

# Effective Communication for Coaches

Published 25/05/17 by [Alexis Lebedew](#)

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I recently attended a great presentation by a skill acquisition specialist focussing on effective communication for coaches.

The great part of it was that all the presented did is present research findings. It wasn't his opinion, it was information based on research.

The research findings (and I'll paraphrase) were:

- Guided Discovery has a Moderate rate of change, but changes are permanent and resistant to pressure. Direct Instruction has a Fast rate of change but are impermanent and not resistant to pressure
  - So.....allow the athletes to make errors and work things out for themselves
- Of three different methods of feedback (Corrective only, Positive only, Positive then Corrective) the least effective is Corrective only. Yep - just saying nice things is more effective than just giving corrective feedback. The most effective is Positive then Corrective
  - So.....if nothing else, say something positive first
- Adapted Practice (open training drills) doesn't show improvements as quickly as Blocked Practice, but demonstrates significantly higher long term retention
  - So.....create an open environment where athletes can make errors and they will have better long term learning
- Less feedback is actually better for long term retention of changes
  - So.....allow the athletes to make errors and work things out for themselves
- When athletes ask for feedback they are more likely to incorporate it into their understanding, and they retain any learning
  - So.....allow the athletes to make errors and work things out for themselves
- Coaches say approximately twice as much as they think they do, during training
  - So.....!

The key outcome for me was:

- Reflection = Retention
  - if we allow space for athletes to reflect, they retain what they learn better than just doing what they are told for a short period of time

We all coach differently, have different styles and different philosophies. But, what is presented above isn't a philosophy, its science.

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