**Teaching new movement skills**

Major principles of instruction are equally applicable to teaching other subject matter.

These are the four steps to teaching sport skills:

* Introduce the skill
* Demonstrate and briefly explain the skill
* Practice the skill
* Provide feedback to correct errors

**Introduce the Skill**

Introduce the skill with enthusiasm expressed in actions and words. Speak clearly and use language your students (athletes) can understand; the younger the athletes the simpler your words need to be. Be brief too. Say what you have to say in less than 3 minutes. Avoid sarcasm, mannerisms and abusive language; they create a negative learning environment.

Three events make up a good introduction.

1. Get the class (team´s) attention.
2. Arrange the group (team) so all can see and hear.
3. Name the skill and give a reason for learning it.

ad 1. Develop a regular routine in practice for starting each teaching session. Give a signal such as a blowing a whistle, to get students’ attention. Position yourself to face the team when you speak to them. If a few students are inattentive, look directly at them and politely but firmly address them by name and ask for their attention.

ad 2. When you speak to your students, be sure to organize them so they can see and hear you. If they are milling around or crowding together, it will be much harder for you to keep their attention. Be certain that the background behind you is free of visual distractions and students are not facing the sun.

ad 3. Naming skills is important so that you can make quick reference to them. If a skill is widely known by certain name, use that one. If not, select a short, descriptive title that is easy to remember. Students’ motivation to learn increases when they know why they learn.

**Demonstrate and Explain the Skill**

Demonstration and explanation are primary ways to help your students acquire a mental plan for a skill. The skill should be demonstrated by someone who can perform it proficiently and whom the students (athletes) respect for being good in the sport. If you cannot demonstrate a particular skill, you have several alternatives: Practice the skill until you are able to demonstrate it correctly. Ask someone, who is skilled to demonstrate (more able student on the group, another teacher) or use a film or video.

Follow these guidelines for giving demonstrations:

* Demonstrate the whole skill just as it would be performed.
* Demonstrate several times, showing how to do the skill from different angles.
* If the skill is performed from a dominant side, demonstrate it for “lefties” and “righties”.
* If the skill is complex, demonstrate the major parties separately.
* If the skill is performed rapidly, demonstrated it at a slower speed so students can clearly see the sequence of movements.

During demonstration you should also explain the skill. Before the demonstration, point out one or two important things to which the students should attend. Keep your explanations simple and brief. After the skill is initially demonstrated, relate it to any previously learned skills. Why is imported? The motor programs for a skill are generalized rules. Thus it is possible to TRANSFER some of these rules for movement to the new skill being learned. (For example, if you are teaching the tennis serve, tell and show your student how these movements are similar to throwing a ball.)

☝**TRANSFER** is a positive transmission, facilitates new learning, old skills / knowledge serves as a basis. The opposite is **INTERFERENCE**. It is negative transmission,previously learned (old) skills make learning new skills difficult.

Now check to see if you students understand how to perform the skill by inviting or asking questions. When a question is asked, repeat it if necessary so everyone can hear. Keep your answers short and relevant. Do not begin explaining all nuances of the skill at this point.

**Practice the Skill**

Students (athletes) should begin practicing the skill as soon as possible following the demonstration and explanation. You need decided if will you teach the skill whole or break it into parts. (You´ll obviously make this decision when you develop your practice plan.)

Principles for better practice:

* Practice the right skill
* Keep practices short and frequent when teaching new skills
* Use practice time efficiently
* Make optimal use of facilities and equipment
* Make sure students (athletes) experience a reasonable amount of success at each practice
* Make practice fun