

Designing Brief Drills for Transfer

Section One - Why Brief Drills?

Skills and decision will be trained at the same time, 'Perception-Action Coupling'.

'Context is King' and is established immediately.

Representative design is followed so there is higher Transfer.

Traditional training often develops isolated skills. Real performance requires continuously adapting to changing information.

Brief drills provide instructors with a practical way to deliberately improve perception, attention, decision-making, regulation, and adaptation within operational time constraints.

Section Two - Reverse Engineer the Performance

Step One, 3 Reverse Engineering Area Questions

1. What are the demands of reality (the criterion environment)?
 - Human Performance, Supreme Court Case Law, Policy
2. What are the current capabilities of the learners?
3. What training scars do the learners have?

Examples

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| • Tunnel vision | • Doesn't reassess |
| • Weapon fixation | • Delayed action |
| • Poor communication | • Premature action |
| • Failure to move | • Poor regulation |
| • Stops evaluating | • Doesn't prioritize |

Write your own.

Step Two

What future performance are you trying to create?

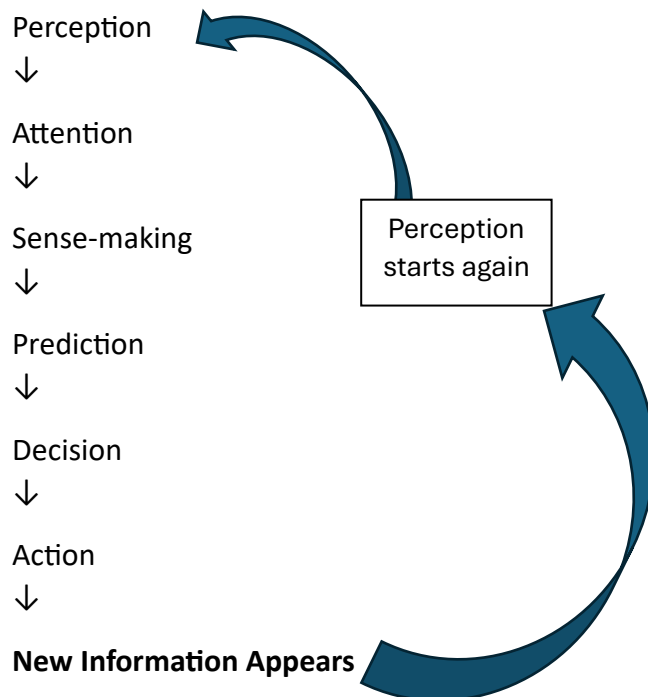
Example on the live fire range could be, "I want them to stop dropping down or pulling back to a ready position the pistol immediately after they stop firing."

Write it so you state what you do want them to do not what you do not want them to do, "I want officers to continually reassess evolving/devolving threats and engage their 4 Cs Checklist."

The difference is to focus the student on what you want them to do and is inline with how the brain cannot think in terms of a 'negative'.

Section Three

The Transfer-First Learning Loop



Then ask, "Where in the loop is the breakdown occurring?"

- Perception
- Attention
- Sense-making
 - If Sense-making is occurring in a situation that has more or in less than 2 seconds to perceive, pattern match, sense-make, predict and act?
- Prediction

- Decision
- Action
- Error and Success Detection
- Adaptation

Section Four

Which Domain Does the Problem Live In?

Different problems require different solutions

Execution Domain

- Correct sense-making and decision-making, poor execution.

Extended Sense-Making (more than 2.0 seconds to act)

- Time to perceive, sense-make, pattern match, decide and act happens in situation that allows for 2.0 seconds or longer.

Rapid Sense-Making (less than 2.0 seconds to act)

- Time to perceive, sense-make, pattern match, decide and act happens in situation that has less than 2.0 seconds.

Learning Loop Step	Error Type
Perception	Rapid Sense-making (<2 sec)
Attention	Rapid Sense-making (<2 sec)
Sense-Making	Extended Sense-making (>2 sec)
Prediction	Extended Sense-making (>2 sec)
Decision	Extended Sense-making (>2 sec)
Action	Execution Domain
Error Detection	Learning Trigger
Adaptation	Learning Outcome

Section Five

Instructor's Read

Instructor fills out this decision tree.

What are learners noticing?

What might that mean?

How confident am I?

High

Medium

Low

What evidence supports that?

What could I be wrong about?

Section Six

Which Dials Need Adjusting?

Dial	Increase	Decrease
Challenge	☐	☐
Confidence	☐	☐

Dial	Increase	Decrease
Motivation	☐	☐
Attention Demand	☐	☐
Cognitive Load	☐	☐
Autonomy	☐	☐
Regulation Demand	☐	☐
Contextual Pressure	☐	☐

Dials are organized in sections:

Learning Dials

Motivation

Confidence

Challenge

Autonomy

Cognitive Dials

Attention

1. Attentional Priming

Do they know what information is important (what cues)?

Examples:

- Hands
- Waistband
- Distance
- Escape routes
- Bystanders
- Partner
- Cover
- Body language

Asking themselves the question, **What information matters most right now?**

2. Do they know how to shift their attention to Task-Relevant information (top-Down Re-Direction)?

Noticing their attention has drifted. Redirecting it. Maintaining it. Switching it.

Examples:

- Radio interrupts.
- Child screams.
- Officer catches themselves staring at the gun.
- Subject drops knife.
- Officer intentionally returns attention to threat.

Question, **Can they intentionally direct and redirect attention?**

3. Reprioritize Attention

Do they know how to re-prioritize their continually evolving situation for WIN (what's important now and what's important next)?

This is where many officers struggle.

They continue attending to what *was* important instead of what *is* important.

Situational Question:

Are the subject's hands always the most important thing to pay attention to?

Question:

Do they know when it is time to change what deserves attention?

Performance Dials

Contextual Pressure

Time

Complexity

Professional Regulation

Motor Demand

Section Seven

Build the Drill

Objective:

Known Scar:

Learning Loop Target:

Performance Domain:

Contextual Pressures:

Instructor Dials:

Reflection Questions:

Next Information Change:

Section Eight

Verify the Read

How will they VERIFY their read?

This is where I think we can really expand your "Instructor's Read" model. Instead of verification being only the instructor's job, it becomes the learner's habit.

The students need to be asked and prompted to ask themselves questions like:

- What did I notice first?
- What do I think is happening?
- What evidence supports that?
- What might I be missing?
- What would change my mind?
- What is the greatest immediate threat?
- What is most important now?
- What is most important next?

Notice how those questions increase confidence without creating overconfidence. They're encouraging active hypothesis testing rather than guessing.

Section Nine

The Information Update

A drill should not end with the instructor saying, "Scan – Breath – Holster".

Every drill should intentionally include at least one meaningful change in information.

Examples:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • The suspect complies. | • Weapon appears. | • Intervention works and is overcome. |
| • The suspect doesn't comply. | • Others enter. | • Victim moves. |
| • Partner falls. | • Lighting changes. | • Officer discovers they're injured. |
| • Radio traffic changes. | • Backup arrives. | • Nothing happens. |
| • Weapon disappears. | • Intervention works | |
| | • Intervention not work | |

The information update forces another trip around the Learning Loop.

That's where transfer is built.

Because the objective isn't to finish the problem.

It's to begin the next Learning Loop.

Examples:

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| • Weapon disappears. | • Weapon appears. | • Partner falls. |
|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|

- Innocent enters.
- Suspect flees.
- Suspect complies.
- Radio changes everything.
- Nothing happens.

The goal of brief drills is not to create faster actions. It is to create faster, more accurate sense-making and prediction so that the right action emerges sooner.

That distinction is profound. Faster shooting isn't the objective. Better perception, better attention, better sense-making, and better prediction are what allow appropriate actions to emerge under pressure.

Design experiences that improve the learner's ability to continuously perceive, interpret, reprioritize, and adapt as the environment changes.

Training should not be designed around repetitions of actions. It should be designed around meaningful changes in information that require learners to repeatedly update their understanding of the situation.

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