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# Get Better **FASTER**

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## Learning & The Brain

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- Learning is a physiological process that involves making new connections in the brain.
- FOCUSED ATTENTION is the trigger to make the brain process happen.
- Without focused attention, there is no learning. So before anything else, the job is to get athletes engaged and focused.
- Fortunately, sports are naturally suited to young brains: physical, social, and constantly challenging their problem-solving ability.

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## BIG IDEA #1 Engage Body & Brain together [ right away ]

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- Movement increases blood flow to the brain and raises endorphin levels, and improves odds of engaged attention.
- Targeted dynamic warm-ups connect the brain & body.
- Activates executive function along with motor areas for focused attention and body awareness, primes the brain for learning physical skills.

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## BIG IDEA #2: Keep them challenged & learning

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### ***It's on coaches to find the CHALLENGE SWEET SPOT:***

- Difficult enough they can't master it
- Easy enough for partial success, promise of eventual mastery
- Fresh goals / competition / incentives (more frequent changes for younger ages, but frequently spaced learning is highly effective also)
- Athletes will naturally have differing competence - pay attention so you can push some with additional goals while simplifying for others

### ***Frequent repetition & feedback***

- Like video games, rapid, frequent trial-and-error is the heart of how young brains learn
- Role of teacher is to provide the structure, space, incentives, and call attention to feedback

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## BIG IDEA #3: Lead with the Love

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The most important thing a coach can do is celebrate what is **already great** about the game, and stoke the athletes' natural enthusiasm and motivation.

- Some athletes will be more excited by competition, some motivated by mastery & learning, some motivated by social aspect/being part of team. GET TO KNOW YOUR ATHLETES.
- Reflect on your OWN motivation: Is it your love for the game? Is it to be of service to kids & families? The best coaches tap into motivation beyond the self.

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## COACHING FOR GROWTH

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### Fixed or “Talent” Mindset:

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Operating with the idea that ability is something you're born with and **cannot significantly change**.

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### GROWTH Mindset:

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Operating with the idea that ability is something that **can be acquired through purposeful practice**.

Mindset is both powerful AND flexible. As coaches, we have the ability to influence mindsets of our athletes, and create cultures of growth in our teams. So how do we do it?

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## 1. Recognize Existing Mindsets

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- Know that your athletes are most likely arriving with pre-existing mindsets about ability, absorbed from their family, friends, the community, and other sports experiences.
- Look for clues that athletes of all levels get overly emotional about mistakes, or fear taking risks, challenging themselves, or learning new things. These athletes may need help adjusting to a growth mindset.

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## 2. Communicate Growth Mindset

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- Talk about **work > talent**.
- Emphasize that **progress and process > outcomes**.
- Demonstrate that **failures, mistakes & imperfections = learning and growth**.

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## 3. Give Meaningful Feedback & Support

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Meaningful feedback meets ALL 3 of the following criteria. Just doing one of them is not sufficient:

1. Honest
2. Geared toward process, not person
3. Combined with ongoing support to help athletes set and reach improvement goals