

Verbal Prompts

Do you dream of a world where it is impossible to fail, and family and those in your social, school loved you, and business circles cared about you?

This article is designed to provide the tools you need to use verbal prompts that can be used to create a positive environment to help your student achieve success.

Types of Prompting

Verbal and Non-verbal prompts play an important role in positive communications with skaters. The definition of a "prompt" is a cue, a signal, or a suggestion.

Verbal Prompts

The goal of verbal prompts is to create an environment that involves your student

There are five basic key types of verbal prompts:

- Choice
- Single Word
- Thinking
- Increasing voice volume
- Voice tone

"Choice" Prompts

There are three types of choice prompts. Some tasks lend themselves more readily to specific type of questions:

- Open Ended
- Multiple Choice
- Yes and No

Open Ended Question

Open-ended questions can have an infinite number of answers, and tend to confuse younger skaters.

An open-ended question cannot be answered by yes or no. An open-ended question requires your student to make a choice. For example –

- "What spin would you like to work on today?"
- "When do you think you would like to test?"

Open ended questions usually start with who, what, when, or where

Multiple Choice Questions

The multiple-choice question offers the individual an answer from a list of choices.

For example "Do you prefer your program's music to start:

- Fast?
- Slow?
- Moderate?"

Yes or No Question

The yes or no question is great for topics that are very straight forward, but pose serious problems in responding if the person providing the answer sees gray areas in the question and is not comfortable with a yes or no response.

Please provide your opinion of which type of question is the most difficult of the following questions-types. Use a (1) for the most difficult and (3) being the least difficult –

- Open Ended _____
- Multiple Choice _____
- Yes and No _____

Single Word Prompt

A single word prompt can take two forms – Action Related prompts and Positive Reinforcement prompts.

Single word Action Related prompts associated with jumping –

- Jump (higher)
- Faster (increase speed into jump)
- Rotate (transfer rotation to landing foot in air)

- Pull (pull in arms to increase rotational speed in air)
- Check (cancel rotation to control landing)

Single word Positive Reinforcement prompts that provide encouragement are:

- Good
- Great
- Well done
- Terrific
- Super

Single word prompts contribute to a positive environment and affirms success. Body language and facial expressions from the coach is essential to the vocal prompts.

Positive reinforcements or compliments that are insincere will have a negative impact and can cause a skater to feel unimportant and demeaned.

Get the attention of students in a friendly conversation by addressing them with their first name.

If you don't have the full attention of your student, don't escalate the tension in a situation by borrowing a trick from parents who use of their full names (First, Middle, and last).

With adults, you may wish to address a person using their last name with Mr., Mrs. or Ms. in a coach/student situation until you ask if you can address them by their first name.

A second verbal prompting technique is used to gain attention is by increasing the volume of your voice. This technique can also be interpreted as you are becoming angry and student's may see this as a lost of control.

You might be speaking in a low or high volume if a student looks at you with a

puzzled expression. Develop a self-awareness of your voice volume

You might inquire if you the student had heard you, before repeating instructions more loudly.

When communicating with a teenager or adult there is a risk that too loud of a volume will cause he or she to feel like they are being spoken down to, like a child.

Summary

Two ways to get a student's attention is to use their name, and to slightly increase the volume of your voice. The use of one or both of these techniques may be an essential key to establishing effective communication.

Another key type of verbal prompt is to use reminders to orient their awareness to time, place, and tasks to be accomplished.

If an important date is coming up, remind the skater of it. Older skaters have busy schedules and may forget to send off an important entry forum for the regional competition unless you keep after them to insure compliance.

When addressing the same issue of entering a competition for a younger skater, you as a coach must establish direct communication with the parents who need to fill out the form, get it signed by a club official, and write a check for the entry fee.

A Validation Technique should be used to confirm that the skater and parents have received and understand that they are responsible for completing the task and there is a specific deadline. Be sure to outline what the consequences are for failing to complete the task.

Voice tone is the fifth verbal prompt

There are two areas to be covered here. First, a supportive, empathetic, and warm with a low tone to your voice engenders

trust and support that encourages the skater.

If you have had a bad day, don't take it out on the student. As a coach you should always make it a habit to listen to and be aware of the tone of voice you use since it has a dramatic effect on the skater.

The second area regarding voice tone is the topic of the baby talk. What is Baby talk? How can it be avoided?

It is very easy to fall into using baby talk unconsciously if you have small children at home.

You need to have a clear awareness of what constitutes baby talk to avoid unintentionally using it. There are three characteristics that distinguish baby talk from normal adult communication:

- **Drawing Out a Spoken Letter** of a word. For example - "G-r-r-r-e-a-t" job "B-o-b-b-b-i-e"! Great job Bobbie! The words are exactly the same, but the meaning and character of the talk is totally different.
- An **Exaggerated Up and Down Voice** tone or modulation producing a roller coaster change of voice tone. For example - "Good ^jump^ that time, Suzie^," rather than, "Good jump that time, Suzie!"
- **Over Emphasizing** or speaking certain words more loudly. For example, "Let me SHOW you HOW to transfer your weight in a 3-Turn," rather than, "Let me show you how to transfer your weight in a 3-Turn."

Know what baby talk is, recognize it, and eliminate it totally from your work environment.

Review

List the five key types of verbal prompts are:

1. Choice prompts. Evaluate the most effective use of Open Ended, Multiple Choice, or Yes and No questions.
2. Use single word prompts as a tool for frequent positive reinforcement, and task reminders, such as saying, "turn, turn turn.
3. Increase the use of your skater's name, and increasing voice volume.
4. Use frequent verbal prompts to orient the student to time, place, and dates
5. Cultivate a voice tone that conveys caring and warmth. Recognize, and avoid the use of baby talk.

Combining verbal prompts are combined with the nonverbal prompts helps to create a positive learning environment.

You need to follow through to do and get what is necessary to make this information work for you. Have verbal prompts become a tool that you use daily.