



LEVEL 2 CANDIDATE SUPPORT PACK



# Level 2 Certificate in Coaching Paddlesport



**Candidate Support Pack**



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## **BCU (UKCC) Level 2 Support Pack**

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### **Acknowledgements**

This resource has been developed in partnership with the British Canoe Union National Source Group, Ian and Tracy Sherrington, and Edward Christian.

### **Published and Distributed by:**

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## LEVEL 2 CANDIDATE SUPPORT PACK

### Introduction

Welcome to the BCU UKCC Level 2 Support Pack! This pack is designed to help you get the most from your Coach training course. It provides the knowledge required at Level 2, activities and key learning points to help you through the course. Your tutor will refer to the information during your training course and use some of the activities.

We hope that the pack will help guide you after your training course, we understand that training courses can be pretty crammed with information that can be hard to absorb at once. This pack helps you focus on particular areas of the coaching process and provides information that you need to know for assessment. Use the pack to clarify concepts and methods delivered on your training course and to prepare for assessment.

Paddlesport coaching is a practical activity and whilst the information contained here should help you – you need to practise and apply the ideas. We try to help you do that through activities and with ideas to help you take the information off the pages and into your everyday coaching!

### Learning Outcomes

The BCU UKCC Level 2 Support Pack aims to help develop your understanding of the essential skills a Level 2 Coach needs. It does this by;

- Providing an overview of the information you will cover on your Level 2 course
- Encouraging you to think about the skills you already have
- Providing resources to help you evaluate, reflect on, and manage your coaching delivery
- Making suggestions on how to develop positive behaviour and good habits
- Offering guidance on how to tackle activities that you may find difficult
- Helping you understand the theory behind good coaching practice



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In the following chapters you will find various symbols and activity boxes. You are encouraged to spend time on the activities as these will help you think about your coaching and prepare you for assessment.

### Applied Activity

These activities are designed to help you apply of the Level 2 syllabus to your everyday coaching activities.

### Development Activity

These activities will help develop your understanding of specific areas and will get you to think about developing your existing ideas and activities.

### Reflective Activity

Reflective activities are designed to encourage you to reflect on your past experiences and how they apply to Level 2 coaching.



**This highlights the really important stuff!**



**This symbol directs you to other resources that you can use to develop your knowledge of a certain area.**



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## Part 1 - The Level 2 Coach

### Introduction

This chapter will detail what is involved with being a Level 2 Coach, looking at the following topics;

- Remit of the Level 2 Coach
- Progression from training to assessment
- Roles and responsibilities
- Skills and competencies of the Coach
- Working with other levels of Coach
- Reflective practice and self-profiling

It is really important that you read and digest the information in this chapter as it gives you information about what is expected of you as well as what your award will let you do and not do.

### 1.1 Remit of the Level 2 Coach

There are three elements to the remit of the BCU (UKCC) Level 2 Coach;

- A Level 2 Coach is trained and assessed to plan, deliver and review a series of six coaching sessions, for paddlers who fall into the Long-Term Paddler Development Paddlesport Start and/or Development stages (See section 3.2)
- The BCU UKCC Level 2 Coach can operate in a Sheltered Water environment with any paddlesport craft with a ratio of 1;6 (See BCU Terms of Reference)
- The BCU UKCC Level 2 Coach can train and assess paddlers for the BCU 1 and 2 Star, Paddlepower 1 and 2, Cross Stream challenge



Your remit defines what you are qualified to do, your scope and areas of responsibility. It is really important to digest this information.



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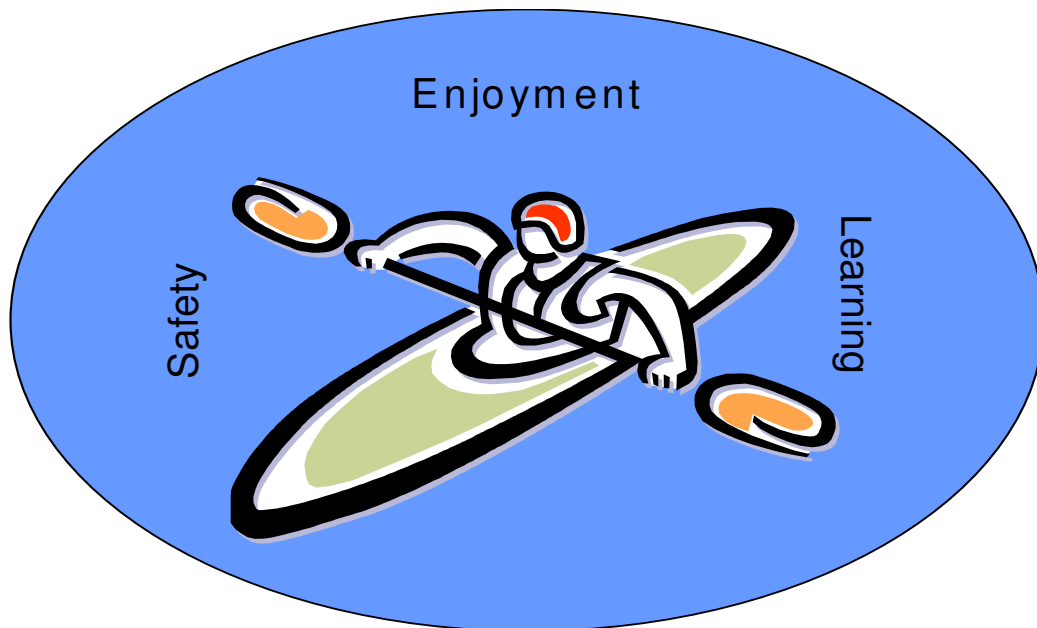
### 1.2 Roles and Responsibilities

As a Level 2 Coach you have a number of roles and responsibilities that you are expected to fulfil. These can appear quite daunting at first but it is important for Coaches to understand and accept their responsibilities.

A main priority of the Level 2 Coach is to make the most effective use of time spent on the water, in the classroom or on the bank. To be effective means that you have met the aims and goals for a particular coaching session. A number of factors resulting from your roles and responsibilities will need to be considered before your students arrive for the session;

- Selection of coaching venue
- Your choice of equipment, is it suitable for the group?
- Any legal requirements, i.e. parental consent
- Responsibility for the physical and mental well-being of the student(s)
- The coaching undertaken by the learner
- Linkage to the next session

A good way to think about fulfilling the roles of the Coach is to consider the SEL (Safety, Enjoyment, and Learning) principle;





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SEL indicates that safety is paramount and fundamental to all our coaching. A safe coaching environment must be established and maintained before a participant can learn or have fun! This highlights the importance of the participant's welfare and development being central to quality coaching and not simply focusing on any one of the three circles. It is fair to say that if you are working to the SEL principle (that is, your learners are safe, having fun and learning something new) you will be fulfilling your responsibilities as a Coach.

### **Roles**

As a Coach you will find yourself needing to assume a variety of roles in order to incorporate the SEL principle into your coaching, some of these might include;

Instructor	Directing activities
Teacher	Passing on information and empowering paddlers' development
Motivator	Creating a positive learning environment
Friend	Supporting the paddler
Manager	Organising and planning
Social Worker	Counselling and advising
Scientist	Analysing, evaluating and problem solving
Student	Continuing to develop your own skills
Guardian	Looking after the safety and well-being of participants

Remember the Paddler Centred approach – most paddlers will require all of these jobs to be fulfilled at some point.

### **BCU Policies**

The BCU have a number of written policies that as a BCU (UKCC) Level 2 Coach you are responsible for understanding and making sure you abide by, these include;

- BCU Duty of Care
- Statement of Physical Competence
- Participation Statement
- Coaches' Code of Conduct
- BCU Child Protection Policy
- Equal Opportunities



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### ➤ Injury Prevention and Manual Handling

These policies are all available on your Home Nation Association Website. It is good practice to be aware of the basic principles outlined in the relevant documents.

## 1.3 Skills and competencies of the Coach

Coaching can be thought of as an intellectual activity, to be a successful Coach involves our ability to identify the 'best fit option' and apply this to our learners. This process relies heavily on decision-making ability as there may often be a number of different ways that coaching tasks or issues might be tackled. Successful Coaches will constantly be making decisions based on their knowledge and experience that will lead them to the 'best fit option', which may involve balancing a number of conflicting elements.

Being aware of the competencies that are involved in coaching is beneficial for a number of reasons;

- It provides targets and goals for personal development. Without the ability to identify what you already do and which coaching behaviours you need to improve it is difficult to get better at coaching
- Most Coaches are involved in some kind of formal or informal coach education. As a Level 2 Coach you may find yourself working with Level 1 Coaches where you might act as a mentor, passing on your knowledge and skills
- The ability to be able to identify aspects of good practice and effective coaching competencies will make the observation of other Coaches much more productive. It allows us to critically observe another individual's work and gather top tips and handy hints, which in turn helps us in our own development



## So what are these competencies?

### Knowledge

- About the subject matter
- About the individuals you are working with – as individuals and within group interactions
- About the venues and environments that you intend to work in

### Decision-making

- That occurs before, during and after the session or programme
- Decisions that are concerned with the selection of 'best fit' coaching methods and approaches
- Decisions that focus on aspects of safety and the personal well-being of the learners and the groups you are working with
- The management of the learning environment to provide a platform to achieve the identified learning outcomes

### Action

- These are overt behaviours by the Coach that aim to meet the aims and objectives of the session or programme
- Action in the interactive nature of coaching. This is where Coaches continuously change and modify what they are doing in light of new information that is received from the constant flow of learner, task and environmental feedback

## 1.4 Working with other levels of Coach

### Providing direct supervision for less experienced coaches;

If you need to provide direct supervision for a less experienced coach you need to remember that whilst you can task your assistant to lead parts of a session or practice you are ultimately responsible for the health and safety, and have a Duty of Care towards learners and other coaches during your coaching sessions.



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Responsibilities when working with an assistant;

- you discuss with your assistant their roles and responsibilities for each session
- you supervise and monitor the assistant
- you provide feedback and evaluation to the assistant to help improve their skills

**Planning:** Whoever plans the sessions, you should ensure that it is discussed and shared. You can decide who is running which parts, and ensure that they are happy with any elements they may be leading. If the assistant has prepared the plan, you should check and approve it prior to the session commencing; highlighting any potential issues – such as health and safety, technical inaccuracies or organisational problems.

**Delivery and Conclusion** – You, or the assistant may lead the delivery and conclusion of the session, decide to take on different parts of the session, or team-teach.

Remember to decide who is covering the various elements of the session, for example;

- Completing Health and Safety checklists
- Completing Risk Assessments
- Session Planning
- Collecting information from participants
- The Safety Brief
- The warm-up and cool-down
- Preparing and leading activities
- Providing Feedback
- Clearing equipment after the session

Remember that you are ultimately responsible for the quality of the session and the safety of everyone taking part!



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### **Working with more experienced Coaches**

You may find yourself on the other side of the coin, being fortunate enough to work with a more experienced coach. This is a valuable opportunity to learn and develop your own skills / knowledge. Remember the points covered above and try to make the most of the time together – always ensure you receive honest feedback to help you further develop.

### **Development Activity**

Think about your job as a Level 2 Coach, try to consider as many contexts as you can that might be outside your normal working environment. List some ideas for the questions below; see how many answers you can get for each question as this will give you a wider view of your job as a Level 2. Some ideas have been given to get you going.

**Who am I responsible for?**

*Myself, other water users...*

**What am I responsible for?**

*Safety, the environment, equipment...*

**What roles might I need to fulfil?**

*Friend, motivator...*

**Where can I teach them?**

*Lakes, sections of sheltered bays...*

**What qualities do I need?**

*Decision making...*



## 1.5 Reflective practice and self profiling

### Reflective practice

In your career as a Coach you will undoubtedly have days where you are an unstoppable 'coaching machine' and everything you do works well and exceeds your expectations, likewise, you will probably have days where nothing seems to work and your learners sit staring at you with blank and confused faces! It is important for us as Coaches not to get too complacent when we do well or disheartened when we don't. In order to try to balance such extremes it is important that we learn from both our mistakes and failures and develop our coaching for the future. One way to do this is by the process of reflective practice.

Reflective practice is the process of taking past experience and knowledge and critically evaluating them in the light of new experiences and knowledge.

Reflective practice can help us make sense of experiences that at first glance seem unstructured and unrelated. It's not about treating sections of learning in isolation, but blending them with other experiences and using them to revisit existing ideas about effective and efficient practice. Reflective practice allows us to consider what has happened and build on what we already know about coaching and utilise ideas by adding value to past and present learnt skills.

Reflective practice is an important process at all levels of coaching and is aided by;

- Making time and space in coaching situations for both you and your paddlers to reflect in the learning undertaken. When time is limited it is tempting to cut time allocated to reflection, but to give the process value you must give it time
- Programming it into all coaching or training activities. Reflective practice can be used to link one session to the next
- Using training diaries, session planners and coaching logbooks as they all provide opportunities for written reflective practice; this might help you to remember the important bits! Some Coaches keep an individual journal or just a little black book of those little gems that they don't want to forget



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Remember, it's not only the experience that you gain that makes you better but what you do with that experience.

### **Self-profiling**

Being able to map our existing skills and abilities is an important part of the reflective practice process. In order to improve in our weaker areas we must first identify what they are. It might be that in your coaching career you have little experience of coaching in 'V' shaped hulls. Or maybe you are not used to working with a specific type of group such as people with disabilities.

One way of self-profiling is to use a self-profiling diagram like the overleaf. This has 8 sections each of which has 5 levels. To fill it in just write the thing you are profiling on the outside of the section and shade in how many levels you think represent your current ability. When you are finished you will be able to identify areas of your coaching you are happy with and those that require development.

### **Development Activity**

Try drawing three of your own self-profiling diagrams. Fill one in that relates to your own personal paddling; what are the areas you really need to improve? Maybe that hanging draw needs a polish or you need to brush up on your solo open canoeing?

With the other two, try one for your coaching experience and knowledge and one for your general knowledge of paddlesport.

(See Appendix 1 for Blank Self Profile Diagram)

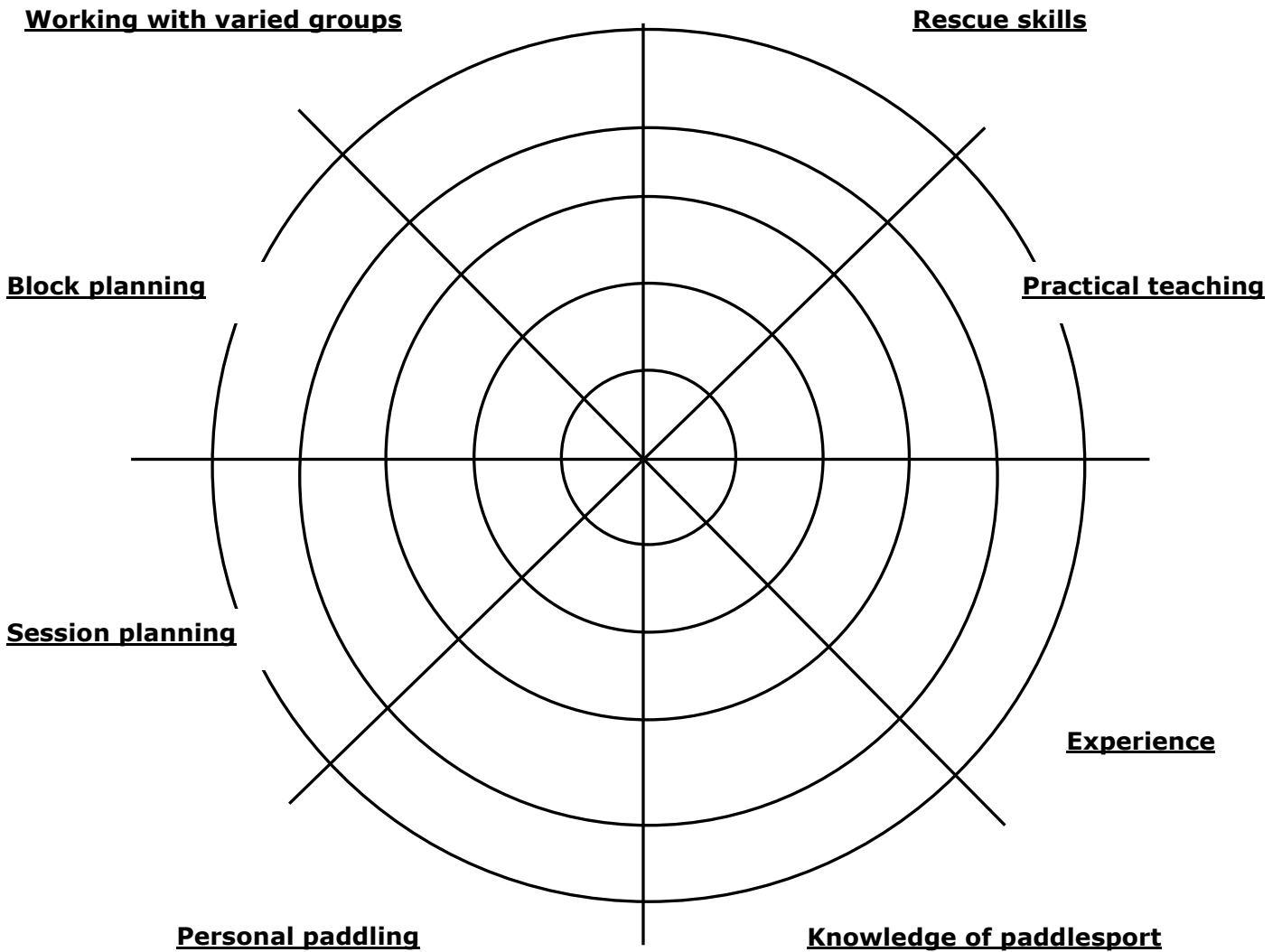


For more information on reflective practice check out;

- 'Coaching' by Bill Taylor in the BCU Coaching Handbook (Pesda Press)



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## Part 2 - Reviewing Participants' Needs

### Introduction

In this section we will look at reviewing the needs of participants. It is essential in coaching to keep the needs of our learners central to all our coaching activity as it ensures that our coaching is relevant and we are giving our learners what they really need. We will start by considering the kind of information we need to find out about our learners then explore how to collect, record and review in order to make plans based on it. We will also consider the needs of specific participants and how they affect our coaching.

### 2.1 Collecting information

In order to begin planning coaching sessions you will need to gather as much information as you can about the group you will be working with. This will allow you to meet the needs of the group and help you structure your sessions.

This information should include detail on;

- Who the group are and their names
- Their previous experience and abilities
- How many participants
- Their ages
- Gender
- Any particular needs
- Medical information on participants
- Behavioural / social needs
- What they want to achieve
- Evaluations of previous sessions

You may also need to consider other people's needs at this stage, for example; parents, carers, other Coaches, support staff, facility staff, etc. The more information you can find out about the whole picture, the better.



## 2.2 Dealing with Confidential Information

As a Coach working with a group for a series of sessions it is reasonable to assume that at some point you will be responsible for handling confidential information about your participants. Being in a position of responsibility you have a duty to handle this information discretely and sensitively.

Information that might be considered confidential is;

- Family / social history
- Medical history
- Financial background

Confidential information could be presented in different ways and from various people. Information that is recorded on paper should be kept locked away in a filing cabinet / office.

Within the BCU Coaches Code of Conduct it states that;

1.18 BCU Coaches inevitably gather a great deal of personal information about participants in the course of a working relationship. Coach and participant must reach agreement as to what is to be regarded as confidential information, i.e. not divulged to a third party without the express approval of the participant.

1.19 Confidentiality does not preclude the disclosure of information, to persons who can be judged to have a "Right to Know", relating to participants when relevant to the following;

- a) Evaluation of the participant within the sport for competitive selection purposes
- b) Recommendations concerning participants for professional purposes
- c) Pursuit of disciplinary action involving participants within the sport
- d) Pursuit of disciplinary action by the BCU involving fellow Coaches in alleged breaches of this



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We also have a responsibility to the Data Protection Act (1998) that states;

- Only relevant and necessary information should be held
- Information is only be used for the purposes stated
- Information is not kept for longer than required
- Information is secured in a safe place (e.g. locked cupboard / box)
- Information is disposed of securely (e.g. shredded)
- Information is not passed on without consent
- Information is kept for an appropriate length of time

### 2.3 Collecting and Handling Information

Information is available from a number of sources;

#### **The person/s who organised the session**

This person should be able to tell you how many people there are in the group, roughly what experience they have and the age range. They may also be able to tell you the time, venue, and equipment available. They will also have organised any assisting Coach, and direct you to the risk assessment and local operating procedures. Sessions are often organised by a number of people; find out who has been involved with setting the session up and try to find out as much detail about the group as you can. The fewer surprises you have when you meet the group the better!

#### **Medical declaration forms and parental consent forms**

These will provide details of any pre-existing medical conditions and the participants' age if under 18.

#### **The group**

Question the participants and group leader directly. You can find out what experience and skills they have, what they would like to achieve and if they have any specific needs. This information gathering may be via a written questionnaire and/or verbal questioning (group or individual) depending on the logistics of your session.



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Some of the information you collect will be confidential; you have a responsibility as a Coach to deal with this appropriately. Information relating to participants' personal details and medical history needs to be kept in line with Data Protection guidelines.

### Applied Activity

Think about the main coaching activities that you are currently involved in. List all the information about participants you think is most important to you and identify sources you would gather this information from;

## 2.4 Specific Participants' Needs

We keep talking about making sure our sessions meet the needs of our participants. We can expect certain groups of participants to display certain characteristics. Whilst we mustn't make too many assumptions we can take these basic expectations as a starting point for our session planning. As you spend time with individuals your knowledge of their needs can become more accurate by watching them perform and through conversation. We will look at some generalised characteristics of a few groups;

- Beginners, intermediates, and advanced paddlers
- Children, adolescents, and adults
- Males and females



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### **Beginners**

Beginners are often learning completely new skills and techniques, they have to think about movements and have no build-a-picture of what the skills look like. When they try to perform a new skill the movements are often jerky and awkward, and unsuccessful. The performer doesn't naturally correct their actions. With practise, coaching and observation they will begin to understand new skills, but won't necessarily have the ability to apply them.

They may have skills and experiences from other sports that they can learn to apply to Paddlesport. The beginner will need a lot of support from the Coach to help build accurate pictures through precise demonstrations, feedback, and careful questioning. The Coach can simplify a skill by breaking it down into logical components to help the beginner with bite- size chunks of information, as it's important not to overload the paddler with too much information.

The paddler will need positive feedback to let them know when they have done something right – they might not know. As a Coach, don't worry too much about the outcome, focus instead on the actions, it will take the paddler sometime before they can put it all together to get the desired outcome!

Top Tips when coaching beginners;

- Don't use technical jargon – keep your language simple
- Keep instructions short and simple – don't overload
- Relate your explanations to things they can already do in other aspects of their life
- Provide lots of demonstrations
- Build skills up, bit by bit
- Build solid foundations and don't try and progress or pressurise skills too quickly
- Keep activities short and change them frequently; beginners will often expend a lot of energy and tire quickly



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### **The Intermediate Paddler**

As participants develop they begin to apply skills with more consistency and adapt them to fit different situations, although they still require practise and thought. The paddler begins to have a mental picture of what the skill should look and feel like. They can normally cope with more technical feedback from the Coach and use this to help correct mistakes, they will also be able to reflect on how a move felt and use that to improve their own performance. Coaches should encourage this self-analysis through questioning.

The Coach can help develop skills through practices that challenge the paddler to use the skill in different ways – the Coach sets the challenge, the paddler finds the solution. The Coach and paddler can use sequences to help them learn complex skills, for example, the bow rudder; plant – squeeze – pull...

Top Tips when coaching intermediates;

- Back to basics
- Variety
- Develop self analysis and encourage independence
- Work with individuals motivations and interests

### **The Advanced Paddler**

Advanced paddlers perform skills automatically; they don't need to think about what to do, it comes naturally. This allows them to focus on other elements such as overall outcome or tactics. Advanced paddlers will still be learning and adapting to ever-increasing challenges – the learning never stops! Paddlers at this level can usually detect and repair their own errors. Goal setting becomes crucial to continue development and performance through focussing on the finer points and maintenance.

### **Children**

As children are developing both physically and psychologically at such a rapid rate, and with the sporting activity they do having such an influence on their long-term development, it is quite a responsibility working with them! Children enjoy sport because its fun, they get to be with friends, to learn and be



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challenged, and to achieve success! We can use a few strategies that help us make the most of this in our coaching;

- Make your sessions FUN! This is what motivates children to play sport and also how they learn best!
- Keep the atmosphere positive, using lots of achievable (yet challenging) goals and heaps of success!
- Build in lots of variety, don't let them get bored!
- Include a variety of competitive / non-competitive activities, group / individual / partner work and some free play with minimal adult direction
- Ensure equipment is suitably sized
- Use activities that maximise every child's involvement. Games where the weaker participants become excluded or over emphasised should be avoided
- Use the activity as an opportunity to develop attributes such as fair play, discipline, being a good sport, appreciation of personal responsibility, and responsibility for others.
- Children are great copiers! Demonstrations work really well, be aware of the impact of role models – they will copy you and those around you who they respect, use these to your advantage! This goes for the technical stuff, but also general attitude.
- The social element is important to children; they need time to be with their friends. Think about how you group them.
- Develop quality skills – what the child learns is likely to stay with them through their sporting career!
- Variety through a range of sports is important for children; we should encourage them to participate in a range of different sports.

Remember, whilst we can make these assumptions, children are individuals and we need to bear in mind personal physical and mental characteristics and continually evaluate our sessions to make sure we are doing the best job for them!



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### **Adolescents**

Adolescence is the period of transition from childhood to adult maturity. It is a period of rapid physical and mental change and creates a number of challenges for us as Coaches;

- Physical proportions change, this can lead to clumsiness
- Self identity is being established, what their friends think is really important, and tension can exist between adults and adolescents as the young person is beginning to form independence and their own opinions
- It is important to engage the young person in decisions and allow them to take an appropriate level of responsibility for their own performance, whilst maintaining session safety
- The young person is coping with a change in how they manage relationships with the opposite sex
- Sport can be viewed as a masculine activity, with a large drop out of female participation at this age. However, many girls enjoy the social aspect of participation. Try to establish what the participants enjoy, and base your sessions around this

### **Adults (Males and Females)**

Men tend to be physically stronger and more powerful than women are and will often use this to achieve desired outcomes. On the other hand, women tend to show more caution and focus on good technique. Neither approach is better than the other; the male 'go for it' approach can lack finesse and lead to poor technique development, but with speed and high levels of confidence; whilst the female develops much better feel and technique but often lacks the confidence to use it! When coaching skills we need to ensure the individual is appropriately challenged so the level of 'over powering' or 'lack of confidence' doesn't negatively affect the skill development or session enjoyment. You can also use activities to develop greater sensitivity and technique, or confidence where an individual shows these traits.



## 2.5 Coaching Paddlers with disabilities

Coaching participants with disabilities can be extremely rewarding and offer a challenge that many of you will want to tackle. You don't necessarily need any special training to work with disabled paddlers, but will require sport specific knowledge and the ability to adapt your work to safely cater for specific disabilities.

Some of the considerations we need to be aware of are as follows;

- Know and understand the particular need
- Provide adequate access to facilities
- What medical considerations need to be accounted for
- Information on individual participants needs
- Additional assistance that may be required
- Specialist equipment requirements
- Specific safety issues
- Availability of first aid equipment
- Emergency evacuation procedures

With this information in mind, we can start to think about how we can support participants with particular needs. There are no hard and fast rules to how we support particular needs; applying common sense and making subtle alterations to sessions are the main priorities. Some ways that we can adapt our coaching styles to support participants are;

- Use of verbal and non-verbal communication
- Use of assistance from others (lip-reading, signing)
- Visual cues and aids (green flag for go, red flag for stop)
- The Coach's' position within the group
- Changing or adapting rules to accommodate needs
- Modifying equipment (rafting canoes together for stability)



## 2.6 Child Protection

As a sports Coach you are deemed to be in a position of responsibility for the welfare of young people in your care. This means that we, as Coaches, should have a good working knowledge of child protection issues, be able to identify signs of child abuse, know which relevant authorities to contact if we suspect a child is being abused, know what information to pass on, know how to respond to an allegation of child abuse and know what situations to avoid to ensure your actions are not open to misinterpretation.

We also have a responsibility to attend regular Good Practice and Child Protection courses in order to keep up-to-date with current issues and legislation.

There are five main forms of child abuse;

- Neglect
- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional
- Bullying and/or harassment

Signs of abuse;

- Unexplained bruising
- A normally extrovert child becoming withdrawn
- A normally introvert child becoming aggressive and extrovert
- Flinching on or near contact
- Sexually explicit language

When listening to a child disclosing information;

- Listen actively
- Do not make judgements
- Use an open door policy
- Write down an account of the conversation as soon as possible after the disclosure
- Don't promise not to tell anyone
- Let the child talk, do not interrupt



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Relevant authorities to contact when responding to child abuse;

- Police
- Social services
- NSPCC advice and helpline (0808 800 5000)
- BCU Child Protection Officer

Information you would seek to pass on to the relevant authorities if abuse was suspected;

- Only what you have observed, know, or have been directly told by the child
- Dates, times, location, and the people involved

Responding to an allegation of a Coach abusing a child;

- Pass on the information to the authorities as soon as possible
- Do not confront / talk to the Coach concerned
- Do not undertake the investigation yourself
- Pass the information onto the professionals

Situations the Coach should avoid to ensure that his/her actions could not be open to misinterpretation.

- Being alone with the child
- Taking a child in their car
- Taking the child to their home
- Sharing a room with a child
- Physical contact with a child



This is a brief summary of best practice; please refer to the BCU Child Protection Guidelines for further information. And remember if you are coaching Under 18's it is important to complete Child Protection Training (e.g. ScUK Safeguarding and Protecting Children).



## LEVEL 2 CANDIDATE SUPPORT PACK

### Applied Activity

Digesting information related to reviewing your participant's needs will be a lot easier if you can apply it into the context in which you work. With a partner or in a group discuss the following scenarios and write down what action you would take in the situation

#### Scenario 1;

You have been working with 13 year old Helen as part of a summer holiday programme for young people in the community. She is staying at a friend's house over the summer as her parents both work long hours. Recently she has begun to withdraw from the group and appears to have lost interest in the sessions. At the end of today's session she has confronted you alone in the activity store and appears to be very distressed. She asks you if she can talk to you alone.

#### Scenario 2;

Working as a freelance Coach, you have been approached by the PE teacher of a local school. The teacher has asked you to run a series of canoeing sessions as part of an outdoor education programme at the school. All the young people involved display emotional and/or behavioural difficulties ranging from aggressive behaviour to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Identify what kind of issues you might encounter with such a group and discuss what action you could take to resolve them. Don't forget to think about what other support might be available to you from the school.



## Part 3 - Producing Plans

### Introduction

The old proverb “Failure to plan is a plan to fail” couldn’t be more relevant to sports coaching. If we don’t know where we are going with our coaching sessions then we will not know when we get there and this devalues the activity for the Coach and the learner.

In the last section we looked at reviewing participants’ needs and we also focused on gathering and analysing the information that helps us build a picture of what we need to give the participants. In this section we will consider how we use this information to produce plans based on the needs of the participants. We will look at the planning process in more detail, helping you develop your skills to plan progressive sessions, which is appropriate to the Level 2 Coach. It examines the role of planning in the coaching process and introduces how to plan to make coaching more effective.

### 3.1 Why Plan?

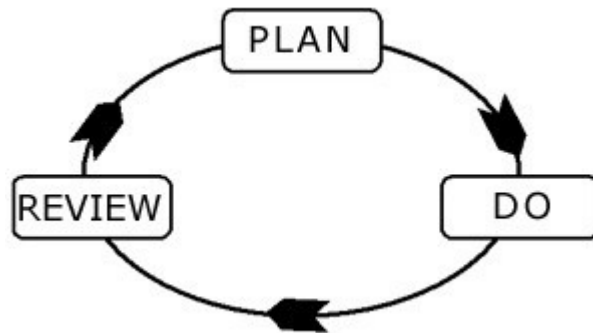
Planning cannot be overemphasised as the key component of the coaching process. It is also useful to have a contingency plan within your plan to account for larger or smaller numbers than expected, or the session not running as you had expected. The main reasons for planning are as follows;

- To meet participants’ needs based on the information gathered
- To ensure safety
- To make the session interesting and fun
- To provide the session with direction and focus
- To ensure progression
- To increase motivation
- To ensure variety, and to suit individual and group needs



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You will remember the plan – do – review cycle from your Level 1 course. This is a really helpful model to remember when planning as it gives us a fundamental framework to base our coaching activities on.



The plan-do-review cycle helps ensure that you achieve a safe and enjoyable learning environment.

### 3.2 Long-Term Paddler Development (LTPD)

The underlying principle of LTPD is that individual paddlers are given opportunities based on their personal needs. The Long-Term Paddler Development pathway aims to create a framework that provides paddlers at all levels of skill development, in all disciplines, the opportunity to be the best they can. The model seeks to provide individuals the opportunity to enjoy our sport at whatever level they choose, whether recreationally or high performance. It also aims to help deliverers provide the right opportunities at the right time, ensuring that paddlers are enjoying paddlesport and progressing at an optimal level.

The Long-Term Paddler Development model supports paddlers from the first day they first get into a boat over a span of many years, providing a logical progression of programme planning and skill development from the young paddler to the experienced performer.



## LEVEL 2 CANDIDATE SUPPORT PACK

There are three key areas in the LTPD pathway;

### **Foundation Paddlesport**

This is applicable to anyone starting out in paddlesport and is split into three stages;

- FUNDamentals – Learning to move
- Paddlesport start – Learning to play sport
- Paddlesport development – Learning to paddle

The Foundation Paddlesport stages are designed to develop a strong core of skills through enjoyable and appropriate activities. They aim to give paddlers a base to progress either into recreational or performance paddlesport or into other sports depending on their aspirations. This stage is based on having fun and developing quality movement skills.

Optimal development requires an early start; ideally paddlers should be passing through these stages between the ages of about 5 and 13 years old. However the principles can be applied and be very beneficial for anyone in their first few years of paddling.

### **Recreational Paddlesport**

This area aims to give paddlers opportunities and skills to maximise their enjoyment and satisfaction from the sport to whatever level they desire. This is applicable to paddlers who wish to achieve personal goals, e.g. enjoy a surfing holiday, be able to paddle class 3, learn to cartwheel, use paddling as a fitness session, or to enjoy regular trips on a local river. The Long-Term Paddler Development model can be used as a goal setting evaluation tool, helping individuals and Coaches to identify specific areas that need development in order to reach their personal goals.



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### **Performance Paddlesport**

This area is applicable to anyone wishing to maximise their potential and equally applies to the competitive and non-competitive disciplines. It is split into three stages;

- Train to train – Develop skills and fitness
- Train to perform – Learn how to perform under pressure
- Train to excel – Producing the goods when it matters

Paddlers who come into this category would include, for example, those with high aspirations on the competitive strands of paddlesport, but equally those wishing to pursue a recreational discipline to the highest level, for example, a solo sea kayaking expedition or a first descent.

The LTPD model takes the paddler from basic to complex skills, from general to specific and from beginner to expert. It seeks to ensure that individuals who come into the sport, stay in the sport and achieve performances that reflect potential and aspirations. As Coaches we should be applying the principles of LTPD into all our delivery.



More detailed information on LTPD is available in the 'BCU Long Term Paddler Development Pathway Document' available from [www.bcu.org.uk](http://www.bcu.org.uk)

### **Development Activity**

It's really important that you have a good working knowledge of LTPD as it forms an important part of the BCU UKCC philosophy of paddlesport coaching. Get hold of a copy of the BCU Long-Term Paddler Development Pathway Document from the BCU, give it a good read and be able to talk about it to your peers and students.



### 3.3 Session planners and Block plans

As a Level 2 Coach you should be used to using session planners to assist session delivery. Session planners are useful tools; they allow us the time and space to work out exactly what activities we are going to use to meet our needs and ensure that nothing is forgotten.

An effective session planner will pay close attention to timing and sequencing. Take time to consider how long each element of the session will take, giving enough time for participants to achieve the desired level taking into account their existing skill level. Punctuality is important too, not only does it set a good example but starting on time will ensure you get the most out of your session.

When thinking about the sequencing of the session (or the order in which you will run the activities) try to be progressive. Start with an activity that students will find simple and gradually build them up to make them more challenging. You can do this either by adding another element to the skill or by changing the environment.

For example, if you are planning a session on sweep strokes you could sequence the main activities as follows, after an introduction and demonstration;

- do a paired activity
- practice this on both sides, with individual Coach feedback
- practice; paddle around a buoy and back
- practice; paddle your boat around some shapes
- practice; paddle your boat around the shape of your written name
- summarise the key learning points
- play a game of tag

Each of the practices and challenges is becoming progressively harder and more challenging.

#### **Block plans**

As a Level 2 Coach you will be expected to plan and deliver block plans of work, which are derived from the needs of the participants. The block planner consists of an overview of a 6-session block of work; the six sessions must also show a clear progression of an appropriate technique, skill, or tactic. Recreational



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Coaches may tend to programme block plans that focus on skill development, movement skill and boat handling, whereas performance Coaches or those involved with racing and competitive disciplines may focus more on physiological and psychological areas to enhance performance. As rounded Coaches with a focus on LTPD, we should be able to design and implement a 6-session block of work that deals with either recreation or performance...or even blend the two.

When programming a 6 session block of work try to be creative, you are only restricted by your imagination! As you become more experienced you will find this becomes easier as your coaching toolbox becomes more and more full. A good point to remember is to try to focus on core concepts rather than individual strokes.

For example, a 6-session plan based on the low brace turns isn't going to keep participants motivated, whereas a programme focusing on versatility of boat handling will encompass lots of elements that are central to overall paddling performance. On the following pages you can see two examples of a 6-session block of work. The first one relates to recreational coaching and the second to performance coaching.



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<b>Outline plan for 6 sessions; Balancing and edging</b>
<p>Session 1; This session will focus on introducing the concept of changing the shape of the boat in the water and focus on the notion of balance as a concept in Paddlesport. Group will consider static and dynamic balance and play various games to highlight the effects of weight transfer. A Coach led session.</p>
<p>Session 2; In this session the group will have the opportunity to explore the concept of edging in craft with different hull designs (V, flat, rounded). Tasks and games will be aimed at highlighting the differences in craft design when edging. Group will also consider the difference between edging and leaning. A student centred session.</p>
<p>Session 3; This session will look specifically how the movements behind edging and balancing should feel. Tactics that emphasise kinaesthetic awareness will be used (i.e. blindfolding) (Coach and student led)</p>
<p>Session 4; Bracing and other stroke progressions will be explored. What is the role of balance and edging in strokes like bracing and sculling for support? (Student led)</p>
<p>Session 5; How does edging and weight transfer affect our stability through the turn? This session is about turning on the move and how changing the shape of the boat assists the turn (bow rudder, low brace turn etc.)</p>
<p>Session 6; This session is a consolidation of the previous 5. Extensive opportunities for variable practice will be given. Games and competitions which highlight key concepts will be used as well a session focusing on stress proofing.</p>



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<p><b>Outline plan for 6 sessions; Development of kayak racing skills</b></p>
<p>Session 1 - Goal setting; This session will look at the concept of goal setting. It will encourage the group to set realistic, achievable but challenging goals that are both long and short term. A flexible perception of success will be discussed and encouraged with an emphasis on achieving individual aspirations. Short goal setting activities will be employed to highlight discussion points.</p>
<p>Session 2 - Endurance training; This session seeks to improve paddlers' muscular endurance; it will use activities that require extended periods (at least 30 minutes) of sub-maximal paddling. The "rating of perceived exertion" or Borg scale will be used as a training tool to standardise individuals effort out put.</p>
<p>Session 3 – Motivation; This session will focus on individuals' motivation and seek to explore reasons for participation and how this can affect performance. The notion of task and ego orientation will be discussed as well as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. This is a practical session with theoretical discussions stemming from practical activities.</p>
<p>Session 4 - Conditioning; This gym-based session is designed to develop muscular strength required for K1 racing. Specific muscles required for performance will be targeted, such as deltoids, lats, biceps, triceps, abdominals, and pectorals. Paddlers will complete 2-3 sets of a 10-exercise circuit. Each exercise will consist of 10 -12 repetitions (i.e. 10-12 bicep curls or lat pull-downs).</p>
<p>Session 5 - Dealing with competition; In this session psychological issues surrounding competition will be discussed. Exercises designed to control anxiety and arousal will be introduced (such as imagery and mental rehearsal). 'Psyching up' exercises such as positive self-talk and levels of optimal arousal will be introduced. This is a classroom session but has a practical theme due to practising psychological exercises.</p>
<p>Session 6 - Anaerobic training; This session will employ interval training to develop paddlers lactate threshold, thus improving aerobic fitness needed for starting races and sprint finishes. This is a boat-based session and will consist of 30-minute blocks of paddling exercises; alternating between 5 minute hard paddling (sprint) and 5 minute easy paddling (technique/style). This is an intense session and due attention will be paid to the physical well-being of paddlers.</p>



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If you are unfamiliar with some of the terms used in the performance block of work check out;

- Guidelines for exercise Testing and Prescription. By the American Council of Sports Medicine (A physiologist's bible!)
- Understanding Psychological Preparation for Sport; Theory and Practice of Elite Performers by Hardy, Jones and Gould



You will find both of these on [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk) or alternatively just use Google or Wikipedia. Don't be intimidated, it isn't rocket science!

When planning a 6-session block of work try to ensure that you demonstrate a clear and realistic progression from one session to the next. The progression should be for a particular technique, skill or tactic rather than, 'we are doing low braces in session 1 then high braces in session 2'.

### Development Activity

Planning a series of 6 sessions is a central element of coaching at Level 2. Using a blank planner (available in your Level 2 Candidate Workbook Assessment Tasks) have a go at writing a block of work. You might choose a theme like stability, posture, blade awareness, or just make up your own. Getting another Coach to give you feedback on your plan is a good way to discuss your thoughts and develop your plan.

As you become more experienced you may find that you use individual session planners less. This may be due to your experience allowing you to be reactive to participants' needs and act on instinct rather than relying on a session plan. However, working within the framework of the 6-session block is important as it provides a time frame to measure success. Rather than completing individual session plans for your block of work you might decide to use a mind map, a diagram, or just some notes in your buoyancy aid pocket.



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How you decide to plan your coaching is up to you and is very individual but it is essential that within our plans we set goals for our learners.

### 3.4 Goal Setting

Goals can be thought of as objectives that a paddler will work towards and are central to the coaching process. We all know how satisfying it is to achieve something we have worked hard towards-passing a driving test or buying a first house, for example. Goals are important to us as they give us something to work towards and keep us motivated. They also help us measure progress; whether it be paddling in a straight line, a first roll, a solo sea crossing or successfully paddling a difficult rapid.

Goal setting is more than stating the aims of a session to a group. It requires you, as a Coach, to accurately consider how to make goals 'paddler-centred' and meet the needs and motivations of the individuals in your group as well as being progressive.

There are various types of goals that we can set as Coaches but first we'll revisit the SMART principle from Level 1.

Specific:	Specific to the activity and detailed
Measurable:	Goals that can be measured or assessed
Agreed:	Agreed between the Coach and participant
Realistic:	Challenging and achievable for the participant
Time-phased:	The goal has a timescale for achievement



It is important that the session goals reflect the participants' needs and your capabilities! Use the information gathered to help you do this.



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### **Types of Goals**

Broadly speaking goals differ in terms of the time period that they relate to. Some goals can be targets for years in the future whereas others might be achieved almost immediately, we can categorise these as long-and short-term goals.

### **Long-Term Goals**

Long-term goals are like mission statements; they often refer to outcomes that might be quite far in the future. Competing in a national competition, making a first descent or completing a wilderness expedition are examples of long-term goals. Long-term goals are like painting a big picture of where we want our learners to be; within this are all the 'stepping stones' needed to contribute to success, where short-and medium-term goals come in. It is important to remember the needs of the learners in setting long term goals, an 8-year-old paddler might not see the value of a 5-year plan!

### **Short-Term Goals**

Short-term goals are the paths to success in long-term goals. They are the little parts of the puzzle that come together to create the big picture. For example, if a long-term goal of your learners is to roll for the first time, a short-term goal might be working on the hip flick or the position of the head in the movement. Only when all the little elements of the roll have been learnt will the learner be able to put them together into the finished item. Short-term goals might be achieved in one session or even less but should generally form a part of the learner's long-term plans.



## Reflective Activity

Think about your own experiences learning to paddle. Can you write down 3 long-term goals in your paddling career and the short-term goals that contributed to your success? You might want to set yourself new long-term goals for the future and think about the short term goals you'll need to achieve to get there.

### Objectives

We can further explore the nature of goal setting by considering the kind of objectives they display. These objectives can be outcome focused, performance focused or process focused. This results in three different types of goals.

### Outcome goals

An outcome goal is focused on the outcome of an activity or by achieving a particular target. Reducing a best time in the 1000m sprint or winning a polo match are examples of outcome goals. The problem with outcome goals is that there may be many factors that impact on achieving it that are outside of the paddlers' control. If, for example, a learner's goal for the summer is to pass their 2 Star Award but an illness prevents practice they would fail to achieve their goal even if they had improved.



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### **Performance goals**

Performance goals are focused on achieving a set standard of performance independent from others in the group or fluctuating environmental challenges. Aiming to improve a J stroke from 2 to 3 Star standard would be an example of a performance goal. Rolling 60% of the time in a pool session would be another example. Performance goals should relate to factors within the control of the paddler. This makes performance goals a far more reasonable measure of a paddler's personal achievement and progress.

### **Process Goals**

Process goals focus on controllable factors within a paddler's performance that will result in improvement. Consistently leading with the head and body in a low brace turn would be a process goal. Maintaining a vertical paddle in a draw stroke is another example. Process goals emphasise particular factors or coaching points that a paddler specifically needs to work on to improve performance. Performers who focus mainly on performance and process goals have been shown to be more confident, less anxious and better able to concentrate. This is not to say that we should not use outcome goals. As Coaches we need to make sure that our paddlers understand that only performance and process goals are directly related to their efforts and these are the important goals to measure their success and achievements.



## Applied Activity

Try setting some goals for your next coaching session with some existing learners. Making sure you have based the goals on the needs of the individuals, can you identify what type of goal it is, what activity you could set to improve the learner, and how you will measure successful performance?

For example, Alice's goal is to stop bringing her head out first when rolling. This is a short-term process goal. I will get her to practise righting herself on the side of the pool and see how long she can leave her head in the water. I will measure her success by her attempts at a full roll after the practice.

### 3.5 Choosing session content

With the needs that you have identified for your participants and the goals you have set you can now decide what you will need to cover in your sessions. As you become more experienced you will find it easier to choose what to cover in your sessions.



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The main priority when choosing session content is to identify the different components that are required to achieve the goal(s) you are working towards, these usually fall into the following elements;

**Technical:** e.g. forward paddling, sweep strokes, edging, rolling

**Tactical:** e.g. trimming an open canoe in the wind, teaching rescues, planning a journey, working on synchronisation in a K2

**Psychological:** e.g. controlling anxiety, increasing motivation, improving confidence

**Physiological:** e.g. working on strength, flexibility, endurance, speed, or power.

As a Level 2 Coach working with participants for blocks of up to 6 sessions you will almost certainly need to cover elements of Paddlesport coaching from each of the TTPP elements and it is a valuable tool to remember when selecting activities to meet the participants' needs. If, for example, a Coach decides that her group of aspiring 3 Star students have all the necessary strokes but have never done a day trip, she may decide to focus on the tactics of journey planning.

Choosing session content is a skill that develops with experience; you might find it takes some time to get it right. The following are a few key points that are central to content choice.

Make sure the content is based on the needs of the group and reflect the goals you have set;

- Content is inclusive to all participants
- Coaching and instructions are technically accurate
- You include appropriate progressions in the content
- The content reflects the environmental conditions on the day



### 3.6 Delivery style

The last part of producing your plan is considering the style in which you will deliver the session. Although the theories behind coaching styles will be explored more fully in part 7 of this pack it is worth introducing some of the concepts at this point as they form part of the process of planning.

Firstly, you may want to think about whether you are going to deliver the session from the bank or by boat. Each has its advantages and disadvantages and some thought needs to be paid to the best position based on your planned activity. It would be unwise to coach a group of 8-year-old beginners from the bank whereas a sculling draw session with aspiring 3 Star paddlers might benefit from you coaching from the side.

Broadly speaking teaching styles can be Coach led or student led although it is important to remember that these are the extremes of a continuum that includes variations of the two extremes. Coach led teaching is where the Coach tends to make all the key decisions and gives the learner all the information they need. Coach led styles have the

advantage of providing a reassuring framework to learners as well as making good use of available time and increasing the rate of skill acquisition. They are especially good for situations requiring tight control. At the other end of the spectrum, the students themselves direct the learning experience. Whereas Coach led styles may stifle some learners and take away ownership of learning, student led styles aim to emphasise the control that the learner has.

The Coach tends to give the learner problems to solve and encourages the student to ask questions and discover answers for themselves. Research suggests that student centred learning produces better long-term results including retaining information, problem solving skills, and independence from the Coach. On the other hand, student led learning may seem unstructured and take a long time to get results. We will revisit these styles later.



## Part 4 - Establishing a Safe Coaching Environment

### Introduction

The safety of our participants and ourselves is of paramount importance when coaching. As a Level 2 Coach you will be responsible for leading and coaching groups on sheltered water venues. The term 'sheltered water' should not give the impression that the environment does not contain an element of danger. In fact there are an abundance of hazards and risks to safety that exist in such environments, it is your duty to manage them and maintain the safety of those in your care.

This section is designed to help you consider how to establish and maintain a safe environment for your coaching. You may be familiar with some of the concepts from Level 1 but they are worth revisiting. The crux of establishing a safe environment is the issue of risk assessment and management. Although this may not be new to you, it is important to remember that risk management is a skill that becomes more automatic the more you do it. Before we look more closely at risk assessment we should remember who we are responsible for when involved in coaching.

### 4.1 Duty of Care

The plain truth is that we have a duty of care to everyone we come into contact with or have an effect on. The level of this responsibility increases as we take on more responsible roles, such as being a Coach. It also increases in specialist environments if we have a greater level of knowledge or ability than those around us. Duty of Care is a legal commitment to being responsible. It is not something that we can choose to avoid by writing disclaimers or something we can duck by being an amateur Coach.



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A good definition of Duty of Care is;

*"The duty which rest upon an individual or organisation to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the safety of any person involved in any activity for which that individual or organisation is responsible"*

(Phil Hadley, BCU Coaching Handbook). An important part of the definition is "to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken".

We should also consider the notion of 'foreseeability'. Simply put, if it would be obvious to other Level 2 Coaches that something could go wrong then it is reasonable that you should consider it too and do something about it. Diving into dark coloured water has sadly, resulted in numerous injuries where people have hit the bottom because it was difficult to tell how deep it was. So, if someone did something similar without checking the water depth first then maybe they should have known better. A Coach encouraging novices to do this could be thought to be negligent in their duty of care because it was an accident waiting to happen, i.e. foreseeable.

### **4.2 Risk Assessment**

Risk assessment encourages the identification of items and situations that may cause accidental injuries or health problems, and the development of a measured and appropriate response.

Production of a risk assessment is a legal requirement and is part of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Every location that is used for coaching should have a risk assessment analysis and we should hold a copy of each. In addition to this we should also conduct dynamic risk assessment on the day taking into account the environmental conditions at the time. We will talk more about dynamic risk assessments later.



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The most commonly used format for risk assessment is the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) five steps to risk assessment;

Step 1	Identify the hazards
Step 2	Decide who might be harmed and how
Step 3	Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions
Step 4	Record your findings and implement them
Step 5	Review your assessment and update if necessary

You will probably have seen and used this model in the BCU risk assessment form. The five steps offer a simple, user-friendly way to identify and manage risks. An example of this model in a canoeing context can be seen below.

This basic model encourages us to go through the logical process of identifying hazards, considering who might be harmed and ways we can avoid them happening.

As your coaching experience grows and you become more comfortable and capable at managing risks you may decide that a certain level of risk is acceptable in your activities. The act of balancing your group's safety, but also providing challenge and excitement comes with experience and a slightly more developed method of assessing risks.

**Consequence and Probability**

Consequence and probability is all about the potential severity of an accident or incident versus the likelihood of it actually occurring. If we take the example in the risk assessment above, we can think about drowning in terms of consequence versus probability. The consequence of a participant drowning is catastrophic and is almost certainly the worst thing that we as Coaches can contemplate. However, the probability of it occurring is actually very low. This makes the overall risk pretty low.



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If we apply a simple numerical scale to this method we can measure the risk and give it an overall grading. This allows us to rank order any risks. Our scale might look like this;

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
What are the hazards?	To who?	How is the risk controlled?	Further action	Review & update
Drowning	All participants	1. All participants to wear a buoyancy aid 2. All participants able to swim 50m 3. Supervision from qualified Coach	Participants given safety brief at start of session on dealing with capsize	Reviewed 30/07/07 Coach will check BA fitted correctly during session

**Consequence:**

- No risk of injury or harm
- Minor risk of injury or harm
- Some risk of injury or harm
- Significant injury or harm could occur
- Definite risk of major injury or death

**Probability:**

- No possibility of occurrence
- Minor possibility of occurrence
- Some risk of occurrence
- Significant risk of occurrence
- Definite risk of occurrence

If we apply the same example again to our scale we can see that the consequence of drowning would certainly score a 5 (definite risk of injury or death) but if we think about the probability of it occurring we might only score a 2 (minor possibility of occurrence). If we take the scores and multiply them this gives our overall risk grade. In this example  $5 \times 2 = 10$ , so our overall risk is 10. On its own that doesn't mean very much but if we think that the highest possible risk would be a score of  $5 \times 5$ , then we can see that our risk of drowning scores 10 out of a possible 25.



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Another example might be; Slips, trips and falls. The consequence of falling over or slipping when carrying a canoe could be pretty bad. It is conceivable that a person could slip and break a bone or cause themselves a muscular injury as a result of a fall. Additionally the likelihood of this happening is pretty high as we commonly work on wet ground with wet shoes etc. If we apply our numerical scale to this example we could say that the consequence of a fall might score a 3 or even a 4 and the probability of it occurring could be as much as 4. This would give us a score of 12 or even 16! You can see how we use this method to rank order risks. The scores that you allocate a certain probability or severity may differ from those of others; this is to be expected and is actually beneficial as it might highlight areas for discussion and justification that will further develop your philosophy of risk.

Depending on the type of participants you are working with you may decide that a certain level of risk is acceptable. This will vary between groups, for example, if you are coaching a group of children you may decide that no risk that scores more than 12 out of 25 is acceptable. This score may go up if you are working with fully grown, fit adults.

### Applied Activity

You are coaching a youth group (10 to 12 year olds) in the Lake District in March. You are operating in a small section of a large lake where sailing and windsurfing are also going on. It is overcast and there is a slight northerly breeze.

Measure and grade the following risks using the consequence vs. probability method;

- Hypothermia
- Other water users
- Lifting and carting canoes/kayaks
- Contracting Weil's disease

With a partner or as part of a group compare your results. Be prepared justify your answers.



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### **Types of risk**

As well as different ways of assessing risk there are also different types of risk that should be identified as part of the procedure.

### **Generic Risks**

Generic risk assessments refer to the risks present in a particular sport or activity. In our case this is Paddlesport. Other examples would be climbing, mountaineering, sailing etc. Generic risks are those that exist in canoeing no matter where you are or who your working with. Examples would be; entrapment, lifting/carrying, becoming separated from the group etc.

### **Specific Risks**

These are risks that are specific to a certain location or population. For example, an overhanging tree on a particular lake or risks associated with a group who have a hearing impairment. It is wise to consider specific risks when working in a particular location with or a particular group for the first time.

### **Dynamic risks**

As mentioned earlier dynamic risks are those that are likely to change during the course of the day or session and they demand extra consideration. British weather is notoriously changeable and just because it was sunny when the session started doesn't mean it will stay like that! Dynamic risks require you to be flexible and adapt your coaching as they unfold. Examples of dynamic risks are; water levels, wind, weather, individuals' behaviour or damage to equipment.

Risk assessment is a large part of the coaching process at Level 2 and is a skill that will develop with experience. The ability to identify and control risks is central to the process as is the ability to grade risks. With experience Coaches generally need to write less on paper but have a mind that is constantly asking; what might happen? Is it likely to happen? How can I stop it happening? What will I do if it does happen?



### 4.3 Equipment Checks

All equipment and resources that you will use need to be checked to make sure they meet the relevant health and safety requirements. You need to be confident that when you issue any equipment to participants it is in good working order. How you do this will depend on the individual situation. Policies should be in place to make sure that equipment is well looked after and damaged equipment is removed from use. If the equipment belongs to your employer, i.e. the club or an outdoor centre, your induction should include an explanation of how kit is cared for, and your responsibilities. If you are not sure who used the equipment last or when it was last used, check it through before the group arrive. If you are reasonably confident it will be in good working order, check it as you issue it.

#### **Boats:**

Check to make sure;

- You have enough of the right type / size
- They have no sharp edges
- They will float! No extra holes! Is there a bung?
- The footrest is in good working order and adjustable
- The backrest is in good working order and adjustable
- There are no snag hazards, no loose ropes, etc.
- End grabs are operational

#### **Paddles:**

Check to make sure;

- You have enough of the right type / size (left and right handed?)
- They have no sharp edges

#### **Buoyancy Aids:**

Check to make sure;

- You have enough of the right type / size
- The stitching is intact
- The buoyancy condition has not deteriorated significantly
- Any adjustable features are functional



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**Helmets:**

Check to make sure;

- You have enough of the right type / size
- The cradle or padding is securely fitted
- Adjustable straps are functional
- Adjustable cradles are functional
- The helmet body is generally sturdy

**Personal Clothing:**

If you are issuing any personal clothing such as Wetsuits, Cagoules, appropriate footwear or thermal clothing you need to make sure that;

- It is clean
- Appropriately sized and fitted
- In good working condition

**Safety Equipment:**

The session risk assessment will identify potential risks that you are likely to encounter during the session and identify how to control them. This is likely to include the requirement for the Coach to have some safety equipment to hand during the session. The Coach will need to be able to deal with potential and likely problems, for example;

Potential Problem	Safety Equipment to Consider
Participants get too cold or too hot	Spare clothing, group shelter, survival bag,
Participants get tired or hungry	Spare food and drink, towline
Participants get injured or ill	First aid kit, mobile phone
Participants get trapped	Knife
Equipment gets damaged or lost	Spare paddles, repair kit

It is important that the safety equipment is appropriate to the session and is prepared and accessible during it.



## 4.4 Moving and Handling Equipment

You will have covered manual handling on your Level 1 course and Level 2 training in some detail. Injury prevention is a major focus in coaching and again it is our responsibility to ensure that risks of injury are minimised.

When moving heavy loads such as canoes and kayaks remember the following models;



**SAFE** – Stop, Assess, Formulate, Execute

**LITE** – Load, Individual(s), Task, Environment

Remember that most injuries occur when you least expect it! It is important ensure that all moving is done safely; this will include taking boats on and off trailers, moving to and from the water, rescues, etc.

## Principles of Manual Handling

### To protect the body

- Adopt a balanced stance
- Bend the knees so you lift with the thigh muscles
- Get a good grip
- Orientate yourself so that you're facing the direction of travel
- Keep the load close to the body

### To make the task easier

- Raise the centre of gravity of the load before lifting
- Get under the load (like a weightlifter)
- Use gravity when lowering (allow the load to slide to the floor)
- Communicate when working in pairs
- Know your limitations
- If in doubt seek help



## 4.5 Environmental awareness

The environment in which we operate will invariably present risks that we should build into our risk assessment process. Special consideration should be given to changes in the weather that may affect your coaching session. For this reason it is important to obtain a weather forecast and attempt to build up an accurate picture as possible as to what to expect from the weather. This will affect your operating area, your choice of content, safety equipment, and time on the water.

We should also remember how environmental conditions affect different participants. Children, for example are more affected by hot and cold weather. It's a fact that when immersed in water we lose heat 23 times faster than we do in air of the same temperature. This is a serious statistic when considering young people with less fat and fewer physiological coping strategies than adults.

Also, be mindful of the quality of the water where we are paddling and the risk of dangers such as Weil's disease.

## 4.6 The Safety Brief

The safety brief should contain all the necessary health and safety information that you need to convey to your participants. What you decide to tell the group and the manner in which you deliver it is something that you will develop in your own style. However, a good safety brief should contain information on the following basic principles;

- Safety equipment, and how to use it
- Operating areas (setting boundaries)
- How to lift, carry and launch safely
- Ground rules for behaviour
- Action in the event of capsize
- Action in the event of an emergency



## 4.7 Dealing with incidents / injuries

During a coaching session it is conceivable that you may have to deal with any of the following;

- An adult/child suffers a minor injury (e.g. cut, bruise, strain)
- An adult/child suffers a major incident (e.g. broken bone, concussion, asthma attack)
- An adult/child becomes ill (e.g. vomiting, headache, sore throat, dizziness)

There is a series of actions that we should take in order to deal with each of these events;

- Conduct an assessment of the situation
- Protect the participant and others from further injury (get off the water)
- Provide reassurance and comfort
- Remain calm and follow organisational procedures
- Assess the extent of the injury
- Administer first aid to your level of qualification
- Contact qualified assistance, if required
- Contact emergency services, if necessary
- Contact parents/carers with information
- Advise the participant to seek medical attention if required
- Record/report the incident to the appropriate person authority

### Following emergency procedures

Should you find yourself in an emergency situation in your coaching, it is important that you stay calm and act effectively to solve the problem. An emergency could be; a missing person, a near miss, a security incident, etc.

When responding to any emergency you should consider the following;

- Stay calm
- Clearly inform participants and others involved of the correct emergency/evacuation procedures
- Ensure the appropriate behaviour of participants during the procedure
- Maintain participants' safety
- Report the incident to the appropriate persons



### **Reporting accidents**

Reporting an accident is a legal requirement. You should be fully conversant with reporting procedures and be able to produce an accident report form legibly and containing all the relevant information. If possible, a witness should be obtained to validate the incident. If you are working independently you will need to report the incident to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) by downloading a RIDDOR form or by contacting the HSE directly. You should also record an account of the incident with as much information in as possible and keep a copy in your own files should you ever need to justify your actions.

## **4.8 Journey Management**

As a Level 2 Coach working on sheltered water it is reasonable to assume that you could be in charge of short trips on grade 1 rivers, canals or lakes. Journeys provide a good opportunity to coach in an applied environment. But be careful to manage the role of a leader and a Coach effectively. Too much leading can be at the detriment of coaching and vice versa.

When leading groups it is important to remember some key principles. One of the most effective and usable models of leadership is the CLAP model;

- C** Communication
- L** Line of sight
- A** Avoidance is better than cure
- P** Position of maximal usefulness

### **Communication**

Communication is an important part of journey leadership. Not only will you communicate with your group verbally but also in the way in which you speak and use body language. We will discuss communication in more depth in part 6. Other forms of communication include hand and paddle signals (for a good guide to signals see *White Water Safety and Rescue* by Franco Ferrero). We also need to consider communication between the group and others that are on hand for support-this may be a centre, minibus pick-up or even the emergency services. Mobile phones offer an excellent means of communication by which we can summon assistance relatively easily and are almost an essential piece of



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equipment when leading a journey. In areas where signal is limited the leader should consider other means of communication-these could be flares, pay phones or other water users.

### **Line of Sight**

Keeping the entire group within our line of sight is an essential part of journeying. If we can't see members of the group then we will not know what they are doing or what is happening. Maintaining line of sight is good for group control as it keeps members reasonably close together. Many water features can obstruct line of sight; bends in rivers, moored boats, jetties, banks, etc. Where we position ourselves and our briefings help us to maintain visual contact.

### **Avoidance is better than cure**

This goes without saying but is often overlooked. An ability to foresee what might happen and taking steps to ensure that it doesn't is an important skill for the Coach. This could be something as simple as applying sun cream on a hot day to prevent participants getting sunburn.

### **Position of maximal usefulness (PMU)**

Your position within the group depends on a number of factors; you may decide to lead from the front, middle or back depending on the circumstances. Placing yourself between the group and a potential danger as a buffer is a good example of useful positioning. For a more detailed look at positioning you should refer to the Safety and Leadership chapter of the BCU handbook.

Using a combination of the CLAP model and filling in journey planners provided in your logbook is a good basis for managing journeys. Proper planning is the key as it gives you a chance to consider any potential problems before they arise.



For more information on managing journeys look at;

- White Water Safety and Rescue. Franco Ferrero (Pesda Press)



## Part 5 - Preparing Participants for Coaching

### Introduction

Before we take to the water and start coaching it is important to make sure our learners know what is in store for them and are given the opportunity to prepare themselves for the coming activity. As a Level 2 Coach you will need to ensure that your participants are ready both mentally and physically.

This section will start with looking at communicating session objectives to the participants and how to prepare them mentally, we will then consider the checks that we need to make before getting on the water. We will also consider in detail the concept of warming up and physical preparation.

### 5.1 Communicating Session Aims and Objectives

A large part of preparing participants for coaching is the process of telling them exactly what will be involved in the session(s). The way in which we deliver this information can have a big effect on the motivation of the group and their perception of the impending activity.

A useful model to use in teaching as a whole is;

- Tell them what you are going to tell them
- Tell them
- Tell them what you've told them

For the purpose of this section we are looking at the first part; tell them what you are going to tell them. We can also think of this as framing. This basically means that we prepare the participants by telling them exactly what we want them to learn, and why we want them to learn it, at the start of the session.

An example of this could be;

*"Today we are going to look at moving the boat sideways, this is really useful for accurate control and manoeuvring in small spaces."*

With this kind of information presented at the start of the session the participant knows exactly what to expect and can prepare themselves for that activity.



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How we communicate our objectives should be tailored to factors such as;

Age: Children, adolescents, adults

Ability: Beginner, novice, advanced

The outcomes themselves: Skills, principles, communication, cooperation, etc.



Framing means telling the learners exactly what we are going to teach them and why before the coaching session.

Remember that the way in which we deliver the information can have a really big effect on the way our learners gain information from us. Research suggests that we pick up information from;

- The words that are used – 7%
- The way it is said – 38%
- The way the speaker behaves – 55%

Being enthusiastic is really important and your behaviour and body language will show this when you are talking. Your coaching will be made much easier if you are working with a group who want to learn what you are teaching and see value in it.

You may decide to present objectives in order of what you think must be achieved, what should be achieved and what could be achieved. If, for example, we are teaching rolling we might say;

*"By the end of the session I would like everybody to be able to right themselves using my hands; some of you should be able to roll with me guiding the paddle and you could even do a roll on your own"*

This gives the learners an idea of what you, as the Coach, think they can achieve and also provides something to work towards. Remember to keep your expectations realistic, basing them on the planning you have already done. We wouldn't expect child novices to be hand rolling in the first session!



## 5.2 Checking Ability and Readiness

The final stages of preparation should involve an element of checking that the participants are ready to get going. Having told them the objectives for the session you should confirm that your learners are indeed able to attempt the activities. The information that you have gathered will have highlighted any physical or medical problems already. Other barriers such as anxiety and apprehension can often come out at this stage; you may find yourself reassuring and comforting individuals in order to prepare them for the activity.

The last few moments before getting on the water should also be used to make final checks on participants clothing and equipment. You should include in your checks;

- Clothing is suitable to the conditions
- Buoyancy aids, helmets, and other safety equipment, are fitted correctly
- The boats are set up for the user (foot rests, back rests etc.)
- The group is clear on your launching instructions
- Boundaries have been set
- The venue is still appropriate (i.e. weather, water level or other water users)

## 5.3 Modifying Plans

Having developed session plans it is important to have the skills to adapt plans to meet changing needs, rather than delivering the plan with no flexibility.

Paddlesport coaching is normally in a dynamic environment; you can be faced with environmental factors that affect the coaching session, for example;

- Change in wind direction or strength
- Change in temperature
- Change in water levels



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You are also going to be faced with changing individual needs, for example;

- Tiredness/fatigue
- Hunger
- Cold
- Boredom / frustration

You need to develop some strategies for dealing with these behaviours.

### **5.4 Warm up and Cool Down**

The importance of warming up cannot be overestimated and is an essential part of paddlesport coaching. Firstly, we will look at warming up in general and then consider how and why to make our warm up specific to paddlesport. Warming up is a key factor in reducing the chance of sustaining injury. Canoeing and kayaking are dynamic movement sports that require postures and movements that are outside of our everyday range of motion. Injuries to the shoulders, lower back and abdominal regions are common and can be caused by over reaching, over rotating and bad posture.

We should think of warming up a process that needs to be done with some accuracy rather than just a token run on the spot and some star jumps! Warm-ups should contain 3 phases;

Raising the heart rate – This increases the delivery rate of oxygen and energy to muscles in order for them to function during exercise. A simple jog or jumping game will achieve this but remember not to incorporate any dynamic movements until the body is ready.

Preparing the muscular and skeletal systems – This involves putting joints, muscles and tendons through gentle work and gradually increasing it. The aim is to warm up the synovial fluid in the joints and active tissues in muscles and tendons. This reduces friction on cartilage and other tissues and lubricates joints to cushion them during exercise. Making ever-increasing circles with the shoulders/ arms / hips / waist is a good way to achieve this.



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Increasing mobility – Now that we have increased oxygen delivery and warmed up active tissues we need to increase mobility. The theory behind this is to lengthen the muscles in order to have a range of motion of the muscle and therefore, reduce the risk of injury and increase performance. This may also reduce muscular soreness after activity. Particular attention should be paid to areas that will be stressed during the activity such as hamstrings, shoulders, lower back, and waist.



Remember! Warm-ups are a preparation activity, not a training activity. You should not include any movements or exercises that are outside of normal capabilities for your participants

### **Warming up for Canoeing & Kayaking**

The types of warm-up you do will depend on your group. Young people may not respond well to a structured warm-up but might achieve the desired effect with a game of 'stuck in the mud' or a 'penguin race'. Likewise, if you are coaching improvers and intermediates you may wish to conduct a boat-based warm-up to make the preparation specific to what they will be doing, forward and backward racing is a good start. Just remember to start gently and build up slowly.

There are literally hundreds of warm-up exercises that we could use for canoeing and kayaking and no doubt you will develop your own preferred methods. It is important to remember that we can achieve more than physiological preparation with a practical warm-up. For example, throwing a ball round the circle will work the upper body and if you state that every person must name the person they are throwing to, you will learn everyone's name as well as each others.

Similarly, try to make your warm-ups as 'canoe & kayak like' as possible. An example of this might be an extension of the ball game. This time get the group to hold their paddles and try to catch, pass, stall, and bounce the ball on the paddle blades. Not only will this warm up specific areas but it will also replicate body positions for paddlesport and raise awareness of how we move when holding the paddle and how to feather the blades. Additionally, this will allow you to see



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who is able to grasp the concept of moving the paddle (and may be more able) and those whose coordination may require attention.



For more ideas of warm-up games look at;

- Safety and Leadership; The BCU Handbook (Pesda Press)
- Canoe and Kayak Games; Dave Ruse and Loel Collins (Rivers Publishing UK)

Another useful point to remember when leading warm-ups is to mix it up. Paddlesport often involves coordinated movements that require differentiated body movements. We could well ask learners to rotate the trunk, push with a certain foot, as well as look in a certain direction. Quite a lot to expect, especially from children! Try using coordinated movements in your warm-ups, maybe swinging the arms in opposite directions or rubbing the tummy while patting the head. You could even set up a game of twister.

### **Cooling down**

Cooling down involves preparing the body to stop exercising as well as mentally preparing for the end of activity. Doing this well can have a big impact on a paddler's ability to perform a session later or the level of muscular discomfort experienced afterwards. It is as important as the warm up. We will look closer at cooling down in part 9.





## **Part 6 - Establishing and Maintaining working Relationships with Participants and Others**

### **Introduction**

The process of establishing and maintaining working relations with others is a natural process that we undertake everyday in our lives. As part of the coaching process it is an area that is often overlooked to the detriment of quality coaching. To get the most out of our learners we need to ensure that they are well informed of what we expect of them...and what they can expect of us!

Well informed learners are far more likely to make the most of coaching sessions and it is down to us as Coaches to let participants know what we expect in terms of standards and behaviour. If we fail to establish a good working relationship with our learners there is a good chance that they might not come back next week, which is exactly the thing we wish to avoid.

The key area of establishing and maintaining working relations is communication. We will look at communication later in this section.

### **6.1 Explaining Roles and Responsibilities**

As part of your session brief you will almost certainly introduce yourself and explain your role as the Coach. You may also include some of the responsibilities that you have to the group in terms of safety, enjoyment, and learning. Obviously your individual coaching circumstances will determine exactly what and how much information you give; for example, adults will require less explanation of your role than young people. A 'youth at risk' group, however, may require much more!

#### **Learning contracts**

One good way of informing learners of your responsibilities (and their own) is to agree on a learning contract with them. This gives you a chance to agree on what you wish to achieve in the session both in terms of technical skills but also interpersonal issues, for example, how to treat each other and other water users.



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Clearly establishing what is expected of the Coach and what the Coach expects in return helps create a good learning environment.



Learning contracts help clearly establish what is expected of the Coach and what the Coach expects in return, helping to create a good learning environment.

### 6.2 Effective Communication

Being able to communicate effectively is an essential tool in every Coach's toolbox. In fact, we can even think of the whole coaching process as no more than an exchange of information. As Coaches we have a good level of technical and tactical ability, however, if we do not communicate this effectively to our learners the information could be misunderstood and not acted upon. The following are some of the key principles of effective communication;

- Presenting information clearly
- Using positive body language
- Providing clear and accurate demonstrations
- Providing clear and accurate information
- Checking participants understand
- Displaying a positive and encouraging attitude
- Using questioning and answering to check understanding
- Smiling and being enthusiastic!
- Providing positive feedback

You will remember from Level 1 that people learn in different ways. Put very simply we can think of the way that people learn in terms of VAK;

V	Visual
A	Auditory
K	Kinaesthetic

You may yourself prefer one or other of these ways of learning (we will explore them further in section 7). But we need to be aware that other people's learning



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will happen in different ways and we can communicate to them in different ways based on this. For example, we may find that learners with a preference to learn visually will rely more heavily on the demonstrations that we provide.

As paddlesport Coaches working with a range of individuals we are likely to use a lot of verbal communication or instruction. In order to maximise the effectiveness of this there are some points worth remembering;

- Plan what you are going to say before you say it
- Remember the type of learner you are talking to
- Give the instruction when the learner is in the best physical and mental position to receive it. Wait until they have stopped their activity
- Be clear and concise. Use less than 8 words in any one instruction
- Use language that will provoke an image i.e. "dig the paddle in".
- Check the message has been understood by getting the students to repeat it in their own words



For more information on the role of communication in coaching look at;

- Coaching; The BCU Coaching Handbook (Pesda Press)



## Applied Activity

Use the VAK model to think about how people learn and how we can communicate to individuals to accommodate their preference. Link the boxes below to indicate the best method of communication to the learning style;

**VISUAL**

**ALLOWING TIME  
FOR PRACTICE**

**AUDITORY**

**VERBAL  
INSTRUCTION**

**KINAESTHETIC**

**DEMONSTRATION**

### 6.3 Active Involvement

An important focus of our coaching activity should centre on retaining our learners. In fact one of the most important aims you have as a Coach should be ensuring that all of the group come back for next week's session. The best way to ensure this happens is to make sure the entire group are included and actively involved in the session. Maximising the amount of time that learners are active, and minimising the time that they are listening, watching or waiting around, goes without saying but it's not always that easy. You may find that a particular member of the group requires more attention than the rest. With experience you will develop strategies to deal with this. Use your existing experience to work through the scenarios below, which are based on inclusion. In each one think about how to keep the group actively involved.



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### Applied Activity

From your experience, how would you make these scenarios more inclusive?

- Playing games where the less competent paddlers are knocked out of play first and then are inactive
- A group member who repeatedly capsizes and needs rescuing while the rest of the group are inactive
- A group member becoming frustrated on a journey because the rest of the group is too slow
- Spending long periods with one member who is struggling with a stroke or concept



## 6.4 Setting Ground Rules and Standards

Safety, enjoyment, and learning in paddlesport coaching can easily be compromised by inappropriate behaviour and it is all too easy for individuals to disrupt or spoil a session for the group. As the Coach you have the responsibility to establish ground rules for behaviour at the start of the session. If correctly managed this should prevent incidents of inappropriate behaviour before they occur.

When thinking about ground rules and standards you may want to consider;

- The need to avoid discrimination on any grounds
- What the boundaries of ethical relationships with participants are
- The development of relationships with participants that are open honest, and engender mutual trust and respect
- Encouraging learners to take responsibility for their decisions and actions
- Projecting a professional image
- Being a positive role model for the sport and profession
- Correct usage of equipment
- Respect for other water users and the environment

It is unlikely that you would talk directly to the group about these issues, however, the manner in which you conduct yourself, the language you use and your image will convey your expectations.

## 6.5 Encouragement and Reward

One of the tools you will develop in your coaching toolbox will be the process of encouragement and reward. When things are going smoothly the activities themselves are rewarding enough and learners will not need any encouragement. On those days where things aren't going right you may find yourself slipping into the role of the motivator. The need for encouragement and reward is usually linked to challenging behaviour or with learners that are de-motivated. In these situations it's important to remember that the Coach's mood and behaviour usually sets the tone for the group; remember to be positive and enthusiastic and this will rub off on the group. You may find that you need to offer rewards to motivate the group, which can be done in a number of ways.



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Below are a few 'top tips' on offering encouragement and reward;

- Be empathetic
- Acknowledge positive behaviour as soon as it is observed
- Reward more than you punish with challenging individuals, this can increase self confidence
- Praise good behaviour and achievements in front of the rest of the group
- Change rewards that are not effective
- Promote an encouraging atmosphere within the group

### Development Activity

Create a list of possible rewards that you could offer to you learners, list as many as you can;

## 6.6 Managing Inappropriate Behaviour

Coaching paddlesport will not always go smoothly. You will almost certainly be confronted with situations where a member, or members, of the group are causing so much disruption that this affects the rest of the group. This may occur in a multitude of ways and require you to make decisions as how to deal with it.



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Although each situation will be different, requiring you to be adaptive and resourceful, here are some options that are available to you;

- Restructure the activity (change rules or activity)
- Change your coaching style
- Engage disruptive members in a new and challenging activity
- Discuss the situation one-to-one with disruptive member. Be positive and praise them where you can
- Use group discussion to encourage positive peer pressure
- Remove disruptive members as a last resort

Remember most inappropriate behaviour is due to boredom or a need for attention. Try and keep challenging members engaged and praise them wherever possible. Raising your voice or shouting is usually totally counterproductive as it is a sign that you are losing control of the situation. A calm collected approach is by far the best one.



## Part 7 - Coaching Delivery

### Introduction

In this section we will look at the theory and practice of coaching delivery and focus on how we can maximise our paddlers' learning. Coaching can sometimes seem like a complex and frustrating exercise as there are so many components of the coaching process but (as you probably know) it can also be highly rewarding and enjoyable. Watching a student enjoying a fluid and skilful performance of skill that you have taught them is highly satisfying; for most of us it is the reason we coach and what motivates us to improve.

Thinking of coaching as a science can be rather daunting but it really doesn't need to be! The best Coaches out there are the ones who are flexible, adaptive and constantly stealing new ideas to put in their coaching toolbox. This section has three main aims; firstly to look at what learning actually is, secondly to consider how people learn, and lastly to think about ways that we can teach them.

### 7.1 What is learning?

Learning is the process of acquiring skills, whether they are motor skills or cognitive skills (see below). We can define learning as a permanent change in behaviour, that is to say that we only really learnt something if we can perform it consistently. If a child catches a ball in one of every ten throws, has he learnt to catch? Sports psychologists would say not, he has been successful through chance or luck. This definition is important to us as Coaches because we can only judge if our students have learnt something if they can repeat it. That makes it our job to engrain skills through the process of coaching.



Motor Skills describe actions that result in a physical outcome. The success of a motor skill is determined by the quality of the end performance. Catching a ball, tying a shoelace, or a low brace would be an example.

Cognitive Skills involve an element of tactical decision-making or deciding if or when to do the skill, e.g. deciding whether to shoot or pass in a game of polo. Most actions in paddlesport are a combination of motor and cognitive skills

## 7.2 The Role of Memory

Memory is a central part of learning. In order to consistently perform a skill we have to have it stored in memory and be able to retrieve it when we need it. If a skill is not stored in memory, we have not learnt it.

There are three stages of memory that we shall briefly look at;

### **Short Term Sensory Store (STSS)**

Information that we pick up from the environment enters our brain via the Short Term Sensory Store (STSS), which can hold a lot of information but only for a short time. The STSS will hold information on everything ranging from the temperature, wind strength, what someone is wearing, etc. Most of this information is irrelevant to the task in hand. The information that we decide is most important will be passed along to the Short Term Memory (STM).

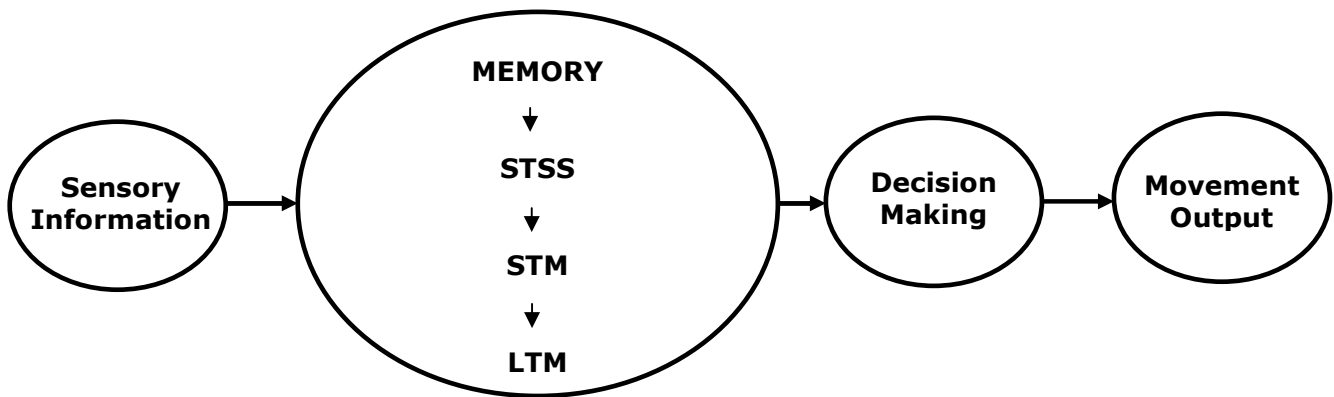
### **Short-Term Memory (STM)**

The STM holds information that we are attending to at any given time but it can only deal with limited amounts. Research suggests that we can hold 7 plus or minus 2 ( $7 \pm 2$ ) pieces of information depending on the person. With children of 12 years this number decreases to  $5 \pm 2$  (that's why it's important not to give your students too much information at once!). The STM codes information into groups of similar meaning, such as, movement patterns, sounds, or timing. It will only hold onto this information while we are attending to it. If we do not practice or rehearse what is in the STM we will lose it forever.



### Long-Term Memory (LTM)

If we do practice it information will be committed to Long-Term Memory (LTM). The LTM is where we hold information that we have learnt and it is where we recall it from when we need it, even if we haven't used it for some time. The LTM is where we need to aim for, to give the information to our learners. There are lots of theories about how different areas of memory interact but in its most simple form we can think about the process as information going in, passing through the stages of memory, and (when we decide to use it) coming out as performance of a movement.



No one really knows exactly how we store information in the LTM but most psychologists believe that we create a kind of movement pattern for each skill we learn that is stored in the brain. We might, for example, have a movement pattern for skills like tying a shoelace, a sweep stroke, or a screw roll. The way in which we form movement patterns affects our ability to adapt them and transfer them into other skills. For example, if we learn a skill incorrectly (say, not having locked elbows in the low brace) we build a pattern that is also incorrect and means that we execute the stroke incorrectly. This is why bad habits are so hard to break. How many times have you tried to correct a paddler who thinks they are doing a stroke correctly...not easy!!!



A movement pattern can have a Schema, Engrams, or Motor programmes. For the purpose of this support pack these titles are interchangeable.



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For more information on memory and movement patterns check out;



- Motor Control and Learning by Schmidt & Wrisberg (Human Kinetics)
- Acquisition & Performance of Sports Skills by Terry McMorris (Wiley Sportex)
- Coaching in the BCU Handbook by Bill Taylor (Pesda Press)

### **Stages of Learning**

When we learn a new skill we will pass through a number of stages in order to master a movement or action. The ability to recognise these stages allow the Coach to select the most productive approach for the student and means that we choose tasks that are challenging and appropriate. The American psychologist Paul Fitts identified three stages of learning as Cognitive, Associative, and Autonomous.

#### **Cognitive stage**

The cognitive stage of learning refers to novice performers or those to who the skill is a new concept. The characteristics of the cognitive stage are;

- Major errors being seen
- Most skills only just learnt
- Jerky and fitful style
- Needs demonstration and praise

#### **Associative stage**

As we get better we enter the associative stage, this is characterised by;

- Still seeing some errors
- Building of patterns and joining up learned skills
- Hit and miss style
- The need for different environments to develop adaption



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### **Autonomous stage**

This stage is where we can perform skills with a high degree of accuracy and in a confident manner. We don't need to be consciously thinking about what we are doing...we just do it!

- Few, small errors can be seen
- Builds and refines established skills
- Fluid style
- Can transfer most learning to novel situations

Think about a skill that you have learnt, can you recognise yourself progressing through the stages of learning? Take learning to drive a car, for example. The first time we sit behind the wheel we are tense, shaky, probably nervous, and prone to making mistakes. We also tend to over think which inevitably leads to errors. As we move through the stages we tend to relax and become more consistent with manoeuvres, we also become proactive rather than reactive and start to recognise what will happen and prepare for it. When we are fully autonomous driving becomes second nature, we don't have to think about what we are doing as it just happens. Now we can listen to music or talk to passengers without it impeding on our driving.

The assumption with the stages of learning theory is that as the students make progress and move through the stages the characteristics of their performance will change. As students enter the autonomous stage of learning they have formulated a schema of the skill that can then be committed to their Long-Term Memory and become part of their repertoire. The process of committing a skill to long-term memory can take a long time. No one knows exactly how many repetitions we need to rehearse to form an accurate movement pattern but research involving professional baseball players suggests that for a major league pitcher to have developed a movement pattern for pitching it would take 300 days a year of practice for 10 years and a staggering 1.6 million throws! Imagine how many free kicks David Beckham must have taken in his career to kick how he does.

This is why it's really important for us to provide lots of opportunity for practice. We will look at practice further in chapter 8.



### 7.3 Learning Styles

It is essential for us as Coaches to understand that our learners are individuals. This means that not all of our students will learn in the same way but, more importantly, it means that we have to be adaptable to cater to all our learners.

We have already looked at the way that people pick up information visually, audibly, and kinaesthetically. Generally speaking we all have a preference to one of these when we learn. Some people will need to watch other people and look at demonstrations from the Coach, these people learn visually. Some will learn by listening (audio learners) and others learn by doing and practising (kinaesthetic learners).

There are literally hundreds of questionnaires on the web that can help identify your own preference, some of these are printable so you can also use them on your learners to help identify how you can direct your coaching at them as individuals.

Visual learners – Learn by watching and will rely on your demonstrations



Audio Learners – Learn by hearing how to do things and need to hear good explanations

Kinaesthetic Learners – These learners need to feel how the movements work and will need lots of time to practice

#### Applied Activity

Use a web search to find a VAK- type learning style questionnaire. Can you identify your preferred learning style? If so do you feel that it's a true representation of how you learn? Try the questionnaire on your group next time you're coaching. What do they think?



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Another theory of learning styles was developed by Peter Honey and Alan Mumford and is (not surprisingly) referred to as 'Honey and Mumford's learning styles'. They believed that people could be divided into four categories but most people will use a mixture of all the styles. The categories they identified are;

**The Activist** – These are people that learn by doing (like our kinaesthetic learners). Activists need to get their hands dirty and tend to dive in feet first. No amount of explanation or demonstration will help the activist as they need to learn skills by actually doing them.

**The Reflector** – These people learn by sitting back, observing, and thinking about what happened. They tend to avoid leaping in and prefer to watch from the sidelines before having a go themselves.

**The Theorist** – Theorists like to understand the theories behind the actions. They need you to explain new movements in a logical way. They will often ask for the fine detail of the action before being happy to try it.

**The Pragmatist** – These people need to see how to put the learning into practice in the real world. They are not too concerned with how things work, the fact that it does is good enough.

It is important to remember that people might not fit neatly into one of these categories. You might be a mix of a number of styles. You might be a reflecting theorist! It doesn't matter that this is not an exact science; those who can learn and coach in a number of ways are in a stronger position to engage with a wider audience.

Remember also that we can help students to become better learners especially if we use a mix of different methods to appeal to them.

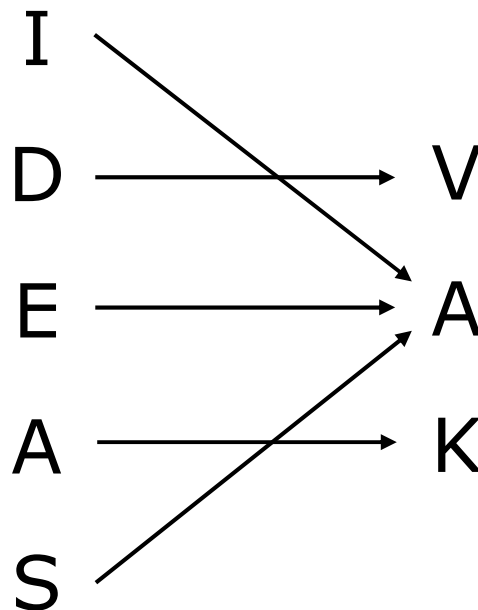


## 7.4 Coaching Styles

You will remember from your Level 1 course some of the basic coaching styles that are available to us. To refer to them as basic does not mean that they are not very good (quite the opposite is true). Let's recap.

### IDEAS

IDEAS (Introduction, Demonstration, Explanation, Activity, and Summary) is probably the best known of the coaching styles. It is simple to use and very effective. It is surprising however that not everyone makes the best use of it. To understand a little more about IDEAS we can look at how it appeals to our Visual, Auditory, and Kinaesthetic learners. More specifically, if we think about which elements of IDEAS will appeal to our VAK learners we might end up with a diagram that looks a bit like this;

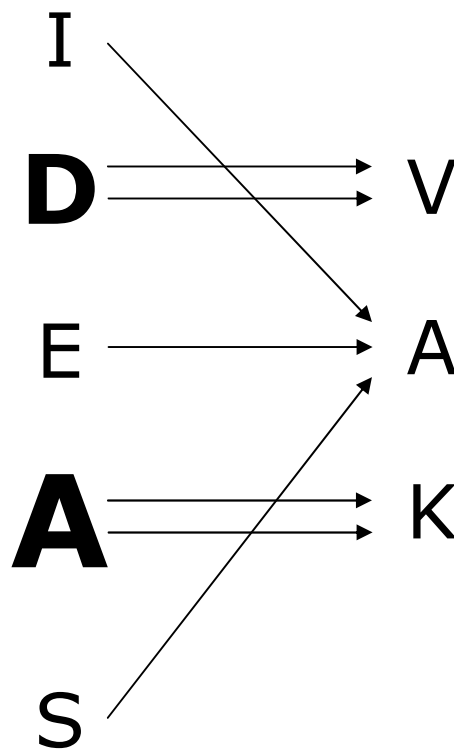


From the diagram we can see that in the IDEAS model three of the elements (introduction, explanation, and summary) will appeal to the audio learners. But the visual and kinaesthetic learners only get one. This seems a little unfair to our visual and kinaesthetic learners until we adapt the IDEAS model slightly to accommodate them.



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When using the IDEAS model if we place more emphasis on demonstrations and activities by making them longer and more varied we give the visual and kinaesthetic learners more opportunity to pick up information and even the balance a bit. Increasing the amount of time we spend providing activities essentially increases practice time that is good for helping develop those schemas in the long-term memory.



The IDEAS model works very well for novices learning new strokes but is somewhat less useful for coaching improvers and intermediate paddlers. When using IDEAS most of the information comes from the Coach and doesn't give the learner much opportunity to work things out or discover things for themselves. In order to shift this balance to put more emphasis on the learner we can consider some other methods.



## 7.5 The Coaching Spectrum

We can describe the coaching spectrum as a continuum of styles from ranging from a very autocratic command, coach-led style, where the Coach makes all the decisions, to the more democratic and interactive style where learning is driven by the student. A coach-led style involves the Coach making all the decisions in terms of the venue, content and structure whereas a student-led style will involve discussion with the learners and allow them to mould the nature of the learning.

COACH-LED ----- STUDENT-LED

The coach-led style is often perceived to be the most used. It involves the Coach “telling” the student what to do and allows little interaction. The student-led approach involves almost no instruction or guidance and virtually leaves the learner to get on with the activity.

Both of these are extremes and it is unlikely you will find either a successful method of coaching on its own. However, there will be times when you need to act in an authoritative manner, for example, in potentially dangerous situations. Equally there will be times when you want to stand back and not impose on the situation at all, especially when things are going well. Where you position yourself on the spectrum will change from day to day depending on the type of group and their ability as well as the conditions, the environment, and your intended outcomes.

Lots of research has been done into coaching styles. Most supports the idea that coach-led teaching tends to be good for picking up skills quickly, whereas student-centred teaching produces better long-term learning, promotes ownership of learning, and helps students become their own teacher, or to become Coach independent.



For more information on the coaching spectrum look at;

- Teaching Physical Education by Muska Mosston and Sara Ashworth (Benjamin Cummings publishing)
- Coaching in the BCU handbook by Bill Taylor



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Much of the work on coaching styles has been developed by Muska Mosston and Sara Ashworth. They have identified 10 styles that run from extremely coach-led to extremely student-led. We will look at four of these styles that are commonly used in paddlesport coaching; the practice style, reciprocal style, self-check, and guided discovery;

### **Practice style**

The practice style of coaching involves the Coach setting the paddler a task and allowing them to go away and do it in their own time. For example, we might ask a paddler to practise turns on the move around a sequence of buoys. The role of the Coach is to set the right activity in the right setting and oversee development.

<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
Keeps learners active Allows lots of time for practice Helps contextualise techniques Good for introductory skills	Learners can get tired quickly Learners can lose interest



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**Reciprocal style**

This involves the learners working in pairs. One paddler is the doer, the other the observer/coach. The Coach sets the task and gives the observer the points of correct technique/tactics. The doer practises the technique; the observer watches and gives feedback related to the information given by the teacher. To get the most out of this style you may want to devise cue cards for the observer that bullet-point the main elements.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Develops observation and analysis skills Good for coach independence Gives learning ownership Encourages discussion	Observer may give inaccurate feedback Can be difficult to facilitate

**Self-check**

In the self-check style the learners work individually on tasks set by the Coach. The paddler must be provided with the correct points of technique for this to work; usually this is done by providing them on paper for constant checking and re-checking. This technique is best suited to improvers rather than novices and also with those who are self-motivated.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Self-motivating Good for coach independence Encourages self-criticism and reflection Gives ownership of learning Frees up the Coach to manage session	Requires lots of motivation from learner Some learners enjoy being observed by the Coach



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**Guided discovery style**

The guided discovery style involves the Coach setting a problem and leads the learner to the correct answer. For example, we may ask a kayaker where is the best position to place the paddle in a bow rudder and allow them time to discover the answer. We need to guide the learning by asking questions along the way. This style is best suited to small groups or individuals as in larger groups learners will progress at differing rates.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Engaging Develops problem solving skills Develops ability to make judgements Encourages questioning and debate Can be rewarding	Requires planning from the Coach Can be very time consuming Can be difficult to draw conclusions



These are only a few of the coaching styles available to you. For look at more coaching styles look at;

- Coaching in the BCU Coaching Handbook by Bill Taylor (Pesda Press)

**Applied Activity**

Where would you place the four coaching styles; Self-check, practice, guided discovery and reciprocal on the coaching spectrum? Think about which are more Coach-led and which are more student-led. Mark with a pen on the scale below where you think each style sits.

Coach Led ----- Student Led



## Reflective Activity

Think about your coaching experiences to date;

- Can you identify an occasion where you have operated at the coach-led end of the spectrum?
  
- What factors made you decide to operate in that style?
  
- List as many factors as you can that would make you operate in a coach led or student led style. An example for each has been given to get you started;

Coach-led	Student-led
Working with a group with behavioural difficulties	Working 1:1 with student



## Part 8 - Developing Performance

### Introduction

In the previous section we looked at the coaching process in some detail in terms of teaching and learning. This section is an extension of the last and deals with specific areas of the process which we need to understand to maximise our coaching.

### 8.1 Demonstrations

The proverb "A picture paints a thousand words" has never been more appropriate than in sports coaching. Research suggests that;

- 83% of learning occurs through showing
- 11% of learning occurs through hearing
- 6% of learning occurs through other senses

This shows just how powerful and effective demonstrations are. We have already looked at demonstrations as a form of communication and how useful they are at getting information across to our learners, but we really need to understand why.

Since birth we have learnt to do things by imitation. Our childhood and even adult life is characterised by watching others and reproducing their actions. The beauty of demonstration is that it is effective at every stage of motor learning; for novices it gives a general model of movement and for experts it highlights specific points in a technique or skill. Demonstrations give information to learners that cannot be conveyed verbally, they allow us to perceive information on the timing and flow of a movement. This picture is encoded by the brain and turned into a physical representation of what we have seen. To maximise the effectiveness of demonstration there are several key points to remember;

#### Position

Make sure all the participants can see the demonstration and any feature of equipment or environment that it relates to. You may need to repeat the demo at



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different angles or on different sides for the learner to get the best image of the movement.

### **Silence**

When taking in visual information your students will be fully occupied with processing it. Talking over the top of your movement will only distract them. Allow a decent length pause after the demonstration before you talk through it. This allows time for the movement to register in the observer's mind.

### **Accuracy**

It is essential that your demonstration is accurate. Any inaccuracy in your performance will be reflected in your students. We have already looked at how difficult it is to unlearn bad habits. You may wish to highlight a particular point of the demonstration; do this at the start so they know what to look for prior to the movement. For example, you might say "I want you to watch the position of my top hand through the turn".

### **Timing**

Make sure you tell your learners when the demonstration is starting and when it is finishing.

In addition to these you may wish to use other students to give demonstrations. This can be good as it removes the element of learners feeling intimidated by copying an expert. If another learner gives the demonstration it can seem much more achievable.

## **8.2 Observation and Analysis**

Observation and analysis are the central elements of your coaching interventions. All of your corrective and developmental coaching will stem from what you see your learners doing.

When analysing performance make sure that you take time. Some errors are temporary or can be corrected by the paddler themselves. Try not to intervene

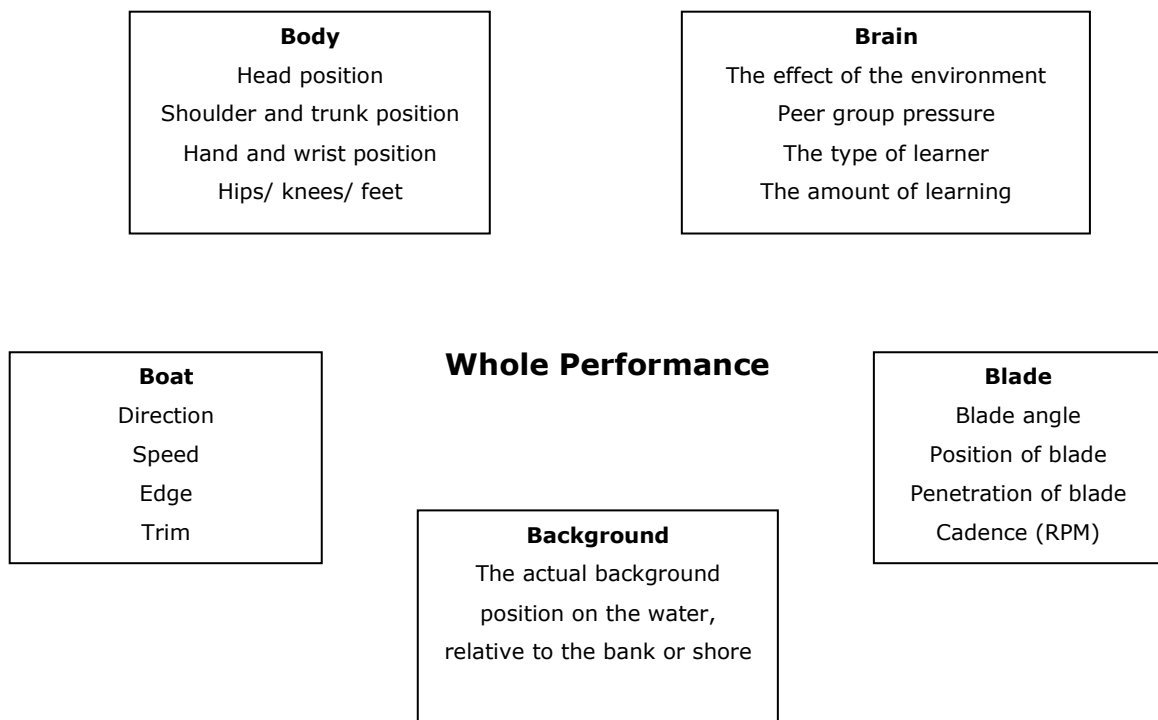


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until you are sure that an error is consistent. It’s always better for a learner to correct themselves as this leads to longer term learning and coach independence!

The key to effective observation and analysis is to know what the action should look like when performed correctly but even more importantly to understand the cause of performance errors so they can be corrected. The process could be compared to a doctor diagnosing a patient and prescribing a cure. In this context you are the doctor, your paddler is the patient and your coaching is the cure!

Having a structure for observation helps you focus on specific elements of what you see. The following, devised by Loel Collins, is an excellent example;



This model is an extension of the 3 B’s (body, boat, blade) incorporating brain and background that are less observable but require just as much analysis.



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Sometimes performance errors will be immediately obvious and jump out at you others may be more subtle and require you to draw on your experience to detect the cause of the error.

The following are some tools that may help your observation skills;

### **Flags**

Flags are physical indicators that pop up as a consequence of an action. They are immediately visible and give you information on whether something is or isn't happening. For example, watch the thumb of the top hand when teaching a 'J' stroke in a canoe. If the thumb points up at the end of the stroke then they are doing a 'goon' stroke. Asking them to turn the thumb down towards the water will change this into a 'J'.

### **Markers**

Markers are also physical indicators and allow for accurate measurement of performance. Putting tape on the hull of the kayak where you want the student to place the paddle at the start of a stroke would be a marker.

### **Noise**

Noise can tell an observer a lot about performance. For example, is the paddle entering the water quietly or making a lot of splash?

### **Rhythm**

Is the paddle stroke rhythmic? Are the bow waves even?

### **Shape**

What shape does the boat or paddle make in the water? What does the shape of the body tell you? Can you see the correct shape of the elbows in the low brace turn?



### 8.3 Practice

We have already mentioned the importance of practice for committing movements and strokes to long-term memory. You have probably heard the saying “practice makes permanent”. This makes practice vitally important in coaching and an element that we need to allocate plenty of time to. Practice can come in many forms. Playing games is a good example of practice; a simple tag game allows learners to practise turns, edge control, balance, forward paddling, etc. As Coaches we can structure practice in different ways, which will have different results. The two main methods are blocked and random practice.

#### **Blocked practice**

Blocked practice is where the same stroke or action is performed over and over. For example, high bracing in a swimming pool, if a paddler performed 100 braces in a row this would be blocked practice. This method is really effective for acquiring a skill as it ‘grooves’ the movement into memory in a short time but we run the risk of learners losing interest. Research shows that while blocked practice is good for skill acquisition, learning might not last long as it is not particularly secure. Also it lacks a real life context and can be difficult to apply to different environments when it’s needed.

#### **Random Practice**

This is where more than one task is given to the learner at a time. After the stroke is introduced and practised a couple of times the Coach will set a context in which to practise it. An example would be teaching a bow cut and a stern pry in a canoe. After the initial teaching a circuit can be devised that makes the paddler use the different turns at different points, you might throw in some bracing or other skills as well. Although skills generally take longer to acquire than in blocked practice, random practice has been shown to provide longer term learning and retention. This is possibly because we have to work harder to remember, thus we create a stronger movement pattern. It’s also more engaging and is more ‘real life’.

Blocked and random practices are two ways of structuring practice sessions. Play with each and see what works for you. The following are some other factors to consider when structuring practice.



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### **Practise where you paddle**

There is no substitute for practising in the environment in which you paddle. A surf kayaker might learn to roll in a pool but unless he can roll in the surf the skill is of little use.

### **Practise on both sides**

Canoeing is a bilateral sport. We need to be able to perform all our strokes on either side of the canoe or kayak this make it important to practise on both sides of the body. Students will invariably practise strokes on their stronger side that will lead to that side becoming dominant. Try to avoid this and encourage an ethos of training weaknesses rather than strengths. Practising on the weaker side will not only even the skill balance but has also been shown to improve the stronger side as well.



Try to promote an ethos of practising weaknesses rather than strengths. This leads to enhanced learning and a greater skill set.

### **Stress proofing**

It's all very well practising skills in a controlled environment and in our own time but unfortunately this is not where we are likely to really need them. We are most likely to need skills like rolling or bracing when we are under pressure, i.e. being capsized! To simulate this kind of pressure try playing a fun game at the end of a session. Shout the names of the skills you have taught in that session aloud, the group has to perform the stroke immediately or they get splashed. Start slow then speed up, if part of the movement is wrong they also get a splash. Try to make it as fast and furious as you can to get them to practise the strokes under pressure.



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### **Mental practice (Imagery)**

Paddlesport is a mixture of Technical, Tactical, Psychological, and Physiological elements (TTPP). The psychological element often involves feelings of anxiety and arousal. Imagery is a tool that we can use to get the mind into a position for the body to perform. It involves mentally rehearsing a performance and can be done on the bank or in a car park, etc. Imagery involves imagining what a successful performance of a task will feel like. Some people like to hold the paddle and physically go through the motions; others prefer to build a picture in their minds. It is especially useful for teaching skills like rolling which is a complex movement and can be very intimidating for some learners. The best way to learn to use imagery is just to give it a go and explore what works for you.

### **Variety**

“Variety is the spice of life”, it is also the spice of practice and is the main contributor to a flexible and adaptable performance. Generally speaking the harder it is to learn something the more secure the learning is. That’s why we should teach (and learn) in as many contexts as possible. When structuring practise let your imagination go wild! Get students to practice forward, backwards, blindfolded, in silence, while singing, while saying the alphabet backward, in different boats, with hands not paddles, with no edge, with lots of edge, leaning forward, leaning backward, etc. If you can do a hanging draw paddling backwards, while blindfolded and singing the alphabet then you have truly learnt it!

The importance of practice as part of the coaching process cannot be over emphasised. As a Level 2 Coach you will not only need to allocate extensive periods of time for practice but also structure it according to the required outcome. The great thing about structuring practice is that there is no right or wrong, you are restricted only by your imagination.



Variety is the key word in practice. Try using as many variations as you possibly can to really ingrain learning. Forward, backward, eyes closed, talking, singing, standing up, different boats, different places, with a single/double bladed paddle, with edge, with no edge, trim forward, trim backward, on the bank, etc.



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## Applied Activity

Look at the 5 coaching scenarios below. Try to match each scenario to a practice type. You may find that a particular type of practice might suit more than one scenario. In your opinion which practice type is most applicable to the scenario? The first one has been done for you. You may want to talk this through with a partner or trainer. It is important to be able to justify your answer so think about why you would match the scenario with the practice type.

Scenario	Type of practice
<p>1. You are coaching year 7 schoolchildren on a one off taster session. You want them to be able to turn the boat using a sweep stroke.</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Stress proofing</div>
<p>2. You are running six-session block of work for aspiring 3 Star paddlers. The theme of your session is 'Turns on the move'</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Imagery (mental rehearsal)</div>
<p>3. You are working with an individual who has a strong bow rudder but only ever performs it on the left side.</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Random practice</div>
<p>4. You are teaching a student to roll. Every time they capsize they become so disorientated that the attempt fails.</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Blocked practice</div>
<p>5. One of your students seems to be able to brace well in the pool with you positioned in the water. On open water they nearly always fail.</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Bilateral transfer (practice on both sides)</div>



## 8.4 Feedback

Feedback can be described as any information that we receive about the nature and quality of a performance. We receive (and give) feedback in many ways, some of which are more appropriate than others. The key element of feedback is that it's of benefit to the performer and promotes a change in performance. Let's look at some types of feedback.

### External Feedback

#### Feedback from the Coach

This is the most common way of feeding back. We can do it verbally for example; "Good effort Sarah, the timing of that roll was much better", or non-verbally, a simple 'thumbs up' or a smile for example.

To make feedback meaningful try using this structure;

#### **Observation → Effect → Change or Repeat**

An example of this might be;

Observation	"Tom, in that last bow cut you didn't power out of the turn"
Effect	"That's why the boat stalled and you lost your speed"
Change or Repeat	"Next time turn the cut into a bow draw and give it a few pumps to keep the power on"

Giving feedback is a continuation of observation and analysis. A key point to remember is to rehearse what you are going to say to ensure that it makes sense and is appropriate. Also, wait a few seconds before you talk, this gives the learner time to process internal feedback. Waiting for them to make eye contact with you is a good indicator of when they are ready.



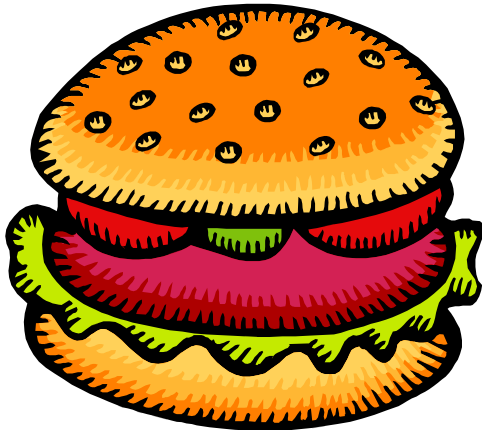
## LEVEL 2 CANDIDATE SUPPORT PACK

The following are some top tips for giving feedback;

- Make sure you are in a good position to feed back, this might not be where you observed from
- Minimise how many points you give. One or two is best
- Wait until the learner is ready
- Keep it brief, the action needs to be practised again within 30 seconds to make the most of feedback
- Ensure the learner knows which element of their performance you are feeding back on
- Be positive, use language that is encouraging

### **The Feedback Burger**

Some Coaches like to structure their feedback in layers built on each other like a burger. As feedback generally consists of information on what was wrong or how it could be better it's a good idea to sandwich corrections between layers of praise.



PRAISE

CORRECTION

PRAISE

An example of feedback given in this way would be; "Mike, that roll is really getting there, your paddle movement is great. This time remember to leave your head in the water as long as you can before you bring it out, your timing is bang on! Let's go again."



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### **Feedback from Peers**

If you are using a reciprocal style of coaching your learners will feed back to each other. This is a good way to include the entire group and give learners the opportunity to focus on particular movements that may, in turn, be of benefit to them. Remember that beginners will need more input from you to ensure the feedback they give is accurate.

### **Video**

The camera never lies! Seeing yourself perform is a powerful tool for improving performance. It is especially useful for those who don't take verbal feedback on board. As well as video cameras we can also use the video application on digital cameras and even mobile phones to record performance. Keep clips short and remember that we are not always as good as we perceive ourselves to be so make sure you don't dishearten students.



Remember if learners are under 18 years old, you **MUST** have permission from parents or guardians before you film them



For more information on the use of video look at;  
The Use of Video in the BCU Handbook by Leo Hoare (Pesda Press)



<b>Applied Activity</b>		
<p>Observation – Effect – Change or Repeat</p> <p>Using this feedback structure fill in the blank boxes in the table below;</p>		
<b>Observation</b>	<b>Effect</b>	<b>Change or repeat</b>
Blade is placed too far forward in the draw stroke		
Paddler not rotating the head and body in the bow rudder		
Blade sinks under the water when placed for a low brace		

### Internal Feedback

As well as feedback from the Coach we also receive feedback from ourselves. Through our senses we perceive a constant flow of information about our actions; ranging from what we see and hear to how things feel kinaesthetically. The job of the Coach is to help the learner process this information. This might involve us deciding not to give verbal feedback but maybe to ask how something felt. This helps ingrain the feel of a successful performance. Beginners tend to rely more on your input but as paddlers become more proficient (with your help) they will start to tune into internal feedback and use it to improve.



## 8.5 Training Principles

### Fitness for Paddlesport

There are a range of fitness components that are important for canoeing and kayaking, and as a Coach you will need to develop each of these components in order to improve a paddler's performance.

The following are components of fitness;

- Strength
- Power
- Muscular endurance
- Endurance/cardiovascular fitness
- Speed
- Flexibility

The following activities can be used in order to improve a paddler's fitness;

**Improve strength** - weight resistance training using high resistance and low repetitions (adults only), exercises using the body weight, e.g. press-ups, circuit training

**Improve power** - plyometric exercises, e.g. skips, hops

**Improve muscular endurance** – weight resistance training using low weights and high repetitions, circuit training, exercises using body weight, e.g. lunges, tricep dips, squats

**Improve endurance/cardiovascular fitness** – circuit training, aerobic training (continuous running), interval training (run – rest – run – rest), fartlek training, small-sided games, anaerobic training (shuttle runs, sprints)

**Improve speed** – sprints and races, interval training

**Improve flexibility** – progressive, developmental stretching including dynamic and static stretches



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### **Injury prevention**

Warming up is by far the best way to prevent injury in canoeing/kayaking. We have already looked at the principles of warming up and the process we should go through. Paddlesport involves a lot of pulling from the shoulders that places a lot of strain on this area. To avoid injury to the shoulders we should focus on them in the warm up and have suitable rest and recovery periods.

Most professionals agree that stretching decreases resistance in tissue structures; you are, therefore, less likely to become injured by exceeding tissue extensibility (maximum range of tissues) during activity. Without flexibility training (stretching), you are missing an important part of overall fitness training.

### **Lower back pain**

Lower back pain is a key area for concern in paddlesport coaching. To reduce the risk of lower back problems it is recommended that we encourage our paddlers to stretch before taking part in activity. Stretching promotes muscular relaxation. A muscle in constant contraction requires more energy to accomplish activities. Flexibility in the hamstrings, hip flexors, quadriceps, and other muscles attaching to the pelvis reduces stress to the low back. Stretching encourages healthy nutrition directly to muscles; the resulting reduction in accumulated toxins reduces the potential for muscle shortening or tightening and thus reduces fatigue.

### **Stretch before and after exercise**

Stretching is recommended both before and after exercise, each for different reasons. Stretching before an activity (after the warm-up) improves dynamic flexibility and reduces the chance of injury. Stretching after exercise ensures muscle relaxation, facilitating normal resting length, circulation to joint and tissue structures, and removal of unwanted waste products, thus reducing muscle soreness and stiffness. Body temperature is highest right after a cardiovascular exercise program and/or after strength training. In order to achieve maximum results in range of motion and to receive other benefits, some opinions feel that it is highly recommended that you do static stretching at this point.



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**Nutrition**

For a paddler to perform effectively it is essential that they maintain a balanced and healthy diet. The body needs fuel like a motor vehicle to be able to perform. The Coach has a responsibility in providing students with the basic necessary information on how to fuel effectively prior to performance. Specialist advice must be sought from a Sports Nutritionist. A balanced diet should consist of carbohydrate (60%), protein (15%), and fat (25%). As well as a balanced diet educating your learners of when to eat prior to training and competition is equally as important. As a general rule, we should not eat a heavy meal two hours prior to training.

Item	How cooked/prepared	Nutrient
Cornflakes	N/A	Carbohydrate
Semi-skimmed milk	N/A	Protein
Full breakfast	Fried	Carbohydrate, protein, fat
Coffee with 3 sugars	Boiled	Carbohydrate

**Key information;**

- Ingesting ideal nutrient combinations at optimal times enhances performance and recovery while improving muscle integrity
- Combining carbohydrates and protein at the right time will improve training and workouts
- Nutrient timing isn't just for athletes—these strategies can benefit everyday exercisers
- Increasing daily intakes of dietary calcium is a new way to combat the obesity epidemic

**Hydration**

Fluid is essential for every living organism and needs replacing at regular intervals. Water is a by-product of exercise in the form of sweat and metabolic activity. When we sweat we lose essential minerals known as electrolytes that are essential for activity and need replacing. Electrolytes (salts and sugars) can be found in isotonic sports drinks.



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Generally speaking a person engaged in exercise can lose between 0.5 and 1.5 litres of water through sweat in an hour. When we remember that we should drink 2 litres of water per day as standard we get an idea of the amount of water that we should consume during and after exercise. Our bodies are about 65% water and it is vital for a variety of functions including; producing energy, maintaining our immune system, balance, focus and cognition. You can see the relevance of these factors to canoeists!



## Part 9 - Evaluating and Reviewing

### Introduction

The coaching process does not end when the participants go home. As effective Coaches we should be constantly looking at ways to improve what we do and how we do it. This section has two broad aims. Firstly, we will look at some considerations for concluding sessions. Secondly, we will consider evaluating and reviewing coaching sessions as well as evaluating and reviewing our own coaching practice.

### 9.1 Concluding Sessions

Part of our session planning should factor in time to wind the session down and prepare participants to finish. You may end your session with a game, free time, or a practice period. Using language that gives participants a time frame is advisable, especially with children. Using phrases like "OK, last three times round the circuit" is good for winding down.

Warming down after physical activity is as important as warming up. Returning our bodies to their resting state is good for muscle relaxation, circulation to joints and tissues, removing waste products, and reducing muscle soreness. Warm downs can be done on or off the water and should focus on slow movements that include stretching muscles that have been used in the session.

Concluding requires that you get participants safely off the water and taking care of their needs before departure. You will need to make sure, for example, that changing facilities are separate for girls and boys. You will also need to follow correct procedures for returning and storing equipment; this should be done safely and leave no hazards for others after you have left.

Concluding sessions should also involve communicating future plans to your learners. Letting your students know what will happen in the next session keeps them informed and is an active part of the learning process. It also helps link together what they have already done with what is required for the next step.



## 9.2 Evaluating and Reviewing

When your session is finished it is important to take time to reflect on it with a view to establishing how effective it was. In order to do this we need to foster and develop a culture of reflective practice within our coaching.

### Reflective Practice

Reflective practice is the process of taking past experiences and knowledge, and critically evaluating them in light of new experiences and knowledge. The key to reflective practice is to be honest about what you do and be prepared to criticise your own coaching. The idea is that by reflecting on what we have done we are able to structure experiences and decide what we did well and what could be improved. The process of reflecting on what has happened allows us to build on what we already know about coaching and develop new ideas by adding value to past and present learnt skills.

Reflective practice encourages a multi-answer approach to problem solving and arms us with more tools to achieve our aims. The result of this is not just a broadening of skills and solutions that we can call on, but also a deeper understanding of the reasons that some things work and some things don't. Reflective practice works at all levels of coaching and coach education. When used by paddlers it helps develop freethinking and problem solving skills that again result in coach independence.

The following are some top tips for reflective practice;

- Encourage an honest and non-judgemental atmosphere when reflecting with your learners
- Allocate time in sessions for both you and you learners to reflect on the learning undertaken
- Use it to link one coaching session to the next. Use what you have learnt to guide future practice
- Use training diaries, logbooks and session planners to provide opportunities for reflection
- Use group settings to reflect on learning in your sessions, this encourages a wider range of thoughts and feelings



## LEVEL 2 CANDIDATE SUPPORT PACK

Developing a culture of reflective practice in your coaching philosophy is important as it means that you will not stagnate and will continue to develop and evolve. Once you have incorporated reflective practice into your everyday coaching activities you can use it to reflect on what your students have learnt as well as the effectiveness of your own coaching.

### **Evaluating and reviewing sessions and coaching**

Evaluating and reviewing requires gathering information on the learning from a variety of sources. Your students should be central to this process and you should become used to extracting information from them in a variety of ways.

When reviewing a coaching session or block plan we should seek to;

- Collect, analyse and review information about the session by utilising self-reflection and feedback from participants and other staff involved in the session
- Identify the effectiveness of the session in achieving its aims as set out in your plan
- Review the key aspects of the session, e.g. the effectiveness of the activities and practices used
- Identify students development needs and undertake further learning to address these

### **Applied Activity**

In your Level 2 Candidate Pack you will have a copy of a self-review form. These are quick and easy ways of reviewing your sessions and will help address the above bullet-points. Fill one in after every session that you do, especially when working towards assessment.



You can use a variety of methods to extract information from students that will help you evaluate and review your session. Some of these include; group discussions, question and answer sessions, feedback from self-reflection, and evaluation forms.



## Development Activity

Using question and answer sessions with learners is a great way of extracting information from them that you can use to review your session. Use the spaces below to think about the kind of questions you might ask. Using open questions (those that require more than yes or no answer) will encourage a more detailed response. Two examples have been given to get you started.

What bit of the session sticks out most in your mind?

What was the worst part of the session for you?

When we look at the specifics of reviewing there are a number of considerations that we need to consider;

**Performance against pre-set goals** – As a Level 2 Coach you will have established a series of long-term, short-term, and longer-term goals. An effective review of a coaching session will allow you to judge whether the short-term session goals were met and how far participants have progressed in their long-term goals. We should ask ourselves whether students achieved the desired session goals and how performance gains compare with anticipated targets.



## LEVEL 2 CANDIDATE SUPPORT PACK

**Participants' progress** – Reviewing helps us monitor participants' progress and achievements over a period of time. Assessing how well students are progressing will help us plan for future sessions. As part of this process we might ask ourselves;

- How well did the participants learn the techniques and skills introduced to them?
- What performance developments were evident for each participant?
- Are the participants ready to progress within the next session?

**Coaching ability** – This is the element of reviewing where we evaluate our own performance rather than that of our students. We need to consider our success (or otherwise) of a coaching session in terms of our actions and behaviours. We should consider;

- What aspects of the session worked well
- What aspects of the session worked less well
- How the participants responded to the instructions given
- Whether the participants responded to instructions and activities
- Whether the participants showed signs of restlessness or boredom
- Whether the coaching behaviour was appropriate

One of the assessment tasks in your candidate pack is to use the 'Self review' form. It's a good idea to fill in one of these after every session. When you have qualified and have more experience under your belt you may find that this process occurs naturally.

### **Future targets**

Evaluating and reviewing is about looking forward as well as back. In order to plan effectively we need to use our review to help set future goals and objectives based on the achievements and progress made by participants.



## Part 10 - Progression to Assessment

### 10.1 The story so far....

It is hoped that this workbook has helped (and will continue to help) clarify some of the coaching theory from your training course and help you progress towards assessment. We encourage you to return to the workbook from time to time and to use other resources to inform your coaching activities. The workbook contains a strong element of fundamental sports and coaching science, which can be a turn-off for many budding Coaches. However, it is really important that as professional, nationally recognised Coaches we are integrating an element of well-informed theory into our coaching as, at the end of the day, it exists to maximise learning and skill acquisition that forms the basis of all coaching activity. If you are interested in the theory of sports science and coaching you are encouraged to refer to some of the texts highlighted throughout the workbook or to contact the BCU for more information.

Having said that, there is no substitute for practical coaching and undoubtedly the best way to become a better Coach is to coach! Now that you have completed your Level 2 training and digested the contents of this workbook, the next step is to get out and develop your coaching. Remember that your Course Guide and Assessment Portfolio will also help to prepare you for your assessment.



Remember; Use the Assessment Portfolio and Course Guide that you received on your training course to help you prepare for your assessment.



## Applied Activity

Using a self-profiling diagram (see appendix 1) make a profile of the things you need to do to progress towards your assessment. Shade in the quadrants you feel represent your current abilities and identify what you think you need to work on.

Some possible headings for your profile could be;

- Personal paddling
- Experience of coaching specific groups
- Knowledge of the coaching process
- Experience in other craft
- Completing assessment tasks

## 10.2 When you're qualified...

Get out there and use your new skills! BCU Level 2 Certificate in Coaching Paddlesport enables you to coach in appropriate paid or voluntary roles. We encourage you to look to develop your learning and knowledge of the sport by working with more experienced Coaches and through additional coach education. Continual Professional Development (CPD) opportunities are available through the BCU programme, or you can access alternative coaching related courses. When you have gained some experience you may choose to work through the BCU Moderate Water Endorsement, the BCU (UKCC) Level 3 programme; or if you hold the Bank-Based award you may wish to switch to a Boat-Based Coach. In addition to CPD, optional units can provide a specific focus to the qualification when required and you can also extend your discipline remit by completing an additional discipline- specific knowledge unit, allowing you to work as a Level 2 Coach in other disciplines. Contact your Home Nation Association for more details.



### 10.3 Keeping your Qualification Valid

In order to keep your qualification valid you will need to maintain Full Home Nation Governing Body Membership and update every three years.

The concept of coach update is based on the BCU Coaching Service actively providing opportunities for personal development and encouraging all Coaches to keep up to date with developments in our sport and indeed in general Sports Coaching. Further to this, with sport and sports coaching receiving an increasingly public profile with moral, ethical, and social commitments, it is important that we can account for and verify the status of all Coaches within the scheme.



Making sure your qualifications are up to date is entirely your responsibility, but the BCU does provide you with a number of easy ways to update.

In order to update you will need to provide your Home Nation Governing Body with evidence that you have fulfilled the following requirements;

- Actively been coaching
- Attended relevant CPD (Continual Professional Development) in water safety, coaching/assessing, and Health & Safety Executive and Legislative Guidelines. This can be achieved by attending an Update Forum organised through your Region, or through Self-Declaration. More details are available through your Home Nation Governing Body and [www.bcu.org.uk](http://www.bcu.org.uk).



We hope that before your three-year update date comes around that you will have chosen to further your coaching skills by progressing onto BCU UKCC Level 3 Training, this automatically moves your update date, three years on!



## Appendix 1 - Self Profile

Name:

Date:

