



North West Cricket Union; Regional Coaching  
Creating a Learning Environment



## Introduction

If we accept that learning is something that participants have to do (with our help), to improve the process of learning we must go beyond approaches that assume we can manage learning on participants' behalf.

- The more we can do to help them master the *skills* of learning, the more able they will be to manage it themselves.
- Overall we want participants taking responsibility for managing their own learning.

### Key Elements of Practice:

1. Transferable Learning
2. Mind Sets
3. The Learning Pit
4. Motivating Environments
5. In Practice

### Structure

Consider how you could use components of session design to scaffold participants' self-management.

- Sessions with significant levels of independent learning tend to be much more structured.
- Sessions should have clear learning intentions from the beginning, either set by the coach or identified and agreed by the participants involved.
- Structure enables participants to make good choices, especially when they are not sure what to do next. (Learn by having a go & exploring skills.)



## Transferable Learning

- Helping participants to develop their independent learning skills.
- **Encourage them how to ask and answer questions,**
- the level of *risk* for participants in your everyday session settings. If it is risky for them to answer questions (because they are afraid they might feel stupid if they give a wrong answer), how likely is it that they will engage? **Emphasise that it's okay to 'have a go' and that being wrong is an opportunity to learn.**
- how to use success criteria to negotiate activities and use feedback effectively
- Help your participants to see a relationship between struggling and learning; **if they are finding a task or challenge easy, then they're not really learning anything new!** Point out that struggling and challenge are both indicators of *learning*, not failure.

### More Than Just Cricket

While the participants are predominately at our sessions to become better cricketers, there are many life skills that will both enhance the levels of performance assist the participants outside sport. Setting acceptable standards and 'team traits' will greatly assist behaviour in sessions and on tours, ensuring players contribute to others success & enjoyment.

### Transferable learning

It can be helpful to think of learning intentions that apply to other contexts as more valuable than those which are specific to only one concept.

- Life skills, such as working together and managing information, are good examples of highly transferable learning intentions.
- Provide opportunity for leadership, decision making and thinking

### Transparency

- Let participants in on the secret of success criteria (for the group & individually), work *with players* to create tips on how to be successful.
- Show how to provide feedback that prompts next steps for improvement, both for their peers and for themselves.
- Involve participants when setting 'success criteria' & 'learning intentions'
- Note: especially important in selection, where participants know where they stand & what improvements or tactics require employed to raise chances of future selections.

### Responsibility

- Enabling participants to manage their own learning.
- It invests them with the skills and responsibility they need to make good choices as they negotiate challenges.



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- Empower players to take on role of the coach in aspects of sessions like warmups, skills where they are a good 'model' to learn from etc.
- Raise the quality of their work, and it promotes their learning. One context where responsibility plays a central role is when participants give feedback on their own and others' work using success criteria.
- Involve participants in setting success criteria where appropriate and beneficial.

### Recognising what 'good' looks like

- If they understand this, then they can manage the quality of their own training and become independent participants.
- If they don't know what 'good' looks like, they will require someone else to give them feedback and suggest their next steps for improvement.

### Trust

- How much you feel able to trust your participants to manage their own learning.
- Giving responsibility to participants to provide feedback to others and self-assess needs to be carefully staged by degrees.
- It is important to avoid damaging participants' confidence and self-esteem to the extent that participants feel unable to 'have a go'.



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## Mindsets (Carol Dweck example)

Video Resource: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUWn\\_TJTrnU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUWn_TJTrnU)

### Fixed Mindset: (valuing looking good)

- Having a fixed mindset is about believing that:
  - Learning potential and ability are fixed and can be measured, and *the goal is performance*;
  - ability, not effort, is the way to overcome challenges and setbacks.
  - Participants with a fixed mindset think they've either 'got it' or they haven't.
  - When they are faced with challenge, they believe that their ability, not effort, should help them overcome the setback. So they can get used to coasting along on their talents and the idea that good performances prove their ability.
  - **When these participants experience failure**, they see it as something deficient or lacking in themselves. They can crumble, showing a helpless response because of this negative '*I am just this good and that is it*' mindset.
  - Linking failure to their own lack of ability can make them lack persistence, opt out of difficult tasks and be reluctant to try new things.
  - They can become overly concerned with looking good and feel bad if they don't look good.

### Fixed Mindset Players

- Participants who value 'getting it right':
- believe that ability leads to success;
- are concerned about being viewed as able and proving themselves;
- gain satisfaction from doing better than others;
- evaluate themselves negatively, giving up/displaying helplessness when the task is too difficult;
- show concern for proving competence.

### Growth Mindset: (valuing learning)

- Having a growth mindset is about:
  - being resilient in the face of frustration and failure; and having the ability to respond well to challenges, believing that effort can lead to success.
  - A growth mindset enables participants to create and work towards *goals* because they believe in themselves as players with the capacity to improve.
  - It's about having a robust capacity that shapes attitude, motivation and commitment to improving.
  - **Participants with a growth mindset tend to respond to failure** by redoubling their efforts, because they have hope that they will succeed.



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- The harder it gets, the harder they try. Seeing effort as the path to mastery, they persevere when the going gets tough and often talk themselves through difficulties.
- They have a positive, can-do, bit-by-bit mindset.

“Growth mastery response means that these participants are more attentive to what they can learn than to how good they look or how bad they feel”.

#### **Growth Mindset Players**

- Participants who value learning:
- believe that effort leads to success;
- believe in their ability to improve and learn;
- gain satisfaction from personal successes;
- are more likely to have a go anyway and show great persistence with difficult tasks; and
- show concern for improving competence.

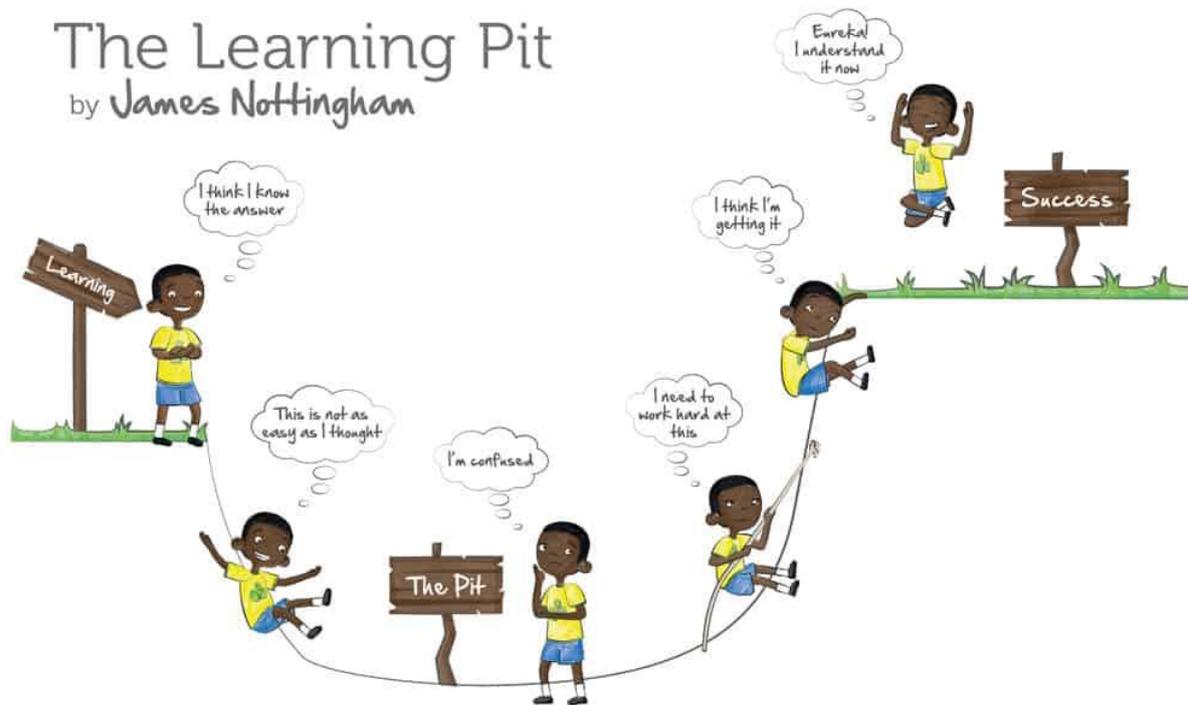
#### **Applying & Adapting Mindsets to Perform**

- Participants need to believe from a very early age that they can develop their performance by:
  - making an effort;
  - using the right techniques or strategies
  - Formative feedback focused on success criteria ensures that they know making an effort can lead to success and improvement.

## The Learning Pit

Video Resource: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8pdYmAbWR-k>

The Learning Pit encourages everyone to step out of their comfort zone. It was created by James Nottingham (2007) to support a culture of challenge, curiosity, reflection and resilience. It is popular amongst educators and parents as a way to encourage and structure questioning, reflection and understanding.





## Motivating Environments

### Praise

- If you give feedback by *praising ability* – such as ‘You are a great bowler’ – you are reinforcing a *fixed mindset*. Success will be seen as a measure of ability, and from the players point of view it will be important to prove this ability to look good all the time.
- This person-centred type of praise is counter-productive, and there is much to lose. It can make participants interpret difficulty or failure as personal weakness and fear that they might be exposed as lacking ability.
- On the other hand, *praising the process* the participants have used, or the *effort* they have put in – for example ‘You have used resources well’ or ‘You have worked really hard’ – tends to foster a *growth mindset*.
- This kind of praise endorses positive beliefs about effort leading to success; it’s not about the participants proving themselves.
- Giving feedback on the effort participants have put in or the strategies they’ve used in a task helps them to develop a more robust self-efficacy, believing that they can, with effort, achieve their goals.

### Getting Participants Involved

- Encourage 2-way communication from the beginning ASAP
- Assist in removing anxiety & nerves through a supportive environment
- Encourage questions for clarity
- Ask Open questions for a more in depth response & ask a closed question for a quick check for understanding (just avoid, does everyone understand?)

### Warm-ups

We are familiar with physical warmups & warmups for thinking (any warmup where decisions require making)

- Warmups can be more than just for the body
- Think about preparing the mind for concentration & challenge
- Can be an opportunity to gauge what participants think about each other & what strengths they see in other participants
- Does this all match what we see?



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### Vocal Warmups

- Vocal Warm-ups are useful for particularly quiet groups to communicate more
  - They also can be steered to help the coach get better understandings into their squad by listening to the questions and answers that individuals come up with.
1. Use a phrase between pairs
    - a. Repeat to each other emphasising a different word each time
    - b. Use a positive message to repeat
    - c. Ie. I **always** catch the cricket ball
  2. Start a dialogue
    - a. Answer/react to partners phrase or question to keep the dialogue going
    - b. IE. Tell me how you manage to catch the ball all the time

### Focused Questions

- Try to resist using the rhetorical questions such as 'are we ready to get started?' or 'has everyone brought their kit?'
- These are frequently used to soften instructions, but they can really coach participants to ignore many of our questions.
- Deliver courteous instructions instead, such as 'Ok its time, let get stated.' or 'we are having a net & using hard balls, if you haven't any kit we will still have activities for you to complete'.

### Fewer questions

- Avoid using questions if it interferes with appropriate purposeful practice when their only real purpose is to fill time or re-establish your presence.
- Ask yourself, 'Would the participants be any worse off if I didn't ask this question?' You might be surprised how many times this stops you asking it!

### Raise the Quality Questioning

- Consider the purpose of your questions.
- If you want to know what the participants' knowledge is, ask a closed question (a question with one right answer).
- However, if you want to probe their understanding, ask an open question (one that prompts participants to keep talking, like 'What more can you tell me?' or 'What do you mean by...?').
- Think ahead, and be clear about the purpose of questioning. What are the participants meant to be getting out of the next question?



### Time to Think

- This is often called 'wait time' or 'thinking time'. Although in some ways this strategy aims to enhance the quality of answers rather than questions, increasing participants' thinking time also gives you an opportunity to ask different kinds of questions.
- Research suggests that coaches typically restrict their 'wait time' to 1–3 seconds. The problem is that this only really gives participants time to recall old learning, not to construct new learning.
- **Allowing around five seconds** of wait time means that you can ask more probing questions.

### 'Shotgun' Questioning?

- Ask questions one at a time, rather than firing off a barrage of them in quick succession. Remember that a proportion of participants may suffer from slow speech processing, which means that it takes them longer to make sense of what we say. Barrages of questions may persuade them to tune out.
- You can still ask more than 1 question at a time to ensure participant learning is taking place but be clear what learning you need from each question.

### Use 'Feedback' – Don't Miss it...

Feedback is more effective if it is focused on the learning intentions and success criteria of the task. This helps participants understand the causes of their success or failure and become more aware of what counts as quality in their learning.

- **Quality feedback involves giving:**
  - them time to talk about and reflect on their learning and how it might be improved.
  - Peer and self-assessment, as well as coacher assessment, contribute to formative feedback.
- **Feedback to improve learning, participants need to know three things:**
  1. where they are in their learning
  2. where they need to go (their next steps);
  3. how to get there (what improvements they can make)
- Suggestions for improvement should enable participants to 'close the gap' by taking their learning forward.
- Feedback is formative when they have time to reflect on and respond to these improvement prompts.
- Crucially, they need to take responsibility for their own learning and its improvement.
- We can't do it for them!



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### Structuring quality feedback

Use the following four steps to help structure your feedback. This process is often referred to as two stars and a wish.

1. **Highlight success:** find two or three successes referring to the learning intention or success criteria.
2. Identify an **area for improvement:** find something that could be improved (not always the worst part!).
3. Give an **improvement suggestion:** write a prompt that will help the learner make the improvement
4. **Give time:** give the participant an opportunity to understand the improvement and make the changes.

### Peer and Self-Assessment

- Participants need to have basic information about what they are learning and how it will be assessed.
- To ensure their reflection is focused, the learning intentions and success criteria need to be accessible.
- Having learning intentions visible on a whiteboard or flip chart will give participants a point of reference throughout the session
- In this way, participants become more confident in identifying successes and areas for improvement in their learning.
- Participants should be involved in peer assessment before they practise self-assessment.
- Peer assessment helps by:
  - motivating participants to work more carefully;
  - creating deeper understanding as they use the success criteria in both giving and receiving feedback;
  - giving them opportunities to communicate in language they would use naturally and understand.
  - Assessing one another's work enables participants to build up the skills and confidence needed for effective self-assessment.

### Self-evaluation

- helps participants become more aware of and improve their learning strategies;
- can lead to improved outcomes due to its emphasis on thinking
- talking about success and improvement.
- Coach modelling and working with peers help develop the quality of participants' dialogue and ability to talk about their learning.

These collaborative processes encourage them to make insightful judgements about their own learning – how and why they've been



## In Practice

### Reinforcing Learning

1. **at the beginning of learning** – to connect new learning and to discover what participants already know or can already do
2. **during learning** – to ensure that participants stay focused and make improvements as they go along (*using self, peer or coach feedback*);
3. **after the learning** – to make participants aware of successes and areas for improvement and to inform their learning targets (*thinking about what and how they have learned, and giving, receiving, and responding to feedback*).

### Coaches Knowledge

1. Understand the expectations of participants at each age group
2. Understand the required batting, bowling, wicketkeeping techniques
3. Understand what skill acquisition competence & success looks like at each stage
4. *Understand what the current group Know, Want to know, & have Learned*
5. Understand tactical individual & team options to optimise individual and team performance
6. Understand periodisation & focusing training towards specific outcomes at specific times of the year (ie, avoiding radical altering or trialling of individual technique in immediate lead into competition).

### Coaches Planning

- Have a clear vision and set of targets for individuals and the group to attain.
- Individual sessions have clear learning intentions
- Players are empowered where possible to feed into the desired outcomes and learning intentions
- Understand where players are currently with player pathway tracking

### Useful Equipment

- Flip Chart/White Board (Put visible reminders of learning intentions of session on board)
- Individual & group sheets (allow for note taking to feed back to group)
- Ipad, phone, laptop (replay live videos)