

Becoming a skilful learner

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What we will cover



- Putting things in **perspective**
- Fundamental principles of **quality practice**
- **Specific strategies** that you can implement
- Open **Q&A**

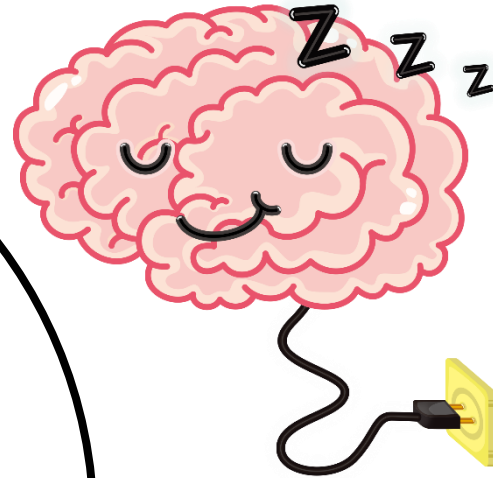
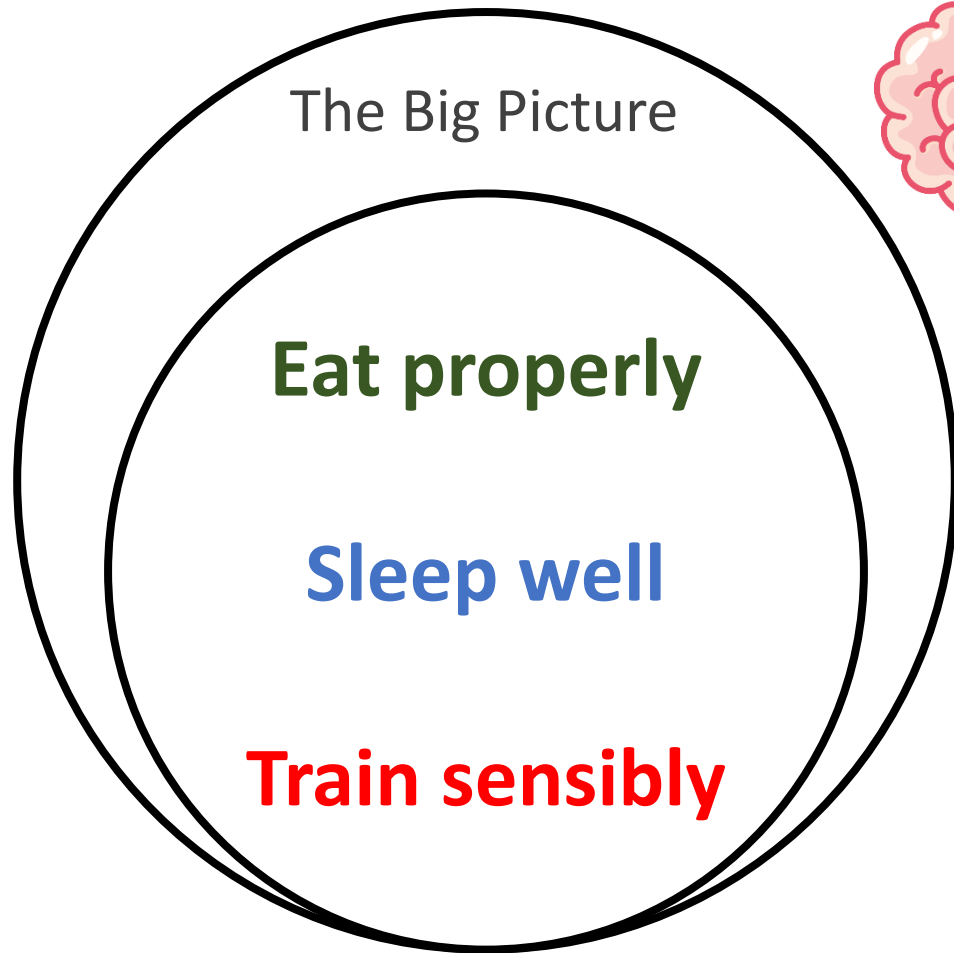
The Big Picture



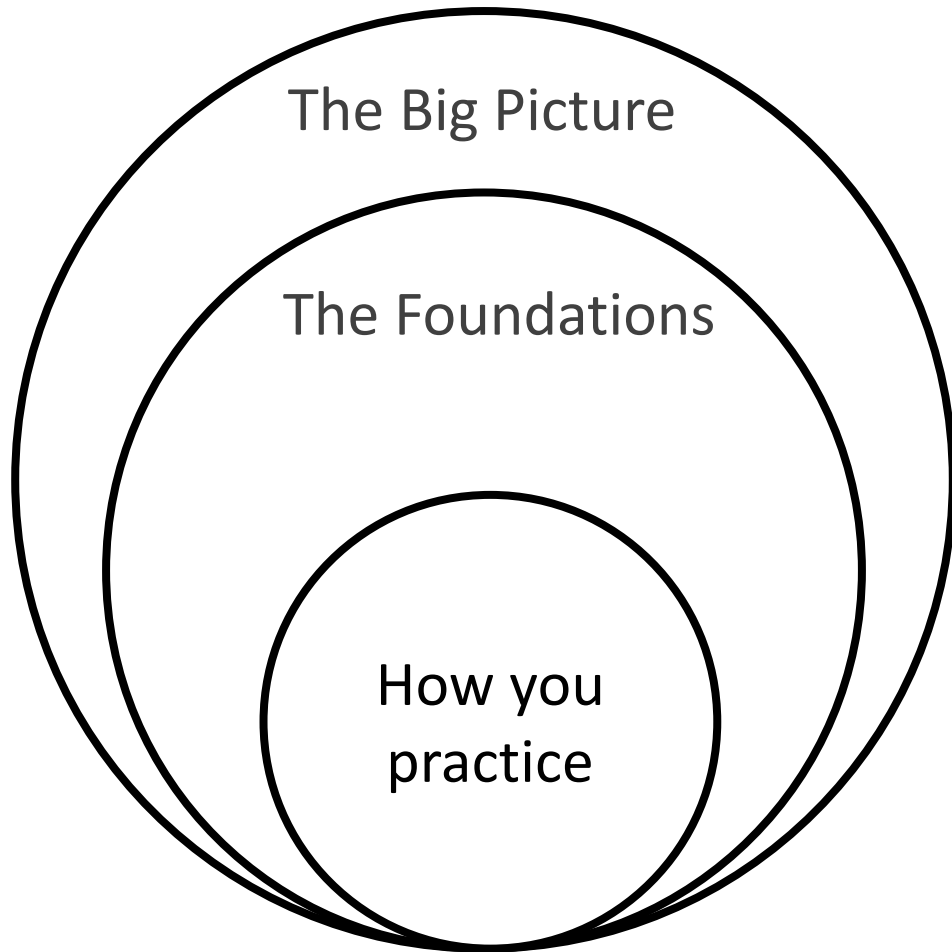
“Sport is part of my identity...It is a part of who I am, but only one of many parts. It does not define me.”
(Valerie Mulcahy)



The Foundations



The Fine Details

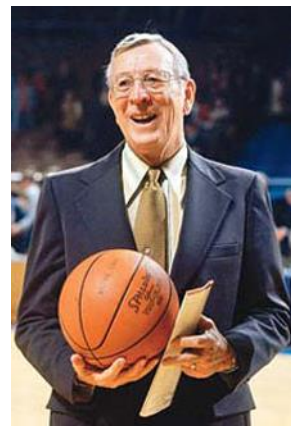


Seek the small improvement



“When you improve a little each day, eventually big things happen. When you improve conditioning a little each day, eventually you have a big improvement in conditioning. Not tomorrow, not the next day, but eventually a big gain is made. Don’t look for the big, quick improvement. **Seek the small improvement** one day at a time. That’s the only way it happens – and when it happens, it lasts.”

– John Wooden



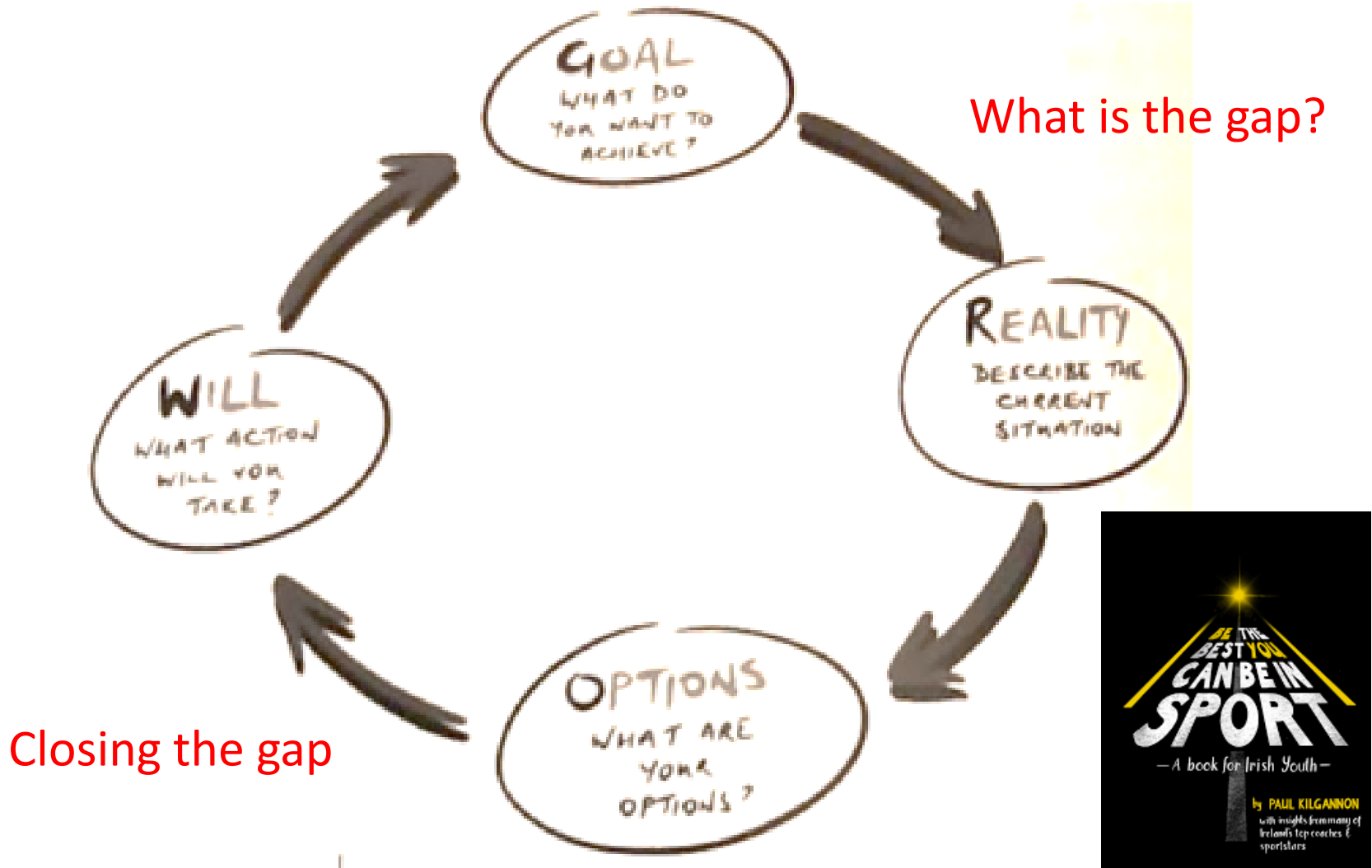
Why do some people learn faster than others?



- **Option 1:** They **have** something different (e.g., different physique, different memory capacity).
- **Option 2:** They **do** something different (what & how they practice).



Skilful learners differ in what they practice



Principle 1: Skilful learners spend more time on challenging activities



- Shizuka Arakawa
 - 2004 World Champion
 - 2006 Olympic Champion
- What does the figure 20,000 represent in the context of this expert performer?





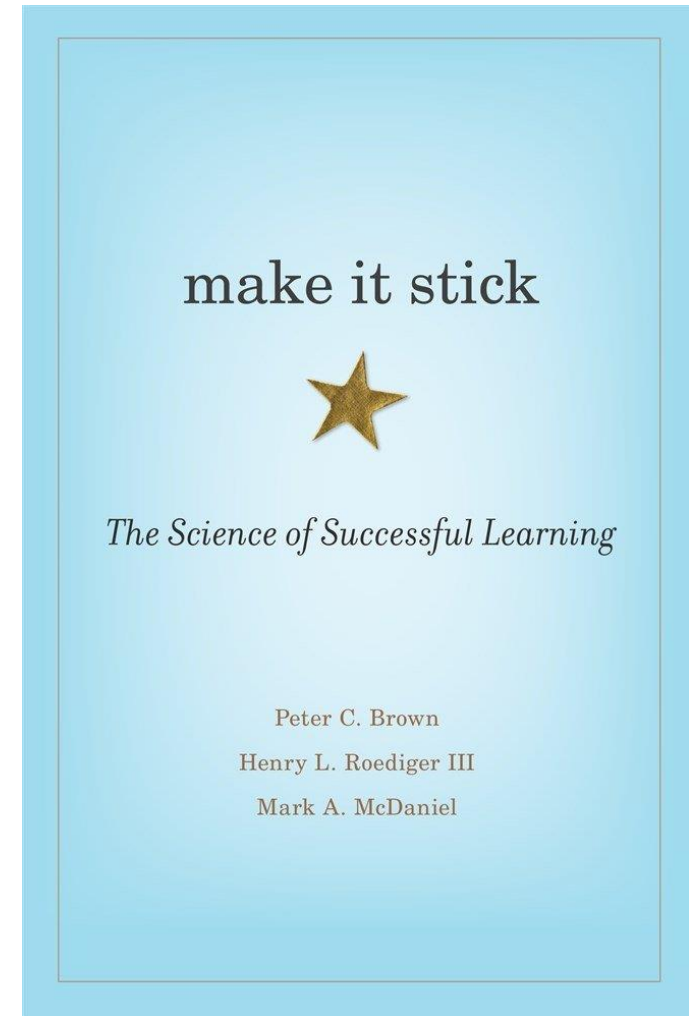
Where Learning
Happens

Lara-Bercial (2012)

Skilful learners differ in how
they practice



“Learning is an
acquired skill, and
the most effective
strategies are often
counterintuitive”



Principle 2

“The brain
that does
the thinking
does the
learning”
– Penny
Crisfield





3-Step Strategy



What do I want to do?



Why did that happen?



What did I do?





Process goals and self-monitoring:

- I had a picture in my head of what my technique needed to be and how I was comparing.
- On this 100m, focus on relaxing the shoulders.
- On this 100m, focus on how I'm breathing.

5-Step Strategy



1. Ready: Get physically and mentally prepared to deliver a high quality attempt



2. Image: See/feel exactly what you want to do / how you want to move



3. Focus: Narrow your thoughts to one key component



4. Execute: Without thought about outcome or technique, just do it.



5. Evaluate: Both your performance, and the preceding steps



Readying (relax):

Imagine a feather at the end of my nose; breath gently so as not to disturb it

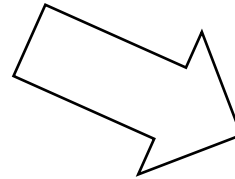
Focus: Clench fist as a reminder (focus on this moment, this rep)



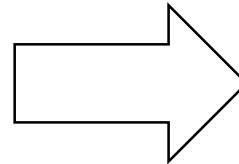
Other Strategies



- **Part practice (as required)**

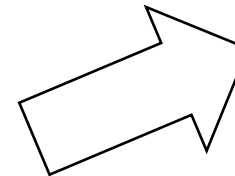


- **Slow it down**



- **Contrast**

- **Mix up (interleave) your practice**



Aspiring Elite Athletes'
Locker



You need to practice these strategies



- You learn to control your arousal.
 - You learn to image more clearly.
 - You learn to maintain your focus.
 - You learn to devise contrast/part practice drills.
 - You learn to evaluate your performance.
-
- If they are to be learned, **they must be practiced.**
Give yourself time to learn the strategies.

Keep a journal



- **Stuart Lancaster:** “I guarantee you players who make notes, write things down, constantly look ahead, reflect on experiences, ask themselves appropriate questions and intentionally plan their future development, make much more of their potential than players that don’t.”
- **David Gillick:** “It would all go in my training diary. At the end of the day I wrote it all down: what I did, what I thought and felt, what went well, areas for development.”



Broader Strategies



- Help seeking

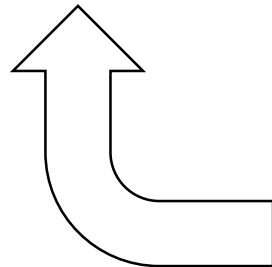
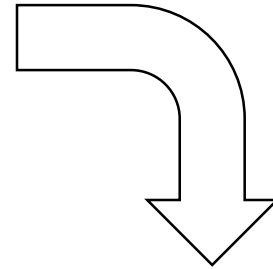


Intense Practice



- “You can’t work with that level of intensity all the time. It doesn’t help to be analytical all the time. When you need to switch on, you switch on.”

Not just for sport





**Take
home message*



- Start with the basics:
 - Broad development; nutrition; sleep; sensible training.
- Fundamental principles of quality practice:
 - Spend more time on challenging tasks (in the learning zone)
 - The brain that does the thinking does the learning
- The best performers select from a wide range of strategies when they practice (you can too)
- Apply strategies from sport to school/university and from school/university to sport.



THANK YOU
FOR
YOUR
ATTENTION
ANY QUESTIONS?