

The Importance of Language in Coaching

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A colleague of mine, [Colin Bennett](#) shared a recent article around the concepts of [Language in Coaching](#) and it reminded me of a previous blog of mine around how use of language is so important in promoting learning and development

As a coach educator, I promote the concept of simple, basic, easy to understand phrases when delivering coaching sessions and when speaking to children. Here are some of my top tips:

1. **Listen to yourself** - Have you ever really listened to what you are saying? You may understand what you mean, but do you really? And more crucially, do your players? *Always check that your players, and fellow coaches, understand what you mean.*
2. **Listen to others** – Building on from above, listen to what your coaches and players are saying. It is a great way of checking for understanding, but you may also be confused as to what they are saying. *Make sure you check for your own understanding as well their.*
3. **Count your words** – don't over talk! You can often get your point across in under 30 seconds, so don't use 5 minutes to make the same point. *Be brief, let them play and if you need to repeat the information, be brief again... and maybe try a different way of explaining.*
4. **Count your information** – don't overload the information. Give players a single piece of information to develop at a time. This avoids confusion over your message, and can always be added to when progress is needed. *You build a jigsaw piece by piece, and not all at once.*
5. **Paint the Picture** – do you even need to talk? Demonstration is a great way of sharing information. If you can't demonstrate the skill, there are lots of ways to show it: for example, the players themselves, video clips. *Tell me and I may forget, Show me and I may remember, Involve me and I will understand.*
6. **Don't talk....** – your players may already know it and/or can figure it out by themselves. So why coach something that is already happening? *Let them play and set them problems to solve and adapt to.*

Obviously, the emphasis on the above points varies from group to group, and with individuals within the groups. It isn't all about just talking, or just showing or giving the players the opportunity to solve problems on their own, but a balance of them all. The right intervention at the right time will develop players and their understanding.

It would be great to hear of your top tips around the use of language, and how you develop learning and understanding - remember, sharing is caring...just add a comment below!

Jon

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