

# **The Parameters of Specialist Leadership Coaching**

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# Leadership coaching: ... The attraction

## Entrants to this field from many streams:

- psychologists and specialist psychologists
- health professionals and HR personnel
- ex-manager/leaders ...
- and ... 'others'

## Three key questions:

1. What is required of a good leadership coach?
2. What knowledge and skills are required?
3. What professional competencies and standards should characterise their services and practice?

## **Inputs from the literature ...**

**Established theory in psychology and applied psychology -**

**personality and individual differences**

**group theory**

**organisational theory**

**professional - client relationships:  
in organisational contexts**

**Established Leadership theory**

**Professional ethics**



**Coaching literature ... review:**

**Conceptualities for coaching:**

**1. Coaching is to be differentiated from counselling or therapy:**

**'There are significant differences between coaching and psychotherapy'** (p.15)

**' ... coaching is a process in which the coach facilitates learning in the coachee. The coach need not be an expert in the coachee's area of learning. The coach need only have expertise in facilitating learning and performance enhancement'**

(p.18).

(Grant Doctoral Dissertation, 2001)

Coaching literature ... review:

Conceptualities for coaching:

## 2. Coaching is proactive ... and assumes a non-dependent relationship.

'The core constructs of coaching include a collaborative relationship between coach and coachee, a focus on *constructing solutions* rather than *analysing problems*, an assumption that *clients are capable* rather than dysfunctional, and the notion that **coaching should be directed at fostering the on-going self-directed learning and personal growth** of the coachee.'

(Grant, Dissertation: 2001. p.3)

**Coaching literature ... review:**

**Conceptualities for coaching:**

**3. Coaching adopts facilitative methods**  
and assumptions about the relationship ....  
**not expert ones.**

**Coaching is -**

**“unlocking a person’s potential to maximise  
their own performance”** (Whitmore, 1992. p.8)

**“a coach is a person who facilitates  
experiential learning that results in future-  
orientated abilities”** (Hudson, 1999. P.6)



## Coaching literature ... review:

### Conceptualities for coaching:

3. “**Coaching** is essentially a **conversation** – a **dialogue** between coach and coachee – within a productive **results-oriented** context”

“**Coaching** is **about learning** – yet the coach is not a teacher and does not necessarily know how to do things better than the coachee”

“**Coaching** is more about **asking yourself the right questions** than providing answers”

“**Coaching** is about **change and transformation** – about the human ability to grow”

# Coaching literature ... review:

## Conceptualities for coaching:

**“Coaching** is a solution-focused, results-oriented systematic process in which the coach facilitates the enhancement of performance, self-directed learning, and personal growth of other individuals.”

**“Coaching** moves people from awareness to responsibility, to action and results!”

(Anthony Grant and Michael Cavanagh, Coaching Psychology Unit, School of Psychology, University of Sydney. 2002)

# Coaching literature ... review:

## Conceptualities for coaching:

### Limitations in current writing about coaching:

**A.** It is assumed that **facilitative coaching** (solution-focused) and **expert coaching** approaches **are opposed** and unable to be combined in the **one** professional client relationship without mutual corruption of each approach.

# Coaching literature ... review:

## Conceptualities for coaching:

## Limitations in current writing about coaching:

**B.** When applying **facilitative coaching** approaches to **leadership coaching** no use is made of empirically-supported leadership theory. Moreover, *implicit coach theories* on a variety of scientifically-established areas of knowledge may not be scrutinised.



# Coaching literature ... review:

## Conceptualities for coaching:

Until 2003 there are seem to be  
few references to evidenced-based  
leadership theory applied to  
'development' in the coaching  
literature.

# Coaching literature ... review:

## Conceptualities for coaching:

### 4. Leadership Coaching

Special Issue: *Consulting Psychology Journal*, 2003.

**Developing leadership (Winum, 2003):** an inadequate treatment of the landscape of established leadership theory: a focus on traits and personality.

**Making sense of shared meanings (Palus & Horth and Selvin, 2003):** a dialogue to deliberately pursue deeper levels of shared sense-making around complex issues.

# Coaching literature ... review:

## Conceptualities for coaching:



### 4. Coaching and Developing leadership

An intervention for organisational transformation  
(Leonard and Goff, 2003):

Moved away from individual to organisational systems-based approach with pre-post measurement attempts.

Improvements were detected in the internal program. Top leadership sponsorship required.

Acknowledged deficiency in the leadership assessment methods used in this study.

(Consulting Psychology Journal special issue, 2003).

# Coaching literature ... review:

## Conceptualities for coaching:

### 4. Coaching and Developing Leadership

Challenges for developing leadership in a post-industrial, post-modern age (Leonard, 2003):

Good review of relevant leadership theory, including traits, situation, contingency and transformational models.

**"Bass's model of transformational leadership is the most rigorously tested model in this (transformational) genre."**

(Consulting Psychology Journal special issue, 2003).



# Proposition

## Leadership coaching is a specialist form of coaching

“**Leadership coaching** is a specialist form of **coaching** which seeks to appropriately apply a range of **empirically-supported** key concepts and frameworks about -

**personality theory** (as found in psychology)

**leadership & management theory**

**group & organisational behaviour theory**

. . . **within organisations.”**

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Ray Elliott, MLQ PL Full Range Coaching Manual, p.44. 2003

# Proposition

**Leadership coaching is a specialist form of coaching**



**Leadership coaching** ... as a specialist form of coaching ... incorporates the strategies, techniques and methodologies of generalist coaching ...

but goes beyond generalist coaching to include expert interpretations of individual, group and organisational experience in the light of established evidence-based theory.

Ray Elliott, MLQ PL Full Range Coaching Manual, 2003

# Coaching literature ... review:

## Conceptualities for coaching:

### Leadership Coaching -

As it the case with coaching generally, in Leadership Coaching the coachee does not develop the dependence on the coach as often occurs in counselling, and as especially occurs in therapy."

"The way in which the coach uses expert power is modified by the basic assumption that the coachee is a free independent agent who is capable of a high degree of self-direction to achieve the potential they are seeking."

Ray Elliott, MLQ PL Full Range Coaching Manual, p.44. 2003

**From the ethics literature:**  
**Conceptualities for coaching:**

**Michael Bayes** proposed five generic sets of assumptions concerning possible professional roles in client relationships -

*Professional Ethics, 1981. pp.60-70 &*

*Callaghan, J. C. (1988)(Ed.) Ethical Issues in Professional Life*



# From the ethics literature - Michael Bayes - The Professional-Client Relationship



**Friendship** - personal relationship of mutual trust and co-operation in a joint venture

**Agency** - expert acting at the direction of the client

**Paternalism** - the professional is in a superior position in relation to the client

**Fiduciary** - the professional's superior knowledge is recognised but the client retains significant authority and responsibility

<sup>21</sup> **Contractual** - shared equality

# Proposition

## Professional roles need to be contractual

The contractual model ... and set of assumptions ... represents the optimal balancing of power, role, authority and identity within organisational contexts for professional leadership development

## Proposition

**Leadership research is  
pertinent to coaching**

**Leadership coaching as  
a specialist form of coaching:**

**Established evidenced-based research on  
leadership should form a part of the  
literature for coaching and coaching  
psychology.**

**Coaching literature ... review:**

**Conceptualities for coaching:**

**Limitations in current writing about coaching:**

Grant (2001) forces a dichotomy between facilitative coaching and expert training.

While the development of a clear rationale for coaching is highly desirable for generalist coaching in itself it represents a self-limiting paradigm when applied to the modalities of leadership coaching. (Elliott, OEC / MLQ PL, 2003)



# Proposition

**Broad skills & knowledge repertoire are required**



**Leadership coaching is  
a specialist form of coaching:**

**A. ... it requires a broad repertoire of skills, knowledge and professional competencies beyond those pertaining to generalist coaching (such as solution-focused or goal-centered approaches).**

# Proposition

## Skills repertoire required for generalist & leadership coaching



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- **Boundaries**
- **Containment**
- **Empathy**
- **Mirroring**
- **Partnering: taking the initiative**
- **Critical distancing and re-framing**
- **Critical question formation**
- **Self-other monitoring**
- **Orchestrating feedback**
- **Regular reviews**
- **Termination skills**

# Proposition

## Knowledge repertoire required for leadership coaching



### The Full Range Leadership Theory

(Bass and Avolio, 1986 - 2003)

### Autocratic - democratic continuum

(Tannenbaum and Schmidt, 1958)

### Path Goal Theory (House, 1971)

### LMX Leader Styles (Graen, Novak and Sommerkamp, 1982)

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### Situational Leadership

(Hersey-Blanchard, 1974)

### Power – Distance

(Hollander, 1990)

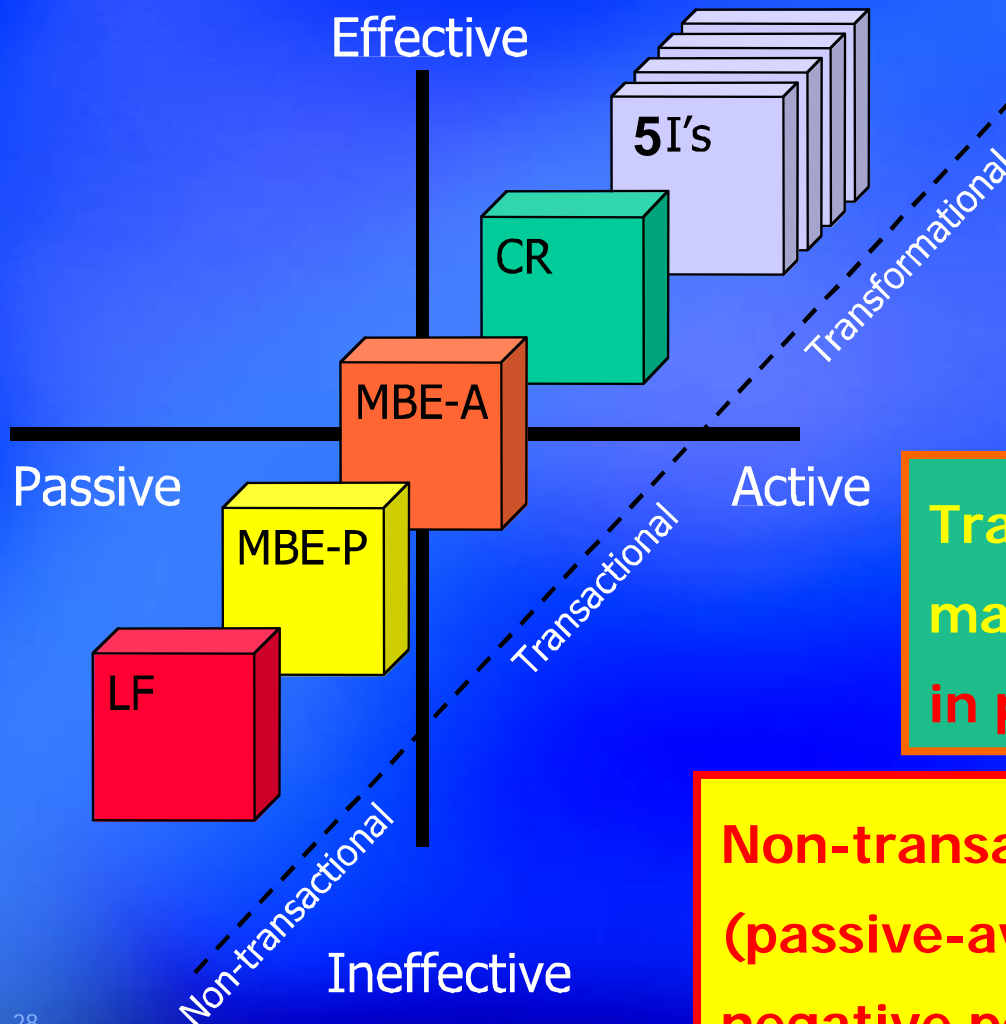
### Least preferred co-worker

(Fiedler, 1967)

Ray Elliott, MLQ PL Full Range Coaching Manual, p.63. 2003

# Full Range leadership Model (Bass & Avolio)

© Bass and Avolio, 1997



Transformational leadership behaviours are associated with superior performance outcomes "beyond expectations"

Transactional leadership-management behaviours result in performance 'at expectations'

Non-transactional management (passive-avoidant leadership) - has negative performance outcomes



# Proposition

## Knowledge repertoire required for leadership coaching



Evidenced-based organisation theory: key concepts

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Organisational roles

Decision-making systems

Formal relationships & communications

IT and communication systems: relation to "human systems"

Informal communications

Referent power

Position power

Ray Elliott, MLQ PL Full Range Coaching Manual, p.76. 2003

# Proposition

## Knowledge repertoire required for leadership coaching



### Organisation theory: ... cont'd

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Organisational culture  
and its aspects

Operational systems

Dominant metaphores  
and paradigms /  
beliefs / assumptions

Strategic systems

Force-field analysis

Mission and vision  
statements

Organisational  
development  
intervention theory

Ray Elliott, MLQ PL Full Range Coaching Manual, p.76. 2003

# Proposition

**Broad skills & knowledge repertoire is required**



**Strategic coaching** is an aspect of leadership coaching

Each coaching intervention within an organisation has a strategic or system implication or expression, whether intentional or unintentional.

This applies working at the individual level when working with a CEO, at the group level or senior management team level, executive level or board level.

# Proposition

**'Expert' & 'facilitation' modalities are both required**

**Leadership coaching as  
a specialist form of coaching:**

**B.** ... it is both possible and necessary to utilise both **'expert'** and **'facilitation'** coaching modalities in the coaching relationship ... these need not be regarded as exclusive, confusing or contradictory for the client.



# Proposition

A variety of methods & assessments are required

Leadership coaching as  
a specialist form of coaching:

C. It is necessary to draw on the use of a variety of methodologies and purposes to achieve leadership development of clients, including formal assessment procedures.

# Proposition

Coaching at multiple-levels is more effective

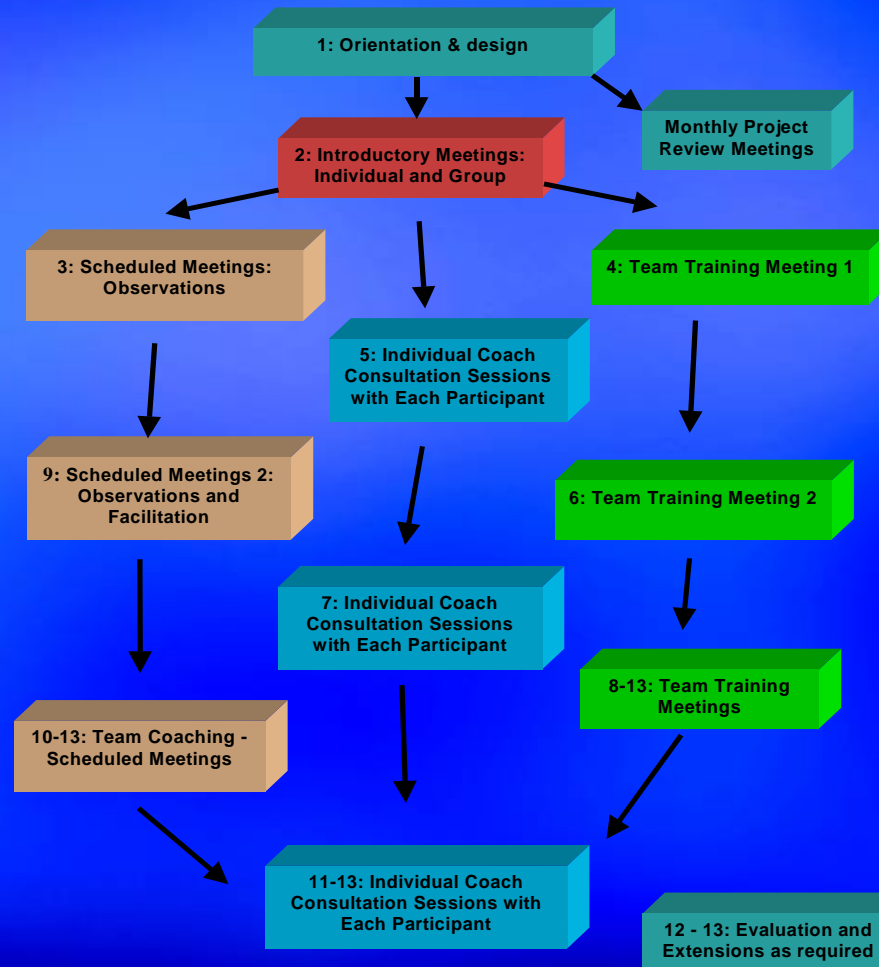


Leadership coaching as  
a specialist form of coaching:

**D.** The most effective leadership coaching takes place in organisational contexts characterised by multiple-roles at individual, group, department and organisational levels.

# A programmatic approach to coaching: a multiple-level organisational intervention

The phases for a project may be represented as follows –



# Proposition

Explicit advanced applied ethics is required

Leadership coaching as  
a specialist form of coaching:

A key tenant of '**specialist leadership coaching**' is the explicit and active practice of advanced ethics with the client(s) in the multiple-role situations found when coaching in organisational contexts.



# Proposition

Explicit advanced applied ethics is required



Responsibility and accountability

Honesty and informed consent

Appropriate and truthful disclosure

Respect for human dignity in the exercise of power

Avoidance of Conflicts of interest

Respecting integrity

Security

**Key OEC Ethical Principles:**

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OEC Privacy Policy

# **In Summary – *Seven Propositions:*** **Specialist Leadership Coaching . . . .**



1. Requires the application of relevant knowledge frameworks.
2. Accessing the extensive leadership assessment and development literature.
3. A broad set of skills, methodologies and strategies.
4. Both 'facilitative' and 'expert' modalities in the coaching relationship.
5. Is more effective when undertaken simultaneously at multiple levels.
6. Requires the application of advanced applied ethics.
- <sup>38</sup>7. Roles at professional levels need to be contractual.