

FACTORS IN SKILL ACQUISITION

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Perceptual awareness

The ability to notice the things you need to pay attention to that are relevant to making appropriate judgements and performing skillfully. For example, if you saw the skill demonstrated, you would be able to pick out what the person did skillfully.

NEED: Basic knowledge; coaching in what/how to observe.

Discretionary judgement

(Requires perceptual awareness of the factors that you have to decide between)

The awareness of a range of options regarding what/when/how to act, and what contextual factors you need to take into account, the risks and benefits associated with different choices. For example, if you saw the skill demonstrated, you would be able to make a good judgement about what action would need to be taken when.

NEED: Differentiated knowledge, including contextual factors and exceptions to the rule; coaching in more advanced observation.

Skillful action

The ability to actually perform the skill in a way that reflects awareness and appropriate judgement.

Comment: Skill acquisition is usually most successful if you first learn what to do in usual circumstances, and then you generalize the skill application to more unusual and challenging situations.