

An Introduction to Coaching models and why they're important

Since the establishment of the ideas and principles underpinning our modern understanding of coaching, beginning with Timothy Gallwey in the 1970s and his work with tennis players, coaching has continued to grow both in terms of the research associated with the performance improvement that can be generated, and in terms of the application and practice of coaching.

Outside of the techniques being developed within the sports coaching arena in the 1970s and 80s, corporate organisations were some of the earliest adopters of the ideas presented by this new approach to improving performance. Perhaps the most well known and widely taught 'coaching model' is the GROW model first articulated in the 1980s by business coaches Graham Alexander, Alan Fine, and Sir John Whitmore, who together coined the term "performance coaching" - This was the birth of the modern coaching movement as we know it today.

The body of knowledge and the growth of coaching psychology as an academic discipline has further fuelled an enormous amount of research concerning the science of coaching and human performance improvement, underpinned by advances in learning theory and neuroscience.

The sections below have been designed to give you a sense of how the emergence of new models and approaches together are advancing our understanding of the efficacy of coaching as an approach, and more importantly, how Notion's work fits into this space in advancing Operational Coaching™ as a new and distinct management discipline per se.

It may be helpful to group coaching models into 4 categories:

Explanatory - Draw on our understanding of psychology and explain why some aspects of coaching are effective

Conversational - Offer a step-by-step mnemonic guide for the coach to follow during a coaching conversation

Behavioural - Focus on some of the psychological approaches to helping other adjust their behaviour

Operational - Focuses on the distinct adjustments to our style of management in order to effectively coach others in the workplace

Explanatory

Gaining an appreciation of some of the underpinning research models that explain why aspects of coaching are effective can help us to develop new mental models about how we and others behave. Examples include how we acquire information, how data is retained and used, and models that describe ways in which behaviour is linked to brain chemistry. These models are drawn mostly from academic research in the fields of *learning & development*, *neurobiology*, and *psychology*.

They're introduced here so that we're able to link our coaching behaviour to underpinning models that have a solid scientific foundation, and you're encouraged to explore them to provide a solid framework from within which to develop your own understanding of why coaching works.

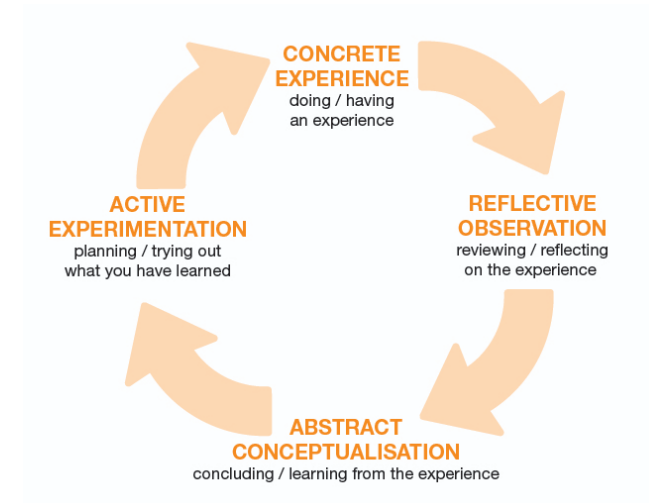
- **Learning Theory**

In 1984, David Kolb in his observation of how people learned, stated that “Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.” He defined 4 distinct stages of a cycle that a person would work through in order to be able to internalise and then act on new learning and is a helpful theory for describing how it is that we acquire knowledge through experience. The stages are:

1. **Concrete Experience** - a new experience or situation is encountered, or a reinterpretation of existing experience.
2. **Reflective Observation** of the New Experience - of particular importance are any inconsistencies between experience and understanding.
3. **Abstract Conceptualization** reflection gives rise to a new idea, or a modification of an existing abstract concept (the person has learned from their experience).
4. **Active Experimentation** - the learner applies their idea(s) to the world around them to see what happens.

Kolb's Theory of Experiential Learning

You can begin at any of the stages and it is a continuous cycle, i.e. there is no limit to the number of cycles you can make in a learning situation. Individuals generally begin with their preferred experience activity. Kolb might have been said to subscribe to a cognitive learning theory in how we internalise our learning.



Kolb and then Honey and Mumford

In an advancement of Kolb's work, Peter Honey and Alan Mumford identified four distinct learning styles or preferences: Activist, Theorist; Pragmatist and Reflector. These are the learning approaches that individuals naturally tend to prefer and they recommend that in order to maximise one's own personal learning each learner ought to:

- understand their learning style
- seek out opportunities to learn using that style.



They asserted that through the act of thinking about our preferred learning style, our learning would be improved as we would also proactively engage in the underutilised aspects of the learning cycle (taking the time to reflect for example if that isn't our natural preference).

- **Appreciative Enquiry/Inquiry (AI)**

Based on looking at what works, and what is right, rather than at problems and at what isn't working...

- Language is very important
- For coaching, identifying and building on what works and what could be

Some version of these three questions works well in most situations:

1. What do you like about what's going on? What's working? Tell me about a time when it really worked well/you felt good about...?
2. What would you like to have more of? What would you like to do differently? What made that so exciting, meaningful, satisfying...?
3. What help do you need to help you succeed? Where could you get that? Where have you got it from in the past? Who could help....?

- **Clean language and metaphor**

A system of questioning that seeks to keep the questioner's perspective out of the question as far as possible (David Grove)

David Grove originated 'Clean Language' in the 1980s. He was a psychotherapist and noticed that his clients often used metaphors to describe their experiences. If he changed their metaphors, rephrasing or summarising using different words, clients usually reverted to their original conceptual descriptions. Through experimentation, he discovered that if he asked very simple questions and used the client's own language, the metaphors' strengths became clear and issues seemed to resolve. Key to success is for the coach not to add any words of their own but to stick to the basic questioning language and use the client's own words.

- **Positive psychology**

Focuses on beliefs, values and needs in the search for ultimate happiness and incorporates work on character strengths and positive reframing to resolve conflicts. The positive psychology school of thought was largely inspired by the work of Martin Seligman, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania and past president of the American Psychological Association (APA). Positive psychology coaching is based on working with a client's core psychological strengths. The work is first to identify them, then to understand how to use them to support making significant changes.

The core psychological strengths are:

- Courage:** Facing your fears and taking the risks necessary for success
- Optimism:** Believing you are a powerful force in your future
- Persistence:** Developing patience, discipline and endurance to succeed
- Living in the Present:** Living every day to the optimum
- Enthusiasm:** Achieving and maintaining a vigorous level of excitement
- Resilience:** Bouncing back from serious adversity
- Interpersonal Intelligence:** Building healthy, rewarding relationships

Conversational

Of the many Conversational models that you might have heard of, we focus only on the most widely known GROW model, later adapted to TGROW (*Downey, 2003*) – *topic, goals, reality, options, willingness*) and help you get past any superficial traps into which unqualified coaches might fall.

The purpose of a Conversational model is to provide a step-by-step guide to follow during a coaching conversation. Other mnemonic model guides are proposed by various academics and commercial organisations and each offers a small distinction from, but can ultimately be traced back to the original GROW model. Whilst they offer a level of confidence to a newly trained coach, they can also constrain a conversation if they are followed too slavishly. So whilst knowledge of them is useful, in reality a professional Coach will draw on some of the insights that each offers to inform their own coaching approach in a given circumstance with a coaching client.

In the STAR® programme, we show how the TGROW model serves as a useful guide for the purposes of holding productive 1-to-1s with team members. There is a good reason why TGROW is the most used as it is both intuitive and easy to recall.

Other Well Known Mnemonics (other than GROW) for Guided Coaching Conversations

CIGAR - Full Potential Group	CLEAR - Peter Hawkins - Bath Consultancy Group	OSKAR - Paul Z. Jackson & Mark McKergow	GAINS - Angela Phillips-Stockwell
C Current Reality	C Contracting	O Outcome	G Goal
I Ideal	L Listening	S Scaling	A Assessment
G Gaps	E Exploring	K Know-how and Resources	I Ideas
A Action	A Action	A Affirm and Action	N Next Steps
R Review	R Review	R Review: What's better?	S Support
PARTNER - unattributed	STEPPPA - (2003) Dr. Angus McLeod	STEER - Unattributed	COACH - Peter Hook, Ian McPhail & Andy Vass
P Preparation & Discovery	S Subject	S Spot the Opportunity	C Clarify the Issue
A Action	T Target Identification	T Tailor the Intervention	O Open up Resources
R Reflection & Insight	E Emotion	E Explain the Task	A Agree the Preferred Future
T Transformation	P Perception and Choice	E Encourage	C Create the Journey
N New Possibilities	P Plan	R Review	H Head for Success
E Empowering Energy	P Place		
R Results	A Adapt or Act		

ACHIEVE - Dr. Sabine Dembkowski & Fiona Eldridge (2003)	ARROW - is a refinement of the GROW model (Unattributed)	TGROW - Adapted from Whitmore (et al's) GROW model by Myles Downey in his book: Effective Coaching: Lessons from the Coach's Coach (2003)	FUEL - from the book 'The Extraordinary Coach: How the Best Leaders Help Others Grow' by John H Zenger and Kathleen Stinnet.
A Assess the current situation	A Aims	T Topic	F Frame
C Creatively brainstorm alternatives	R Reality	G Goal	U Understand
H Hone goals	R Reflection	R Reality	E Explore
I Initiate options	O Options	O Options	L Lay out
E Evaluate options	W Way forward	W Will	
V Validate an action program design			
E Encourage momentum			

Behavioural

In our journey to improve our own performance, knowledge and insight about the underpinning models supporting behavioural change is an important factor in recognising not only how we 'operate' but also how others do. It's the tenets of behavioural coaching that underpin the STAR® Operational Coaching™ approach.

- **Behavioural coaching**

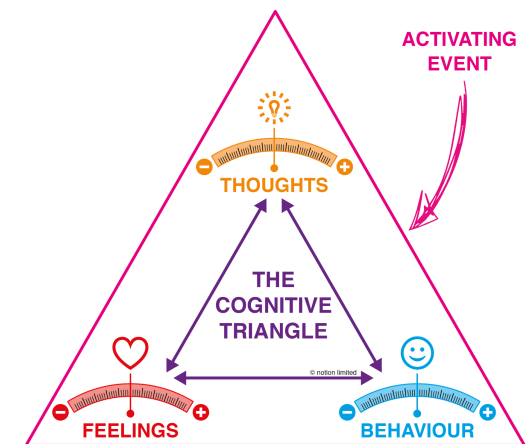
Draws from extensive psychological work in conditioning and adapting of behaviour as a science. It relies upon rigorous evidence-based psychological concepts. Here are some of the aspects of behaviour and learning which are emphasized in behavioural coaching:

- Much of our human behaviour is learned
- All behaviours result in positive or negative consequences for the individual and those around them
- Defining individuals' current status and developmental progress in terms of their behaviour, rather than personality traits or personality styles
- Specifying the target behaviour impacting on, say, a professional skill, position task etc.
- Measuring the target behaviour
- Exploring and changing core values, motivation, beliefs and emotions which can result in significant behavioural change
- Assessing covert behaviours (e.g. limiting beliefs, anxiety) in relation to overt actions (e.g. speaking at a meeting)

- **Cognitive Behavioural Coaching**

With regards to leadership and business, CBC was developed with the intention of aiding individuals in overcoming functional weaknesses or mental obstacles within the workplace.

The effective principle of CBC is this: what we think about a situation, affects how we feel about it. As we can control what we think of things, we can therefore subsequently control our feelings. The tools and methodology can be helpful in scenarios such as dealing with lack of motivation, confidence issues and general personal or professional skill development.



The aim of CBC is to identify the root of an issue that may be preventing an individual from reaching their full potential.

- It differs from other coaching frameworks such as GROW in that it focuses on emotional or psychological barriers, rather than purely practical knowledge, skill or strategic shortcomings.
- This form of coaching is primarily focused on the workplace and the individual's ability to perform. CBC focuses on the notion that our reactions are the driving factor behind our beliefs concerning such *events*, rather than our reactions being directly caused by the event.

By focusing on and isolating the negative thoughts and beliefs surrounding *events*, it becomes possible to utilise alternative behaviours and viewpoints to ultimately alter our negative beliefs surrounding the *event*. These alternative viewpoints and behaviours can, in turn, be reinforced by positive feedback from managers and colleagues, creating a 'new self' through discarding old beliefs.

This is why CBC operates in many cases under the notion that if someone can talk themselves into ineffectiveness, they are also able to talk themselves out of it. This ability subsequently allows, in theory, the individual to reach their true potential within the workplace.

Operational

Knowledge and awareness of other coaching models can help us to develop as individuals in both our personal as well as our professional lives. Bringing that knowledge and insight into the workplace though requires a fundamental shift in our perceptions of the workplace, how we regard our purpose within our roles and the style with which we engage with others. This is the fundamental basis of 'Operational Coaching™', an approach to coaching that is focused primarily on the adjustments that we as managers and leaders within the workplace need to make in order to be able to effectively coach others when the opportunity arises. In this regard, Operational Coaching™ is regarded as a management discipline that includes:

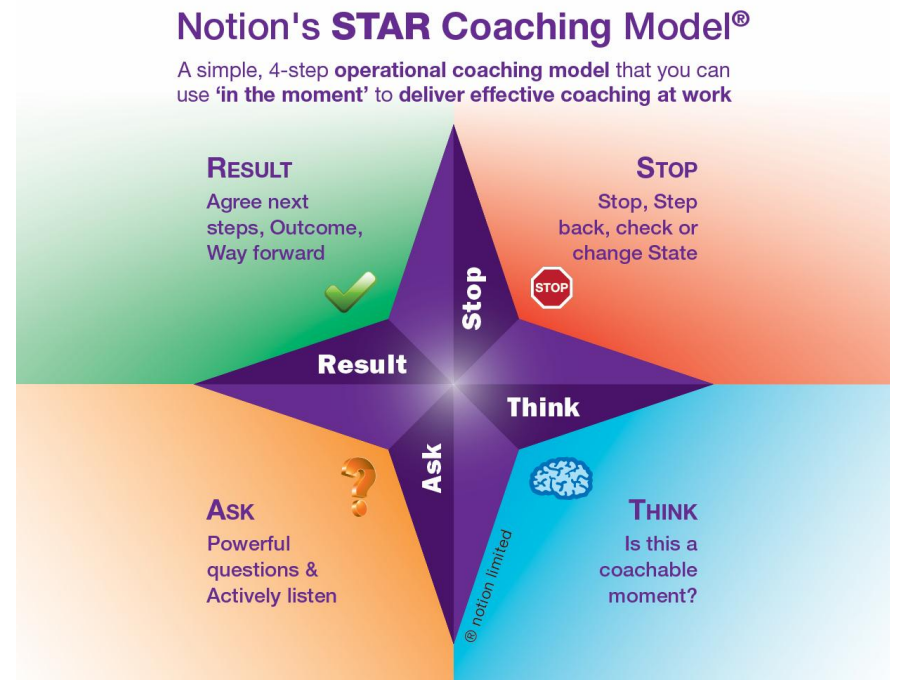
- Developing our situational awareness
- Gaining a deeper sense of the potential from different situations and encounters
- Being able to restrain our natural inclination to 'solve' problems presented to us where there might be a learning opportunity for another
- Knowing how to ask respectful, sincere and provocative questions designed to bring about deeper reflection on the part of others

- Developing knowledge and insight about the team members that we work with to know how we might offer stretch activities
- Knowing how to better prepare for and positively engage with challenging conversations
- Knowing how to gain commitment from others to follow through on actions and support ongoing development

Notion's STAR[®] model is the first and only model of its kind to focus specifically on bringing about a permanent change in management and leadership behaviour, an approach which has been validated by academic research conducted across 66 organisations and evaluated by the UK Government and the London School of Economics.

By encouraging managers to STOP, change state and then THINK about their approach in the moment, entertains the opportunity to ASK questions and draw upon other behavioural knowledge that may have been learned that can be brought to bear in the moment to support the learning of another. Drawing the ensuing coaching conversation to a close with the express intent to gain commitment to action from the other person helps to generate a meaningful RESULT from the encounter, and planned follow-up of the conversation underlines the commitment that the Manager has to the ongoing performance improvement of team members.

The STAR[®] model's growing popularity is probably due to its easy application during any coaching encounter - from the fleeting but insightful question or short operational coaching[™] moment, through to the management coaching conversation or more developmental coaching opportunity afforded by a regular operational 1:1 session with a team member or direct report.



Capturing evidence for your Qualification

We advise that from the outset you capture your application of coaching experiences, particularly when you are learning how to apply models within a coaching intervention. The information you capture in your 'Coaching Diary' will be helpful in writing up your 'Mission' experiences and will be most helpful when reflecting on your own coaching performance and how to improve.

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