

## Sharing some thoughts on Screening

I thought I would share part of a conversation with my coaching mates Steve O'Brien and Paul Ford. We were exchanging thoughts on Physical Competence Assessment (PCA).

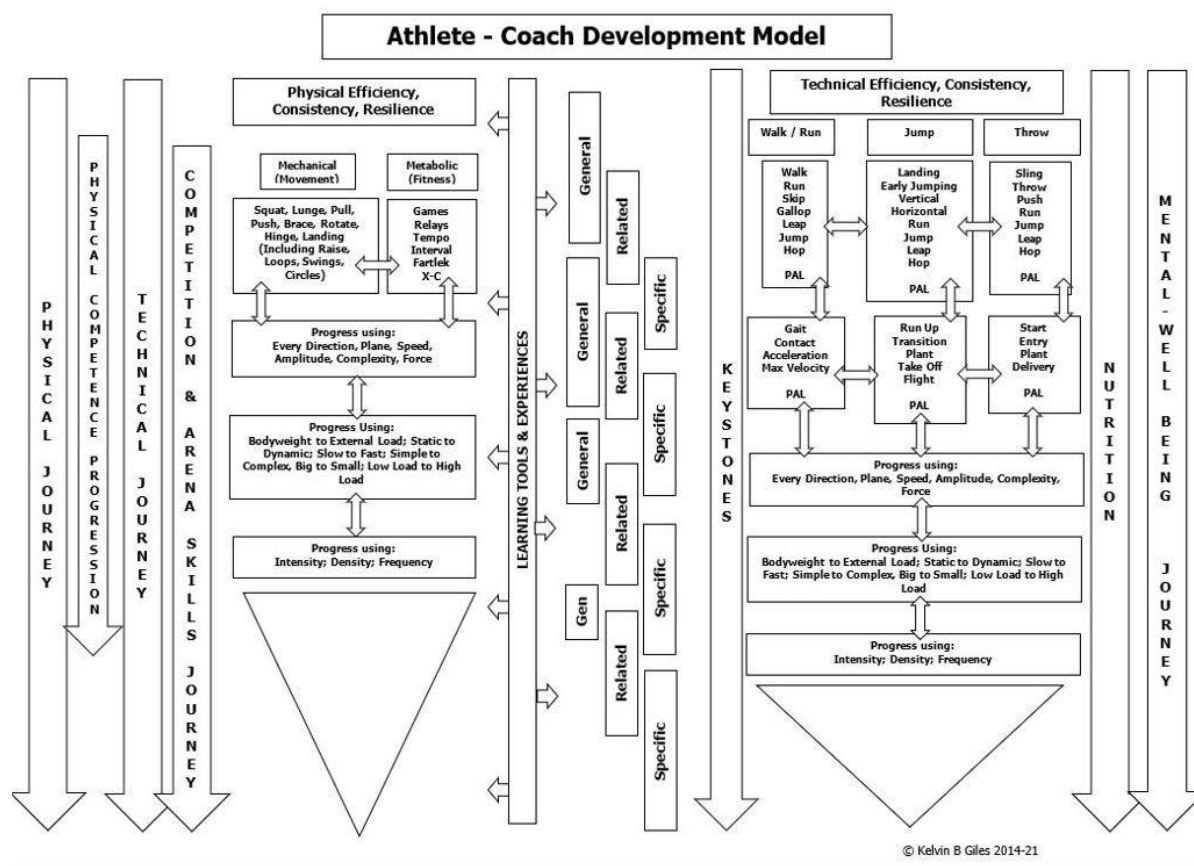
Steve had pondered, *"The question is – have you created a screening and have you developed your capacity to screen?"*

As usual, insightful questions Steve. There should never be any rush to do formal screenings above and beyond the quality of minute-to-minute teaching observations as the student learns. As coaches, we should be 'screening' all the time as we observe the athlete's response to the challenge presented to them as part of the learning journey. This 'screening' should lead to appropriate feedback at the right time and in the right manner.

Unfortunately, the bureaucracies always seem to want formal assessments for them to base their decisions on (goodness knows why they should be involved in any decision-making!). It seems that for any decisions they need to have plenty of boxes to tick and certainties to reckon with while the world of the teacher/coach is one of detail, nuances and inspiration. They then turn to 'science' to give them these often-irrelevant results.

*"I am reminded of the differences between professional research into education, action research taken by busy and semi-trained teachers, and that research which actually impacts on classroom teaching. There is a perpetual space between these three fields."* The Quill Guy

'Science' has its own set of research rules that force the creation of screenings that are often far removed from the reality of any responses to learning. Understanding the specifics of the foundation movements of squat, lunge, pull, push, brace, rotate, hinge and landing, and where and how they and their hybrids appear in the movement patterns being sought, will focus one's observation skills and improve the feedback given. The response from the athlete will, just as importantly, determine what you, as the coach, choose next for them to do. If they are struggling you will consider turning the activity down to an easier level. Or you will turn the activity up to a slightly more difficult level. Having a toolbox full to the brim of all these movement options will obviously be required. Such a toolbox can only be achieved if this element of the 'physical' pillar is a major part of the coach's journey in terms of long-term courses, workshops and mentoring. The following model illustrates a means of creating this journey.



## Screening - Part Two

It is always heartening, inspirational and educational for me when other practitioners make a contribution to a post. Their comments are always grounding for me and keep my mind focused on the actual place where the rubber meets the road, the athlete/student-coach/teacher interface.

From Joe Przytula (New Jersey, USA) - *Kelvin as you've put it so succinctly in the past- the PCA tells us where to start. Where we are on the continuum. How to set our athletes & students up for success. We're still using it here in our PE classes in Elizabeth. Looks a little different because we do peer-to-peer assessments. PCA is an under appreciated "Project-based learning" tool provided you have a good teacher to lead it.*

From Brendan Chaplin (Barcelona) - *Movement is just the beginning isn't it? The reports show the numbers, not the grimaces.*

From Steve O'Brien (the banks of the river Severn, UK) *I read your work about ten years ago, Kelvin. I found that I needed to formally hone my screening by (a) taking a course provided by MAT; then isolate screening away from traditional coaching. Only then, was I able to then subconsciously include it into traditional training sessions. Now, I only screen in an isolated environment if (a) somebody requests a full screening and then include my wife and business partner (Sports Therapist) to determine if there are any red herrings in the mix, and (b) if a recurrent issue presents.*

*As I have developed my observational skills - it becomes second nature to determine what movement skills require development and/or intervention. My question, the context that you have picked up on, was to nudge the question: "Is it enough to read the books? Only in practice, we begin to understand."*

These comments reminded me of a situation similar to that of Joe Przytula where a Primary School and major High School in Stevenage, UK, incorporated the PCA and a movement syllabus into their PE curriculum. Fifteen years ago I was fortunate to come across two great educators in the south of England. Phil Elcock was the Head of the Education Support Centre in Stevenage who introduced me to the adjacent Campshill Primary School and to the Head of PE at Marriotts High School, Mark Fox. Both expressed the desire to see the creation of a more appropriate curriculum as opposed to the 'competitive games-based' one that prevailed.

It became very apparent that both of these fine professionals were able to see the value of a plan that could:

1. Engage all of the students.
2. Help them learn the movements by their observation during the testing
3. Select an appropriate level of exercise with which to progress their competence.
4. Instil a long-term appreciation of movement and physical well-being.

Together we created a workbook for Teachers and Coaches, "Physical Competence Assessment Manual for Schools and Clubs"

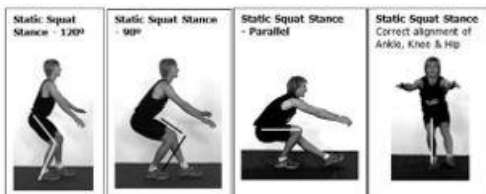
*"This is a photocopiable manual which provides information on how to apply 11 basic Physical Competence Tests. It shows how to perform, measure and record both individual and group results and also provides a few progressive exercises which may enable progress to be made in each area of assessment before retesting at a later date. This manual provides a short scheme of work for schools enabling them to record and track pupil progress. It also meets the demands of the UK's new Key Stage 3 National Physical Education Curriculum. The manual is designed to work in partnership with the measuring gauge and the Basic Software Package."*

## The Schools and Club Content Examples

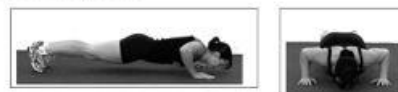
### Test Card – Single Leg Static Squat 120° - 90° - Parallel Thigh (L&R)

Exercise	Desirable	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor
Single Leg Static Squat (L&R)	5	4	3	2	1

- Position 1 (High position) - Thigh at 120° - Hold for 10 seconds.
- Free Leg held ahead of body.
- Head Up, Chest Up, Flat back, Butt Out.
- Check both the time and quality of the held position.
- Note:** Give plenty of recovery between each position attempt. Fatigue can distort the result if there is not sufficient recovery between the High, Medium and Low positions.



### Pupil Test Record Sheet – Push Up – Standard

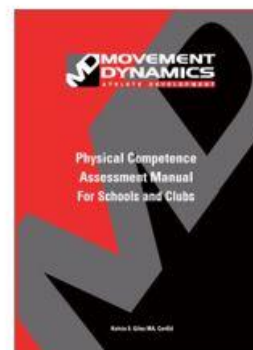
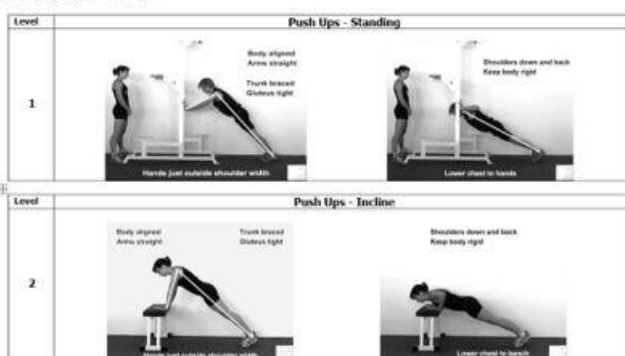


Coaching Points. Does your partner...	1st	2nd	3rd
Have Hands below the Shoulders with Fingers forward.			
Pull Shoulder Blades together.			
Keep Butt Tensed.			
Keep Stomach Tensed.			
Lower the Chest to floor.			
Keep body rigid at all times.			
Support their weight on Hands and Toes.			

Exercise	Desirable	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor
Push Up - Standard	5	4	3	2	1

NUMBER	SCORE

### Exercise Progression – Push Up



## Peer to Peer Assessment



This resource contained detail of the background to movement competence and some of the arguments for its inclusion in the journey of all students. More importantly, it contained practical resources to:

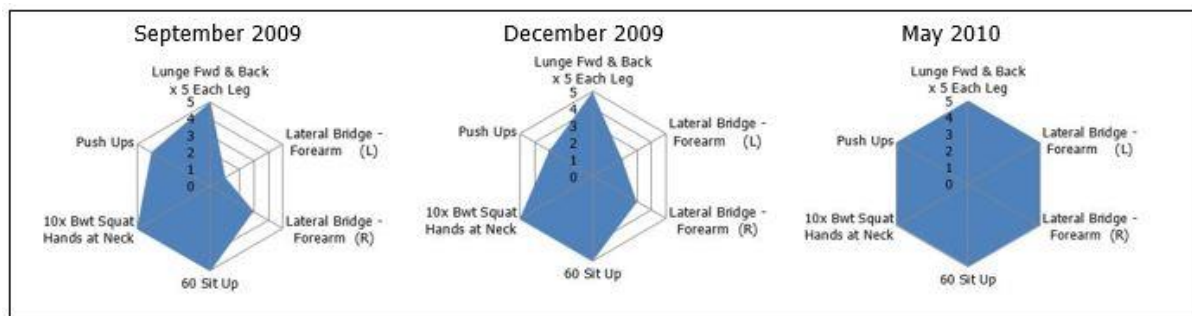
1. Assess the competence level across a variety of movements – Bracing, Squat, Push, Pull, and some range of movement (a peer-to-peer system).
2. Select the appropriate Exercise Progression unit to follow the assessment.

To these ends the resource contained:

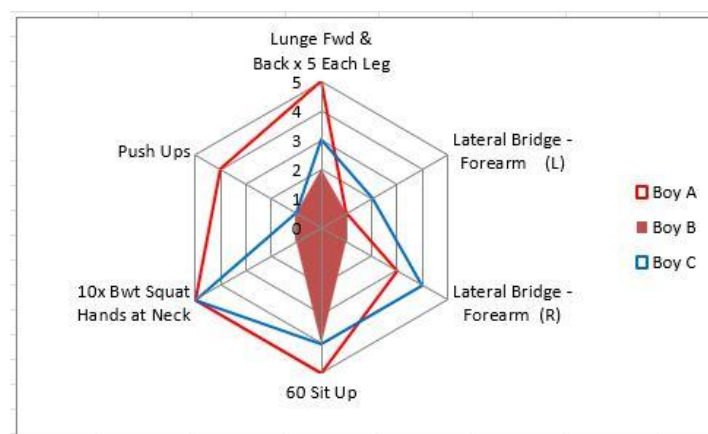
1. Test Cards for each individual test illustrating the scoring criteria.
2. Pupil Record Sheets
3. Exercise Progression choices
4. Class/Group Recording sheets
5. Individual Recording sheets

## 6. Interpreting Results

Phil led the assessment at Campshill Primary School and Mark forged a powerful pathway at Marriotts. I will remain indebted to their enthusiasm, expertise and professionalism as they supported other staff members into this new pathway. At Campshill we saw classroom teachers developing a new vocabulary taken from using the 5in5 as their exercise toolbox. Some of the students were given their own 5in5 video syllabus because they wanted to be better at things like the "Hot-Foot Lizard" and "Crocodile Crawl" and "10 Count Windshield Wiper Body Builder". The students chased improving their graphs at a personal level.



Tracking competence over time



Comparing Results

As Joe has said – it just needs a good Teacher to see these things take root and progress just as it needs a good coach to weave the magic of movement into the quest for personal bests in the chosen sport. As Steve has said - time to encourage greater exposure to the practicalities of coaching. His humility shines through as he comments on the journey he took himself to become more effective at observation in an assessment setting. Brendan reminds us that often there is a chasm between what the scientific numbers indicate and the human experiences gained in creating them.

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