Learning Styles

This session will present introductory concepts related to learners and creating the most effective environments to learn new skills

You have typically 45 minutes per week for your players to learn the concepts of basketball. Regardless of their age this is not much time. Well designed and delivered training sessions can have a significant impact on the improvement of your players.
USE YOUR TIME EFFECTIVELY

LEARNING STYLES



Visual learners absorb movement patterns best when they see techniques, plays, and physical positions performed correctly.
Key Characteristics: Watch demonstrations intently, observe peers before trying a drill, and respond well to diagrams or video clips.

Auditory learners process sports instruction through verbal explanations, clear cues, rhythm, and spoken feedback.
Key Characteristics: Ask detailed questions, remember play calls easily, talk themselves through movements, and adjust well to tone of voice.

Kinesthetic learners understand physical skills by actively performing them, feeling muscle positioning, and learning through immediate physical feedback.
Key Characteristics: Eager to start immediately without long explanations, learn best through trial and error, and thrive on repetition.

Children process concepts and acquire physical skills through Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic learning styles, though effective youth coaching integrates all three into a multi-sensory approach.

PRESENTATION SKILLS

Organisation of your session is important but how you communicate the activities is significant in how the information gets to your learner. Spending 5 minutes at the beginning of a session ultimately leaves less time for skills. Sometime showing the activity is quicker than explaining, plus this allows the learners to be exposed to each of the learning styles discussed above. Given the different learning preferences, multi-format instructions provide the best opportunity for learning and understanding.



Demonstrations: Keep them short (30 seconds).

Positioning: Can they see you? Can they hear you? Avoid full court demonstrations where possible, and ensure the learners can hear over the ambient noise.

Cues: Highlight one or two key learning points. These can be effective to guide the learner through the skill/activity. Working memory is limited

Check for understanding: Make sure they players are aware of the task.
Avoid using "*Do you understand?*" rather
"*What were the cues I gave you?*" or
"*First we _____ then we _____?*"

Have fun: As a coach, the learners thrive off the actions of the coach. If you look disinterested, they will not engage. Be fun, energetic, and engaged!

Who: Where possible, use the learners to demonstrate the skill. Select a player who you think will be a positive model, other learners will see its achievable and provide a motivating demonstration.

Interventions: There is a temptation to stop an activity if it is not working as intended. Consider – does the whole activity need to stop?

SESSION PLANNING AND ORGANISATION

To confidently present a training session, planning is essential, as this ensures your session runs smoothly, on time and with maximum time on task. You will face challenges, but having a plan will help get the most out of the training. Below are some strategies I have used previously in planning and organizing my sessions:

- **Session focus:** What is the key aim of your session? With limited time it is not possible to spend adequate time on each skill, so over a period of a few weeks you might focus on different training aims
- **Number of players:** how many are expected to train? How will these be divided?
- **Space and equipment:** Half court? Consider how you can best maximise the space (see considerations below). Each player should have a ball!
- **Time:** How long to spend on each activity?
- **Transitions:** Move quickly between activities. Consider if any require significant set up time (create a small game to allow you to prepare next task).
- **Flow:** Allow the activities to build upon each other. Easier tasks first, adjust the challenge (eg defenders)

Key planning considerations. This is not an exhaustive list, there are many factors that will determine how you design sessions.

- **Observe first, question later**. Refrain from telling your players what to do and how to do the task. Let them try to work it out. Use guiding questions if you notice a trend. Go back to learning styles – "Let me try"
- **Numbers and equipment.** Consider how your activity can be structured to maximise player activity. Can I run the activity in pairs? Can I use both sides of the basket? Can I run the same activity in multiple places? Can I use stations?
- **Progression and regression**: Plan ways in which you can make the task easier or harder. Your players may surprise you and get it first go, other days they might be tired and frustrated and the same activity just doesn't work as expected. Simple changes can have a big impact.
  Activity to easy? reduce the space or change starting position of defenders.
  Activity to hard? Increase the space, or offset player numbers (e.g. 4v2)
- **Present skills as games and challenges**: Races, first to X points, collect the cones. But make sure you observe. This can be the point where the skill execution is secondary to winning the race. Children (and adults) like to cheat.
- **Questions:** After observing the activity for a period, you can then ask the learner guiding questions. "*What is the best position to receive a pass?* (away from defenders)?" "*Who is the best person to pass to* (the player in space)?". Avoid telling the learner the answer to the challenge – you cannot do this in games, so they need to learn this process. This is a key focus of my coaching. Take note of potential questions and consider the progressions and regressions too which can evolve from this.

Sometimes things go wrong. If you suddenly have no session plan, remember:
PLAY → TEACH → PLAY
Start with a game. Observe. Identify something players could improve.
Create an activity that helps them explore it. Return to the game.
You do not need fifteen drills to run a valuable training session.

TAKE HOME MESSAGE

- **Consider your learners:** coach to their needs
- **Preparation and planning:** Have a Plan B, C, and D
- **Observe:** Watch, question, modify, watch.
- **Have fun!**
- **Reflect:** What worked? What didn't? What should I try next time?

RESOURCES

- Sport Lesson Plans - https://www.ausport.gov.au/sport-lesson-plans
  School based basketball lesson plans. Includes a number of basic games and activities related to game based learning
- Junior NBA - https://jr.nba.com/
  A range of practice plans for different levels (12 week programs!)
- Mojo Basketball - https://jr.nba.com/category/basketball-skills-and-drills/
  Videos to accompany the practice plans
- Planning an Effective Training Session - https://basketballaustralia.etrainu.com/
  Plus many other relevant courses for community coaches

CRICOS: 00219C | TEQSA: PRV12073 | RTO: 40939