

**Discuss the differences between, skill, ability and technique and explain how you would structure practises to enhance these components of fitness.**

I am going to discuss the differences between skill, ability and technique and then I am going to explain how I would structure practises to enhance the components of fitness.

Skill is a word commonly used in sport, for example it could be the way a footballer kicks a ball, a tennis player served or how a basketball player could dodge other players. Skill is seen in sport as a co-ordinated act of different movements put together making one smooth action. Different people will view skill levels differently for example a novice compared to a professional. A reference to show this follows:

“A organised co-ordinated activity in relation to an object or situation which involves a whole chain of sensory, central and motor mechanisms.”

Welford

There are a number of key qualities to perform skilfully, which are, consistency, accuracy, control, an intention and fluidity. There are different types of skills such as cognitive skills, perceptual skills, motor skills and perceptual motor skills.

Cognitive skills are someone's mental ability for example a judges score in trampolining or a footballers average of goals scored per game in a season. Perceptual skills is down to the individual's brain as to how someone may perceive something. For example looking at a cloud in the sky may look like cotton wool or someone else may see a different picture. Motor skills involve the muscular system in our bodies that control our movements for example, running, skipping and jumping. Perceptual motor skills are a involvement of all cognitive, perceptual and motor skills for example, see, interpret, think and then move.

Whereas ability is seen to be born with it or to develop the ability at a very young age. Without a climbing frame it would be impossible to develop skills fully. In sport serving in tennis would be impossible without the ability of hand eye co-ordination. It is also impossible to develop skills using the correct equipment and environment.

Technique is commonly associated with skill and ability, technique is commonly confused with skill. The three terms are having a strong relation to each other. In order to perform a skill we must learn the required

technique, in order to learn the technique fully we must have the necessary abilities.

If we consider the definitions of skill and ability, we will see that performers at the elite level must have been born with a natural ability and then developed the specific techniques for them to perform the skills at such a high level. So this means that skill equals ability plus technique.

If I were to structure practises for skill, ability and technique, I would have to take note that to enhance skill you have to enhance ability as well as technique. So to structure a practise session to enhance skill, I'd break it down into sections. First of all I would practise closed skills for example in tennis, a closed skill could be taking a serve, in basketball a free throw and in golf a swing to tee off. In tennis I would break it down into 4 stages. The first stage I would get the group to practise throwing the tennis ball in the air until its right and in a good position to strike. The second stage I would get the group to do the same but as they throw the ball up then bring the racket behind there back over the right/left shoulder. The third stage would be just bring the racket up from the back and just hit the ball at just in to the right of the head. Finally in the forth stage I would get them to follow through with the shot to increase the power of the serve, but to learn this skill you also need the ability to perform the skill and you also need the right technique to perform the skill. I would also break the parts down for open skills, self-paced skills, externally paced skills, discrete skills, continuous skills and serial skills. Fitts & Posner (1967) suggested that there are three different stages to learning a new skill. The cognitive stage, this is when you can identify the components of the skill. Associative stage, this is when you link the components together to make a smooth motion, requires practising and using feedback. Autonomous stage, this is when you develop the learned skill so it becomes automatic.

We can teach skill in different ways. We could show the performers guidance and present them with the information. This could be a way how to structure a session to enhance the different components of fitness. The teaching styles are pure-part, whole-part-whole and progressive part. Pure-part is when the performer is taught the different parts and the performer learns the different parts before moving on to performing the whole skill. Whole-part-whole is when you show them the whole skill and then you break the skill down and then show them the whole skill again and the progressive-part method overcomes the problems in the other two methods. This method allows flexibility for example in a basketball free throw there may be four parts to the skill, you can practise the first part with the second part, then you can practise the first and second part with the third part and

then you could practise the first, second and third part with the forth and then eventually you will have the whole skill. Also we could show them a different type of guidance such as visual guidance, verbal guidance and manual/mechanical guidance. Visual guidance can be done in different ways such as showing them demonstrations, watching a video or posters. This sort of guidance can be better as you can show them how to do a particular skill rather than telling them when they might not understand. You could also modify the skill by changing the focus of the skill for example in football a free kick you can put footprints on where to place your feet before you kick the ball. Verbal guidance is when you speak to your trainee; this can be very effective if the trainee fully understands what you want them to do.

Beginners find this hard as they will not have a mental image of what to do if they don't understand, verbal guidance can be better after you demonstrate so they know what to do but the verbal guidance can pick up on what to correct. Manual/mechanical guidance this is when you physically move the performer into the correct position or restricting the performer, so they can gain the muscle memory or the kinaesthetic awareness of how the skill should feel. Each of these types of guidance depends on what the skill is and also the stage at which the learner is at. To conclude this basically, skill, ability and technique are confused as being the same thing but in fact they are very different. Ability is the basis we need to develop skills and technique is the way we perform a skill, but skill is a mixture of both, without the ability and the technique we wouldn't be able to perform the skill.

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Bibliography- Advanced PE for Edexcel, Hienemann, authors- Frank Galligan, Colin Maskery, Jon Spence, David Howe, Tim Barry, Andy Ruston and Dee Crawford.

<http://www.brianmac.demon.co.uk/tech.htm>