Incorrect method of training

**Ride 1 – without jumping**

**-Trot to canter transition**

## C1: Cause – Poor training method

For this particular skill I can suffer from a lack of balance as I can tend to tip forwards in my saddle and this then makes my lower leg position insecure which means that I cannot apply my aids correctly and efficiently. When I am making a trot to canter transition I tend to tip to the left to compensate for the lack of bend in my horse to try and get the right canter lead. Balance is all about maintaining stability and equilibrium. I do not maintain my centre of mass over my base of support. This therefore causes my horse to become unbalanced and means that it is actually harder from my horse to get the correct canter lead and strike off on the leg.

I have not corrected these weaknesses as I have adapted a poor training method. I currently use the whole method of practice which is where the complete skill is practised without any attempt to break it down into sub-routines. This means that I am unable to correct or spot my weakness easily. However a skill does need to be practised in its entirety to make it easier to be transferred to a competitive situation, but using this method when training is preventing me from correcting the tipping in my skill. As the trot to canter transition is a serial skill it makes it easy to be broken into subroutines. In order for a skill to be practised efficiently the amount of organisation and complexity levels need to be taken into account e.g. a complex skill such as the trot to canter transition needs a larger amount of information to be processed as a bigger amount of perceptual information is needed to be processed, therefore these skills should be broken down into subroutines. These subroutines would be sitting trot, application of the leg aid and then moving off into the canter. The level of organisation links to how easily the skill can be broken down into sub routines. This transition has a lower level of organisation due to the point that it can be broken down into the part elements, once again suggesting that the skill should be broken down in the order to be practised.

## C2: Corrective measure – Choice of training method

A technique that I could use to improve my balance by training would be by using the whole part whole method. The whole part whole method is where a skill is performed as a whole then broken into parts, a part is practised then the skill is practised as a whole again. As trot to canter is a serial skill, it means that the skill can be broken down into sitting trot, application of the leg aid and then moving off into the canter. By breaking each part down it allows me and my coach to concentrate on each part and allows me to improve them. It also means any of my weaknesses can be easily spotted. For example, by breaking the skill down I am able to see that the sitting trot phase is the part that needs improving and allows me to just practice sitting trot on its own.

This method is a development of the part method but normally favoured over the part method as it will allow me to realise the order of the process of the whole skill and then target my area of weakness. When I use this method the first stage will entail me performing the trot to canter transition as a whole. This will allow me to develop my understanding of the skill and gain the ‘feel’ (kinesthesis) of the transition in its whole form. Then, I will need to break the transition down into its individual parts (sitting trot, application of the leg aid and then moving off into the canter). I will need to practice each part in order to improve and perfect the skill. However, I will focus more on the sitting trot phase as this is where I tend to tip forwards which then makes my lower leg position insecure and so it does not stay on the girth, meaning that I can then not apply my leg aid correctly and this then causes my horse to rush or strike off in canter on the wrong canter lead. For me to correct my sitting trot phase I will use the progressive part method of practice which is where a skill is broken down into parts and each part is learnt and then linked in and practised in a sequence. I will use this by practicing sitting trot when schooling for a short period of time.

I can practice this for example, in a marked school between letters M to F and K to H or down the diagonals H to F or M to K or down the centre line A to C (*see figure 3*). This will allow me to practice my sitting trot down the long sides of the school on a straight section to begin with. This will allow me to improve and perfect my sitting trot as the only factor that I will need to pay attention to will be the rhythm of the trot by keeping relaxed in my lower back making sure that my shoulders are balanced over my hips and that my lower leg remains down and underneath me on the girth. When I am able to do this easily and comfortably without tipping forwards in the trot, I will continue the practice by then practicing sitting trot around a corner as this is where you are normally asked to perform the transition on a marker. By practicing this skill around a corner I will be able to concentrate on my balance, whilst keeping a relaxed position and secure seat as I had previously been practising on the long sides. When I am able to execute the transition without tipping forwards as my horse moves around the corner I can then develop this into lots of other schooling movements e.g. riding twenty and ten meter circles (see *figure 1*) into a three or four loop serpentine ( see *figure 2*) – all in sitting trot. Once my sitting trot and correct aid stages have been improved and perfected, it is vital for me to reintegrate the sitting trot and correct aid stages back into the whole skill so that I do not forget the sequence of actions, the feel or the links between each stage. As a result, for the method to work productively I will need to perform the whole skill and all of the elements involved in one training session. By improving my training methods it will mean that I can improve my balance stopping me from tipping forwards in my saddle and this then will mean that my lower leg position will be secure and I will be able to apply my aids correctly and efficiently making the trot to canter transition smooth and easy.



*Figure 2:* A diagram showing a 3 looped serpentine in a dressage arena.

*Figure 1:* A diagram showing different sized circles in a dressage arena.



*Figure 3*: A diagram of possible straight sitting trot periods.

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Horseriding – Half pass

Half Pass

C1

Cause- Poor Training Method

When I am riding half pass my upper body tends to become in front on the movement due to a lack of core stability and strength. This then results in my lower leg not being secure and causes me to grip with my knees to try and keep my balance. This then means that my leg aids are not effective and can cause confusion with my horse. Also due to my body tipping forwards it causes my contact to become inconsistent. Another bad habit of mine when doing half pass is that I tend to lean the way that my horse is moving. For example if I am on the right rein doing half pass across the arena I tend to lean right by collapsing my core and dropping my right shoulder. This causes my horse to become unbalanced and it makes the movement harder for the horse due to my body weight not being central.

I have not yet corrected this bad habit due to my poor training method. When I am practicing half pass or training a horse how to do it and to understand my aids I have been using the whole method of practice. The whole method of practice is when the skill is practiced as a whole without any attempt to break it down into sub-routines. This method of training can have a positive effect because it is easy to then transfer into a competitive situation, but due to half pass being quiet a technical skill for both horse and rider it is not a good training method to use when learning it.

Half pass is a serial skill as it has lots of discrete skills strung together to make a new and complex movement; this means that it is easy to break it down into several subroutines. The subroutines for half pass done coming out of a corner would be…

* Ride into your corner with inside bend
* Place your outside leg behind the girth and your inside leg on the girth
* Draw your inside hand away from the neck a little and use a half halt with your outside hand to control the shoulder
* Bring the horses front end off the track and onto a diagonal line

C2

Corrective measure – Choice of Training Method

There are several different methods of training that I could use to improve my balance and bad habits when doing half pass. I could use the part method of training. This allows a complex skill to be broken down and learnt more easily. It also allows me to work on individual stages of the skill and their weaknesses. For example in half pass I struggle with the execution of the skill. My horse tends to fall inwards in the first few strides of the movement due to my balance and leg aid. By using the part method I can focus on the specific stage of the movement to try and perfect that stage.

I could also use the whole-part- whole method of training to improve my half pass. This is when the skill is done as a whole. This will give me the kinesthetic feeling of the whole skill as one. I will then look at how I performed the whole skill and pick out where I made errors or places that need improvement. These may be found by me watching a video of my performance back, it may also be by a coach evaluating my performance and telling me where I did not do well or places that need work on. I will then practice these areas as individual stages. Once I feel that I have made an improvement in those areas I will put the whole skill together again.

Kayaking – Hanging draw

**C1: Indirect/Non-specific Learning Past.**

I was taught the basics of the hanging draw from other kayakers around me and I have continued to develop this skill over a long period of time. However, due to the risk factors and accessibility of white water, I was unable to learn the hanging draw on moving water, making it very hard for me to learn properly and apply to a practical situation. Dane Jackson had a childhood in which he grew up around white water and kayaking, this allowed him to learn the skill and develop it over time however, on white water: making his hanging draws more effective when he applies them.

When paddling white water, I have effectively taught myself the hanging draw through operant conditioning. Operant conditioning was found by a person called Skinner. He used a box of mice to test his theory that if you supported and praised a good behaviour or action, you would receive a reward. Allowing positive reinforcement to encourage the correct response and negative reinforcement to deter the incorrect response. This relationship between the stimulus and the response was later names the stimulus response bond. This is because when I apply the stroke, in certain environments and conditions it works whereas in others it does not. For me the reward has been able to carry out the stroke effectively giving me intrinsic motivation to practice more. This is the positive reinforcement I need to try again. This is relationship between the stimulus and response is called the stimulus response bond. When the correct action is reinforced the correct response becomes stronger. If I did not recognise that I had performed this skill or performed it effectively; sometimes another member of the paddle group praised me and told me that it was a good performance. This again reinforced the stimulus response bond alongside my motivation, making my hanging draw more effective. However, I do not regally perform the hanging draw well as I learnt it on flat water. This has cause my dominant response to be incorrect and when paddling white water, I tend to perform the wrong strokes. This is an issue as when I am in a situation in which I am reliant on the hanging draw stroke, I cannot be certain that it will be effective. Reducing my confidence and increasing my anxiety.

The Trial and error factor of operant conditioning may also lead to the wrong dominant response. This is due to the initial success I had with the wrong technique. This may result in me needing to unlearn the technique and be retaught it in a separate or different environment to allow my dominant response to be correct and to improve my overall performance.

**C2: Relearn The Skill In A New Environment And Strengthen The SR Bond With The Newly Learnt Skill.**

Now I am older and have developed further as a kayaker, it would be safer to relearn the skill in a tougher environment than I did when I was younger. This would this is because although I am relearning a skill, I would be able to recover with ease if something such a capsize happened. I would also be able to apply a series of other strokes to correct myself if I end up on an unsafe line or similar.

I would also need to strengthen my SR bond with the correct dominant response. This can be done through a series of ways. The first of many is positive reinforcement for the correct stroke. This can be with intrinsic or extrinsic (self-praise/motivation, praise from others). As I am now older, I will have a better reaction to negative feedback and I will be able to change and adapt my stroke to make it better rather than having a poor quality stroke as my coaches only gave limited negative feedback as they did not want me to suffer from demotivation or even leave the sport.

Another method would be to set goals allowing me to have success when I reach them, increasing motivation and confidence in my hanging draw.

Mental rehearsal is also another way of strengthening the SR bond. This is where I would go through the tasks and the skill in my mind before performing it. This would help me to develop an automatic response. This requires practice and would be pre-planned but I would have a vision of me performing the stroke correctly or the perfect performer performing the stroke, allowing me to know how I should perform it to be the best of my ability.

I would also practice the skill as a whole to help me to develop understanding of each movement that is involved and the correct strokes I am able to apply.

According to Thorndike’s three laws to promote learning; I need to practice the correct skill to strengthen the SR bond as practice improves the bond. This will improve my performance as I will have the knowledge behind the performance to perform it correctly and performing it in a new different environment will help the aspects of the stroke go into my long term memory, eventually making them my dominant response.