

## Development Coach Assessment – are you ready?

The Development Coach is designed for people who work as Coaches with young people and/or adults over a significant period of time, so; climbing wall coaches, squad managers, teachers, scout leaders and clubs. If you regularly teach climbing but as 'an instructor' working with a high client turnover and no regulars it might be that you need to develop a longer term relationship with a few climbers who want coaching.

When working with someone over a period of time you need to consider all the things you would put in place to support a) your teaching and b) their learning.

Things like:

- Goal setting – long term aims such as '*climb 7a*' or '*climb Mont Blanc*' or 'win the BMC YCS' for example.
- You might then do a SWOT analysis – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats – or something similar.
- Targets – so, these are the intermediate stages to tick of such as '6a/b/c' or 'learning to lead' or 'increasing stamina'.
- Then you might make a macro plan – what are you going to do over the next year. Don't forget to include significant landmarks such as life events, holidays etc.
- Then you might break the year down into chunks based on their training requirements – stamina training, movement training, head games, rope work, etc.
- And to allow you to do this you might then have lesson plans for each session specifically considering the TTPP elements
- Also training plans, diet plans and performance indicators depending on need.
- You might even choose to arrange a physical assessment or injury screen such as a functional movement screen (FMS).
- Collaboration – do you work with others? Can you use the client's other interests to further their climbing targets
- Don't forget to evaluate your sessions and to give your clients the opportunity to evaluate their learning and your performance – more forms.

It is not unusual for a coach to hold all this in their head but this doesn't provide evidence or good feedback and resources for your clients. If you can bring this to your assessment it shows a coach working in a professional manner at the right level. It also provides justification for your decisions.

Then comes the coaching bit; this is relatively easy to implement (compared to the above) but obviously needs to be of a high standard. Consider:

- Observation and analysis – coaching staples; get it right, do it properly.
- Imagination and innovation – YOU are the coach. Don't be afraid to make things up
- Drills, exercises – talk/action ratio. If these are your long term clients should you have to say much at all?
- Video coaching – have you got a library of their climbing? Can you compare their performances directly?
- Feedback and communication – how are you doing this? Where are they on the skill acquisition scale? Can you justify your approach?
- Reflection – how do you encourage this? Is it recorded?

Common pitfalls include not using good questioning and using the wrong kind of feedback for the learner. Also ensure you are able to differentiate – if you have 2 clients on assessment you should be teaching 2 different people using the appropriate method for each which.

Make sure you can justify your approaches, if this is backed up with solid evidence then even better – this will also allow you to discuss points of interest not only with your clients but with your assessor.

If in doubt – get to know your assessor. Work with them, learn from them. They will all help you out. They want you to pass and they want you to be a good coach. Collaboration is key – good luck.