

Stages and Theories of Learning

By the time you have read this document you should have spent some time learning a new skill.

So my first question is;

In 5 words how did you feel when trying to learn the skill?

In 3 words – what do you think the skill looked like?

Did you use any strategies to help you learn? (brief)

Stages of Learning

Cognitive

- In this stage of learning, performances are inconsistent and not success is not guaranteed.
- Performing the skill requires all of the athlete's attention and so they rely on the coach for cues.
- This is a process of trial and error with a success rate of 2 or 3 out of 10 attempts.
- Correct performances must be reinforced through external feedback.

Associative

- Also known as the "practice phase". Performances are becoming more consistent as [motor programmes](#) are being formed.
- While the simpler parts of the skill now look fluent and are well learned, the more complex elements require most of the spare attention.
- The athlete is starting to get a sense of internal 'kinaesthetic' feedback when they perform the skill well.
- They are starting to detect and correct their own errors and success rate has risen to 5-7 out of 10.

Autonomous or Motor Phase

- In the final stage of learning, performances have become consistent, fluid and aesthetically pleasing.
- The motor programmes involved are well learned and stored in long-term memory.
- There is now spare attention which can be focused on opponents and tactics.
- To retain the new skill at this level, it must be constantly practiced to reinforce the motor programmes. Success is now 9 out of 10.

From the information above, you will see that the experience you had whilst learning a new skill is consistent with being in the cognitive stage of learning.

Take some time to reflect on your sporting portfolio and reflect on where you sit on this continuum. Please remember that the stages of learning are skill based not sport based.

Questions on Stages of Learning

Tennis players need to develop their skills so that they can become more effective.

As a tennis player moves from the early 'stage of learning' through to the final stage of learning, the type of feedback they use will change.

- (i) Name the early and the final stages of learning, **and** describe the characteristics of each.

(3)

- (ii) Describe how the 'feedback' that a tennis player uses will change between these two stages of learning.

(3)

(Total 6 marks)

Theories of Learning

This is one of the more conceptually tricky areas of the course and one that it is definitely worth spending some time reading on.

Below I have listed the Theories of Learning which we learn and I would like you to populate the table.

You need no particular resources for this piece of work, just a google search.

	Major theorists	Key concepts	Application to the learning of new skills in sport (incl. Examples)
Operant Conditioning			
Observational Learning			
Social Development Theory			

Gestaltist Theory			