

WHOLE – PART – WHOLE

THE THEORY...

The Whole – Part – Whole (WPW) learning model was first outlined by Malcolm Knowles in 1973, it is used in many learning situations both practical and theory based. This model presents the “whole”, then breaks it down into smaller ‘parts’ and returns to the original whole task.

When coaching football this can be used in a variety of ways, to break down a technique, skill or tactic. Most commonly the players are taken from a practice with high game context to a low one, before returning back to the original practice.

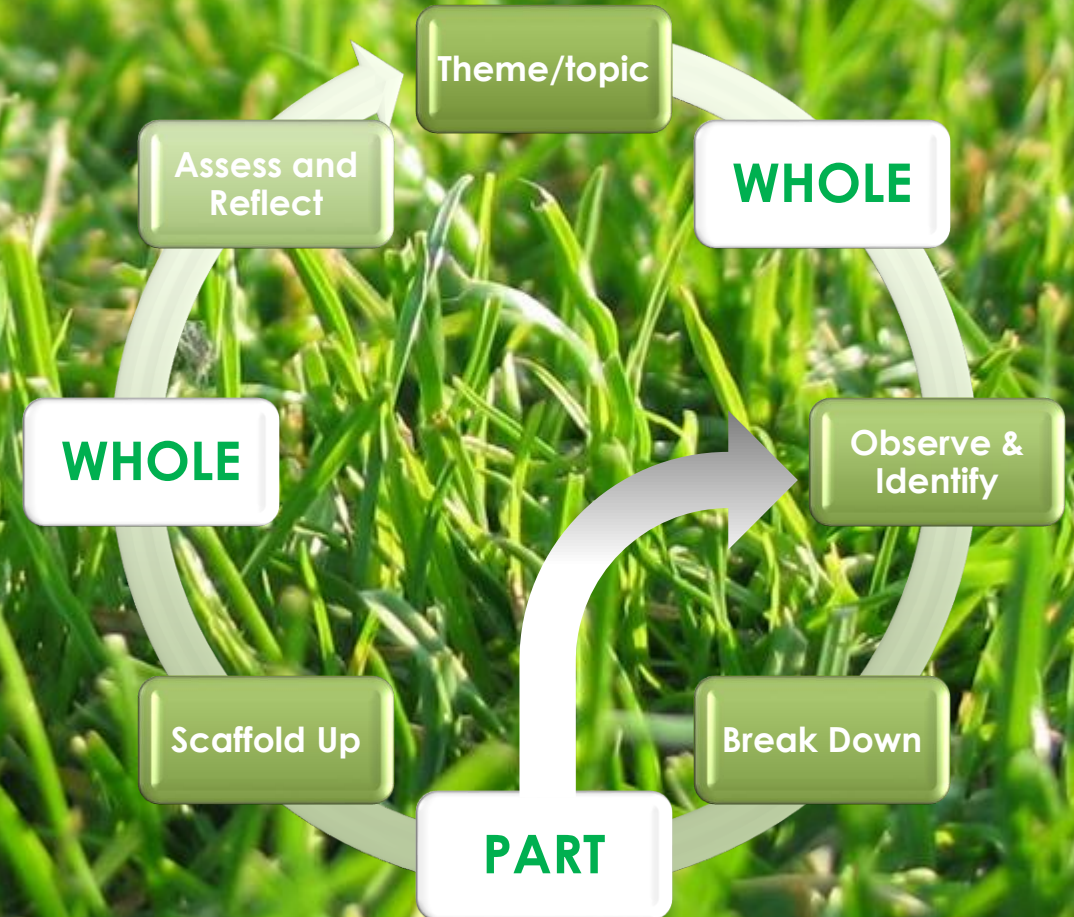
Where possible it is best to practice the game, or elements of the game in their entirety. An example of this could occur in a topic such as ‘Defending in central areas’. What do you do if individuals or units in your squad don’t understand how to defend 1v1 or 2v2? You break it down.

‘Whole’ doesn’t necessarily mean a game. Actually in this theory, a ‘whole’ practice could be a series of complex skills that can be broken down into more discrete skills.

In my opinion the ‘whole’ element should be as realistic to the game as possible, then the coach looks to break down the components of the practice and scaffold them back into the game situation.

The next few slides will look at;

- How does W-P-W transfer to football coaching?
- What needs to be considered when planning a W-P-W session?
- Two sample W-P-W session, looking at defending and playing through midfield



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WHOLE

WHAT?

- Game related
- Opposed or semi opposed
- Promotes decision making
- Teaches 'pictures' that players will see in game
- Allows the coach to observe and identify areas for improvement

PLANNING: KEY QUESTIONS

- Do the players know what the aims and objective of the session are, or do you let them play?
- Is the 'whole' element; coach led or player led?
- What (if any) coaching interventions will be used?
- Observing the 'whole' does the 'part' element of the practice need to be improved?



PART

- Simplifies these pictures
- Focuses on key techniques and skills needed to perform the task
- Is 'easier' than the whole
- Allows players to 'experience success'
- Allows for a variety of coaching interventions

- How do you assess what elements need improving? Player led, coach observation, discussion, based on previous, curriculum..etc
- What are the learning objectives of the part?
- How does the 'part' link to the 'whole'?
- How many stages do you need to break down to?
- Do players understand how the 'part' benefits their game?
- Is the 'part' of benefit to all, or individuals within the group?



WHOLE

Return to the whole to see if the understanding can be applied to 'whole'.

OR

Go beyond the original practice... even MORE realism, can the players take it in to a game?


- Have players transferred their learning from the 'part' to the 'whole'?
- How will you judge the improvement? Stats, player – coach discussion?
- What does 'success' look like?
 - Attempting it?
 - Performing it?
 - Recognising when?
 - Helping others?
- Reflection, what went well? What could be improved for next time



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What do you need to consider when planning the practice or 'part' of your session? Do you pre-plan, knowing the players? Or do you observe and assess the players and deliver based on the 'whole'.

Here are some factors you may want to consider when delivering a whole-part-whole session with your team.

TECHNICAL

Do the players have the **technical ability** to perform in the 'whole'? Sometimes they might understand how to or what to do but lack the skill to perform under pressure. The coach may need to simplify the picture e.g less players, overload, more time.. And allow the player lots of repetition.



PHYSICAL

The player may have the understanding and technical ability but **lack athleticism** to perform in the 'whole' practice. This is particularly apparent in kids football as children mature at different rates.

Is the success you see due to game intelligence or early maturation?



SOCIAL

Can the players work well as member of a small team?

Has the individual motivated and focused to take part in the session?

Does the player feel confident in this situation?



PSYCHOLOGICAL

Do the players have the **game intelligence** to perform well in the 'whole'? Are you asking them to do something they've never done before? Is the session realistic and relevant to their game? Is the practice fun and engaging?



THE SESSION

Sometimes its not the players fault, its very much the coach's. The session just may not be right. Assess if you've got the following correct...

- Space (dimension / shape)
- Task (relevant/realistic)
- Equipment
- People (No. /under/overload)
- Time



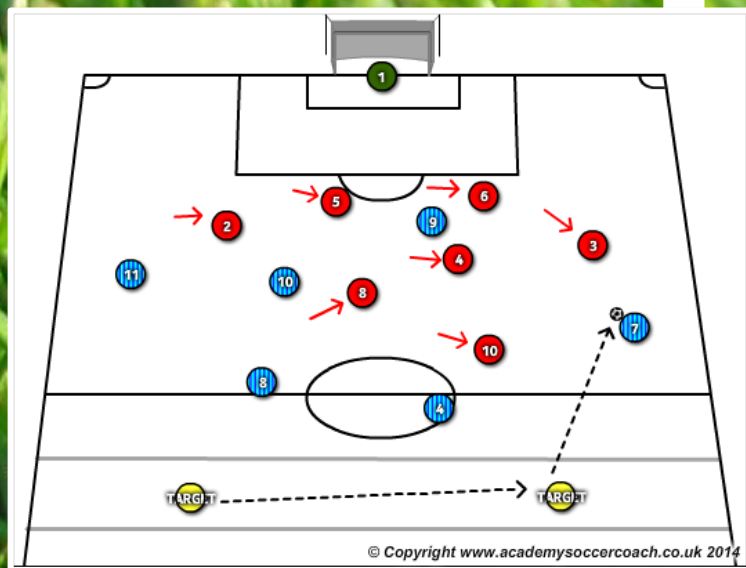
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SAMPLE SESSION, WHOLE-PART-WHOLE...

DEFENDING



PHASE OF PLAY

(2 UNITS VS 2 UNITS)

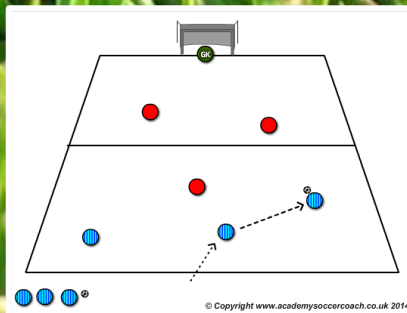
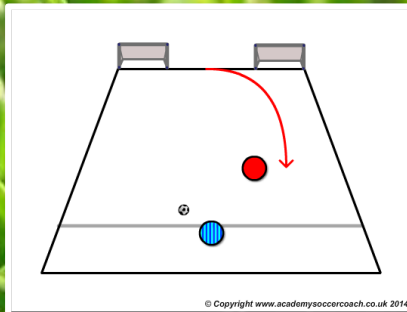
ATTACKING TEAM (BLUE) ATTACK THE GOAL.
DEFENDING TEAM IN RED, DEFEND THE GOAL AND
SCORE BY PASSING TO TARGET PLAYERS (YELLOW).

Set objectives? The coaches intervention can be high
or low.

DEFENDING 1V1

BASIC DEFENDING
TECHNIQUE, 1V1.

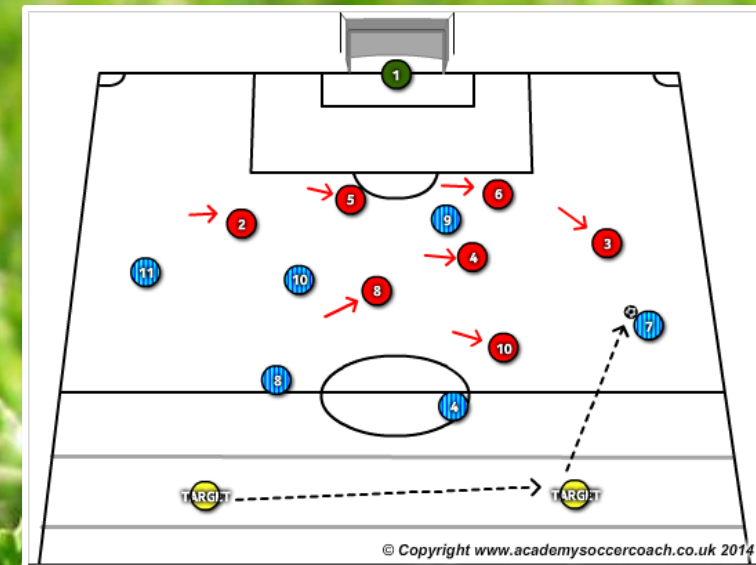
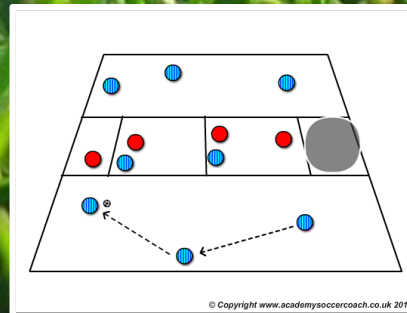
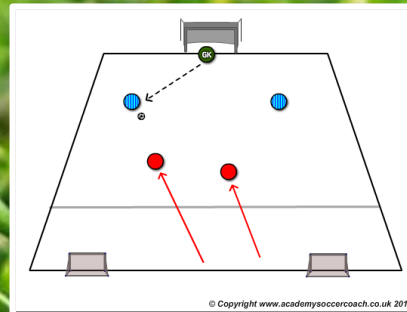
Shut Down, Slow Down, Sit
Down and Show Down



DEFENDING 2V2

DEFENDING IN PAIRS

Communication, Cover,
Balance and hand overs.



PHASE OF PLAY

RETURN TO THE PHASE OF PLAY, LINKING THE
LEARNING FROM 'PART' TO THE 'WHOLE'.

WAVE PRACTICE

BLUES ATTACK IN 3'S VERSUS
RED. REDS SET UP 1V3 THEN
2V3. Defending outnumbered.

Delay, make play predictable
could add recovery run.

UNIT PRACTICE

BLUES TRY TO PENETRATE RED,
BY SCORING THROUGH
CENTRAL ZONES.

Slide, keep play in front, could
add pressing.

NEXT STEPS...

Reflect and evaluate the session
Assess individuals improvement
Check players understanding
Stretch understanding
Can they transfer it to a match

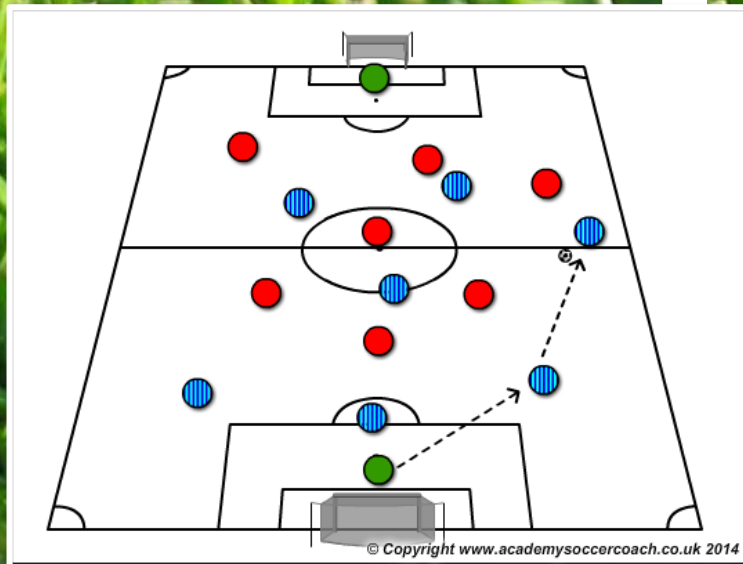


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SAMPLE SESSION, WHOLE-PART-WHOLE... PLAYING THROUGH MIDFIELD



8v8 GAME

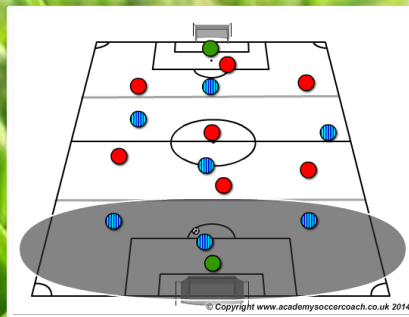
RED VERSUS BLUE IN A SMALL SIDED GAME 8V8.

Set objectives? The coaches intervention can be high or low.

UNOPPOSED IN THE DEFENSIVE THIRD

ALLOW DEFENDERS TO BUILD AN ATTACK UNOPPOSED.

Patience in possession and repetition of playing into midfield



1V1 IN THE MIDDLE THIRD

MIDFIELDERS MATCHED UP 1V1 IN 3 ZONES.

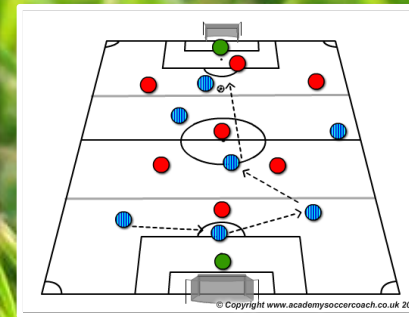
Receiving to play forwards, Rotation and combination play.



THIRDS GAME

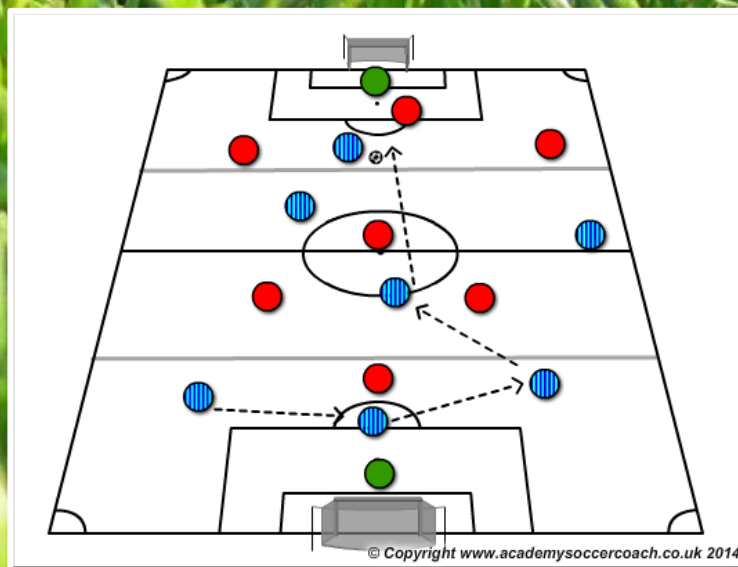
CONDITIONED GAME

Players locked in zones?
Rules on support?
Encourage overloads?
Build up from defensive third



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8v8 GAME

RETURN TO THE GAME, REMOVING CONDITIONS...

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