



Reflecting pathways to
learning and change



F. Campone, Inc. Newsletter

Bridging Coaching Research and Practice
v.1, #5

Our clients are complex human beings and as coaches we are always seeking to expand our repertoire of strategies to best fit our clients learning styles and needs. One approach can be found in Howard Gardners theory of multiple intelligences. This month's column summarizes *Using the Multiple Intelligences as a learning intervention: A model for coaching and mentoring* by Colleen Harding (downloaded from The International Journal of Evidence-Based Coaching and Mentoring, vol. 4 #2, Autumn 2006. (<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/education/ijebcm/home.html>))

Currents in Coaching Research: MI and Coaching

Multiple Intelligences: A Toolkit for Coaches

The Literature in a Nutshell

Author Colleen Harding notes in her review of coaching literature that little has been written about using Howard Gardners theory in coaching. The principles of multiple intelligences (MI) and practices for cultivating these have been applied for years in the field of education. Harding set out to explore how emphasizing MI in coaching might impact the clients (whom she refers to as learners); how incorporating MI impacts the practice of coaching and mentoring; and how it might be incorporated into a model for coaching and mentoring. The article provides readers with a solid overview of the eight intelligences identified in Gardners work.

The study itself holds the focus on the participants views and uses an action research design to elicit the experiences and constructs developed by the coaches and learners over the course of the study. Six university staff members served as the coaches in the study and six staff members served as the clients. All participants maintained a reflection diary. The coaches met for regular action learning sessions and participants were also interviewed. Over the course of the study, the coaches found a need for a toolbox of strategies to facilitate the development of each of the eight intelligences. While this was not a part of the original design, the toolbox emerged through the action learning process and became a useful product which is included in the article for readers reference.

The author found through her study that the inclusion of less-common MI interventions helped clients achieve their goals by integrating body, mind and emotion in learning experiences. She was able to correlate specific MI interventions with different stages of an unfolding coach-client relationship. Specific tools- for example teaching clients to create mind maps- are drawn from practices in

education while others, such as the use of music to create client awareness of language patterns, introduce practices which might be unfamiliar in an organizational culture.

The Researcher Lens

Harding offers extensive detail about her methodology, with a strong orientation toward an epistemological perspective of constructivism. Her choice of an action research format for eliciting the learning of the coaches resulted in an evolving understanding of the questions and the development of an unanticipated product (the Toolbox). Her data were collected from three sources: the reflective diaries of coaches and learners, transcripts and documentation of the action learning sets and interviews with participants. The data from all three points were triangulated to strengthen validity. In addition, she looked to two theoretical frameworks for her Mi model- the GROW model and The Mentoring Meeting model. Her explanations of methodology also include the thinking behind her decision points in the research process. The results section is illustrated with data from all three sources.

The Coaching Lens

The toolbox offers practicing coaches practical strategies for acknowledging and engaging a clients multiple intelligences. In this theoretical framework, interventions which require clients to draw on underutilized skills can catalyze thinking in new directions. While coaching is primarily a language-based intervention, the MI Toolbox acknowledges that some coaches and clients may get better results by drawing on bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, or naturalist intelligences or by using linguistic intelligence in a different way. Awareness of the MI perspective can also help practitioners become aware of their own natural habits and tendencies in coaching and invite a breakaway from those practices. Similarly, this perspective offers coaches a different set of lenses through which to view client strengths and areas for growth.

Francine Campone, Ed.D., PCC is a Coach and Consultant and a member of the ICF Research Committee. She specializes in coaching mature professionals who want to make sustainable changes in the quality of their personal and professional lives. You are invited to contact Francine at francine@reinventinglife.net or via phone at 303-862-77010 for more information about coaching or to subscribe to this free newsletter. Visit her website- <http://www.francinecampone.com> or her virtual office at <http://francinecampone.interfaceias.com> to find out more about current programs and teleclasses. Francine Campone, Ed.D., PCC
