

Kieran Dignan

Discuss the role of feedback in the learning of skills

In Physical Education and sport we are given different types of feedback by different people in different ways.

"Feedback is the process of giving information on how well we perform during and/or after a particular activity."
(Oxford Encyclopaedia)

Feedback can be given as positive, negative, extrinsic/augmented, intrinsic, terminal, concurrent, knowledge of performance and knowledge of results. I intend to find out how each of these types of feedback is used in different types of sport in variation of individual, racquet and team-games, I will also see how learning stages affect the type of feedback which is used, this includes cognitive phase, associative phase and autonomous phase.

The various types of feedback are:

* Positive feedback is used for when a skill is performed correctly so the outcome is successful. This is essential for beginners as it gets them more motivated for the next time they perform.

* Negative feedback is used to correct weaknesses in the action so that it can be performed better next time. This feedback must be used carefully because it can easily demotivate the player.

* Intrinsic feedback is used when a player looks to improve their play. It is feedback from within the player to themselves.

* Extrinsic feedback comes from outside the player from someone watching or guiding them such as a coach or friend.

* Terminal feedback is used for building motivation or confidence as it is used before or after the action is performed. This is also commonly used in analysis of performances.

* Concurrent feedback is given during the action to keep the player in a right frame of mind to perform, usually extrinsic. A common example is a coach on the sideline shouting information on the players performance and telling them how to improve it or maintain it.

* Knowledge of results is the knowledge gained through feedback either external or internal about their performance and technique, a key step in to analysing and learning to improve the performance.

* Knowledge of performance are results which are given to the performer which then can be analysed and compared to previous performances.

Feedback is used commonly in the learning phases of performance, it is used to analyse performances and help performers maximise their skills and development.

"Learning is a more or less permanent change in performance brought about by experience"
(Knapp, 1973)

The first stage of learning is the cognitive phase and is aimed for beginners. The learner gets initial ideas on how to perform a skill by gathering information such as watching a demonstration. Then the next step is to attempt to perform the skill by themselves. After, the person guiding them will give them extrinsic feedback to encourage them or to tell them how to improve. The feedback should mostly be positive at this stage to keep the performer enthusiastic however with little negative so they know what area to work on in the future.

The second stage is the associative phase where the learner will continue to practise the skill after feedback from the cognitive phase. The learner will use intrinsic feedback to know how they could keep practising however the extrinsic feedback from the person guiding them will be verbal and mostly negative. This will help the learner know exactly where and how to improve to get the best out of the performance.

The final stage is the autonomous phase, which is what elite performers are at. The performer can consistently perform the skill correctly and use tactical and strategic considerations in their performance. For example, if a football player was taking a penalty, he will contemplate which direction the goalkeeper, who is also interpreting which way the player will shoot, will dive rather than being more concerned on the performance of the shot because that should come naturally at this stage.

If practise is not maintained in the associative and autonomous phases then regression of stages will take place rather than progression.

"Proprioception, a person's continual awareness of their balance, their whole body position or the position of any of its constituent parts."

Proprioception is another form of intrinsic feedback as the performer becomes aware of

their body movements and position. The player needs to continually analyse their performance to give them options of whether to improve or maintain.

Team games are very much open for feedback in all forms, most team games are similar and have a coach on the side watching and guiding. In football, feedback is vital for the players to keep them motivated throughout the game. There are many different types of feedback which are used in football just as much as any other sport. The three main types used by an extrinsic form are negative feedback, positive feedback and concurrent feedback. When negative feedback is used perhaps at half time or at the end it slightly demotivate me but makes me want to make amends on my performance. Positive feedback makes me motivated even more and continue to maintain the performance. The concurrent feedback which is given throughout the game gives me motivation during the game if I am performing not as well as I could.

Racquet games have slightly more intrinsic involvements. For examples in tennis Tim Henman has a coach on the side guiding him but he can only perform as well as he can on the day if he has a continual awareness of his performance, good proprioception and eager to motivate himself if he becomes demotivated. The main types used are intrinsic, extrinsic and terminal.

Individual games are very much intrinsic as the overall performance depends only on the single performer. This means proprioception must be used continually and effectively. For example in snooker there is no coach to give extrinsic feedback. After the player has taken a shot he must analyse the situation for preparation of his next shot. This is concurrent feedback from within the player.

By rewarding the player they can remember the skill action they used to complete the skill and this will go into the long-term memory and used later in the game and be performed at a higher level. While negative feedback will develop a fear of failure and create a tense practise atmosphere.

I have found from my research that feedback has a high importance of involvement in the learning of skill. Beginners need a lot of positive feedback from an outside source. The further the stage the performer is at the less extrinsic feedback is needed as they can feel

themselves when a skill is performed correctly or needs improving.

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