Phases of Skill Learning

The first phase is the cognitive phase which is the ability to find out what has to be done in order to perform the skill. During this phase you identify the subroutines involved and the correct sequence of the skill. You are acquired to see and experience the movement required. This phase is the 'exploratory phase'. This phase may lead to a large number of inaccuracies due to the performer at the amateur stage of the skill. You need feedback to recognise and rectify these inaccuracies. This stage can be aided by; demonstrations, video analysis etc, this helps them to perform the skill better as they have gained a mental image of how to perform the skill. This phase is only a short one. This phase needs a lot of practise and for the cognitive phase a closed practise is used. This is to not confuse the performer with other sorts of externalities such as opponents etc.

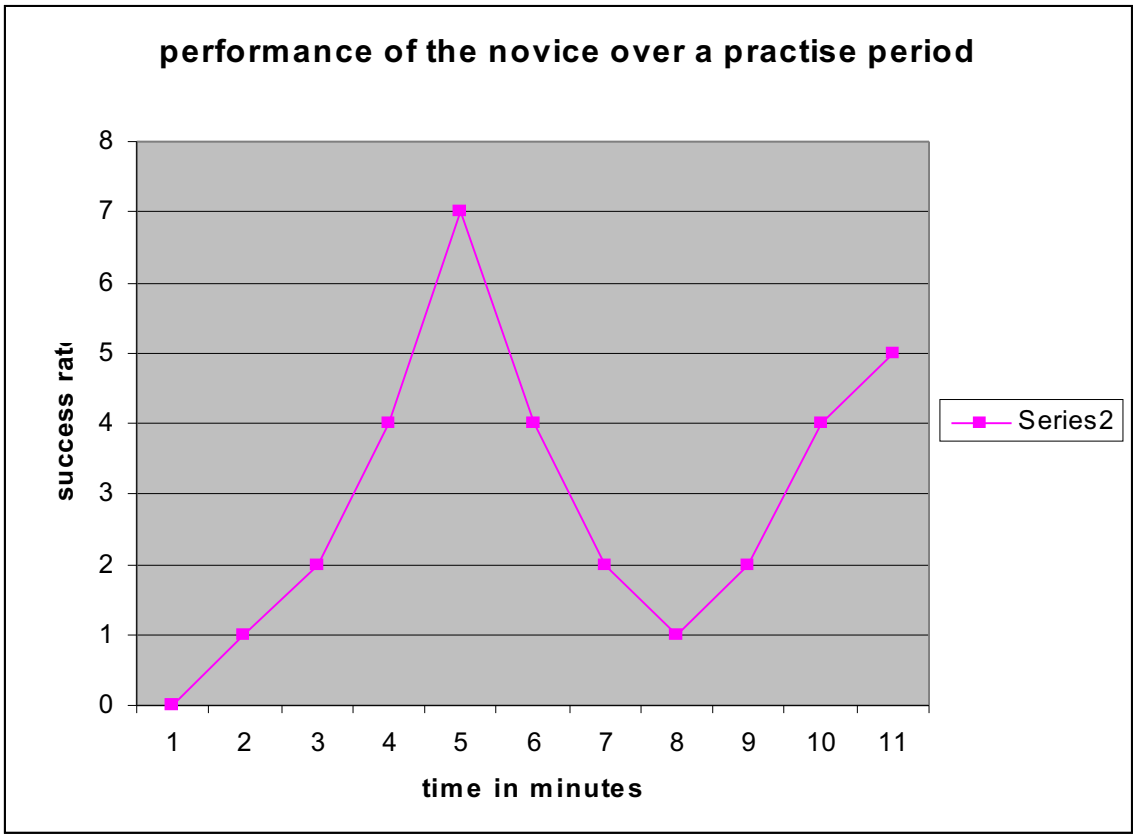
Then secondly is the associative phase. After you have received and understood the information about what is required, you must practise in order to become familiar with the complexity of the skill, your past experience and motivation. This phase can also be aided by feedback. This phase is a very long one and sometimes some performers do not move on they stagnate. Stage also needs a lot of practise but this practise should be open, for example practising football – playing a match against opponents.

Thirdly the autonomous phase, practise has enabled you to perform the skill by organising the subroutines without thinking, they become automatic. When you have reached this stage of the skill then you can concentrate on the more detail of the skill and aim to perfect it. For example in tennis when you have perfected the 'forehand' you can then concentrate on placing the shot accurately.

At the third stage the autonomous stage, the best way to learn is to compete, to play against someone who performs the skill better than you do. So then you can get practise at playing them and soon your performance of the skill be performed at a higher degree of skill. A use of performing alongside an advanced performer in a team game can show you how to perform the skill in each situation and pick out the best option.

You would know when a performer has reached the autonomous stage of the skill because the learner knows how to complete the skill

and can do so with a great degree of skill. The leaner does not have to concentrate on performance and seems to perform automatically. The learner has spare attentional capacity and can now concentrate on other things for example in a team game a player can now concentrate on tactics. The leaner has the ability to teach them selves. The teacher can use quite complicated verbal feedback as the leaner is capable of understanding it. The learner can make greater use of kinaesthetic information. The teacher should ask the leaner to try and remember how correct movement felt.



The shape of performance on this graph shows a novice serving for 20 minutes and shows the success rate. The novices' success rate will vary throughout the practise period of 20 minutes because he is a novice he is at the cognitive phase of learning as this is a closed skill. The novice needs a lot of encouragement and pointers to tell him where and when he is going wrong and how to improve it by showing demonstrations etc.