

# Some thoughts on coaching

1. METHODS ARE DRIVEN BY YOUR BELIEFS AND ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT SKILL LEARNING
  1. Therefore, understanding how people learn and perform movement skills is the foundation to your coaching and should be thoroughly explored.
  2. Basing your activities/drills on faulty beliefs is a problem.
2. SKILL IS EMBODIED AND EMBEDDED
  1. Skill is unique to each individual's organismic constraints (embodied).
  2. Skill is embedded in the performance environment.
  3. Therefore, performers must be afforded the opportunity to explore their own way to solve the movement problem.
3. TECHNIQUE IS NOT "the correct way", IT'S "a way" TO PERFORM THE MOVEMENT TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM.
  1. The problem "being" solved is most important, how it is solved is irrelevant. Don't restrict your players from finding different solutions, that's ultimately what skill is.
4. SKILL IS IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PERFORMER AND THE ENVIRONMENT.
  1. Therefore, your practices/ activities/ drills, need to represent this relationship. Practicing skills decoupled from the environment doesn't make sense as that is where the information for decisions exists.
5. SKILL IS INFORMATION DRIVEN
  1. So, all practice activities/ drills (hate that word) should have the same/ similar sources of information that are used in the game. Opponents are the greatest source of information in any sport.

## 6. REPRESENTATIVE DESIGN IS VERY IMPORTANT.

1. Action fidelity – movements in the game are represented in practice activities.
2. Functionality – same information used in games is present in practice activities.

## 7. KEEP MOVEMENTS AND DECISIONS COUPLED.

1. Perception-action coupling, means they are inseparable, so should not be practiced separately. Practicing a movement (passing, dribbling, shooting) without the information used to make decisions is practicing a different skill all together.

## 8. SKILLS DO NOT BECOME AUTOMATIC

1. A common belief is that repetitive practice develops automatic skills (see first post). This belief in automaticity, leads to methods that align with it , i.e. repetitive drills of technique. If the belief is incorrect then so are the methods.

## 9. PRESCRIPTION DOES NOT DEVELOP SKILL

1. Instructing and/or designing activities that follow set sequences (A to B to C) does not transfer to the game. Players make good decisions by practicing making decisions not following instructions.

## 10. REPETITION DOES NOT DEVELOP SKILL.

1. Skill is adaptable, therefore, movement problems can be repeated but not solutions. This concept is called repetition without repetition. Players must find varied solutions to the same problem, which has huge implications for activity design.

## 11. FUN GAMES ARE GREAT SKILL DEVELOPERS

1. Zombie tag is a great game that teaches dribbling, agility, spatial awareness etc without actually teaching those things specifically.
2. ANY FORM OF TAG IS THE BEST AGILITY GAME EVER.

## 12. USE CONSTRAINTS

1. Manipulating game rules, dimensions, # of players (e.g. 5v3, 7v4) etc, presents different affordances for action. Set problems, don't provide solutions and let them work through trying to solve it in different ways.

### 13. REFLECT ON YOUR BELIEFS AND ASSUMPTIONS

1. Why do you believe in your particular methods? Is it grounded in skill learning theory?  
"because I saw a Premier League club do it on YouTube" is not good rationale for your coaching choices.

### 14. BE PART OF THE DISCUSSION, THE GOAL IS FOR EVERYONE TO GET BETTER

1. Coaching is an ego-oriented activity, we are supposed to know what we are doing. Traditional practices are often not grounded in evidence and that is what coach educators are trying to help fix. Let's work together

Tweeted by @kestrelpsych