

**Date** Jan 10

CEU Documentation for Scott Dell, Physical Therapist, Strike First Therapies

*Scott Dell - Age 35, father, soccer coach, physical therapist*

*Lynn Dell - Age 35, mother, substitute teacher*

*Tara Dell - Age 9, daughter*

*Shaun Dell - Age 6, son*

*I am receiving continuing education credits from my employer for the hours spent taking the course and I thought the best way to record my work for those CEU's would be to narrate my thought process along with the exercises. My goal is to find how TAGteach can make life more positive and fun for my family, my coaching and my work.*

*Life is a soccer field*

*I have been coaching recreational soccer for five seasons. The first four were with my daughter Tara's team and now I also coach my son's team.*

*I was talking about the obstacles of coaching six year old boys with a team parent and he brought up TAGteach. He told me about his daughter's gymnastic coach who used the technology. It seemed she really liked the TAGteach "game" and was coming home from practice in a better mood. He thought I may be interested in looking it up on line and maybe using some of the techniques during soccer practice.*

*I went to the website and saw that this 'TAGteach' was being used in variety of applications, not just sport coaching. I signed up for the TAGteach Yahoo group and the TAGteach Blog as there was a lot of interesting information there too. When I am not parenting, husbanding or coaching, I work as a physical therapist and it sounded like TAGteach could be helpful in my practice too.*

Date Jan 13

*...I started documenting my phrasing and in just one day I am already much more aware of what I am asking and the manner in which I ask it. I can't believe that so much of what I said was negative.*

*Note: One problem, it seems I notice everyone else saying "don't do this or that". I want to say, "What do you want?"*

Date Jan 14

*I took a step back and tried to listen to the way information and feedback is delivered and processed. I was mindful of trying to see things from that new perspective discussed in Lesson 3.*

*I watched and listened to:*

*I tried to listen to my own coaching although I didn't try to change anything yet*

*I listened to coaches from the other soccer teams*

*I listened to the coach from my daughter Tara's gymnastic class*

*I listened to my wife helping Tara finish her math homework*

*I listened to a store manager speak with his employee*

*I listened my boss speaking with his boss*

*TOP TEN OBSERVATIONS:*

*1. People will interpret verbal language used in feedback.*

*2. People will often misinterpret verbal language. Yesterday, I told one of soccer players "good pass". He looked confused. I repeated, "Good pass!" The student*

*looked disappointed and said “Last time you said AWESOME pass. What did I do wrong?”*

*3. The person receiving feedback usually does a lot of head nodding as if to say “yes, I understand what you want me to do or change.”*

*4. They don’t.*

*5. Sometimes the person giving information or feedback raises their voice NOT because they are angry, but simply to be heard down the field or over the chatter of others.*

*6. Sometimes it is because they are angry.*

*7. The person giving information often knows what needs to occur for the learner to be successful.*

*8. It can be frustrating to verbalize what needs to occur for the learner to be successful.*

*9. It is hard to deliver elegant verbal feedback while an athlete is flipping through the air or running down the field.*

*10. To socially sensitive learners, verbal feedback can be uncomfortable, even if it is positive.*

**Date** Jan 16

*Identify-TAG-Reinforce*

*I like that the whole approach is concise enough for a single diagram.*

*Identify what it is that you DO want*

*TAG it at the moment of performance*

*Reinforce "it" so it will be more likely to happen again.*

*I get it so far...*

*I'm looking forward to the next lesson. It seems that a big part of this process is to reduce the amount of talking that goes on while we are teaching. I've always thought my clients and athletes (and especially my kids) think I talk too much...it's that glazed over look they get about 5 minutes into the lecture.*

**Date** Jan 22

*I tried some tagging at work this week. I think it went well. I used it with two of my clients to help them find the leg position that I was trying to explain. I explained to them that TAGteach is a new approach and that we are going to be trying it out in our physiotherapy practice. I asked them if they would like to be the first to try it and they seemed quite excited about this. I explained that I would use the sound from the tagger to let them know when they had achieved the correct position. I asked them to go ahead and try to find the position that I had described and I tagged as they got it right. This worked well and they seemed to like the clarity of it.*

**Date** Jan 25

*I have been trying out the funneling approach with my kids, on the soccer field and at work.*

*1. The lesson is:*

*This was from a lesson at home with the kids. "Shaun, when you leave your bath towel on the floor, it stays crumpled and wet in a pile and will be wet and stinky when you use it next time. The towel is to get hung up on the hook. I have hung a tagulator from the towel hook. Pull down a bead and when the tagulator is finished you can choose the next family activity.*

*The objective:*

*SO, when you hang up your wet towel, pull down a bead on the tagulator*

*The Instructions are:*

*Hang up towel after using it.*

*The tag point is:*

*Towel on hook*

*2. The lesson is:*

*This is another lesson with the kids. Tara has started going to her friend's house by herself. I told her, "Tara, you must call home as soon as you get to your friend's house. If you forget, I worry. I know about how long it takes you to walk there and if it seems too long without a call, I will go*

*looking for you. For all I know you could have been grabbed by a stranger or hurt yourself along the way. Anyway the point is, you have to call the moment you get there.” I told Sue (the parent of Tara’s friend) about our TAGteach game and asked her if I could keep a tagger at her house. When you arrive, at Tammy’s house and call home immediately, you get a tag.*

*The objective is:*

*So, When you get to Sue’s house, call home*

*The instructions are:*

*Call home immediately when you arrive at friend’s house.*

*Tag point is:*

*Step in house- call home*

*3. The lesson is:*

*I chose to record a session at work. I bought an inexpensive voice-activated microphone at a tech store and wore it during a session with a 15 year old ice skater recovering from a knee injury. I transcribed a bit of the recording to get a better idea of what I was actually asking for.*

*“You need to extend the leg further. The leg uses a different set of muscles during the last 30% of the extension. Those are the muscles you want to use. It is important that you extend your leg fully, especially that last 30%percent, or all this exercise will really just be useless” I will tape a line on the wall and ask patient to lift her lower leg to match the line.*

*The objective is:*

*So, you need to extend your leg a little bit further to use those muscles*

*The instructions are:*

*Do five leg lifts*

*The tag point is:*

*Leg to line*

*4. The lesson is:*

*My next funnel was for the soccer team.*

*I used the same recorder I use at work to get an honest feel for my coaching. It makes it much easier to plan tag points for the next week.*

*You really need to keep your eyes up and off the ball while you are dribbling it down the field. If you look up you will be able to spot which teammates to pass the ball to, see who is coming to steal the ball or be able to plan your move towards the goal. Three players stand in different areas of the field. Each has big card with a number on it. The player dribbling runs by each player on the field and calls out the number on the card as he passes by it. If he calls out the correct number, he hears a tag.*

*The objective is:*

*So, when you dribble the ball down the field, you need to call out the number that each player has on his card.*

*The instructions are:*

*Dribble the ball down the field and run by each player that has a card*

*The tag point is:*

*Call out number*

**Date** *Jan 28*

*I have just been doing Exercise 4 - where we had to watch the gymnastics coach giving multiple corrections to the athlete. I had to watch it 4 times to get them all, and I had pen and paper at the ready to write them down! Finally I had to pause the video. It was hard to hear with all the background noise in the gym, but the athletes have to contend with that as well. She just had to try and remember them all without being able to take notes or pause the video, and she had to execute a complex movement at the same time. I realized that I do the same multi-instruction thing with my clients. I teach them what to do, but once I think they should know it I give them a bunch of instructions or corrections all at the same time. No wonder I have to keep going over and over it with some of them. This exercise was a real eye-opener for me.*

**Date** *Feb 4*

*I was so busy this week that I didn't really have time to prepare for soccer practice this week. I had not thought about what new tag points to introduce, so I was not going to do any tagging this week. The kids were all excited about doing some more tagging (and filling in some more lines on their charts) and I didn't want to disappoint, so I asked them for some ideas about what the tag points should be. They had some great ideas! I was pleasantly surprised. Soon they won't need me at all!*

**Date** Jan 28

*Al thought I understood why an audible marker was used, just to make it crystal clear the moment a task was performed but WOW, until you experience it yourself, you can't believe the power of the sound! My daughter was teaching me to braid (every father should have to learn to braid hair) and she tagged when I crossed the hair over in the right direction. When that tag sound came it was like a little lightning bolt. Now I understand why they call it "highlighting". That tag sound definitely highlighted the exact moment I did it correctly. It really did feel like my mind made a picture of the moment which I could recall even when Tara wasn't tagging.*

*I also think "does not invite a social response" will be important. If I am going to tag my patients, I want them to stay focused on the movement and not on formulating a social grace response.*

*Interestingly, I find myself as the person tagging, much more focused on the task. I have to maintain my concentration in order to tag correctly. This may be very beneficial in my more distractible moments.*

**Date** Feb 12

*First of all I like the fact that most times, there will be no need for external reinforcers other than the sound of the tag which signals success- which is very reinforcing for most people.*

*I can separate general praise or rewards from the actual information coming from the sound of the tag. I can tell a client to do three leg extensions with the tag point, "foot touches my hand". After he has completed the three extensions (hopefully receiving three tags) I can then say "good job"*

*The good job refers to the whole process, while each individual tag says "yes you extended correctly" and most likely will reinforce that position.*

*I think this separation of information and general praise will encourage focus through the exercises.*

*Overall, I have to admit; I never gave much credence to what I thought was positive reinforcement. Giving out stickers and lollipops never seemed to make any significant difference in how fast the kids learned a soccer skill. Now I understand why stickers and lollipops didn't have any effect. It was just 'stuff' the kids would take if I happen to be handing it out.*

*The insect slide in lesson 7 cleared this up for me. Now I understand that the very definition of 'positive reinforcement' means the reinforcer will make the behavior more likely to happen again. If it doesn't make the behavior more likely to happen again, then what you thought was a reinforcer... wasn't.*

*By definition, positive reinforcement works, but every key does not open every lock.*

*My example goes like this. I like looking at bugs. Even as a kid, I would go out of my way to watch a spider spin a web. My son will go out of his way to avoid anything remotely resembling a spider. If someone said "every time you put your dirty socks in the hamper, a screen will pop up and you will see the rarest spider in the world spin a web", I would definitely be more likely to throw my socks in the hamper. The same cannot be said for Shaun. If every time he threw his dirty socks in the hamper, a screen with a scene from Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles popped up, I can assure you his socks would always find a home in the hamper. The same cannot be said for me.*

*Last night I started watching my soccer players for 'keys'. I watched them tumble out of their cars and minivans, making their way toward the field. I searched for clues. Matt was first to greet me, "Hi coach". "Hi Matt" I said and as he walked toward the fields, I added, "Matt, spit your gum out in the garbage can before you start running please." Scott ran up behind Matt, tossing out a casual greeting to me, "hey". "Hey Scott, how are ya?" I also had to prompt him to lose the gum before hitting the field. Back to racking my brain; reinforcers, reinforcers...what would really motivate these kids? My thoughts were momentarily interrupted to shout at Matt. "Matt! I said get rid of the gum." I hate pulling gum off my shoe...I hate kids gnawing on gum...I hate gum...they love gum...I want them to spit it out...they want to chew it... loudly and blow bubbles... There is definite potential here. A bubble gum blowing contest!*

### *Lesson Plan*

*I will have the kids make tagulators from little soccer ball beads I found in the craft store. Actually I will have them earn all the materials necessary to make the tagulators. They love putting stuff together so I am fairly certain that the tagulator components will be at the very least moderately reinforcing. The string will be 5 tags; the carabiner 10 tags and each bead, 5 tags.*

*When they have all have earned and made their tagulators, they can start earning tags towards entrance into the Bubble Gum Blowing contest.*

*10 tags = 1 piece of gum*

*25 tags = Admission to contest*

*10 tags = 1 attempt at bubble*

*10 tags for each additional attempt*

*When all team members have enough tags for the admission, gum and at least 1 attempt, the contest will be scheduled. As part of this process of identifying and quantifying successes, we will log the tag points and which skill or skill part was learned while earning the tags. I will make a results card for each contestant that will have their name, size of bubble and soccer skills that were learned or improved by earning all these tags. This way the parents know their kids have earned the right to have a fun competition by improving their soccer skills and meeting goals.*

**Date** Feb 18

*Point of success is not something I use enough in life. In my effort always to progress and to keep others around me progressing (my children, patients, my athletes), I usually chose to be moving forward all the time. What is wrong with starting off with success and a positive outlook? Nothing! Setting an atmosphere for success can only improve learning. I think of this 'point of success tag' as a warm up for more challenging tag points. I am always trying to move my clients and athletes forward as fast as possible but it is certainly important to reinforce previously accomplished skills. Starting with a guaranteed tag and then moving onto more challenging ones likens to starting each practice with a warm-up that leads into more difficult skills.*

*I think my new philosophy about this has reduced stress for me and those around me. It has taken away the pressure to come to each new day or session expecting something more than was accomplished on the day before. I like to think that my patients dread seeing me a bit less because they know I am not going to make it harder for them right away!*

**Date** Feb 27

*I introduced my patients to TAGteach in several different ways. Some I sent to the website and some I just broke out the tagger and started tagging. Knowing your client is helpful. If they've been nagged to death about certain exercises or they don't like the condescending sound of someone constantly saying "good job" then they jump all over tagging.*

*For those who seem a bit more cautious, I immediately give the tagger to them and let them tag my behaviour first. They liked being the one "in the driver's seat" and watching me perform the tag points first helps them understand what they are supposed to do. Once they see there's nothing scary about the little noise making box, it's easy to turn around and tag their behaviour.*

*I made the mistake of tagging too long one day at Shaun's soccer practice. The enthusiasm I usually see during the tag sessions was really waning and I saw a few of the kids starting to rub their foreheads. Their brains were tired! I let them all have 10 free tags (they were "collecting" their tags for chances to win a free sport drink) for working even when they were tired and then let them scrimmage for a while. It seemed like the bonus tags kept the memory of the workout positive. It's really hard to remember to stop while you're ahead and not push for more, especially when they learn so quickly with tag.*

*The whole WOOF approach really grows quickly on you, I guess we like what works! It must be "reinforcing"!*

*I use WOOF (What you want; One thing; Observable/measurable; Five words or less) all the time - at home, with my clients and especially on the soccer field. Even if I'm not using the tagger, I still find the kids and my clients are more successful if I ask for what I want and one thing at a time. It's like nails on a chalk board to hear coaches asking for 5 things at once and most of those are things they don't want. "Quit doing this and stop that". I still have hope for them as quite a few have requested more information on TAGteach. They can really see a difference in the attitude of my athletes and how fast they're gaining skill competence.*

**Date** March 5

*Well, I've finished the course. I never would have believed an online course about Teaching with Acoustical Guidance would have such a huge impact on my life.*

*Right from the beginning of the course with the exercise, "Think of three things that need to be stopped and write down a way to rephrase these in the positive." Initially, that exercise was tougher than I imagined. For so long I've looked for what is wrong...*

*The exercises have really given me a new perspective.*

*I look at my children (and my wife) and think, wait, what is it that I want to happen? Telling the kids to stop leaving their school books on the kitchen table is not giving them helpful information. Now I will say, "Put your books in your room on your desk" or I can even make a game of it and run with them to their rooms and tag them as they put the books in the proper spot. TAGteach approach is flexible that way. I can be a more successful parent, therapist or coach by incorporating the tag phrasing and positive perspective and I can kick it all up by using the tagger.*

*I've created better communication and focus with my clients and can see a huge increase in skill acquisition in less time. Thanks to learning about tag Points and how to design them, I've seen a significant drop in patient frustration levels. According to my patients I'm much more clear about EXACTLY what I want them to do.*

*Using the tagger has helped me stay focused on my patients. I have to concentrate in order to tag the task at the appropriate time. My clients comment that using the tagger creates a certain amount of distance between them and the therapist...a good thing they say because they don't feel like someone is nagging or breathing down their neck. There have been patients who call and specifically ask for the therapist who uses TAGteach! Now I can see why.*

*My little soccer stars will tell you that other than scrimmaging, tagging is their favorite part of practice. They love tagging each others behaviour. That Peer Tagging is really something else. I can give the tagger to a bully or a loudmouth and he becomes a fabulous teacher. I give the little shy girl on the sidelines the tagger and suddenly she feels empowered. I give the tagger to any one of the athletes and they become a second set of coaching eyes. If their behaviour can be tagged; they can turn around and tag someone else's!*

*I'm really grateful for this experience and how it has given me, my family, my clients, my athletes a New Perspective*

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