and required for their teams and participants. Once coaches have clarity in answering these questions, they can begin to set expectations for their players and provide goals.

Conclusion

Please note that although we have focused on invasion games here, the same approach can be used in other sports.

Please complete the **Study Guide Task** to get a good grasp on this very important concept. You will never regret it!

Thank you for your attention and see you in the next section.



Study Guide Task: Build a Model of your Sport

Thinking about the examples provided in this section, what would a model of your sport look like? If you are not sure where to start, maybe you can look for existing models of your sport online and adapt one for your context. Some National Governing Bodies have built very good ones. Get Googling!

Chapter 1, Section 1.2 – Season Planning 1 – Goal Setting Principles



VIEW AND/OR READ

You can view this section on the online MOOC https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QfoX_Dka7cc or you can read it in the Study Guide. If it re-enforces your learning, you can do both.

Introduction

Hello again Coach!

In this section, we are going to talk about goal setting for a season. Before talking about the process it is worth revisiting the advice given in **MOOC 1 Chapter 3, Summary & Conclusions - Creating a Vision and Strategy for Your Team or Club**. That section focused on the importance of creating a Vision, Mission and Strategy for your whole club. Typically, most coaches of children operate within a club. We know from talent development literature that the most effective coaches and coaching occurs when their goals for their team align well with a well thought through club strategy. So, you are encouraged to take some time to go back and watch that video and/or read that section of the study guide.

Goal Setting

Ok, so we have probably all heard about the need to set goals, but why are they so important? To answer this question, consider this perspective, which may resonate with many coaches. Good goals help coaches keep control of their emotions!

Clarity of Goals = Better Emotional Control

We have all seen the coach who behaves badly when watching their team in a competition or a coaching session. Shouting at children who just want to have fun. This is the complete opposite of being the role model talked about in **MOOC 2**. Typically, this poor behaviour is because a team is 'losing' or 'playing badly'. Essentially this reflects a coach who is becoming inappropriately emotional because they are making the competition about them, and NOT the goals that they should be working towards. In other words, goals are great for players but they can be as much about giving the coach a focus for their behaviour. No coach wakes up on a coaching or match day with the goal to be mean or even verbally abusive to children.

Clear Goals allow Coaches to Stay Focused

Right, next question, how can goals stop coaches being inappropriate and be useful for the development of the player? By focusing on the coaching process and not on the competition outcome.

Focus on Process Not the Outcome

As legendary American Football Coach Bill Walsh puts it, **get the process right and the score will take care of itself**. But what is the score that we want to be the case of children?

Goal Setting and Children

Realistically there are two major 'scores' or outcomes for any coach of children and young people:

1. Children keep coming back because they enjoy what they do.
2. Children develop their skills, both in sport and life.

This should not be seen as being anti-competitive or winning however!

In their ground breaking research Amanda Visek and colleagues (2015 – see Further Viewing / Reading at the end of the chapter) identified eleven factors that influence children having fun in sport:

1. Trying Hard
2. Positive Team Dynamics
3. Positive Coaching
4. Learning & Improving
5. Games
6. Practices
7. Team Friendships
8. Mental Bonuses
9. Game Time Support
10. Team Rituals
11. Swag

The first three which were seen as being of **primary importance** were:

- Trying Hard, Positive Team Dynamics, Positive Coaching.

The next six which were seen as being of **secondary importance** were:

- Learning and Improving, Games, Practices, Team Friendships, Mental Bonuses, and Game Time Support.

The final two were Team Rituals and Swag, which were seen as of **least importance**.

Of note, is that '**Winning**' is contributor to the "Mental Bonuses" factor, but it is only one. In fact, 'Ignoring the Score' is also a contributor to Mental Bonuses. Winning is important to some children. But perhaps not as much as we coaches sometimes think.

Winning is important to some children, but perhaps not as much as we coaches sometimes think

Goals Setting - Processes

So, what does all this mean for goal setting? Well, we can split the 11 factors into three broad processes that we as coaches can focus on:

- **Process 1:** Create an environment that children want to come to that offers them feedback on their progress
- **Process 2:** Create opportunities to engage in practice and competition where the focus is on getting better
- **Process 3:** Create opportunities for children to be with their friends that also come with some bells and whistles!

We suggest that these three processes can guide the development of process goals that lead to the 'score' taking care of itself. For example:

Some Goals for Process 1 might be:

1. Engage with parents to create a shared view on good pitch side behaviour and pre and post competition training support.
2. Coaches agree on a code of practice for creating a positive environment at coaching and competition settings.

Some Goals for Process 2 might be:

1. Create a clear view on the Technical, Tactical (it may be worth revisiting the Knowing Your Sport video/section here), Physical, Mental and Social development expected over a season for the children in the group.
2. Have a goal for how much each child will be engaged in coaching sessions and competitions. (For example, that every player will get equal game time).

Some Goals for Process 3 might be:

1. Create a teammate of the week trophy
2. Have players offer constructive feedback to a teammate on their training and/or match performance

Conclusion

Within this section we have deliberately avoided talking about the idea of SMART goals - because for many coaches working with children this does not match their reality. The process we are suggesting here is that you have a strong view on goals 'in principle'.

Use Goals as Flexible Principles

Principles can be flexible yet guiding in coaching and competition environments that often vary from one week to the next. They help keep us on track. This is a topic we will return to in the sections about planning.

Good luck with your goal setting coach!

Chapter 1, Section 1.3 – Season Planning 2 – Heavenly Goals to Earthly Plans



VIEW AND/OR READ

You can view this section on the online MOOC <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m4O5wqHRzb4> -or you can read it in the Study Guide. If it re-enforces your learning, you can do both.

Introduction

Hello again Coach! Welcome back!

In this section, we are going to talk about planning for a season. Before talking about this process, it is worth revisiting the advice given in the previous section about Goal Setting for the season. In that section, we see how, for many children's coaches, it makes sense to create goals for a season that are based on principles. This allows for both strong and flexible goals that are adaptable to the changes that will inevitably occur over a year. If you have completed these goals, then you have already started planning – great work!

Create Goals Based on Flexible Principles

Why should we plan?

Before talking about the process of planning however, it is worth talking about why we should plan. You may have noticed we have just said that things will change over a year. So if they are going to change, why bother planning? Planning is difficult, time consuming, inefficient even! Crucially it is often unrecognised in the allocation of time and effort for either paid or unpaid coaches. It all seems a bit pointless doesn't it?

So why plan? Well, there are four key reasons:

1. **Raise Expectations:** Planning raises expectations of both coach and player. It therefore provides a template against which reflection can occur after delivery.
2. **Cope with Uncertainty:** Planning helps us to cope with an unknown future.
3. **Stay on Track:** Planning helps to keep us on track when events may want to take us off track.

4. **Think Critically:** Planning requires coaches to talk to our fellow coaches. It causes coaches to think critically about what they are trying to do. In short, planning helps coaches get better as coaches, as well as the players!

So, that's why we should plan. The next question is how should we do it? Well, as we have already suggested, if you've engaged in thinking about your goals for the season you've already started planning. The question is, how do we take these goals and turn them into reality?

How Do We Turn Goals into Reality?

A key concept we want to introduce you to is called **Nested Planning**. The overall idea of this process is a bit like Russian Dolls. That is, the smallest Russian Doll always fits within the largest Russian Doll. Likewise, research shows coaching is most effective when the smallest coach-athlete or coach-coach, or coach-committee interactions are nested within the overall goals that are being worked towards.



In practicality, the way we have seen this work best is when three levels of planning occur; **Macro, Meso, and Micro**. So, the **Micro** (or shortest time frame, for example a coaching session) is nested within the **Meso** (maybe 2-3 months out of a year), which is in turn nested within the **Macro** (maybe 1 -2 years) as you can see in the diagram below.

3 Levels of Planning

1. **Macro = maybe 1 or 2 years**
2. **Meso = maybe 2 or 3 months within a season**
3. **Micro = maybe a training session or group of sessions**

We will look at **Micro** planning in the next section. Therefore, in this section we will examine **Macro** and **Meso** planning.

1. Macro Level Planning

At a **Macro** level of planning you can think about where you would like to be in one to two years. If you have engaged in your Vision-Mission-Strategy level of thinking and then developed some annual goals based on this, you have done most of the work. The example shown here (see below) reflects how this might work in a well-resourced talent development setting. If you do not have this sort of time or resource, you would dial back on your expectations. The really key issue about this level of planning is that it engages key stakeholders such as fellow coaches and committee members so that a shared view is created and agreed on.

Macro Planning	
-	Where do we want to be in 1 or 2 years?
-	Create annual or seasonal goals
-	Engage all stakeholders

Level	Objectives	Timeline and Activity											
Macro, 4 year: Strategic & Political Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition 2/3 of current players into U16s. Align player capabilities outcomes with club and NGB policy at each sub age group Work within budget constraints Benchmark player development progress against comparable clubs 	Meso Year 1 Objectives				Meso Year 2 Objectives				Meso Year 3 Objectives			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit 3 players Build realistic plan of and attain expected player progression across developmental targets Develop reputation of quality within benchmark clubs 											
Meso Seasonal: Socio, tactical, motivational	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Create and deliver annual plan with team individualised targets against club defined age and stage targets Create and administer tests of development drawing on game and training behaviour Engage parents in establishing and understanding club philosophy to player development with associated expectations 	Meso/Micro Objectives Week 1 – 12				Meso/Micro Objectives Week 13 - 24				Meso/Micro Objectives Week 25 - 36			
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Playing when in-balance (6 weeks) and playing when out of balance (6 weeks) 1. & 2. Conduct needs analysis process to establish each individual player's age/stage developmental curriculum needs (p-b, p-s & p) and align with tech and tact curriculum Parent education meeting to set expectations 											
Micro Sessions	Develop session and meeting plans with requisite aligned objectives and practice, behaviour and curriculum detail	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

Abrahams et al (2014). Planning your Coaching: A focus on Youth Participant Development. In C. Nash (Ed). Practical Sport Coaching, Abingdon: Routledge

2. Meso Level Planning

At the **Meso** level of planning you would start to break a macro period of time, in most cases a 'season', into manageable chunks. Typically, this might be about 8 weeks at a time. Remember though, do not become too specific, your plan still needs to allow for flexibility as human behaviour and development is rarely straight forward!

Meso Planning

- Break Macro period in manageable chunks
- About 8 weeks at a time (it can vary)
- Specific Yet Flexible

Realistic and Flexible

As much as being flexible is important, so is being realistic. One key component of **Meso** planning is being aware of the resources you have. Often the key resource is time. For example, in a club, a coach coaches children for about three hours a week for about 25 – 28 weeks. On the basis of using all weeks, and everyone turns up every week (not very likely!), that is 75 hours. About half of this time will be in games against other teams. In total this is not very much time! It is important therefore that you make the best use of the time you have – plan for where your focus is going to be. Will it be Technical? Tactical? Physical? Mental? Social? Or some combination of these? Returning to the section about knowing your sport can help here.

Ultimately, do not expect too much too quickly. Learning new skills takes time and opportunity. Moving on to something new every week will not help the children. Once you have made a **Meso** plan decision try and stick to it in all coaching environments. This helps create a focus for children and for you as a coach. It can prevent instruction and feedback overload, particularly at competitions.

- Be Realistic
- Consider your time and resources
- Don't expect too much too quickly
- Be flexible but consistent

Practice and Patience

Planning is not an easy process, it requires practice and patience. We have covered some important principles around planning at the **Macro and Meso** level here but there are quite a few of them. To help you in learning and implementing these ideas we have created some templates within the study guide that goes with this MOOC. We hope you find them useful. However, if they do not work for you and you think you have better templates then have the confidence to use them, we do not claim that these are perfect.

Best of luck with your macro and meso planning. The templates are included in the following **Personal Coaching Task** and **Coaching with Others Task**.

Remember to follow up with the section on session planning to get the full nested planning idea.

Personal Coaching Task / Coaching with Others: Create Your Season Plan

Adapt the Nested Planning Template below (provided by Dr Andy Abraham) to create your own season plan. Then share and discuss it with the coaches with which you coach.

Club: _____ **Squad:** _____ **Coach:** _____ **Date:** _____

Macro Planning Template

Level	Objectives	Timeline and Activity		
Macro, 4 year: Strategic & Political Goals		Meso Year 1 Objectives	Meso Year 2 Objectives TBC	Meso Year 3 Objectives TBC

Meso Seasonal: Socio, tactical, motivational	Meso/Micro Objectives Week 1 – 12	Meso/Micro Objectives Week 13 - 24	Meso/Micro Objectives Week 25 - 36
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Micro Sessions Tech-tact,	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	----

Meso Planning Template

	Meso Cycle 1			Meso Cycle 2			Meso Cycle 3		
	% Emphasis	Goal	Required learning activities & Assessment Points	% Emphasis	Goal	Required learning activities & Assessment Points	% Emphasis	Goal	Required learning activities & Assessment Points
Tech/Tact									
Physical									
Psycho-Behavioural									
Social/Lifestyle									

Micro Planning Template

Meso Cycle 1		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Objectives									
Resources	Training Time Available								
	Facilities Available								
	Training focus								
	Competition Focus								
	Suggested Player Homework								
	Support available/required								

Chapter 1, Section 1.4 – Session Planning - Bringing it to life one day at a time




VIEW AND/OR READ

You can view this section on the online MOOC <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-hxXP6sTNHA> or you can read it in the Study Guide. If it re-enforces your learning, you can do both.

Introduction

Hi again Coach!

In the previous section, we discussed the idea of **Nested Planning**. This approach encourages a coach to think about participant development over long, medium and short periods of time. It also encourages coaches to set clear goals, objectives or learning outcomes that help them to have clear expectations of participant progress.

	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>3 Levels of Planning</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Macro = maybe 1 or 2 years2. Meso = maybe 2 or 3 months within a season3. Micro = maybe a training session or group of sessions
---	---

Importantly, when coaches have clear expectations, they are better prepared to know what they are looking for when coaching.

Clear Expectations Facilitate Coaching

The idea of **Nested Planning** works from a top down perspective. This means it starts with the final product in mind, so in other words “after one year my participants will be able to demonstrate this, this and this”. But these final expectations can only be achieved if there are associated medium and short term goals that when met from session to session contribute to the overall final objective. As such, the medium and long-term goals allow a coach to shape what is needed within each session.

Diamond Diagram

To help coaches plan appropriately, Dr Bob Muir (2012) of Leeds Beckett University developed the coach planning and reflective framework, better known as the **Diamond Diagram**.



Muir, B. (2012) Coaching Planning, Practice and Reflective Framework (The Diamond Diagram)

The **Diamond Diagram** is a tool that coaches can use to plan sessions effectively. It is separated into four areas: **1) Session Objectives, 2) Practice Structure, 3) Coach Behaviours and 4) Player Engagement.**

1) Session Objectives

So, let's start with the session objectives – we must stress that the planning of a session should always start with the objectives, as it provides an informed expectation of what a coach believes their players should have acquired by the end of the session.

Session Objectives = Provide Expectations & Focus
--

As mentioned in previous sections, objectives should be SMART, that is, **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic** and be attainable within the **Time** they have to coach the session. By starting the planning process with the session objectives, coaches can then plan activities and behaviours to allow every player to meet the intended outcome.

2) Practice Structure

We now move onto the second part of the diamond diagram which is practice structure. As coaches, we have to design our activities with only one intention in mind: to meet the session objectives that have been set.

Practice Structure = Specific Activities to Meet Objectives

Sample Session Planner

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants: How many participants are you expecting? 2. Ability Levels: Are there different levels of ability in the group? 3. Equipment: What equipment do you need or have? 4. Assistant Coaches: What support from helpers or assistants will you require? 5. Moving Between Activities: How are you going to manage transitions between activities? 6. Water Breaks: When are you going to have water breaks? 7. Weather/Heat: If you coach outdoors, what is the weather going to be like? If indoors, will there be heating? 8. Take-home Messages: Are there any messages you need to give the kids and their parents after the session? 	Session Planner						
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">Coach</td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">Date</td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">Meso Block</td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">Week</td> </tr> </table>	Coach	Date	Meso Block	Week		
	Coach	Date	Meso Block	Week			
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%; padding: 5px;">Meso Block Objective</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> </table>	Meso Block Objective					
	Meso Block Objective						
	TEAM Session Objectives						
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%; padding: 5px;">Technical/Tactical</td> <td style="width: 33%; padding: 5px;">Physical</td> <td style="width: 33%; padding: 5px;">Psychological/Social</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> </table>	Technical/Tactical	Physical	Psychological/Social			
	Technical/Tactical	Physical	Psychological/Social				
	INDIVIDUAL Session Objectives						
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%; padding: 5px;">Player Name</td> <td style="width: 35%; padding: 5px;">Learning Objective</td> <td style="width: 35%; padding: 5px;">Progress Review & Action Plan</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> </table>	Player Name	Learning Objective	Progress Review & Action Plan				
Player Name	Learning Objective	Progress Review & Action Plan					
Session Structure & Organisation							
Tasks, Practices, Key Messages							
Expected Player Engagement							

So, for example if one of the session objectives is Technical, such as the technique of a pass in soccer or netball, you have to plan for an activity that allows the players to repeat the technique or skill with success.

On the other hand, if the objective demands the improvement of a technique within a tactical environment, you have to plan an activity that allows for frequent attempts of the skill under competitive conditions.

Note: Importantly, we propose that coaches steer clear of adopting the terms 'drills' or 'games' and instead we encourage coaches to select activities that match the session objective set.

Activities = Drills OR Games OR Combinations

3) Coach Behaviours

Now coaches should move to the third part of the framework and plan for their intended behaviour. Coach behaviours include instruction, questioning, feedback, demonstration and observation amongst a number of others. The behaviours coaches plan for should be the most appropriate to assist the participants to achieve the session objectives. Chapter 2 gets into this in more detail.



**Coach Behaviours =
Instruction,
Demonstration,
Questioning, Listening,
Observation, Feedback,
Reflection**

4) Player Engagement

The final part of the diamond diagram is player engagement. We propose that coaches should always plan keeping in mind how their players will interact with the proposed session activities and coach behaviours. Thinking in this way may lead a coach to go

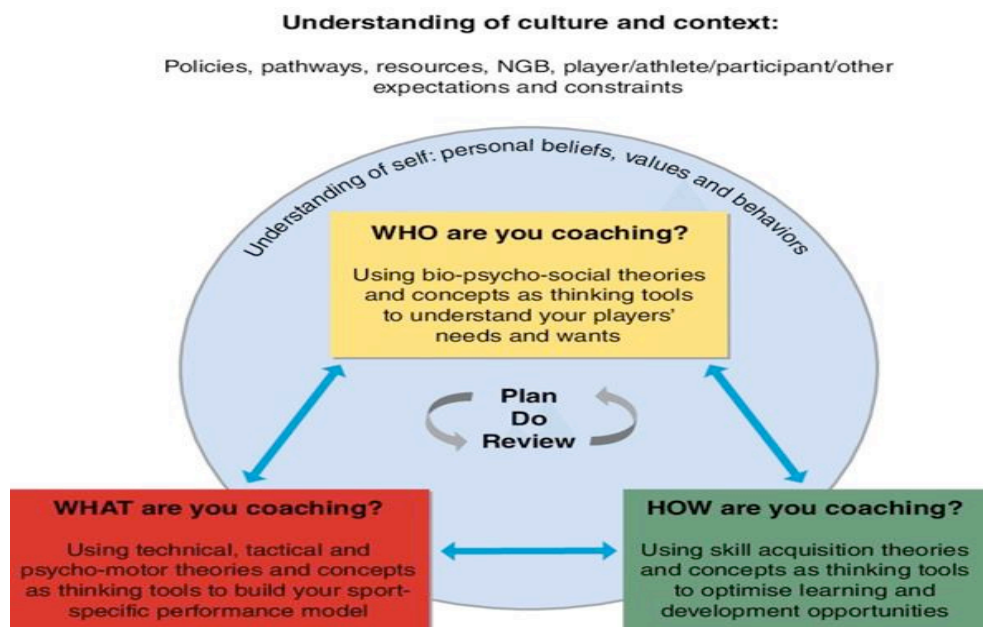
back to their plan and make changes to better meet the capabilities and objectives of the players.

Player Engagement = With Session Content and Coach Behaviours

Summary

To summarise, in Chapter 1 of MOOC 1 we explained Andy Abraham's Coach Decision Making Model (see below) which stressed the importance of asking the following questions;

- **WHO** are you coaching?
- **WHAT** are you coaching?
- **HOW** are you coaching?



The **Diamond Diagram** allows you to plan with these questions in mind:

- The **What**, is answered through the session objectives
- The **How**, through the proposed practice structure and coach behaviours
- The **Who**, through the consideration of player engagement.

Conclusion

To wrap up this section, let me share with you some of the additional nitty-gritty questions that you may wish to consider when planning your sessions. For instance:

1. **Participants:** How many participants are you expecting?
2. **Ability Levels:** Are there different levels of ability in the group?
3. **Equipment:** What equipment do you need or have?
4. **Assistant Coaches:** What support from helpers or assistants will you require?
5. **Moving Between Activities:** How are you going to manage transitions between activities?
6. **Water Breaks:** When are you going to have water breaks?
7. **Weather/Heat:** If you coach outdoors, what is the weather going to be like? If indoors, will there be heating?
8. **Take-home Messages:** Are there any messages you need to give the kids and their parents after the session?

Do not worry, you do not have to remember all these questions. You will find them in our session planner template in the following **Personal Coaching Task / Coaching with Others Task**. (There is also another session planner available via the iCoachKids website page for *Helping You Plan Your Coaching* [<https://www.icoachkids.eu/helping-you-plan-your-coaching.html>] - You can find this in the downloadable documents section of the page.)

Ok, so whilst these ideas are fresh in your mind, please view the Chapter Summary and complete the end of chapter Quiz to see how well you retained the main concepts.

After doing the Quiz, please go to the next chapter where we will explore how learning happens and how coaches can help facilitate it through the use of sound practice structure and coaching behaviours.

Until then:

Keep Calm and Coach On!

Personal Coaching Task / Coaching with Others – Design Your Session Planner

(a) Adapt the template provided to create your own session planner (alternately look at the planner in Chapter 2 or the planners used in your sport. Try it for a couple of sessions, change whatever you need and continue to use your final version.

(b) Share the planner with the other coaches with which you coach. Try it, discuss it, change it and continue to use your final version.

Session Planner

Club: _____ **Squad:** _____ **Coach:** _____ **Date:** _____

Key Questions:

Questions	Answer
1. How many participants are you expecting?	
2. Are there different levels of ability in the group?	
3. What equipment do you need or have?	
4. What support from helpers or assistants will you require?	
5. How are you going to manage transitions between activities?	
6. When are you going to have water breaks?	
7. If you coach outdoors, what's the weather going to be like?	
8. Are there any messages you need to give the kids and their parents after the session?	
9. Other:	
10. Other:	

Session Planner

Coach		Date		Meso Block		Week	
--------------	--	-------------	--	-------------------	--	-------------	--

Meso Block Objective	
-----------------------------	--

TEAM Session Objectives		
Technical/Tactical	Physical	Psychological/Social

INDIVIDUAL Session Objectives		
Player Name	Learning Objective	Progress Review & Action Plan

Session Structure & Organisation
Tasks, Practices, Key Messages
Expected Player Engagement

Chapter 1, Summary & Conclusions – Planning for Success



VIEW AND/OR READ

You can view this section on the online MOOC <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZUSPMFWS00&t=14s> or you can read it in the Study Guide. If it re-enforces your learning, you can do both.

Introduction

Hey Coach! Well done for completing **Chapter 1 - Planning for Success**. Did it go according to plan? Sorry, couldn't help it!

Planning & Control

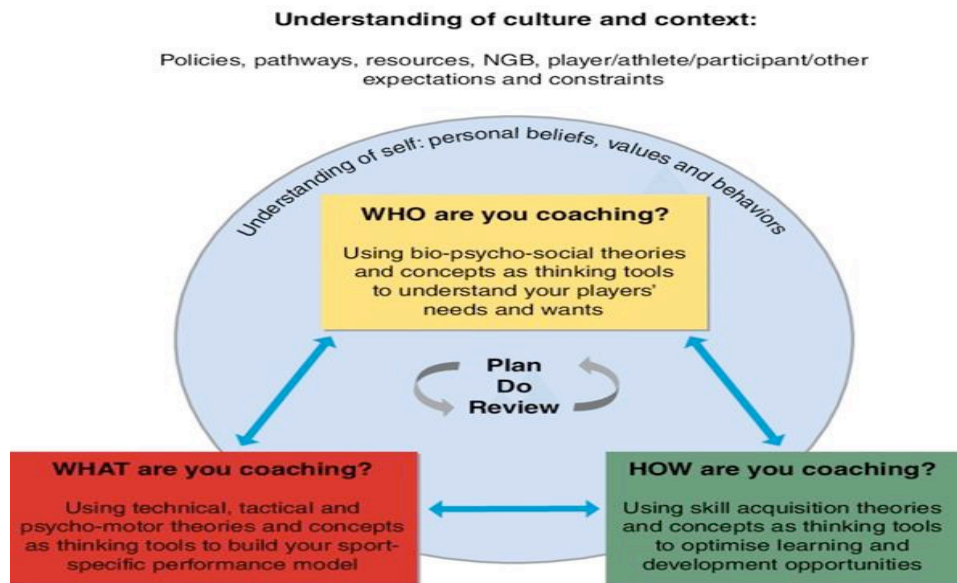
Over the course of this chapter we have emphasised how planning is our way to exert a little bit of control over our environment so we can achieve whatever goals we have for the short, mid and long-term future.

Planning helps us manage the inherent unpredictability and uncertainty of coaching

As a social activity, coaching is full of unpredictability and uncertainty. Planning, however, helps us manage and reduce this so we are not left with a world of chaos and improvisation. That would be exhausting and a simple way to ask for trouble!

WHO and WHAT

In the first two sections, we saw how central to planning having a clear understanding of the **WHO** and the **WHAT** are. This reminded us of the need to really understand who you are coaching and what it is they need and want from their participation in sport. It is important that before engaging in any “high tech” planning, ensure you look at the sport through the eyes of the children, and making that the epicentre of all our planning and delivery is vital.



Understand Your Sport

We then talked about the importance of spending time getting to understand your sport at a very fundamental level. The idea is to simplify it to its basic components in order to build a comprehensive yet progressive curriculum we can implement over different periods of time.

Simplify your sport to then build a comprehensive and progressive curriculum

Medium & Long-Term Planning

A main concept running through the chapter was that coaching is not only about the episodic delivery of a coaching session, but perhaps more importantly about long-term development, which may take months and years. It follows that in order to facilitate development, coaches must be able to look beyond the daily planning of sessions and embark in some sort of mid- to long-term goal setting exercise.

Nested Planning

We introduced the concept of **Nested Planning**. **Nested Planning** is all about starting long-term goals and progressively breaking them down into mid and short term goals and actions that all contribute to the overall goal. Like a set of Russian dolls, all actions and goals fit neatly into each other to achieve the main objectives.

Nested planning is about breaking down long-term goals into medium and short-term goals and actions

Diamond Diagram

We then used Bob Muir's **Diamond Diagram** to help us plan well thought through coaching sessions. The diamond contains 4 key elements that contribute to the success of the session:

1. The Objectives
2. The Practice Structure
3. The Coach's Behaviours
4. The Participant Engagement

How coaches are able to align all these elements is paramount for the success of the session and the overall programme.

Conclusion

Ok, so that was it for this chapter. Remember our two favourite 'catch phrases' in relation to planning:

Failing to plan is planning to fail
and
The first thing you need to plan is making time to plan

Thank you coach! We hope you will go onto the next chapter where we will cover a massively important topic: **How Learning Happens**

Now, go and complete the **Quiz!**

And remember:

Keep Calm and Plan On!

Chapter 1, Quiz

Q1 – From a teaching and planning perspective, each sport is different based on (more than one right answer):

- a) The ultimate goal of the sport or how you win
- b) The number of people that play the sport world-wide
- c) The rules or what you are allowed to do to win

Q2 – Before they can coach a sport, coaches must (more than one right answer):

- a) Have played the sport themselves
- b) Understand and break down the complexity of the sport
- c) Identify the tactical problems and technical solutions linked to the objectives and rules of the sport

Q3 – Having clear and stage-appropriate goals allows children's coaches to (more than one right answer):

- a) Have more emotional control during training and games
- b) Break down the opposition's tactics
- c) Stay focused on what's important

Q4 – The 11 FUN Factors can be split into 3 processes:

- a) Create a positive environment; Focus on getting better; Promote social interactions
- b) Create a positive environment; Focus on winning; Promote social interactions
- c) Create a positive environment; Focus on getting better; Promote internal competition

Q5 – The idea that short term goals should fit into mid-term goals and these into long-term goals is called:

- a) Strategic flow chart
- b) Nested planning
- c) One day at a time planning

Q6 – Nested planning describes three levels of planning:

- a) Macro, meso and micro
- b) Maxi, midi and mini
- c) Major, Middle and minor

Q7 – When planning, a children's coach must consider (more than one right answer):

- a) What is realistic to achieve in the proposed time
- b) What resources are available (human and capital)
- c) What other teams are doing in the same time period

Q8 – The four elements of the diamond diagram are?

- a) 1) session objectives, 2) practice duration, 3) coach behaviours and 4) player engagement
- b) 1) session objectives, 2) practice structure, 3) coach behaviours and 4) player engagement
- c) 1) session objectives, 2) practice structure, 3) coach experience and 4) player engagement

Q9 – The main objective of the coach's behaviours during a session should be to?

- a) Maintain order
- b) Achieve the session objectives
- c) Demonstrate their knowledge

Q10 – The two tools that coaches use to positively influence player engagement through:

- a) Discipline and punishment
- b) Explanations and repetitions
- c) Coach behaviours and practice structure



Q1 – From a teaching and planning perspective, each sport is different based on (more than one right answer):

- a) The ultimate goal of the sport or how you win
- c) The rules or what you are allowed to do to win

Q2 – Before they can coach a sport, coaches must (more than one right answer):

- b) Understand and break down the complexity of the sport
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- a) 1) Create a positive environment; b) Focus on getting better; c) Promote social interactions

Q5 – The idea that short term goals should fit into mid-term goals and these into long-term goals is called:

- b) Nested planning

Q6 – Nested planning describes three levels of planning:

- a) Macro, Meso and Micro

Q7 – When planning, a children's coach must consider (more than one right answer):

- a) What is realistic to achieve in the proposed time
- b) What resources are available (human and capital)

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- b) 1) session objectives, 2) practice structure, 3) coach behaviours and 4) player engagement

Q9 – The main objective of the coach's behaviours during a session should be to?

- b) Achieve the session objectives

Q10 – The two tools that coaches use to positively influence player engagement through:

- c) Coach behaviours and practice structure

Further Viewing / Reading

Amanda J. Visek, Sara M. Achrati, Heather Manning, Karen McDonnell, Brandon S. Harris, and Loretta DiPietro (2015) **The Fun Integration Theory: Towards Sustaining Children and Adolescents Sport Participation**, *Journal of Physical Activity and Health* 12(3): 424–433

Dr Bob Muir (2012) Planning your Coaching: A focus on Youth Participant Development

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279037541_Planning_your_Coaching_A_focus_on_Youth_Participant_Development