

Throwing and other Journeys

Thought I would share part of an exchange of thoughts from a conversation to do with Athletics Australia (AA). A contributor commented on Discus throwing and I used the opportunity to set out a (probably clumsy) process that has worked for me and quite a few fellow coaches.

It may stimulate further discussion on the most appropriate journey an athlete can follow towards running, jumping and throwing activities.

"Hi XXX - while you wait for AA to create suitable opportunities to learn I will try to outline some of the qualities of what we did for other countries in this respect. If you can get to some practitioners who are experienced in this type of pathway, they might be willing to share.

It all starts with the fundamental movements of Squat, Lunge, Pull, Push, Brace, Rotate, Hinge and Landing and how they appear in each of the Athletic disciplines of Running, Jumping and Throwing. There is also a clear link between these fundamental movements and the development of Locomotor, Non-Locomotor and Manipulative skills if these descriptors are more readily understood and applied.

Each of these Fundamental movements should be understood by the coach so that they can be taught appropriately. The coaches are exposed to a variety of teaching processes (explicit to implicit varieties) for these movements and they are also taught how to progress and regress them when appropriate e.g. Slow to Fast, Static to Dynamic, Simple to Complex; Unloaded to Loaded. This movement journey quite quickly sees the fundamentals of Run, Jumps and Throw appearing quite naturally.

The learned movement vocabulary then starts to be woven into the athlete having to solve masses of Running puzzles, Jumping puzzles and Throwing puzzles as part of the journey. You mention Discus - when a young person has developed a multi-joint, multi-plane, multi-directional, multi-force, multi-amplitude movement vocabulary they will naturally be able to solve the throwing puzzles. These throwing puzzles should encompass pushing delivery, overhead delivery and slinging delivery varieties; forward, backward, diagonal and sideways movements; 2-handed and one-handed versions; two-footed and one-footed versions. Working with a partner or against a wall or free throwing; using bean bags, sand-sacks, quoits, sticks, etc; they can be encountered using a variety of ways e.g. while sitting, while kneeling, while standing, while walking, while rotating; etc. With this extensive journey in place the transition to shot, discus, javelin and hammer specifics becomes a natural progression.

Each time you ask them to grip, stance and release an implement they will have a thousand previous experiences to call upon as they learn the movement pattern. It requires a patient approach. It requires creativity. It requires a journey from general to related to specific. All I can tell you is that this works. Now we need to create a set of courses and workshops on all this. I have always offered to share with organisations on all this but as yet there are no takers.

None of this is a case for isolating foundation movement pattern development from the specifics of the event. The key is to create a session that contains enough of the fundamental movement vocabulary alongside the attraction of the event that stimulated the young person to turn up in the first place."

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