

Reflective Report – SKIP Cymru

After graduating from Manchester Metropolitan University with a BA Honours Degree in Sport and Music I decided to complete a PGCE at the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff. Since I qualified in 2001, I have worked with a variety of primary ages but mainly year 3 and 4. I currently work as a year 2/3 teacher at Ysgol Bro Caereinion, an all age dual stream school. I have always had a keen interest in a variety of sports and have actively participated in several team sports.

Attending the SKIP training has been a transformative experience that significantly deepened my understanding of teaching Physical Education. Before the training, my approach to PE was largely shaped by traditional methods and a focus on physical skill development. However, the SKIP programme introduced me to a more holistic and inclusive perspective, emphasising the importance of fundamental motor skills. Every lesson is now carefully planned with a clear focus on developing Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS), specifically stability, locomotor, and object control skills, as outlined by Goodway et al. (2019).

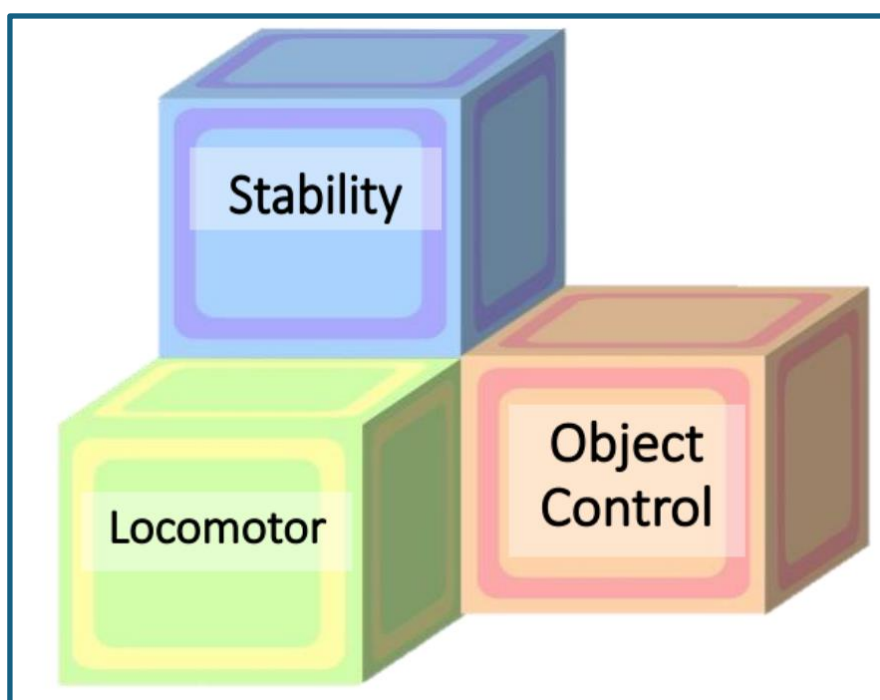


Figure 1: Fundamental Movement Skills Goodway et al. (2019)

After the first day of training, I returned to school and completed the baseline activities for the class. The cohort was a mixture of Year 2 & 3 with 4 girls and 11 boys. Establishing a baseline is a crucial part of the SKIP Cymru approach, as it provides a clear starting point for understanding each child's current level of physical development. By assessing fundamental movement skills (FMS) such as stability, locomotor, and object control early

on enabled me to identify strengths, areas for improvement, and any developmental delays. This information was essential for planning targeted, inclusive activities that support their progression.

BASELINE TEST MEASURES									
Child			Standing Long Jump		Single Leg Balance 30 seconds				Catch
ID	Date of birth	Height (cm)	Jump 1	Jump 2	Left 1 (sec)	Left 2 (sec)	Right 1 (sec)	Right 2 (sec)	Stage
RH	26/09/2017	115cm	94cm	93cm	x (8)	x (26)	x (11)	x (20)	4
CW	12/10/2017	114cm	92cm	90cm	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
LD	30/06/2018	106cm	93cm	80cm	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
AW	16/06/2018	105cm	85cm	95cm	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
SD	06/04/2018	109cm	86cm	98cm	x (10)	x (10)	✓	✓	2
EC	17/03/2018	119cm	95cm	85cm	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
MG	03/01/2018	114cm	80cm	82cm	✓	✓	✓	✓	3
MS	06/03/2018	116cm	105cm	95cm	x (4)	✓	x (28)	✓	2
SW	24/06/2017	118cm	109cm	144cm	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
HP	14/08/2017	116cm	107cm	103cm	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
MB	06/08/2017	111cm	100cm	106cm	✓	✓	✓	x (25)	4
HD	27/04/2017	120cm	73cm	82cm	x (28)	x (15)	x (5)	x (5)	4
BK	04/02/2017	119cm	90cm	89cm	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
LO	12/10/2016	115cm	90cm	80cm	✓	✓	✓	x (25)	3*
GP	19/06/2017	116cm	145cm	153cm	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
*this learner has partial upper limb on his left arm									

Figure 2 : Baseline for cohort

The baseline test data provided insight into the development of fundamental movement skills among the learners. Activities such as the standing long jump linked to locomotor skills, while single-leg balance assessed stability. Catching tasks reflected object control abilities, with majority of learners performing at Stage 4. The results showed a range of abilities, with some learners demonstrating stronger coordination or balance than others. This analysis helped me understand the specific developmental needs of my learners and helped how I structured my lessons. Activities to develop stability were introduced during obstacle courses e.g walking on lines and balancing on spots. Locomotor skills were developed during warm up activities. A range of object control activities were planned where learners had opportunities to practice in different gardens or through a focussed teacher led garden. This approach not only supported physical development but also had a positive impact on pupils' self-perceptions. As they experienced success and improvement in their skills, their confidence and enjoyment of physical activity grew.

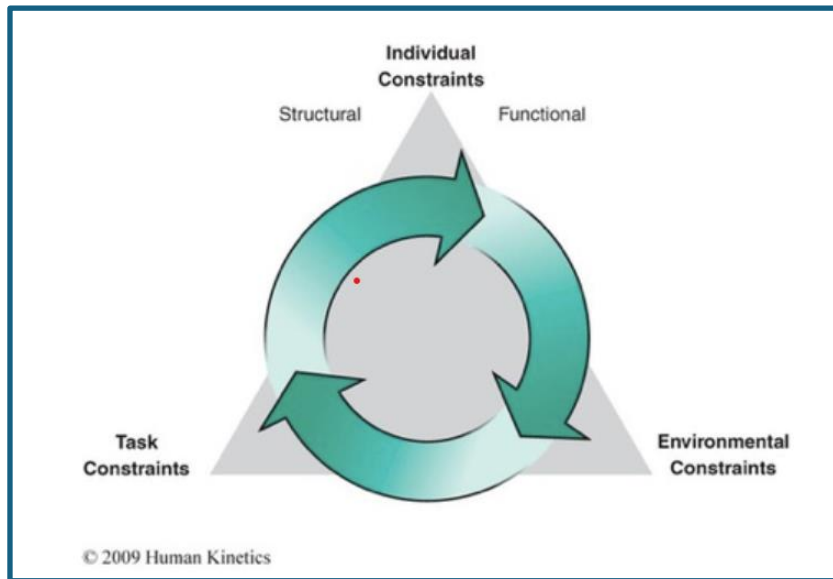


Figure 3: Newell's (1986) Constraints-Led Theory

Using Newell's (1986) Constraints-Led Theory has been incredibly helpful in shaping a more dynamic and responsive approach to teaching activities. This theory recognises that every learner is unique and needs a different task or equipment to be able to improve their skills. It emphasises that movement and skill development are influenced by the interaction of three types of constraints: individual, environmental and task-related. By understanding and manipulating these constraints, I've been able to design more inclusive and adaptable activities that meet the diverse needs of learners. For example, prior to SKIP training, when teaching ball skills, I would have learners in a line facing each other, all using the same ball and same distance apart.



Figure 4: Example of learners taking part in 'Me to You' activity.

Figure 4 is the activity 'Me to You'. Playing this activity has been a valuable way to apply and understand Newell's (1986) Constraints Theory. Learners worked in pairs (of similar ability) and passed an object (like a beanbag or ball) to their partner. Most learners in this group were at Stage 4 and could catch the balls with their hands. Learners were able to choose different size and shaped balls and also increase or decrease the distance (Task constraints). Adjusting the size of equipment or increasing/decreasing the distance helped the learners experience success and stay motivated. I was able to rotate between different groups, challenging the more able to catch balls outside of their X zone or support and question the learners who were finding it difficult. With the minority of learners who were still Stage 2 (huggers), I was able to encourage them to pass the object using hands to develop their skills further. The game also encouraged creativity, cooperation, and problem-solving through a constraints-led approach.



Figure 5: Example of learners taking part in 'Battleships' activity.

The 'Battleships' game was another activity I used for learners to practice their underarm throwing technique (Object control). The hurdle placed in the middle encouraged the learners to release the bean bag higher. I noticed the learners were stationary when throwing the beanbag, so I introduced markers for learners to step over. This helped, although further practice was needed to carry out stepping over and throwing in one smooth action. Adding a visual, such as stickers or scrunchies on dominant foot would also help. Using Newell's (1986) Constraints-Led Theory also supported learners – one pair were finding it difficult to hit the targets so we moved them closer together. Additionally, one pair found this activity easy so we moved the targets further apart. Using these different constraints enabled all learners to be inclusive and enjoyed success whilst developing their movement skills.



Figure 6: Example of learners taking part in ‘Power Throw’ activity.

Another activity used to develop overarm throw (object control) was ‘Power Throw’. This activity consisted of targets of different sizes that were placed on the fence for the learners to aim towards. Focusing on hitting a high target helped to refine aim and control, especially when combined with other techniques like stepping towards the target. A scoring system was introduced. Once a target score was achieved, learners could move to another hoop (task constraints). The hoops placed on the floor were also there to support learners and to encourage them with transferring their weight. Initially the learners were stepping into the hoops, but to develop further, the learners should be stepping out of the hoops to enable them to focus on the throw. Many learners were very static with their throws; stepping forward first before throwing, so they needed to practice overarm throw as one fluid movement. Following on from this, during the next lesson we used zones on the floor at different distances. This was to encourage a strong overarm throw as one movement. By taking away the targets on the fence the learners could concentrate on a whole-body approach – the wind up, step with opposite foot, transfer of weight and follow through.

Learners need plenty of opportunities to improve their movement skills. But for that practice to happen, the activities must be accessible and achievable for them. It is important to carefully choose the right activities, use suitable equipment, and create a safe and supportive space. When these elements are in place, children are more likely to stay engaged and get repeated practice of the key actions we want them to learn and develop. The use of gardens has greatly improved my PE lessons – they’ve added a new dimension to learning, with stations set up to focus on different skill areas such as;

jumping over natural obstacles, balancing on uneven surfaces, or practising throwing and catching with varied equipment. These stations allow for repeated practice in a playful, inclusive environment. Teacher-led activities are now more focused and responsive, guided by observations and baseline data to ensure that each child is supported in their development.

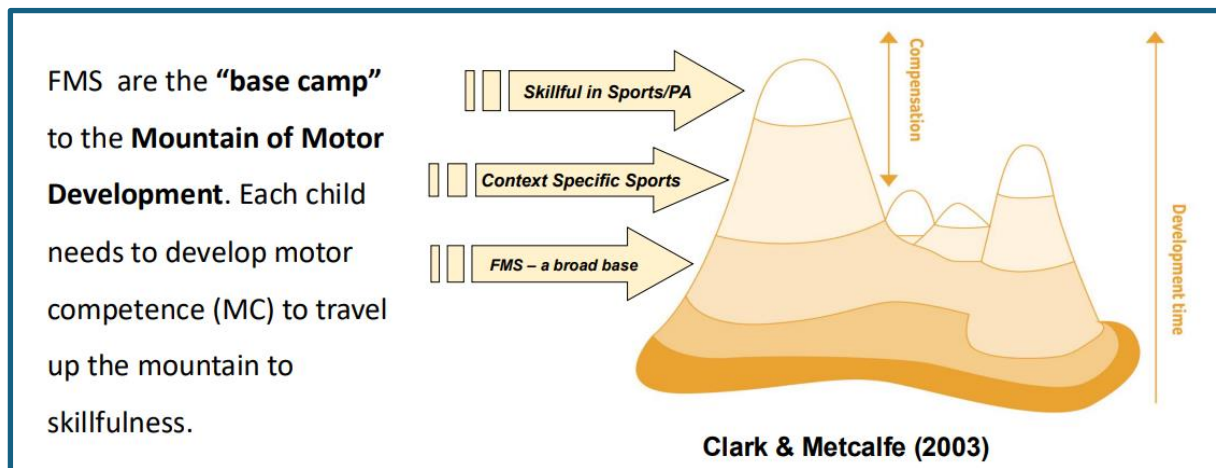


Figure 7: Clark & Metcalfe (2003)

SKIP Cymru has completely changed the way I approach teaching PE. Instead of focusing on traditional sports like netball—where only a small number of learners felt confident or engaged—I now prioritise the development of Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) to ensure all pupils can participate and succeed. Using warm-up games and garden-based stations, learners get repeated, meaningful practice in developing skills in a fun and inclusive environment. This shift has helped me see the importance of building strong movement foundations before introducing sport-specific activities. The Clark and Metcalfe (2003) model, which compares motor development to climbing a mountain, has helped me understand that children need to master basic skills first before progressing to more complex ones. Everyone climbs at their own pace, and by supporting them at the right stage, I can help all learners feel confident, capable, and excited about being active.

In conclusion, SKIP Cymru has played a vital role in enhancing my ability to observe and analyse pupils' physical skills and understand the implications for their development. I've learned to identify where children are in their physical development and how best to support them. I feel more confident in using outdoor spaces like gardens creatively, adapting activities using the constraints-led approach, and observing pupils' progress with greater insight. This approach has helped learners feel more successful and motivated, positively influencing their self-perceptions and hopefully encouraging lifelong engagement in physical activity.

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