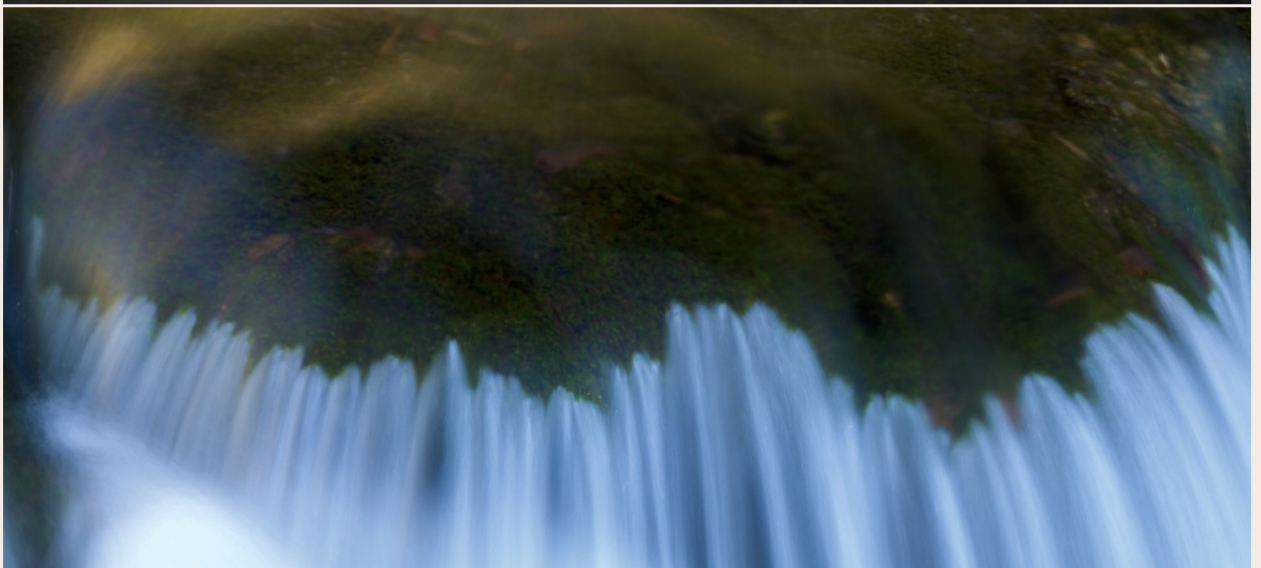


Transformative Talk

Cognitive Coaches Share Their Stories



Edited by **GAVIN GRIFT**

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Foreword

To become a Cognitive Coach requires the investment of a great deal of time, energy and learning. For some, it requires abandoning old habits in order to make room in one's repertoire for new patterns of behavior. Even more strenuous for some, it requires adaptive change—shifting mental models to accommodate new beliefs and values. It requires building new sources of mental energy to stay focused on one's intentions, to become a spectator of one's own actions and to have the fortitude and inclination to self-modify.

Is it worth the investment? This book provides a collection of vignettes, tips, lessons learnt and reflections on personal learning journeys as skilled and dedicated educators sought to improve not only their own skills in this meditative practice, but support others in developing self-renewing capacities.

These descriptions of personal experiences and insights support the findings (Edwards, 2013) that Cognitive Coaching enhances student achievement, teachers become even more efficacious, their thought processes become more reflective and complex, teacher morale and satisfaction is heightened, school cultures become more collaborative and professional and that teachers' personal lives are enhanced.

These stories corroborate our beliefs about mediating teacher thinking and research-based conclusions. This book is about Cognitive Coaching for Cognitive Coaches by leaders and practitioners of Cognitive Coaching from America, Australia and Canada. Readers not familiar with Cognitive Coaching may find in this book ideas to support their own leadership and enough examples to pique interest in learning more about this meditative practice.

Editor Gavin Grift poses a dilemma common to those who critically reflect on their work. As a successful support provider and consultant, he found that the more he learnt, the greater his potency to distill and deliver knowledge to others about teaching and learning with corresponding expansion of his own perception of self-worth. Yet, when he began to question his effect on others' ability to develop along their own paths to become self-directed learners, he found that his practices were lacking toward this aim.

In Cognitive Coaching he found the means to foster capacities for self-directed learning within all members of a school community, developing, protecting and liberating the very intellectual qualities we desire to develop in our students. The authors in this book elaborate on how, from a variety of roles, their own work in Cognitive Coaching has served to promote the basic drives of efficacy, consciousness, flexibility, craftsmanship, and interdependence. These drivers of relationships, thoughts, decisions and actions go far beyond classroom applications to develop mindful communities and individuals who are self-managing, self-monitoring and self-modifying.

The journey each author describes is at once a study in self-discovery and a handbook on what they found helpful to others. This is a book in which fixing is replaced with developing, solving is replaced with resolving and acting on others is replaced with acting on self. Topics treated include: using video in reflecting conversations, working with novice teachers in urban settings, leadership, trust, accountability, research, developing trainers, school site councils, classroom applications and so much more. It is, in a sense, a love song to the enduring contribution of Cognitive Coaching to the lives of the authors and those they touch.

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Preface

The concept for this book came about from the many participants approaching me during the Foundation Seminar, asking how they could apply Cognitive Coaching to their work. These discussions often centered on the application of the maps, tools and skills learnt in the training. As aspiring Cognitive Coaches grappled with how to utilize these high-level, interpersonal skills learnt for their own professional (and sometimes personal) contexts, questions would abound. Part of my desire in creating this book was to help others benefit from the experiences of my Cognitive Coaching journey, and those of my colleagues.

Transformative Talk is designed to assist an aspirant Cognitive Coach to build their capabilities. It draws upon each of the insights and experiences of Cognitive Coaching Training Associates and Agency Trainers who are making it work. In varying degrees, each chapter reflects personal journeys shared with the explicit intention to assist you in making connections to your own work and your own growth as a coach.

The structure of this book has been designed to support educators who fulfill a variety of different roles. You will find information, insights and strategies to assist your growth from a variety of perspectives. These include author reflections from their experiences as classroom teachers, school leaders, principals, support staff, coaches, systems leaders and researchers. *Transformative Talk* supports you in your ongoing goal to build both your identity and your capacity as a mediator of thinking.

Talk is critical to the complex, challenging and intrinsically satisfying work of educators. I hope the thinking encapsulated in this book provides you with the opportunity to continue transforming your talk so that we can continue to transform the thinking of others.

Gavin Grift

Chapter 1

The Power of Cognitive Coaching

Gavin Grift



.....

Gavin Grift is director of professional learning for Hawker Brownlow Professional Learning Solutions. With experience as a teacher, assistant principal and educational coach, Gavin uses Cognitive CoachingSM to connect with audiences on topics such as quality teacher practice, professional learning communities, collaboration and learning-centered leadership. Gavin is an author of numerous articles and books, including *Assessing the Whole Child* (2007) and *Teachers as Architects of Learning* (2013). As a PLC at WorkTM training associate, he led the establishment of the Professional Learning Communities Network in Australian schools, based on the foundational work of Dr. Richard DuFour, Rebecca DuFour and Bob Eaker. He also serves as a

global outreach consultant and training associate to Thinking Collaborative, which is the home of both Cognitive Coaching and Adaptive Schools.

.....

Becoming a Cognitive Coach

Cognitive Coaching is the single most powerful professional learning experience I have ever had as an educator. So powerful, in fact, that I chose not only to apply it in my work as teacher, coach and leader, but also to devote my career to it. I am now a Training Associate with Thinking Collaborative, where I am privileged to perform Cognitive Coaching regularly in schools and facilitate the Cognitive Coaching eight-day seminar to educators across Australasia.

So what is behind the power of Cognitive Coaching? The answer is both simple and complex. The simple answer is that Cognitive Coaching has the potential to change your identity as an educator – it certainly changed mine. Prior to embarking on my Cognitive Coaching journey, my identity as a support provider in education was that of consultant, and I was quite successful in my career at a relatively young age. Both the system I worked within and my experiences had taught me that success came from working hard, learning as much as I could and then applying this knowledge. The more I learnt about effective teaching and learning, particularly if it aligned to the priorities of both the school and the government system I worked in, the more successful I became. The more I knew, the better I perceived myself to be. The more I knew, the more success I had. So what was the problem?

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The problem was that my approach didn't necessarily translate into success for others. I may have impacted positively on students, parents and colleagues – and of course I hope that I did – but deep down I'm sure it was more out of accident than design. I had no idea how to grow others. This is the complex part.

If you believe, as I do, that the heart of the work we do as educators is to build success in others, then my identity as consultant was more of a hindrance than help. While I wanted others to succeed as a result of working with me, I was certainly not focused on building self-directedness in others. In fact, this went back to the way I operated as a classroom teacher. I came to realize that the very things I thought were assisting students might have actually been getting in the way.

Costa and Garmston (2002, p. 21), the pioneers of Cognitive Coaching, explain their work through the metaphor of a stagecoach that takes valued persons from where they are to where they want to be. This was especially illuminating to me. The first key words I was drawn to in this metaphor were 'valued persons.' How did I show my students and colleagues that I valued them? The second key word was 'taking.' How did my work support taking a person from where they were to where they wanted to be ?

Of course, consulting is both a necessary and powerful support function, but I am now able to weave it into a more powerful framework. After nearly eight years of working as a Cognitive Coach and as a Training Associate for this work, my identity has shifted to a default of Cognitive Coach.

Six insights for transformative talk

In this introductory chapter, you will learn six insights to support you in using talk as a transformational tool for working with others. Each insight will draw from the work of Cognitive Coaching and from my own experiences in the field. They will provide you with ideas for deepening your learning and application of Cognitive Coaching by challenging you to think about how the maps, tools and skills we learn in the training can be used to serve the students and colleagues you work with every day.

Synonyms of the word *insight* include vision, perception, understanding, intuition and comprehension. This fits with what I want to share. The insights are based on my *perception* of what is most useful for true *comprehension* in coaching; they come from my own *understanding* and intuition about what Cognitive Coaching is and how it supports the growth of others; my hope is that they will help the reader to create a broader *vision* of what Cognitive Coaching can do for them.

The six insights are outlined in this chapter under the following headings:

1. Look for formal and informal opportunities to coach

2. Name and shame unhelpful thinking
3. Know your intentions and choose congruent behaviors
4. Develop your situational flexibility
5. Start small but think big
6. Practice, practice, practice

Each insight has been structured with a definition (*what*) and tips for implementation (how). The insights are not listed in an order of importance. They are not intended to be used as a recipe, but rather to serve as a catalyst for thinking and action.

1. Look for formal and informal opportunities to coach

What?

Formal Cognitive Coaching occurs when you coach using one or more of the three mental maps that Cognitive Coaches employ to structure the coaching conversation; these are the Planning map, the Reflecting map and the Problem-Resolving map (Costa & Garmston 2002, p. 34). People tend to associate formal Cognitive Coaching conversations with planned and cyclical opportunities for coaching.

In contrast, informal Cognitive Coaching describes those occasions when you are coaching without cognitive attention to any of the maps. In essence, you are coaching with the purpose of mediation and subsequent self-directedness. Informal coaching is more likely to happen outside of the teacher observation structure within a school.

Many participants in Cognitive Coaching training sessions will state that they just can't find the time to coach. While it is true that some staff don't have the influence to build coaching structures into the culture of a school, it is also true that all of us have coaching opportunities presented to us everyday. Working in schools is highly interactive; we know that as soon as we pull up in the car park it's 'game on.' We are always interacting, whether with students, staff, parents or members of the wider community, and this provides us with many opportunities for coaching. In fact, any social interaction is an opportunity for us as Cognitive Coaches to practice becoming a mediator of thinking.

How?

It takes a heightened level of consciousness to remind ourselves of the opportunity to coach. As Costa and Garmston (2002, p. 135) explain: 'To make personal change, one must be conscious of one's own inner workings.' When we start to see interactions as opportunities to coach, we commit to our maps and tools with more rigor.

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If you think over the conversations you've had at work in the past week, I'm sure you can think of many instances where informal or formal coaching could have been useful. In the following example, compare the words of a coach who does not have a heightened state of consciousness with those of one who does. Both scenarios describe a conversation that informally evolves in the staff room when most teachers are in class.

Scenario 1

Colleague: I'm so over Ella. She is constantly distracting the other kids and exhausting me. It's like I have two sets of rules: one for her and one for the rest of the class. Her dad just came up to me in the corridor and accused me of picking on her all the time. I'm seriously over it!

Coach: Yeah, it's hard when that happens. I hate when parents do that. They have no idea that that's not going to help. They can only ever see it through the eyes of their child! I know exactly how you feel ... I had the same issues last year when I had Ella.

In the first version of Scenario 1, the coach didn't realize this was an opportunity for coaching. The colleague was reaching out in a heightened emotional state and showed definite signs of being stuck. However, instead of utilizing knowledge of the Problem-Resolving mental map, the coach ploughed into a sympathetic, autobiographical response and the opportunity for mediating thinking was lost.

Scenario 1 revisited

Colleague: I'm so over Ella. She is constantly distracting the other kids and exhausting me. It's like I have two sets of rules: one for her and one for the rest of the class. Her dad just came up to me in the corridor and accused me of picking on her all the time. I'm seriously over it!

Coach: So you're really at the end of your tether ...

Colleague: Yes, I am, and it makes it so hard to deal with her every day.

Coach: Yeah, it's hard ... What you want is to have influence over her behavior in a way that works for everybody.

Colleague: That's exactly what I want. I just don't know where to start.

In the revised version of Scenario 1, the coach seized the opportunity for mediation through a heightened consciousness of what was being said. They then used knowledge of the Problem-Resolving map to honor the coachee's existing state and create awareness of a possible desired state – a process that Cognitive Coaches know as *pacing* (Costa & Garmston 2002, p. 194). This exchange represents a coach who sees their default identity as Cognitive Coach – in other words, as a mediator of thinking – and applies a formal coaching conversation to an informal exchange in the staff room. Such work can only occur when a coach is keenly aware of the impact their response behaviors will have on others.

2. Name and shame unhelpful thinking

What?

Cognitive Coaching requires the highest level of attentive listening. In his influential work on the seven habits of highly effective people, Covey (1990, p. 235) argues that ‘empathetic communication’ – seeking to understand rather than be understood – is a critical strategy of high achievers. Empathetic listening is also paramount during a coaching conversation, where building self-directedness for the coachee is key. However, many things can get in the way. Unhelpful thought processes that surface during the process of listening are one such obstacle to attentive listening.

In this context, *unhelpful thinking* can be defined as those creeping thoughts that take you away from being truly present with your coachee. In order to put this unhelpful thinking aside, it is important to recognize unhelpful thoughts that are surfacing (*name*), then disregard them or find another way not to follow that train of thought (*shame*). Naturally, your ability to do this is enhanced by maintaining the heightened state of mind already discussed.

How?

If you have experienced the Cognitive Coaching Foundation Seminar, you will recognize the set-aside strategy as a valuable mental model for naming and shaming unhelpful thinking, while promoting the empathetic and attentive listening needed to effectively coach. The set-aside strategy encourages us to disregard unproductive patterns of listening, helping us to respond and inquire more successfully. Effective mediators of thinking are able to both recognize and eschew distracting thoughts – known as *set asides* – in order to more successfully serve the person being coached. As Cognitive Coaches, we are encouraged to resist the urge to become:

- autobiographical. When what we hear reminds us of a situation that we have experienced, we respond in ways that bring the focus of the conversation onto us rather than the person we are coaching.
- solution-focused. When we believe we have the best or only solution to the situation, the solution becomes ours rather than the coachee’s own. Again, this makes the conversation about us, minimizing opportunities for the coachee to build their self-directedness.
- inquisitive. When what we hear alerts us to a curiosity we have, it takes our listening and therefore our thinking away from the person we are coaching.

On the following page is an example of how these three set asides can easily slip into an interaction. It takes the form of a meeting between a principal and her Cognitive Coach.

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Scenario 2

Principal: I'm still struggling to bring our network principals on board to implement professional learning communities as our number one initiative. They just don't seem to understand what it means in any depth.

Coach: Ah, okay. I've had similar issues in the past and it's always made it so much harder when you feel that some just don't get it. There were times when I just went ahead and planned things anyway [autobiographical]. Maybe that's something for you to think about. At least the decisions you make will result in action and maybe bring more of them on board [solution-focused]. Who are the other principals you are working with? I think I might have worked with one of them before [inquisitive].

Can you hear yourself in the above example? How can we begin to break these natural and habitual ways of responding and inquiring?

Here, the power of the paraphrase is critical. Instead of drawing attention onto themselves, the coach reiterates their coachee's problem in different words, in this way both showing their empathy for the speaker and prompting self-directed problem resolution. In some ways, paraphrasing is more of a listening skill than a verbal one, as to do it well requires 100 per cent focus on the coachee. Examine the same scenario again, but where the coach uses paraphrasing as a tool to set aside the temptation to become autobiographical, solution-focused or inquisitive.

Scenario 2 revisited

Principal: I'm still struggling to bring our network principals on board to implement professional learning communities as our number one initiative. They just don't seem to understand what it means in any depth.

Coach: Ah, okay. So you're feeling frustrated by their refusal to buy into PLCs because of their lack of knowledge on the concept.

Principal: Absolutely.

Coach: What's your sense of where this lack of understanding comes from?

When a Cognitive Coach is deliberate in their intention to coach, then they must focus on the thinking of their colleague without becoming distracted by the inevitable thought processes that can sometimes be obstructive. A knowledge of the above three set asides, coupled with a commitment to utilizing paraphrasing in response behaviors, will ensure greater proficiency in your development as a coach.

3. Know your intentions and choose congruent behaviors

What?

Effective Cognitive Coaches develop four capabilities, as taught during the Cognitive Coaching Foundation Seminar. Costa and Garmston (2002, p. 401) define these capabilities as being about:

how one uses knowledge and skill. For the coach, these metacognitive functions include knowing one's intentions and choosing congruent behaviors, setting aside unproductive patterns of listening and responding, adjusting personal style preferences, and navigating within and among various coaching maps and support functions.

Knowing your own intentions and choosing congruent behaviors is essential in building momentum, confidence and skill in the art of coaching. When a coach is truly clear about what they want out of a conversation, they can more readily use the tools and capabilities of Cognitive Coaching to support coachees in achieving their desired outcomes. Put simply, this insight asks coaches to act in accordance with their purpose.

How?

People who are starting on their coaching journey often confuse what they want to achieve with the application of the maps, tools and skills of coaching. One example of this occurred while I was coaching a Year Six teacher, who on this occasion was modeling the formula for calculating the area of a two-dimensional shape. He had a shape drawn on the board and proceeded to pose a set of mediative questions to the students: 'What might be some ways we can work this out? What do you think this shape asks us to do? What might be some reasons for needing to work out the area of shapes?'

As the lesson went on, the teacher became more and more frustrated, as the responses he was receiving were low-level at best and in many cases non-existent. The question-and-response session also took up valuable time at the beginning of the lesson and didn't allow for much 'applying' time.

So what happened? During our Reflecting conversation, it became clear this was a case of his intention not matching his behavior. When I asked him what he was trying to achieve, his response was simple: 'I wanted them to know that length times width will give you the area of a two-dimensional shape.' If this was the case, it would have been better for him to have just told the students the formula and modeled it for them. Then, later, he could explore for deeper levels of thinking and connections through mediative questions.

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Examples of a mismatch between how we communicate and what we want are evident in many contexts. Another example of a mismatch follows.

Mismatch

A coach observes unprofessional conduct from a teacher in the way they handle a student's behaviors. During the Reflecting conversation, the coach asks leading questions (dressed up as mediative questions) to ensure the teacher recognizes that this conduct is unprofessional and possibly damaging to the child's wellbeing. The conversation quickly becomes uncomfortable for both coach and teacher, and trust whittles away as the coachee tries hard to work out what the coach is actually trying to say. As a result, the coachee becomes more defensive and the coach more agitated.

Match

A coach observes unprofessional conduct from a teacher in the way they handle a student's behavior. The coach realizes that before coaching can begin, certain non-negotiable information must be shared with the teacher, because it is an expectation at the school that professional standards are adhered to. Before initiating the Reflecting conversation, the coach asks the coachee if he can share an observation. The coachee agrees. The coach proceeds to outline the principles of the school's student wellbeing policy in relation to classroom management, then shares data that shows evidence of how a poorly handled interaction can damage the student. The coach explains that he wants to assist the teacher but feels it is important this is made clear.

Having matched their intention to congruent behaviors by imparting this non-negotiable information, the coach then initiates a Reflecting conversation with the long-term aim of self-directedness by asking, 'In light of this information, what seems to be going on for you?'

A Cognitive Coach develops the capability to act on their intention. To repeat, during Cognitive Coaching, you are taking a valued person from where they are to where they *want* to be. If your inclination is to tell the coachee where you think they should be, could be or ought to be, then DON'T COACH! The trick is learning to recognize this in yourself so you can act in a way that is congruent to your intentions.

4. Develop your situational flexibility

What?

Patterson et al. (2012) discuss the importance of being alert to what is happening in the moment when conversations go from routine to crucial. They remind us to base our approach on purposeful consciousness of what we observe in others, whether these observations are emotional, physical or behavioral. Similarly, Costa and Garmston (2002) refer to the concept of *situational flexibility*, which describes our ability to react according to the varied roles and responsibilities we take on in our job. They write:

CHAPTER 1 – THE POWER OF COGNITIVE COACHING

Skillful coaches may depart from Cognitive Coaching periodically to conduct these other forms of interaction (collaborating, consulting and evaluating). Because they continually strive to consummate their identity as mediators, however, they consciously return to the beliefs, values, principles, maps and tools of Cognitive Coaching as their default position. (Costa & Garmston 2002, p. 279)

So, while we strive to have Cognitive Coaching as our default identity, we also develop the skill of responding according to what we notice – from both a physiological and emotional perspective – as well as through a deep understanding of what our role asks from us at particular times. Cognitive Coaches learn to read a situation and respond accordingly, but in a way that continues to build the capacity of others to be successful.

How?

The story below about my experience with a principal with whom I have worked as Cognitive Coach for the past five years, provides an instructive example of how to develop and implement situation flexibility.

Gavin and Stella's story

My partnership with Stella started when she first took up the role at her school, and she was looking to develop her leadership skills through Cognitive Coaching after participating in the Foundation training herself. One of the areas she wanted to work on was managing her impulsivity when responding to 'difficult staff.' One particular staff member (here referred to as Rose) seemed to be most difficult for Stella to deal with. Rose would often question decisions that were made and respond negatively to her colleagues when she was unhappy with the outcomes of these decisions. Over a period of time, I noticed a pattern in the response behaviors that Stella would exhibit when dealing with Rose. Stella's frustration would lead to a reactionary response that would fuel the conflict, preventing her from using the situation as an opportunity to learn.

While a heightened consciousness is critical to developing your ability to respond with conscious flexibility to colleagues and situations, it also requires practice. When Stella agreed to this, she essentially committed to developing her situational flexibility. Realizing that she needed to vary her responses to Rose when tensions emerged, Stella developed some rules to assist her in drawing from what she had learnt at the Cognitive Coaching seminar she attended. These included:

- Listen and look for both verbal and non-verbal clues as to what emotion is being demonstrated.
- Paraphrase where possible to honor the emotion and seek to understand as the first thought (rather than simply thinking, 'Here we go again!').

Gavin and Stella's story Continued

- Check whether the issue requires an approach drawn from the four support functions taught in Foundation training:
 - ↳ *Coaching*: Stella supports Rose in taking her from where she is to where she wants to be.
 - ↳ *Collaborating*: Stella works with Rose to form ideas on how to move forward.
 - ↳ *Consulting*: Stella provides Rose with information that she believes Rose to be missing.
 - ↳ *Evaluating*: Stella listens but explains to Rose why the decision is non-negotiable or essential to the school's values.

Using these responses with Rose started to pay off for Stella immediately. It enabled her to see that on many occasions Rose had a perspective that was useful, helping Stella to consider when decisions needed to be made or implications needed to be explored. Furthermore, it meant that Rose started to trust Stella and confide in her more often, which often brought up issues that were deeper than what had surfaced in previous conversations. In this way, Stella's ability to become situationally flexible with Rose helped both parties to build a more respectful and productive working relationship.

5. Start small but think big

What?

Start where you can and take it everywhere you can. Many participants get excited by the possibilities Cognitive Coaching can bring them, but then become frustrated by the uptake when they go back to their schools. Regardless of the role someone holds in a school, Cognitive Coaching provides participants with the opportunity to help others become successful, both independently and as part of a community. It just takes commitment to start where you can with what you have. In essence, from little things big things grow.

For commitment to happen, a Cognitive Coach must attend to the state of mind of efficacy. People who are efficacious are likely to be resourceful, energetic, and confident. Furthermore, they are aware of what Covey (1990, p. 83) identifies as a key characteristic of proactive people: the ability to devote their energies within their circle of influence, in this way focusing on 'the things they can do something about.'

How?

As a Cognitive Coach, it's important to see every interaction as an opportunity for mediation. In this way, we can commit to utilizing the maps, tools and skills for coaching on an ongoing basis. This is the same regardless of whether we are employing Cognitive Coaching in our professional lives – with students, colleagues or community members – or within our private lives, with partners, children, relatives and friends.

One successful strategy for starting small that I have both observed and undertaken is to approach a coworker (either a trusted colleague, or one with whom you are seeking to develop higher levels of trust) to work with you on developing your coaching practice. This is not only an opportunity to develop coaching skills that will enhance your capability as a support provider, but also allows you to support your colleague in their work to be successful. In this way, it is genuinely a win-win situation for both the coach and the coachee.

At the beginning of my journey as a Cognitive Coach, immediately after completing the Foundation Seminar, I held an informal meeting for my colleagues on the topic of 'What is Cognitive Coaching?' Twenty coworkers attended, and I provided a 30-minute overview of what the work involves. At the conclusion of the meeting, I asked whether anyone there was interested in being coached. Thirteen people volunteered, with participants ranging from principals and teacher leaders to experienced teachers and graduate teachers.

I committed to meeting with these colleagues at mutually convenient times throughout the year to conduct Planning, Reflecting and Problem-Resolving conversations. I collected participant data, conducted Reflecting conversations and took surveys to build evidence of success for both the coachee and myself. The data in turn provided an opportunity for me to discuss the benefits of Cognitive Coaching with the school leadership team, and this became the first step towards building a more reflective and collaborative culture. Through starting with what I felt able to do and then committing to doing it, I developed my skills and belief in the work.

I have spoken with participants during Foundation Seminars who have used Cognitive Coaching in a variety of ways, but always with the intention to create success. This leads me to the last of the six insights – which, while seemingly an obvious one, is perhaps one of the most critical in developing as a coach.

6. Practice, practice, practice

What?

For our book *Teachers as Architects of Learning* (2013), my co-author and I researched what it takes to learn something deeply. We found that one of the most prevalent strategies for learning is to ‘do it,’ ‘apply it’ or ‘have a go at it,’ as this leads to greater commitment and therefore success. The more we do something, the more we refine our skills, both through the learning experience itself and through reflecting on the learning experience. This holds true when it comes to developing our capabilities as a Cognitive Coach.

How?

There are many ways we can practice our Cognitive Coaching skills. Below are ideas I’ve collected from participants who have demonstrated growth in their ability to coach. They are practical methods that encourage commitment to the maps, tools and capabilities of Cognitive Coaching.

- ***Seek out opportunities to coach***

One thing that effective Cognitive Coaches do is find opportunities to coach throughout the week and commit to making the most of them. I have seen this play out in different ways. Strategies could include the following:

- Utilize reflection time at the end of a lesson to apply mediative questions.
- One afternoon a week, engage in Reflecting conversation with a colleague on their day, lesson or role.
- Isolate a skill (such as pausing, paraphrasing or posing questions) and devote a portion of the day to applying it.
- Review your timetable, breaking down the week and highlighting key times, meetings, lessons and other opportunities that lend themselves to possible practice of Planning, Reflecting and Problem-Resolving conversations (e.g. parent meetings, leadership reviews, school mentoring programs and so on).
- If you participated in the training with a colleague from the same school or neighboring area, invite them to join you for regular practice. If there are more than two of you, it could be beneficial to practice with the involvement of a meta-coach.

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- ***Watch television***

Watching television with heightened consciousness as a way to build your coaching can be both fun and effective in building your skill set. Here are some ways to achieve this:

- ↳ Look for examples of response behaviors that align to Cognitive Coaching capabilities such as paraphrasing, questioning and states of mind. Watching Oprah Winfrey interview people, for instance, is a great way to build awareness of the skills we use to coach.
- ↳ When you see an opportunity for Cognitive Coaching, stop the program or turn off the television, then say aloud or write down a paraphrase and a mediative question that you think fit the scenario. (You might want to ensure you are alone in the house so that the rest of your family don't think you've totally lost your marbles!)
- ↳ Record yourself coaching, play it back through the television and conduct a self-mediated Reflecting conversation. By doing this, you can explore the reasons that you feel and act the way you do about a conversation. It was through this strategy that I saw how often I nodded in agreement with the coachee, leading me to work on being more 'still' during formal conversations.

- ***Target someone***

To get the most out of Cognitive Coaching, it is good idea to organize regular, ongoing practice with at least one willing coachee. If you can do this in both your professional and personal lives, it will provide you with a chance to refine those skills on a regular basis. Some tips include:

- ↳ Explain to a colleague, friend or family member about the training you have been doing. Let them know that you are working at building your capacity to be a mediator of thinking and to assist others in becoming more self-directed.
- ↳ Request permission from this person to help them plan, reflect or work through problems in a Cognitive Coaching capacity.
- ↳ Ensure that you continue to reflect on the coaching practice in order to learn more about the process and how it is serving both you and the coachee.
- ↳ Utilize your learning guide if you need to, at least until some of the mediative questions and principles of paraphrasing becomes more automatic.

These strategies are just some of many that successful Cognitive Coaches undertake to continue their commitment and development. All the training in the world will make little difference unless we look for opportunities and apply the maps, tools and skills we have learnt on a regular basis. As Arthur Ashe, the first African American to win the Wimbledon men's singles title, once said: 'To achieve greatness, start where you are, use what you have, do what you can.'

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Chapter 2

We Don't Fix Teachers: Managing Outside Expectations and the Integrity of Cognitive Coaching

Carrie Usui Johnson and John Matich



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TRANSFORMATIVE TALK

For decades, school systems have tried to integrate and implement a coaching community. While successful models exist, many coaching communities last only a handful of years, creating negative assumptions about coaching in schools. Many times, coaching communities are the first to go when budgets become tight. In fact, although Costa and Garmston initially shared their thinking on what would become Cognitive Coaching almost 30 years ago, a recent publication from the California Department of Education (2012) states that few teachers and administrators actually receive coaching today. It appears that even in the place where Cognitive Coaching was born, advocates are still seeking a way to establish a coaching community as a viable option for school systems.

Cognitive Coaching persists as a coaching model in schools, but it is often more difficult to sustain on a system-wide basis. In order to address this challenge, we need coaching communities working together to influence and disrupt systems on a larger scale. Lambert (2003, p. 4) points out that ‘real communities ask more of us than merely to gather together; they also assume a focus on a shared purpose, mutual regard and caring, and an insistence on integrity and truthfulness.’ Therefore, creators of Cognitive Coaching communities need to carefully consider several points, including (a) how their coaching community focuses on a common purpose relevant to the goals of Cognitive Coaching; (b) how they promote mutual regard and caring among community members; and (c) how to maintain an integrity and truthfulness about coaching work and the systems within which it operates.

As the leaders of Cognitive Coaching communities in a large Los Angeles school district, we – the authors of this chapter – engage in transformative talk at all levels of our work. Through these experiences, we have identified some of the challenges in creating a sustainable Cognitive Coaching community, along with some strategies we have implemented to create self-directedness and resourcefulness in both the individuals and the systems we support.

Misconceptions about Cognitive Coaching communities

‘So what exactly do you do in education?’ This is a common question asked of many of our coaches, and one that gives them pause. How does one explain a role in which support is defined through mediating thinking and developing resourcefulness and self-directedness? ‘I support teachers in becoming better teachers’ may satisfy the questioner, but it fails to capture what makes the coach’s role unique and powerful. So what do our coaches say?

What do Cognitive Coaches do?

My primary role in self-reflection is to facilitate a coachee's reflection/clarification process through careful paraphrasing and posing questions. At the heart of my role as coach is to listen, really listen and in doing so, hear – really hear what my coachee has to say.

— Suzanne

I support teachers to be the teachers they want to be and listen to teachers in a way that they feel capable, full of capacity and encouraged to do the work needed to teach all students to their capacity.

— Natalie

As a coach, I support teachers by observing classroom instruction, engaging in productive Reflecting, Planning and Problem-Resolving conversations, planning and facilitating professional development workshops, co-teaching, and preparing and presenting model lessons.

— Jim

The variety of responses indicates the complexity of the role and purpose of a Cognitive Coach, while also highlighting a common theme: valuing each individual in the place where they are and supporting that individual in creating their own path to resourcefulness. In other words, Cognitive Coaches don't fix teachers.

In a world focused on finding ways to fix education, this belief in *not* fixing can be troubling. However, if they are to find a shared purpose in the stated mission of Cognitive Coaching 'to produce self-directed persons with the cognitive capacity for excellence, both independently and as members of a community' (Costa et al. 2013, p. 19), the coaches in a Cognitive Coaching community must relinquish the idea of 'fixing.' The aspiring Cognitive Coach should develop an identity as someone who doesn't fix or problem-solve on another's behalf, but rather supports the other to problem-resolve their own issues and become self-directed. This cognitive shift in identity is both transformational and challenging, and it requires our strategic attention as we work to create a sustainable Cognitive Coaching community.

Garmston and Wellman (2013, p. 122) argue that 'identity influences the incorporation of information at the deepest levels, responsibility for what one has learned, and commitment to putting it into action.' Developing the identity of a Cognitive Coach is a complex and deep process – yet as Garmston and Wellman highlight, it is critical in enabling a coach to effectively use the skills, tools and strategies they have learnt during a Cognitive Coaching seminar. In order to understand and manage the complexity of this process, misconceptions, assumptions and tensions must be explored. Based on our experience, we propose exploring the following three misconceptions as challenges to creating a sustainable Cognitive Coaching community:

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1. Expertise in the classroom is the main indicator of expertise as a Cognitive Coach.
2. Cognitive Coaches should undergo professional learning according to the ‘training for trainers’ model, rather than continued development of their Cognitive Coaching identity through focused rehearsal with coaching skills, strategies and tools.
3. Leaders of Cognitive Coaching communities do not need to be Cognitive Coaches or learn alongside their coaches.

In the paragraphs that follow, we discuss each of these misconceptions in more detail.

Misconception 1: ‘Great teachers make great coaches’

For many educators, a dominant sense of satisfaction has come from their expertise as problem solvers. The shift to a mediational identity creates a feeling of being rewarded by facilitating others to solve their own problems. The shift is from teaching others to helping others learn from situations; from holding power to empowering others; from telling to inquiring; and from finding strength in holding on to finding strength in letting go. (Costa & Garmston 2002, p. 71)

There are many knowledgeable, skilled and reflective teachers who demonstrate a high level of classroom expertise and leadership, both with their students and fellow colleagues. Many of these teachers could become great coaches as well. However, as Costa and Garmston (2002) point out, the shift to a mediational identity requires more than just classroom expertise and goes beyond traditional ways of thinking about supporting teachers. While our coaches do demonstrate expert-level classroom instruction, there are additional qualities an expert teacher must display for us to consider hiring them as a coach. Furthermore, even when potential coaches exhibit many of the characteristics necessary to be a successful coach, it can be difficult to assess whether they hold the identity of a mediator of thinking until they are fully engaged in the work of Cognitive Coaching. By exploring the possible characteristics and qualities of a potentially successful Cognitive Coach, instead of relying on just classroom expertise, we are able to hire and support teachers who will be more successful and resilient Cognitive Coaches.

Misconception 2: ‘Create a Cognitive Coach in only eight days!’

Capacity building ... is the daily habit of *working together*, and you can’t learn this from a workshop or course. You need to learn it by doing it and having mechanisms for getting better at it on purpose. (Fullan 2007, p. 69)

Leadership capacity is content-free – for example, it doesn’t promote certain math programs over others – but it is not value-free. (Lambert 2003, p. 90)

We often see professional development for coaches focused on a 'training for trainers' model, where coaches are expected to learn and train teachers immediately. There is a misconception that after coaches attend the Cognitive Coaching (and Adaptive Schools) seminars, they have acquired the requisite skills and identity to obviate the need for further rehearsal of their coaching practices. Based on this model, coaches devote little time to developing their identity, behaviors and skills as a Cognitive Coach. Therefore, they have difficulty 'living' this identity in their schools.

If we are to believe that a primary responsibility of a Cognitive Coach is to support others in building their capacity as self-directed and resourceful people, then we have to attend to the capacity-building of our coaches as well. Furthermore, a strong, impactful Cognitive Coaching community needs continued support, with leaders who value and model the work of Cognitive Coaching in their leadership of the community. As Fullan and Lambert suggest, the work of capacity building must be supported beyond the workshop by the leaders of Cognitive Coaching communities, who have a duty to provide opportunities and structures for continued learning and growth.

Misconception 3: 'Leaders don't need coaching'

It is very hard to lead on behalf of other people's changes in their underlying ways of making meaning without considering the possibility that we ourselves must also change. (Kegan & Lahey 2001, p. 3)

Developmental leaders function as exemplars, facilitators, mentors within a group, helping it move towards a progressive culture. (Perkins 2003, p. 219)

We often see supervisors or managers of coaching communities presenting or evaluating the work of coaching without learning and rehearsing the work themselves. While we recognize that presentation and evaluation are inherent responsibilities of the supervisory role, we consider our first priority as leaders to be the creation of a sustainable Cognitive Coaching community. For this reason, we need to heed Kegan and Lahey's words with careful consideration. When we, as leaders of the community, do not consider and change our own beliefs, values and ways of thinking, how can we lead others to do the same? We must be the 'developmental leaders' defined by Perkins, modeling learning in order to support the leadership of others (Lambert 2003) and matching the mission and purpose of the community with corresponding behaviors. This is only possible when we engage in Cognitive Coaching ourselves, as a reciprocal process to deepen our learning; when we value the learning, experience and knowledge of our coaches; and when we focus our shared purpose on supporting others to become self-directed and resourceful.

With the goal of promoting engaged and ongoing professional learning among Cognitive Coaching leaders, the remainder of this chapter presents some of the strategies, tools and ways of thinking that have supported us as leaders of Cognitive Coaching communities in demystifying

the three misconceptions outlined. We hope that these resources will prove useful for other Cognitive Coaches and community leaders attempting to manage outside expectations, while maintaining the integrity of Cognitive Coaching in coaching communities.

Building and developing a Cognitive Coaching community

You've gone through both the Foundation Seminar and the Advanced Seminar, and you are ready to create your Cognitive Coaching community – but where do you start? How do you locate educators ready to cultivate their identities as Cognitive Coaches? How do you build relationships with administrators willing to support a Cognitive Coaching model?

Getting ready to develop and support a Cognitive Coaching community requires attention on two fronts: the internal development of your coaches, and the external development of the systems your coaching community will support. While development of internal and external systems generally occurs simultaneously, we will begin by focusing our attention on ways to build internal resources.

Choosing teachers to be Cognitive Coaches

As mentioned in our discussion of Misconception 1, we see the selection and interview process of Cognitive Coaches to be a complex process. A candidate's instructional expertise is significant; equally important, however, are the candidate's beliefs, values and instructional style. Most candidates do not come to the table with extensive Cognitive Coaching backgrounds, but many do have holonomous characteristics – that is, they demonstrate the ability to be autonomous and interdependent simultaneously – and exhibit high levels of Costa and Garmston's (2002, p. 124) five states of mind: "efficacy, flexibility, craftsmanship, consciousness and interdependence." Thus, aligning the interview process to the values and beliefs of Cognitive Coaching can provide insight into whether a candidate will be amenable to developing the identity of a Cognitive Coach. By using questions representing the different states of mind, we are able to align these questions to the values and beliefs of Cognitive Coaching, while also pinpointing the candidate's thinking within each of the different states of mind.

Figures 2.1 to 2.3 are sample interview questions used to support the selection of teachers who have the mindset to become a mediator of thinking.

During an interview and selection process aligned with the purpose and mission of Cognitive Coaching, the candidate's responses can highlight aspects of their thinking and identity not apparent in more traditional interview questions and resume reviews. For example: Linda, a three-time Teacher of the Year award winner with more than 35 years of experience, was high in craftsmanship but low in consciousness, flexibility and interdependence. Linda's low levels in

Instructional Coaching Sample Interview Questions Highlighting the States of Mind

Lipton and Wellman (2007) have identified five states of mind that collectively demonstrate the qualities desired for instructional coaches. The following sample questions are accompanied by States of Mind definitions as well as probing questions designed to highlight specific states of mind. In order to have a common language during the post interview and to assist them during the interview, the interview panel reviews the definitions and questions prior to the interview.		Consciousness	Craftsmanship	Efficacy	Flexibility	Interdependence
	General Questions					
1	Clarify any questions about the resume.					
2	Describe the leadership roles you have held in the past.					
3	What interests you working as an Instructional Coach?					
Behavioral Question						
4	Give us an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.					
5	Give us a specific example of a time when you had to conform to a policy with which you did not agree.					
6	What is your typical way of dealing with conflict? Give us an example					
7	Tell us about a time when you had to deal with a very upset co-worker, parent, teacher, or student.					
8	Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventative measures.					
Scenarios Question: How might you respond when a teacher says...						
9	"I'm really discouraged about the behavior of my students. They're taking up all the time I should be spending on teaching. They're really difficult to manage and they don't seem to care about learning anything."					
10	"I have been teaching for 20 years. I do not need your help!"					
11	"I'm so excited! I've been getting ready to introduce a geography unit to the class, and I have been gathering resources for the past four weeks. Look at all the things I have!"					
12	"I don't have time to meet with you. I teach all six periods and tutor after school."					

Figure 2.1

States of Mind Definitions for Interview Panel

State	Description	Examples
Consciousness	Knowing what and how I'm thinking about my work in this moment, and being willing to be aware of my actions and their effects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being aware of self, others, and setting • Knowing about one's thinking • Seeking data about self, others, and setting • Being aware of one's own and others' styles and preferences • Monitoring one's own decisions and the resulting effects
Craftsmanship	Knowing that I can continually perfect my craft, and being willing to work toward excellence and pursue ongoing learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being intentional • Striving for improvement and refinement • Seeking clarity and precision • Assessing for excellence • Pursuing ongoing learning
Efficacy	Knowing that I have the capacity to make a difference through my work, and being willing to take the responsibility to do so.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having internal resourcefulness • Initiating responsibility • Knowing one has choices and making choices • Being a problem-solver • Taking action
Flexibility	Knowing that I have and can develop options to consider about my work, and being willing to acknowledge and demonstrate respect and empathy for diverse perspectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking/generating alternatives • Seeing multiple perspectives • Being willing to consider change • Adjusting to others' styles and preferences • Tolerating ambiguity
Interdependence	Knowing that we will benefit from our participation in, contribution to, and receipt of professional relationships, and being willing to create and change relationships to benefit our work.w	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributing to the common good • Participating with and learning from others • Developing capacity in interacting with others • Seeking collegiality and collaboration • Balancing self needs and group needs

Figure 2.2