



Insights - Learner Centered Approach to Daily Reflection

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Briefing

In our last newsletter, we discussed the importance of a yearly review. The review process is important in progressing through the experiential learning model in that it promotes reflection and can provide additional skills, methods, and tactics to experiment with. This benefits the learning process and solidifies the key takeaways and is beneficial for athletes and coaches of various skill levels.

In this article we will look at a more specific review model that can be used after each practice session or competition.

GRIP Review

Through my courses with the U.S. Center for Coaching Excellence I was introduced to the GRIP Review Process that promotes a very learner-centered approach to reviewing performances. Although athletes should reflect on the performance routinely, the GRIP Review Process allows both the learner and the coach to participate in the review process. The coach will always have a slightly different perspective than the athlete and will be able to help bring awareness to the athlete's blind spots.

Through this process it is important for coaches to remember that coaches are facilitating this review. The GRIP Review Process provides a clear structure to reviewing skills and performance. The GRIP acronym stands for:

- G - Goals:** This includes both the outcome and process goals for the learner.
- R - Reflect:** The learner needs to reflect on the positives and the criticals.
- I - Input:** Input should come from both the coach and from the learner.
- P - Plan:** Plan the detailed personal actions that are needed for growth in the specific area.

G - Goals

Athletes should have a goal for each practice. These should be both personal goals and those provided by the coach. What is the desired outcome of the practice? What should the athlete be able to do by the end of practice or at the competition? This may include both process and outcome goals for the athlete. Asking the athlete to answer these questions helps pull that information and learning out of them and narrow down the focus on the review.

R - Reflect

Coaches can say statements or ask questions to encourage self-reflection. Coaches should look to pull out the positive aspects first and then move toward the more critical elements. For example, a coach may say, "Tell me what you did really well." Depending on the athlete or their

mood, the coach may have to really work at this and continue to encourage the athlete to find the positives to reinforce.

Coaches may then follow up by asking about the more critical elements. For example, a coach may say, "Tell me about what happened when you looked at the leader board and saw your name at the top of the list." And then the coach may follow up with "What might you do differently next time if presented that same situation?"

Coaches should avoid asking single word response questions and questions that promote judgement.

I - Input

This is where the coach provides their observations on first the additional positives and then offer tips to the areas of improvement. Coaches should remember to utilize the concepts of effective feedback by being clear and concise. Coaches also need to remember to be honest to the learner, but they do not have to be brutally honest.

P - Plan

Now the coach will help the learner identify the priority areas to develop and plan the next steps. The coach can again pull this information from the athlete through questioning. Questions such as:

- "What is the most important priority to focus on?"
- "How can we improve that area?"
- "What resources will we need to improve that area?"
- "What do you need from me to help achieve that?"

GRIP for Coaches

This review process can also be used for coaches working together to improve their coaching ability. Coaching is a skill, or rather a multitude of skills, and just like shooting a bow, the skills of coaching can be developed through practice. Having another coach go through the GRIP review process with you can help identify your blind spots and help guide you to reflect on areas of improvement.

GRIP Practice

Certainly, the first time you go through a GRIP review it will seem a little awkward. Coaches may discover that the first time an athlete goes through the process they may be more reserved, and the coach may need to really encourage the athlete to be an active participant in the process. Over time they will be more comfortable and more involved in the process. Younger and less experienced athletes may require the coach to use a much-simplified version of this process.

Summary

Encouraging an athlete to progress through the learning cycle is critical in reinforcing the learning, retaining information and skills, and continuous positive development. The GRIP process provides coaches with an organized method for keeping the athlete involved and

engaged in the review and reflection process. This review process is also great for coach to utilize to continue their development.