Ashridge Psychometrics

Ashridge Coaching Behaviours

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INTRODUCTION

There is a wide variety of possible styles and approaches that helping professionals and managers can take when coaching their clients and staff, respectively. None of them are "good" or "bad" in themselves because they all have an important place in the helper's coaching toolkit.

What does count is the skill with which the coach or manager selects and uses an approach which is appropriate to the situation. John Heron has developed a "Six-Category Intervention Model" which is a useful tool for this purpose (see his book "Helping The Client", 1975, Sage Publications).

This questionnaire helps you to see how often you use different styles of coaching, compared to our norm sample of 112 participants. The next page includes a graph with your results, and the following pages explain the model of coaching in further detail. For each of the interventions, it will show a brief description, when and why it might be used, specific "micro-skills" needed, and potential traps to avoid.

By "intervention", Heron means any contact between two people where one person is trying to help the other in some way. So his interventions model can apply to many different helping relationships, such as parents helping children, counsellors helping clients, doctors helping patients, teachers helping pupils.

These notes summarise this model, and are specifically focused on managerial coaching. "Coach" and "learner" refer to the manager and the staff member respectively. "You" means the coach or the coaching manager, but this can also include any other type of consultant, such as a "mentor", i.e. helpers who are not the direct line manager of the learner.

You can increase the power and impact of your coaching if you:

- understand the purpose of each intervention
- anticipate its likely impact on the learner
- select the appropriate intervention for each situation
- use each intervention skillfully and sensitively
- have some level of agreement with your learner about the interventions, so that they don't come too unexpectedly

If you are a consultant or change agent and you are wondering how 'coaching' fits within your wider portfolio, we would recommend you take a related questionnaire called *Consulting Roles Inventory* , where a wider range of your interventions and contributions is explored. For information on the *Consulting Roles Inventory* , go to www.ashridge.org.uk or contact Helen.Lockett@ashridge.org.uk.

Kitty Schaap	PR	IN	CO	RL	EX	SU
Raw Score	25	26	30	27	38	34
Percentile Score	92	74	50	15	24	60
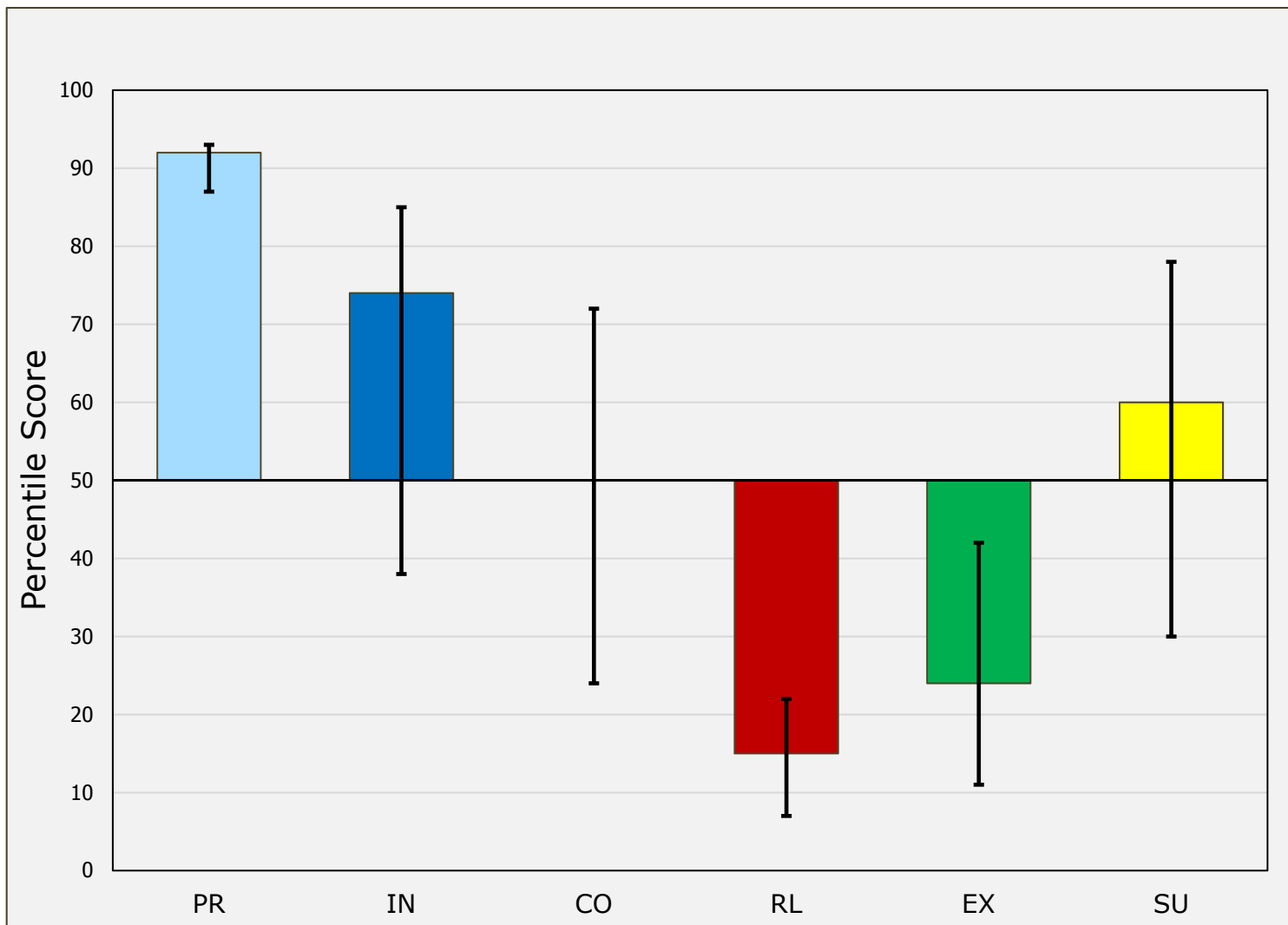
Percentiles describe your score in comparison to the norm sample of 112 participants. For example, if your percentile score is 80, it means that your score is higher than 80% of the norm sample.

(PR) PRESCRIBING - You direct the learning experience in some way, taking (or at least strongly influencing) decisions about such matters as coaching goals, learning methods, the detailed design of the coaching experience, and the learning review and assessment process.

(IN) INFORMING - You give information to the learner; this could be technical, professional, business or organisational knowledge. It could also be "feedback" about their results, or about the potential consequences of different courses of action. You might offer this spontaneously, or you might be asked for it by the learner.

(CO) CONFRONTING - You use challenge and confrontation to help the learner to gain a deeper awareness of something which is important to their learning.

(RL) RELEASING - You help the learner to express and to deal with emotions which are holding them back in their learning activity. (Heron called this style 'cathartic'; Aristotle used "catharsis" to describe how Greek drama provides an outlet for our emotions; a similar term used by modern psychologists is "abreaction")

(EX) EXPLORING - This is a key intervention for the coach to master, and for many people represents the "classic" coaching role (as distinct from the more instructional forms). (Heron called this style catalytic; as a catalyst, you facilitate change in the learner without a direct involvement in that change yourself)

(SU) SUPPORTING - You may well have personal values which will in any case prompt you to try to build up the learner's self-respect. In purely practical terms, too, the whole coaching process will be more effective if the learner can undertake the various learning activities with self-confidence and an enhanced feeling of self-esteem.

BASIC PRINCIPLES

The six interventions are named according to the intentions of the coach. They fall into two groups:

Directive - where the coach intends to take the leading role on behalf of the learner, by giving guidance, instructions and information, or by raising awareness (the first three interventions: Prescribing, Informing, Confronting).

Facilitative - where the coach intends to help the learner to be autonomous and to take responsibility for themselves and for their own learning (the last three interventions: Releasing, Exploring, Supporting).

A single coaching "session" between a manager and their member of staff might well contain elements of all six interventions, each chosen at a particular time for a specific purpose.

INTENTIONS AND ACTIONS

There is a popular saying that "We judge others by their actions, but ourselves by our intentions". This suggests that the learner is likely to react to your style by what they perceive of your visible behaviour. So it is not sufficient for you to select and employ a suitable intervention. You must also consider whether it is important that the learner, too, sees you operating in this way.

For example, you might intend to stimulate the learner to think of a solution for themselves (which will be labelled below as a "exploring" intervention), so you might say something like: "Have you considered using this technique?" The learner, though, might interpret a leading question like this as a signal from you, their manager, that they should try that technique, in which case the effect on them would be that of a "prescribing" intervention - not at all what you wanted!

MISUSING OR ABUSING THE INTERVENTIONS

We should bear in mind that these interventions, like any tool, can be used unskilfully or inappropriately. There are issues of both competence and ethics to consider.

A sharp knife and a knowledge of anatomy can be used by a murderer - or by a surgeon.

If, as these notes assume, your intentions as a coach are appropriate (ie, to help the learner to learn and develop), the interventions can in principle be compared to the knife used by a surgeon. However, there are still some potential obstacles:

- You might select the wrong intervention for the situation, or handle it unskillfully, which at best would be ineffective, and at worst could actually be harmful
- Your interventions might be unsolicited or unwelcome: is the learner willing and ready to be coached?
- Your interventions might be "compulsive": you might be working through some personal agenda of your own instead of focusing on the needs and interests of the learner

On the other hand, these interventions can also be deployed like a knife in the hands of a murderer. A coach might display high levels of skill, but their intention might be to benefit themselves without helping the learner; in extreme cases, they might deliberately try to harm the learner.

Prescribing Interventions

Giving directions, advice and recommendations to the learner

Description

You direct the learning experience in some way, taking (or at least strongly influencing) decisions about such matters as coaching goals, learning methods, the detailed design of the coaching experience, and the learning review and assessment process.

Within this one intervention, there is actually a range of possible styles, according to the extent to which you share decisions with the learner. However, you should remember that the learner is likely to view you as an "authority". You might not intend to steer the learner strongly, and you might prefer to describe yourself as suggesting, advising, persuading, etc. However, the probable impact of your behaviour will be that the learner feels directed or at the least strongly influenced by you.

When and why to use

If you believe that learners should "manage their own learning", and if you try to use a "hands-off" coaching style, you may prefer to act as a facilitator rather than as an instructor. You will not want your role as the learner's manager to "interfere" with their learning process. So you may try to avoid prescribing interventions altogether.

However, it is important to recognise that situations can exist when the learner lacks the confidence or the skill to direct their own learning. In these cases, you may need to use a prescribing style with your learner; a more facilitative style might leave them feeling insecure, or might even give them the impression that you are not concerned about them.

Specific skills needed

Skills of diagnosing the learning needs of the individual are also important. There might be areas of their current job where they could improve their performance ("remedial", reactive coaching); or they might need to acquire new skills for the future ("developmental", proactive coaching).

An understanding of the learning process is also needed: for example, the "Learning Styles" model (Kolb, 1984). This will enable you to design an experience for the learner which takes into account their preferred style(s). Many traditional people-management skills are also important: defining clear goals, communicating clear instructions; explaining the reason why certain actions are needed; motivating the learner.

Traps to avoid

There are a number of behaviours which can reduce the effectiveness of this intervention, either by being over-directive, or by not giving a strong enough lead when needed. These include:

- giving advice when it is not needed or wanted
- taking over their learning experience and imposing your own solution
- manipulating by controlling for your own purposes
- being oppressive: not giving enough scope or freedom to the learner
- creating dependency, so that the learner is unable to function without you
- imposing moral judgements

Informing Interventions

Giving information and knowledge to the learner

Description

You give information to the learner; this could be technical, professional, business or organisational knowledge. It could also be "feedback" about their results, or about the potential consequences of different courses of action. You might offer this spontaneously, or you might be asked for it by the learner.

When and why to use

As with prescribing interventions (above), you might instinctively try to avoid the informing intervention, preferring instead that learners discover answers for themselves.

Whilst that is indeed a more effective strategy in most cases, learners do occasionally need you to offer information more directly. They might need to know where to go to get extra help and information. They might need to be told that they have missed certain facts, or why a particular task is important, or what options are open to them, or why somebody reacted in a certain way. You might want to share some of your own experiences with them.

Specific skills needed

Communication skills are central to this intervention: presenting information in a clear, logical and consistent way, checking for understanding, inviting and handling questions, listening and looking for signs of understanding or perhaps confusion.

Traps to avoid

- overloading the learner with too much information
- using jargon without explaining it
- not structuring the information in a way which makes sense of it
- giving information which is out of date or incorrect
- delivering information unclearly or too quickly
- giving irrelevant information
- not giving the reasons why this information is important
- focusing on your teaching, not on their learning

Confronting Interventions

Challenging the learner's assumptions; stimulating their awareness of their own behaviour, attitudes or beliefs

Description

You use challenge and confrontation to help the learner to gain a deeper awareness of something which is important to their learning.

When and why to use

You may sometimes need to confront the learner with the consequences of their actions, or to challenge them to re-think their ideas or assumptions. For example, it might be that the learner is unintentionally damaging relationships with people around them; so you would give them supportive but direct feedback in order to create or heighten their awareness of this. Confrontation can also be used in a positive way: you might want to boost their self-confidence by challenging their negative view of themselves.

Before rushing into a confrontation, however, you should consider both ethical and practical questions like:

* in what circumstances do I have the right to confront the learner?
* how can I do so honestly and directly, but without damaging the learner's self-respect?
* when is the right moment to confront them?
* how deeply should I intrude on the learner's privacy?
* can I manage my own feelings and behaviour?

Specific skills needed

You will need to have skills in using direct questions (both open and closed), as well as challenging defensive statements and excuses. Being able to focus on the process ("how"), not just the task ("what"), and give honest, constructive and supporting feedback is also important. You should be able to correct errors and discuss the "here and now", while also being able to hold up a mirror, reflecting back to the learner their own behaviour and its impact upon you/others.

The learner must of course feel that the confrontation is intended to help them, and should not experience your behaviour as aggressive, critical or destructive. So it is important to give the learner enough "space" to reflect upon the challenge and to think through and accept the consequences.

Traps to avoid

You should avoid acting aggressive, punishing, judging, or acting like an angry parent. You should also avoid confronting them about a trivial issue or with the wrong agenda. Other traps include:

* avoiding a difficult or painful issue
* discussing their personality or motives rather than their behaviour
* over-talking to justify your feedback
* creating win-lose outcomes

Releasing Interventions

Helping the learner to release tension, and to discharge or come to terms with emotions which are blocking progress

Description

You help the learner to express and to deal with emotions which are holding them back in their learning activity. (Heron called this style 'cathartic'; Aristotle used "catharsis" to describe how Greek drama provides an outlet for our emotions; a similar term used by modern psychologists is "abreaction")

When and why to use

A learner may experience a whole range of feelings which can block their learning and development. These may be relatively near the surface, such as boredom, tiredness, embarrassment, irritation. Or they may be much deeper, like anger, fear, grief. They may not be caused by or even directly related to the learning project, but could still prevent them from achieving their task or learning goals.

We are not suggesting that you should "play the psychiatrist" with the learner. Nevertheless, there may well be occasions when the learner needs your help to discuss, recognise, come to terms with and discharge some of these negative and blocking emotions.

For example, the learner may be afraid of failure, of risk, of incompetence; they may feel embarrassment in demonstrating new skills in front of their colleagues; they may fear your disapproval; they may be angry at a lack of support from elsewhere in the organisation; they may be frustrated or demotivated at an apparent lack of success.

Specific skills needed

You need to find the right balance here between:

a) leading, based on your own analysis, judgement, ideas, interests (and yet too much leading could mean that you are imposing your own diagnosis and projecting your own feelings onto them)

b) following, where you respond sensitively to their behaviours and feelings (and yet too much following can lead to an aimless and unhelpful discussion)

"Active listening" and questioning skills are needed in order to draw out the learner; "playing back" emotions which you have detected; and of course the creation of a climate where learners feel able to express their feelings (positive or negative).

Traps to avoid

- sympathising too quickly and thus missing the real issue
- not giving your "permission" and encouragement to express emotions
- talking rather than listening
- picking up signals too late
- spending too long
- going too deep

Exploring Interventions

Helping the learner to self-discovery, self-directed learning, and to owning and solving their own problems: without becoming involved in their change yourself

Description

This is a key intervention for the coach to master, and for many people represents the "classic" coaching role (as distinct from the more instructional forms). Heron called this style catalytic; as a catalyst, you facilitate change in the learner without a direct involvement in that change yourself.

When and why to use

This intervention is important for developing both the knowledge and the skills of the learner.

If a learner needs to acquire certain knowledge, it might seem much easier and quicker for you simply to give it to them (using prescribing and/or informing interventions). But real learning goes beyond simply reproducing "given" information like a parrot: it requires a deeper understanding of cause and effect, of underlying issues and principles. To achieve this deeper level of learning, it is usually necessary for learners to discover information for themselves.

Furthermore, to develop skills it is necessary for the learner to practise them and get feedback on their progress. This too requires an approach where they take the responsibility for their own learning.

Specific skills needed

- asking them to evaluate their own performance
- asking them what they have learnt
- inviting them to set their own learning goals
- echoing what they say (fully or selectively), thus stimulating them to re-examine their ideas
- open questions
- closed questions
- checking your understanding by "playing it back" (paraphrasing)
- restructuring and reassembling what they have said
- reacting to their non-verbal signals (eg, that they want to speak)
- if you are coaching a group: bringing people in, drawing them out, or shutting them out as appropriate
- helping whilst keeping your hands in your pockets!
- perhaps the most powerful of all: knowing when to be silent!

Traps to avoid

- too many closed questions (which close down rather than open up)
- looking for structure or conclusions too early
- disguising a prescribing intervention as exploring by using leading questions and suggestions ("wouldn't it be a good idea to ...... ")
- indulging your own curiosity rather than the needs of the learner
- not identifying success criteria

Supporting Interventions

Building the learner's self-esteem, self-confidence and self-respect

Description

You may well have personal values which will in any case prompt you to try to build up the learner's self-respect. In purely practical terms, too, the whole coaching process will be more effective if the learner can undertake the various learning activities with self-confidence and an enhanced feeling of self-esteem.

It is often said that "learning from one's mistakes" is a powerful process. Indeed it is; but it can only be effective if the learner feels able to take the risk of making a mistake, by practising skills and behaviours without fear of punishment or ridicule.

When and why to use

Self-confidence is a "self-fulfilling prophecy": the learner's confidence gives them a greater chance of success, and this in turn increases their self-confidence for the next learning step.
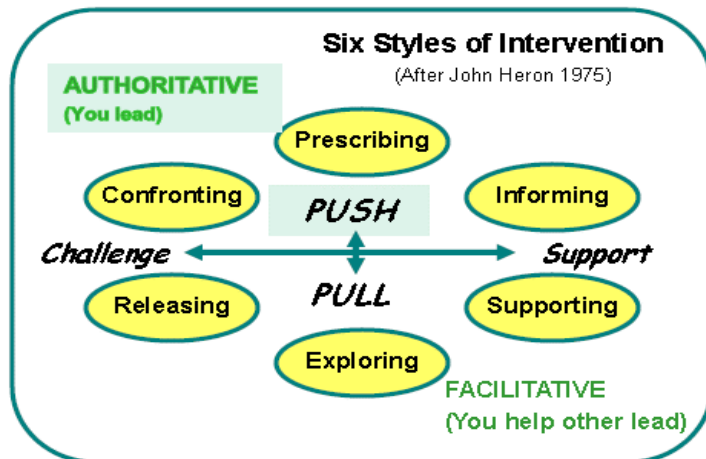
Specific skills needed

- expressing your appreciation (appreciation of the learner, their qualities, their achievements, their beliefs, their work, their ideas)
- expressing your confidence that they will succeed
- agreeing, praising
- making them feel welcome when visiting you
- sharing with them: sharing your ideas, your experiences (especially your mistakes!), your contacts, even physical things like personal possessions
- doing things to help them
- apologising for anything you did which was unintentionally hurtful, unfair, forgetful
- encouraging them to appreciate themselves

These are very simple skills, in some cases perhaps seeming no more than common courtesies. However, they are often overlooked under pressure for results. And some learners find it difficult to receive this sort of message, taking refuge in denials or in changing the subject quickly.

Traps to avoid

- patronising (complimenting the learner as if you occupy some higher moral vantage point)
- praising them for achieving what you achieved many years ago
- offering support, but qualifying it with a heavy "But ...."
- overdoing the support so that it feels false to the learner
- being held back by your own inhibitions about showing warmth, approval and support
- sending mixed signals (eg, saying "Come and see me any time" whilst you actually remain unavailable, busy or simply behind closed doors)

Summary of Styles

Six Styles of Intervention
(After John Heron 1975)

AUTHORITATIVE (You lead)

Prescribing
Confronting — PUSH — Informing
Challenge ←——→ Support
Releasing — PULL — Supporting
Exploring

FACILITATIVE (You help other lead)

Informing — PUSH
Giving information and knowledge

When
- Showing where to find extra help, information
- Supplying facts and data
- Explaining what just happened
- Telling your own experiences

Skills
- Presenting information clearly
- Checking for understanding
- Inviting and handling questions
- Judging how much to give

Traps
- Overloading
- Using too much jargon
- Not structuring the information
- Not saying WHY it's important

Examples
- "You can find the information in this report"
- "If you need help, you can get it by pressing F1"
- "John will not support you because it adds to his group's cost"
- "At my first presentation I forgot to check the equipment!"

Confronting — PUSH
Raising awareness; challenging assumptions

When
- To show consequences of the client's actions/thinking
- To challenge the client to re-think assumptions
- To raise the client's awareness of others' perceptions
- To boost client's confidence by affirming success

Skills
- Knowing when appropriate
- Direct questions
- Giving constructive feedback
- Challenging defensive excuses
- Giving 'space' to reflect

Traps
- Avoiding painful issues
- Punishing
- Acting like a parent
- Making character judgements
- Confronting on a trivial issue
- Creating win / lose outcomes

Examples
- "Are you aware that you are not using one of your key talents?"
- "We missed delivery to the customer because of your mistake"
- "Are you assuming that it's the same problem as last year?"
- "I've received very good comments about your last report"

Prescribing — PUSH
Giving directions, advice, recommendations

When
- If expertise is asked for / required
- When guidance is needed
- If the client is unable to direct for themselves yet
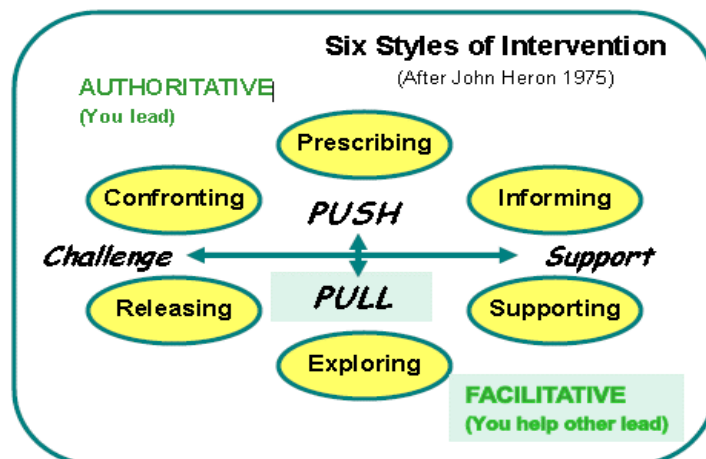- If there are legal, safety, ethical guidelines

Skills
- How to prescribe
- Whether to prescribe at all
- Giving clear instructions
- Explaining WHY
- Motivating

Traps
- Giving unwanted advice
- Taking over, imposing solutions
- Creating dependency
- Hesitating when firmness needed
- Over-controlling

Examples
- "Remember to include these figures in your report"
- "Have you talked to Marketing about this?"
- "I suggest that you attend this training course"
- "Our policy is to do it this way …"

Six Styles of Intervention
(After John Heron 1975)

AUTHORITATIVE (You lead)

Prescribing
Confronting — PUSH — Informing
Challenge ←——→ Support
Releasing — PULL — Supporting
Exploring

FACILITATIVE (You help other lead)

Supporting — PULL
Building subordinate's self esteem, self confidence

When
- To build morale and self-confidence
- To encourage risk taking
- To reward success, promote further learning

Skills
- Expressing appreciation
- Showing YOUR confidence
- Sharing your mistakes
- Encouraging SELF respect
- Apologising when necessary

Traps
- Patronising
- Giving "Yes, BUT …" support
- Overdoing it so it feels false
- Held back by OWN inhibitions
- Sending mixed signals

Examples
- "You did a great job with those figures"
- "I'm here next week if you need any more help"
- "I'm confident that you'll make a big success of it"
- "Don't worry if some of the details are missing at this stage"

Releasing — PULL
Releasing emotions which block progress

When
- If the client is afraid of risk or failure
- If the client feels incompetent
- If the client is frustrated, demotivated, angry
- If the client is excited, joyful, pleased

Skills
- Active listening
- Questioning
- Showing empathy
- Feeding back what you perceive
- Creating a supportive climate

Traps
- Talking, not listening
- Making it hard to express emotions
- Spending too long
- Going too deep
- Sympathising too quickly
- Denying or criticising their feelings

Examples
- "Why are you not very confident about this?"
- "What is the problem here?"
- "I have the impression that you don't agree with this …"
- "Tell me about it …"

Exploring — PULL
Promoting expansive and self-directed conversations

When
- To achieve a deeper level of understanding
- To achieve a broader, more expansive conversation
- To encourage client to take responsibility
- To promote motivation and commitment

Skills
- Wide range of questions
- Reflecting and paraphrasing
- Provoking curiosity
- Keeping hands in pockets!
- Silence

Traps
- Too many closed questions
- Structuring too soon
- PRESCRIBING, in other words
- Following YOUR curiosity
- Not clarifying objectives

Examples
- "What advice would you give to the next person to do this?"
- "How do you intend to start?"
- "What would you do differently next time?"
- "How important is this to you?"

Conclusion

As a coach you will have a very broad range of interventions at your disposal. At any point of time in a coaching conversation, you will have the options of

1. not doing anything devoting your energy to following the learner and to listening;

2. offering a piece of direction, either by means of an advice or suggestion (Prescribing) or by means of information that might help the learner (Informing);

3. offering a challenge to the learner, consisting of a different way to look at his or her issues (Confronting);

4. offering more facilitative interventions, by offering warmth and support (Supporting), or an effort to summarise or inquire more deeply into the issues at stake (Exploring), or an invitation to open up emotional undercurrents to the issues and the conversation itself (Releasing).

Each of these can have very different effects on your counterpart and the conversation.

The skilful coach is able to:

- select and apply intervention styles appropriate to particular learners in particular situations
- use a range of skills and interventions within each style, for maximum effectiveness
- move cleanly and elegantly from one intervention to another as required
- be aware of what intervention is being used at each moment and why
- be aware of the learner's reactions to the intervention style used
- have a view and careful consideration on when to lead and when to follow
- choose an appropriate balance between direction and facilitation.

References

For more information see:

1. De Haan, E. & Burger, Y. (2005; second edition 2013). Coaching with colleagues: an action guide for one-to-one learning. Chichester: Wiley.

2. Heron, J. (1975; fourth edition 2001). Helping the client. London: Sage.

3. Kolb, D.A. (1984). Experiential learning- experience as the source of learning and development. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Appendix: Statistical Data

Reliability

To determine internal consistency of the Coaching Behaviours Questionnaire, we conducted three reliability studies:

- Version 1 with a forced choice amongst 3 interventions per question, which had the same items (60) as the original coaching behaviours questionnaire designed by Richard Phillips, with 95 coaches and consultants (and some managers);

- Version 2 with revised items and 12 new items, completed by a norm group of 119 mainly coaches and consultants.

- Version 3 which was the first version with a forced choice amongst 4 interventions per question, and a norm group of 112 coaches and consultants (and some managers)[1].

Most of the consultants in the populations are (external) organisation consultants. This may explain the somewhat higher scores for the facilitative interventions that we found (see the table below).

On the basis of these studies, we rephrased the original 60 questions with, in total, 72 items to achieve Version 2, which proved to be a much more reliable tool than Version 1. With the detailed results from the reliability study of Version 2, we were able to revise most of the items again and decided to put them into groups of 4 rather than 3. Version 3 is the first questionnaire with 18 questions (made up of 4 items each, i.e. 72 items in total). On the basis of the study results for Version 3 we slightly rephrased 23 of the 72 items to produce Version 4.

All numbers below are based on the norm group of 112 questionnaires that we have collected for Version 3 of the Coaching Behaviours Questionnaire. Here is an impression of the norm group raw data:

Coaching Intervention Style	Minimum score:	Maximum score:	Average score:	Standard deviation:
Prescribing	0	40	10.4	9.2
Informing	5	44	22.9	7.5
Confronting	11	58	30.3	7.8
Releasing	5	63	39.5	11.5
Exploring	22	71	44.8	10.1
Supporting	5	54	32.1	8.7

[1] The constitution of the Version 3 norm group was 46% self-employed executive coaches, 29% Ashridge faculty and associated coaches; 13% in-company coaches and line managers; and 12% unknown.

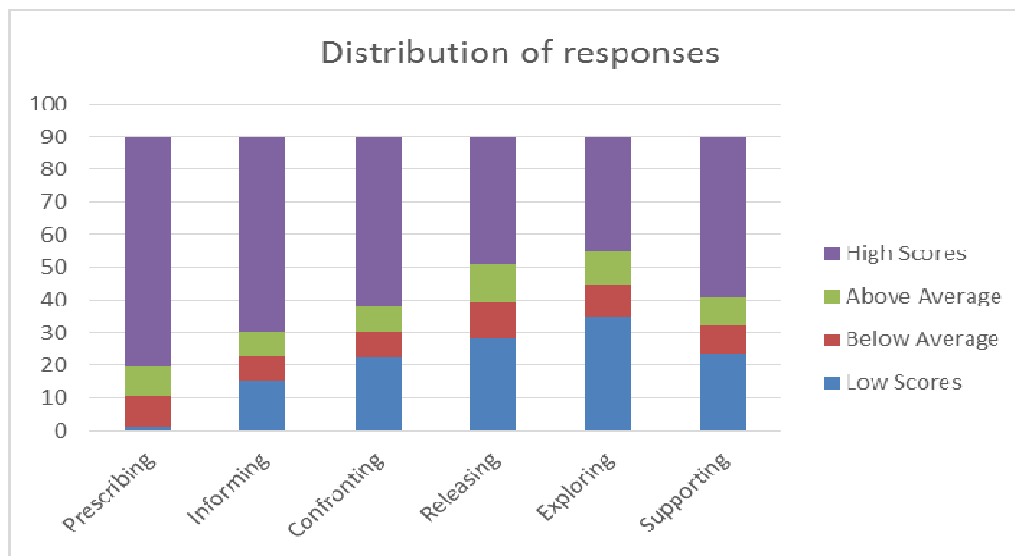## Appendix: Statistical Data

Reliability Continued

Figure. Raw data of the norm group scores (Coaching Behaviours Questionnaire version 3) showing means and standard deviations. One expects about 70% of the population to be within the green and red coloured bands.

Detailed study of the replies from all 112 respondents shows that each individual item of the 72 items (i.e. 4 per question, multiplied by 18 questions) leads to very different responses: all items receive a '0' score for some respondents and all but five items receive the highest score of the four options for some respondents, i.e. 5 points or more. There were altogether 9 (of 72) items for which the score varied over the full range from 0 to 10 points, and 25 that vary from 0 to 8 points. This shows that most of the individual items do discriminate for the coach population tested.

Using all completed questionnaires, we were able to test the questionnaire for internal consistency, by measuring Cronbach's Alpha. This computation showed us that all individual items correlate positively with their own scale total, as one would hope. The Cronbach's Alphas are given below:

Coaching Intervention Style	Cronbach's α
Prescribing	0.90
Informing	0.59
Confronting	0.71
Releasing	0.84
Exploring	0.78
Supporting	0.76

A Cronbach's Alpha higher than 0.6 is generally regarded as sufficiently consistent [2]. As the table above shows, the present Versions 4 of this questionnaire (just) achieves such consistency for all dimensions.

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[2] Due to the ipsative nature of the questionnaire, small deviations are possible. These deviations are negligible in our opinion because we correlate here only within a dimension and not between dimensions.

Appendix: Statistical Data

Independence of dimensions

Because of the ipsative nature of the questionnaire, we don't expect the scales to be completely independent. We would expect a small negative correlation between all the scales. Indeed, for the N = 112 norm group we find an average correlation between the four dimensions of –0.06.

However, if we look more closely at correlations between the scales we find the following clusters:

1. *Confronting* correlates negatively with all the other scales, and in particular with *Supporting* (r= -.47), with an average of r = -.09.

2. There is a bit of a cluster around *Prescribing, Informing* and *Supporting,* which all correlate positively with each other, particularly *Prescribing* and *Informing* (with r = .62) whilst the other two correlations are considerably lower (r = .21 and r = 0.07).

3. There is third cluster around *Exploring* and *Releasing,* which correlate with r = 0.40.

All other correlations are negative, between r= -0.21 and r= -0.75.

The highest negative correlations are consistently between opposites in the model, which provides a nice confirmation of its underlying structure:

· *Confronting* with *Supporting* : r = -.47
· *Prescribing* with *Exploring* : r = -.66
· *Informing* with *Releasing* : r = -.72

Prescribing and *Releasing* correlate even less, with r = -.75. Another surprise when viewed from the underlying model is that also *Releasing* and *Supporting* are strongly anti-correlated, with r = -.50, even though they are neighbours in the model. All other neighbours are either non-correlated or positively correlated.

The correlations bear out the overall structure of the model and suggest that there are three main clusters for intervening:

1. Offering some kind of active help, either through advice (*Prescribing*), information or data (*Informing*) or active support (*Supporting*);

2. Offering some kind of facilitation of the learner's own process, either by listening actively, questioning and summarising (*Exploring*) or by deepening the conversation and uncovering feelings and emotions (*Releasing*);

3. Offering a challenge or different way of interpreting issues, new insight or confrontation to the learner's frame of mind (*Confronting*).

All these correlation coefficients above .4 or below -.4 are significant at the $p < 0.01$ level and those above 0.2 or below -.2 are significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

Appendix: Statistical Data

Validity

Face Validity

Thousands of managers and coaches, who have worked with precursors of this questionnaire over the past 20 years or so, have appreciated how it helps them to reflect on their own interventions as coaches. They tend to recognise the dimensions on which they are scored by the Coaching Behaviours Questionnaire. Also the model in Heron's book (Heron, 1975) seems intuitive and comprehensive, and has been corroborated by other writers about coaching interventions (such as Clutterbuck, 1985, and De Haan & Burger, 2004, who both also introduce a two-by-two matrix with main dimensions being directive versus facilitative and challenge versus support).

Content Validity

Many experts in the area of counselling and coaching interventions have looked at this questionnaire and Heron's (1975) underlying model, and they attest that the questions seem to be relevant and appropriate for the dimensions they try to measure. In the course of the history of the questionnaire, more than ten senior colleagues have helped to make the questionnaire more relevant and easy to use.

Construct Validity

As this questionnaire was constructed on the basis of a clear theoretical model, we will be able to conduct experiments to demonstrate the ability of this questionnaire to measure the dimensions that it purports to measure.

We are presently setting up such an experiment to test the construct validity of the questionnaire.

About

Ashridge Business School

For over 50 years as a world-class business school, Ashridge has helped many organisations and individuals address a wide range of management and organisation development challenges. We work at several levels throughout the organisation, developing new talent, middle management and senior high potentials.

Over 700 corporate clients a year now use the services of Ashridge to make their organisations and people more effective.

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- Customised and open executive education
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- Virtual learning
- Organisation consulting
- Executive coaching
- Conference

Our credentials

Ashridge is one of the few business schools in the world to be triple accredited by AMBA, EQUIS, and AACSB – the UK, European and US executive education bodies, and is consistently placed in the business school rankings produced by the Financial Times, Business Week and Economist.

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