

Define skills and explain what makes a skilful performance

Skill classification

Motor Skill:

Motor ability:

Classification system

- **Open skills-** These skills are performed and participated in within a changing environment where there will never be a correct 'thing to do' or time to do it
 - Example- a receiver of a tennis serve will not be able to ascertain exactly when the serve will come towards them, the placement of it within the service box, the speed at which it will be travelling and whether or not there will be spin placed onto the ball.
 - **Closed skills-** Oppositely, closed skills will take place within a stable and very predictable environment where the performer is aware in advance of the action to perform and when they should do it.
 - Example- The server in tennis, they are in complete control of when to complete the serve, the direction in which it will be paced and the speed at which it will be travel. They are also in control of whether they put any spin onto the ball.
-
- **Gross-** This classification of skills contain the skills in which major muscle groups are being used in order to perform the action
 - Example- A runner is involving major muscle groups in order to perform the action that makes his/her body move.
 - **Fine-** The opposite to gross, here very small muscle groups are involved in the action/movement.
 - Example- Playing the piano

This next classification of skills below is based on the difference of the beginning and end points within a movement.

- **Discrete**- these skills have a clear beginning and end, the skill can be repeated but the performer would need to 'start the action again'.
- Example- in a tennis serve in which the movement starts when the performer prepares to toss the ball in the air and ends when the performer has finished his/her follow through.
- **Serial**- this type of skill is made up of a few discrete components, put together to produce an integrated movement. Within this type of skill, the order/sequence in which the components of the movements are performed is important.
- Example- when the triple jump is being performed the sequence is sprint, three hops, and the take off. These steps have to be performed in a set order.

However serial skills are also discrete as there is a clear beginning and end, so in many ways the skills overlap.

- **Continuous**- these skills are those that have no obvious beginning or end to them. They can be continued for as long as the performer wishes or can manage.
- Example- When running or cycling. When one cycle is of the movement is finished, following is the beginning of the next cycle.

The pacing continuum measures to what extent the performer takes control over the timing of the action. Actions are classified as being 'self paced' or externally paced depending on the extent to which the performer controls when to start the action. Actions can be and often are however somewhere in between the two extremes.

- **Self paced**- these skills are when the performer has control over the speed/ start/ distance/ position of the action.

- Example- when serving a tennis serve, the server decides when/ where/ speed/ any topspin/ backspin to place onto the ball. Ice skating moves may be performed slowly or quickly depending on the desired effect.

Other fall into the 'in between' category where the performer has control over when to start the action but none over the rate/ speed that follows. An example of this would be a dive in swimming where the diver decides when to descend but has no control from then on as to the rate of which he hits the water.

- **Externally paced-** Here the timing and rate of skills are pre determined by the environment and situation out of the control of the performer.
 - Example- when yachting, the yachtsman cannot control the speed or direction of the wind, he can only adjust the sails according to it.
-

For the following actions/movements within sport I have classified their placements on each continuum.

A Gymnastic Vault

- This is a **closed skill** because you would perform a gymnastic vault within a stable environment i.e. indoors. The performer is in control of the action and is aware when and how to complete it.
- This is a **Gross skill**, as the performance of it would involve major muscle groups.
- It is a **serial skill**, as the performance of it has to be a sequence of components. It is also discrete as it has a clear beginning and end.
- It is **self-paced skill** as the performer has control over when to begin the sequence of moves, how fast to run, jump, how high the landing will be and the placement of where they will land.

Potting the black in snooker

- This is a **closed skill** because snooker has to be played indoors and is therefore not subject to a changing environment. The performer will be aware of his shot selection and when to do what. It is slightly an open skill in that one shot will never be exactly the same, depending on the opponent or on where the black is placed for the finishing shot.
- It is a **fine skill**, as the major muscle groups all over the body are not being used.
- This is a **discrete skill**, as there is a clear beginning and end to the movement.
- It is a **self-paced skill**, as the performer has control over when/ where/ the speed/ on which to hit the ball.

Penalty flick in Hockey

- This is a **closed skill**, as the person taking the penalty is in control of the action to be performed and when to do it. It is open however, in the fact that the environment may not be so stable and predictable.
- This is a **gross skill**, as the major muscle groups within the body are involved in the flicking action.
- This is a **discrete skill**, as there is a clear beginning and end to the action.
- This is a **self-paced skill**, as the performer has control over when/ where/ the speed/ on which to hit the ball.

Passing to a team mate in a football match

- This is a **closed skill**, as the person passing the ball is in control of the action and when to do it, with what pace/speed etc.... It is open however, in the fact that the environment may not be so stable and predictable due to unpredictable weather.
- This is a **gross skill**, as the major muscle groups within the body are involved in the passing action.
- This is a **discrete skill**, as there is a clear beginning and end to the action.
- This is a **self-paced skill**, as the performer has control over when/ where/ the speed/ on which to hit the ball.

G.A shooting in netball

- This is a **closed skill**, as the shooting the ball is in control of the action and when to do it, with what pace/speed etc.... It is open however, in the fact that the environment may not be so stable and predictable due to unpredictable weather.
- This is a **gross skill**, as the major muscle groups within the body are involved in the passing action.
- This is a **discrete skill**, as there is a clear beginning and end to the action.
- This is a **self-paced skill**, as the performer has control over when/ where/ the speed/ on which to shoot the ball.

This quote:

'Skill is the learned ability to bring about predetermined results with maximum certainty often with the minimum outlay of time, energy or both'.

Before analysing the quote we need to know what the key underlined words/phrases mean.

- **Learned Ability**- The Oxford English dictionary states learned as 'Having or showing great learning' and ability as 'The power to do something; cleverness'. So learned ability is the capability to do something, in this case a skill, which has been learnt.
- **Predetermined results**- these are results
- Maximum certainty
- Minimum outlay of time, energy

This quote means and is defining the word skill. Barbara Knapp is saying that a skill/Skilful action is something that to a certain degree is natural talent, but that it involves practice and repetition in order to make it a skill. The performer needs to be able to perform the skill to a basic level and then practice and repeat it to make it a skilful performance. This learned ability would be put together to give predetermined results that will occur through the practice and repetition of it. These results will come in the form of either a stable speed record, perfect or close to precision for say a serve in tennis to bounce in the corner of the box. The results may also be in terms of power, which in many instances will combine with speed or a persons developed strength for example in weight lifting. Other ways the

predetermined results will form are in quality or difficulty i.e. to perform what is said to be the hardest shot in tennis, a backhand smash would be difficult but with practice and skill the results will mean a successful shot. Maximum certainty comes from this, being the certainty of completing the skill successfully i.e. winning the point or passing your defender. The maximum certainty is the maximum amount of times/distance this could happen following your predetermined results, taking into account factors such as weather i.e. the wind direction and speed when playing the backhand smash that may effect the certainty of it being successful. When the skill has been practiced over and over, the result is that a minimum amount of time and energy are needed to be concerned with that particular skill, because it has been perfected and the performer will know how to perform it without thinking about what they are doing, it will become a natural instinct, a proper skill.