



Adopting an Educative Coach Mindset – Roadmap to Foster Helping Relationships, Student Learning and Professional Growth

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exchange of information, are we also conscious about how we use our connections to create inspiration that can sustain us and our learners in challenging times?

This article describes a conceptual framework, key concepts, and consequences that result when a medical educator adopts a coach-based mindset. This article describes a conceptual framework, key concepts, mediating antecedents, and outcomes that can result when educators adopt a coach-based mindset.

What is coaching?



Figure 1

The COVID-19 pandemic is posing countless challenges to our health care and educational systems. Rapid societal change has dramatically challenged us to transform the structure and the process of teaching and learning (King and Frick, 2000).

The pandemic has reminded us how connected by technology we are in today's world. If you face a challenge for which you wish to get input, it has never been easier to seek guidance. We're connected in a staggering number of ways, but to what degree are we truly connecting? In addition to facilitating



Figure 2

When we hear the term "coaching," what first comes to mind is an athletic coach. However, we might also envision a different metaphor. To me, in its simplest way, coaching is a means of conveyance like the figure above. To coach means to convey a valued

learner, colleague, or friend from where he or she is right now to where he or she wants to go or be. Within the stagecoach metaphor, the coaching process itself - not the coach - is the conveyance. Or, as Coach Parseghian suggests “coaching is unlocking a person’s potential to maximize their own performance,” helping the learner or athlete to learn rather than teaching them”.

There is a range of definitions and descriptions of coaching, which are expressed in general terms. In the previous article, (Overview of the Spirit, Core Principles, and the Processes of Coaching in Education, coaching was defined as (Grant):... a one-to-one conversation that focuses on the enhancement of learning and development through increasing self-awareness and a sense of personal responsibility, where the coach facilitates the self-directed learning of the coachee through questioning, active listening, and appropriate challenge in a safe, supportive, and encouraging climate.



Figure 3

Coaching is not about directing someone in what to do, providing answers or solutions, or resolving problems. However, it can be a powerful resource for medical educators (Byrne).

What’s a Mindset? Why is it important for coaching?

People form beliefs on the basis of their experiences; these beliefs can guide their motivation and behavior. Now, some beliefs are not isolated ideas, but rather can serve an organizing function, bringing together goals, beliefs, and behaviors into what might be called a meaning system (Hong, Chiu, Dweck, Lin, and Wan, 1999;



Figure 4

Molden and Dweck, 2006). Mindsets create meaning systems. people’s behaviors often come from thoughts and feelings, which live in the brain, and can be recognized and changed.

The coach mindset framework can be used to enhance the capabilities of educators in a variety of roles. The intent is to positively impact climate, influence culture, and subsequently enable psychologically safe settings. Adoption of a coach mindset can only be accomplished when an educator has a common understanding of what a coach mindset means. For the purposes of this briefing, the definition of a coach mindset has been derived through identifying key attributes and is defined as: The implicit and habitual use of a mental paradigm that reflects how you think, believe, and act every day with others, and enables a educative coach to connect and partner with individuals (client) and teams as they learn together and pursue the client-focused personal and/ or workplace results-oriented goals.

How can educative coaching benefit medical educators?

Coaching is about empowering people to take responsibility for themselves and make necessary changes in their professional and personal lives. It promotes the goals of personal fulfilment and professional growth are not incompatible; rather one supports the other. Two particular characteristics: action and learning are central to its capacity to advance change (Whitworth; Kinsey-House and Sandahl). However, unlike clinical supervision,



Figure 5

which shares a reflective approach, coaching is highly focused on individuals designing their future – and achieving excellence – through setting personally and professionally challenging goals and committing to taking actions necessary to achieve them. Coaching also places premium value on the importance of well-honed communication and interpersonal skills, which are essential to motivate and inspire others. The literature on coaching emphasizes supporting individuals to learn these skills of personal and professional self-management, and interpersonal communication, so they can continue to practice them themselves, and pass them on to others, once the coaching relationship has ended (Nelson Jones).

Educative coaching building blocks

“Coaching done well may be the most effective intervention designed for human performance” -Atul Gawande, “Personal Best” (2011).



Figure 6

Boyattzis, Smith, and Van Osten (2019) offer three major building blocks or approaches to coaching interactions with a mindset for building and nurturing a quality coaching relationship.

Coaching is a process

First, believe that individual change is a process, not an event. In pursuit of new habits, it takes practice and feedback to grow one’s openness, awareness, and energy to think and behave differently. We all need to ourselves space and time to make mistakes, grow and improve. The process doesn’t happen overnight.

Mine for gold

We must acknowledge that the most important, indeed, the only, thing we have to offer our students is ourselves. Everything else they can read in a book or discovered independently, usually with a better understanding than our efforts can convey. Daniel Tosteson.

Second, consider your approach to coaching as a chance to mine for gold, not dig for dirt. Andrew Carnegie in the late 19th century was one of wealthiest men in American. At one point in his career, Carnegie had many millionaires working for him. A reporter curious to understand his secrets interviewed Carnegie inquiring how it was possible to have paid that much money to so many people. Carnegie shared that people are developed the same way that gold is mined. “Several tons of dirt must be moved to get an ounce of gold, but you don’t into the mine looking for dirt. You go into the mine looking for gold”. Excellent coaches appreciate coaching conversations looking for “gold” in the other person or group. This is common sense but uncommon practice – and even with the best intentions, coaches can this golden opportunity.



Figure 7

Co-active agenda setting

Third, consider that the agenda for the coaching conversation should come from the person being coached. This means that, although the coach is guide in the overall process, the fundamental reason for the process is to help the other person – not for the coach. So, the agenda should be kept flexible and meet others wherever they are, and to allow the coachee to have a say and exercise choice in how you use your time together.

Coaching presence

In addition to the three coaching mindset cornerstones and guidelines, the most important ingredient for establishing a high-quality coaching relationship is being fully present and being mindful of yourself as well as the other person. As defined by Silsbee, Presence is a state of awareness, in the moment, characterized by the felt experience of timelessness, connectedness, and a larger truth. One crucial element for nurturing trust and demonstrating support is to pay close attention to, and use active, reflective listening to the other person. Presence lends itself to the development of skills and techniques and is useful for bringing resourceful and a certain quality of being to relationships to others and leads to openness and being listened to in a profoundly different way.