COACHING UNDER PRESSURE

Using constraints, cueing, and velocity to maintain movement quality

1 SEE & DECIDE	2 CUE	3 CONSTRAIN	4 FEEDBACK

Two questions per activity. You are the coach.

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1 See & Decide

You can coach only what you have seen. Notice everything, then change one thing.

THE TASK
One athlete works a set of swings or squats. Everyone else observes in silence.

THE RULE
Watch the whole set, then write down/think about the single intervention you would make. One only, so choose wisely.

WATCH FOR
How much you saw against how much actually mattered (the gap between the two is the skill).

THE TRAP
Seeing everything and trying to fix all of it. We often try to fix too much at a time.

Q1 You likely saw several faults. Which one did you pick, and why that one?
Q2 Name one thing you saw and deliberately chose to leave alone.

Informed by: Boyd (1987) military strategy; Klein (1998) decision making under time pressure; Sweller (1988) cognitive load

2 Cue

CUE LADDER:
Teaching sentence (necessary for the first time)
Short cue (recalls the teaching)
One-word cue (quickly recalls the cue)
Gesture (even more quickly recalls the cue)

Fewer words, faster change. Move down the cue ladder.

THE TASK
Kettlebell swings, jumps, or medicine-ball throws. Coach in pairs, then swap.

THE RULE
Round 1: full teaching sentence.
Round 2: short cue.
Round 3: one word or a gesture only.

WATCH FOR
Which cue changed movement fastest? Did it change with fatigue?

THE TRAP
Repeating the cue, stacking a second one on top, or explaining after it lands.

Q1 What is your one-word cue for a specific fault (no naming a body parts).
Q2 If your cue did not work, what is your next move, and what do you not do?

Informed by: Bailey & Wulf (2020) ; Gallimore & Tharp (2004); Winkelman (2020);

3 Constraint

Let the task do the teaching: redesign it before you explain it.

THE TASK
Squat pattern, acceleration drill, or a lifting derivative. Coach in pairs, then swap.

THE RULE
The coach may not speak to cue.
Change the task instead: target depth, tempo, a reactive start, a positional target.

WATCH FOR
Does the task require the behaviour you want?

THE TRAP
Adding a constraint and then talking anyway. When we are working in a fast-paced environment, you might not have the ability to explain everything.

Q1 Change one thing about the task to limit the likelihood that the fault happens. What did you change and why?
Q2 When is talking the better option than redesigning the task?

Informed by: Davids et al. (2013); O'Keeffe et al. (2021) representative design; Sweller et al. (2019) instructional design

4 Feedback & Intent

Feedback should sharpen intent and velocity is simply one way to deliver it.

THE TASK
Jump squat, trap-bar jump, or explosive press. VBT device, jump plates/mat, or a phone app to measure objectively.

THE RULE
Round 1: no feedback at all.
Round 2: give the number.
Round 3: repeat it under accumulated fatigue.

WATCH FOR
Whether the number changes what the athlete does or how the coach coaches it.

THE TRAP
Feeding back because the data exists, rather than because the athlete needs it.

Q1 The number drops ten percent. Do you tell the athlete, and what exactly do you say?
Q2 No device today. What do you coach instead to get the same intent?

Informed by: Kahneman, Sibony & Sunstein (2021) judgment and noise; Schön (1983) reflection in action; Wulf (2013) attentional focus

>>> TAKE IT TO THE FLOOR

Four things to coach tomorrow

1. See more and change only what matters.
2. If you repeat it, it was (probably) too long.
3. Design the task before you explain it.
4. Feedback should sharpen intent.

EVIDENCE BASE

Motor learning Wulf · Bailey & Wulf · Winkelman · Schmidt & Lee · Magill & Anderson

Task & skill design O'Keeffe et al. · Davids et al.

Decision under pressure Boyd (military) · Klein (emergency services)

Instruction & cognitive load Sweller (education) · Gallimore & Tharp (teaching)

Judgment & reflection Kahneman et al. · Schön · Ericsson et al.

LAST QUESTION What is the one thing you will stop doing on Monday?

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Notes