Teaching styles within handball training
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1. Preface
The first impulse for producing this article was through discussions with specialist handball students during their practical lessons. The students (mostly high performance players) often cited the same way of leadership used by the coach as the reason for the decline in attractiveness of training units. That is why we have included the application of various teaching styles into the program of specialization. Below there are some examples.

2. Introduction
Training process is a special type of teaching process (mostly for younger players). Accepting this statement we may consider a coach’s activities as teaching behaviour, which “is a chain of decision making” (Mosston, Ashworth 2002). We can differentiate a repertoire of teaching-learning behaviours according to who makes which decisions about what and when. It is possible to identify the structure of eleven landmark teaching-learning styles. They are arranged in the Spectrum of teaching styles (Mosston, Ashworth 2002).

Two basic human capacities are reflected within the structure of the Spectrum: the capacity for reproduction and the capacity for production. Some of the styles (labelled as A-E) represent teaching options that foster reproduction of past knowledge/skills or the replication of models (e.g. playing situation solutions). The second cluster of styles (F-K) represents options that invite production of new (for the learner) knowledge/skills. The line of demarcation between these two clusters is called the discovery threshold. The structure of the Spectrum is shown in fig. 1.

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Fig. 1 Spectrum of teaching styles (Mosston, Ashworth 2002)

The interaction between the coach (“teacher”) and the player (“learner”) always reflects a particular teaching behaviour, a particular learning behaviour and particular sets of objectives that should be reached. So each teaching style is defined by the particular behaviour of the coach (the decisions made by the coach), the particular behaviour of the player (the decisions made by player). In other words – each style is characterised by a number of decisions, which the coach leaves to the player. The predominance of command style (in which the coach takes all the decisions) is typical in everyday training practice, which sometimes seems to be a little big boring (especially for youngsters). Moreover, such an approach hinders the development of creative players. That is why we consider it necessary to change the teaching styles during the training. But the use of a larger part of the spectrum is related to the educational level (licence) of individual coaches (Šafaříková, Tůma & Ashworth 2015). The topic “communication and decision making” is namely very often a part of higher categories of education (level III and IV according to Rinck convention).

In the following section a brief characteristic of individual teaching styles used in the examples of the training units below will be presented. A more detailed description as well as the characteristics of other teaching styles can be found in the mentioned sources.
• Command style (A)
All decisions such as subject matter, location, posture, starting time, pace and rhythm, stopping time, duration, feedback, etc. are made by the coach. The goal for players is to reproduce and learn to perform the content in a very precise and synchronized manner. The advantage for the coach is the easy checking of the group (team).
• Practice style (B)
The coach makes all subject matter and logistical decisions and provides private feedback to the learners. Players practice a reproduction task individually and privately while making specific decisions (up to 9). These decisions include location, order of tasks, starting time, pace and rhythm etc. The “task sheets” are very often used.
• Reciprocal style (C)
The role of the coach is to make all subject matter, criteria, and logistical decisions and to provide feedback to the observer. The players’ role is to work in partnership relationships. One (or more) player is “the doer” who performs the task, while the other player is the observer who offers immediate and on-going feedback to the doer, using a criteria designed by the coach. At the end of the first practice, the doer and the observer switch roles. The coach communicates solely with the observer.
• Inclusion style (E)
The aim is to provide opportunities for continued participation of all players in the selected task, regardless of their varied skill levels. Tasks are designed with varying levels of skill difficulty so that players can survey the options and select an entry level of difficulty. Players may make adjustment decisions in their task level. The coach circulates among the players to acknowledge the players’ choices and to clarify and affirm the accuracy of the players’ assessment process.
• Guided discovery style (F)
The aim is to develop logical and sequential thinking. In this style questions are designed in a logical and sequential series that leads players to discover a predetermined concept, principle, relationship or rule that was not previously known. The mastery of tactical principles is very often the target of these activities.
• Convergent discovery style (G)
The aim is to discover the solution to a problem by employing logic and reasoning skills. The role of the coach is to make all subject matter decisions, including the target concept to be discovered. He has to offer feedback (if necessary) without providing the solution. The role of the player is to examine the problem (or issue) and then to engage in reasoning, questioning and to discover the solution.

3. Practice variables
Two individual skills were selected as topic of the units – shooting (from different positions) and faking (body feints with the ball). They are included in group tactical exercises in the second unit, in which decision making (what skill in which situation) is the main topic. There was no feedback given to defenders in playing exercises.

4. Practice units
Unit 1
a) Warm up (command style)
- The players run in couples free through the hall and transmit the ball from back to front and vice versa.
- The same setting, the players have to pass and gradually increase the distance according to commands of the coach.
- The first player runs with the ball in the hands. He sidearms the ball with one hand on the command of the coach. The player behind starts with movement on the opposite side, then
changes the direction fast, picks up the ball from the teammates hand and runs in front of him.
- Both players are approximately 15m away. One throws the ball bow next to each, starts up, catches the ball and after changing direction of movement passes teammates.
- Warming up of goalkeepers, organisation of the exercise is on figure 2.

Notice: all activities are managed by coach. Players have only to follow the commands

b) Main part 1 (practice style)
- Preparatory exercise for stride jump shot from the wing, preparatory exercise for vertical jump shot from centre back position and improvement of stride jump shot from line player position.
- The team is divided into three groups. There are three stations designed in the hall, the task sheet with the description of exercise is prepared on each of them. Each group has to find a station in the hall and start with practice according to description on the sheet. The groups change the stations after approximately 8 minutes (sheets remain on stations).
- The exercises are shown in fig. 3.
- Playing exercises for improvement of vertical jump shot over the defender from centre back position.
- There are two stations designed in the hall, each of them near to one goal area. The coach explains the exercise and then the team divides into two equally numerous groups. Each group has to find a station and start with practice. The groups change the stations after approximately 7 minutes.
- The exercises are shown in fig. 4.

Note: the first selection of the group, the intensity of practice (number of attempts in the available time) and the effort is the decision of individual players. Coach travels from group to group and tries to get individual feedback or makes an individual correction.

c) Main part 2 (reciprocal style)
- The exercise for improving of stride jump shot from line player position and playing exercise for improving of body feints with ball.
- There are two stations designed in the hall, each of them near to one goal area. There are two observers on each of them. The team divides into two groups.
- The group practicing the feints does two exercises. In the first one the player passes the helper, runs forward, after the catching the back pass makes step askew left forward (trying to touch forward extending arm of another helper), makes a sharp change of the direction to the right and misses the defender in direction goal. He finishes with stride jump shot (see fig. 5, left side). In the second one the player passes the helper, runs forward, after the catching the back pass he lands on both feet on defender’s left side. He follows with right (!) leg step on the right side of defenders accompanied by pulling right hand over the defenders head. Left leg step behind the defender follows. The player finishes with stride jump shot (see fig. 5, right side).
- Each player stops after each attempt to get feedback from the observer.
- The group practicing the shot from the line player position is divided into two parts, left and right next to the centre of goal area line. Each player has a ball. Two back player (right and left) positions are assigned by helpers. The line player starts with the pass to the closer back. Then he waits until the ball is by the next back player, runs up along the line, after catching the ball he turns to the opposite and finishes with stride jump shot (see fig. 6).
- Each player stops after each attempt to get feedback from the observer.
Note: The coach shall explain to the observers the “critical points” of individual skills (i.e. the points which they have to check) before the practicing start. Then he communicates solely with observers and helps them to formulate the feedback.

d) Cool down (command style, self-check style is possible)
- The players sit on the free throw line; each of them has a ball. Two to four targets are marked into the goal; the players shot gradually on the goal and try to hit one of the targets.

Unit 2

a) Warm up (inclusion style)
- The players start with trot with jumps, additionally they perform the shoulder mobilisation exercises.
- There are two possible stations for preparation of body for the main part. The players shoot against the wall and they increase the distance gradually on the first one. The players pass together alternating a handball ball and a heavy ball (600 – 800 grams) and they increase the distance gradually on the second.
- There are three stations for the practising of the vertical jump throw with different levels of difficulty (shooting over the rope, shooting over the passive one player block and shooting over two players block). Each player has a task to pass the helper, run forward with the changing of direction, and catch the pass back and shot over the block. The players choose the level of difficulty according to their own evaluation of the shooting skill.

Note: The coach moves from group to group, helps players to choose the appropriate performance group or asks why they chose that group and corrects the players' evaluation. Additionally he gives them the possible feedback.

b) Main part 1 (guided discovery style)
- The “operating area” for defender is marked by cones next to the goal area line. The right and left back positions are occupied by one helper (see fig. 7). The middle back runs forward with the ball and the defender steps against him. The attacker passes the left (right) back and moves backward to the default position after the contact between them, the defender moves backward to touch the cone on the side on which the ball was passed. The attacker gets the pass back and tries to solve the 1:1 situation and finish with shot on the goal
- The players start in the situation 2:2 in the designated area (next to the goal area line). The task of the attackers is to prepare the convenient shooting situation against the active defenders) = free play two against two into the designated area

Note: The task of the coach consists of a question (series of questions) that logically guides the player to discover the solution. He has to follow several „rules“:
1. Never tell the answer
2. Always wait for the player’s response
3. Offer frequent feedback
The following questions are possible in the above exercise (play):
• “In which direction you have run when the defender touches the left cone?”
• “How would you react if the defender had stayed by the goal area line?”
• “Both defenders move to the right. In which direction you have run for catching the pass?”
• “Why did the defender block your shot successfully?”, etc.

c) Main part 2 (convergent discovery style)
- The “operating area “for the defender is marked by cones next to the goal area line. The middle back position is occupied by two helpers; the players with balls are on the right and left back positions (see fig. 8). The middle back and the left back make crossing, the task for
the left back is “to try to score a goal” (i.e. find the solution how to overcome the defender and create the shooting chance). The left back may use different approaches to solve the task.

- Four attackers play free against four defenders, which are in the 3:1 position (see fig. 9). The task for the attackers is “to find the playing strategy and try to gain the shooting chance”. They have a possibility to talk together before they start to attack.

Note: The main task of the coach is to present the issue (the task). After presenting the problem the role of the coach is to observe the players as they move through the discovery process. Discovery thinking takes time, i.e. the imperative for the coach is to wait! The players can (have to) ask the coach if they are not sure in decision making, but the answer has to be the feedback about the thinking process (not the solution!). The players verify the solution by the coach after the end of the episode.

d) Cool down (command style)
- The vault box without the upper panel is placed on the centre line. The players sit on the goal area line level; each of them has a ball. They try to throw (curve trajectory) the ball into the box.

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