Long term memory

In a video below Burnley manager Vincent Kompany is coaching one of his centre backs.

Below is a model of learning accompanied by some teaching techniques that could be used by Kompany to better help this player learn his coaching points.

Let's start with what he appears to be coaching the player:

1. Keep a big arm distance
2. Match his run
3. Be on your toes, ready to sprint
4. Don't let him match your line
5. Keep a constant distance

The above is a very basic breakdown of his coaching points…

Let me first introduce you to the two vital memory components involved in this moment of learning (see pic)

1. Working memory
2. Long-term memory

Working memory (WM) is your 'work space'. It's where you hold information 'in the moment'. When we deliver knowledge to a player
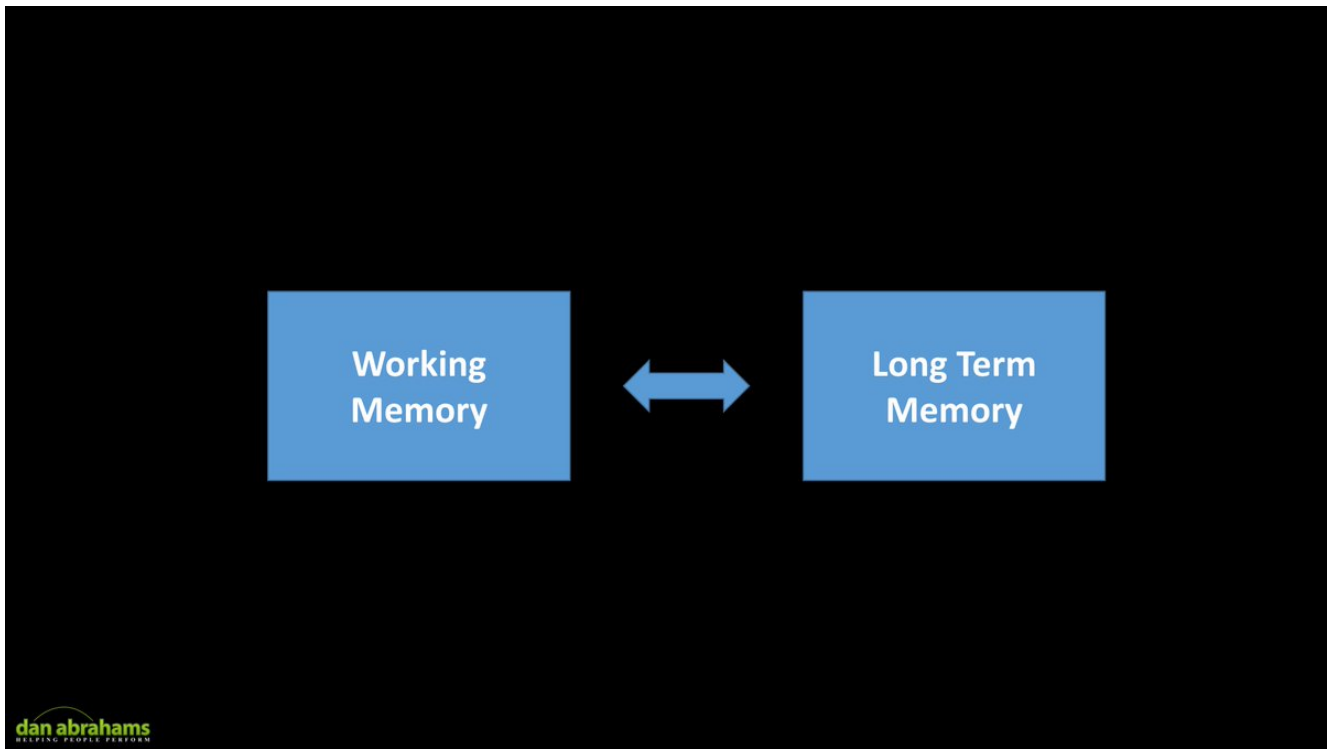
(the specifics of an activity, our rules, guidelines and instructions), this is where a player initially holds that information.

For learning to happen, instruction has to transfer to long-term memory (LTM) — in other words, we want players to remember (knowledge is in LTM)

The gateway to working memory is attention — & this is where your influence on learning starts — you have to captivate, direct & hold attention

You have to captivate players' attention because if they're not paying attention to you, your instruction can't enter working memory

"Hey, eyes on me, I've got some thoughts for you and I need you to listen really closely to what I'm saying…" — captivate attention!

Direct attention: to key coaching points by using emphasis, tone, volume, rhythm, silence…use your voice to help players pay attention to your most appropriate messages
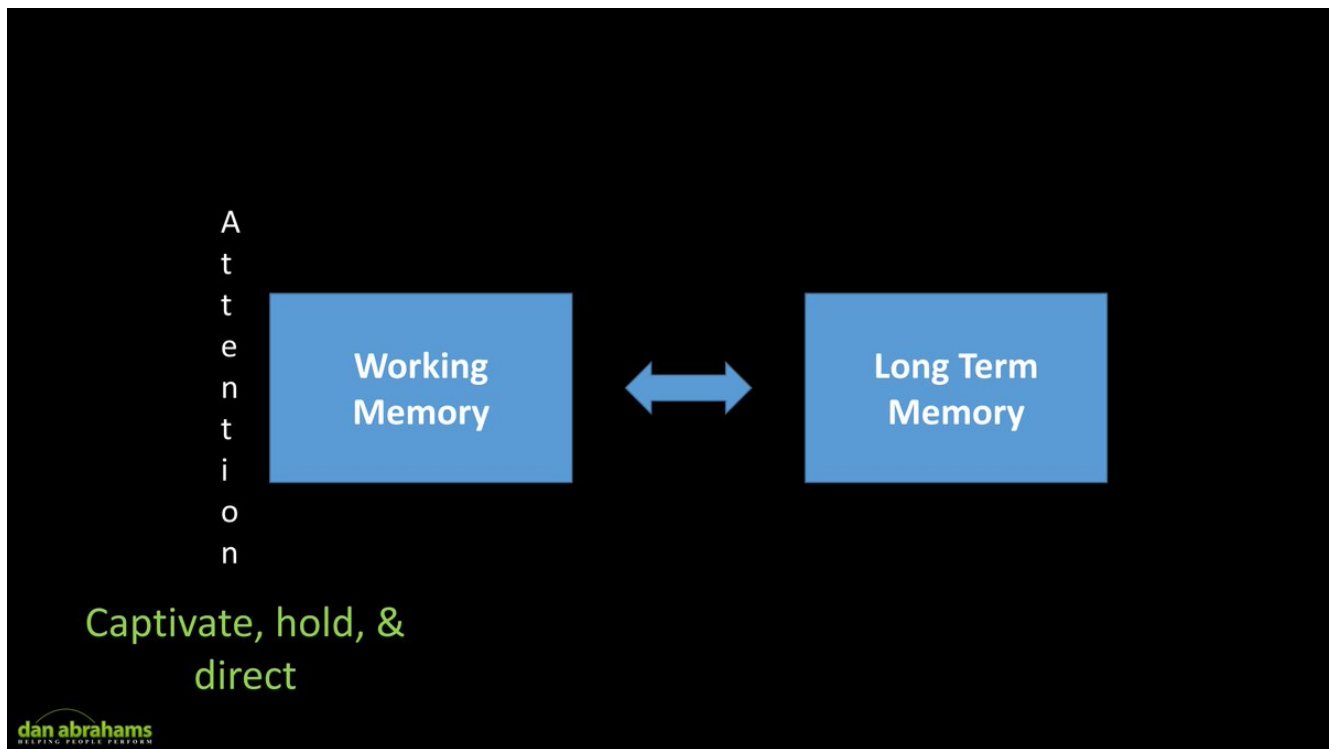
Hold attention by helping players understand the importance of your coaching points for them as individuals and as team mates:

"Too often you get too close to the striker and this gives him the chance to sprint in behind you…"

Crucial to understand about WM is that it has limited capacity – it can hold around 3 bits of instruction for around 20 seconds – it's easy to overload WM and for instructions to decay quickly.

Key is to keep instructions simple, short and snappy…

You can do this by chunking your coaching points. For example, after initial explanation, Vincent Kompany could chunk his coaching points in a simple, short, snappy way…
"Big arm…match run…on toes…stay constant"
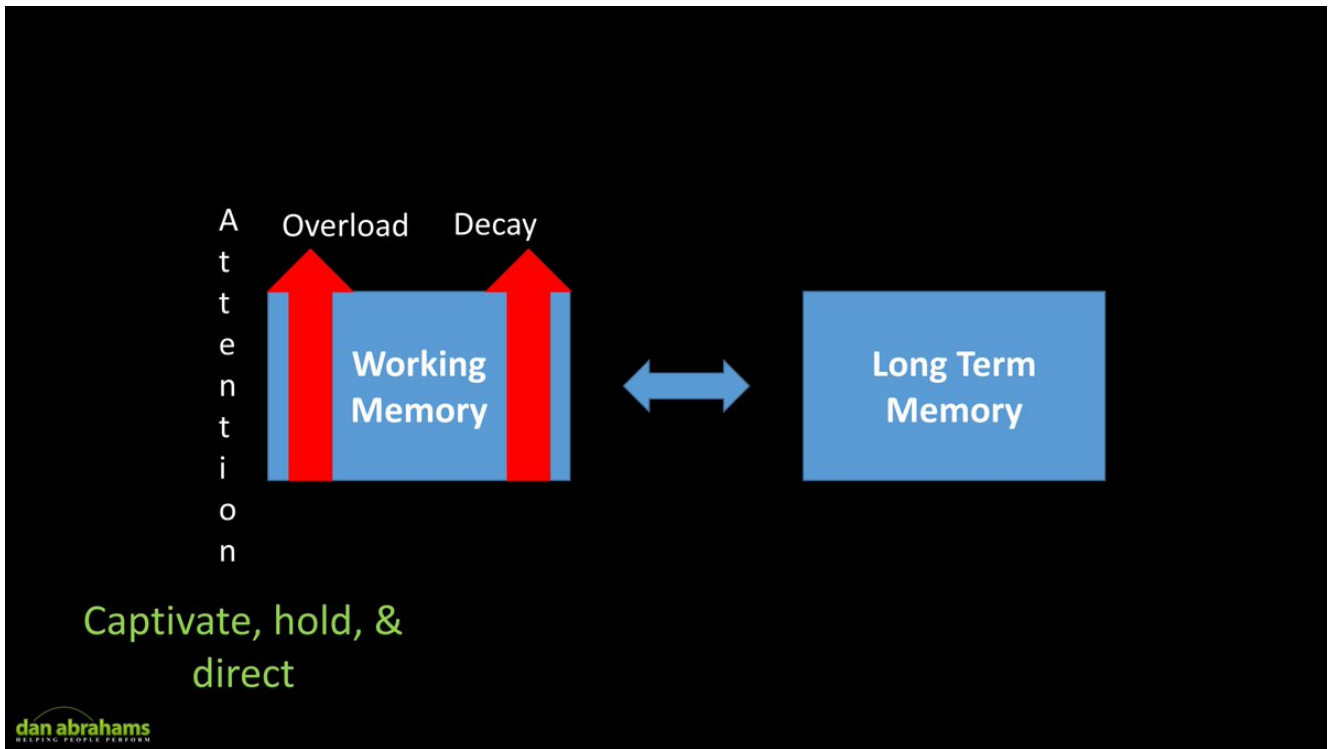
Captivate, direct…then hold through simple, short, and snappy instructions..by doing so we help players encode instruction into long-term memory.