



Coaching 101 – Mentoring

Mentoring plays an important role in coaching. Knowledge, attitudes, skills and habits can be passed down from one generation to another through a process of explanation and observation

There are two types of mentorship:

- Informal mentorship is developed over time between the mentor and the mentee. By working together the mentor and the mentee develop a trusting, supportive relationship that makes the mentee comfortable talking to the mentor. In this relationship the mentor looks for the teachable moment to recognize and expand the potential of the mentee. This type of mentorship capitalizes on the day to day communications.
- Formal mentorship refers to a structured process of mentorship where the mentor is trained to perform a task and the process is supported by the organization or team. This is referred to as cognitive coaching.

What is cognitive coaching?

Cognitive coaching is a set of strategies, a way of thinking and working that invites oneself and others to shape and reshape their thinking as well as problem solving capabilities.

Cognitive coaching is built on 4 propositions:

- thought and perception produce all behaviour;
- coaching is consistent decision making;
- learning something new requires engagement and alteration in thought;
- humans continue to grow cognitively.

At the heart of cognitive coaching is being aware of ones own thinking processes and how these processes affect ones behaviour. The goal of a cognitive coach is transformation not performance. It is not enough to change a mentees performance but more importantly is their understanding of the thinking that directs their behaviour.

Cognitive coaching gives the mentee the ability to develop the invisible skills of coaching.

- Thinking
- Planning
- Reflecting
- Problem solving
- Decision making

Cognitive Coaching is:

- the belief that the mentee has the resources needed to enable them to grow and change within;
- capitalizes on and enhances mentees cognitive processes;
- enables mentees to modify their capacity to change their own behaviour and ways of thinking;
- allows mentees to evaluate what is good or bad, what is appropriate or inappropriate, effective or ineffective;
- helps mentees see how to get from where they are now to where they want to be.

Mentorship is based on four principles:

- Emphasizing the relationship between the more experienced person (the mentor) and the less experienced (the mentee). The mentor acts more as a facilitator creating a safe, open environment in which the mentee can both learn and try things for themselves. Building trust/rapport with the mentee is major part of the role for the mentor.
- Giving the mentee a significant role in directing the process. Thoughts and perceptions are the basics of all behaviour and learning new behaviour requires engaging the mentee and altering their thoughts. To accomplish this, the mentor engages the mentee through a process that questions the guides of the mentee to discover solutions themselves.
- Emphasizing the personal development of the mentee which includes self awareness and self knowledge, developing individual skills and talent building capacities to coach and fulfill their aspirations.
- Formalizing the process of support for mentees augments the informal mentoring that takes place during practices and competitions. The formal process includes preplanning, meeting, observation and reflective conversations.