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Revision

Guidance techniques

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After reading the article on pp. 22–25 of the magazine, use these notes to help you remember the four guidance techniques.

Guidance is defined as:

‘A large class of common methods in which the learner is guided in various ways through the movement patterns’. (Schmidt)

Guidance looks at methods of helping the learner through movement patterns.

There are four types of guidance technique that can be used in conjunction with teaching and practice methods: **visual**, **verbal**, **manual** and **mechanical**. They are explained below.

Visual guidance

This is a demonstration of the required task. It has the following features:

- Useful for beginners.
- Forms a mental picture or image.
- May be a video, chart or book.
- Shows what the result should be.
- Can be used to highlight a weakness.

The problems associated with visual guidance are:

- Too much information might be given at once.
- The demonstration must be accurate.
- The performer might not be capable of matching the demonstration.

An example of visual guidance is a beginner watching a coach’s demonstration of a basic pass.

To make sure that demonstrations are copied correctly, coaches should ensure that:

- the demonstration is accurate
- they highlight key points, which the learner pays attention to
- the demonstration is shown from different angles to make sure it is seen
- time is allowed for mental practice
- the demonstration is repeated to give consistency

Verbal guidance

This is an explanation of the techniques required for performing a task. It has the following features:

- Best used in conjunction with visual guidance.
- Helps to form an image of the skill in the memory.
- Tactics can be explained to more advanced performers.
- Can be used with conditioning and fitness.
- Has direct relevance.
- Feedback can be given verbally and immediately.
- Can give technical information.
- Can be used as a trigger to promote the correct action during practice, e.g. telling the basketball player to drive to the basket when performing a lay up.

The **problems** associated with verbal guidance are:

- Too much information might overload the short-term memory.
- The performer might lose concentration.
- The language could be too complex.

An example of verbal guidance is a coach explaining tactics to a group of players in the final training session before a game.

To make guidance effective, you should give it in relevant 'chunks' and the demonstrations should be accurate. All types of feedback should be used.

Manual guidance

This involves physical support, such as holding a gymnast on a vault or during a headstand. It can involve a type of forced response, e.g. tennis coaches holding the arms of tennis players to help them learn the movement of a forehand stroke. Manual guidance has the following features:

- Eliminates danger.
- Builds confidence.
- Gives an early feel and develops early kinaesthesia.
- Reduces fear and anxiety.
- Helps to break a complex movement into parts.

The **problems** associated with manual guidance are:

- The performer may become dependent on the support.
- If used too much it can interfere with kinaesthesia.
- The proximity of the coach might be upsetting.
- An incorrect feel of the skill could result in bad habits.

Mechanical guidance

This is when a device is used to help performance, such as an armband in swimming or a harness on a trampoline. It has the following advantages for coach and performer:

- Builds confidence.
- Eliminates danger.
- Gives an early feel for the whole skill.
- Can be used with disabled athletes.

The problems associated with mechanical guidance are:

- If used too much it will interfere with kinaesthesia.
- The performer might depend on it too much.
- Motivation could be lost if performers think they are not performing skills themselves.
- Incorrect intrinsic feedback encourages bad habits.