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Communication Processes

In

Dressage Coaching

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis was to study the communication processes in the equestrian sport dressage. Phase One was a descriptive, qualitative study examining the pathways of communication. This involved interviewing one coach and two dressage riders. From the results, we made a preliminary model of communication that included three actors (coach, rider, and horse) and different pathways of communication (auditory, kinesthetic, verbal, visual). In Phase Two, we interviewed a second coach and two more riders. We decided to look at their definition of dressage as well as the culture within which we could study communication, as it would bring a deeper understanding of the participant's environment. Here, the role of the horse was more important than we initially thought, and the kinesthetic pathway was key to successful dressage riding and training. Phase Three was a detailed study looking at different levels of riders and horses and how the process of communication differed within each context. The roles of each actor were also studied. A cross context analysis was done and a detailed look between the six different contexts revealed several interesting similarities and differences.

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Communication Processes
In
Dressage Coaching

Lucy Cumyn

Riding is a partnership. The horse lends you his strength, speed, and grace, which are greater than yours. For your part, you give him your guidance, intelligence and understanding, which are greater than his. Together, you can achieve a richness that alone, neither can.

Introduction

Years ago man used horses for fighting and hunting, and as a working animal. Then the horse's role gradually changed becoming man's sporting partner in competitions. The origins of the discipline dressage that we see today, was first written about around 400 B.C. by the Greek statesman and general, Xenophon, whose methods were based on intuition and kind treatment of the horse (Podhajsky, 1965/1967). Later, in the beginning of the eighteenth century, the art of riding, including dressage, was almost exclusively influenced by the French. These methods are still applied today at the oldest institution in the world, The Spanish Riding School of Vienna, a world class center for classical riding, and home of the famous Lipizzaner horses (Kenney, 1991).

Dressage is a sport where the horses receive the most training of any type of riding horse (e.g. jumping, polo, saddleseat). The object is the harmonious development of the physique and ability of the horse. As a result, it makes the horse calm, supple, loose, and flexible, but also confident, attentive, and keen, thus achieving perfect understanding with the rider (United States Dressage Federation (USDF) rulebook, 1991). The horses with superior, natural gaits and the right temperament can sustain advanced dressage training. The levels of dressage start with the Basic level and go up to the Grand Prix level (See Appendix D). All levels have a set pattern that riders follow for competitions. These patterns and changes of gaits (walk, trot, and canter) are performed at different letters around a dressage arena.

Dressage is a discipline that requires ultimate communication between the horse and the rider. The rider aims to obtain the same degree of impulsion and suspension that the horse has in nature. This is achieved by systematic and gymnastic work designed to

teach the horse to move forward willingly and freely, and also without restriction from the rider. The development of balance is first taught to the rider who will then be able to teach the horse to re-balance himself. With this in mind, no matter how spectacular a horse's natural movement, or how advanced the horse's training, nothing will come unless the rider has developed awareness of the influence of their seat, leg, and hands on the horse and how to properly use these aids. This requires physical and mental effort when working on maximizing the horse's potential without forcing or restricting its natural movement (Meredith Manor International Equestrian Centre, 1990). The ability to ride effectively and knowledgeably comes from good, solid instruction. When all the 'pieces' fit together, dressage becomes an art - a form of equine ballet (Kenney, 1991).

Dressage and the communication processes involved between the coach, the rider, and the horse, will be the focus of this thesis. This topic deserves to be studied for a couple of reasons. First, any equestrian sport is inherently risky due to the fact that sometimes, large animals are unpredictable. It has also been suggested that in sport, good communication between coaches and athletes can reduce the risk of injuries (Fuoss & Troppmann, 1981). Secondly, the communication processes in teaching and learning dressage are probably very different to what is seen in other sports. Thus, the study of communication processes involving three actors (coach, rider, horse) instead of the traditional two (coach, athlete) is unique and, to our knowledge, has not been studied yet.

Research Context

Personal experience

My addiction to horses started nine years ago when I began jumping. Three years later, I changed to dressage, and thus started the process to becoming a more dedicated

rider. Attending an equestrian school specializing in educating students about various aspects pertaining to horses was valuable in that it taught me not only riding and teaching strategies, but also dedication, hard work, and discipline. It was there that I learned just how hard I had to work mentally and physically in order to improve my riding the way I wanted it to improve even though I was a newcomer to the sport.

However, it was not until two years ago that I decided to seriously explore my own potential and learn as much as possible about dressage. I wanted to see just how much I could learn about training horses and teaching students of different levels to improve my own teaching. This goal required a higher level of commitment and hard work.

I began observing riders and coaches of all different levels in dressage, and even in other disciplines, such as jumping. I found a new 'teacher'; a coach who would help me excel even further in dressage and who also opened up new avenues which included riding several different horses so that I could further my learning.

Watching professional national and international coaches as well as their students train, only confirmed my opinion that the ability to communicate effectively seemed to be what separated the good coaches from the average coaches. Talking with these coaches and riding under them also showed me just how well these professionals know their horses and how they are able to get the best out of them when teaching students.

Thus, I have concluded that learning how to teach riding and especially the communication processes involved, is an important step towards becoming a better rider and coach. I also believe that more of this information should be available for those who really wish to learn how to ride (riders) and teach (coaches).

Literature on equestrian sports

The majority of literature on equestrian sports consists of non-empirical and anecdotal books, magazines, instructional or documentary videos, and internet resources for amateur or professional horse trainers (Davison, 1995; Morris, 1990; Podhajsky, 1965/1967). Books can be found on dressage (Holzel, Holzel & Plewa, 1995, Podhajsky, 1965/1967; Swift 1985), jumping (Stoneridge, 1989), eventing (Green, 1986), as well as on veterinary care or breeding (Giffin & Gore, 1989; Kidd, 1986). The Howell Equestrian Library is one of several companies that offer a collection of books on all aspects of horsemanship (show tips, training tips, course designing, etc.). Magazines cover a wide range of disciplines too, such as Western Riding (Western Horse, Horse & Rider, Quarter Horse Journal), Dressage (Dressage Today), and English riding (Practical Horseman, Equus, Horse Illustrated).

There are very few scientific studies in the equestrian discipline and even fewer looking at dressage. Some of the scientific studies done, have looked at injuries and horse-related accidents. Because injuries are prevalent in a high-risk sport like horseback riding, coaches need good communication skills to help prevent accidents from occurring. Some researchers therefore, find it important to try and find out which accidents are or are not preventable. Bixby-Hammet and Brooks (1990) summarised 31 studies of injuries and deaths associated with horseback riding. Causes of riding accidents were documented and findings showed several influential factors such as horse behaviour, rider error, and inadequate riding experience as well as inadequate supervision.

Other studies have looked at the physiological, kinematic and bio-mechanic aspects of riding horses and of riders (Berno, 1992; Clayton, 1991; Schils, 1991). For example, a study of the bio-mechanics of the locomotion of elite competitive athletic horses looked at the walk, trot, and canter stride-timing characteristics of Grand Prix level dressage horses (Deuel & Park, 1990).

In one of the most recent studies in horseback riding, the researcher sent questionnaires to seventy-seven national equestrian-related organizations to develop competency guidelines for individuals providing coaching and instruction in equestrian sports (Harris, 1995). However, the study was statistically weak because answers from only 14 respondents were used.

Recently, The Canadian Horse Industry Research Study (Evans, 1998) was commissioned by the Canadian Equestrian Federation (CEF) as a part of the CEF Change Committee project, to develop a profile of the Canadian horse owners, riders, and drivers of the Canadian horse herd, and of the potential market growth sectors. Responses from the questionnaires and surveys designed to look at the Canadian horse industry showed that it was important to promote equestrian sports to the general public. As well, people felt the need to develop Canadian standards for coaches and instructors as well as developing Canadian standards for public riding stables and athlete development programs. These statements contribute to the relevance of studying the communication processes in dressage since it must be considered as an important issue to include in the development of standards and programs to fulfil the needs of coaches, instructors, and athletes.

Literature on communication

Communication is a concept that is difficult to define and, as indicated by Littlejohn (1999) “Scholars have made many attempts to define communication, but establishing a single definition has proven impossible and may not be very fruitful.” (p. 6). For Burgoon, Hunsaker & Dawson (1994) the communication process is a “dynamic process; a transaction that will affect both the sender and the receiver, and that communication is a personal, symbolic, process requiring a shared code or codes of abstractions.” (p. 19). The following definition implies that communication is successful: “Communication is the verbal interchange of a thought or idea”. However, if communication was just the transmission of information, then communication would not imply reception or understanding (Littlejohn, 1999, p. 7).

Attempting to make sense of the different definitions, Dance (1970) presented three dimensions that seemed to form the basics of communication. The first dimension is the level of observation, or abstractness. In other words, communication can be defined in two very different ways: in general and broad terms or in very narrow and specific terms. The second dimension is intentionality. Definitions can include purposeful messages sent and received to consciously affect the receiver’s behavior, while other definitions may not. The third dimension is normative judgement. This means that some definitions might have a statement of ‘success or accuracy’.

A more recent attempt to clarify what communication is, was done by Littlejohn (1999) who used a figure (see Figure 1) consisting of nine communicative behaviors that contrasted three perspectives to communication. The columns refer to the source of behavior and answers the question, ‘Must communication (verbal and nonverbal) be

intentional?’ and the rows refer to whether the behavior is received and answers the question, ‘Must communication be received?’

RECEIVER BEHAVIOR	SOURCE BEHAVIOR		
	Unintentional Behavior (Symptoms)	Intentional Behavior	
		Nonverbal	Verbal
Not received	1A Nonperceived symptomatic behavior	2A Nonperceived nonverbal messages	3A Nonperceived verbal messages
Received incidentally	1B Incidentally perceived symptoms	2B Incidental nonverbal messages	3B Incidental verbal messages
Attended to	1C Symptoms attended to	2C Nonverbal messages attended to	3C Verbal messages attended to

Figure 1: Communication-related behaviors (Littlejohn, 1999, p. 8)

The sender-receiver model by Motley (2B, 2C, 3B, 3C) states that communication should be restricted to intentional behaviors (verbal and non-verbal) directed to other people who attend to or incidentally receive them (Motley, 1990; Motley, 1991).

An example of someone sending an intentional nonverbal message (2B) that was incidentally received, would be in an instance where a student speaking with the professor didn't really realize that a colleague was signaling to them, and yet only later realized that the colleague was trying to get their attention. An intentional (and incidental) verbal message (3B) would be your supervisor telling you in class to start working on your thesis. You know he's talking to you, but since you were busy concentrating on reading over a paper, you only realized later on that he was trying to talk to you. A straightforward example of an intentional nonverbal message that was

attended to, (2C) is waving back to a friend who caught your attention across the classroom. A verbal message attended to (3C) would be a group of students listening to a professor lecturing about the upcoming final exam.

The receiver-model (1B, 1C, 2B, 2C, 3B, 3C) by Peter Andersen (1991) also presents communication as intentional verbal and non-verbal behavior, consistent with Motley, but also unintentional (symptomatic) behaviors (as opposed to Motley), which are incidentally attended to and received. For example, an incidentally perceived symptom (1B) would be if a student yawned in class and the professor didn't pay attention at first, but only later realized that the student might have been tired. A symptom attended to, would be (1C) a student yawning (the symptom) in class and the professor asking if they were bored.

Thirdly, the communication behavior model by Clevenger (1991) includes all intentional and unintentional behaviors (except 1A). This model agrees with Motley & Anderson, but since "intentionally" is, according to Clevenger hard to determine, communication should include both intentional sending and receiving. For example, if you waved at someone and they didn't see you, that would be a non-perceived nonverbal message (2A). Or if you tried to talk to your friend in a loud hall who didn't see you trying to talk and therefore, didn't acknowledge the fact that you were trying to communicate, would be an example of a non-perceived verbal message (3A).

Communication in sport

The literature on communication in sport can be divided into three categories. First, several authors have published non-empirical papers on coach-athlete interactions. These studies addressed topics such as leadership styles on team performance (e.g.,

Henschen & McGowan, 1988), psychological factors and athletic success (e.g., Carron & Chelladurai, 1978; Poitras, 1997), positive communication (e.g., Campbell, 1985), understanding and improving coach-athlete communication (e.g., Shelley & Sherman, 1997).

Second, there are researchers who have concentrated on specific components of the communication process instead of the process as a whole. Using systematic observation instruments, these authors have looked at the frequency and percentage of specific coach behaviors during training sessions and competitions. For example, Rupert and Buschner (1989) found that baseball coaches at the secondary school level devoted 48% of the practice time to silence, 25% to instruction, 7% to management, and 10% to hustle, praise, and scold. (For an exhaustive search of these studies, see Trudel & Gilbert, 1995). Referring to Littlejohn's communication-related behaviors (Figure 1), these studies might fit into the sender-receiver model. However, one caveat is that since the focus was on coaching behaviors, the authors did not check whether the athletes received the behaviors or not.

As well, researchers have used questionnaires to investigate factors that may influence athlete's perceptions and evaluations of coaching behaviors. For example, Kenow & Williams (1999) used the Coaching Behavior Questionnaire (CBQ) and found that trait anxiety, state cognitive and somatic anxiety, state self-confidence, and compatibility were related to athlete's evaluations of coaching behaviors.

And thirdly, to our knowledge, there are very few studies looking at the coach-athlete communication in a real setting from a global perspective, that is, looking at the athlete's and the coach's point of views as opposed to using questionnaires from the

athletes. Culver (1999) looked at the communication process in a junior national alpine ski team. Factors such as the ability to communicate, the knowledge level, the attitudes of the coaches and athletes as well as the culture, and the pressure from the organization influenced the communication process. Culver's study also found that unintentional coaching behaviors had the potential to jeopardize the communication between the coach and the athlete.

In another study conducted in a karate club, Larocque (1999) also looked at the perspectives of both the coach and the athlete. Larocque found that the instructor's philosophy of what should be the practice of karate (competitive or not) had a tremendous influence on the verbal and non-verbal communication process between the athletes and the instructor.

Specifically for the context of sport, Fuoss and Troppmann (1981) presented a model to explain the coach-athlete communication process (see Figure 2). Their definition of communication as "the transmission and the exchange of information conveying meaning to two or more people" (p. 116), seems to fit the sender-receiver model explained earlier in Littlejohn's table.

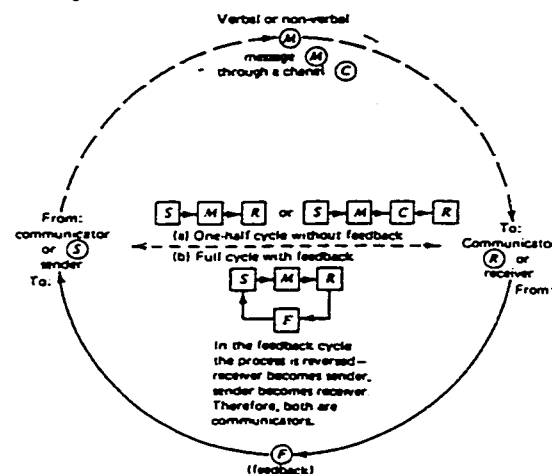


Figure 2: Model of a two-way circular process of communication (Fuoss & Troppmann, 1981)

Here, a communication situation involves the production of a message by someone, the sender-source (or communicator) who sends a message that is received and interpreted by the receiver-interpreter, who becomes a source when sending a message back to the original sender, who in turn becomes the receiver. Encoding and decoding exists within both communicators. In this model, the three basic elements in the communication process are the sender (S) who transmits a message (M) through a channel to the receiver (R) who interprets the message. Effective communication is normally a two-way process because the receiver's feedback must reach the sender to finish the communication process, in order to let the sender know that the original message was interpreted and the receiver has reactions. In the feedback cycle, the process is reversed; where the receiver becomes the sender and vice versa.

For effective communication, Fuoss and Troppmann (1981) stated four factors that must be considered within the source or sender, (the encoder of the original message), because each are involved in both encoding and decoding messages. The first factor, communication skills, states that there are five verbal communication skills (writing, speaking, reading, listening, and thought). The level of someone's communication skills affects one's ability to analyze one's own purposes and intentions as well as one's ability to encode messages that express what one intends. The second factor, attitudes, affects both the source and the receiver. The attitudes of a communication source will affect the way in which one communicates. Here, attitudes affect one's self-image as well as one's attitude towards a sender. This can greatly influence the communication process. The third factor, knowledge level, is paramount to successful communication. Here, the quantity and quality of knowledge a sender has

about a subject will affect their message. One cannot communicate what one does not know, nor have optimal effectiveness if unfamiliar with the content material. And lastly, the authors state that the position somebody has within their socio-cultural system affects the process of communication. Cultural beliefs and values, behaviors, and philosophies are the components of the socio-cultural system. In other words, “where the coach or athlete is coming from” (p. 129) affects communication.

Summary

In brief, the literature on communication is extensive, but there are few models that explain the communication process in sport even if “there is probably no single element of coaching more important than communication” (Spink, 1991, p. 37). The model proposed by Fuoss & Troppmann (1981) is based on a dyadic coach-athlete relationship. As well, most of the empirical studies reviewed here looked at the coach as the sender of messages. Finally, in our literature search, very few studies were found that looked at the role of the athlete in the communication process as a sender and receiver of messages. Even fewer studies have considered looking at the roles of the coach and the athlete as a sender and receiver of messages.

Regarding the equestrian sport dressage, there are very few empirical studies on the coaching aspect, even though people in charge of its development are considering restructuring programs for coaches and riders. Information on the communication process will definitely contribute to the literature and athlete development programs since “Communication theory is also empowering because it can suggest ideas about how to intervene or institute change” (Littlejohn, 1999, p. 19). But for those who are familiar with dressage, the dyadic model of communication proposed by Fuoss & Troppmann

might be considered incomplete since three actors are involved (coach, rider, and horse). The goal of this research was then to investigate the communication process in dressage by looking at both the coaches' and the riders' perspectives.

Because communication is a dynamic process, meaning it has no easily defined beginning or end; it is ideally studied while it is actually occurring (Burgoon et al., 1994). Therefore, the inductive approach adopted in this thesis resulted in the development of a project consisting of three consecutive phases from which we were able to study the communication processes in dressage.

Phase One

The purpose of the first phase was simply to explore what the communication processes in dressage were, as well as to see if the Fuoss and Troppmann model of communication could be applied and/or modified for dressage.

Method

Participants

One certified CEF (Canadian Equestrian Federation) Level 2 dressage coach and two dressage riders from a stable near Montreal, Quebec, were involved in this phase (See Appendix E). Both students were deemed suitable participants for this phase of the study as both had some experience in dressage, having competed at Basic 2 and Basic 3 level dressage according to the requirements of the Canadian Dressage Owners and Riders Association (CADORA) (See Appendix D).

Data collection

Two interviews were conducted with the coach who discussed the definition of dressage and personal approaches to coaching riders and training horses. Then, two data

collection sessions followed with each rider. Each session consisted of videotaping one lesson of each rider, followed by separate interviews with the coach and the rider. In the interviews, the coach and rider, separately, chose an aspect from the lesson and described the coach-athlete interaction.

Data analysis

After the interviews were transcribed, each were read and notes based on the communication process were made. Labels were then used to indicate the specific actors who contributed to or participated in the interaction during the lessons. As well, pathways of communication were also labeled.

Results

Results from the transcribed interviews and from observing videotaped lessons revealed that the communication process in dressage was quite complex. Based on the information that was gathered, the communication process in dressage was better represented by the model that we developed (see Figure 3) than the two-way model proposed by Fuoss and Troppmann presented earlier in this thesis.

Channels of communication:

Auditory
Visual
Verbal
Kinesthetic

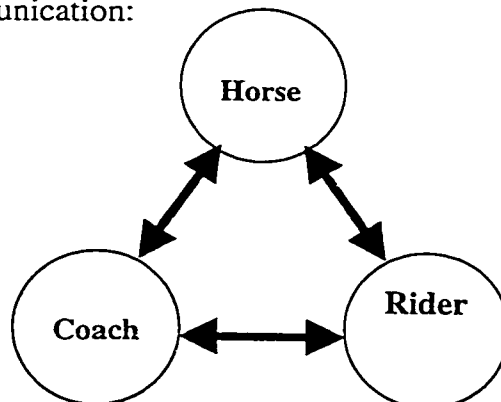


Figure 3: Model of Communication in Dressage

First, this new model is composed of three actors: the coach, the rider, and the horse. From the interviews, we found that the role of the horse was more important than we initially thought. For example, in these quotes, the coach underlined the role of the horse when teaching dressage to riders.

...the horse has to know it in order for the rider to feel what it feels like...so you try to get them on an advanced horse (Coach 1, Phase 1).

...well, the horse I'm riding right now is what is called a schoolmaster, from my point of view. Because I bought a horse that knows how to do a lot of things that I don't know how to do yet, yet with the idea that my learning process will be accelerated (Rider 1, Phase 1).

Second, the channels of communication used to send messages were not only the verbal and visual (non-verbal) messages, but also included the auditory and the kinesthetic channels. An example of an auditory channel would be signals such as the swishing of the horse's tail. And since the object of dressage requires the ability of the rider to 'feel' i.e., what the horse is 'saying', many messages were kinesthetic.

You're expected to feel more as you become more experienced. And if you don't teach feeling all the time, then often you see people who don't feel, they keep the horse very mechanical (Coach 1, Phase 1).

Finally, the following two examples from the interviews with the coach and riders illustrated the dynamics of the communication process in dressage lessons.

Example 1:

...he (the horse) was balking and he didn't want to go forward, he was backing up. And why? Because I was physically afraid (Rider 2, Phase 1).

I wasn't able to move him (the horse) as forward as quickly as the instructor would have asked. Because of this fear that this huge animal is saying no I don't want to do this and I'll rear or do something that's going to scare you or that's going to hurt you. And because I'm not a good enough rider at this point to say it doesn't matter (Rider 2, Phase 1).

In this situation, the rider, who was tense (kinesthetic message to horse), was having difficulty with the horse balking and backing up (kinesthetic message to rider). It also served as visual information to the coach who was observing the situation.

She (the rider) wasn't sending the horse forward. The most important thing. So the horse was at the canter, and we let her canter, but we made her increase the rhythm, the forward rhythm of the canter. And by increasing it and by keeping her quiet and then asking her to bend the horse to the right slowly, bend to the left, and loosening up the neck. We were able to prove that the horse went forward cantering quietly (Coach 1, Phase 1).

Example 2:

In another lesson with the same horse and rider, other communication processes were illustrated. Sometimes the coach will school the horse in times when the rider is unable to do so herself/himself.

...had it been the instructor on my horse, she wouldn't have backed off. Because she's not afraid of the consequences...she would have kicked him forward and simply the different feel of my body on him versus her body on him, he would have probably gone forward, or what he would have tried, she wouldn't have cared anyway. Because she knows because she's ridden him many times and she knows that to get out of this situation the thing to do is to move him forward. So yes, she's using her knowledge and experience on my horse to tell me what to do (Rider 2, Phase 1).

With the coach able to work the horse through the problem, and then the rider getting back on again, is a teaching tool because it helps the rider learn what needs to be done and what it feels like after the horse has been properly schooled.

Phase Two

Based on the findings from the first phase, we realized that we needed to know more about the context of dressage to better understand the communication processes. The purpose of the second phase was to gather more information about some topics addressed in Phase One, (e.g., the importance of the horse's role, the kinesthetic channel),

and also on the rules, norms, and values of dressage culture. These aspects are relevant to studying communication as cultures are composed of specific attitudes and philosophies reflected in routine activities and ways that people interact with each other (Powers, 1995).

Method

Participants

The participants were five people (two coaches and three riders) who had been riding between 25-35 years and specifically involved in dressage for at least twelve years. Three of these people were from the same stable (one dressage coach and two riders) with the remaining two participants (one dressage coach and one rider) from another stable (See Appendix E).

Data collection

Collecting data involved travelling to different stables and observing and videotaping dressage lessons. After the lessons, semi-structured interviews (between 30-60 minutes each) were done with each coach and rider. Questions focused on “norms, values, understanding and taken-for-granted rules of behavior of a group or society” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 28). More specifically, the topics discussed were the definition of dressage and a description of the sport, including how it involved the horse and rider. For example, one question was, “How would you describe what dressage is?” This led into the goal of dressage and how this affected the type of horse trained in dressage. Participants also spoke about how dressage influenced their attitudes and approaches towards teaching or training horses and people. Riders were asked how they were taught dressage and the coaches described approaches to coaching dressage. This was

illustrated with examples of what the coach would do in a situation where a student had difficulty.

Thus, questions asked during the interviews were designed to elicit from the interviewees, specific and general aspects pertaining to the process of communication in dressage. Answers requiring elaboration or clarification were signaled with probes, a strategy supported by Rubin and Rubin (1995) who stated that probes encourage longer and more detailed answers.

Data analysis

According to Rubin and Rubin (1995) this stage of qualitative analysis is to “hear the meaning of what is said” (p. 226). Its purpose is to discover themes and concepts that build toward an overall explanation of the topic in question. After transcription, the interviews were read and then coded using the questions of the interviews as a guide to find different themes or concepts to discover meaning in the data. Rubin & Rubin (1995) recommended labeling concepts and core ideas that interviewees spoke about on the interview transcripts with the purpose of being able to combine ideas to gradually build a theory grounded in the data. This allowed me to interpret and discover what the dressage riders said about their sport.

Results

Analysis of the transcribed interviews revealed several related concepts and themes that were grouped and presented in two figures. The first figure (Figure 4) illustrates, ‘What is dressage?’ This is elaborated with aspects that contributed to the culture of dressage and elements that described how interviewees viewed their sport. The second figure (Figure 5) looks at different aspects of the teaching process in dressage.

The culture of dressage

The starting point [1]. One interesting finding from these interviews was that riders did not start with dressage, but in hunter jumper or mainly jumping. Two interviewees had evented for several years before changing to dressage, and the other three had started with hunter jumper.

...because what I liked to do was eventing...(Rider 1, Phase 2)

I did hunter jumper as a teenager, which was a lot of fun as a teenager (Rider 4, Phase 2).

I started like everybody else in the province, you start jumping (Coach 2, Phase 2).

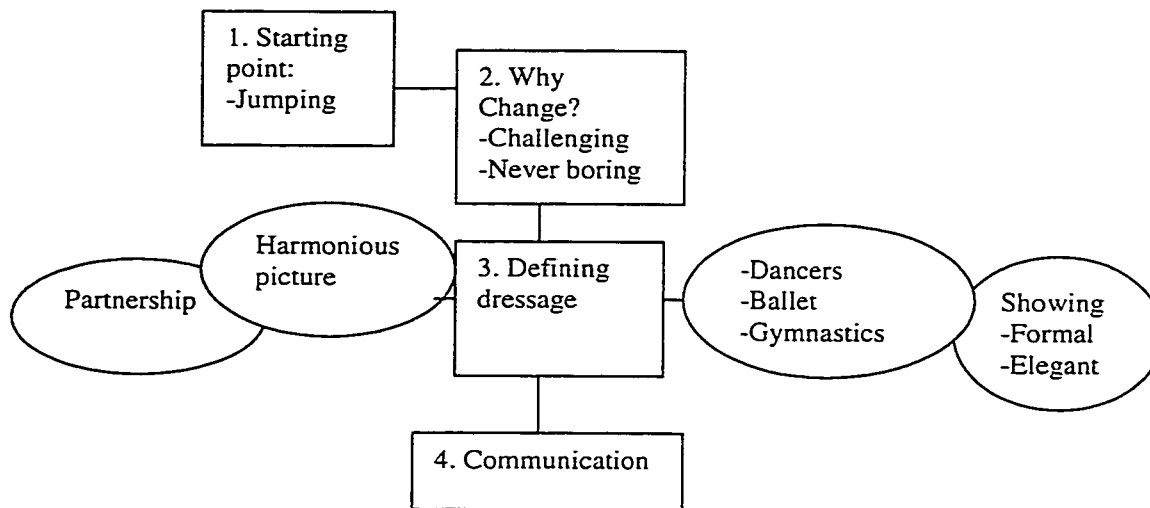


Figure 4: What is Dressage?

Why change to dressage? [2]. After having done jumping for awhile, interviewees had different reasons for changing into dressage:

...when I took it up again, (riding), I really wanted to do something different. I was looking for a new challenge and so dressage came up as an option and as soon as I started taking my first lessons I became bitten by the dressage bug and that was it, I never stopped...I am not interested in jumping (Rider 4, Phase 2).

...it seems that the ultimate goal is Grand Prix but there is always so much to be perfected and refined, that it's never boring (Coach 2, Phase 2).

Defining dressage [3] After having been in dressage for a few years, each interviewee was able to explain how they perceived dressage, by starting to define it with the literal meaning of the term.

Dressage is the systematic training of the horse, and every day counts. There was a really definite system, how to progress with the horse and how to train...(Coach 2, Phase 2).

Dressage is the training of the horse so that as a rider or as a partnership, we can reproduce what the horse does naturally in the wild. We try to capture the most elegant movements of the horse, what he's capable of doing, and we try to install through the learning process, we try to be able to control that so we can reproduce it in the show ring. So it's a step by step methodical training of the horse toward that goal (Rider 4, Phase 2).

To further illustrate what dressage was, some compared it with other artistic disciplines.

...the way I see it, is to maximize the potential of its own body and the way it uses its own body...it's almost like gymnastics for horses...getting the muscles built up and getting really coordinated and getting the body in balance (Rider 1, Phase 2).

It's the kind of suppleness and flexibility that a gymnast needs, but also the same kind that a dancer needs. You need strength, but you always want there to be grace. And with the greater suppleness and flexibility, the movements, as they become more and more complicated, still can be executed with a fluidness and grace (Rider 1, Phase 2).

At Grand Prix level is where the horse does everything required at the Olympic level...to make him become like a gymnast at the Olympic level (Coach 2, Phase 2).

Interviewees used the following aspects to illustrate their point about what dressage was.

...a horse that is all decked out and braided and a rider in full dress is quite an elegant picture and it's kind of nice to see (Rider 4, Phase 2).

So a horse that is swishing its tail or kicking out does not present that harmonious picture that we strive for, that that's what we want to have, a harmonious picture, horse and rider together as one (Rider 4, Phase 2).

Even so, for horses that are not pre-dispositioned to do higher levels of dressage, the training can still be beneficial.

...they don't have the ability to do some of the work like passage which is a difficult exercise and requires great collection, so those horses may not be able to progress beyond Medium level of dressage, and yet the work that they've done can still benefit them physically and mentally (Rider 4, Phase 2).

Dressage is communication [4]. When defining dressage, coaches and riders talked about the process of communication between the riders and the horses.

Communication is always occurring when riding, and when the horse doesn't understand, miscommunication often occurs.

...are you helping him by sitting correctly and not incorrectly, are you giving clear, definite signals to him, are you communicating, really, correctly. And if you don't get it right and the horse gets frustrated because he doesn't understand your signals or you get frustrated because he's not listening to your signals then you have to go back to square one and go why is this not working? What is not working? What am I doing wrong that he is not understanding what it is I'm trying to get across? And because it's an animal and he doesn't understand, you have to find a way to get your message to him without him losing his cool... (Rider 5, Phase 2).

...you know we tend to be a little hard on the horse if he doesn't understand, well sometimes the horse doesn't do it because he doesn't understand. And sometimes people forget to actually take a step back and say, "Well is it possible that he doesn't understand?" So I try to give the horse the benefit of the doubt that if I'm asking for something and he's not doing it, maybe it's because he doesn't know what I want or maybe he's confused maybe I'm not asking the right way (Rider 4, Phase 2).

The teaching process in dressage

Communication in dressage occurs between a horse and a rider through different channels, where one of the more important ones is the kinesthetic channel. As illustrated in Figure 5, riders need to learn about 'feel' if they want to do dressage [1].

Riding is feeling...A rider is good when it has good feel...a rider has good feel when it has a good seat...and can process what it feels...Seat, the way to sit on the horse in a relaxed way. OK. And then you feel the horse's back, the hindlegs, the bit, you feel everything. If you don't have a good seat, you're just trying to hang on to the horse, you're so busy just trying to hang onto the horse you're not, thinking about feeling, because you're trying to not fall off...so when the seat is very, very good and the rider is very relaxed and then you can start feeling the horse. The best way for the rider to feel the horse is to have a trained horse that does it. Because it gives you the proper feel of how things should be (Coach 2, Phase 2).

This is how one coach taught 'feeling'.

Did you feel that horse go forward? Yes I did. Now I want you to collect the horse with your seat. Not with your hands. And I always ask them, did you feel that. Sometimes they say no they didn't so we keep working until they do feel it. If they don't then I say I'd like you to walk and halt the horse with your seat. Then when they feel it you have to move on to trot. And sometimes they'll say no, I'd like to just do this walk a little bit more. OK. And then they get bored with it and feel that they understand it, then let's try it at trot. So they try it at trot and sometimes they aren't able to coordinate their hand with their leg. So I work on a smaller circle just to try to keep the horse round on a smaller circle. And I'll have them work around me. Then if they really don't get it sometimes I'll even physically take the reins in my hand and show them the feeling of the contact and I'll get them on one end of the rein and I'll have the bit on the other and I'll work both ends with my hands to try and teach them the feel...feel the contact, when to give, feel how you don't hang, feel how you don't go so quickly, because some people just go yank, yank, yank, yank, so no, no can't do that (Coach 1, Phase 2).

This rider described how she was taught to 'feel'.

One of the things was I had my horse in training with this second coach and she would ride the horse first and say, 'now, do you feel this?' 'can you feel the horse swing, or can you feel him pushing you', and I'd say, 'yes, I think I do'. Then you would ride for half an hour and clearly with my riding, the horse would lose the swing. And she'd say, 'let me get on for a minute, I'm going to straighten him out', so she would get on and correct a movement' either get him rounder or more on the outside rein, or whatever and then I would get back on and she would say, 'quickly, now can you feel the difference? Can you feel that? And you'd say, 'oh yeah, I CAN feel that' (Rider 5, Phase 2).

To 'feel' properly also involves timing and coordination.

They have to be able to co-ordinate feeling and timing in order to, again the quality of the gaits...Co-ordinate their aids. If they're too slow, then they're going to miss it. If they're collecting a canter and you don't co-ordinate your

back and your legs, the horse will drop off in your hands the horse will drop off into trot (Coach 1, Phase 2).

Data from this second phase of the project and also from the first phase told us that in the teaching-learning process in dressage, riders benefited from two teachers: the coach [2] and their ‘assistant’, the horse [5].

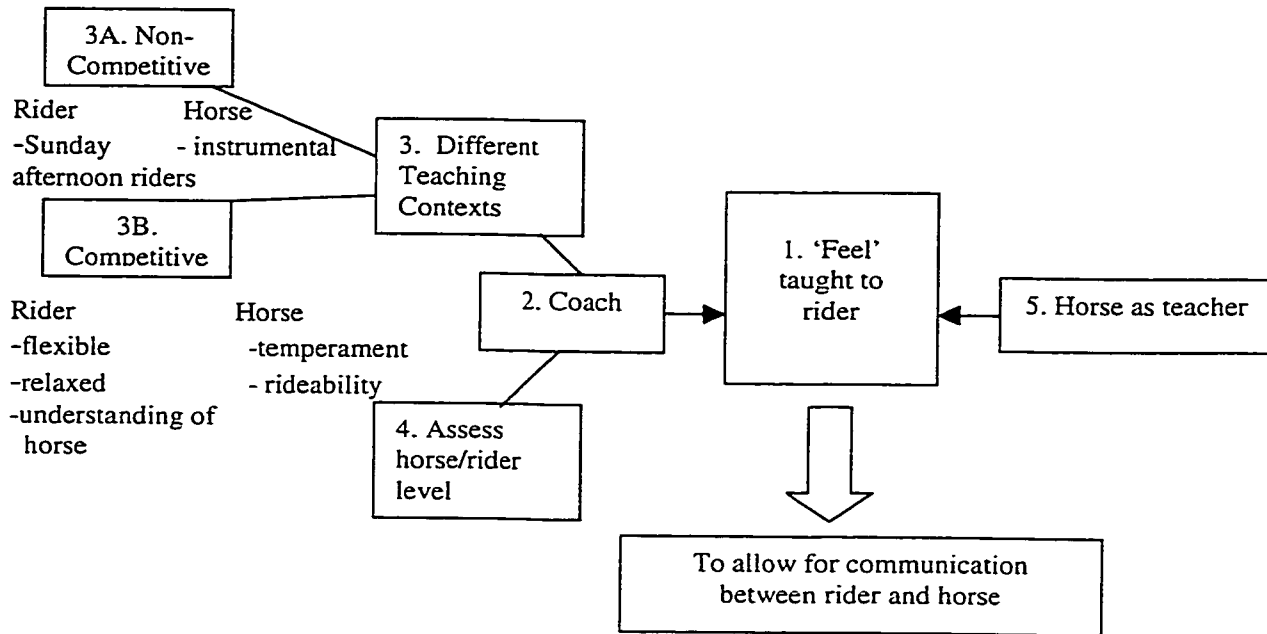


Figure 5: Teaching process in dressage

At this point in the study, we found that the coach had two important roles. One role was to differentiate between the teaching contexts to accommodate the needs of non-competitive riders [3A] and competitive riders [3B] within the two different teaching contexts [3].

I have different students and they have different expectations. And I have learned to understand their expectation and I accommodate what they want, OK? I used to be, my personality is not my student’s personality, and I’m a show rider, I want to be as good as I can, and I am a perfectionist. I aspire to a very high level, but I cannot expect the same from the student...You have to learn what the student really wants and go with that student. And a lot of them ride because they like to ride...you have to recognize that (Coach 2, Phase 2).

So you have to make sure you keep your teaching in tune with what they want to learn...So you have to look at the students that really want to do a lot, try to teach them a little bit. But know the ones you can really push, I guess that's what I'm trying to say and know the ones that you can't (Coach 1, Phase 1).

It depends on their personal goals. Some people just want to be able to ride a horse on the trails. Some people want to just jump a horse. Some people would like to do dressage. Some people want to go to the Olympics (Coach 1, Phase 1).

Within each of these two contexts, riders and horses had different characteristics.

Non-competing riders [3A]. For some riders, dressage was a recreational sport.

And so in this context, the student's needs and goals were also important. Teaching was keeping the students learning enough about riding without emphasizing and focusing on the development of the horse as far as dressage training.

In a situation like the ladies yesterday, who come once a week and they're older ladies, and they enjoy their lesson and they don't want to do any more than that, I try to get rhythm from the horse, from them so they keep the horse forward into their hand and I try to develop their position at the same time...And that's about as much as I would do because if you try to do too much you just discourage them (Coach 1, Phase 2).

Non-competing horses [3A]. Because of the needs of a non-competing rider, the horse's role changed from a 'dressage horse in training' to one that was more instrumental. That is, they were used to fulfill the requirements of the riders who rode for pleasure. In this situation, it was not as important for the horse to be a nice moving horse with dressage potential.

Competing riders [3B]. The riders who trained in dressage needed to be not only physically strong in order to work the horses properly, but needed to understand the horse, which included having a good 'feel' so that they could communicate properly using their seat, legs, and reins. Before this was accomplished with the horse however,

riders needed to be trained first before they could ask the horse to re-balance itself, which required physical work.

You have to build up the strength and you don't have to be an atlas but you have to build up the strength so that the muscles can produce the maximum they're capable of doing and sustaining it. It's not a question of doing the motion for five minutes. Can you do it for either a test or a lesson if you have a three quarters of an hour lesson and you're riding at a higher level, you don't have a walk break... So you have to be fit. Because if you're not fit then you don't guide the horse correctly and then you can cause him to have problems. (Rider 5, Phase 2).

...it's the hardest work...it takes a lot of physical strength, to get something that much bigger than you are, that doesn't have wheels and an engine, to move the way you want it to, without doing the wrong things, like hauling its head around or whatever. It requires a lot of balance and flexibility and subtle movement on the rider's part... (Rider 1, Phase 2).

After some years of training, riders came to develop their own philosophy towards riding. In order to ride that well, it may become, to some riders, an equestrian art.

I think if anything it's taught me more patience. Whereas dressage you, you sometimes are not quiet, but you still have to be patient whereas the hunter world, if you, um, if you didn't get it right, then you just jump a few fences and finally got through three fences in a row, OK fine onto the next. In dressage it's not like that because you can get the movement right three times in a row for four days, but that fifth day, then you go back to, oh, can't do it anymore, so then you have to start again and that I think is where the patience really kicks in (Rider 5, Phase 2).

I think I've learned to become much more sensitive to the horse's perspective, by working in dressage because it is a very slow process. And sometimes we have to be happy with small, small steps forward. So I've learned to be a little more philosophical about it. Sometimes we get into a thing where, if you have a bad ride or the horse, things aren't going well, then you get all caught up in this, in a negative mindset. And I've learned that it's part of the process, part of the cycle and that a bad ride is just that. It's a bad ride and tomorrow could be better and sometimes when we think we're really not doing well we just need someone else's perspective to either reassure us or to help us get back on the right track. So I've learned to be more patient and to be more understanding of the horse and to be more sensitive to how much you can reasonably ask of a horse and expect him to do (Rider 4, Phase 2).

Competing horses [3B]. One goal of dressage training is to make a horse rideable that is, easier to ride. Another related objective is to maximize the potential of the dressage horse.

...the goal of the horse is to have self-carriage at the end of it... That the horse is able to do his gaits without the support of the rider... with the minimal of contact and the minimal of back and seat and legs. So you're working toward getting them to be more supple, more supple all the time and rideability (Coach 1, Phase 2).

You just like to see the animal look as attractive as possible. What can that animal produce to make himself look even better, even more elegant, more graceful, more beautiful, more powerful, just what can that animal produce best of itself? (Rider 3, Phase 2)

And because of the physical demands of the sport, the mental aspect of dressage was important.

I think to me, the number one criteria, if choosing a dressage horse has to be temperament. Because you have the most outstanding mover, a horse that's extremely athletic and has phenomenal movement but if the horse doesn't have the temperament to do that type of work that you're asking him to do then you won't get anywhere with him. So I think that temperament has to be first because if the horse wants to do it, then he'll do, he'll work to his potential, if the horse doesn't want to do it. So you need a horse for dressage that's patient, that doesn't mind repetitious exercises, and it's very hard work to be a dressage horse... Once you get to the higher levels, you have to have a horse that can go past that and not get caught up in resistance and not wanting to do it or a horse that's maybe a little lazy or just not a generous natured horse. So temperament is number one. And movement is next, and not vice versa (Rider 4, Phase 2).

Temperament is extremely important because if a horse is not willing, or for some reason is too nervous... it's very difficult to train them. You have to have their cooperation and if a horse cannot focus well and is not attentive to the rider and you cannot work with the horse, everything becomes extremely difficult. You can achieve it, but you'll never have good success with the horse because the unwillingness or the temperament will always show in the movements (Rider 5, Phase 2).

...he wants to, so that he's happy doing the work because it's not fun to ride a dressage horse that doesn't want to do it for you. That's when you have your best moments in riding (Rider 4, Phase 2).

The second role of the coach was to observe the horse and the rider. This was needed in order to develop an effective horse/rider team.

How you get to the best I can for a rider is eventually to train the horse progressively with the owner of the horse and if my eye is good, I will tell the rider, this is what you're looking for, this is the height, this is the feel, this is the rhythm try to feel that and concentrate and that's the feel (Coach 2, Phase 2).

A rider noted the importance of having her coach on the ground watching while she worked her horse.

...what is really important is having the coach on the ground to watch what you're doing and tell you when you've got it right, because ultimately what you want to be able to do is FEEL when you've got it right (Rider 1, Phase 2).

Horses as teachers [5]. Though coaches had important roles in the teaching-learning process in dressage, the aspect of teaching riding and 'feeling' was left to the 'assistant', the school horse.

As a beginner rider, I would put the rider on a horse that's able to walk, trot, and canter without changing its rhythm (Coach 1, Phase 1).

However, for optimal learning, the horse needed to be suitable for the level of the rider.

If you're a Basic rider and your horse is Basic you can't go any further. You cannot learn Medium. You're not even going to know the feeling on how to do a half-pass, you won't know the correct feeling. You will know that you're supposed to try and get a three-track movement, but unless you have felt a correct three-track movement, you won't know it's right and you won't be able to teach it right (Rider 3, Phase 2).

One interviewee described how the horse taught her when she was learning higher dressage movements.

You know if you're all over the place and you're moving all over the place, then it's not fair because how is the horse supposed to know which of the aids he's supposed to listen to? And I think that, the day it became very clear to me was when I rode her Grand Prix horse for the first time and when I started to canter, he started doing flying changes every stride, he was doing one tempis all over the

place and I couldn't stop him. And I realized that the reason he was doing that was because I was moving. And every time I twitched in the saddle, he'd change (Rider 4, Phase 2).

Summary

In summary, the first phase of this study found that the communication processes in dressage are complex and involves three actors: the coach, the rider, and the horse. We also found that the role of the horse was very important and that the pathways of communication used in dressage were visual, verbal, auditory, and also kinesthetic. The second phase told us more about dressage culture and how it influenced teaching (coaches) and learning dressage (riders). For example, in a situation with an advanced rider and a young horse, the coach's role was to help the rider school the horse with the long term goal of developing this horse to the higher levels in dressage. In a recreational situation however, the horse's role was instrumental. In other words, the rider's needs (riding for fun) would take precedence over the horse's development, with the focus being on the rider and not the horse. Therefore, the results of the second phase showed that there are specific horse/rider teams in dressage and the teaching process can differ among these different contexts.

"I must not forget to thank the difficult horses, who made my life miserable, but who were better teachers than the well-behaved school horses who raised no problems."

Alois Podhaisky

Phase Three

Because the goal of this study was to learn more about the communication process in dressage, the purpose of the third phase was to analyze the communication processes in different real on-site contexts.

Method

Contexts

Data from the first two phases of this project indicated that there were different levels of riders and horses providing several different possibilities of contexts in which to observe dressage coaching.

...if you have a Medium horse and you're a Basic rider, the Medium horse will teach you Medium. If you're a Medium rider and you have a Basic horse, you can teach it Medium. Because you've already felt the moves, you already know how the horse is supposed to feel underneath you. So it's a case of the more educated partner is the teacher (Rider 5, Phase 2).

		HORSE					
		Green	Basic	Med	FEI	School horse	School master
R I D E R	Beginner	B				A	
	Intermediate	D					C
	Advanced	E			F		

Figure 6. Contexts of Dressage

Figure 6 presents three categories of riders. Basically, beginner riders are learning how to sit on the horse (basic position) and how to use the aids (seat, leg, and rein). Intermediate riders have a better knowledge of the basics and are in the process of refining their aids some more. Should riders wish to, they can start to learn more about dressage training at this stage. Advanced riders know not only the basics, but have more knowledge about dressage training where some riders are able to train horses in dressage.

Once they (the riders) move along, then you can start teaching them how to teach their horse certain things. But that's quite a way. A long way away (Coach 1, Phase 1).

For this project, 'horse' was classified into six categories. In the first category of horse, 'Green', means a young horse with little training either as a dressage horse or as a school horse. The next three categories (Basic, Medium, and FEI) are categories used to classify horses that compete. Finally, there are two categories of horses that are used as a 'teacher': a school horse and a schoolmaster.

These school horses are pretty well trained. Trained that they ride these lines, they keep the same rhythm, they don't have to be tugged, they don't fall into the centre, fall out of the centre... You want to go one way, and they don't go the other way, they know their jobs (Coach 1, Phase 3).

...well, the horse I'm riding right now is what is called a schoolmaster, from my point of view. Because I bought a horse that knows how to do a lot of things that I don't know how to do yet, with the idea that my learning process will be accelerated (Rider 1, Phase 2).

Considering the time needed to study the process of communication for one horse/rider context, it wasn't feasible to collect data for each of the 18 contexts shown in the matrix. The reasons for having chosen the contexts indicated with the letters are as follows. First, we decided to have a variety of contexts among those that were available to us. Second, some situations would not be logical. For example, one would not commonly see a beginner rider on an advanced horse, such as a Medium horse, an FEI horse, nor a schoolmaster. Third, since this study involved collecting data in the natural setting, we had to adapt to the participant's schedule and their time of availability, and not the reverse. Although the number of sessions observed were not equal between the contexts, we were, based on the previous work in the first two phases (which was considerably extensive), confident that the 'profile' depicted for each context was fairly

well represented. This was the case in two instances where the situation became available during the course of data collection, and we found that the information was readily integrated into the existing study.

Participants

Three certified dressage coaches and six dressage riders participated in the third phase of this project. Coach 1 is a certified CEF (Canadian Equestrian Federation) level 2 coach, who for the past 30 years, has worked and continues to do so, with novice riders and advanced riders in dressage, jumping, and eventing, even though the main focus is mostly on dressage. Her two novice students (Rider 5 and Rider 6) had started dressage in the past year and were riding school horses. Coach 2 started in dressage 25 years ago and is now a national Grand Prix dressage rider. Mostly training horses, this coach has been twice named Quebec's Coach and Dressage Athlete of the Year. Her student (Rider 4) has been specifically in dressage for the past 11 years and now competes at the FEI (Federation Equestre Internationale) levels with her horse. Coach 3 is a certified CEF level 3 coach and is involved with the Canadian Equestrian Federation as well as judging. The students (Rider 1, Rider 3, Rider 7) were participating in one of the clinics this coach was giving. Rider 1 is an intermediate rider who primarily did eventing but changed to dressage a couple of years ago after purchasing a 'schoolmaster'. Rider 7 is an advanced rider who also initially evented and then changed to dressage where she has trained, ridden, and competed in dressage for the past 15 years or so. Rider 7 is currently training a 5 year old warmblood. Rider 3 is also on a young horse and has been riding for the past 30 years in various disciplines, but changed to dressage 10 years ago (See Appendix E).

Data collection

Data collection involved going to the stables to observe coaches and videotaping dressage lessons in the different contexts selected. In each lesson, the coach wore a wireless microphone while teaching the student (or in some instances, students). During sessions, I took field notes in order to remember relevant aspects mentioned by either the coaches or the riders. All together, 27 lessons were videotaped.

After each lesson, interviews that lasted around 15-30 minutes were conducted separately with each of the riders and the coach. (In two instances, the riders were unable to do the interviews, whereby, e-mail became the means of correspondence.) Topics discussed in the interviews were based on what occurred in the lessons. Coaches and riders were asked to describe what was worked on specifically during the lesson, and in the process, questions were designed to pick out the elements pertaining to communication. (See Appendix F).

The model of coach-athlete-horse communication that was derived from the first phase of the thesis project (see Figure 3) was presented as a visual tool. Coaches and riders described which elements in the lesson pertained to specific pathways of communication. This also allowed me to see whether the coaches and the riders had similar viewpoints regarding the lesson.

Interviews were then transcribed and analyzed. Eleven video transcripts were done in order to help illustrate and support the differences between the various levels of horses and riders. As well, observation of the videos served to further emphasize or support what was mentioned in the interviews.

Data analysis

I took all data for each horse/rider context (interview transcripts, videotape transcripts, videotapes, field notes from the lessons observed) and took out the elements that pertained to or seemed specific to that context and created files on a word processor. In these files, I listed the general characteristics of each context, as well as some information to support it (using quotes from interviews or video transcripts). This allowed me to make comparisons between contexts as well as looking within each context. For example, beginner riders worked mostly on the basics, however, advanced riders didn't, although at times they went back to work on the basics. In this manner, I was able to study the process of communication between and within contexts.

Validity

The following elements contributed to the validity of this project. First of all, two phases were done in order to know more about dressage culture and the communication processes involved. Secondly, findings from the first phase led to the questions used in the second pilot study to gain a better understanding about the culture of dressage. The findings from the second phase, as in the first, were used to plan more questions for the main project where the goal was to study the processes of communication in more detail so that we could further develop and apply a model of communication in dressage.

There were several methods of data collection used (observations, field notes, videotaping, interviews) in the six different contexts. These methods allowed us to get a deeper study of the communication in dressage; not only the common patterns that seemed to characterize dressage, but also the nuances. This was possible due to the experiences I had in this sport, allowing me to understand the participants as well as to

ask appropriate probes where necessary. As well, most, if not all the participants, showed great interest in the study and were more than willing to speak freely and answer any questions about their lessons.

During data collection and the analysis, I participated in various group meetings where other students, as well as the supervisor, provided feedback about my work. It also gave me the opportunity to discuss the different themes that emerged from the data. We also talked about how they were related and how to present the results.

Results

The following figure (Figure 7) will be used to explain the communication processes for each context.

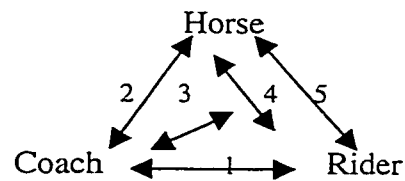


Figure 7: Communication Processes in Dressage

These five arrows represent the direction of communication between the three actors. To show the importance of a pathway of communication, the arrow is thicker. The absence of an arrow indicates that, for the situation observed, the pathway of communication was not seen very often, (however, this doesn't mean that it didn't exist).

Line 1 signifies the exchange between the coach and the rider, such as when the coach gave instructions to the rider, or when the rider asked questions to the coach. Line 2 shows the coach riding/training the horse (in this case, the arrow would be one-way). Line 3 represents the coach observing the interaction between the horse and the rider (Line 4) and Line 5 represents the pathway of communication between the horse and the

rider. In some instances, the emphasis would be on the direction from the rider to the horse (one-way arrow) and in others, the emphasis would be from the horse to the rider.

Beginner riders on school horses [A]

In this context, one coach and two riders (and two horses) were studied. The material used came from 12 videotaped lessons, 12 interviews, and 3 video transcripts.

Figure 8 is a summary of the communication process and the content taught in the lessons.

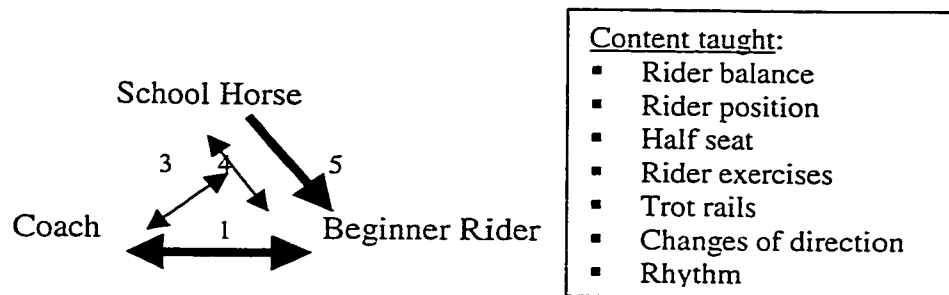


Figure 8: Communication: Beginner riders on school horses

Learning how to ride is no different than learning how to accomplish a new sport. Generally, one can benefit with guidance from someone who can provide a safe learning environment and the proper equipment. Beginner riders need the same thing, a coach and the right horse: a school horse.

What is a school horse? Generally, school horses are older, experienced, and/or retired show horses who won't compete much except for local horse shows that students may wish to participate in. School horses tend to have a good temperament: relaxed, calm, and patient. Riders can be relatively sure that the horse won't make sudden movements that could be frightening. This allows riders to be more comfortable so they can concentrate on learning how to ride.

...with Hanz* (rider's own green horse) I have to concentrate a lot because I know he can spook and if he does I want to stay on...you know, so with a school

horse you don't have to worry as much, so now today (on a school horse) I worked on my position...(Rider 5, Phase 3).

...the horse has a nicer, well, not a nicer trot, but an easier trot (Rider 5, Phase 3).

Because school horses are used for riders to learn the basics, they have a specific job: walk, trot, and canter, and to go around the arena on a loose rein, as well as jumping a few cavallettis. One coach spoke about the school horses she used on a regular basis.

They (the school horses) have to go like a metronome (Coach 1, Phase 3).

...these two horses (school horses) are very easy to canter, I did a lot of canter work and, in their two point position (Coach 1, Phase 3).

Content taught. In these lessons the focus was mostly on rider development, and very little on actual training of the horse. Rider development is comprised of several abilities that together, make an effective and active rider. The coach spoke about what she primarily worked on with beginner riders.

I really like the rider to have a good position because without a balanced position and a position that's straight, it's pretty hard to ask the horse to do the things we want them to do unless you're straight and balanced, not sitting too much to one side or the other, not getting your horse ahead of the motion. So I try to get that organized first (Coach 1, Phase 1).

A good position is needed so riders can develop balance and learn how to use the aids: seat, legs, and reins, without changing their own position on the horse. The coach had the riders do various exercises designed to help the rider find and correct balance.

And now take your jumping position...try to bring your lower leg forward, you don't want to take your jumping position and let your legs go forward...no, it slipped back, did you feel that? Bend your knees. Really bend your knees (Coach 1, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

...so we're going to take our legs off the saddle. Just like this (demonstrates with arms) and back on again. And try to do it without leaning back, and put your legs back on. The reason this is good is many reasons, to get our hips really loose but it makes you aware how you're all without thinking about it, grip on our horses, stifling the motion of our horses, you move with the horse. Your leg and you

thigh breathe, should just breathe on the horse (Coach 1, Phase 3, video transcript 2).

Now just balance in your legs now slowly up the neck, move your hands up and back, so we have to practice that because it's not as good as when you were stationary. Move your hands a little further up her neck, up towards her ears, bend your body (Coach 1, Phase 3, video transcript 2).

Once riders had an idea of what the aids were and how they worked, then the coach had them practice using them for basic control.

I made the trot rails like a fan shape so that the centre of the trot rails were walk rails, but the middle to the end of the trot rails were different distances, depending on the speed and the type of horse that you had, and it made them both try really hard to be accurate. They had to trot the outside of the trot rails so they had to prepare that as they came around the corner, then they had to trot just slightly in and they enjoyed doing that (Coach 1, Phase 3).

I had them (the riders) go over a cavalletti...so these people had to trot over it. ..they learn to just improve their balance as the horse sends them a little higher in the saddle. Also by putting them on the diagonal, it makes them learn about steering. ..it also taught them to coordinate the different gaits. It's one thing to ask a horse to go canter/trot/trot/canter without a jump...so it just makes the whole thing a bit different (Coach 1, Phase 3).

The riders in these lessons noted why 'position' was important; that is, how to sit on the horse.

...by coordinating legs, a little leg and the hands I was able to achieve this control and that worked very well at the canter, that was super (Rider 6, Phase 3).

...and maybe because my ankles move the horse doesn't really understand what I mean, so what I try to do is with the, try to, if I put my left leg on when I go when I turn to the left, if I kept it on longer and steadier, that it would help more, so I think that's something I learned...and my hands too, I worked on that, keeping that quiet (Rider 5, Phase 3).

Even though the emphasis was not on basic riding of the horse, some elementary aspects were covered and presented in a way the riders would understand.

...lots of changes of direction and increase the walk rhythm a bit...loosen the neck a little, bend it right, bend it left...So, now we're going to warm the horse up a little bit the other way, so you'll go around the corner, don't lose the rhythm, did

you feel the rhythm change slightly as you went around the corner? Ok so now whenever you change direction on a horse try to change direction by bringing the shoulder around (Coach 1, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

We're going to work on rhythm tonight. We're going to work on collecting the rhythm a little bit, but keeping the energy and allowing the energy to be out, like a galloping horse. When they gallop they're all strung out, their bodies are long. Compared to if you visualize a collected dressage horse. Collected on the spot. Or a jumper they get a spring organized to jump over the fence (Coach 1, Phase 3, video transcript 2).

Communication process. The arrows in Figure 8 illustrate the main pattern of the communication process in the context with beginner riders on school horses. The thicker two-way arrow (1) between the coach and the rider shows how the focus was mainly on the development of the rider.

So first we teach the student how to work the left part of the student's body, the right part of the student's body, then how to do one thing with one hand and one thing with another and then with their legs (Coach 1, Phase 1).

Yet, the coach always watched (3) the interaction of the horse and rider together (4) paying little, if any, attention to the horse (no arrow between the coach and horse).

These horses are pretty good school horses, so they really, they didn't need me, they listen to the student (Coach 1, Phase 3).

Because the coach relied on the school horses to 'teach' the riders, the one-way arrow (5) is thicker from the horse to the rider, demonstrating the importance of the horse's role.

They're (the students) not fighting with the horse to teach the horse, the horse has already been taught. Now the student is learning from the horse (Coach 1, Phase 3).

They (the school horses) know what they're supposed to do (Coach 1, Phase 3).

An extract from a lesson will be presented as an example of the pattern of the communication process. In this example, the rider was leaning on the horse's neck for

balance while in the half seat at the canter, (an unintentional kinesthetic message from the rider to the horse). As a result, the horse was panicking and running away due to restriction from the rider's hands, (kinesthetic message from the horse to the rider). In this situation, the inexperienced rider did not know how to slow the horse down who 'objected' to being ridden this way.

In order to solve the problem, the instructor showed the rider (1) how to not lean on the horse's neck for balance by having the rider practice freeing up the contact on the horse's mouth, giving the horse total freedom and then less freedom.

I showed him, I physically did it with him, he was the bit, by holding the reins, and I took the other end of the reins and I showed him with my hands and his hands how you work with the bit (Coach 1, Phase 3).

The rider then practiced freeing the horse's mouth (crest release) sitting down at the halt, then in the half seat while working at maintaining balance without his hands. After awhile, the instructor observed (3) that the rider was able to keep his balance (4) and start to understand how the reins worked, another important means of communication with the horse.

And then gradually he started to feel that the reins were like an elastic and so you could pull a little bit, or a lot or less or even less than that (Coach 1, Phase 3).

The rider was then able to maintain balance even at the canter without restricting the horse's forward movement. It was a 'breakthrough' lesson for this rider.

And after that we cantered we did the transition to canter, and uh, all of a sudden I had the feeling that it clinched, you know? I consciously knew that I was getting it, it's like when you drive a shift car I remember the exact time and the precise moment when I learned to get it (Rider 6, Phase 3).

Being able to maintain balance without using his hands with a relaxed horse was different for this rider, and therefore, in that sense, gave him new kinesthetic senses, furthering his development as a rider.

I suppose it's the same kind of feeling, and first of all it was a question of balance; being aware of my legs and my body and making sure that my legs are push forward as much, well not as much as possible, but more than I used to do before, so that in fact the legs were at that point, correct. At the same time I had the feeling that by putting my upper body a little backward I had more control on my balance. And I realized all of a sudden that I could lift my hands from the mane and do anything! And it didn't bother my balance (Rider 6, Phase 3).

The lesson was in fact, a success, not only to the coach, but also for the rider who was also starting to develop the concept of timing and coordination of the aids, two essential elements in becoming a dressage rider.

...it's the whole thing, you know, it's holistic in a sense. I realize then when I was pushing my legs a little forward and keeping my upper body back, a little bit back, more back than I used to, um, it worked (Rider 6, Phase 3).

This new acquisition of the rider's balance did affect the horse. According to the rider, the horse felt 'less constrained'.

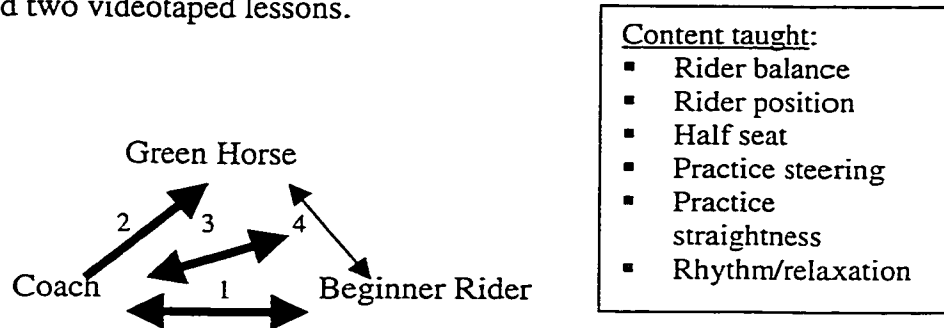
The horse was cantering around nicely...and the student was very happy, the horse was happy (Coach 1, Phase 3).

This was the horse 'reinforcing' with a kinesthetic message, what the rider was now doing (5).

Beginner riders on green horses [B]

Considering the role of the school horse then, one would logically think that beginner riders would not be riding green horses, however, the situation arose when I was collecting data.

One coach and two riders, who each rode the same green horse on separate occasions, were used in this context. Data came from seven interviews, two video transcripts, and two videotaped lessons.



Content taught:

- Rider balance
- Rider position
- Half seat
- Practice steering
- Practice straightness
- Rhythm/relaxation

Figure 9: Communication: Beginner riders on green horses

What is a green horse? According to the coach, this horse was “lacking experience” and “not as well trained as some of the others (school horses)” (Coach 1, Phase 3). However, the more this horse was ridden, the more she kept improving and learning. So that with time, the horse started to learn the ropes of becoming a ‘school horse’ that enabled the coach to use her in lessons even with beginner riders. Because of the coach’s experience, she could make a safe judgement call as far as using this green horse.

A month ago she’d be racing around the arena, but now she’s understanding that, as all school horses do, that this is not the way to do it because they just get too tired, so they start to settle down (Coach 1, Phase 3).

But this horse is, been learning, and so at least when she knows the student is relaxed, the horse is relaxed. But if that horse for a moment thought the rider was really tense, she’d get faster and faster (Coach 1, Phase 3).

Content taught. The content of the lessons emphasized rider development:

position for balance, learning of the aids, basic control, and basic riding.

I worked on the rider keeping the same rhythm of the horse going around the arena, and, when the rider kept the horse on the track on the long side of the arena, there was no difficulty at all. So at that time I would work on the rider’s

position a little bit because the rider is weak in the legs. And her ankles move quite a bit...(Coach 1, Phase 3).

And to improve her balance (the rider) I would have her not only in her half seat, but actually standing right up, and then sometimes going into her half seat, holding the reins in one hand and then patting the horse with that hand and without losing any of the rhythm of the horse, changing hands, so she had to do different things while maintaining her position (Coach 1, Phase 3).

But because of the green horse however, more time was spent on basic training (and control), since this horse was not like a 'metronome'.

Let's get the trot first, just nice and relaxed. Little bit quick, just slow down a bit. Slowly, slow her down...shorten your reins a little bit...slowly, use your voice, a little quick coming in, there, OK, let's do that once more...slowly, look up, there, don't rush, give a little, good. So the problem that I found is when you went from your canter to your, from your full seat in canter to your half seat, the reins were too long. Shorten the reins, the horse was getting faster and faster. So see if you could shorten the reins a little more easily (Coach 1, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

The coach not only got the riders to work on their position and balance, but also planned exercises geared for these riders to practice steering, and straightness.

Now as you go up the quarter line this time, you're going to just think of a straight horse. So turn up the quarter line and you're going to ride your horses very straight. Just shorten your reins a little bit... (Coach 1, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

Now I set up four poles there so the first thing we'll do is pick up a trot, get into our half seat and then you remember how we worked on the straight line on the quarter line, looking in the mirror? Keeping our horses straight, keeping the same rhythm? We're going to do the same thing over the trot rails (Coach 1, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

Because rider development was still a main focus this coach took advantage of the situation to lunge the rider in one of the lessons.

Now this lunge line is your responsibility. You didn't know that. So you have to keep it like that. Now, how do you do that? By keeping your inside leg on the horse and keeping the horse on the same circle line. Not, it's not my responsibility to back up or go forward, it's your responsibility. Don't jiggle with your seat, just relax your seat....keep your fingers closed because like playing the

violin or playing the piano, the hand control is so important, and if you open the fingers, you can't get that squeezing effect (Coach 1, Phase 3, video transcript 2).

Communication process. The arrows in Figure 9 illustrate the patterns of the communication process with a beginner rider on a green school horse. In this situation, the coach had a prominent role in the communication process. Because of the green horse, the coach had to not only enhance rider development but also had to maintain a safe learning environment for the green rider. This involved continuously watching (3) the interaction between horse and the rider (4) so the situation could be monitored in case the rider created any type of miscommunication by sending unintentional messages to the horse (4). In the interview, the coach explained why it was necessary to watch the rider and the horse all the time in one situation.

So when she (the rider) was cantering her horse, I was a little tense because I could see the horse was getting not dangerously quick, but a little quick (Coach 1, Phase 3).

During the actual lesson, the coach asked the rider why there was so much contact (weight in the reins), even after having said to not hold them so tightly (two-way arrow between the coach and rider (1)).

She started to pull, remember? She started to pull on the reins. And I asked her, why do you have so much tension on the reins?...I forget her answer. Something like 'Oh, I don't need to?' (Coach 1, Phase 3).

And because the horse was green and needed training, often the coach or another advanced rider would ride the horse on a regular basis which explains why there is a thick one-way arrow from the coach to the green horse (2).

It's (the horse) used to going fast and it's only now learning to slow down because we're teaching it (Coach 1, Phase 3).

An extract from a lesson will be presented to show an example of the communication processes. Even though the rider was relatively inexperienced she rode this green horse quite well. This was due in large part, to the coach who told the rider, nearly every step, what to do when, and how (1).

And the more relaxed you are on that mare, the better she is. If you tense up on her she gets a little tense. So let's just start with our trot. Let's trot around the arena once. Open your rein a little bit, take her to the wall, just one rein, take her to the wall, same thing as your horse does, eh?...Slowly, just like that, whoops, well at least you know you have some brakes. Now you don't want to kick her, so just do a little sitting trot to canter. But don't hang on her mouth. There, that's nice, just sit and canter, canter slowly, shorten your reins, put your heels down, keep your shoulders back, sit down in your saddle a little bit, slow down a bit, don't round your back, slowly, there, good, good, and trot now, just slowly trot, outside rein, heels down, just trot, that's it, keep trotting, slow down a little bit, now take your jumping position. Shorten your reins, see there's lots to do, good for you! ...slowly, whoa, use your voice, a little quick coming in there, OK let's do that once more. Try not to round the back...slowly, look up, there, don't rush, there, give a little, good, good girl, and walk (Coach 1, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

Other communication processes involving the interaction between the horse and rider improved the situation even more was when the rider sent intentional kinesthetic messages to the horse (4).

And suddenly this rider was so relaxed, started patting the horse. And the horse immediately, which you saw, started to relax, and slowed down. I have noticed if you talk to this horse she relaxes (Coach 1, Phase 3).

The rider also said in the interview how the verbal interaction (4) with the horse helped in improving her awareness of how horses react to their riders.

I can see with the voice, she slowed down when she was speeding up and then I find that she's very sensitive, responsive much more than Promise (school horse), for example...you could see her ears and, yeah she listened. So I was encouraged by that because she was responsive. Sometimes you say things and you pat them and they just ignore you completely, but she did listen (Rider 5, Phase 3).

Well, I liked riding her quite a bit because you have an exchange between the horse and the rider so she kind of listens...I find her much more fun to ride (than a school horse) (Rider 5, Phase 3).

Intermediate riders on schoolmasters [C]

Two coaches and one rider (and one horse) were used in this context. The material came from four interviews (from previous phases of project), four videotaped lessons, two transcribed videotapes, as well as two e-mail entries from the rider.

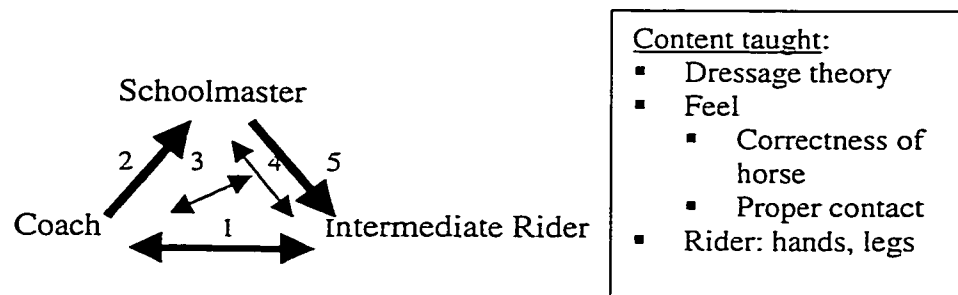


Figure 10: Communication: Intermediate riders on schoolmasters

When the rider has a bit more experience and knowledge of dressage training, they are ready to learn from more experienced horses. One coach explained the transition from one level to another.

First of all, the student has to be schooled quite a long way before you expect the student to start teaching the horse. So first we teach the student how to work it's left part of the student's body, it's right part of the student's body, then how to do one thing with one hand and one thing with another and with their legs. That part is sometimes hard for them. Not to twist their bodies. After about two years, when they can walk, trot, and canter without falling in certain directions, then I start teaching them lateral movements on a horse that already knows how to do it (Coach 1, Phase 1).

So when the student really shows an interest in learning the more advanced movements then I'll probably get them to use a boarder's horse, that knows the movements (Coach 1, Phase 1).

What is a schoolmaster? Riders who have reached a level where they want to progress more in dressage will not be as likely to ride school horses anymore, but instead, schoolmasters.

Albert* (the horse) is what is called a 'schoolmaster', meaning a horse with sufficient training (and the right temperament) to serve as a teacher to the rider. When the rider and horse are learning new things at the same time the process can be rather 'hit and miss' and long. If the horse is trained to a level above the rider's ability, however, the rider's learning rate should be accelerated. When the rider gives a signal, the horse should respond with the correct move, thus providing basic (Pavlovian) reinforcement to the rider. The rider should also find it easier to feel when things are going well, from the way the horse is going (Rider 1, Phase 3, e-mail entry).

Schoolmasters are also experienced, semi-retired horses but with a higher level of dressage training (possibly from Medium to Grand Prix). Riders can continue to compete with these horses, though generally at a lower level than what the horse used to compete at.

Content taught. From this data, lessons focused not only on rider development, but also on working the horse. This involved doing some of the dressage movements as well as the theory behind dressage training in order for the rider to learn how to 'feel' the correctness of the horse.

I try to explain to her that the horse has to work from behind onto that bit, onto that contact. And if they're really leaning then, yeah, you just kind of slide the bit through its mouth. Give a bit, yeah, maybe I've got to teach her more needling the bit (Coach 1, Phase 1).

What I asked her to do was to try to co-ordinate lowering the frame, of the horse, dropping his head down but keeping the contact, not being busy but lowering the frame so the back would be more engaged as she lengthened. Because what happens when the horses lengthen they try to stick their head in the air and invert their back. So I was trying to get her to lower the frame gently and lengthen the stride (Coach 1, Phase 1).

Rider development is always important and even at this level the basics need to be emphasized. This was evident in a session given by this coach who worked mostly on the rider who then, could afterwards, work on the horse.

Lengthen your reins a little and carry your hands just above the neck. I don't want to have to remind you what you have to do on the left rein. Good. More trot, more trot from your leg, more trot. Don't double beat. Don't double beat, hold with your leg when you sit down. Squeeze with your lower leg (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

That's better energy now, much better, turn his head a little bit to the left, because you are working on the left rein to start encourage him to look a bit left. Look a bit left, he's looking to the wall, that's a girl. Ah ah, keep it, yup, keep it, he may need a little bit of holding there, he's a bit stiff. Good, big circle here. And as you sit down, when you ask him to look left, make sure you use your leg more to help him come into the bending rein. That's it, just keep his face, yeah, it's coming. That's a girl, inside leg. Really use that leg, that's it, good. Keep your hands up and close your fingers left. More forward. He's looking to the right again because you keep pulling your right hand down. And away from the neck. Give a little on the outside hand so it's easier for him to look to the left. Keep your right hand a little higher and closer to your left rein (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

Communication process. Referring to Figure 10, the process of communication can be summarized as follows. First, in this situation, the coach rode the horse on a regular basis to keep him 'tuned'. This is why the arrow from the coach to the horse is thicker (2).

The instructor (coach) rides the horse to keep his training sharp, undoing where necessary, the 'damage' done by the rider's bad habits and errors. The sharper the horse, the better a teaching tool he is (Rider 1, Phase 3, e-mail entry).

The arrow from the horse to the rider is thicker too (5), because keeping the horse tuned helped the rider learn the correct feeling of what was needed to learn in order to progress with her own development as a rider and as a learner of dressage.

Relying on the assumption that the horse will react properly to the correct signal or aid, the instructor should be able to concentrate on what the rider is doing. Where the horse is not trained to a level equal or above what the instructor is

trying to teach the rider, the instructor's attention has to be divided between horse and rider (Rider 1, Phase 3, e-mail entry).

The level of the horse (more advanced than the rider) and the horse's sensitivity to shifts in the rider's weight and/or position, and the degree of tension in the rider's legs and/or back, make the horse a very good teacher for a rider wanting or needing to improve balance (the rider's) and the proper relaxed seat. When the rider rides properly off the seat and leg, the horse responds very well. The rider can therefore feel the proper balance and rhythm of the horse's stride, and is reinforced to use the proper aids (Rider 1, Phase 3, e-mail entry).

These examples showed the role of the schoolmaster and the coach, who together, taught the feel of dressage movements and consequently, more about dressage training, improving the rider's ability. As with the other situations, this one too, had two two-way arrows (3,4) which indicated the coach observing (3), on a continual basis, the interaction between horse and the rider (4) so that proper instruction could be given to the rider (1).

Another example from a different lesson showed that no matter how good the schoolmaster was, or how often the coach rode the horse, or how many lessons a rider had, miscommunication (such as unintentional kinesthetic messages) could still occur with the interaction between the horse and the rider (4).

Canter forward. Don't pull. Left leg back, go. Good, and relax. Good. Good girl, go on, more forward. Ah, ah!! (horse did flying lead change) You're doing something to cause that! Trot. Trot. Now go, rising, keep going. There is a tension in your seat and hips, and a gripping of your spur that is annoying that horse and is causing him to think you want him to do flying changes.

Also, in this lesson, the coach worked the rider through the problem (1) resulting in successful communication between the rider and the horse (4).

Pay attention not to create stiffness in your body. OK. Now canter, go. Good, and sit quiet, don't grab. Loosen your knees, a flying change again! Trot. Trot on. Trot on. Trot on. I didn't say sitting, trot on. Use your legs to push him in the trot. More (leg). Good. And canter. Ah, you got it! Canter. Good (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript).

This rider noted why sometimes, the horse misunderstood unintentional signals (4).

Particularly when cantering on the right lead, I tend not to sit evenly and pinch my upper leg, thereby restricting the horse's motion and making it harder for him to balance himself. As a result, I often get flying lead changes when I don't want them, (but he thinks I do, or else he does the change because I've gotten him off balance (Rider 1, Phase 3, e-mail entry).

At the end of the session, the rider achieved what the coach was asking. The coach then explained to the rider what influenced the communication between them (1).

What was happening is at the beginning was, he was cold. So he got himself tied up like a little corkscrew. And then he wasn't going forward, he was going up and down and the canter actually showed that to you, OK? So you have to ride him energetically, not crazily, but you have to be, 'come on, let's go get warm, let's go forward, let's use the arena', and use your canter/trot transitions not for the classical 'is he on the bit, round, and bent', but let's get him warmed up. The only thing is with you and he is to focus once you get working, a little more on the correct bend to the left. And because he has, you know, the horse and he is stiff on that side, even when you go on the straight line, you should work on position, what we call position left, which means you aren't bending the body, but you are positioning the head and neck a little to the left (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

Intermediate riders on green horses [D]

In this situation, there was one coach and one rider for one video lesson. Data consisted of one video transcript, one e-mail entry from the rider, as well as field notes.

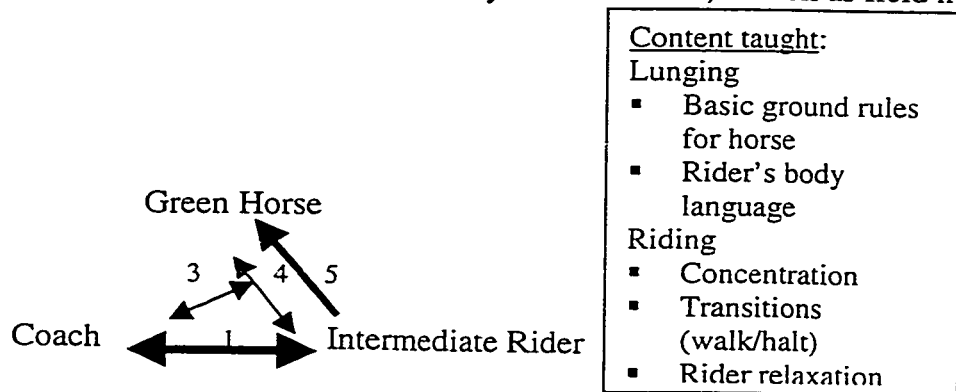


Figure 11: Communication: Intermediate riders on green horses

Green dressage horses. Once riders start to get a feel of the dressage movements and gain more knowledge about dressage training, some decide to try training younger horses for dressage. At the time of this lesson, this horse was five years old and had been ridden for just over one year, doing walk, trot, and very little canter.

Content taught. In this lesson, the coach started off by teaching the rider the 'ground rules' for lunging, since neither the horse nor the rider knew them. This way, the rider would be able to train the horse how to lunge.

There are ground rules for lunging, if he plays within those ground rules, fine, but he's still got to stay out and go forward (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

And just keep the whip down to the ground so he doesn't get the excuse to go more. That's it. Good, now if he wants to trot, just let him break back in the trot and go forward on the trot quietly. Good. That's it. That's it. Send him out, send him out, don't bring your hand backwards, send him out. Not with your whip. That's bringing him forwards, send him out. Use your left hand high and forwards towards his nose, in other words, kind of send the lunge line towards his face. Good, and if you want to push him out with your whip, you almost bring it underneath your lunge line and towards his nose, Got it? (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

After lunging, the rider got on the horse and started the warm up at the walk where the rider worked on exercises composed of the basics of dressage training.

These exercises are the stepping stones of dressage. First he has to move off the leg or your aid, then you have to have the transition for obedience and balance. Then you need the flexion and throughness for suppleness. This is basically all we worked on. The exercises were in keeping with the level of development of the horse and rider. The exercises reinforced to me what I was supposed to do and attain with my horse (Rider 3, Phase 3, e-mail entry).

And throughout the warm up, the coach guided the rider through the process of training the horse as well as to get his focus on the rider's aids.

Don't forget to introduce your transitions as you did on the left rein. Get in that corner (of the arena). Think about focusing on getting in the corner. Into the corner. That's it. Not speeding up! Not speeding up. Remember what I said.

When you apply a signal, make sure the response is what you want, not what you don't want (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

Transition walk. Walking on, this is just like doing the walk/halt, now we're doing trotting walk. And walk, and walk, keep his focus on you. Keep his focus on you (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

After the warm up, the coach introduced basic dressage training where the importance of rider development was emphasized; especially relaxation, which was something this rider needed to work on as this would consequently, improve the horse.

Breathe each time you sit in the saddle (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

The more relaxed he becomes from the leg aids and the exercises he was doing, then the more relaxed he will become in his neck. It's just that the side reins, just like your reins, keep him in a round outline, from which he must learn to relax into (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

Rider position and balance was also very important when riding a young, unbalanced horse for this rider.

Don't stiffen in your knees, you've got to be able to sit and hold in your elbows and lower back. So that if he gets a little leany (on the reins, that is, in the hands) because of balance problems, he can relax against your back (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

Communication process. Figure 11 illustrates the main pattern of the communication process with the intermediate rider and green horse. The two arrows (3, 4) show the importance of the coach's role, which was to observe (3) the interaction between the horse and the rider (4) in order to provide proper instruction (1). This is needed because training young horses successfully can be difficult since any weaknesses the rider may have can affect the communication between horse and rider, and hence, the overall quality of training.

The processes of communication can be broken down into two parts: lunging and riding. In the first part of the lesson where the rider lunged her horse, the coach was

teaching the rider (1) how to communicate properly with the horse so that he would understand what she wanted. This is illustrated with the thick two way arrow from the coach to the rider.

And waggle it (the lunge line) and say 'out'. Always say 'out' and then lower it as soon as he goes away. So he understands, that's body language (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

Say 'WALK'. He will not learn English if you do that. Don't pull him into you. Now, halt if it is, and go to him. Don't back away. You go to HIS head. That's it, go, go to him! That's it...Don't brrr at him!! Use words (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

When the horse responded correctly to the rider's body language (5), the coach had to tell (1) the rider to reward the horse to reinforce his learning. This is shown with the thick one way arrow from the rider to the horse (5).

That's it, talk to him. Say 'good boy'. You don't communicate enough with your horse! You stand in the middle of the ring, whacking your whip, or clucking and you never say 'good', you never use any words, commands, come on! Go forward now! Forward! Say 'trot on'. Don't cluck at him, he'll never learn the word 'trot' and 'canter'. There's a good boy. Trot on. Come on say 'trot on'. Good, you see the canter's getting more balanced now even when he breaks to it he doesn't bolt on it now. And that's what he needs to learn (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

At the same time the rider was teaching the horse the correct way to lunge (5), the coach looked at the way the horse should be travelling (3).

You couldn't ask for more when he (the horse) stretches like that and goes forward. So tell him he's good. Very good. Good boy (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

Since relaxation is one of the foremost steps to effective training, the coach emphasized this even while the rider was teaching the horse to lunge because it created unintentional kinesthetic messages from the rider to the horse (5).

Good, good, let the walls stop him. That's it. (He spooks) And go, go, go, go forward!! Drive him, drive him now!! Leave him, go on!! Don't hold your

breath just because he shies! Holy mackerel that's the worst thing you can do! Just get his mind back on you! So he realizes, oh, big deal. There's no big deal (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

These same principles that affected the process of communication while lunging, applied in the second part of the lesson when the rider was on the horse. This element from the lesson really showed how a young horse needed guidance from the rider in order for him to learn what was expected of him as far as basic training. The rider needed to communicate to the horse (5) in a clear manner, so that he would understand.

If there's a wandering it may not just be you, it might be just a little bit of disobedience and lack of focus on the horse's part and you approach that the same way as you approach controlling the shying. You make him do it, OK? Which means, you have to be a little stronger on both reins and the inside leg, not allowing him to speed up so he misunderstands what you want, but understanding that he must walk along the line you set for him (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

When you have to apply a signal to get his attention make sure his reaction is what you want, which is simply turning his ear back to you, bending, if that's what you asked, but not speeding up. Even if you used the leg. He has to learn that (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

And it was easy for the rider to send unintentional messages that would make a young horse confused (5).

Remember when you give a signal, you get a reaction. Sometimes it's the right one, often with young horses it's the wrong one. If you immediately change that signal, then he is really confused, OK? So when he makes the wrong reaction to the aids, you have to keep the aids perhaps controlled, just a little, so the horse goes, 'oh, I see, I misunderstood', OK? Very important, that (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

Advanced rider on green horse [E]

One coach and one rider with a green horse were studied in this context. The material used came from two videotaped lessons, two interview transcripts, and two

video transcripts. Figure 12 summarizes the communication process as well as the content covered in the lessons.

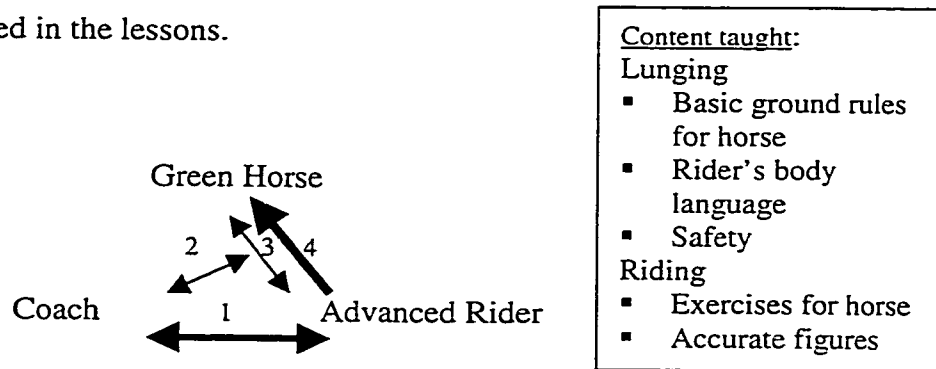


Figure 12: Communication: Advanced riders on green horses

In this situation, the horse was five years old and could walk, trot, and canter as well as starting some lateral work.

Content taught. In this lesson the coach also helped the rider with lunging the horse. This lesson was not focused only with teaching the rider how to lunge, but also for the horse's well-being (i.e. because he was young and consequently, fresh).

All you're doing here now is just as you (the rider) say, exercise, let him loose up, if he wants to have a little buck and a play, that's his right... That's it, just let him get that edge off him. (Big buck) Yoo-hoo! Yes, much better that he does it now than when you're on him! (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

You're just exercising him to get the kink, you don't want to lunge him to the point where he's tired, you know, you want to keep a little edge always, but an obedient edge on the horse, you know. A young horse., and tomorrow he may come out and act like a nerd (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 2).

This coach also helped the rider lunge the horse.

Keep the hands low, not the whip high, remember, anything that goes high is body language in lunging techniques to go forward. So you always want to keep the hands low (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

With this horse, the coach mentioned the aspect of safety while lunging.

Just let him play, but watch he doesn't jump over the lunge line (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

Just watch the lunge line doesn't get under his feet, that's all (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

Even when the horse was having fun running around on the lunge line, the coach ensured that the rider taught him about basic training, as well as manners.

Once he stops doing his yahoo-ie, and decides he doesn't want to canter, that's when you say oh no come on, we're going to canter just a little bit longer. So he understands who's boss (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

Even when he's playing you're always the boss. Don't forget that. There's some very basic ground rules the horse must respect even when he plays (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

And what is the horse expected to learn from being lunged?

What they have to learn on the lunge a little like that too is that you will find after awhile they will grow up and they won't let loose nearly as much as he did because they'll find, 'oh god, now I've got to be ridden, no this isn't funny, I'm exhausted already' and you'd be surprised how smart they figure that out, pretty quickly (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

The coach and rider also looked for ways the horse should be travelling while on the lunge.

Just let him do whatever he wants. Just be quiet as long as he keeps his distance from you. Good. Let go, let go, that's it. Because if you pull, he uses it as an excuse to come into you. Good. Just tell him. He's nice and balanced and stretching, that's great (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript).

After the lunging part of the lesson, the rider then rode the horse. Here, the main focus was on basic dressage training, in this example, large figures.

Now let the circle be nice and big, control it with your left rein, not your right rein so much. Keep riding, don't block with your hips, come on. Swing, that's better! Good, and another circle (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

While doing these exercises, the rider had to work the horse in such a way as to get him to travel correctly.

Give a little, let him stretch, good. Softly give, even when you're turning him, turn and give. And ride forward...(Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

To maintain the correctness, the coach emphasized the need for relaxation and balance.

Just relax, just sit. Very good, pat him with your left hand. Pat him, good girl. Doesn't matter. Just sit quiet, sit down if he loses his balance so that he has to carry you and stay balanced. Rather than worrying about if he falls in, sit down on him, keep a steady connection, that's it. Sit strongly on your seat bones without being stiff in your back, doesn't matter. Trot. Relax your arms so you can feel what your hands are doing (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

Communication process. The arrows in Figure 12 illustrate the main pattern of the communication process in the context with an advanced rider on a green horse. The thick two way arrow between the coach and the rider (1) showed how important it was for the coach to instruct the rider as to how to train the horse. Since the emphasis was on training the horse in the context, a one-way arrow went from the rider to the horse (5).

For example, at the beginning of the lesson, the coach reminded the rider (1) about body language while lunging the horse. This way, the rider showed the horse what to do on the lunge (5).

Remember, anything from shoulder forward or in front is 'slow down, stop', anything from behind the shoulder is 'go forward' as far as your body language goes (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

Communication from the rider to the horse (5) was illustrated when the coach emphasized the importance of rider relaxation for effective communication.

If you stiffen in the hand and stiffen in the hip he doesn't understand and he automatically slows down (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript).

An extract from the lesson will be presented as an example of this communication process. For example, the coach watched the rider (3) start the warm up and then instructed the rider on what to do (1).

Just start your normal way you do with your warm up. Don't go looking for anything special, just a nice way. Don't try to balance him yet, he's not warmed up. Just ride, you're a little too stiff in your lower back and you're resisting too much with him, just round, low, and just trotting forward in a nice rhythm (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 2).

The excerpt also showed the role of the rider as far as training the horse (5) and how important it was for the rider to maintain relaxation.

Remember he's (the horse) still warming up. Just try it again (the canter), the transition, relax, always first, bending, oh no. Why does he do that? You've got to ask yourself that. There's something you do that causes that reaction. You change your way of riding when you think canter. You stiffen and brace your back against him in your leg (Coach 3, Phase 3, video transcript 2).

This example also showed how the coach needed to observe (3) the interaction between the horse and rider (4) to help this rider work successfully through the problem.

Advanced rider on advanced horse [F]

In this context, one coach and one rider (with one horse) were used. Data consisted of five observations, of which three were videotaped, three interviews, and one video transcript.

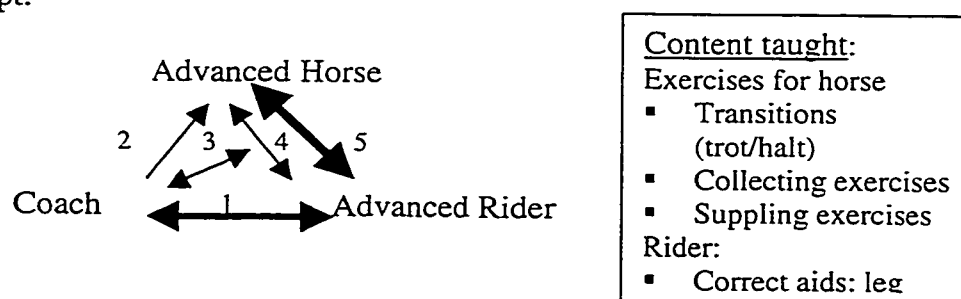


Figure 13: Communication: Advanced riders on advanced horses

What is an advanced horse? For this context, the dressage horse was 'advanced' because he had a lot of experience, having received sufficient training (and continually being trained) and was working on upper level dressage movements. (See Appendix D).

At Grand Prix level, is where the horse does everything required at the Olympic level... So of course you need a very talented horse and not every horse is good

at everything, but you hope that you can get a horse that is good at everything. But then it's to do through training, to make him as supple as a horse can be and as strong as a horse can be, and as collected as the horse can be. So you want the optimum and the Grand Prix test asks for the most difficult things there is out of a horse on the ground (Coach 2, Phase 2).

The coach summed up the level of the horse and rider in relation to each other.

The rider has trained the horse. So they are at the same level. She is not more advanced than the horse. She's even with the horse (Coach 2, Phase 3).

Content taught. For these lessons, some of the exercises were geared towards improving the horse, and at times, the rider. The coach explained why these exercises were necessary for this particular horse.

After the initial warm up, what we did was trot-halt transitions. And those are fundamental, they're very, very hard to do correctly to do a trot from a half, to do a trot from a halt, and to do a halt from a trot. He's (the horse) beginning to improve because he's more responsive to the legs, for the transition from halt to trot, he was better. He wasn't kind of plowing into the first stride, he was staying more collected, but definitely there was a big problem with the trot to the halt because every time she (the rider) touches the reins, he just leans into her hands and she cannot come to the halt, she will trot another step or walk a few steps. So, that's what we tried to do and then we incorporated shoulder-ins which are collecting exercises and half passes which are collecting exercises and then when he gets a little bit bored, or whatever, we do medium trot, but essentially, that's what we try to do in the trot. And then in the canter, is the same problem, he's normally he's easier in the canter especially to the left, and we were able to do half-passes and to the right, he tends to lean into the left rein and put his shoulder out so again we did circles and transitions, and we finished it with the piaffe (Coach 2, Phase 3).

The following example from the lesson is an illustration of the coach explaining an exercise to the rider showing how dressage requires one to be accurate and systematic towards training.

So, let's be precise. OK, you do F to P, again you move in two meters, go all the way to B if you like, so then from B to R in the shoulder-in you would go back to the track. Try it once in the walk on one rein, once in the walk on the other rein, if it's good we do it in trot (Coach 2, Phase 2).

Even when working mostly on the horse, sometimes the rider needed to work on herself too. The coach found this important and therefore, geared a section of the lesson towards rider improvement.

And then I was correcting her aids because her left leg normally is not far enough back. And when I stand in front of her I see, so I was working on her and we did it in the walk and then we did it in the trot, so that was mainly for the rider. It was not for the horse (Coach 2, Phase 3).

Communication process. Figure 13 illustrates the main pathways of communication for the context with an advanced rider and horse. There is a thin one-way arrow (2) from the coach to the horse because the coach occasionally rode the horse.

Because you teach the horse and then the rider sits on the horse and the horse is doing it in an easier way and the rider understands, learns from the horse. Riding is feeling. So you have to feel it. And when the horse is not doing it, the rider cannot feel because it's not doing it. And it, it might not be the rider's fault, the horse is just not doing it because he's not, either properly asked or properly brought to it, or the rider doesn't know how to, to make it do it or just the horse simply doesn't do it because it's hard to do (Coach 2, Phase 2).

There is a two-way arrow (1) from the coach to the rider because throughout the lesson, the coach continually observed (3) the interaction between horse and rider (4), to provide feedback and instruction (1). The thick two-way arrow from the horse to the rider (5) shows how the main focus was on developing both the horse and rider to higher levels of dressage.

You make a halt, and then you flex him just in the crest, and see his mane lift, you have him round, and then you let your reins get longer and longer until his nose is on the ground. So you might have to do it a few times because he doesn't know that. So you get his crest to the right, by just moving your wrist, give a little left. There, OK when you will give, now you let the reins run through your fingers until he goes down. You have to release more outside. Give both reins...this is the best reward for the horse is to be allowed to go down and stretch and stretch his back with absolutely no interference (Coach 2, Phase 3, video transcript 1).

Because this exercise in the lesson was new for the horse, the coach had to explain (1) it to the rider who in turn asked the horse to do the exercise (5). In order for the horse to learn it, the rider had to repeat it a few times, each time rewarding (5) each little improvement, until the horse learned it. Then the coach used the same principle behind this exercise to have the rider work the horse on circles to improve the suppleness in the horse.

Even though the rider is advanced, the coach still took time in the lesson to work on improvement of the rider's aids, to refine them even more.

The repetition, the transition trot/halt, the rider has to get better and the horse has to become more responsive, and then if the trot is more collected and balanced, then the transition is better. This is a very quiet rider, very passive and very strong and she tends to be too passive at times. And Francis is not the strongest horse, he likes to be in the hands he doesn't like to carry, he's not so strong behind and, the combination is the work makes it hard, I mean the work has to be done to improve the, you know, if she (the rider) was more busy, maybe he (the horse) wouldn't lean on her hands so much and if he was more in self-carriage with her being so passive it would be easier, at, as well, so it's to improve both (Coach 2, Phase 3).

This showed that the coach chose the specific exercises in the lesson to not only develop the horse but also the rider, so that they could both continue improving. This was important from this rider's perspective.

So to have someone, before you get into a rut where you're always angry at the horse because he's not doing what you want, to have someone point out to you, stop for a second and look exactly at the way you're asking for this; and you're really not asking for it in a way that's going to produce positive results. So I think that to work on my position and to work on my aids was a very important part of the process so that I was asking for things in a way that was fair to the horse (Rider 4, Phase 2).

And, at times the role of this horse would change from school horse/schoolmaster (5), to a dressage horse in training. In this sense, the horse became the teacher, and the coach focused exclusively on the rider (1).

When I taught the rider, when I was doing the exercise shoulder-in on the centre-line from the shoulder-in to go to travers or to the half –pass, then I really focus on the rider because I know the horse knows the shoulder-in and the half-pass. (Coach 2, Phase 3).

If I use the horse as a school horse and work strictly on her and her aids then you have to vary and to make sure that the horse is not left out or becoming strung out or whatever (Coach 2, Phase 3).

Cross Context Analysis

The content and the pathways of communication for each of the six contexts are presented in Figure 14 (on page 64). Upon studying each of these situations, I noticed a number of similarities as well as some differences in communication and content.

Similarities across all contexts

There are two similarities that occur across all of the six contexts: The first one is a thick two-way arrow between the coach and the rider. In each context, there was interaction between these two actors throughout the lessons, and even afterwards as they discussed the lesson. The second similarity is the two two-way arrows from the horse and rider and then one from the coach to the middle of that arrow signifying how the coach observed the interaction between the rider and the horse. This occurred in all the lessons again, as it was quite important that the coach watch the two in order to assess, or to give feedback on what the rider and/or the horse were doing.

Similarities between the contexts for beginner riders

The content of the lessons with the beginner riders was similar, despite the fact that the lessons were with a school horse and a green horse. Because the riders were just

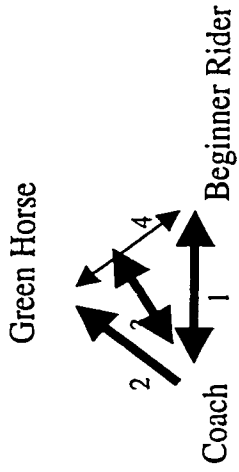
learning, the focus was on rider development. This was broken down into working on a good position on the horse so that their balance would, consequently, be effective and stable. Rider exercises were emphasized such as doing the 'half seat' or 'jumping position' in walk, trot, and canter. Again, the purpose of this exercise was to develop the muscles needed for balance. In these lessons, the coach also had these riders work on basic riding, such as setting up trotting poles to practice straightness or rhythm, and steering. The riders also worked on the rhythm, relaxation, and straightness of the horse in their lessons.

Similarities in the role of the school horse/schoolmaster

In the two contexts: beginner riders on school horses and an intermediate rider on a schoolmaster, the horses shared some of the same responsibilities; in that they were both a 'teacher' in these lessons. This is shown with the thick one-way arrow (5) that goes from the horse to the rider. In these contexts, the school horse taught the beginner riders the basics: walk, trot, and canter. As well, the school horse gave 'feedback' to the riders whenever something correct was done, such as in one example, when the rider learned how to maintain balance without using hand. The schoolmaster taught the intermediate rider more about riding dressage. Being schooled to a higher level than the rider's own riding level, the horse was able to show the rider when something correct was done. In essence, this was also providing feedback to the rider.

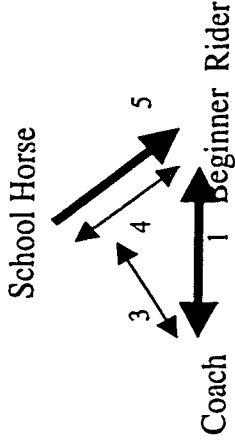
Being a 'teacher', the horse had an important role in these situations. This also showed the aspect of communication where the rider received information from the horse and consequently, their ability was improved.

- Rider balance
- Rider position
- Half seat
- Practice steering
- Practice straightness
- Rhythm
- Relaxation



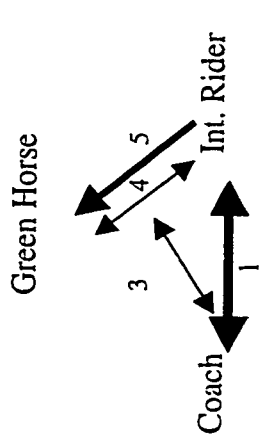
Beginner riders on green horses [B]

- Rider balance
- Rider position
- Half seat
- Rider exercises
- Trot rails
- Changes of direction
- Rhythm
- Straightness



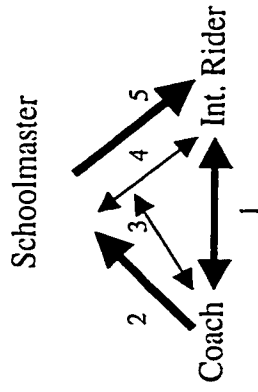
Beginner riders on school horses [A]

- Lunging
- Basic ground rules for horse
- Rider's body language
- Riding Concentration
- Transitions W/H
- Rider relaxation



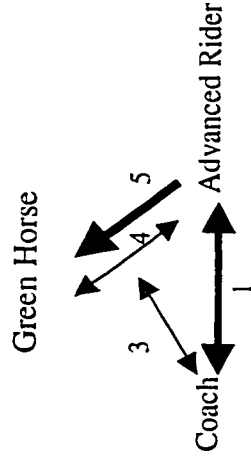
Intermediate riders on green horses [D]

- Dressage theory
- Feel
- Correctness of horse
- Proper contact
- Rider: hands, legs



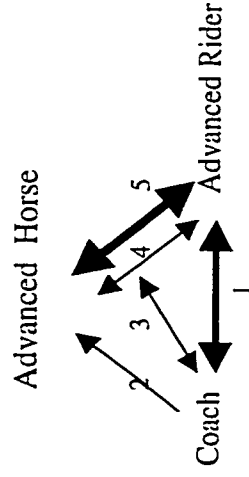
Intermediate riders on schoolmasters [C]

- Lunging
- Basic ground rules
- Rider's body language
- Safety
- Riding Exercises for horse
- Accurate figures



Advanced riders on green horses [E]

- Exercises for horse
- Transitions: trot/halt
- Collecting exercises
- Suppling exercises
- Rider: Correct aids; leg



Advanced riders on advanced horses [F]

Figure 14: Cross Context Analysis

Similarities in the role of riders with green horses

The horse as ‘teacher’ was contrasted in this situation where the rider was the teacher of the horse. The third similarity was therefore shown between the following two situations with green horses: intermediate rider [D] and an advanced rider [E]. Both riders (as ‘teachers’) were training a green horse (5) and so the content of the lessons was quite similar. With each lesson, the coach started with having the riders lunge the horse in which the basic ground rules for lunging were emphasized. The horse had to follow these ‘rules’ and the riders (who were lunging) had to enforce them. This was done with clear use of body language. Each rider then worked on which exercises that were based on developing the horse, and working on the basics of dressage.

Because the coach was helping these riders with training the young horses, the coach’s role was quite important (hence the two-way arrow (1) from the coach to the rider). Because the horses were young and the riders were more experienced (and teaching the horse) the thick one-way arrow (5) also went from the rider to the horse. In both these situations, the coach continually watched (3) the interaction between the horse and rider (4).

Similarities in the role of the coach

The fourth aspect that was similar involved the following three situations: beginner rider on a green horse [B], intermediate rider on a schoolmaster [C], and the advanced rider on the advanced horse [F]. In each situation, the coach rode the horse (2), but for different reasons. For the beginner rider on the green horse, the coach or another advanced rider would school (or educate) the horse so that the beginner rider, the one with less experience, would have an easier time riding. This way, the green horse would,

because of the training, understand what the beginner rider wanted. The coach had a similar role for the intermediate rider with the schoolmaster. Because the schoolmaster was schooled to a higher level of dressage than the rider, the coach would ride the schoolmaster to keep him 'tuned'. This way, the horse would continue to understand what the rider wanted, who, in turn would benefit since 'the feel of the different movements could be learned as well as the correctness of the horse. Feeling the correctness of the horse is why the coach, in the situation with the advanced rider and advanced horse, would school the horse. The coach however, would not ride the horse on a regular basis, but once in awhile perhaps in a teaching situation in order for the rider to learn immediately, what the feel was.

Differences between beginner riders

Looking at the category of the beginner riders [A, B], there were some interesting differences. In the situation with the beginner rider and the green horse [B], the coach had a very important role. The coach had to school the green horse (2), as well as give nearly step-by-step instructions to the rider (1) during the lesson to ensure that safety was maintained. This involved careful observation (3) of the interaction between the rider and the horse (4). In the situation with beginner riders and school horses [A], the coach had an 'assistant' (the school horse). With already trained school horses, schooling was not necessary and the coach could focus solely on the rider, even relying on the horse to teach the rider (5).

Differences between intermediate riders

In the situations with intermediate riders [C, D], the role of the horse was quite different. One horse was green [D] and the teacher was the rider (5), where, with the

schoolmaster [C], the teacher was the horse (5) as well as the coach (1). Because one horse was green, the coach's role (1) was to help the rider train the horse (5). This involved giving instructions and providing feedback. With the schoolmaster, the coach would school the horse on a regular basis (2) so that the horse could in turn, 'teach' the rider (5). In the lessons, the coach's role was to teach the rider, giving instruction and feedback (1). Because of the differing roles of the horse, the content was also structured around the level of the horse. The green horse had to be taught how to lunge, and to respect the rider on the ground. When being ridden, the horse needed to be taught how to focus on the rider, as well as learn basic riding, such as walk and halt transitions. Because the schoolmaster already knew the content that the green horse was learning, the lessons focused on rider learning. Dressage theory was emphasized as well as learning the correct feel of the horse, proper feel of contact. This rider also had to work on the aids in order to develop further in dressage.

Differences between advanced riders

In the last category with advanced riders [E, F], each of the actors had a different role again. In one situation the horse was green [E] and learning dressage, and in the other situation [F], the horse was already advanced in dressage, and therefore, had much more knowledge than the green horse. Because of this, the rider in the green horse situation was the teacher (one-way arrow 5), as opposed to the rider with the advanced horse, who was learning dressage at the same time as the horse (two-way arrow 5). Differing roles resulted in different lesson content. The green horse was learning how to lunge (basic ground rules and body language) as well as basic dressage (large figures, how to carry himself), whereas the advanced dressage horse was learning sophisticated

movements (passage, piaffe) and worked mostly on collecting and suppling exercises. The coach in both these situations had similar roles in that they were more as an 'eye' on the ground (3); reinforcing and providing feedback (1) about whatever the rider did, watching (3) the interaction between the horse and rider (4). The advanced riders had several years experience and therefore had a vast knowledge base about dressage and were therefore, able to do a lot of independent training.

In brief, the cross-context analysis revealed interesting aspects, in which several were related and consistent across all six contexts. Here, the role of the coach was emphasized because we saw that there was constant interaction between the horse, the rider, and the coach during the teaching sessions. Also, the coach continually observed the horse and rider together in the lessons. In the situations where the horse needed training or schooling, the coach's role had an added dimension; they rode the horse in order to help the student learn how to ride. This was seen with the beginner riders on the green horses and with the intermediate riders on the schoolmaster. In some instances, the coach would ride the advanced horse, but this was more for demonstration or a brief training session. Having the coach or an advanced rider train the horse was contrasted in the other two situations (green horse with an intermediate rider, green horse with an advanced rider) where the horse was young and relatively inexperienced and the rider was the trainer. In this case, the coach was more an 'eye'; someone to help reinforce and provide feedback and teach the rider how to train a horse in dressage. These contexts really showed how, depending on the level of the rider and the level of the horse, and the different combinations we saw, the coach's role changed. This aspect is quite essential as it has important implications for not only communication, but also effective coaching.

Discussion

According to Powers (1995) the “concept of message is central to understanding the intellectual structure of the human communication discipline” (p. 193). These messages can be verbal or nonverbal message systems (icons or symbols) such as an ‘independent physical sign’ (like somebody’s posture) that can be open to interpretation. Powers (1995) also stated that communication is an “activity that people perform in order to accomplish particular goals in specific social and cultural situations” (p. 199). This study has shown that the concept of message was important to allow for a better understanding of the teaching-learning process in dressage. However, in this sport the senders and receivers of the messages were not only between people (coach and rider). Communication, as we saw in this project, involved the coach, the rider and also the horse, a non-human sender and receiver of messages with an important role in the teaching and learning process of dressage.

A more operational definition of communication can be found through Littlejohn’s table of communicative behaviors. This table narrowed down nine specific types of behaviors proposed by three different theorists that, when grouped, and depending on the role of the sender and receiver, defined communication. Clevenger’s communication behavior model seemed to be the most appropriate for the type of communication processes in teaching dressage. For example, referring to the model (p. 8 of this document) we saw intentional verbal messages sent and received with the interactions between the coaches and the riders on a continual basis during the teaching sessions (3C). Intentional nonverbal messages and symptoms were also sent and received (2C), as were some incidental verbal (3B) messages. From some of the

examples we saw in the context with the beginner riders on the green horses and intermediate riders on the schoolmasters, it was not uncommon for the rider to send unintentional messages to the horse (1C). (The horse would respond in a way the rider didn't expect.) Non-perceived, nonverbal messages (2A) could be transmitted from beginner riders to the school horses, since the riders are learning the aids (seat, leg, and rein) and how to use them; essentially, learning how to ride. For example, if a rider had difficulty asking for the canter, (the horse wasn't cantering), it would show that the rider needed to work on how to use their legs to 'cue' the horse for canter.

Though these types of messages were seen throughout the different contexts I studied the work in this thesis went a step further to compare the pathways between and within a variety of rider and horse levels. As far as we know, there are very few, if any, studies that have provided qualitative descriptions of communication (type of messages and pathways) involving the same three actors in different contexts.

As Littlejohn (1999) stated, the process of inquiry in communication starts with a systematic study of experience to which we can understand and then gain knowledge. This project started with a basic examination of the descriptive properties of the process of communication in dressage, addressing elements that were observed from interviews and videos. These facts then led to properties about the process of communication that we found needed further investigation, such as the culture of dressage in order for us to understand the communication in dressage better. More observations and videos (the second stage of inquiry according to Littlejohn) led to the construction of models of communication that differed depending on the level of riders and horses.

Early in this study, it became clear that the model proposed by Fuoss & Troppmann (1981) to explain communication in sport was limited with regards to explaining the communication processes in dressage. These authors stated that a necessary condition for human communication is an interdependent relationship between source and receiver. Since communication was a dyadic concept, each required the other for effective communication. As we saw in this project, one of the main actors in the communication process was the horse. The horse had two important and prominent roles in the development of riders and in a sense, the sport of dressage: one as teacher, and the second as an athlete of dressage. Thus because of the horse's role in the communication process, the interaction became triadic: the coach, the rider, and of course, the horse.

Fuoss and Troppmann continued to describe communication as "the goal of the interaction as a merger of self and other, a complete ability to anticipate, predict and behave in accordance with the joint needs of self and other" (p.123). Interaction may be defined as the ideal of communication – the goal of human communication. Again, this description does not include the horse in the communication process as a receiver and sender of messages. The goal of the interaction according to these authors can be seen in dressage, as advanced riders who reach the level of effective communication with clear signals so that the horse understands which occurs with the help of the coach. Here, messages are not always verbal, but mostly kinesthetic when the horse is involved. An example of a kinesthetic message from the rider to the horse would be the rider applying more pressure with both of their legs to get the horse to step more forward with its hind legs. And then once the horse responded correctly, giving the horse a pat on the neck for reinforcement.

Practical Implications

Where does this lead us? Based on our review of literature, this study has implications for practical use in teaching equestrian sports as well as in a variety of domains related to the arena of coaching. There is a lack of scientific literature within the domain of effective coaching in horseback riding. While there is material pertaining to coaching certification programs in Canada (3M National Coaching Certification Program (3M NCCP)), and in equestrian sports, provincial federations (for example the Quebec Equestrian Federation (FEQ)) and national federations (CEF) the aspect of communication is never covered in great depth. An effective coach must be skilled at sending and receiving messages in a variety of situations (Spink, 1991). The six different contexts presented, illustrated just how the process of communication can change depending on the context. We saw just how the importance of the pathways varied accordingly to horse, and/or rider level. And, two of the pathways that remained constant through the study were the interaction between the coach and rider, as well as the coach continually observing the interaction between the horse and rider, demonstrating the importance of the coach's role. This could have further implications for coaching in equestrian sports. As the model clearly showed the role of the horse and in some instances with the horse as teacher, was also important in the teaching/learning process of dressage. One rider had two teachers in two contexts (the coach and the horse). Adopting the concept of having a horse as a valuable teacher to riders, is something that can be pursued and emphasized even more. Of course, this means that suitable horses are needed, for this 'job'.

Because horseback riding is considered one of the riskiest sports, communication can be crucial. The coach needs to be able to watch the rider and predict what the horse will do at the same time. This could be important in a situation where the horse is green. And, for coaches to be able to provide and maintain a safe learning environment, enhance rider learning, give feedback and instruction, they must have an extensive knowledge base (Manross & Templeton, 1997; Tan, 1997). This, according to Cooke & Lorraine (1997) includes theoretical knowledge, as well as having the ability to communicate that knowledge effectively.

It has been noted that the sport of dressage in Canada, although developing, is not at the same level of European countries due to the lack of good quality show horses and schoolmasters.

Our system here (in Canada) is, we have very few trained horses, and those trained horses don't train riders. They get retired, you know. In Germany, there are a lot of trained horses and they get re-sold or pros have so many that young riders can learn on trained horses. It's much easier (Coach 2, Phase 2).

Because of this, the development of riders will be limited which one coach spoke about in the interview.

Everybody (in Europe) knows how to put a horse on the bit, or just about and how to put the horse in front of the leg and how to do lateral movements and how to do flying changes. And that's the basics. Here, it's not the basics anymore. Most people don't know how to do that...a lot of trainers don't know themselves because they've never been taught (Coach 2, Phase 2).

According to this coach, not only does Canada need good coaches to promote the development of riders, but also higher quality, better trained horses in order for the riders to learn on. Without these horses, the development of the sport as a whole will be somewhat limited and slower than in the countries that already have those horses and coaches available to them.

This study can also have implications for sports other than dressage. As shown in our review of literature, the study of communication in sport has often been restricted at looking at what the coaches are saying to the athletes. This approach has two important limits. First in this context the athlete plays a passive role, he/she is the receiver of messages. Second, only the verbal messages are considered. The importance of kinesthetic messages is not recognized although they are central in many sports. The findings from this study and the models proposed can certainly become a starting point to help coaches to better understand the communication process in their sport. For example, to be effective in teaching sailing, coaches need to pay attention to the ‘interactions’ between the sailor and the boat. The teaching-learning process becomes more than only a coach teaching techniques to athlete.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis project was to examine the communication process within the context of dressage. The first phase raised two interesting findings that provided implications for further modifications of the classical model of communication processes presented by Fuoss & Troppmann. Dressage does involve verbal and auditory interaction between two people, the coach and the rider, but the horse also had an important role. The second phase was then designed to examine in more depth, the horse’s role in the teaching and learning process of dressage, as well as the culture. Findings showed that communication was primarily kinesthetic between the horse and rider and that the coach’s role was integral because dressage was feeling, and so rider’s needed to learn ‘feel’ in order to ride dressage. Results also showed that coaches take into consideration the horse who can then be used to teach the rider such as when learning

new movements for example. In this context, the rider had two teachers: the coach and the horse.

The third phase of the project was designed to look at this concept in a variety of different contexts. Observing and interviewing riders of different levels as well as the coaches showed a number of similarities regarding the process of communication, as well as important differences across and between contexts that contribute to the model proposed in the first phase of the project. Depending on whether the rider was teaching the horse, or the horse was teaching the rider, the pathway of communication would be emphasized more between those two actors. The role of the coach was always a consistent actor in the process as careful observation of both the rider and the horse for instruction and correction as well as feedback would be necessary. Depending on the context, the coach would be there to either focus on teaching the rider basic aids or as seen in another context, teaching the rider how to train the horse.

Results from this study could contribute towards developing a teaching tool for practical uses to help riders develop better communication with their horses. This would serve to reinforce the importance of the coach's role in the teaching and learning process of riding. As well, the role of the horse in the teaching and learning of a dressage rider is important not only to develop a correct rider, but in an overall sense such as promoting the sport as a whole. For this to occur, good quality horses are needed to become available to those who want to learn dressage.

The next practical step would be to try and increase the awareness of these issues to riders and coaches through the literature so that coaches teaching out of stables adopt better awareness of the consequences of effective communication skills. Ideally, to

continue publishing and making the work available to coaches and educators out there to read and implement, would be a satisfactory method to increasing and advancing their education. Based on the responses from the participants as the study was in progress, their overall reaction to the project was, in general, quite positive.

From a qualitative point of view, the methods employed in this study were quite adequate because the data obtained from the riders and coaches was enough to illustrate any subtle differences that occurred between the six contexts we had. The purpose of this study was not to generalize, and so what we presented was solely based on what we were able to extract from the data with these specific coaches, riders, and their horses. However, from my perspective, I had no other choice than to use this methodology since no other technique would have generated the same type of results. Overall, systematically observing, videotaping, and interviewing on a continual basis, analyzing immediately afterwards, and adapting to what the participants said, was an ideal method for studying the communication aspect.

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Appendix A: Ethics



Université d'Ottawa · University of Ottawa

Faculté des sciences de la santé
Cabinet de la faculté

Faculty of Health Sciences
Office of the Dean



**CERTIFICATION INSTITUTIONNELLE DU COMITÉ DE DÉONTOLOGIE
DE LA RECHERCHE SUR LES ÊTRES HUMAINS
FACULTÉ DES SCIENCES DE LA SANTÉ**

Le Comité de déontologie de la recherche sur les êtres humains de la Faculté des sciences de la santé, mandaté à cette fin par l'Université d'Ottawa certifie avoir étudié le projet soumis par **Professeurs Pierre Trudel, François Tochon et Jean-Paul Dionne** de l'École des sciences de l'activité physique pour le projet intitulé « *La communication qui aide le jeune : analyse de l'adéquation entre le message de l'entraîneur et la perception des jeunes sportifs* ». Le comité confirme que ce projet répond entièrement aux normes déontologiques à un niveau de catégorie 1A.

COMPOSITION DU COMITÉ

<u>Nom (Optionnel)</u>	<u>Poste occupé</u>	<u>Département ou discipline</u>
Victor Boucher	Professeur	Programme d'audiologie et d'orthophonie
François Tremblay	Professeur	Programme de physiothérapie
Claire-Jehanne Dubouloz	Professeure	Programme d'ergothérapie
Mark Grenier	Étudiant	École des sciences de l'activité physique
Jocelyne Tourigny	Professeure	École des sciences infirmières
Julian Roberts	Professeur	Département de criminologie
Roch Paquin	Membre affilié	
J. Roger Proulx	Président	Comité de déontologie

SIGNATURE

13/01/98
Date

Président du comité de déontologie- J. Roger Proulx, Ph.D.

Appendix B: Letter of Information (for Phase One)

Universite d'Ottawa • University of Ottawa

Faculty of Health Sciences
School of Human Kinetics

LETTER OF INFORMATION

When a research project involves studying individuals by a member of the University of Ottawa, the Ethics Committee of the University requires the written consent of the participants. This does not imply that the project involves any type of risk; the intention is simply to assure the respect and the confidentiality of the participants concerned.

This research project will be conducted by Lucy Cumyn under the supervision of Professor Pierre Trudel, both from the University of Ottawa. In this project, data will be collected in order to study the method riding instructors employ to teach dressage during schooling sessions. Data will be collected in the following five contexts.

1. During two schooling sessions.
2. During an interview following the two schooling sessions.
3. During an interview in which the instructor comments or gives retrospective feedback while watching the videotaped schooling sessions.
4. During two more schooling sessions.
5. During a follow-up interview after these two schooling sessions.
6. (tentative) During a conclusive interview.

A video camera will be used to record each schooling sessions while the coach wears a cordless microphone that can be turned off at any time. Interviews will be tape-recorded.

The main objective of this study is to analyze a dressage coach's instructional methods with the use of a coding system to be used in the six contexts mentioned above. This will hopefully provide a general overview of how the retrospective use of video-cameras influence and enhance the teaching methods of dressage coaches in schooling sessions.

A copy of the transcript will be provided should the participant wish to read and check for honesty and truthfulness. A copy of the final report will be also provided upon request of the participant.

We wish to inform you that this is on a purely voluntary basis and you may decline further participation at any time.

Please feel free to contact us any time.

Pierre Trudel, Ph.D. Supervisor of Research Project
School of Human Kinetics
125 Universite, Pavillon Montpetit
The University of Ottawa
K1N 6N5
(613) 564-9111

Lucy Cumyn
School of Human Kinetics
Graduate Studies
The University of Ottawa

Appendix C: Consent Form

Universite d'Ottawa • University of Ottawa

Faculty of Health Sciences
School of Human Kinetics

CONSENT FORM

After being informed about the goal of the study done by Lucy Cumyn under the supervision of Professor Pierre Trudel from the University of Ottawa, on the analysis of dressage instruction in schooling sessions, I consent to participate in this phase of the study.

I know that in this study, my participation will be needed for an initial interview, two schooling sessions, two subsequent interviews, with one interview being retrospective in nature, involving the observation of the schooling sessions, following by two more schooling sessions, and lastly, a final interview.

I am aware that I may withdraw from this study at any time.

I understand that there may not be any direct benefit to me from participating in this study. I will be advised on my personal results when all the analyses have been completed. A report pertaining to this phase of the study will be sent to me, should I wish.

I also understand that the results will be kept strictly confidential and that my name will not appear in any publications.

If transcripts are appropriate to illustrate the data analysis procedures, I give my consent to have it used under the conditions that confidentiality and anonymity will be respected by the researcher.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Pierre Trudel, Ph.D. Supervisor of Research Project
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Lucy Cumyn
School of Human Kinetics
Graduate Studies
The University of Ottawa

Appendix D: Requirements of dressage levels

C.E.F. Dressage Tests

Basic 1A, B, C (20 m circles, working walk, trot, canter)
Basic 2A, B, C (15 m circles, working walk, trot, canter, lengthen trot and canter)
Basic 3A, B, C (15 m circles, 10 m circles, lengthen trot and canter, leg yields)
Basic 4A, B, C
Medium 1A, B, C
Medium 2A, B, C
Medium 3A, B, C
Medium 4A, B, C
Advanced A, B, C, D

F.E.I. Dressage Tests - Junior

FEI Pony/Junior Championship test: Preliminary
FEI Pony/Junior Championship test: Team
FEI Pony/Junior Championship test: Individual

FEI Junior Competition test: Preliminary
FEI Junior/Competition test: Team

FEI Junior Championship test: Individual

FEI Young Rider Competition test: Preliminary
FEI Young Rider Competition test: Team
FEI Young Rider Competition test: Individual

F.E.I. Dressage Tests (these are the upper levels of dressage)

Prix St. Georges
Intermediaire 1
Intermediaire 2
Grand Prix
Grand Prix Special (Olympic level)

*In the Basic and Medium levels, the tests are graded in difficulty. Generally, the higher the level, the smaller the circles, the more collected the horse becomes, and consequently, the harder the tests. Lateral work is introduced and gradually increases in difficulty to demonstrate the training and suppleness of the horse.

On the score sheet, each test has, at the end, collective marks for the following four elements:

1. Paces (freedom and regularity)
2. Impulsion (desire to move forward, elasticity of the steps, suppleness of the back, and engagement of the hindquarters).
3. Submission (attention and confidence; harmony, lightness and ease of the movements; acceptance of the bridle and lightness of the forehand).
4. Rider's position and seat; correctness and effect of the aids.

The paces: walk, trot, canter (collected, working, lengthening, which at higher levels, becomes extensions)

Appendix E: Participants

Table 1

Coach	Rider	Horse	Phase One	Phase Two	Phase Three
1			*	*	*
	1	SM	*	*	
	2	B	*		
	5	SH			*
	6	SH			*
2				*	*
	4	AH		*	*
3					
	3	GH		*	*
	1	SM			*
	7	GH			*

B=basic level dressage SM=schoolmaster SH=school horse AH=advanced horse
GH=green horse

Coach 1:

Coach 1 is a Level 2 certified CEF coach who owns and operates a riding stable in Quebec for the past 20 years. Most of the students are in dressage however, there are some in hunter jumper and eventing. Coach 1 has trained horses in jumping and more recently, in dressage. The students range from beginner level to advanced levels both in jumping and dressage. For the third phase of this project, this coach was Rider 7.

Coach 2:

Coach 2 is a Level 3 CEF certified dressage coach who owns and operates a private dressage stable also in Quebec. This coach trains dressage horses and competes nationally at the Grand Prix level.

Coach 3:

Coach 3 is a Level 3 CEF certified dressage coach and a Grand Prix rider who also coaches and judges dressage internationally as well as gives clinics to riders of all different levels.

Appendix F: Excerpt from interview transcript

*I: Could you describe what you had the rider work on during the lesson and why?

C: OK, you ready?

I: Yup.

C: OK so, the situation was quite different from the last time. Um b/c of the cold weather the horse had not worked in a few days and I realized he was v uptight, short strided, short backed and pulling, so what I did is I waited longer to start the lesson until the horse had a better warm up and uh, that took awhile, and then I realized that the student was upset b/c there was a lot going on with the snowblowing and everything, and um she was quite stressed, so while I did the exercises, the shoulder in and half pass she ran into some problems. So we tried the same thing but in a different way and at the v end we ended up doing it better but in an easier way. So what I did is I, I worked on the horse but I made sure that I, I achieved a positive, um, um, result even though the task was easier than I would have liked to, and I stayed with that exercise in the canter we did the same thing after we got it in the trot, we did the half pass and used that what we had worked on to go into the canter pirouette which was well, well prepared through the half pass b/c if I had done other things it would not have worked on that day.

I: OK b/c the exercises that you chose were easier or a little bit easier than what you would have liked in order to get him relaxed.

C: Not really no. Um, the exercise was not easier but it was done in an easier line.

I: OK

C: to achieve a good result, I could have made a, it was still a half pass, I could have made it tighter, but it wouldn't have been as good so I chose to make it um less advanced that the horse can normally do, um, and um then it was performed better. B/c that day he was stiffer and he wouldn't bend and then b/c we got it like that in the trot I stayed w/the same exercise once we got it to go into the canter and not change anything and I prepared the canter pirouette from that exercise that he had worked on and then he succeeded the first time he did it and then it was easier on, and so then I did not change the exercise I went right from the half pass to the canter pirouette and then the rider had to not change anything; keep the same aids, keep the same thing and it was kind of assured success.

I: OK and did you notice then that she was more relaxed afterwards?

C: well you know when you succeed in doing something makes you feel better!

I: yeah

C: and that's why we, that's why I chose that exercise b/c I know if I had gone into changes he would have scooted off and um, it, there always has to be some pleasure in the lesson and otherwise you work on v difficult things and you don't achieve success it's quite frustrating or upsetting.

I: So you wanted it for both the horse

C: and the rider b/c the rider became thrilled with the quality of the pirouette from the half pass and from the work and at the beginning of the ride I realized that she was quite, quite upset.

I: and so, um b/c of that you had to change what you had planned to do?

C: Well...it just didn't work as I had planned.

*I: denotes interviewer

C: denotes 'coach'

Appendix G: Glossary of horse terms

Eventing: Three phases of horsemanship, where the first phase is dressage, the second phase is cross-country which is jumping over natural obstacles and into water. The third phase consists of stadium jumping, which is a course of colored fences.

Lunging: Exercising or suppling a horse on a circle of various sizes depending on the purpose, connected to a line which is held by the rider.