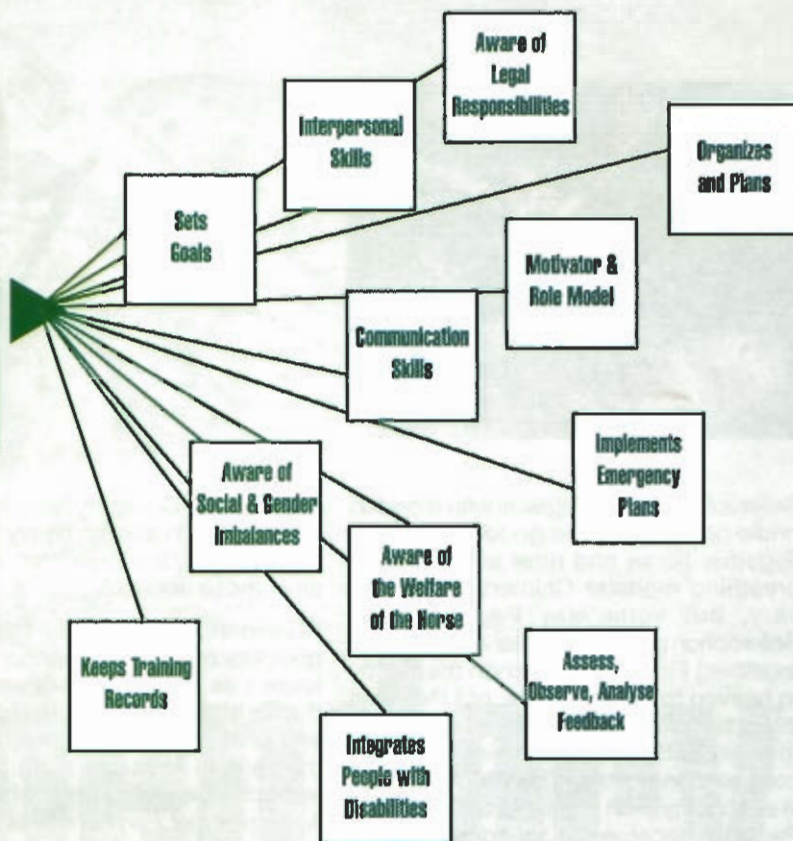


The Role of a Coach



By Dr. Mohamed Elsherbini

Trainers and instructors have a special responsible and varied role in the equestrian sport. Riders and horses with their different aptitudes have to be trained and improved upon in accordance to the principles of classical horsemanship. The riders must be taught at the same time to handle horses safely and appropriately. This task requires the following:

High levels of practical riding skills and training experience: this should result from riding as many different horses as possible and taking part in different equestrian disciplines. The instructor should be willing and able to put himself in the student's shoes so that he can then use the expert knowledge and emphasising skills to correct faults and allow the rider to progress.

An aptitude for teaching: certain character traits are necessary for this job. For example generous, helpful, mature self controlled correct enthusiasm and natural love for horses.

The coach sets an example and that is not only through his riding and horse handling, but also personally through his behaviour. Until the basic principles are established, the students need to have an instructor they can relate to. If the instructor is changed suddenly or too soon, confusion can result. Advanced riders and even top-level competition riders also need to be corrected constantly by experienced professionals in order to combat the faults which can develop very easily



when working unsupervised.

Always remember that a good lesson should be well planned, simple, and fun for both rider and horse; communicating well with students will result in some improvement and making the rider hope for more, whilst a bad lesson is one with no plan, boring, and aimless, leaving bad memories to both rider and horse.

More than 350 years ago, 'Pluvinel' gave us great words of advice:

"We shall take great care not to annoy the horse and spoil his friendly charm,

for it is like a scent of blossom - once lost, it will never return."

Basic training is a novice outline that aims to make the horse supple and sensitive to the rider's aids. The horse moves in a horizontal balance within its natural strides, the rider adapting to the horse's movement. The aim of advanced training is to bring the horse into a state of maximum suppleness and obedience. By making the horse totally obedient to the rider's aids, one achieves the best muscle and joint response of the horse leading to extreme propulsive power. **HT**