

# Decision Training Confronts the “Fear Factor” in Sport



**Nancy Buzzell & Sonja Seyfort**

# **Fear Factor in Sport**

- ❑ Anxiety is a negative emotional state in which feelings of nervousness, worry, fear & apprehension are associated with activation/ arousal of one's body**
- ❑ Cognitive anxiety is the degree to which one worries or has negative thoughts**

# Purpose

**To implement Vickers' 3 Step DT Model  
Using DT Tools:**

**DT Tool #3 Bandwidth Feedback**

**DT Tool #4 Questioning**

**DT Tool #5 Video Feedback**

# **Vickers' 3 Step DT Model**

**Step 1: Define the decision to be made & identify one cognitive skill the athlete uses while performing a specific skill or tactic.**

**Step 2: Design a drill/activity in which the decision is trained & identify one cognitive trigger.**

**Step 3: Select one of the following DT Tools #3, #4 or #5 that best trains the decision in the drill/activity.**

# Cognitive Skills

1. Perception: Ability to process sensory information in short time
2. Anticipation: Ability to attend to critical cues prior to acting
3. **Attention: Ability to attend to one thing for period of time**
4. **Focus & Concentration: Ability to sustain attention to one thing for extended time period**
5. Pattern Recognition: Ability to extract meaning from group of moving objects
6. Problem Solving: Ability to use combination of cognitive abilities to arrive at a solution
7. Decision Making: Ability to solve problems by choosing between alternatives

# Anxiety And Quiet Eye

*Research in gaze indicates that anxiety affects search behavior in terms of changes in .....*

- Number of fixations - increases**
- Areas of fixations - increases**
- Duration of fixations - decreases**

# **Superior Sport Performance and the Quiet Eye**

- ❑ Increased duration of quiet eye**
- ❑ Location - specific targets for gaze**

**Nancy's Putting: What not to do!**

# How Can You Increase The Fear Factor In Your Drill Today?

- Induced pressure
- Competitive rankings
- Money or prizes
- Time or space constraints
- Other



# 7 DT Tools

DT Tool #1 Variable Practice

DT Tool # 2 Random Practice

**DT Tool # 3 Bandwidth Feedback**

**DT Tool #4 Questions**

**DT Tool # 5 Video Feedback**

DT Tool # 6 Hard First Instruction & Modeling

DT Tool # 7 External Focus & Quiet Eye

# DT Tool 3:

- Incorporates a number of feedback characteristics**
- Involves a comprehensive approach to providing feedback as skill level develops**

What did we used to recommend to coaches, and indeed most professionals, in terms of feedback? How has this changed and why?

- ❑ Instantaneous feedback was recommended - immediate feedback before athlete has time to think about their performance
- ❑ Research shows us that **Bandwidth Feedback** achieves a higher level of long term performance

# Feedback Research

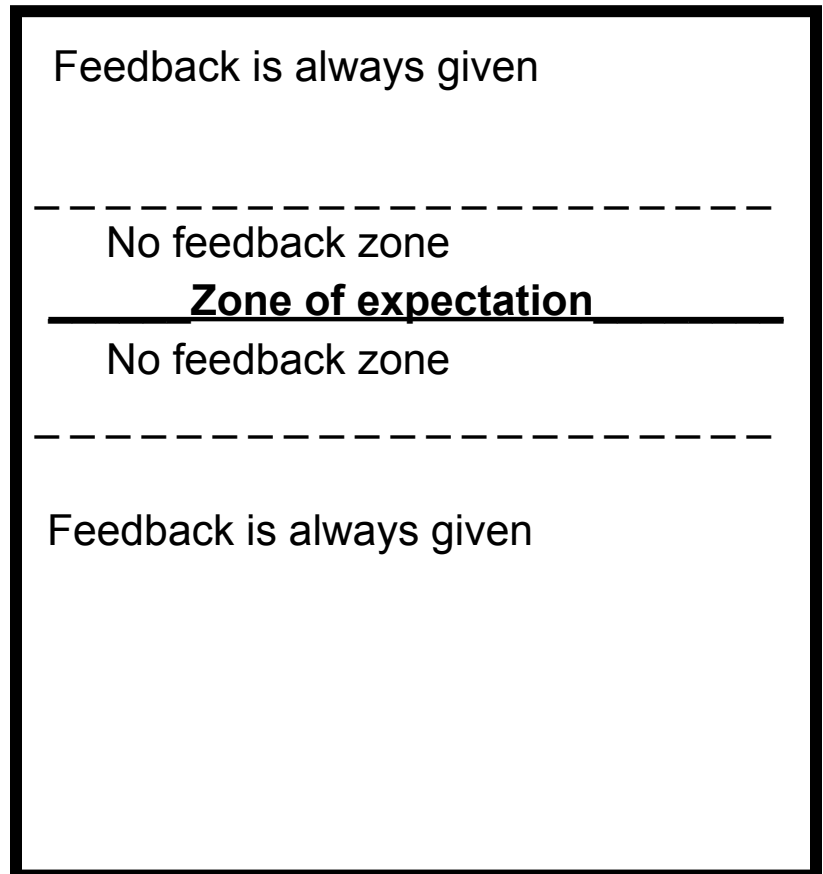
1. Frequency of feedback should decrease as skill level goes up. *Combining immediate and summative are more effective than using one or the other (Lavery, 1962).*
2. Fading - high frequency of feedback is given at the beginning of session and is gradually reduced as skill level improves. *Faded feedback showed more improved retention (Wienstein & Schmidt, 1990).*
3. Delayed feedback - a form of corrective feedback after a delay of a few seconds, minutes or days. *More cognitive retention is associated with delayed feedback (Swinnen et al, 1990).*
4. Reducing the frequency of technical feedback improves performance, even in children. *More cognitive thought required, creates a greater chance of transfer (Weeks & Kordus, 1998).*

# DT TOOL 3: **BANDWIDTH FEEDBACK**

## & how to use it:

*Sherwood Model 1988*

1. Define what you ideally want in terms of the technical or tactical skill. Zone of expectation.
2. As skill develops reduce feedback on specific areas inside the bandwidth
3. Always give feedback on areas outside the bandwidth of correctness



# DT TOOL 4: **QUESTIONING**

Basic idea: **Bandwidth Feedback** alone can create communication problems in the real world of sport coaching or other areas of professional development. Adopting a questioning style over comes this problem by keeping the communication channels open.

# Questioning:

- Questions that probe what the athlete understands about the drill, tactic or skill being trained
- Probes what the athlete understands about the decisions being made
- Probes the critical physical and psychological dimensions of sport
- Over time, the coach develops a repertoire of questions that explores the critical dimensions needed to perform at a high level

# **DT Tool #5**

## **Video Feedback**

- Athlete views his/her own performance in order to detect what is done well & what needs to be improved**
- Athlete(s) learn to use video feedback & develop self corrective skills**



# **Janelle et al (1997)**

## **Maximizing Performance Feedback Effectiveness Through Video Tape Replay**

- Is Video FB effective?**
- Throwing tennis ball to target**
- Four treatment groups:**
  - **Self directed - Video on technique only when requested**
  - **Summary - Video after every 5 attempts**
  - **Yoked Control - Video received exactly when requested by self directed**
  - **Control - Nothing beyond their own observations**

# **Janelle et al (1997)**

## **Maximizing Performance Feedback Effectiveness Through Video Tape Replay**

**Results indicated that groups receiving video feedback did better & in fact, self directed group “faded” their video feedback.**

- **Self directed - Out performed all other groups**
- **Summary - Second best performance**
- **Yoked Control - Third best performance**
- **Control - Last**

# **Janelle et al (1997)**

**Learners require less feedback to acquire skills & retain those skills at a level equivalent to or surpassing those who were given more feedback but receive it passively.**

# Video Feedback

- Delayed feedback & use of questions**
- Should be led by coach in beginning**
- Coach identifies critical cues & makes suggestions for improvement**
- Athletes quickly learn to make their own videos**
- Athletes learn to critically analyze specific skills & strategies**
- Athletes respond to questions about their performance & performance of opponents & teammates**

# Vickers'3-Step DT Practice Planning Model



# STEP 1

Identify one decision your athlete needs to make in order to overcome fear in their particular performance situation in their sport.

Name one cognitive skill the athlete has to make to overcome fear while performing this specific skill.

The main cognitive skills are anticipation, attention & concentration, pattern recognition, memory retrieval, problem solving.

# STEP 2

Design a drill that will help the athlete develop the cognitive skills to alleviate their fears while developing this one skill.

Identify ONE “**cognitive trigger**” that lets both the athlete and coach know that they have made the right decision or if the drill was successful.

Cognitive triggers are object cue, location cues, quiet eye cues, memory cues, reaction time cues, self-coaching cues.

# STEP 3

Use one DT Tool #3, # 4 or # 5 to train the decision in the drill designed in step 2.

## **DT Tools:**

- DT Tool 3: Bandwidth Feedback**
- DT Tool 4: Questioning**
- DT Tool 5: Video Feedback**