

It ain't what you say, it's what gets heard

Published 25/10/16 by [Andrew Beaven](#)

Fascinating little video clip from @CoachLisle, which beautifully illustrates the perils of (mis)communication for coaches. (If the video doesn't play you can view it on the initial tweet [here](#))

Rule #1: Keep Your Eye On The Ball pic.twitter.com/RJS1jEVZ97

— Matt Lisle (@CoachLisle) [17 October 2016](#)

Top listening skills from the player, great learning opportunity for the coach!

There is a lot to be said for *all* coaches spending time with young players and beginners - to refine their communication skills, and identify the core, non-negotiable elements of technical skills.

If you were teaching a three year old to hit a ball, where would you start? Grip, stance, back-swing? Or "look at the ball, swing the bat back and whack"?

It would be interesting to hear from other coaches of their experiences coaching young players - good, and less good; successes and new learning opportunities (no failures, please).

I have been coaching groups of 3-4 year olds for a couple of years, now. Lots of learning opportunities (for players and coaches), only a very few tantrums and tears (players and coaches, again).

We certainly see the benefits as the young players “graduate” to “proper” cricket sessions, in enhanced concentration and engagement, significantly advanced striking and catching skills, and often greater general athleticism.

But what of the coaches?

We certainly watch what we say – aside from the genuine misunderstandings and inappropriate "jargon", the players quickly learn that they can “accidentally” misunderstand the coaches' words for comic effect. Instructions are kept short, and as explicit and unambiguous as possible.

Technical instruction is whittled down to the minimum. The ECB Coach Education "core principles" come out a lot.

Want to hit the ball?

- Are you ready? [balanced & comfortable 'set-up']
- Can you reach the ball? [coordinated body movements]
- Can you see the ball? [head in optimal position to see the ball]
- Use the flat side of the bat [implicit – grip the bat and swing it so that the full face meets the ball].

Throw the ball?

We use “pointy position” – hold the ball in one hand, then point with the other hand at your target, with the other foot, with your nose, where you want the ball to go; then follow the ball [implicit – select your target; establish strong base; energy transferred to the ball and towards target]

Catch?

- Big bucket hands [present comfortable and maximal catching area].

Oh, and *always* keep your eye on the ball...sorry, *look at* the ball...whether hitting or catching.

With thanks to Dr Edward Coghlan ([@DrSkillAcq](#)) and Stuart Armstrong ([@stu_arm](#)) for re-tweeting the original post from [@CoachLisle](#)

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tags : coaching-children, communication