

# ***SUMMARY OF SECTION 2 –BEHAVIORAL GOLF INSTRUCTION***

## ***DURING AND AFTER THE LESSON***

Here are the key steps in Behavioral Golf Instruction *during and after the lesson*:

### ***1. STATE A MEASURABLE GOAL FOR THE LESSON***

State a measurable goal the student and teacher can agree on. Research shows students who set goals with their instructor perform better. Focus on changing average score, particularly in tournaments. State the ultimate goal, interim goals, the pre-lesson performance, the performance the student wishes to achieve, the timetable and the student's inputs – the number of lessons, practice shots and rounds per time period. Describe performance in measurable, observable and objective terms.

### ***2. STUDENT LEARNING STYLES***

Students learn a number of ways. While students prefer some styles of learning, there is no evidence from educational research experiments that the student learns more when the style the teacher uses is their preferred format. It does no harm to ask the student what their preferred style is. Presenting the instruction in their favorite format may make them happier. It evidently does not increase their learning.

### ***3. STUDENT NOTE TAKING***

Give the student a notepad, pen and zip lock bag at the start of the lesson. Prompt the student to take immediate written notes within 60 seconds of the teacher presenting instruction. Ask the student to repeat it back for additions, corrections and deletions. Prompt the student to put the note in the golf bag. Observe it and praise the student for placing it there. The student is to reread the notes before every practice session and round until completely recalled and review periodically after that. Students five years or more later rave about its value.

### ***4. DECIDE ON WHAT PART OF THE GAME TO START LESSONS***

Start instruction on whatever will reduce average score the most for this student. To determine that, base it on data someone collects observing the student play a round on the course, rather than in the practice area, with its artificial lies, targets and absence of hazards. It is better to rely on hard data collected on the course by the teacher, the student (after some instruction on collecting data), an assistant or a paid senior or junior. On all shots, start the instruction on impact, the most important element in the swing. Work on the movement of the club, especially at impact, as opposed to body movements, which can have many variations without affecting ball flight.

## **5. HOW GOLFERS LEARN, OR FAIL TO LEARN**

Golfers learn in so many ways and fail to learn in so many ways. Moving the student's club or body slowly and precisely is probably the best way to teach. Obtaining accurate and immediate feedback is essential. Writing notes immediately during the lesson, repeating them back for additions, deletions and corrections and re-reading frequently at future practice sessions and rounds is a powerful tool.

## **6. BREAK CHANGE INTO SMALL SMALL-ADVANCE SHAPING STEPS**

The teacher should break any instruction that has the slightest complexity into multiple steps of improvement that are small advances and easy to achieve. The student should pass a measurable, observable and objective standard at each step before advancing. Never, ever, have a student attempt a swing change by making a full swing at full speed. From the top of the swing into impact, the clubhead moves 20 times faster than a Ferrari can accelerate.

## **7. SELF-CORRECTING FEEDBACK**

Feedback is information that causes the student to self-correct quickly and accurately. The student must receive from the teacher or invent a self-correcting feedback system for every key swing behavior. If not, the student cannot take the swing change to the practice range or course and make it work. Golf instruction focuses on telling the student how to swing, but quite often omits any mention of any matching feedback system for each key swing behavior. Any teacher who decides to provide a feedback system for each important swing behavior will excel versus instructional competitors.

## **8. POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT**

Positive reinforcement is any action that causes a student to use a desired swing behavior more often. That can come from primarily from improved shot results and the positive words and gestures of the teacher. The teacher should select shot conditions that are most likely to produce immediate improvement. In most cases, that means making the lie for the shot easy and the target. Very short targets and short, slow swings are more likely to produce better results. The teacher should be specific in naming what behavior is receiving the reinforcement. The frequency and timing of the reinforcement is important. When the student starts making a swing change, it is vital that positive consequences occur quickly for the new swing behavior to survive and increase. Never tell the student what was wrong on the last swing. It is past history and unchangeable. Instead, tell the student what to do correctly on the next swing.

## **9. IMPROVING THE MENTAL SIDE OF GOLF**

Golfers need instruction on the mental side of golf. The teacher should observe the student and probe the student for the internal thoughts and feelings the student experiences in playing, especially in competition. The teacher can create changes in the student's mental thoughts and feelings. One source for ideas on how to do this is in the

“Mental Side of Golf” on my web site [ApplyGolfLessons.com](http://ApplyGolfLessons.com), click on “Booklets.” As one example, prompt the student on the practice range or course to visualize in detail an excellent shot. Praise the student if she says she visualized a better shot, especially if more of the shots improve.

## **10. WRITTEN PRACTICE PLANS**

Many students practice a high multiple of hours per year as compared to their hours of instruction. I could be a 150-to-1 ratio. Most students practice badly, compared to what Behavioral Golf Instruction suggests the student do. At the end of the lesson, use my practice checklist to write what the student should do in every practice session. Tell the student you will ask for a report at the next lesson. Then ask for it. Praise any action the student took to practice more effectively. If you get influence the student’s practice behavior, you can work wonders.

In general, the more golfers practice, the better they perform in the long run, though not necessarily that day. All golfers should exercise to get their blood warm, such as by running in place, and by stretching. Data shows such golfers have fewer back injuries. Urge the student to conduct warm-up exercises at the course before practicing and playing to reduce injuries. Golfers as a group do not practice effectively, which I address in the next section.

## **11. DISPLAY CHARTS AND GRAPHS PUBLICLY SHOWING STUDENT IMPROVEMENT**

Teachers should display charts and graphs showing how much individual students improved within a time period. It attracts more students, more lessons, higher fees and job security. Once again, you will stand above your instructional competitors who do not do this.