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

# Chapter 2
# How Learning Happens and How Coaches Can Help

# MOOC 3: How Learning Happens and How Coaches can help

# Study Guide

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

### Disclaimer
The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use, which may be made of the information contained therein.

www.icoachkids.eu @iCoachKidsEU          Copyright © 2020 by iCoachKids

## CONTENTS

**Study Guide Introduction**

# 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 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 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 |
| --- | --- |
| • Their prior experiences and abilities are recognised and they are encouraged to reflect and build on them | |
| • They are motivated to take responsibility for learning and are given opportunities to drive it and direct it to their own needs | |
| • The application of what is being learned to the practical context in which they coach is clear and facilitated | |
| • The topics and learning materials are clearly relevant | |
| • The climate is positive and supportive to minimise anxiety, encourage experimentation and challenge them appropriately | |
| • Interaction and sharing with other coaches is promoted | |
| • A variety of learning activities is offered | |
| • 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 2

**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 | ◯ | | | | | | | |
| Section 2.1 | ◯ | | ◯ | ◯ | | | | |
| Section 2.2.1 | ◯ | | | | | | | |
| Section 2.2.2 | ◯ | | ◯ | ◯ | | | | |
| Section 2.3 | ◯ | | ◯ | ◯ | | | | |
| Summary / Conclusion | ◯ | | | | | ◯ | | ◯ |

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 2, Introduction – How Learning Happens and How Coaches Can Help

You can view this section on the online MOOC
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dl4Do4YQoko&list=PLO4sec12HcRvomj2wYJE Jnjkxuld_00mZ or you can read it in the Study Guide. If it re-enforces your learning, you can do both.

## Introduction

Welcome back to MOOC 3 of the iCoachKids e-learning programme: "Coaching on the Ground: Planning, Doing and Reviewing". This is Chapter 2: How Learning Happens and How Coaches Can Help.

Our previous chapter focused on tools that coaches can use to plan effectively. There, we introduced the idea of a coach using activities and behaviours to progress their participants towards session objectives. This would suggest, and I use the word suggest with caution, that by using this approach, the players will have learned something. We looked at the Diamond Diagram (Muir 2012) as seen below.

Now, imagine this scenario: let us say a coach has not watched our videos, they have not ever experienced formal coach education or actually ever coached before. This coach is then asked to create a mental image of what successful coaching looks like and begins to construct a picture in their head of this imaginary successful coach and their behaviour.

Now, for most people this picture would look like this: a person in a tracksuit, a colourful whistle around their neck, a clipboard, a set of clearly delivered instructions telling players what to do which results in a nice tidy session where the players rarely made mistakes.



| We can all agree that the reality is significantly different! |
| --- |

If we adopt the messages from the previous chapter around developing informed expectations of what our players can achieve, do those behaviours shown by the 'successful coach' sound like an environment that will allow players to achieve such goals? We can make a strong case that it does not. In what follows, we will try to explain why.

Ok, so, what is learning if it is not a coach wanting to see the perfect session where everything is neat and tidy and where the children look busy, happy and well behaved?

Well learning in its simplest form can be described as gaining new, or modifying existing:

- Behaviours
- Skills
- Knowledge
- Values
- Preferences

Applied to sport, players are consistently required to obtain new skills or information and frequently asked to modify it as they develop and grow older.

**What does a successful learning environment look like?**

As a consequence, it is the responsibility of the coach to create an environment to better facilitate this development. So, what does a successful learning environment look like? Well, research shows that quality-learning environments are messy, full of mistakes, encourage errors, are highly motivating and have a direct purpose towards acquisition or modification of knowledge, behaviours and skills.

MESSY Knowledge Mistakes Behaviours Errors Motivation Purpose Skills PEDAGOGY

# Enter Pedagogy!

The word **Pedagogy** has its roots in ancient Greece and literally means "to lead a child" in the sense of supporting their learning and development. Hence teachers were referred to as "pedagogues". The term pedagogy is a fancy way to refer to the "art and science" of teaching and in a coaching context can be defined as 'how to best create a learning environment' for the child. And yes, coaches are also pedagogues or leaders of children!

A coach has two 'pedagogical' tools at their disposal:

1. Coaching Activities
2. Coaches Behaviours

In the sections that follow we will explore these tools to consider how kids learn and begin to explore and guide coaches to specific coaching strategies that facilitate and accelerate the learning process.

# Chapter 2, Section 2.1 – What is Learning and How Do We Learn?

You can view this section on the online MOOC https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XP0ymXooMHY&list=PLO4sec12HcRvomj2wYJEJnjkxuId_00mZ&index=2 or you can read it in the Study Guide. If it re-enforces your learning, you can do both.

# Introduction

Hey there Coach! Glad you are still with us!

So, learning – what is it? Let us begin by re-introducing the basic description we provided in our last section.

> **Learning = Gaining new, or modifying existing behaviors, skills, knowledge, values, or preferences**

In this section we will spend our time exploring what learning is, and more importantly how we actually learn. There are many theories that try to explain learning, leading to different approaches and beliefs. But do not worry, I will not spend the length of this chapter describing each theory – as it will just become confusing and steer us off topic.

Instead I am going introduce one of them that I believe is universally applicable to coaches across numerous contexts.

# Ripples on a Pond

In 2005 Phil Race introduced the educational world to how teachers can better 'make learning happen' and he did this through the analogy named 'Ripples on a Pond'.

As you can see in the diagram above, each ripple presents one of six factors that underpin successful learning. The ripples are:

1. Wanting
2. Needing
3. Doing
4. Making sense
5. Feedback
6. Teaching

Now, what we propose is that we spend the rest of this section translating each factor to how a coach might use them to facilitate learning.

## 1. Wanting

The first factor **Wanting** relates to the idea that learning happens when someone wants to learn something and therefore are motivated to learn it. As we all know, this is not always the case with the children we coach.

Therefore, a coach has to create the want in their participants, which can only truly be done if the coach knows and understands their motivations. So, spending time getting to know the kids you coach and what makes them tick is very important!

## 2. Needing

Similar to 'Wanting', **Needing** suggests that learning is promoted when the participants are aware of their need for a new piece of knowledge or skill in order to succeed. So, in other words 'if you want to get here, you need to have this'. It is perhaps simpler than a coach creating a want, but the coach must also create a need and ensure player can see it and feel it!

## 3. Doing

The third factor **Doing** is where the coach becomes truly active. It suggests that in order to learn successfully, the participants must be actively 'doing' but doing in line with what they are required to develop. For an example; if a tennis coach wants their players to learn how to effectively return a serve with their backhand, they should create a practice activity that allows for frequent attempts to return a serve with their backhand.

## 4. Sense Making

There is more though, the **Ripples on the Pond** theory suggest that the tennis players would then need to make sense of this information. That is the fourth step, **Sense Making**. The coach should then facilitate an environment where the players can understand when they would use the backhand shot when returning a serve, but also why this is the best shot selection.

## 5. Feedback

In addition, the fifth element contributing to learning is **Feedback**. The coach, participants or peers can aid the sense making process by giving feedback on the performance – and the coach can better facilitate this by encouraging participants to give themselves and others feedback.

## 6. Teaching

The sixth and last factor is **Teaching**, which suggests that successful learning in participants is truly underpinned by the ability to educate someone else. That is, we have only truly learnt something when we are able to teach it to others. As such a coach should aim to create an environment where participants are encouraged to educate others following their own learning.

So, taking all this into account, we suggest that learning is successful when a coach deliberately creates an environment where each of the six factors can be satisfied.

# Conclusion

Ok, we have spoken about these factors in a particular order 1 to 6. However, as we have discussed earlier in the chapter, learning is messy and most certainly does not happen in a logical order nor does it all happen within one training session. The analogy of 'ripples on a pond' implies that the ripples ebb and flow forwards and backwards, which is a fair reflection of how learning works.

So, sometimes learning may start with making sense, or feedback – but a want and need should still be present in the players. What is important is that a coach is aware of each of these factors and that they ensure that their practice and behaviour allows for the ripples to ebb and flow from one to six. In the next two sections we will take a deeper look at the strategies we can use to ensure this happens.

I hope you have enjoyed this section, thank you for reading and please keep reading and coaching!

Remember:

| **Keep Calm and Coach On!** |
| --- |

# 👤 Personal Coaching Task: Ripples on a Pond

In the text box provided, please write a 250-300 reflection on what you think the Ripples on a Pond theory of learning means for you as a coach.

# 👥 Coaching with Others: Ripples on a Pond

Teach your fellow coaches about the Ripples on a Pond theory of learning and discuss it with them. In the text box below, note any amendments / additions to the thoughts you listed above.

# Chapter 2, Section 2.2 –  Coaching Strategies that Enhance Learning – Part 1

You can view this section on the online MOOC https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_UXrudGv-gM&list=PLO4sec12HcRvomj2wYJEJnjkxuld_00mZ&index=3 or you can read it in the Study Guide. If it re-enforces your learning, you can do both.

# Introduction

Hello there and welcome back. In the last section we explored how learning happens and some significant factors that underpin successful learning using Race's Ripples on a Pond theory. Can you remember the six factors?



To progress, we will begin to discuss what strategies a coach has at their disposal to enhance learning.

In this section (Part 1), we will focus on the **short term**, the here and now and how coaches can enhance learning from session to session. As we progress to Part 2, we will look more to the **long term** strategies.

# Short Term Learning

So, the here and now. If we jump back to the video 'Planning - bringing it to life one day at a time', we introduced Bob Muir's diamond diagram.



We will use this to build a pedagogical framework, or put simply a system of learning enhancement that coaches can simply identify, connect with and use in their day to day practice.

If a coach's planning is appropriate, suitable expectations will be set about what they want their participants to learn. From then on, it is simply a case of allowing learning to happen, isn't it? Easier said than done!

As we said earlier, coaches only have two types of pedagogical tools in their toolbox to make learning happen.

1. Coaching Behaviours

2. Coaching Activities


**1. Coaching Behaviours**

It is important to start with how a coach behaves in a learning environment. With younger kids especially, this can have a substantial impact on the child's perception of them and be either positive or detrimental to learning.

This has been covered in detail in MOOC 1 and we will cover the main tools in the coaches' toolkit in the next section. So, let's go straight to the pedagogical tools we can use to maximise learning.

## 2. Coaching Activities

In 1986, Sinah Goode and Richard Magill published a seminal article exploring the impact of three types of practice conditions:

1. Blocked Practice
2. Variable Practice
3. Random Practice

They wanted to find out how skill learning in badminton would be affected when practice included different levels of what they called 'contextual interference'. In short, contextual interference can be described as the conditions that replicate the constraints and pressures of the competitive environment.

Let's define the three types of practice conditions:

### 1. Blocked Practice

Blocked practice is an activity that requires the repeated practice of one technique or skill with no variation. An example would be a golf putt from the same distance and same direction repeated over and over. Research shows that the advantages to this approach are best felt when a participant is learning a brand-new technique and it always leads to short term improvements in performance. On the other hand, the disadvantages of blocked practice are that there is a poorer long-term retention of the skill, limited transfer of the skill to a competitive context, no decision making involved and it can be quite boring for the participant.

### 2. Variable Practice

Variable practice is an activity that demands one technique or skill being practiced with varying distances, speed, angles, lofts etc. It is ideal for developing and refining skills, allows all parameters of the skill to be developed and practice becomes more realistic to the game as it encourages players to make decisions on the fly. The disadvantages of this are there will be a lot of mistakes initially, but as we know – mistakes aren't a bad thing. Because of this, learning may appear slower than when using blocked practice.

### 3. Random Practice

Variable practice replicates the competitive context of the game and under the pressures of an opposition. This allows practice to be more realistic to the game, makes events unpredictable and allows a better transfer of learning to competition. However, this can frustrate players if they are unable to succeed in such an environment. Again, the benefits of this approach may be less immediate and appear slower.

| Blocked | Variable | Random |
|---|---|---|
| • Repeat a technique without variation | • One technique varying distance, speed, angle, etc. | • Replicates competitive context |
| • Good for learning new technique | • Good for refining skills | • Under pressure and opposed |
| • Short-term improvement | • Enhanced versatility and transfer | • High transfer |
| • Low retention and transfer | • Encourages decision-making | • Potentially frustrating |
| • Boring | • More mistakes and learning appears slower | • Learning appears slower |

These different practice types bridge the gap between drill to game, as they indicate that the selection of a practice activity should be dependent on what it is the kids are required to learn and their stage of development.

**Coaches Must Decide What Practice Type Best Suits Each Situation**

If they need to learn a skill for the first time, then blocked practice should be used. If they need to use the skill under varying game like pressures, random, game-based practice would be most appropriate. Regardless of the type of practice you choose, always maximise the doing.

It is important to understand that **none of these methods are better than the others**. They simply offer different benefits at different stages of development and for different purposes. And there's nothing stopping you from mixing them up with the same participants and within the same session. It's never either or!

Combining the practice type with the proposed behaviours mentioned previously will allow coaches to shape an enjoyable, healthy and nourishing learning environment for participants.

# Conclusion

Before moving on to the next section, it is good to remind ourselves that emotion drives learning. So when thinking about what behaviours and pedagogical tools to use. Please always bear in mind, from the **iCoachKids Pledge, Rule Number 5: Prioritise the Love of Sport above Learning Sport**.

In other words, "Don't let learning get in the way of fun".



Thank you for reading!

# Chapter 2, Section 2.2 – Coaching Strategies that Enhance Learning – Part 2

👁/📖

You can view this section on the online MOOC [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cwl7_2hOvAk&list=PLO4sec12HcRvomj2wYJE Jnjkxuld_00mZ&index=4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cwl7_2hOvAk&list=PLO4sec12HcRvomj2wYJEJnjkxuld_00mZ&index=4) or you can read it in the Study Guide. If it re-enforces your learning, you can do both.

# Introduction

Welcome back everyone!

In the previous section, we dealt with the here and now. In this section, we look towards the future, what **long-term** coaching strategies exist to enhance learning?

Unfortunately, we must start with an anecdotal statement: "long term enhancement of learning directly rests on the effectiveness of a coach's planning".

Without a nested plan, a coach is left without clear expectations of where they want their players to get too and what they want them to achieve. Consequently, this coach would go from session to session with limited direction and, whilst short term learning may occur, long term learning certainly will not.

So, what can coaches do in the long term to enhance learning?

# Long Term Learning

### 1. Genuine Care for Participants

Coaches should genuinely care for their participants, but this care must be accepted by the participants themselves. Care can look different, from listening and being concerned about things outside of the sport context, to making a participant work harder in training – but both may still promote learning because a person that feels cared for is more likely to be open and motivated to learning new things.

### 2. Honest Feedback and Expectation Management

Coaches are encouraged provide honest feedback and manage expectations appropriately. Coaches should not always aim to please, yet the timing and the manner in which honest feedback is provided matters.

### 3. Promote Understanding & Enjoyment

Coaches should check for understanding and check for enjoyment. Remember emotion drives learning. If a child becomes bored, the learning may stop.

### 4. Balance Training & Competition.

Fourth, getting the balance right between training and competition is paramount. This is not only about the amount of competition, but also about the level and format so it serves a developmental purpose and it does not become an end in itself. Chapter 3 in MOOC 3 will cover this topic in detail.

In addition to this set of behaviours, there are two perspectives derived from coaching literature on long term learning that are important to highlight here.

### Long Term Learning Perspectives

### 1. Deliberate Practice

Swedish researcher Anders Ericsson, in his original research in musicians, identified that in order to develop expertise, the best violin players had accumulated substantially more hours of what he called deliberate practice. **Deliberate Practice** involves the sustained and purposeful targeting of specific areas of improvement. According to the violinist, it was not much fun, but they acknowledged they had to do it if they wanted to reach higher levels of expertise.

**2. Deliberate Play**

By contrasts, Canadian researcher Jean Cote provided a counter to this idea and suggested that deliberate play environments are better suited to developing individuals who can find multiple solutions in difficult tactical environments. **Deliberate Play** is intrinsically motivating, provides immediate gratification and is specifically designed to maximise enjoyment. Examples of this include Street Football, playing Ultimate Frisbee in the park or playground Basketball.



Now, both positions have provided evidence to support their claims, and both claims have been openly criticised. So, what's the right answer? Should we encourage kids to engage in **Deliberate Practice** or **Deliberate Play**?

Similarly, to the debate of games versus drills, deliberate play and deliberate practice indicate two specific, but significant strategies to long term learning. The evidence collated for both perspectives would suggest that both are necessary in enhancing learning. We would however strongly discourage being guided by a numerical value, like the constantly alluded to ten thousand hours. The truth is that research shows that the number of hours required to developed expertise varies greatly across individuals and contexts.

Similar to blocked, variable and random practice, deliberate play and practice environments tend to be strategies that appear to align well to specific demands of sport and learning objectives. That is, deliberate play seems to benefit players finding and developing multiple solutions in situations of high complexity, whereas deliberate practice seems to suggest the development of specific skill-based expertise largely devoid of context.

So once again, we advocate for a common ground between deliberate practice, deliberate play, games-based methodologies and skill-based approaches. In the end, it all comes back to the plan and, what will the child develop? where will they get to? and what is the best pedagogical strategy at that point?

**The Coaches Must Decide What Strategy Best Suits Each Situation**

# Conclusion

Ok, that was a lot to take in! Let us summarise both Part 1 and Part 2 and the multiple strategies to enhancing learning we have explored.

**Short-Term Learning**

1. Enjoyment
2. Specific feedback
3. Praise
4. No scolds or punishments

**Long-Term Learning**

1. Planning
2. Relationships
3. Developmental climate

On a short-term basis, coaches' behaviours should promote enjoyment, specific feedback and praise, they should steer clear of scolds and punishments for skill failure and observe more and talk less. Their practice structure, to put simply, should be directly aligned to what the child is required to achieve whether drill or game based.

Long term development centres more on planning, developing a relationship and care for the athlete and creating a developmental climate within training and very importantly, during competition. Furthermore, we propose that coaches strike a balance between deliberate play and practice and do not hold themselves hostage to either approach.

We hope you have enjoyed this section and please remember the two rules to live by when enhancing learning:

1. **Maximise the doing**
2. **Emotion drives learning.**

Remember:

| **Keep Calm and Coach On!** |
|:---:|

# 👤 Personal Coaching Task: My Strategies to Enhance Learning

Please use the text box provided to reflect extensively on your current practice from a "learning perspective". For instance, you can Identify the type of practice you use and how often do you use blocked, variable or random practice. You can also identify if you use deliberate practice or deliberate play, and why or whether you tend to favour one or the other. You can also consider what all of this means for your coaching going forward.

# 👥 Coaching with Others: Our Strategies to Enhance Learning

Discuss with your fellow coaches about the types of practice (blocked, variable, random) and the strategies (deliberate practice, deliberate play) you use as a group of coaches to enhance learning. In the text box below, note any amendments / additions to the thoughts you listed above. Also, list what all of this means for your coaching as a group going forward.

# Chapter 2, Section 2.3 – The Coaches Toolkit

/ 

You can view this section on the online MOOC
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VB9Ip8pTulY&list=PLO4sec12HcRvomj2wYJEJ
njkxuId_00mZ&index=5 or you can read it in the Study Guide. If it re-enforces your
learning, you can do both.

## Introduction

Hi again Coach! How is your learning going?

All through this chapter, we have focused on what learning is and how we make it happen. In previous sections, we hinted at some of the key behavioural strategies that coaches can use to foster learning in the here and now, during a coaching session.

We like to call these strategies: The Coaches Toolkit and in this section, we are going to go through these basic tools and explain what we may use each tool for and why.

First, let's quickly introduce our top five tools:

1. Setting Up & Standing Back

2. Explanations

3. Demonstrations

4. Questioning & Listening

5. Feedback

# 1. Setting up & Standing Back

**Setting Up and Standing Back** is about asking the participants to do an activity and just letting them get on with it while we observe carefully.

What is important here is that the activity is **well designed** and that we are **very clear about what we expect from it**. That is because setting up and standing back allows us to observe and assess specific skills or tactical concepts so we can then decide whether we want to do something about it.

> - **Well-designed activity**
> - **Clear objectives and expectations**

The other great benefit of standing back is that it maximises the doing and allows the activity to be the teacher. It doesn't mean we take a break from coaching though. We still have to pay intense attention so we can intervene if necessary or make mental notes for the future.

> - **Maximise the Doing**
> - **The activity as teacher**
> - **Attend and Intervene where appropriate**

# 2. Explanations

Next, we have **Explanations**. Explaining means literally "to make plain". The key is in the name! It is the art of clearly telling athletes what they need to do, how and why.

Here are some recommendations to deliver effective explanations:

1. **Kneel down to eye level to draw them in**

2. **Ensure your language is clear**

3. **Focus on a small number of specific points and make it short**

4. **Use vivid language and images that they can remember easily**

5. **Concentrate on what they need to do, not what they need to 'not do'**

6. **Regularly check for understanding**

## 3. Demonstrations

**Demonstrations** serve the purpose of giving participants a model of the skill we want them to learn. They are particularly useful when introducing something new. Demonstrations can be done by the coach, by one of the participants or thanks to today's technology through a video on your phone or tablet. Use your own judgement!

> - **Provide a model of the skill**
> - **Introduce something new**

Here are some recommendations for good demonstrations:

| 1. | **Make sure everyone can see** |
|---|---|
| 2. | **Know what angle you want them to see it from** |
| 3. | **Decide if they need to see the full skill or only a specific segment** |
| 4. | **Use cues, anchor words or images for the key elements to help focus their attention and increase retention** |

## 4. Questioning & Listening

**Questioning** is a powerful tool to guide learning, but *it requires preparation and practice*. And as the title indicates, a pre-condition for good questioning, is to have great **listening** skills too so you can ask even better questions.

The value of questioning resides in engaging participants to do their own thinking and to come up with multiple solutions to problems. And yes, it is a bit slower than telling kids what to do all the time, but it pays off long term.

> - **Own thinking**
> - **Multiple solutions**
> - **Slow but long-term learning**

Here go some key things to consider when asking questions:

| 1. | **Know what questions you are likely to ask** |
|---|---|
| 2. | **Ask what and when questions, and even better why and how ones to encourage deeper thinking. Try to stay away from YES or NO questions** |
| 3. | **Encourage a variety of answers and make sure they know that no answer is silly or stupid** |
| 4. | **Give the kids time to come up with the answers. Be comfortable with silence until someone comes forward** |

It is very important to understand that questioning and listening allowing kids to work through problems is not a means to an end, but an end in itself. It is the process that matters, not the outcome. That will come much later

## 5. Feedback

**Feedback** is central to improvement, but we have to be mindful of how we give feedback to children. Here are some key ideas:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. | **Keep it to a minimum! Remember to maximise the doing** |
| 2. | **Keep it simple. Focus on one element!** |
| 3. | **Keep it positive. Remove all negative emotions and do not make it personal** |
| 4. | **Catch them being good! Why not offer feedback about what they do well too? Praise is very powerful!** |
| 5. | **Keep it solution-focused. Tell them what they need to do, not what they have to stop doing** |
| 6. | **Make it timely. Wait for play stoppages and make sure the participant is mentally ready to receive the feedback. The world will not come to an end if you don't share your pearl of wisdom at that point!** |

Ok, that was a lot of information right? I want to finish with one more tool that we have not mentioned yet: Self-Awareness.

## Self-Awareness

**Self-Awareness** is our capacity to realise what we are doing, the impact it is having on ourselves, and most importantly on the kids is fundamental! If you see something you don't like, just change it. It you do or say something you shouldn't, stop, apologise and do something else. The kids will respect you for it!

# Conclusion

So that is the end of this chapter. Please do the **Personal Coaching Task** and the **Coaching with Others Task** on the following pages. Next up is the **Summary and Conclusions**. Thank you for reading!

# 👨‍💼 Personal Coaching Task: My Coaching Toolkit

Please use the worksheet to reflect on how well you feel you currently use the 5 Coaching Tools (with room for a 6th) and what you could improve on in the future.

| Coaching Tools | Current Use | How to Improve |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Set Up & Stand Back | | |
| 2. Explanations | | |
| 3. Demonstrations | | |
| 4. Questioning & Listening | | |
| 5. Feedback | | |
| 6. Other: _____ _____ | | |

# 🎨 Coaching with Others: My Coaching Toolkit

(a) Share the 'My Coaching Toolkit' with other coaches with which you coach. Ask them to complete it on you, and vice versa. Then discuss each other's Coaching Tools.

(b) Have someone take a video of you coaching and examine your Coaching Tools.

# Chapter 2, Summary & Conclusions

# Introduction

Hey there coach!

We have covered a lot so far in this chapter, so let us capture the main content quickly and simply.

Learning can be described as gaining new, or modifying existing behaviours, skills, knowledge, values, or preferences. It is messy and difficult to see and track. This highlights the importance of planning from both a long and short term perspective. In other words, coaches need to know where they expect their participants to get to before they start them on their journey.

Contrary to certain beliefs, learning is not simply a reproduction of behaviour. It is much more of a non-directional and non-linear process which is influenced by a number of factors.

**Ripples on a Pond**

We saw that Phil Race's Ripples on a Pond model suggests there are six factors which underpin successful learning – Wanting, Needing, Doing, Making Sense, Feedback and Teaching. It follows that it is the coach's job to create an environment where these conditions are satisfied.

## Short Term Learning

Coaches can do this through two pedagogical tools: their own behaviours and practice structure. The practice environment should therefore be engaging, interesting and fun and coaches should maximise the doing in their players. They should steer clear of scolds for skill failure, they should question and challenge understanding and ensure praise and feedback is specific and related to the objective of the sessions.

| Coaches' 2 Pedagogical Tools |
| --- |
| 1.      Coaching Behaviours |
| 2.      Coaching Activities |

## Long Term Learning

From a long term perspective learning is more about the environment a coach creates. A coach should build a healthy relationship with the participants, care for their players and reshape competition into a tool for development rather than an outcome in itself. A coach should be honest with their players and manage expectations in the face of reality of how they're developing. Finally, the needs and wants of participants should always be taken into account. Always remember that emotion drives learning.

Keys for Long Term Learning:

| | |
| --- | --- |
| 1. | **Build relationships before skills** |
| 2. | **Reshape competition** |
| 3. | **Be Honest and Manage Expectations** |
| 4. | **Respect their needs and wants** |
| 5. | **Maximise the Doing and Create Positive Emotions** |

# Conclusion

The final comment is something we have revisited numerous times in the preceding chapters, if a coach plans and foresees where their players can get too. And they do this through an informed understanding of **WHO** they're working with, **WHAT** they want them to develop and **HOW** they can best achieve this through different pedagogical tools and practices, then the learning will take care of itself.

Thank you for reading this very important chapter. I hope you have found it informative and enjoyable and that you can apply its content to your practice straight away.

| **Keep Calm and Coach On!** |
| --- |

# ⚛ Chapter 2, Quiz

Q1 – We defined learning as:

   a)  Gaining new, or modifying existing habits, experiences, knowledge, values, or preferences
   b)  Changing old, or modifying existing behaviours, skills, knowledge, values, or preferences
   c)  Gaining new, or modifying existing behaviours, skills, knowledge, values, or preferences

Q2 – The 6 component of the "Ripples on a Pond" theory of learning are:

   a)  Wanting, Expecting, Doing, Making Fun, Feedback and Teaching
   b)  Wanting, Needing, Doing, Making Sense, Feedback and Teaching
   c)  Waiting, Needing, Doing, Making Mistakes, Feedforward and Teaching

Q3 – The Teaching component of the "Ripples on a Pond" theory of learning relates to:

   a)  The learner understanding something well enough to be able to teach other learners
   b)  The teacher being in control of all the learning at all times
   c)  The learner taking notes of everything the teacher says.

Q4 – In Section 2, Part 1 we described three types of practice:

   a)  Blocked, Variable and Repetition
   b)  Basic, Medium and Advanced
   c)  Blocked, Variable and Random

Q5 – Contextual interference is defined as:

   a)  The conditions that replicate the constraints and pressures of the competitive environment
   b)  The accurate reconstruction of the context of the game
   c)  The inclusion of crowd noise during practice sessions

Q6 – In relation to the 3 types of practice (more than one right answer):

   a)  Blocked practice is good for learning a new technique quickly
   b)  Variable practice increases versatility and transfer to real game conditions
   c)  Random practice can be frustrating but leads to high transfer
   d)  Coaches must decide which practice type is best suited for each participant and situation

Q7 – Coaches can promote long-term learning by:

a) Providing constant instruction, giving harsh feedback, promoting understanding and focusing on competition
b) Providing conditional appreciation, giving honest feedback, demanding obedience and balancing training and competition
c) Providing genuine care, giving honest feedback, promoting understanding and balancing training and competition

Q8 – Deliberate Practice:

a) Involves the sustained and purposeful targeting of specific areas of improvement.
b) Is always fun
c) Makes no difference to skill development

Q9 – Deliberate Play:

a) Tends to be boring
b) Supports the development of decision-making skills
c) Is just for little kids

Q10 – The 5 main tools in The Coaches' Toolkit are:

a) Setting Up & Instructing; Explanations; Demonstrations; Applications; and Feedback
b) Setting Up & Standing Back; Explanations; Demonstrations; Questioning & Listening; and Feedback
c) Setting Up & Standing Back; Exclamations; Deconstructions; Questioning & Listening; and Feedback

Q1 – We defined learning as:

a) Gaining new, or modifying existing behaviours, skills, knowledge, values, or preferences

Q2 – The 6 component of the "Ripples on a Pond" theory of learning are:

b) Wanting, Needing, Doing, Making Sense, Feedback and Teaching

Q3 – The Teaching component of the "Ripples on a Pond" theory of learning relates to:

a) The learner understanding something well enough to be able to teach other learners

Q4 – In Section 2, Part 1 we described three types of practice:

c) Blocked, Variable and Random

Q5 – Contextual interference is defined as:

a) The conditions that replicate the constraints and pressures of the competitive environment

Q6 – In relation to the 3 types of practice (more than one right answer):

a) Blocked practice is good for learning a new technique quickly
b) Variable practice increases versatility and transfer to real game conditions
c) Random practice can be frustrating but leads to high transfer
d) Coaches must decide which practice type is best suited for each participant and situation

Q7 – Coaches can promote long-term learning by:

c) Providing genuine care, giving honest feedback, promoting understanding and balancing training and competition

Q8 – Deliberate Practice:

a) Involves the sustained and purposeful targeting of specific areas of improvement.

Q9 – Deliberate Play:

b) Supports the development of decision-making skills

Q10 – The 5 main tools in The Coaches' Toolkit are:

b) Setting Up & Standing Back; Explanations; Demonstrations; Questioning & Listening; and Feedback

# Further Viewing / Reading

**Athletics Ireland Blog:** A strategic approach to practice (by Dr Phil Kearney)
https://www.athleticsireland.ie/blog/a-strategic-approach-to-practice


**Athletics Ireland Blog:** Organising training activities to maximise learning (by Dr Phil Kearney) https://www.athleticsireland.ie/blog/organising-training-activities-to-maximise-learning/