

Developing a Movement Vocabulary

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movement vocabulary

I am convinced that sports-specific journeys are better served if they are built on a wide and deep general movement vocabulary. In distant times when ‘play’ formed a major part of a child’s life and was coupled with a PE curriculum that was built around formal and educational gymnastics mixed with a decent dose of ‘physical fitness’ there was little need for much in the way of a formal movement vocabulary creation.

In today’s world of sedentary living coupled with a competitive games-based PE curriculum and a concentration of coach education on technical and tactical development the creation of a movement vocabulary as a foundation is vital. I believe that the journey is one of ‘general’ to ‘related’ to ‘specific’ when it comes to the journey to sports-specific activity. Certainly the ‘specific’ elements will appear in the pathway but not at the expense of the other pillars of development. A session can contain ‘general to related to specific’ activities and they can easily be woven into a fabric of learning that satisfies all the criteria for progression. If the only tool you have in your coaching toolbox is sports-specific actions and postures then you are doing a dis-service to the participant.

If a session is constructed where the participant experiences warm-up activities; movement puzzles to solve; sports-specific activity; strength and stability development; and some application of all this into a game of some sort then it could look like this:

Warm Up	Puzzles	Sports-Specific	Strength & Stability	Applied Games
Designed to prepare for what is yet to come in the session. Contains learning sections. Opportunity to coach.	Locomotion Non-locomotion Manipulative – based on what is coming later in the session. (See Blogs on Locomotion , Throwing and Jumping development for further examples)	Technical actions and postures. Start with some explicit guidance. Allow experimentation and problem solving.	Foundation Movements of Squat, Lunge, Pull, Push, Brace, Rotate, Hinge and Landing. All directions, speeds, planes, amplitudes, forces, etc.	Sports-specific game application and / or other games and relays

The younger the training-age the shorter each section can be so that the athletes are frequently challenged relative to their attention span e.g. *7-9 year-olds have the attention span of a gnat*. One can cycle through Puzzles, Sports-Specific, Strength & Stability and Applied Games several times in the session.

As attention span increases with maturity so you can spend longer on each section.

The recent Blogs on [On-Foot Locomotion](#), [Throwing](#) and [Jumping](#) progressions form the basis of the ‘Puzzles’ section of the session but can also appear in the Warm-Up and Sports-Specific and Applied

sections where appropriate. You can find all my ConnectedCoaches blogs, including the ones I reference in this post, [here](#).

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