The Classification of teaching Motor Skills Michael Fenton

- *Discuss the difference between skill, abilty and technique and explain how you would structure practices to enhance these components of fitness.*

Introduction

Skill

There are a number of different types of skill, these are:

Cognitive skills- this involves thought proccess. An example of this would be calculating batting averages in cricket.

Perceptual skills- involves interpretation of stiluli, we may see the same information as someone else, but our brain might interpret it differently to them.

Motor skills- involves the muscular system and concern movement and muscular control, i.e walking or jogging are motor skills as they involve movement and muscular control.

Perceptual motor skill- most skills are referred to as this type of skill as they involve thought, interpretation and movement (cognitive skills, perceptual skills and motor skills).

In sport, skill is seen as a co-ordinated act, involving complex movements brought together in a consistant and smooth manner.

A number of key qualities are needed in order for a performance to be skillful:

- consistancy
- accuracy
- control
- an intention
- fluidity.

Ability

In order to be able to perform any skill we must have the ability required. Ability is seen as something you are born with or is developed in early life. Abilities are often referred as the building blocks of sport, and

without the basic building blocks or movement vocabulary we will never be able to fully develop the skill.

Examples of specific abilities required in sport would include: hand/eye co-ordination, flexibilty, speed, balance, etc. Without these abilities, it would not be possible to learn skills such as serving in tennis.

Technique

Technique is often confused with skill. There is is strong releationship between skill, ability and technique. In order to perform a particular skill in sport we must learn the aquired technique, and in order to learn the technique fully we must have the neccessary abilities. SKILL= ABILITY + TECHNIQUE

Technique is something that can be learned by athletes, the better the technique, the more skillfull the athlete will become.

Main body of text

Skill is learned in many ways, but to learn a skill you must have the ability and the technique. Every sport requires a different type of skill and so each has different reqiurements. If we know the general requirements of a particular skill, we can then decide the most appropiate learning and practicing enviroments.

There are various methods of categorising skills, all of which demonstrate the need of a flexible and analytical approach.

Barbara Knapp recognised two basic classifications of skills. She suggests that skill can fit on a continuum between open and closed.

Open skills are those which are directly influenced by the enviroment in which they are performed. They are skills that require adaptations each time they are performed. The adaptation may depend on a range of enviromental conditions, the speed on a ball, the position of an opponent. Thus an open skill is never performed in exactly the same way twice, an example of this is a training match during football practice.

Closed skills are those that have no outside physical influences acting upon them. They are the same each time they are performed. The performer will go through 'a pre-learned sequence of motor activities' with no reference to the enviroment in which the skill is being performed. Once learnt, closed skills should be performed in excactly the same way each time. In a basketball free-throw, the performer's skill is the same each time, there is no outside physical factors interferring with the performance.

Discrete/continuous/serial skills

This method of skill classification relies on the excistance of an obvious beginning or end to the skill itself. In other words, is the skill a seperate aspect of a sport, which can be removed and practiced alone, or is it an element that cannot be identified as having an obvious point where it starts or ends?

Discrete skills have a clear beginning or end. It is obvious when that skill is being performed and it can be taken out of the sport as a whole and be practiced on its own, an example of this is a free-throw in basketball. This is a discrete skill as it is obviously a seperate element of the game of basketball.

Continuous skills are those that have no obvious point at which they start or finish, in other words the skill just continues to flow from element to element, as in running. This is a continuous skill as each step flows into the next. It is not clear where each phase begins or ends. Discrete and continuous skills are often shown on a continuum.

Serial skills are those which are made up of a number of discrete or continuous skills put together. These are skills which make up a sequence or routine, such as in a gymnastics floor routine, or a running forehand in tennis.

These may not suit all sports or different parts in play in sports, i.e, you can't use discrete when having a practice match in football because there is a physical influence but you can use it when practicing a free-throw. To get the best result it is best to us different kind of training to enhance different skills to raise your game and become the best performer in sport that you can.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I believe there is a clear relatioship between skill, technique, and abilty. They are all different and seem to all be needed to make the best athlete. You must have the ability to learn the technique aquired and to be skillful you must have the ability and technique. To improve your overall game you have to practice and train all of these using different types of training, i.e, using open and closed skills.