

Providing feedback



What does feedback do?

Providing feedback allows us to inform a learner as to what they are doing well, but also how they can improve in their performance of that skill. Feedback is an important component of skill development and motor competence, but more crucially it develops an understanding and awareness in the learner of how movement can be achieved. Feedback can take many forms and utilising different types of feedback throughout a program set or curriculum is beneficial for the learners.

Types of feedback

The most common type of feedback is **verbal feedback** from the facilitator. Verbal feedback should consist of comments based on specific, observable characteristics of the movement that occurred. For example, when a learner is throwing you can say 'I liked the way you pointed your finger' to remind and reinforce the skill. **A piece of verbal feedback to avoid is the phrase 'good job'**. Saying 'good job' to a learner provides no reinforcement of the movement that occurred, and provides no indication of what was 'good' about the movement. This can be a challenge as the phrase has become a simple affirmation of completing a required task, but a simple change to this phrase can make it much more impactful. Instead of the word 'job', say the movement task. For example, 'good running', 'good jump', 'good throw' etc. Although this statement is still lacking in depth, it allows the learner to understand what part of the movement was being observed and analysed.

Another form of verbal feedback is **question based feedback**. In this form of feedback, the facilitator

will question or provide an observation on the outcome of the movement. For example, using the same throwing example, the facilitator might ask 'did you see what happened when you pointed your finger versus when you didn't?' or 'what was the difference when you threw that way versus this way?'. This type of questioning is great for a debrief with the class or group at the end of a game or activity. Providing these questions enables the learners to consider their own performance and learn strategies from others in the group.

Finally, the third type of feedback we will mention here is **outcome based feedback**. This relies on the learners understanding what the desired outcome of the movement is and how they may need to change their movement pattern in order to be successful. Sticking with the throwing example, the facilitator can explain at the start of the activity that the aim is to get the bean bag in to the hoop, and if you do the hoop can be moved farther away. In this activity, the learners will need to adjust their performance of the movement to the changing requirements of the task. Initially, a short underhand throw may be most successful whereas when the hoop is farther away an overhand throw may be required. Understanding these changes places the movement in context and allows the learner to develop the knowledge to adjust movements based on the assignment.

All of them together

These three types of feedback are not independent of each other, and can be used within the same activity. Using these strategies will build competence, knowledge and understanding of movement within the learner.