

A Systematic Observation Study of the Teaching Behaviors of an Expert Basketball Coach

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A systematic observation analysis was performed on Fresno State men's basketball coach Jerry Tarkanian over the course of an entire season. Based on Tharp and Gallimore's (1976) work and recent research on expert coaches' training techniques (Côté et al., 1995; Durand-Bush, 1996), the Revised Coaching Behavior Recording Form was created to observe and record Tarkanian's teaching behaviors and verbal cues. Results showed that tactical instructions was the most frequently occurring variable, representing 29% of the coded behaviors. This behavior was 13% higher than the second highest variable, hustles (16%). Following these two categories were technical instruction (13.9%), praise/encouragement (13.6%), general instructions (12%), scolds (6%), and six other categories with percentages less than 3%. This means that almost one-third of Coach Tarkanian's practice behaviors relate to teaching offensive and defensive strategies to his team. This differs from the practice sessions of beginner- and intermediate-level coaches, who often focus on teaching fundamental skills to their athletes. A complete description of all 12 categories are provided along with implications for coaches of all levels.

According to Darst, Mancini, and Zakrajsek (1983), "systematic observation allows a trained person following stated guidelines and procedures to observe, record, and analyze interactions with the assurance that others viewing the same sequence of events would agree with his [or her] recorded data" (p. 6). Van der Mars (1989) noted that while systematic or direct observation has historically been used in a wide range of domains, such as anthropology and psychology, it was not introduced to the study of classroom teaching until the 1960s. Shortly thereafter, systematic observation techniques were used in physical education and

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