

The Effect of the Gradual Activities Strategy on the Performance of Some Complex Offensive Skills of Handball for Students

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Abstract: The purpose of the study is to determine the impact of the gradual activities' strategy on students' performance of certain offensive handball skills as well as whether the experimental and control groups' effects on students' performance of these skills are superior in the post-test. By creating two identical groups (experimental and control) with pre- and post-tests, the researcher employed the experimental technique to fit the nature of the research problem. For the 2023–2024 academic year, 90 second-year students from the University of Karbala's College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences were part of the research community. A total of 40 students were chosen for the study and split into two groups: an experimental group and a control group, each with 20 students. The statistical package (SPSS) was used to statistically process the data for the variables being studied. Using educational units based on the gradual activities' strategy has a significant impact on students' development of the complex offensive skills under study and their motivation to perform some of the more difficult offensive skills in handball, according to one of the researcher's most significant findings. Using educational units in accordance with the gradual activities' strategy, which greatly aided students in developing the complex offensive skills under study, and the necessity of implementing contemporary study techniques because they improve learning levels were the researcher's two most important recommendations.

Keywords: Compound Offensive Skills, Graded Activity Strategy, Handball for Students

A. Introduction

The modern era is characterized by scientific and cognitive progress in various areas of life, especially the educational field. This progress has given broad visions to scientists, thinkers, and workers in the educational and sports fields to adopt modern strategies and various means of assistance that have a prominent role in showing a distinctive

educational level that ensures readiness to learn faster and more accurately to make students able to invest their energies more effectively (Al-Jubouri, Z. H. F., & Hussein, A. R. A. 2022). There are modern strategies that are followed in teaching to deliver the largest possible group of information to the student and achieve the desired goals. Perhaps one of these strategies is the strategy of gradual activities, which is based on the constructivist theory, which emphasizes the positive and effective role of the student in the educational process, through his practice of many diverse activities, in order to reach advanced levels through participation in educational situations (Hrebid, N. K., Hamza, A. K., & Hussein, A. R. A. 2022). Therefore, it has become necessary to use such strategies in which there is a joint interaction between the student and the teacher, the student and the colleague, as well as the educational curriculum, in order to establish solid foundations in the learning process based on the principle of joint interaction between the most important axes of the basic learning process (teacher - student - educational curriculum) (Noor, H. A. & Dr. AlTaie, D. N., 2023). Handball is a team game that is characterised by competition and excitement due to the movement sequences and complex offensive skills that are implemented during matches. Therefore, it has become imperative for students to learn to link the basic offensive skills together to form complex offensive skills that end with shooting.

One of the main factors in the educational process that those in charge of teaching resort to in order to bring students to a state of advanced skill performance, and that teaching and mastering any skill depends on modern strategies and educational methods, and given that the researcher is a lecturer in the College of Physical Education and a handball player. Note the weakness and unwillingness to learn handball skills due to the difficulty of linking skills and performing them in sequence and their importance in accelerating the learning process, as learning depends mainly on the activities that are applied during the lecture. Therefore, the researcher decided to apply the strategy of gradual activities in an interactive manner through auxiliary means, so that there may be competition between students in performing activities and exercises during educational units. From all of the above, the research problem returns to the following question: Does using the strategy of gradual activities have a positive effect on the performance of some complex offensive skills in handball for students? Research objectives: 1) Preparing educational units according to the strategy of gradual activities in performing some complex offensive skills in handball for students; 2) Identifying the effect of the strategy of gradual activities in performing some complex offensive skills in handball for students; 3) Identifying the advantage of the effect between the strategy of gradual activities and the mechanism followed in performing some complex offensive skills in handball for students. Research hypothesis: 1) There is a positive effect of the gradual activities strategy on the performance of some offensive handball skills for students between the pre- and post-tests; 2) The gradual activities strategy has the

advantage in influencing the performance of some offensive handball skills for students between the two (post) tests for the two groups, in favor of the experimental group.

Research field: Human field: Second-stage students in the College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences/University of Karbala for the academic year (2023-2024). Time field: from (20/02/2024) to 05/04/2024). Spatial field: Outdoor playgrounds of the College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences/University of Karbala. Definition of terms: 1) the strategy of graded activities: It is a group of activities of different levels that teachers design, where each learner starts with the activity appropriate to his cognitive and skill level, and when the students differ in their cognitive and skill levels (Al-Jubouri, Z. H. F., & Hussein, A. R. A. 2022). 2) The operational definition of the gradual activities' strategy: an educational strategy used by the teacher on a group of students inside the classroom, but some conditions must be met, which are represented by the presence of many individual differences between the students, and the differences are cognitive differences and differences in skill.

B. Methods

By creating two identical groups (experimental and control) with pre- and post-tests, the researcher applied the experimental technique to the nature of the research problem. The research community was determined by the second-year students in the College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences, University of Karbala, for the academic year (2023-2024), numbering (90) students distributed over (4) sections, namely (A, B, C, D). The research sample, represented by Section (A), was selected with a composition of (20) students from the original research community, randomly and by lottery, representing the experimental group, and (20) students from Section (B) representing the control group.

Table 1. The Homogeneity of the Sample in the Variables of Age, Height and Weight

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness
Age	19.22	1.08	0.777
Length	169.21	3.69	0.821
Mass	63.43	4.82	0.676

Table 2. The Equivalence of the Two Research Groups in The Research Variables

variables	Evaluation	Experimental		Control		Calculated t-value	Sig level	Sig Type
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation			
Receive, dribbling, then shoot with a high jump	Degree	2.888	0.878	2.921	0.998	1.994	0.423	Non Sig
	Time	25.121	2.673	25.222	2.403	1.453	0.067	Non Sig
Receive, then shoot with a front drop	Degree	1.202	0.221	1.231	0.447	2.011	0.333	Non Sig
	Time	5.712	0.912	5.676	1.923	1.998	0.078	Non Sig
Receive, dribbling, then deception, then shoot with a long jump	Degree	2.697	0.872	2.486	0.993	1.342	0.232	Non Sig
	Time	18.324	2.883	18.556	4.932	2.321	0.132	Non Sig

Evaluation variables Experimental group Control group Calculated t-value sig Type of significance

Methods, devices and tools used in the research:

1- Methods of collecting information in the research:

1- Tests and measures.

2- Observation.

3- Sources and references.

4- Personal interviews with professors and experts.

5- Questionnaire form to choose the most appropriate test to measure basic handball skills.

Devices and tools used in the research:

1. Digital electronic stopwatch.

2. Data show.

3. Hand calculator type (hp) number (1).

4. Laptop computer type (hp) number (2) Chinese made.

5- Legal handballs number (10).

6- FOX whistle number (5).

7- Small signs number (10).

8- Large signs number (10).

9- Adhesive tape.

10- Measuring tape.

11- Handball court.

Field research procedures:

Determining the complex offensive skills in handball: The researcher connected the offensive skills (receiving, passing, deception, and shooting) at the start of the second semester during the first weeks after examining the handball curriculum for second-year students at the College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences, University of Karbala, where the offensive skills were completed during the first semester.

Determining the tests of complex offensive skills in handball: The researcher created a questionnaire with a series of tests tailored to the complicated offensive skills being studied in handball after reviewing several studies and sources on the subject. The questionnaire was then given to a group of specialists. The tests that had an agreement rate of 80% or more were chosen based on the unanimous judgments.

Description of the nominated tests: After presenting the tests for the complex offensive skills to the experts, a group of tests were nominated as follows:

1. Receiving test, then patting, then shooting with a high jump.
2. Receiving test, then shooting with a front fall.
3. Receiving test, then patting, then deception, then shooting with a long jump. (Al-Amiri, 2015).

Exploratory experiment: To prove the validity of the instruments and the timing of the tests, an exploratory experiment was carried out on a sample of ten second-stage students on Sunday, November 11, 2024, at precisely 10:00 a.m. in the handball court. After seven days, the tests were conducted again on Sunday, 18/2/2024, at precisely ten a.m. The same survey sample was used in the experiment, the same procedures were followed, and the same tests were used again.

The researcher reached the following:

1. The readiness of the tools, devices and playgrounds used for the application in the main experiment.
2. The time needed by the student to perform each test was determined, which is (30) seconds.
3. All the requirements required to conduct the pre-tests were prepared, including planning the external arena, providing legal playing balls, and preparing the legal goals for handball and indicators.

Scientific basis for tests: Scientific transactions were conducted for the complex offensive skills tests under study.

Main experiment

Pre-tests:

The pre-tests were conducted and started on the members of the two research groups (experimental and control), numbering (40) students, before starting to implement the educational curriculum in the special tests for the skills of (handling and patting) in handball, on Tuesday, corresponding to (17/10/2023) at exactly (9) o'clock in the morning, on the external yard of the handball court. The pre-tests were photographed and documented with the help of the assistant work team.

The introductory educational unit according to the gradual activity strategy: Before implementing the educational curriculum, the researcher conducted an introductory unit on Monday (19/2/2024) in the handball court at nine o'clock in the morning in order to familiarize the students with the work and stages of the gradual activities and how they are applied by the subject teacher, as well as to learn about the following:

1. Obstacles facing the researcher when applying the stages of the strategy.
2. The time needed by the teacher to apply each stage of the strategy.
3. The appropriate time allocated to the sections of the educational unit and the possibility of implementing it.

The educational curriculum according to the gradual activities: educational units were prepared according to the strategy of gradual activities in performing some complex offensive skills in handball for students, which were applied to the experimental group. The number of educational units reached (8) educational units, for a period of (4) weeks, at a rate of (2) educational units per week, in the second semester. The duration of the educational unit was (90) minutes in its three stages (preparatory (10) minutes, Main (75) minutes, final (5) minutes), starting from Tuesday (2/20/2024) until Thursday (4/4/2024), and the researcher planned educational activities that suit all skill and cognitive levels of students, and the steps of the gradual activities' strategy were applied.

A set of activities were prepared in a graded level to suit all levels of students while implementing these activities. The researcher was keen to ensure that the exercises were consistent with the students' abilities and capabilities through (the degree of challenge, the degree of complexity of the activity, the available resources, and the processes necessary to perform the activity) and according to Bloom's classification of levels (knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation). In the form of integrated exercises and gradual progression, dividing students into groups according to these levels and giving each group the activities appropriate to their level, and the students must apply the activity determined by the teacher according to the student's skill and cognitive level, and the students' levels are determined by conducting some

tests through which the students are divided into heterogeneous groups. After the student sees that he must move from one level to another for the activity that is less difficult, they can move to the activity that is more difficult and complex than the previous activity, and then move from one activity to another activity that is more complex and difficult than the previous activities (Mohamed, J. J., Hrebid, N. K., & Hussein, A. R. A. 2022). Also, activities are presented in the form of complex exercises at different levels in terms of difficulty, and these complex exercises are presented on an iPad display screen. It is distributed to each group of cooperative groups and the students choose the activities that are appropriate for them according to a pre-prepared plan for the number of activities that are implemented, as well as creating a spirit of competition among the students by aiming at rings of different diameters in addition to a data show device to display video clips of some complex offensive skills as well as some exercises. Thus, the teacher can achieve the desired goal of the gradual activities strategy and reach activities that are gradual in terms of cognitive and skill levels, and thus students can reach the mechanism for acquiring the skills required in the educational unit. This strategy makes the student able to build new knowledge gradually by overcoming the situations and problems he faces, and thus he works to achieve it gradually in the face of difficulties and challenges until he achieves it.

Post-tests: After completing the implementation of the educational units on their dates according to the strategy of gradual activities in performing some complex offensive skills in handball for students, and in conditions identical to the conditions of the pre-tests to obtain accurate results, the researcher conducted the post-tests on the experimental and control groups on Sunday 7/4/2024 at (9) in the morning in the handball field affiliated with the college. Statistical methods used: The researcher used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version (25) to extract the results according to the statistical methods.

C. Results and Discussion

Presentation and analysis of the results of the pre- and post-tests of the experimental group:

Table 3. Significance of the Differences Between the Pre- and Post-Tests of the Experimental Group in the Tests of the Complex Offensive Motor Performances in Handball For The Sample “Under Study” (n = 20)

Variables	Evaluation	pre-test		post-test		Calculated t-value	Sig level	Sig Type
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation			
Receive, dribbling, then shoot with a high jump	Degree	2.888	0.878	6.797	1.022	7.939	0.000	Sig
	Time	25.121	2.673	22.302	3.332	9.423	0.000	Sig
Receive, then shoot with a front drop	Degree	1.202	0.221	2.982	0.639	11.983	0.000	Sig
	Time	5.712	0.912	3.977	0.996	9.553	0.000	Sig
Receive, dribbling, then deception, then shoot with a long jump	Degree	2.697	0.872	4.012	1.923	5.786	0.000	Sig
	Time	18.324	2.883	15.998	2.994	7.993	0.000	Sig

Displaying the results of the pre- and post-tests for the control group:

Table 4. The Importance of the Variations Between the Control Group’s Pre- and Post-Test Results on the Intricate Offensive Motor Performance Assessments in Handball for the Sample “Under Study”

variables	Evaluation	pre-test		post-test		Calculated t-value	Sig level	Sig Type
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation			
Receive, dribbling, then shoot with a high jump	Degree	2.921	0.998	4.111	1.554	5.873	0.022	Sig
	Time	25.222	2.403	24.932	4.934	4.990	0.002	Sig
Receive, then shoot with a front drop	Degree	1.231	0.447	1.982	0.334	5.929	0.012	Sig
	Time	5.676	1.923	4.782	0.999	7.997	0.000	Sig
Receive, dribbling, then deception, then shoot with a long jump	Degree	2.486	0.993	2.967	0.986	9.865	0.003	Sig
	Time	18.556	4.932	17.834	2.929	5.564	0.024	Sig

Displaying and analyzing the results of the post-tests for the experimental and control groups:

Table 5. Displays the Calculated (T) Value, Arithmetic Means, Standard Deviations, and Statistical Significance for the Experimental and Control Groups' Post-Tests

variables	Evaluation	Experimental		Control		Calculated t-value	Sig level	Sig Type
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation			
Receive, dribbling, then shoot with a high jump	Degree	6.797	1.022	4.111	1.554	13.987	0.000	Non Sig
	Time	22.302	3.332	24.932	4.934	5.989	0.000	Non Sig
Receive, then shoot with a front drop	Degree	2.982	0.639	1.982	0.334	7.999	0.000	Non Sig
	Time	3.977	0.996	4.782	0.999	3.987	0.000	Non Sig
Receive, dribbling, then deception, then shoot with a long jump	Degree	4.012	1.923	2.967	0.986	5.982	0.000	Non Sig
	Time	15.998	2.994	17.834	2.929	9.934	0.000	Non Sig

Table (3) shows that the averages of the pre- and post-measurements of the research sample in all tests that assess the complex offensive skills in handball differ statistically significantly in favor of the experimental group's post-measurement at a significance level of (0.05). The researcher attributes this development among the members of the experimental group sample to the effectiveness of using a group of complex offensive motor performance training through a strategy of gradual activities, similar to the multiple playing situations that occur during handball matches and in a competitive manner, as well as the diversity in the use of these training exercises and their gradual progression from easy to difficult and from simple to complex. Which led to raising the level of students' performance in all the complex offensive skills (which end with shooting) of the skills (under study) in terms of accuracy and speed, while taking into account the technical points during performance. The results of this study are consistent with the results of the study of (Obad Hamza, N., Sachit, M. H., Finteel, A. K., & Kadhem, A. A., (2022), in the field of handball, which indicated that using the strategy of gradual activities using assistive devices in changing conditions and situations similar to various playing situations leads to the development of those complex offensive skills in handball for the sample under study and all other group sports activities.

Table (4) also indicates the presence of statistically significant differences between the pre- and post-tests at a significance level of (0.05) for the control group, as the experience possessed by the subject teacher, the presentation method, and the educational units prepared by the subject teacher had an effective impact on the

development of students in the complex offensive skills under study, but below the level of ambition.

Table 5 displays the variations in the post-test arithmetic mean and standard deviation values between the students in the experimental group, which employed the gradual activities strategy, and the control group, which employed the teacher's method. The researcher attributes this to the difference in the method of presenting and explaining the skill and conveying the required information. The experimental group used the strategy of gradual activities, which aroused the spirit of competition and the sequence of its steps, as well as the delivery of information, which is compatible with the requirements of the modern era and is in line with what was mentioned by (Ali, R. I. J., & Malih, F. A., 2022). The presence of an appropriate teaching strategy that suits the learners' mental and skill capabilities and abilities in the educational situation helps in learning and acquisition. In addition, the strategy of gradual activities and their application helps students to absorb information and spread the spirit of cooperation and communication between them and the teacher in discussing the information and creating an educational environment full of innovation and creativity (Abod, Z. F., & AlHaddad, N. H., 2022).

The researcher believes that the reason for the superiority of the experimental group students over the control group students at this level is that the prepared educational units were more positive than the educational units for the control group and the mechanism followed by the subject teacher (Abdul Hussein, A. R., & Hatem, N. 2024), due to the comprehensiveness of these units in terms of following a logical sequence in presenting the topics and what is based on it in terms of activities and events that are compatible with the handball subject and the level of students' awareness. The organization and linking of complex offensive skills and the selection of teaching methods and techniques and educational means that the teacher used are what made the students of the experimental group more motivated, harmonious and prepared to receive information to a greater extent than the students of the control group (Abdul Hussein, A. R. & Shaalan, M. A., 2021). The researchers attribute the results of the control group to the fact that the role of the students was limited to receiving and implementing information, and that there were not enough opportunities to undergo experiences that would activate the learning process and increase understanding and comprehension of some legal materials, which require watching some matches, video clips and illustrative images, as well as applying them in educational matches so that they have the ability to retrieve them in similar situations (Abdul Hussein, A. R. & other, 2021).

This environment, where the teacher applied the curriculum in these prepared units, which included a variety of educational exercises for skills and according to the levels

of the learners, made the units more exciting, interesting (Al-Amiri, A. A. .K., 2015), and enjoyable for the students, which led to their interaction and drive to apply their contents with all care, desire, and drive, is another positive factor that the researchers believe contributed to the experimental group's superiority over the control group. (Abdul Hussein, A. R., & Hrebid, N. K. (2023) confirmed that "the best way to create an environment that is exciting, suspenseful, and enjoyable for the student is to use diversity and renewal in the use of exercises, methods, and approaches when teaching sports skills." This helps the student learn and quickly acquire sports movements and activities".

D. Conclusions

The educational units that were prepared according to the gradual activities' strategy contributed significantly to the development of the experimental group in performing the complex offensive skills under study. The use of educational units according to the gradual activities' strategy had an effective impact in increasing students' motivation to perform the complex offensive skills under study. Using educational units according to the strategy of gradual activities in teaching handball skills to students. Conducting a study similar to the current research but on other dependent variables and other handball skills using another model, method or strategy that takes into account individual differences among students. The necessity of applying a modern study strategy because it has a positive impact on the level of learning.

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Appendix (1)

Model of an educational unit according to the gradual activities' strategy

Unit sections	Time	Content or activity	Formation	Notes
Main Section	70 min	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students stand in the form of a square with one side missing. 2. Explain and display the compound offensive skill and the way to connect them using a model from the students for display or by the teacher with displaying illustrative pictures and posters. 3. - Divide the students into three groups and give the appropriate exercise to each group according to what the student chooses the appropriate exercise for his skill level and according to the level of challenge and difficulty. 		Emphasize avoiding and overcoming mistakes while presenting the model. Emphasize that each student starts from the exercise appropriate to his skill level.
Educational Aspect	20 min			
The applied aspect	50 min	<p>First level: Students are divided into cooperative groups and given exercises according to the level of challenge as follows: Exercise No. (1) Refer to Appendix (1). Exercise No. (2) Refer to Appendix (1). Exercise No. (3) Refer to Appendix (1).</p> <p>Second level: Students are divided into three groups according to Bloom's pyramid, and the difficulty is increased through the following exercises: Exercise No. (4) Refer to Appendix (1). Exercise No. (5) Refer to Appendix (1). Exercise No. (6) Refer to Appendix (1).</p> <p>Third level: Giving more complex exercises Exercise No. (7) Refer to Appendix (1). Exercise No. (8) Refer to Appendix (1). Exercise No. (9) Refer to Appendix (1).</p>		Emphasizing the transition from the first exercise in the unit after the student finds himself fully prepared for the next exercise and thus the progression to reach a distinguished level of total exercises. Emphasizing the participation of everyone in performing the exercises. Emphasizing the delivery of the ball to the fellow student Emphasizing the performance of the skill very quickly.
	15 min			
	20 min			

Appendix (2)

Exercises used in the educational unit

Diverse receiving and then shooting with a high jump		
Figure	Explanation of training	n
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A locomotive in the middle of the field - The ball is thrown and caught from the air, then a high jump is shot from outside the (9 m) line, taking care to rise to the highest point and shoot the high jump, and return to stand behind the locomotive 	1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students stand in groups in locomotives in the three back positions (left back - playmaker - right back) - The ball is with the left back (locomotive 1) who presses the ball forward, then passes it to the playmaker student (locomotive 2) who receives the ball from the movement and in turn passes the ball to the right back locomotive (3) who receives the ball from the movement and rises to shoot with a high jump from outside the (9 m) and returns to stand behind locomotive (1). - The students exchange places and repeat. 	2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A locomotive in the right wing center - The student passes the ball to the teacher on the center line, then runs behind the teacher in the opposite direction to receive the ball from him, then shoots with a high jump and returns to stand behind the locomotive, then repeats the performance for the rest of the students. 	3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The students stand in a locomotive behind the midfield line, (A) stands in a place with the balls and (B) stands in the right wing position. - The first student in the locomotive runs and receives a pass from (A), then passes it to (B), runs to receive it again, then takes three steps, then rises up and shoots a high jump powerfully at the goal and returns to stand behind the locomotive. Repeats 	4

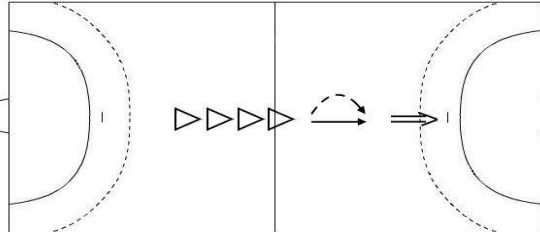
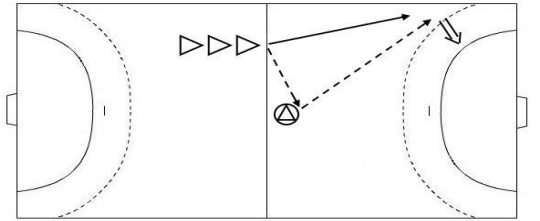
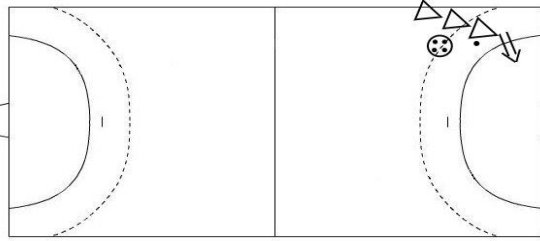
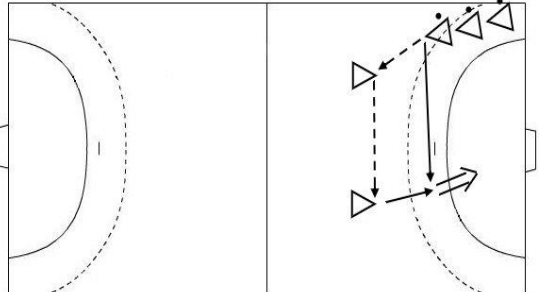
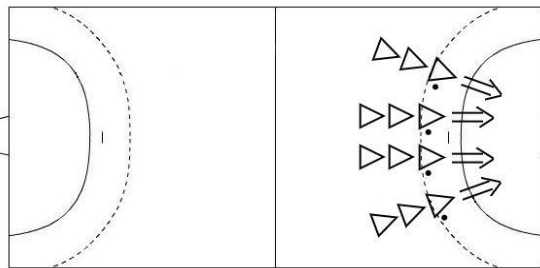
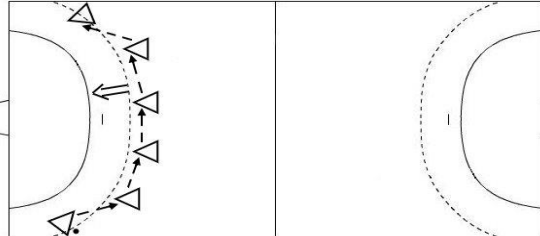
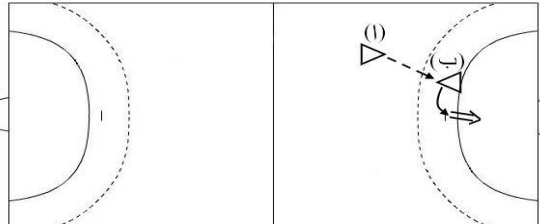
Figure	Explanation of training	n
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A locomotive in the middle of the field - The ball is thrown and caught from the air, then shot with a long jump from outside the (6m) line, taking care to rise forward and upward, and return to stand behind the locomotive. Repeat 	5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Locomotive at the middle of the field - The student passes the ball to the teacher on the middle line, then runs towards the left wing center to receive the ball, then shoots with a long jump, and returns to stand behind the locomotive. Repeats 	6
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students stand in a locomotive in the center of the left wing. The ball is picked up from the ground, then they take steps to approach and rise inward to shoot the long jump from the center of the wing, taking care to approach parallel to the goal line whenever possible. They rise in two or three steps and shoot, then return to stand behind the locomotive. - Repeat the performance towards the center of the right wing. 	7
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A locomotive in the left wing center - The first student in the locomotive passes the ball to (A) who passes it to (B), and at the same time the student crosses the (6m) line to receive the ball from (B), then shoots with a long jump and returns to stand behind the locomotive. Repeats 	8
Diverse receiving and then shooting with a front drop		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The students stand in trains on the (7m) line, then the first row of trains students, upon hearing the whistle, pick up a fixed ball from the ground, then shoot with a front fall, and return to stand behind the trains. Repeat. 	9
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Figure	Explanation of training	n
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Standing in the playing centers outside the (9m) circle, passing and receiving takes place, and when the teacher blows his whistle, the student in possession of the ball shoots with a front drop. - Students change positions when hearing the teacher's whistle 	10
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student (A) is on the (9m) line and student (B) is on its extension and stands on the (6m) line. - (A) passes to (B) a bounce pass and (B) receives then turns and shoots with a front fall. - Students switch places and repeat. 	11