



PE.SP1 Sport Psychology: Classification of Skills

AQA 8582 · Calculators not allowed · about 50 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Answer ALL questions. Show all your working.

1 In GCSE PE, skills are classified using continua rather than being sorted into two fixed boxes.

- ☐ A) Every skill fits neatly at one extreme or the other
- ☐ B) Most skills sit somewhere between the two extremes, so a scale gives a more accurate picture than two fixed boxes
- ☐ C) Continua are only used for gross and fine skills
- ☐ D) A skill's classification never changes once it has been decided

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 Three continua are used to classify skills in GCSE PE.

- (a)** Name the continuum that classifies a skill by how much the performer's environment influences it. (1)
- (b)** Name the continuum that classifies a skill by how much information must be processed/how difficult it is. (1)
- (c)** Name the continuum that classifies a skill by the size of the muscle groups used and the precision required. (1)

(Total for Question 2 is 3 marks)

3 The open-closed continuum classifies skills by how much the environment affects them.

(a) Describe what is meant by an 'open skill', giving a sporting example. (2)

(b) Describe what is meant by a 'closed skill', giving a sporting example. (2)

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

4 The basic-complex continuum classifies skills by the amount of information the performer must process.

(a) Describe what is meant by a 'basic skill', giving a sporting example. (2)

(b) Describe what is meant by a 'complex skill', giving a sporting example. (2)

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

5 The gross-fine continuum classifies skills by the size of muscle group used and the precision required.

(a) Describe what is meant by a 'gross skill', giving a sporting example. (2)

(b) Describe what is meant by a 'fine skill', giving a sporting example. (2)

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

- 6** A golfer lines up a putt on the practice green, with no opponent or defender able to affect the shot.

State where a golf putt should be placed on the open-closed continuum, justifying your answer.

(Total for Question 6 is 2 marks)

- 7** A footballer receives the ball in midfield, checks the position of teammates and defenders, and decides whether to pass, dribble or shoot.

(a) State where this action should be placed on the basic-complex continuum, (2)
justifying your answer.

(b) State where the action should be placed on the gross-fine continuum, justifying (1)
your answer.

(Total for Question 7 is 3 marks)

- 8** A netball player practises a chest pass alone against a wall, then later performs the same pass in a live match with a defender closing her down.

Explain why the same skill, the chest pass, might be placed at a different point on the open-closed continuum depending on the situation it is performed in.

(Total for Question 8 is 3 marks)

- 9** Which of the following is the best example of a closed skill?

- ☐ A) A tackle in rugby
- ☐ B) A free throw in basketball
- ☐ C) A return of serve in tennis
- ☐ D) Dribbling past a defender in football

(Total for Question 9 is 1 mark)

10 State two characteristics of a fine skill.

(Total for Question 10 is 2 marks)

11 Archery is classified as a fine skill.

Explain why archery is classified as a fine skill, referring to the muscle groups used and the precision required.

(Total for Question 11 is 3 marks)

12 A gymnast performs a single cartwheel in an empty hall, with no other movements before or after it and no decisions to make about direction or timing.

(a) Identify whether this cartwheel should be classified as basic or complex. (1)

(b) Explain your answer to part (a). (2)

(Total for Question 12 is 3 marks)

13 Compare a basic skill and a complex skill in terms of the decision-making demand placed on the performer, using one named sporting example of each.

(Total for Question 13 is 2 marks)

- 14** Josh is a hockey player. During a match, he receives a pass while an opponent closes him down. He must control the ball first time, then decide whether to pass, dribble past the opponent or shoot, before executing his chosen action with the stick.

Discuss how the open-closed, basic-complex and gross-fine continua each apply to Josh's passage of play, justifying where you would place his actions on each continuum.

(Total for Question 14 is 9 marks)

- 15** Which of the following is the best example of a gross skill?

- ☐ A) A tenpin bowling release
- ☐ B) A squat jump
- ☐ C) A dart throw
- ☐ D) A snooker shot

(Total for Question 15 is 1 mark)

- 16** State two sports in which the performer's skills are dominated by closed skills.

(Total for Question 16 is 2 marks)

- 17** Explain why open skills are generally harder to perform consistently than closed skills.

(Total for Question 17 is 2 marks)

- 18** A swimmer performs a tumble turn at the end of a length, tucking into a somersault before pushing off the wall.

State where the tumble turn should be placed on the gross-fine continuum, justifying your answer.

(Total for Question 18 is 2 marks)

- 19** A gymnastics floor routine follows a set, pre-planned sequence of moves in a fixed order, but several individual moves within it require extremely precise body positions.

Explain why a single skill, such as a gymnastics floor routine, might combine elements from both ends of a continuum.

(Total for Question 19 is 2 marks)

- 20** State one sporting example of a basic skill.

(Total for Question 20 is 1 mark)

- 21** A beginner is learning to shoot a basketball for the first time. Their coach starts by practising the shooting action against a wall with no defender, before later introducing a defender in small-sided games.

Explain why a coach might introduce a skill in a closed practice environment before progressing to a more open one for a beginner performer.

(Total for Question 21 is 3 marks)

Mark scheme • PE.SP1 Sport Psychology: Classification of Skills

Question 1

- **B1** B
- **Answer: B**

Question 2

- (a) **B1** open-closed continuum
- (a) **Answer: The open-closed continuum.**
- (b) **B1** basic-complex (or simple-complex) continuum
- (b) **Answer: The basic-complex continuum.**
- (c) **B1** gross-fine continuum
- (c) **Answer: The gross-fine continuum.**

Question 3

- (a) **B1** a skill performed in a changing/unpredictable environment, where the performer must react to it, oe
- (a) **B1** sporting example, e.g. a tackle in rugby, or a return of serve in tennis, oe
- (a) **Answer: An open skill is performed in a changing, unpredictable environment where the performer must react to it, for example a tackle in rugby.**
- (b) **B1** a skill performed in a stable/predictable environment, largely unaffected by others, oe
- (b) **B1** sporting example, e.g. a free throw in basketball, or a golf putt, oe
- (b) **Answer: A closed skill is performed in a stable, predictable environment that is not affected by others, for example a free throw in basketball.**

Question 4

- (a) **B1** a skill with little information to process, few decisions, often learned quickly, oe
- (a) **B1** sporting example, e.g. a jog, or a star jump, oe
- (a) **Answer: A basic skill involves little information to process and few decisions, for example jogging.**
- (b) **B1** a skill with a lot of information to process, many decisions/subroutines, often takes longer to learn, oe
- (b) **B1** sporting example, e.g. a triple jump, or a tennis serve, oe
- (b) **Answer: A complex skill involves a lot of information to process and many decisions or sub-actions, for example a tennis serve.**

Question 5

- (a) **B1** a skill using large muscle groups, with low precision needed, oe
- (a) **B1** sporting example, e.g. a squat jump, or a rugby scrum, oe
- (a) **Answer: A gross skill uses large muscle groups and needs low precision, for example a rugby scrum.**
- (b) **B1** a skill using small muscle groups, with high precision needed, oe
- (b) **B1** sporting example, e.g. a dart throw, or a snooker shot, oe
- (b) **Answer: A fine skill uses small muscle groups and needs high precision, for example a dart throw.**

Question 6

- **B1** close to/at the closed end of the continuum, oe
- **B1** justification: the environment (ball position, green, hole) is stable and not affected by an opponent, so the performer can use the same, self-paced technique each time, oe
- **Answer: A golf putt sits close to the closed end of the continuum, because the ball, green and hole do not change or react to an opponent, so the golfer can repeat the same technique each time.**

Question 7

- (a) **B1** towards the complex end, oe
- (a) **B1** justification: several options must be considered and a decision made under time pressure before the correct one is selected, oe
- (a) **Answer: Towards the complex end, because several options (pass, dribble, shoot) must be weighed up and a decision made quickly under pressure.**
- (b) **B1** roughly in the middle of the continuum (or towards gross), because a pass/shoot needs some precision but also uses the large muscle groups of the leg, so it is neither a purely gross nor purely fine action, oe
- (b) **Answer: Roughly in the middle of the continuum, because striking the ball accurately needs some precision, but the large leg muscles used to generate power mean it is not a purely fine skill either.**

Question 8

- **B1** against a wall, the environment is stable/predictable and nothing reacts to the performer, so the pass sits towards the closed end, oe
- **B1** in a match, a defender's movement is unpredictable and must be reacted to, so the same pass sits further towards the open end, oe
- **B1** this shows classification is not fixed for a skill, but depends on the environment it is performed in at that moment, oe
- **Answer: Against a wall the environment is fixed and predictable, so the pass sits towards the closed end; in a match a defender reacts unpredictably, pushing the same pass towards the open end, showing that a skill's position on the continuum depends on the situation, not the skill alone.**

Question 9

- **B1** B
- **Answer: B**

Question 10

- **B1** uses small muscle groups, oe
- **B1** requires high precision/accuracy of movement, oe
- **Answer: A fine skill uses small muscle groups and requires high precision of movement.**

Question 11

- **B1** the main controlling movements (drawing the string, aiming, release) rely on small muscles of the fingers, hand and wrist, oe
- **B1** very high precision is needed to hit a small, distant target accurately, oe
- **B1** small errors in the fine release movement are magnified over distance, so accuracy depends on small-muscle control rather than overall strength, oe
- **Answer: Archery relies on small, precise movements of the fingers, hand and wrist to draw and release the string accurately, and because the target is small and distant, even tiny errors in this fine movement are magnified, so accuracy depends on small-muscle control rather than strength.**

Question 12

- (a) **B1** basic
- (a) **Answer: Basic.**
- (b) **B1** little information needs to be processed, oe
- (b) **B1** there are no decisions to make about what to do (no choice of direction, timing or which move to link it to), oe
- (b) **Answer: Little information needs to be processed and there are no decisions to make, since the gymnast is only performing one fixed movement with nothing else to react to or choose between.**

Question 13

- **B1** a basic skill needs little decision-making, e.g. a shuttle run/jog, since the same simple action is repeated, oe
- **B1** a complex skill needs a lot of decision-making, e.g. a rugby line-out throw, since timing, target and technique must all be judged together; the complex skill therefore also takes longer to learn/master than the basic skill, oe
- **Answer: A basic skill such as jogging needs almost no decision-making because the same simple action repeats, whereas a complex skill such as a rugby line-out throw needs several judgements (timing, target, technique) made together,**

Question 14

- **Level 3** (7-9): A detailed and coherent response that applies all three continua accurately and specifically to Josh's actions, with clearly justified placements that treat each continuum as a scale rather than a fixed box. Sustained, accurate use of sport psychology terminology throughout.
- **Level 2** (4-6): Accurate application of two or three continua to Josh's context, with some justification, though placements or reasoning may be underdeveloped in places. Generally correct use of terminology.
- **Level 1** (1-3): Basic or generic statements about one or more continua with little or no specific application to Josh's actions and little justification of placement.
- **Level 0** (0): No relevant content.
- **Indicative content:**
 - Open-closed: the opponent closing Josh down is unpredictable and reacts to him, so receiving and deciding sits towards the open end of the continuum.
 - Open-closed: however, once Josh has decided to shoot, the final striking action itself is closer to self-paced, showing the continuum can shift within a single passage of play.
 - Basic-complex: Josh must process several sources of information at once (the ball, the opponent's position, his teammates' positions) and choose between three options (pass, dribble, shoot), so the decision-making stage sits towards the complex end.
 - Basic-complex: the first-time control of the ball under pressure also adds to the complexity, since he must control accurately while still scanning for information.
 - Gross-fine: controlling the ball with the stick and striking it accurately needs a degree of fine, small-muscle precision.
 - Gross-fine: but the overall movement (running, changing direction, generating power to shoot) also uses large muscle groups, so the action sits somewhere in the middle rather than at either extreme.
 - General point: none of the three continua should be treated as a fixed yes/no box; Josh's actions could reasonably be placed at slightly different points by different students as long as the justification is defensible and refers to his specific situation.
 - Justification is key: marks should be awarded for a defensible placement with a clear reason linked to Josh's context, not for stating a 'correct' single point on each continuum.
 - Evaluative point: classifying the skill correctly matters for coaching, since a skill placed towards the open/complex end (like Josh's decision-making) usually benefits from varied, game-realistic practice rather than repetitive closed-skill drills.

Question 15

- **B1 B**
- **Answer: B**

Question 16

- **B1** any one valid sport, e.g. gymnastics (floor routine), diving, or archery, oe
- **B1** a second distinct valid sport, oe
- **Answer: For example, gymnastics (a set floor routine) and archery.**

Question 17

- **B1** the environment for an open skill keeps changing (e.g. an opponent's movement), so the performer cannot repeat exactly the same technique every time, oe
- **B1** a closed skill's environment stays the same, so the same, well-rehearsed technique can be used every time, oe
- **Answer: An open skill's environment keeps changing, so the performer must constantly adapt their technique rather than repeating an identical movement, whereas a closed skill's stable environment allows the same, well-rehearsed technique to be used every time.**

Question 18

- **B1** towards the gross end of the continuum, oe
- **B1** justification: the tuck, somersault and push-off use large muscle groups (core, legs) to generate the movement; although some timing precision is needed to push off at the right moment, the movement itself is not a small-muscle, high-precision action, so it sits closer to gross than fine, oe
- **Answer: The tumble turn sits towards the gross end of the continuum, because the tuck, somersault and push-off rely on**

Question 19

- **B1** the overall structure/order of the routine is fixed and predictable, which is a closed-skill feature, oe
- **B1** but individual moves within it demand very fine, precise body control, which is a fine-skill feature, so the routine cannot be placed as a single point at one extreme, oe
- **Answer: The routine's overall structure is fixed and predictable, a closed-skill feature, but individual moves within it need extremely precise body control, a fine-skill feature, so the routine genuinely combines features from both ends rather than sitting at a single fixed point.**

Question 20

- **B1** any valid basic skill, e.g. a jog, a star jump, a tuck jump, oe
- **Answer: For example, jogging.**

Question 21

- **B1** a closed environment removes the need to react to a changing situation, letting the beginner focus fully on learning the correct technique, oe
- **B1** once the technique is grooved/consistent, a more open environment (e.g. a defender) can be added gradually, oe
- **B1** introducing the open element too early, before the technique is secure, could overload the beginner with information and slow down learning, oe
- **Answer: Practising against a wall removes the need to react to anything, so the beginner can focus fully on learning correct technique; once that technique is consistent, a defender can be added gradually, since introducing the open, reactive element too early could overload the beginner and slow down learning.**