**General Knowledge of the Coach**

The development of coaches is a fundamental process to elevate professional quality and promote the holistic growth of athletes. To achieve this goal, it is essential that coaches align their purpose, values, and mission with their training practices. This alignment not only defines the coach's leadership philosophy but also ensures a more meaningful impact on the athletes’ lives and performance. This text explores how the elements of purpose, values, and mission can be cohesively integrated into the training process, using metaphors to illustrate the coach's role in a practical and understandable way.

Understanding what characterizes quality coaching is the first step in this process. Interestingly, the word "coach" comes from a city in Hungary where the first suspension carriage was created, providing smoother and more pleasant journeys. This metaphor is an excellent analogy for the coach’s role, who must facilitate the athlete’s journey in a more efficient and enjoyable way. However, the success of coaching is not limited to podium finishes or medals; it includes the holistic development of athletes, encompassing four main areas: competence, confidence, connection, and character.

To illustrate the importance of coach development and its essential components, we can use the metaphor of a ship sailing on the open sea. In this scenario, the coach is compared to the ship's captain, and each aspect of coaching becomes a crucial part of the vessel. This image helps understand how different elements interact to promote effective and high-quality coaching.

In the ship’s structure, the **bridge** represents the coach’s knowledge. It is the place from which the captain conducts the journey, gathering technical information, strategies, and leadership skills to make assertive decisions. It is on the bridge that the coach organizes their professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge—all essential to guide the team toward their goals.

The **engine room**, in turn, symbolizes the athletes’ outcomes. It is where all the energy is transformed into motion and where the impact of the coach’s work is most visible. Just like on a ship, where the efficiency of the engine room defines speed and performance, in coaching, the development of athletes’ competence, confidence, connection, and character determines progress in the desired direction.

The **main sail**, in turn, represents **contextual adjustment**. Just as the sail is essential for adapting the ship to the wind and sea conditions, the coach must adjust their coaching style to the athletes’ needs and the environment in which they are inserted. This adaptability is crucial to ensure that the coaching process remains effective, even amidst challenges and unexpected changes.

Lastly, the **leisure deck** reflects the **coach's well-being**. Just like on a ship, where the deck provides moments of rest and leisure for the crew, in coaching, self-care is fundamental for the coach to stay motivated, balanced, and able to lead their team. A healthy coach can provide a more positive and inspiring working environment for athletes.

The concept of the **“Golden Circle,”** by Simon Sinek, is an essential tool to inspire trust and leadership. Starting with the “why,” moving through the “how,” and ending with the “what,” this approach helps create an emotional connection with athletes and collaborators, generating a more lasting impact.

Simon Sinek describes the “why” as the **purpose**, the core cause or belief that drives a person or organization. The “why” is what motivates action, inspires followers, and gives meaning to what is done, going beyond simply “what” we do and “how” we do it. For Sinek, the “why” is the central element for achieving success and lasting engagement. The **mission**, in turn, is the “what” of coaching, which must be aligned with the goals of both the organization and the coach.

In the final stage of coach development, the focus is on **communicating these elements effectively**.

Here are some examples of “whys” in different contexts:

1. **Sports Organization:**
* **Why**: To inspire athletes to surpass themselves and to develop values of discipline, resilience, and sportsmanship.
* **How**: By offering rigorous training, promoting fair competition, and encouraging teamwork.
* **What**: Physical and mental training for high-performance athletes.
1. **Technology Company:**
* **Why**: To make people’s lives easier and connect the world by promoting innovation and accessibility.
* **How**: By developing intuitive and accessible products with advanced technologies and exemplary customer service.
* **What**: Creating smartphones, tablets, laptops, and connectivity services.
1. **Sports Coach:**
* **Why**: To help athletes discover and reach their full potential, creating a transformative experience through sport.
* **How**: By providing technical guidance, encouraging self-confidence, and promoting fair play.
* **What**: Offering training sessions focused on the physical and mental development of athletes.

These “whys” exemplify how a clear purpose can inspire and guide actions, promoting a deeper connection with the people involved.

**Valorie Kondos Field**, known as "Miss Val," transformed the UCLA gymnastics team by incorporating values such as **gratitude** and a **sense of belonging**. With no previous experience in gymnastics, she used her background in ballet to create innovative routines and emphasized the **personal development** of her athletes. Miss Val believed that success was not limited to victories, but also to **individual growth** and **joy in sport**. Her human-centered approach resulted in **seven national titles** and the recognition of **Coach of the Century** by the Pac-12 Conference.

Throughout the process, coaches are encouraged to engage in **practical exercises** to identify and align their **purpose, values, and mission**. One way to practice this is to reflect on what needs to be done to achieve a certain goal. This reflection helps to understand and clarify one's purpose. Furthermore, listing values that guide behavior and aligning daily actions with personal and organizational goals can assist in this practice.

In conclusion, integrating **purpose, values, and mission** into a **cohesive coaching philosophy** is essential for the coach’s success and the effective development of athletes. This philosophy is the coach’s true **“heartbeat,”** guiding their actions and inspiring the athletes’ journey in a deep and transformative way.

Coaches play an important role not only in the athletic lives of the athletes they train but also in their **daily lives**. They have the potential to influence not only the development of sport-specific skills and athletic performance but also the athletes’ **personal growth** and approach to other aspects of life. Although coaching can be challenging at times, it can also be an extremely **rewarding function**.

**Development of a Coaching Philosophy and Effective Communication**

In the sports world, a coach’s success is deeply connected to the **clarity of their coaching philosophy**, the **effectiveness of their communication**, and the **strategic use of feedback**. These fundamental elements determine how coaches manage the development of their athletes and maximize their potential to achieve success in competitions. Based on studies and the practices of elite coaches, this guide provides a comprehensive overview of how these principles can be applied to promote athlete growth and to establish a high-quality coaching environment.

A **coaching philosophy** serves as the foundation for all of the coach’s actions and decisions. It establishes what is most important in the relationship with athletes and directs their development. To be effective, this philosophy needs to include some essential components:

* Putting **athletes first**, prioritizing their well-being and growth, since success in competitions is a natural consequence of this process;
* **Showing athletes they are on the right path**, which generates motivation to keep trying;
* Teaching how to **control the aspects that can be managed**, such as technique and skills, rather than external factors;
* Focusing on **technique** as a way to overcome moments of doubt or pressure;
* And recognizing that, although achievements belong to the athletes, **coaches play a fundamental role** in their success.

The concept of success in coaching should not be limited to merely winning competitions. Success can also be defined as **setting and surpassing challenging expectations**, in addition to promoting the athletes’ **personal growth**. This includes turning them not only into committed competitors, but also into responsible citizens and individuals.

**Communication skills** are essential for effective coaching. Establishing clear expectations and demanding accountability from athletes is crucial for their development. This includes teaching specific skills in a structured manner, allowing athletes to understand exactly what is expected. Additionally, **active listening** is a crucial skill for coaches, as it allows them to understand athletes’ needs and concerns, fostering an environment of **mutual respect and trust**.

**Feedback** is a powerful tool in athlete development. There are three main types of feedback:

* **Positive reinforcement**, which recognizes desirable behaviors to encourage their repetition;
* **Redirective feedback**, which increases awareness of behaviors that need adjustment and guides changes;
* And **knowledge of results feedback**, which provides information about performance to guide continuous improvement.

The **timing and frequency** of feedback are also key to its effectiveness. After a good performance, praising the athlete is appropriate; after a poor performance, it is best to wait until the athlete has calmed down. Also, **beginner athletes** need more frequent feedback, while **more experienced athletes** require less.

**Planned practical sessions** are a key component in athlete development. Two types of practice are particularly useful:

* **Blocked practice**, which involves the continuous repetition of the same skill and is effective for beginners;
* And **random practice**, which alternates skills during training, simulating real competition conditions and being more suitable for experienced athletes.

Introducing **variables** such as temperature, lighting, and noise during training also prepares athletes to face different competition environments, increasing their **resilience**.

Studies by **Clifford Mallett** and **Sergio LeClera Bocal** identified **common characteristics among elite coaches**, such as:

* Effective communication,
* Management and motivational skills,
* Strategic planning,
* And the ability to build strong relationships with athletes.

In addition, successful coaches are driven by an **unrelenting desire to win and constantly improve**, along with a **focus on the personal growth** of their athletes and themselves.

**Effective planning** is essential to success in coaching. This involves:

* Developing a clear coaching philosophy,
* Simplifying training complexity so it’s understandable for athletes,
* Continuously adjusting and reviewing action plans to keep them updated and effective.

**Careful selection of athletes and staff** is also fundamental, ensuring that everyone shares the same **vision and goals**.

In conclusion, success in coaching depends on:

* A well-defined philosophy,
* Effective communication,
* Strategic use of feedback,
* And deliberate practice.

Successful coaches combine interpersonal and technical skills to **create an environment** where athletes can thrive and reach their **maximum potential**. The **integration of these elements** is what allows coaches not only to win competitions but also to **transform their athletes’ lives in deep and lasting ways**.

**Coaching Methods in Rowing**

Training methods in rowing involve various approaches that define the coach’s ultimate success. The coaching style adopted quickly becomes noticeable to participants, as well as to parents, guardians, officials, and administrators. It can either facilitate or hinder the **learning process**. We will now address different coaching styles and athlete skill development using the **SPORT formula** as a guide. This section also covers **basic training session planning**, with an emphasis on **safety and inclusive practices**, and provides an overview of the various forms of **specialized coaching** in the sport.

**The SPORT Coaching Method**

To maximize learning, coaches can consider using the **S.P.O.R.T.** method, which involves the following principles:

* **Show**: Demonstrate the activity, highlighting a maximum of three key points and check athlete understanding with specific questions.
* **Practise**: Allow athletes to practice immediately after the demonstration, repeating key points if necessary.
* **Observe**: Watch the athletes and provide verbal feedback on the main points, valuing their effort.
* **Reinforce**: Praise effort and recognize achievements, maintaining enthusiasm throughout the session.
* **Time**: Repeat the activity with the key points in subsequent training sessions to reinforce learning.

Coaching success depends on the coach’s ability to **adapt their approach** to meet the needs and circumstances of athletes, always ensuring a **safe and motivating learning environment**.

**Reflecting on Coaching Practice**

When reflecting on your coaching approach, it’s essential to consider the **goal of the task** and the **roles of both coach and athlete** in the teaching-learning process. A key question is:
**“How will I coach?”**
This prompts critical thinking about the **coaching style** chosen for a specific task. Evaluating whether the chosen approach was appropriate for the session and considering other possibilities that might work just as well—or better—is essential practice.

**Coaching Styles**

There are different coaching archetypes that can influence a coach’s approach:

* **Authoritarian Coach**: Very strict, often punitive. There’s good team spirit when winning, but conflicts arise during defeats. The authoritarian coach is willing to be “hated” in order to gain respect.
* **Businesslike Coach**: Focuses not on people but on **results**. Expects 100% effort all the time.
* **Nice Coach**: Connects well with self-disciplined participants. However, some may take advantage of their cooperative nature.
* **Intense Coach**: Easily transmits anxiety due to a tense posture, always focused on performance quality and results.
* **Easygoing Coach**: Casual or submissive, which may give the impression that training is not taken seriously.

Although each coaching style has advantages and disadvantages, all can be effective in different contexts. Most coaches naturally use a **blend** of the above styles. The most important thing is that the coach is able to **adapt** their style to the athletes’ needs and circumstances. For example, an authoritarian coach may not be ideal for athletes who need encouragement during development. On the other hand, a very friendly coach may struggle when preparing a senior team for the World Championships.

Regardless of style, there are common elements that do **not** require adaptation: the need to be **positive**, **encouraging**, and to **ensure the participants' safety** at all times.

**Coaching Developing Athletes**

**Coaching Children**

The formative years of childhood are **critical for motor skill development**. At this stage, teaching the correct technique is essential, as it lays the **foundation for movement patterns**. Children learn best in **multisensory environments**, where sounds, colors, touch, and kinesthetic stimuli play an important role. Coaches should **vary tone and language**, emphasize the **feeling of the activity**, and provide **constant feedback**.

**Key Points for the Coach:**

When planning training sessions for children, consider their **growth characteristics, development, and experience levels**. It's important to:

* Allow children to contribute to their own learning;
* Focus on individual needs;
* Develop fundamental movement skills;
* Include a variety of activities and challenges;
* Cater to different abilities and backgrounds;
* Encourage the best effort from everyone;
* Maintain an appropriate balance between activity and rest.

**Coaching Adolescents**

Adolescents enjoy opportunities to connect with their peers and are open to a **more collegiate approach**, provided that **clear boundaries** are established.

An effective training program for adolescents should:

* Establish **consistent limits and rules**;
* Provide **challenges for individual development**;
* Include athletes in the **decision-making process**;
* Offer a **variety of roles and activities**.

**Coaching Masters**

Master rowers generally have **more autonomy over their training** compared to younger athletes. Due to their varied life experiences and commitments outside of sport, **there is no single best approach** to coaching masters—adaptation to individual needs is necessary.

**Justin MacLellan**, affiliated with ‘Coaching Masters Athletes’, recommends a **more flexible coaching environment** when working with master rowers.

**Performance Coaching: Communicating for Performance**

**Effective communication** is one of the main pillars of quality coaching, especially when it comes to **motor learning** and **athlete performance**. The words used by coaches play a **crucial role** in this process, directly impacting how athletes perform. This section explores **communication strategies**, emphasizing the use of **cues** to boost sports performance. By understanding these principles, coaches can better **direct athletes’ attention**, making learning and performance more effective.

At the start of training sessions, it’s common to include stretching exercises to energize participants, highlighting the importance of **clear communication** right from the beginning. This leads to the core concept of this content: the **coach’s communication loop**, composed of five essential steps:

1. **Describe**
2. **Demonstrate**
3. **Give cues**
4. **Observe the execution**
5. **Debrief**

This forms a continuous and effective **communication cycle**.

**Internal vs. External Cues**

When defining coaching cues, it’s important to distinguish between:

* **Internal cues**: Focus on specific parts of the body (e.g., “extend your hips,” “squeeze your glutes”);
* **External cues**: Focus on the **goal of the movement** (e.g., “jump higher,” “reach for the sky”).

To demonstrate the difference, practical activities are used, encouraging participants to **feel the effects** of each type of cue—for example, raising their arms or performing a squat.

**External cues** stand out for their **effectiveness in activating the motor system**, allowing the body to naturally organize itself to perform the movement. In contrast, internal cues can **restrict movement** by narrowing the focus to one specific body part, potentially compromising overall execution.

To help athletes understand external cues, coaches can use **visual analogies**, like:

* “Be the jet” (to accelerate);
* “Break the glass with your knee” (to drive the motion).

**When to Use Internal vs. External Cues**

Practical application of cues requires a clear understanding of **context** and **timing**. Internal cues are more appropriate during the **description** and **debriefing** phases, when there’s more time for detailed explanations. On the other hand, external cues should be used **right before and during execution**, helping athletes focus on the desired outcome.

A classic example of how internal focus can hinder performance is **Lolo Jones** in the 2008 Beijing Olympics. She was the favorite to win gold in the 100m hurdles and was leading the race when she hit the penultimate hurdle, lost balance, and finished seventh. That critical mistake was attributed, in part, to a shift in her mental strategy to a more **internally focused approach**, which was unusual for her.

This experience highlights the importance of **mental consistency** in high-speed sports like hurdling. Studies show that **external cues help prevent “choking” under pressure**, promoting a more **optimized performance state**.

**What Is Choking Under Pressure?**

**Choking under pressure** happens when athletes fail to meet performance expectations, usually in **high-pressure situations**. This phenomenon is often caused by increased **anxiety**, which leads athletes to **overprocess** the situation. That overprocessing overloads working memory, resulting in **slower execution** and **performance errors** (Gomez et al., 2015). These thoughts act as **distractions** for the athlete.

A study with players from the **Spanish Basketball League** revealed a tendency to **speed up their free-throw routines** in pressure situations. The same study also found an increase in poor decisions during the last five minutes of tight games (Gomez et al., 2015). This could be due to pressure from the **crowd, coach, teammates**, or the **athlete’s own expectations**. As a result, players may attempt to escape the anxiety by **rushing**, abandoning their natural routine.

Interestingly, fewer cases of choking were observed during **overtime periods**. This was attributed to coaches having time to **reorganize the team** and create **new strategies** (Gomez et al., 2015). The study suggests that anxiety is **more intense at the end of a tight game** than at the beginning. However, players appear to be more composed when **coaches intervene** with tactical resets before overtime begins.

According to Gomez et al. (2015), **high-status athletes** may induce pressure during training to decrease the likelihood of choking when it really matters. This hypothesis was confirmed in a later study. In the world’s most competitive soccer leagues, a study analyzed penalty success rates among **high-status** and **non-status** players.

“High status” was defined by **elite performance awards**—the world’s top players. The results were surprising: high-status players had a **65% success rate** on penalties, while lower-status players converted **88.9%** (Jordet, 2009).

That means **non-status players performed 23.9% better** on penalties than the best-known athletes in the world (Jordet, 2009). Although high-status players are still the world’s best footballers, this study suggests that **higher status creates more pressure**, resulting in **greater anxiety and distractions** compared to lower-status players, who may not receive the same intense scrutiny from fans and media.

**Minimizing Choking Under Pressure**

To minimize choking, athletes need to **eliminate distractions** in high-pressure moments. One effective strategy is to develop a **pre-performance routine**.

In a study involving three athletes who had previously failed under pressure, researchers designed individualized routines that included:

* **Behavioral preparation**,
* **Mental preparation**,
* **Breathing techniques**,
* And **cue words** (Mesagno & Beckman, 2017).

The group practiced their routine and was later tested in pressure situations. The results showed that the athletes who followed their **pre-performance routine** performed **better under pressure** than those who did not (Mesagno & Beckman, 2017).

**Choking happens in all sports, at all levels**, whether it’s missing a crucial shot, a free throw, or a penalty. Every athlete experiences the **anxiety and pressure** that cause choking. This article outlines different techniques to manage anxiety that leads to choking. Studies have shown that science-backed techniques such as the **“Quiet Eye”** and **pre-performance routines** are effective in preventing choking. Athletes can use these methods to manage anxiety and **perform at their best when it matters most**.

**Quiet Eye**

Previous studies have found that **expert athletes** tend to have **“quieter” eyes**, or less visual activity, in the final moments before executing a skill. For example:

* A basketball player might **fixate on the hoop** before shooting a free throw;
* A golfer might **lock eyes on the ball** before swinging.

The **Quiet Eye technique** refers to the **duration of time** a person spends **fixating on a specific location** before initiating movement. It has been studied in sports, as well as in **law enforcement**, the **military**, and **medical** contexts.

Expert performance appears to be linked to **longer Quiet Eye periods**, which suggests that **optimal execution requires the brain to organize itself** before movement begins. These periods tend to **increase** as skills become more complex.

In other words, the athletes who **perform best** don’t rely on instinct or rush—they take a moment to **mentally slow down and prepare** before making their move.

**Enhancing Communication Through FIT Cues**

To improve communication in training, it is recommended to adopt the **FIT strategy**, which stands for:

* **Familiarity**,
* **Interest**,
* **Target**.

Cues should be:

* **Understandable** to athletes,
* **Incorporate elements from their daily lives** to make them more relatable and engaging,
* And **direct attention to one specific aspect at a time**.

An effective practice is to hold **silent sessions**, during which coaches observe athletes **without providing immediate feedback**. This allows athletes to **internalize the cues**.

An indicator that athletes have **understood and internalized** the cues is when they begin to use them **autonomously**, without needing reminders.

In the end, coaches are encouraged to:

* Reflect on the **types of cues** they use,
* Incorporate **more external cues** into their coaching practice.

For those who want to dive deeper into this topic, it is recommended to explore resources like the book
**“The Language of Coaching” by Nick Winkelman**.

**The Power of Effective Communication in Coaching**

Effective communication is **undoubtedly essential** for coaching success. The **proper use of cues** can transform athlete performance, helping them reach their **maximum potential**. Coaches who consistently strive to improve their **communication skills** foster a learning environment that supports **athlete growth and achievement** in competition.

**Providing Positive Experiences**

It is essential to ensure that young athletes have **pleasant and meaningful experiences** throughout their sports journey. This increases the chances that they will remain **engaged in the long term**.

**The Coach’s Personal Image**

A coach’s role goes far beyond technical development. It also includes **building a strong professional image** and applying **ethical principles** in sports management. To be successful and progress in their career, coaches must understand how their **image affects public perception**, **growth opportunities**, and the **reputation of their organizations**.

A solid professional image is one of the pillars of a coach’s success. It refers to the **set of qualities and characteristics** that represent how the coach is perceived by others. This includes:

* The **desired image** – how the coach wants to be seen;
* The **perceived image** – how they are actually seen.

To build a strong image, it’s fundamental to define **core competencies**. A coach may be:

* An **efficient executor**,
* A **strategic thinker**,
* Or a **relational communicator**.

It’s also important to consider the **social identity** they want to embody—such as being seen as a **mentor**, a **volunteer**, or an **advocate** for a specific cause. Aspects like **appearance** and **behavior** also play a key role in building this image, as they directly impact **public perception** in events and professional interactions.

**Coaching the Beginner: Planning and Inclusive Approaches**

**Inclusive Coaching**

Coaches **don’t need “special” skills** or knowledge to include all participants. Many believe it’s necessary to have specific skills to coach people with disabilities, but that’s not true. The **basic skills of a good coach**, when applied with an **inclusive philosophy**, ensure that the inclusion of **all individuals**, including those with disabilities, becomes a **natural part of training**.

There are **very few disabilities or medical conditions** that completely prevent someone from participating in rowing. People with disabilities engage in sports and physical activity for the same reasons as others: to **improve fitness**, **develop new skills**, **increase social interaction**, **reach their full potential**, and **gain recognition**.

An essential aspect of inclusive coaching is the recognition of values such as:

* **Patience** – some individuals will take longer to develop skills;
* **Respect** – acknowledging differences and treating all participants as individuals;
* **Adaptability** – using a **flexible approach** in both coaching and communication to account for individual differences.

Inclusive coaching skills involve:

* **Organization** – recognizing the importance of preparation and planning;
* **Safe practice** – ensuring every session is conducted with participant safety in mind;
* And **knowledge** – having adaptable strategies to maximize each participant’s potential.

**Inclusive Coaching in Practice: The T.R.E.E. Model**

One of the most effective approaches to inclusive coaching is the **T.R.E.E. model**, which stands for:

* **Teaching**,
* **Rules**,
* **Environment**,
* **Equipment**.

This model, promoted by **Sport Australia**, is a **simple and repeatable method** to ensure more inclusive coaching practices by **adapting elements of sports activities** to meet the needs of each participant—especially those with disabilities.

**1. Teaching (Estilo de Ensino)**

This refers to **how the game or activity is communicated** to participants. The delivery of information can have a huge impact on inclusion. Using a **mix of strategies** helps ensure that communication is effective and appropriate. Examples include:

* Keeping instructions **simple and concise**,
* Using **visual aids**, **demonstrations**, and **whistles**,
* Encouraging **participation**, **teamwork**, and **problem-solving**,
* Asking **specific questions** to check understanding.

**2. Rules**

Some participants may find it difficult to understand or follow standard rules. Rules can be **simplified or modified** as needed and gradually reintroduced as participants’ skill levels increase. Strategies include:

* Starting with **few rules**, then adding more as understanding improves,
* Minimizing the time between **instructions and activity**,
* Starting exercises in **slow motion** (e.g., using a slower ball, rowing at a very slow pace, or performing simplified movements).

**3. Environment**

When planning activities, it’s essential to evaluate whether the **environment is suitable** for everyone’s mobility level. Considerations include:

* Ensuring the floor surface allows for **smooth wheelchair movement**,
* Having **benches or chairs** in strategic locations for participants who cannot stand for long periods,
* Allowing activities to be performed on the ground (e.g., sitting, kneeling, or lying down),
* Providing **stabilizers** (like floaters) to assist in boat balance during rowing.

**4. Equipment**

Not all rowing activities occur on water, so it’s important to ensure that the **right equipment** is available and accessible for all participants. Creating a **safe environment** and adapting equipment when needed reinforces that inclusion is a **core value**, not an exception.

**Summary**

A coach who is **prepared to accept each participant as an individual** will have no trouble coaching people with disabilities or participants with **different skill levels and backgrounds**. Every person is unique, and effective coaches **adjust their approach** to embrace those differences.

**Adopting an inclusive philosophy** in coaching benefits both the coach and the participants, creating a **learning and development environment that is accessible to all**.

**How to Organize a Training Session**

The first element is the **session introduction**, where the coach presents the **main objectives** of the training. This can be done using a **whiteboard** or through **direct verbal communication**. The introduction works best while athletes are getting ready, creating an opportunity to **align expectations** and answer questions.

**Warm-Up**

The second element is the **warm-up**, which is essential for **reducing the risk of injury** and improving **muscle efficiency** throughout the session. The warm-up should be:

* Adapted to the participants’ **age**,
* Focused on **low-intensity activities** related to the skills being trained,
* And include a **playful component** to keep beginners engaged.

**Learning Activity**

This is the **main part** of the session and should be **engaging and fun**. If the goal is to develop a specific skill, it’s important to use the **S.P.O.R.T. method**, now as a set of **physiological training principles**:

* **Specificity**
* **Progression**
* **Overload**
* **Reversibility**
* **Tedium**

It's also a great opportunity to include **games or competitive events**, allowing rowers to practice **competition elements** and improve their **technique under pressure**.

**SPORT Principles Explained**

Here’s what the acronym **SPORT** means in this context:

* **Specificity**: Training should be relevant to the individual and their sport. For example, a 100m sprinter will train very differently from a 10km runner. The sprinter will focus on speed and power, while the long-distance runner will develop **cardiovascular endurance** and the ability to work at high intensity **aerobically**.
* **Progression and Overload**: Training Frequency, Intensity, Time, or Type (**FITT**) should be gradually increased to push the body **beyond its usual limits**. Gradual increases help avoid performance plateaus and reduce the risk of injury.
* **Reversibility**: Fitness levels will decline if training stops or is significantly reduced (e.g., due to injury). Consistency is key.
* **Tedium**: Variety is essential—not only to keep athletes motivated, but also to **prevent overuse injuries** like strains or stress fractures. Coaches can apply this principle by **changing up the training methods** regularly.

**Example: Applying SPORT in Rowing**

Let’s take a rowing coach preparing an athlete for a **2,000-meter race**:

1. **Specificity**: The coach builds a plan tailored to the physical and energy demands of a 2K race—using high-intensity intervals and endurance sessions instead of irrelevant exercises.
2. **Progression**: Each week, the coach increases sprint reps or the length of long rows, promoting safe, steady development.
3. **Overload**: The coach ramps up the training load—speed, strength, or duration—to keep the athlete adapting and improving.
4. **Reversibility**: The coach emphasizes the importance of consistency. Even during recovery, the athlete maintains a **minimum training routine** to avoid losing progress.
5. **Tedium**: To maintain motivation, the coach mixes in intervals, strength work, technique drills, and varied workouts that stimulate both body and mind.

**F.I.T.T. Principles**

When designing a training program, coaches should also apply the **F.I.T.T. principles**:

* **Frequency**: Increase the number of training sessions per week.
* **Intensity**: Raise resistance (e.g., more weight in strength training) or train at a higher percentage of **maximum heart rate** or **heart rate reserve**. This applies to both continuous and interval training.
* **Time**: Extend the duration of the workout, shorten recovery intervals, or increase the number of sets/repetitions.
* **Type**: Offer a variety of training methods to keep the program diverse and effective.

**Cool-Down**

After the learning activities, a **cool-down** takes place, involving **low-intensity movements** such as slow rowing, walking, or light jogging once back on land. The cool-down is essential for **aiding muscle recovery** and **preventing injury** after intense effort.

**Session Review**

The final element of the session is the **review**, where the coach highlights the **most important aspects** of the session—both successes and areas needing improvement. This can be done during or right after the cool-down. It’s also a valuable time for the coach to **reflect on the session’s effectiveness**, adjusting plans and coaching strategies for future sessions.

**Multiple Choice Questions**

**Easy**

**What is the main goal of coach development?**
A) Only winning competitions
B) Promoting the holistic growth of athletes ✅
C) Creating new training styles
D) Gaining public recognition

**Where does the word “coach” come from?**
A) A military training technique
B) A Hungarian city where a suspension carriage was invented ✅
C) The practice of leading horses in races
D) A term used in American football

**What are the four core elements that define coaching success?**
A) Competence, confidence, connection, and character ✅
B) Technique, discipline, courage, and strategy
C) Respect, ethics, dedication, and focus
D) Planning, execution, results, and analysis

**What does Simon Sinek’s “Golden Circle” emphasize?**
A) Building physical strength in athletes
B) Starting with “why” (purpose) before “how” and “what” ✅
C) Creating innovative training strategies
D) Detailed analysis of athlete mistakes

**Medium**

**What does the S.P.O.R.T. method in training include?**
A) Specificity, progression, overload, reversibility, and tedium ✅
B) Strategy, planning, organization, results, and training
C) Simplicity, progress, observation, reaction, and technique
D) Sustainability, practice, organization, rhythm, and timing

**What is the connection between “Reversibility” and sports performance?**
A) Training intensity should drop after major competitions
B) Conditioning is lost when training stops ✅
C) It encourages variety to prevent overuse injuries
D) It ensures consistent performance regardless of training

**Hard**

**How do external cues benefit athlete performance compared to internal ones?**
A) They help focus on the environment and goals of the movement ✅
B) They enhance focus on technical details
C) They eliminate pressure-related anxiety
D) They’re only useful for beginners

**What characterizes the “Quiet Eye” approach in sports performance?**
A) Focusing on external goals during complex movements
B) Alternating visual feedback to improve concentration
C) Fixating on a specific point before moving to optimize mental organization ✅
D) Relying solely on internal technical focus during execution

**Additional Easy Questions**

**What should the coach prioritize in athlete development?**
A) Athlete well-being and growth ✅
B) Competition performance only
C) Pursuing sponsorship and recognition
D) Conducting hard training without rest

**What creates a lasting emotional connection between coach and athlete, according to Simon Sinek?**
A) Strategic planning
B) The “why” (purpose) ✅
C) Hosting frequent competitions
D) Enforcing strict rules

**What does the T.R.E.E. model represent in inclusive coaching?**
A) Training, Results, Balance, and Strategy
B) Teaching, Rules, Environment, and Equipment ✅
C) Technique, Respect, Education, and Empathy
D) Timing, Reinforcement, Stimulation, and Execution