

TEACHING SKILLS

International Ice Hockey Federation

Learn To Play Program

Sheffield, England

October 17, 2004

“Hockey Is Not Rocket Science. It’s Not
All X’s and O’s and Positioning and
Systems. The Team With the Best Skills
Are Usually Going to Win.”

Don Lucia, Head Coach at the University of
Minnesota, NCAA 2002 and 2003 National
Champions

- Your impression on the young players is profound. How they relate to the game of hockey depends on you...
- 75% of all youngsters drop out of sports by age 13. There's not enough fun and too much pressure.

Question?

- Recall three teachers or coaches who had a great influence on you. What did you learn from the way these people taught that you could apply to teaching in your Learn To Play program?

Teaching Highlights

1. Growth and development
2. Factors affecting learning
3. Teaching progression:
 - * Four links
 - * Practice teaching
4. Teaching approaches

Physical Growth and Development Factors

- Assumptions:
 - Basic coordination is not very refined.
 - Development at this stage is instrumental for all other levels.
- Implications:
 - Use simple activities that develop fundamental skills with very little pressure on performance.

Physical Growth and Development Factors

- Assumptions:
Aerobic capacity is adequate for most activities.
- Implications:
Provide lots of activity and opportunity to participate.

Physical Growth and Development Factors

- Assumptions:
Right/left handedness is determined at this age.
- Implications:
Encourage the use of the non-dominant side.

Mental Growth and Development Factors

- Assumptions:
Reasoning skills are improving.
- Implications:
Play simple games with simple rules and strategies.

Mental Growth and Development Factors

- Assumptions:
Attention span is increasing but still short.
- Implications:
Give short, clear and simple instructions. Use demonstrations. Drill / activities should be changed frequently within one practice but repeated over consecutive practices until players experience success.

Social / Emotional Growth and Development Factors

- Assumptions:
Players are easily hurt by criticism.
- Implications:
Be positive in comments and provide realistic practical opportunities to develop skills.

Social / Emotional Growth and Development Factors

- Assumptions:
In the desire to succeed, players are often impatient with learning the fundamentals.
- Implications:
Help the players to recognize the importance of leaning small steps toward larger goals.

Social / Emotional Growth and Development Factors

- Assumptions:
Role models and heroes are emulated by the players.
- Implications:
Be sure to act responsibly if you are a role model for the players.

The Player in the LTP Needs:

- To have fun & enjoy hockey & physical development
- Refine basic motor skills
- Experience activities that are challenging & ongoing
- Receive reinforcement & experience success to build confidence
- Try, experiment, play & pretend in unstructured activities & adapted game situations
- Be introduced to concepts of cooperation & sportsmanship

Factors Affecting Learning

- The learning environment
- Leader traits
- Other factors

The Learning Environment

- Should be completely under control of the leader
- There should be reward for success given at every opportunity
- Encouragement must be provide to assist skill improvement
- Focus on the players' ability not their personality

The Learning Environment (cont)

- Focus on the correction of errors not criticism of the individual. Correct major errors at once
- Provide free time to experiment with new skills in self-teaching mode
- Factors that often inhibit learning – excessive enthusiasm, negative attitude, poor equipment, poor teaching tools

Leader Traits

- Knowledge of the game, the components of the basic skills and how and when to introduce them
- Ability to express the knowledge that you have at the players' level of competence and in a manner which will motivate and challenge them

Leader Traits (cont)

- Relating to the players in a friendly, courteous and respectful manner
- Ability to identify learning limits, the skill level and level of interest of the players
- Ability to capture and hold the players' attention
- Knowledge of the level of tolerance of the players so that the learning demand is not more than they can handle
- Be prepared, creative and enthusiastic

Other Factors Affecting Learning

- Be aware of progressions in learning – work from the simple to the difficult
- Introduce new skills on a solid basis, for example at the beginning of a lesson, they should be built on previous lessons and should be emphasized until mastered
- Ice sessions should be planned around the level of competence and interest of the players
- Repeat drills for short periods of time over a large number of ice sessions...praise good performance

Teaching Progressions

- Select the skill
- Plan the demonstration
- Plan the practice
- Provide feedback

Four Links in Teaching Skills

1. Select the basic skill to be learned
2. Plan the explanation and demonstration
 - a. select a skill & write down why it's important
 - b. select 2 or 3 teaching points & key words
 - c. decide if an aid would help
 - d. decide on what views a player should see
 - e. decide on who demonstrates
 - f. call for questions and conclude

Four Links in Teaching Skills

3. Plan how the players will practice the skill
 - a. take stock of the practice environment
 - b. maximize activity
 - c. move the players into practice quickly
 - d. use clear, precise instructions
 - e. check and correct practice pattern first, then check technique

Four Links in Teaching Skills (cont)

4. Provide feedback during practice
 - a. give feedback to guide improvement
 - b. use feedback as a measure of progress
 - c. use feedback as reward or punishment

Two Teaching Approaches

- The imitation method – modeling... ‘watch this’ or ‘try this’
- The demonstration / explanation / practice/ correction method

Exercises

- Make up a catchy three or four word sequence to use as an aid in explaining and demonstrating a drill
- If you were given \$1,000 what could you do to improve your practice environment
- What do you feel is your greatest strength as a coach/ teacher?