Transforming Teachers with Coaching and Neuroscience

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Abstract

NeuroLanguage Coaching® and Neuroheart Education® incorporate the latest findings in neuroscience as well as principles and tools from coaching into the traditional process of teaching with practical steps to facilitate learning. Through neuroscience we know that every brain is unique, so learning is tailor-made to clients´ needs, with clear and structured targets to achieve in defined periods of time. This potentially creates the perfect learning conditions for the brain leading to faster, more efficient, sustainable and cost-effective results. It is essential as an educator to fully understand how the brain is impacted and affected while learning and for us to engage and empower our learner to their full potential. When we create brain friendly interactive conversations, in a non-directive style, provoking brain connections whenever possible, then a greater learning impact can be achieved. Neurolanguage adds the practical application of "neuroscientific principles" bridging the theory and the practice and professional coaching greatly influences how educators communicate with learners to create psychology safety, positive emotions and compassionate conversations.

Keywords: *coaching, neuroscience, brain friendly, transformation.*

Neurolanguage Coaching is the efficient and fast transfer of language knowledge and skills with sustainable effects from the language coach to the language coachee facilitated by brain based coaching and coaching principles as vehicles " RM Paling © 2012

According to Merriam Webster dictionary the essential meaning of a teacher is "a person or thing that teaches something" or "a person whose job is to teach students about certain subjects". Professional coaching can be used as a vehicle to deliver the learning process and additionally, by incorporating the principles of neuroscience, performance and results can be impacted through the constant implementation of metacognition.

Coaching

Originally, in the 1800s in Oxford University slang, a coach was a private tutor and then later was imported into the world of sports mid-nineteenth century, but over the last 50 years we have seen how coaching has and is penetrating all walks of life and maybe has transcended into a type of "meta-profession" relating to life, business or professional spheres and which can combine with different disciplines to assist "clients" to develop; overcome blocks; tap into unknown potential; achieve proposed and focused goals or achieve success or solutions relating to the discipline or question at hand.

There is no one perfect definition of coaching, in fact there are many definitions of coaching and coaching in itself is an unregulated profession, however there are certain professional associations which work towards developing training standards, as well as a body of ethics and standards for members to follow. The four main internationally recognised bodies are the International Coach Federation (ICF), the Association for Coaching (AC), the international Association of Coaching (IAC) and the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC).

In addition, there may be cultural differences relating to the term "coach", and academic courses relating to coaching, which may also exacerbate confusion to define what coaching really is. Some perspectives and expectations of a qualified coach involve training which includes psychology and maybe even neurolinguistic programming, cognitive behavioural therapy or other such therapies. The latter perspectives are extremely different to, for example, the concept of coaching of the International Coach Federation.

For the general understanding of the term coach relating to life coaching or business coaching and perhaps more from the US perspective, the International Coach Federation competences give certain guidelines to coaching, which is not about giving advice or telling people what to do, but is based on being a soundboard and facilitator, integrating and building on the client´s ideas and suggestions and "helping the clients to discover for themselves new thoughts, beliefs, perceptions, emotions, moods that strengthen their ability to take action and achieve what is important for him or her".

In conclusion, the coach is not there to deliver psychotherapy or therapy, nor to be a mentor or an adviser.

Coaching in Education

There are therefore certain aspects of professional coaching, as seen from the perspective of the International Coach Federation, that can be incorporated into educational processes. Namely, the standards, guidelines and ethics of coaching; the structure, that is, the goal and action setting plus periodic goal reviews; the coaching models namely GROW (Sir John Whitmore), CREATE and FEELING (Dr David Rock), PACT PQC (Rachel Paling 2012) and powerful coaching conversations based on positive emotional attractor theory from a study of Richard Boyatzis et al. Skilled coaching conversations may be used around, motivation, commitment, promoting learner autonomy, troubleshooting, overcoming emotional blocks and finding compassionate solutions to issues.

Neuroscientific principles

Neuroscience may be incorporated into the learning process in various ways. Firstly, to enhance metacognition. In a study in 2019, teaching metacognition at schools involved self-regulated learning, thinking skills and learning to learn and benefitted primary to university students as well as disadvantaged and struggling learners. The results demonstrated better performance, improved outcomes and a positive motivation cycle – “greater motivation leads to improved metacognition which leads to greater motivation”.

Secondly, talking and sharing neuroscience and neuroscientific findings has also demonstrated an impact on learners. In a 2007 study, it was shown that when students understand how the brain learns, as well that neuroplasticity changes the brain and they can be autonomous learners, then achievement increases.

Thirdly, by shaping and creating learning processes that implement and incorporate neuroscientific findings, a more brain-friendly process is the achieved. For example, incorporating the theories of spaced out learning, chunking down materials, connecting to previous knowledge or scaffolding as well as understanding how to get the brain’s sustained attention and how to create an environment to stimulate memory formation.

Neurolanguage Coaching® and Neuroheart Education

Neurolanguage Coaching and Neuroheart Education encompass coaching models, tools, structure, practices, philosophies and in addition the ethics and standards of the International Coach Federation and the practical application of neuroscientific principles as mentioned above, relating to how the brain learns, functions and reacts, in particular in relation to emotional triggers when learning a language, drawing Krashen´s affective filter into the scientific evidence arena.

Tranforming teachers

Training teachers to become professional coaches in education as well as knowledge about neuroscience and neuropsychology will be key to shifting education into a post pandemic compassionate approach and raised sensitivity towards learners. Comprehension of how the brain learns, functions and causes reactions creates an inner awareness and sensitivity that teachers normally do not possess, mainly because teachers are not trained in this field. Neurodiversity also becomes more important to respect. Using techniques and coaching conversations to promote an “optimised learning state” is essential for maximum learning effects and efficient learning. The entire communication pattern between coach and coachee transforms the knowledge transfer process and moves the coach away from a directive and instructional manner into an interactive and brain-friendly mode. This in turn ensures that learner autonomy is maximized and the coachee leads and takes more control which provokes the coachee to take ownership of the learning process.

In essence teachers transforming into coaches become:

- Aware of how the brain learns
- Aware of their own impact on the learner´s brain
- Sensitive to emotional reactions of the brain
- Provocative – provoking brain connections
- Experts at powerful conversations
- Experts at active listening
- Much more empathetic and compassionate

- Aware of coaching ethics and principles
- Masters in goal setting conversations
- Absolutely less directive and more interactive
- Structured and orientated towards focus and attention
- Facilitators and catalysts for brain connections to hardwire

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