

# Reflection Guideline for S4D Training Sessions

Without reflection it's  
'just sport'.

## Introduction:

The reflection as key element of S4D sessions<sup>1</sup>

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Reflection **makes the difference** between a Sport for Development (S4D) session and a regular sport session. Reflection on a single S4D activity or whole S4D sessions is essential to build a connection between the development of life competences/life skills<sup>2</sup> and the translation of these competences into daily-life contexts. Without reflection, there will be neither a connection nor a transfer of competences to daily life situations and, therefore, there will be no impact. The reflection part helps to deepen the understanding of what was learned during the session and supports learning processes. It is important to ensure that this process gets enough **time and attention**.

No reflection  
– no impact

There are many different ways of conducting a reflection, but some **key elements** should be taken into consideration. This guideline helps you to understand the importance of reflection for competence and life skill development as well as for recollecting of what was learned during the session. First, we will explain the learning process of children and youth within S4D programs and how S4D competences can be transferred into daily life situations. Then, information about the timing of the reflection part during the S4D sessions will be given and a detailed step-by-step explanation on how it can be implemented. At the end of the guideline you will find different examples of reflection methods you can use to conduct your reflection.

## Understanding the Learning Process:

How can competences be transferred into daily life situations?

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Sport and games can be used to make meaningful experiences possible. Based on these experiences, there are different learning theories that have inspired existing approaches to teaching in S4D.<sup>3</sup> Some of these learning theories are closely linked to the reflection part of the S4D session. In this guideline, we refer to the **experiential learning theory** developed by David Kolb in the early 1980's. Here, learning is "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience", where "knowledge results from the combination of grasping experience and transforming it" (Kolb, 1984). The experiential learning theory is visualized in a "**four-stage learning cycle** in which the learner 'touches all the bases'" (McLeod, 2017): (1) concrete experience, (2) reflective observation, (3) abstract conceptualization, and (4) active experimentation.

Learning is grasping experience and transforming it.

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<sup>1</sup> Even though we are conducting a comprehensive reflection in each of our S4D sessions, we might not see changes in the behavior of our participants. There are various other indicators that influence the personal development of our participants and there is still a lack of substantial evidence to support the potential of sport for this development. To measure the outcomes and further impact of our S4D interventions a monitoring and evaluation system is necessary. [Here](#) you can learn more about the fundamental functions of M&E and how a project cycle can look like.

<sup>2</sup> Life competences/life skills are part of the S4D competences that children and youth should develop through S4D programs. Further we will use the term life competences. [Here](#) and in our [Glossary](#) you can find more information on S4D competences and Life Skills.

<sup>3</sup> To get an overview about different learning theories see GIZ & SPIN (2020b, p. 37 et seq.).

This theory suggests that **deep and lasting learning** occurs when we engage in an emotional and powerful experience before we step back and reflect on that experience, then interpret and try to make sense of it and finally test our new abilities in other situations.

Put another way, learning can be maximised by actively involving the participant as much as possible in **activities, reflection and discussion**. This learning process enables the participants to give rise to new ideas or a modification of their own existing concepts. The last step of the learning cycle includes **active experimentation** – the learners apply their idea(s) to the world around them and see what happens (GIZ & SPIN, 2020b).

## Timing:

### When should the reflection take place?

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*Find a good  
balance between  
reflection & play!*

For sustainability, reflection should be made routine for all training sessions. To create a comfortable learning atmosphere for your participants, make sure to find a **good balance between play and reflection** in your sessions. First of all, your participants should enjoy the session and have fun during the activities and games.

Try to observe the participants closely during the activities and games to identify important teachable moments (see below) that you can refer to during the reflection. Therefore, the reflection is best done **immediately after the activity or game**. However, if you have more games focusing on the same competences you can also do the reflection afterwards. You as a coach best know your participants! Try to sense the mood of the group to find a good balance between play and reflection. **At the end of the session**, there should always be a closing circle and short reflection of the whole session to get participants together and recap on what was learned during the session.

## Implementation of reflection:

### Important aspects (1) before, (2) meanwhile and (3) after the reflection

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#### (1) Crucial aspects to keep in mind before starting with the reflection

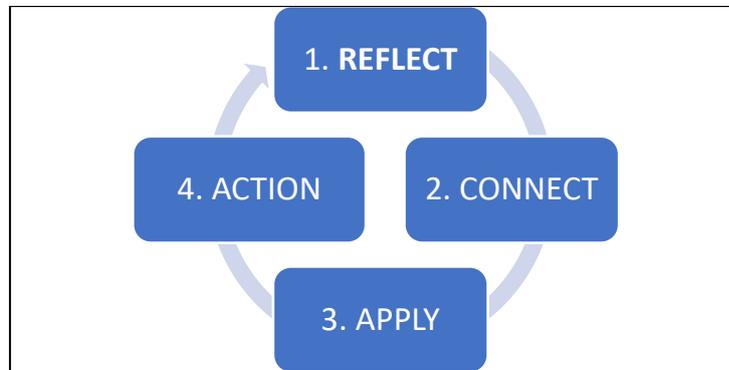
Reflection is a key part of the S4D session and therefore needs enough time and attention. But **before** you start there are some important aspects to keep in mind (GIZ & SPIN, 2020):

- Gather participants in a **circle** (sit down if you feel like the participants feel more relaxed then)
- Make sure to create an environment where participants **feel comfortable** to take part in the reflection and an open discussion.
- Give **clear guidance** during the reflection process and make sure that everyone is involved and heard.
- Do not rush and give participants some **time to think** about their experiences.
- However, do **not overdo the reflection**. It should not take longer than 10-15 Minutes.
- If you feel that participants don't have anything else to contribute you can also decide to have a **shorter** reflection or come back to the topic another day.
- **Don't force participants** to share something they don't want to.
- Take feelings and thoughts of participants **seriously**.
- **Listen to the participants**, don't tell them what to think. Your task as a coach is to **guide the group** through the reflection and not to give the answers for them.

*Create a pleasant  
setting and  
atmosphere!*

## (2) The S4D reflection cycle - Guiding the reflection in 4 steps

In the working field of S4D there are **different models and guidelines existing** about how to implement reflection processes. Based on the experiential learning theory (see above) and in line with the model from one of the most established NGOs in the field of S4D, namely Right to Play (RTP), we divide the reflection into four different steps (Kolb, 1984; EDU:PACT Network, 2019):



The reflection cycle (own illustration on the basis of Kolb, 1984; EDU:PACT Network, 2019)

### STEP 1: REFLECT - Ask the participants about their experiences during the activity

The first part of the reflection aims to make the participants **look back at the activity** with a special focus on specific situations, competences/skills or learning opportunities. The coach should guide the participants to **identify the life competence(s)/skill(s)** the activity focused on and help them to understand the relevance of their own behaviour during the activity. Examples of questions:

- How did you like the game/activity?
- What was difficult/easy for you?
- What did you notice? or Did you notice that...?
- What helped you to succeed/ or What could have been done better?

This part requires the coach to **closely observe** the participants during the activities and to pay attention to their behaviour. This is necessary to identify specific situations, competences/skills or learning opportunities that he/she can refer to during the reflection, so-called **teachable moments**.

#### The importance of teachable moments

A teachable moment can be a *positive or negative* event:

Examples for *positive* events during a S4D activity could be:

- unexpected help of another participant
- a solved problem as a result of good teamwork
- support and cheering of the team

Examples for *negative* teachable moments could be:

- a conflict during the activity
- unfair behaviour of an opponent
- the loss of a game

When you work with children and youth, teachable moments are happening all the time. The key is to determine which teachable moment is the most important to truly focus on.

It is important to see these moments as powerful learning opportunities, through which you can extend or expand the thinking of students and athletes. In these situations, you may want to stop the session in the middle of play to ask some questions to help the students and athletes get the most out of the experience. Alternatively, you may want to wait until the end of the session before discussing this issue (EDU:PACT Network, 2019).

## STEP 2: CONNECT - Make a connection to daily-life situations

After identifying the life competence(s)/skill(s), the second part of the reflection aims to build a **transfer to daily-life situations**. These questions invite the participants to generalize the experience, asking them to look at it in broader terms and see if there is a **connection between the experience during the activity and their life outside the sport field**. The questions in the second part of the reflection should also be related to the overall topic of the S4D session, for example gender equality, violence prevention, employability etc. Examples of questions:

- Have you ever been in a situation...?
- Does that happen to you before (in life, at home)?
- How is it relevant to what I already know, believe or feel?

## STEP 3: APPLY- Ask the participants about specific actions

The last part of the reflection on the field is about the participant's **personal learning**. The coach should help participants to link/transfer their learning experiences to **specific actions** they could take in real-life situations. In other words, the participants should think about **how to apply their learning** regarding life competences/skills to the world outside the court. This part should also be closely linked to the overall topic of the S4D session (e.g. gender equality, health). Examples of questions:

- What do you take out of this experience?
- What will you do differently in the future?
- Do you have ideas how to...?

## STEP 4: ACTION – Agree with the participants on specific actions

Talking about the application of actions is easy. To close the S4D reflection cycle and to guarantee the actions you discussed in step 3, you should **agree with the participants on specific actions** they will **implement in their daily life** when they leave the field. This part is enormously important for the participants to try what they have learned. You can give them **small tasks** (“homework”) that they should do or **questions** they should think about until the next S4D session. These tasks/questions should also be closely linked to the topic of the whole session. Make sure not to overwhelm the participants with these tasks and do not put pressure on them! Examples:

- Write a letter to yourself and formulate one personal goal you would like to achieve in three months. Bring the letter to the next training session. I (the S4D coach) will keep it sealed and safely until you will reopen it in three months.
- Observation tasks, e.g. “What kind of gender stereotypes exist in your environment (family and friends)?” or “How do people in your environment communicate with each other?”
- Try to apply three respectful/tolerant/solidary actions, e.g. being polite to someone, or offer your support/help to someone (agree with the participants on how those actions could look like).

### (3) Follow-up during the next S4D session

At the beginning of the next S4D session, you should have a **look back to the last session** and follow-up on step 4. That means you should **ask them about their observations, experiences with the task/agreed actions** or their answers to your question from the last session. Here, they can reflect about how they applied or transferred the life competences from the last S4D session into their lives (see [Guideline S4D Training Session Cycle](#)).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Also for this follow-up part you can use different reflection methods (e.g. interview in pairs).

## Different methods to conduct a reflection:

### Creative possibilities beyond 'asking questions'...

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*Avoid overwhelming  
your participants –  
use simple methods!*

When starting to implement reflections, the participants might at first be overwhelmed by this new approach. Especially when asking a lot of questions, you might not get an answer. To **avoid overwhelming** them, you can **use simple methods** to introduce the new approach to your participants. There are many different ways and methods how a reflection can be done and how participants can be organized. In the following you can find examples of methods you can use to conduct your reflections. However, you can also use your own variations and methods depending on your target group, the number of participants and space available.

### 1. Cone movement

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**Equipment needed:** Two cones, bottles, t-shirts etc.

**Description:** Place two cones approx. ten meters apart. Gather all participants together and explain that both cones represent a different answer to a question, for example simple *yes* or *no* questions or statements.

- Ask participants to position themselves on the line between the two cones, depending on their individual answer to your question or opinion to the statement. Make sure that you clearly define what the two poles stand for. An example could be: What skills they acquired from the session, the one cone is therefore labelled motor skills and the other one life skills.
- After the participants have positioned themselves, describe what you see. Some may stand in the middle to signify that they acquire both life skills and motor skills and some may stand on the ends. Give participants the opportunity to explain the skill they acquire and how it can be useful in their daily life. Participants only have to share their thoughts if they want to. You can further ask a few more questions, for example if and how they can apply what they have learned in training in their daily lives.

### 2. Write it down/ Draw it

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**Equipment needed:** Pens, paper

**Description:** Divide the group into smaller groups and provide pens/markers and a paper for each group. Ask the participant what they have learned during the activity or training session and how they can use it in other situations of their lives. To answer the questions participants can for example:

- draw a mind map and come up with different parts of their lives where the skill could be useful
- they can take notes
- draw a sketch of a situation

### 3. Act out

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#### **No equipment needed**

##### **Description:**

- Gather participants together and start by asking the skills that were needed during the activity or training session.
- Divide participants in smaller groups.
- Tell them to act out daily life situations where they need the skills from the activity or training session.
- Keenly observe the groups and gather them together after five minutes.
- Shortly discuss with the whole group the situations the smaller groups came up with. Focus on the life skills and how they can be useful in life situations.

### 4. Reflection baton

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**Equipment needed:** Ball or any other object

##### **Description:**

- Allow participants to think about the most important thing they have learned during the activity or trainings session and how they can use it in their daily life.
- Then pass a ball or any other object to one of the participants and ask him/her to share what he/she has learned.
- The ball or object will then be passed on to the next person.
- Depending on the time available, try to give everyone the opportunity to share.
- Communicate with the participants that no one is forced to share something, only if they want to.

### 5. Interviews in pairs

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**Equipment needed:** Flip chart (*optional*)

##### **Description:**

- Ask the participants to pair up and interview one another using questions given by the coach either on a flipchart or verbally. These questions should refer to the four steps of the “experiential learning cycle” (see above).
- After each has responded, you can ask each pair to work with two other pairs, forming groups of six people. Let them share their most important learnings with each other.

### 6. Four corners

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**Equipment needed:** Four cones

##### **Description:**

- Place four cones in a square on the field.
- Ask participants to gather together.
- Now each of the four cones will be labelled with a statement.
- Then ask the participants to choose one cone according their individual opinion.

- Give participants time to discuss the statements in their group.
- Then bring participants together and discuss the statements with the whole group.
- You can do another round with another statement.

## 7. Yes and No Movement

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**Equipment needed:** Eight cones

**Description:**

- Mark a field with four cones and divide it with a line in the middle into two sides. One side represents the “yes” answers and the other side the “no” answers.
- Ask the participants different questions that can be answered with “yes” and “no”, for example: Did you like the activity? Have you ever been in a situation ...?
- Based on their answer the participants should choose the “yes” or “no” side of the field.
- To get a deeper understanding you can ask if some participants want to explain their answer.

## 8. Target

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**Equipment needed:** Flip chart, pens

**Description:**

- Prepare a flip chart with a target and divide it into four different parts.
- Ask the participants to come up with four different strategies how they can apply the life skill of the activity or training session into their daily lives.
- Write down each of the four ideas in one part of the target.
- Now ask the participants to draw a cross in the field of the strategy which is most important to them.
- Discuss with the whole group how the participants can take action and implement these strategies into their daily lives.

## References:

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