

Keeping Busy

Keeping busy by filming 400+ videos illustrating the "Related" activities that lead to Throws, Running and Jumping. I think I have enough illustrations of the "General" (5in5, More 5in5, Progressive Exercise Syllabus, Additional Movement Puzzles, etc) now for more "Related". It continues to be a useful exercise for me to keep moving between the theory of my ideas and the actual delivery. Here, in the movement vocabulary environment, I have to be creative and 'fundamental' at the same time. Where does the activity fit into the individual's journey? What has to be learned beforehand to allow progress to this activity? Does the progression cater for the slow learner and the fast learner? Is the movement destination clearly in sight regardless of the many required deviations and detours in the journey? Can the activity be easily exposed to the required changes in direction, plane, amplitude, speed, intensity and complexity? What are the 'keystone' elements of each activity?

While this is going on I am also doing an exercise to create an example of the very first certificate course for Track and Field. I am assembling elements from previous courses I have created e.g. 'Level 1 - Athletic Development', 'Level 1 - The Quest for Physical Literacy', 'The Development Journey', 'Physical Competence Assessment', 'Developing Reactivity', 'Learning', and the exercise is not easy. I will use it as an example of where I think Coach Development infrastructures should be going – but only that – an example to be put in the queue for consideration with all the other examples out there.

To keep me on track (and to keep me sane) I have a list of parameters (a framework) to which I remain faithful. There is always the tendency to include stuff simply because I know it or it looks sexy or it sounds impressive. The key is to prioritise the competing demands to ensure that the coaches get what they need as opposed to getting stuff that is simply available or fashionable. As the years have unfolded I have watched fundamentals be overtaken by fads ("spells, potions, gadgets and gurus") and other irrelevancies and we have all suffered because of this 'quick-fix', 'fast-track', 21st-century malaise. If I consider something that doesn't positively embrace the reality and context of the world the coach will operate in, then it doesn't get included.

These parameters are basically –

(a) A reaction to the current status of the sport in the community e.g. create coaches who are able to reduce the increasing *participation* problem; who can reduce the crippling effects of the lack of *physical literacy*; who can create progressive journeys for the *four pillars* that lead to *mechanical, metabolic and behavioural resilience*; to achieve all these by the judicious use of appropriate '*learning*' practices.

(b) Ensure that the ‘*Why*’ is presented with enough (and only enough) detail. Once you have done enough to convince the attendees of the rationale and importance of certain pathways and activity journeys, you have done enough and it is time to get to the ‘*What*’, ‘*How*’ and the ‘*When*’. The awaiting trap is to hurtle uncontrolled into all the scientific research and jargon that surrounds us all in today’s appropriate and inappropriate settings. There will be plenty of time in the future for the attendees to self-educate in the greater scientific detail that is available.

The key to this first course is for the attendees to be equipped with the tools to effectively deliver a session. Everything must focus on this element where the attendees are stimulated and confident in their ability to do this. Also, there must be follow-up elements in place so that, in the shortest of time (days as opposed to weeks and months), the attendees are reminded and invigorated by local and in-house workshops that re-focus on the fundamentals and confidence-building elements they experienced in the course. This is the background reasoning to the statement that, ‘*Coach development starts the minute they get their certificate*’.

I am finding myself throwing out a lot of stuff that distracts from the essential skills they will need the very next day after the course. When you imagine a novice coach attending their first session in charge of some athletes you better have confidence in what you told them. One of my suggestions is that all the information contained in related subjects such as Health and Safety, Safeguarding, Inclusion, Diversity, Bullying, are delivered online and away from the teaching focus of the course.

The course must also contain appropriate exposure to individual, partner and group teaching activities. This is where the practical components come into their own. It also requires some thought as to the make-up and experience of the course instructors. The many practical modules should contain experiences for the attendees where they are exposed to teaching tasks and given feedback by the attending instructors. My latest version, 2-4 days over weekends, includes the late afternoon and evening of the first day being a time for the attendees to prepare for teaching units the next day. These ‘preparation’ periods are also times of interaction between the instructors and the attendees.

I’m on version 6 at the moment and I am only a little happier with the structure!

Kelvin B. Giles MA, CertEd, AS
October 2021