

“COACHING IS inspired teaching” is an expression that has been near and dear to my heart throughout my days in this profession. As coaches we are teachers. Our players are our students, the gym is our classroom.

Here are a dozen ideas that serve as valuable reminders as I strive to improve myself in this most essential area of coaching.

1. IF IT ISN'T BROKE, FIX IT ANYWAY.

Always look for better ways to do things. Make your good teaching methods even better. The best teachers are generally the best students and never stop learning. The best teachers are “experts” in their subject area. When we cease to improve, we’re dead.

2. PLAN YOUR WORK, WORK YOUR PLAN.

Organization is at the heart of good teaching. Know what you are going to teach, how you are going to teach it, when you’ll teach it, to whom you are teaching it and why you are teaching it.

3. THE K.I.S.S. FORMULA.

It’s time tested and still rings true today: “Keep It Simple, Stupid!” Our jobs as teachers is to “trim as much fat” as possible off what we teach. Be specific in terms of teaching only things players will do in the game. Ask yourself: Is what I’m teaching necessary for success? Simplicity leads to quality.

4. BUILD ON ROCK, NOT ON SAND.

Teach the basic skills first and build progressively to those that are more difficult and challenging. As in building a house, it’s the foundation that allows it to withstand the storms that come along.

5. HAVE A VISION FOR YOUR STUDENTS.

What do you see for your players individually and your team collectively? Paint a picture of what they can become. Don’t underestimate the value of Salesmanship in effective teaching.

6. ATTITUDES AND TECHNIQUES.

Along with teaching the techniques, teach the intangibles that make those techniques successful under the most trying circumstances. It’s the intangible qualities that lead to the highest level of execution

7. WE REMEMBER BEST WHAT WE SEE.

Students are better visual learners than auditory learners. Demonstrate the correct technique while explaining it.

8. GET TO THE POINT.

Keep your explanations and demonstrations concise. Be specific. What’s the attention span of your students? Don’t overwhelm players with too much information.

9. SAY IT ONCE, DO IT TEN TIMES. Students learn best by doing. Repetition, then, is the mother of learning.

10. DON’T JUST DO IT, DO IT RIGHT.

Demand quality execution from your players. Repetition alone is not enough, its quality repetitions that count. Doing things right requires discipline and mental toughness on the-part of both the players and the coach. Coaches must recognize excellence in the performance of our players. Habits, good or bad, are hard to break.

11. TEACH ON THE RUN.

Once the techniques have been explained and demonstrated, correct and instruct your players as they are doing it. Avoid stopping the group to instruct one player unless it's something everyone can benefit from.

12. DON'T BLAME THE LEMON ON THE WORKERS.

If things aren't successful, evaluate. How can you do a better job with your players? Ask another coach to evaluate your practices or games and be open to criticism. Listen to your players, especially your graduating seniors, as it's amazing what you can learn.

Source: Will Rey, Assistant Men's Coach, Wright University (Dayton, Ohio)