

Discuss the roll of feedback in the teaching and learning of physical skills.

Feedback is very important to an athlete and their performance.

There are eight types of feedback. They are:

Intrinsic feedback- information received by the athlete as a direct result of producing a movement through the kinaesthetic senses - feeling from muscles, joints and balance. Used as an error detection as the movement is in progress and feedback after the movement has been completed.

Extrinsic feedback- information not inherent in the movement itself but which improves intrinsic feedback. This is also known as augmented feedback. There are two main categories:

Knowledge of performance- information about the technique and performance. This can be provided verbally from the coach or visually via video. This enables the athlete to establish a kinaesthetic reference for the correct movement, e.g. an analysis of the sprinter's action.

Knowledge of results- information with regards the result of the athlete's performance, e.g. the sprinter's 100m time. When knowledge of results is combined with effective knowledge of performance a player or athlete can modify their actions in the future. It must not provide too much information, otherwise the performer will not know what to pay attention to or how to help future attempts.

Positive feedback- used to inform the athlete as to what was correct as this provides the reference point for future execution of the movement. Positive feedback is essential in motivating athletes.

Negative feedback- used to inform the athlete as to what was incorrect about the movement. Negative feedback must include information on the action required by the athlete to achieve the correct movement.

Terminal feedback- information provided to the athlete before or after the performance. May be given immediately by the coach or some time later, such as when analysing a video of the performance. It is important because it strengthens the schema in learning.

Concurrent feedback- information provided to the athlete during the performance. This may be extrinsic, that is a coach shouting information, or intrinsic, the feel of the movements.

Extrinsic feedback has many functions:

Motivational:

- Success is motivational
- Failure can act as a spur to motivation

- Makes the learner slightly more enthusiastic about the activity and encourages them to try harder.

Reinforcing:

- Behaviour that is rewarded tends to be repeated
- Praise for a correct performance will act as positive reinforcement
- Will influence the performer to desire to repeat the correct performance.

Informational:

- Feedback provides information about errors hence the performer will be able to correct errors
- The learner is able to associate this information with other information, e.g. kinaesthetic feedback, so that they might be able to adjust future performances accordingly.

Feedback occurs as a result of an action. A performer receives information during or after the performance of a skill, and can use this information to alter future performances.

'It allows us to compare our performance with the 'model' of the correct skill and thus to note errors and make adjustments. It tells us about the appropriateness or accuracy of the action so that we can monitor and adapt our behaviour as a result of previous performance'

Barbara Woods, 1998

When giving feedback the coach should start by reinforcing the athlete for anything they have done correctly, no matter how small. This will raise their self-esteem and confidence. It also reinforces the things they should do again and it is the best way to get their attention. This praise should be followed with future oriented instruction. Don't dwell on the mistakes as there is nothing the athlete can do to correct the mistakes made in the past, they can only change what they do in the future. Don't tell them what they already know, tell them something they don't know, not simply that they made a mistake but why they made a mistake. End the feedback given with general praise and encouragement as this will encourage them to try again and will let them know that their coach has confidence in their ability to perform the skill correctly.

Feedback is very much associated with guidance and can be given in three ways:

- Visually
- Verbally
- Manually

Visual feedback involves the transfer of information through the use of demonstrations, video images, and so on. For example a coach could video tape a sprinter during a race and play it back to the athlete in slow motion to show them where they were going wrong and how they could change things to become better and more successful. Visual feedback for a beginner helps the performer to gain insight into a performance and its quality.

Verbal feedback about performance can be very beneficial as long as it is clear and concise. Performers in the autonomous stage of learning benefit most from verbal feedback, as they are able to concentrate on what is being said, not needing to think about how to perform the basic skill. For example, during a netball match the coach may tell players what they need to do to play better and improve their game. As the netballer knows how to play they can focus on what the coach has said. Verbal feedback should be restricted during the early stages of learning since too much information can confuse the performer.

Manual feedback involves physically moving or restricting the performer. This can either involve physically manipulating the performer into the correct position so they gain the 'muscle memory' or kinaesthetic awareness of how the skill should feel. For example, in tennis the coach may stand behind a beginner and guide them through a shot so that the performer would know the correct action.