



CHAPTER 4

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

LUKE'S DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. “The ability to see accurately is a coach’s first skill” (162). Why is **careful observation** so challenging as a coach and what can you do about it?
2. “Believing you can process that much information without tracking it in some organized way is incompatible with an understanding of how the brain works. If your primary approach to watching training is taking mental notes, you’re not **treating your observations as data** and are missing a critical tool that can help your athletes get better faster” (165).
 - a. How and why can data tracking by writing it down and keeping a notebook help? What might some pitfalls be? What could go wrong?
 - b. Share an example with the group of how you’ve been able to effectively take data during practice. Or if you haven’t tried it, take notes on your note taking. Try it out and share your observations.
3. Draft exemplars or what **ideal execution** looks like for 2-3 concepts of skills.
 - a. Basketball Example: Shot Fake (Skill) - Legs loaded, eyes to rim, ball to chin.
4. “To **build a culture of error** is to show that mistakes are normal and valuable to study so we can shift players away from doing things like deflecting blame onto others, rationalizing mistakes, or seeking to hide them - from their coaches but also from themselves” (172-173).
 - a. Write down 2-3 phrases you can use to reinforce a culture of error in your next training session.

5. **“Anticipate Errors** - that is, if you take a few minutes when you are planning a training exercise and specifically ask yourself, ‘What are the things players are most likely to get wrong as they do this?’ *And then write those things down*” (169).
- Draft a list of common errors players make within a specific phase of play or training exercise.
 - Write down criteria for when and how you will intervene to correct this error if it appears.
 - Ex: “When 3 or more players have made this mistake, I will intervene and do/say”
6. “If (**emotional constancy**) is relevant for classroom teachers, it is doubly so for coaches, who are perhaps doubly likely to give feedback wrapped in strong emotion and just possibly to romanticize doing so - to believe that it makes them a better coach if their feedback frequently comes with a raised voice” (175).
- What are the downsides for athletes and the team of high emotion and expressing deep frustration?
 - What is one practical thing you can do to remain more emotionally constant when coaching and correcting errors?
7. When in doubt, plan your model” (181).
- Describe a time when a demonstration was suboptimal. The demonstration might not have been a total disaster, but it just wasn’t very effective.
 - Draft a demonstration that you will use in your next practice and script out exactly how you will “call your shot” and direct players’ eyes to what they should observe.

ABOUT LUKE



Luke Gromer is a high school teacher and basketball coach in Fayetteville, Arkansas. He's the founder of Transform Sport, an organization that's on a mission to help coaches get better at teaching and leading. He's also the host of The Coaches Club Podcast, which features weekly conversations with coaches, experts, and leaders in sport.

You can follow Luke and The Coaches Club Podcast on Twitter at @LukeGromer and @CoachesClub_. You can also learn more about Transform Sport and how they support coaches at transformsport.org. If you'd like to contact Luke, send him an email at luke@transformsport.org.

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