

**Question 25** (5 marks)

Describe the stages of skill acquisition that an athlete should typically pass through when developing a skill.

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When an athlete is learning a new skill they will experience three different stages of skill development: the cognitive stage is the first stage of skill development this requires a lot of practice to develop some muscle memory; many errors will be experienced at this stage. Next the learner will progress to the associative stage, where muscle memory and kinaesthetic sense should be well developed and errors should have greatly decreased. Finally ~~into~~ the autonomous stage, the movement should be almost ~~to~~ automatic. The ~~at the~~ athlete has developed temporal patterning, muscle memory and kinaesthetic sense. Their anticipations and consistency should be very well developed so that the athlete can focus on strategic and tactical development and decision making, some athletes will never progress to this stage.