

# COACHING IN EDUCATION

## A BRIEF GUIDE: BY CHRISTIAN VAN NIEUWERBURGH

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There has been remarkable growth in the use of coaching in educational settings over the last decade. Coaching is now being used in schools, colleges and universities all over the world to support learners, educators and leaders to flourish. Research emerging primarily from the UK, the US, Australia and New Zealand is providing valuable academic support for this new field and it is continuing to develop rapidly.

### WHAT IS COACHING?

Coaching is a conversational activity that aims to support people to learn and develop, thereby enhancing their ability to achieve more of their untapped potential.

### WHAT IS COACHING IN EDUCATION?

Coaching in education has been defined as “a one-to-one conversation focused on the enhancement of learning and development through increasing self-awareness and a sense of personal responsibility, where the coach facilitates the self-directed learning of the coachee through questioning, active listening, and appropriate challenge in a supportive and encouraging climate” (van Nieuwerburgh, 2012). This way of understanding coaching highlights how it is perfectly aligned with the purpose of educational organisations. By highlighting the “self-directed” nature of coaching, we are distinguishing coaching from mentoring. Coaching is not about teaching or sharing expertise. It is about creating the best possible environments for people to learn for themselves.

### HOW IS COACHING IN EDUCATION DIFFERENT FROM COACHING IN OTHER SECTORS?

The key differentiator is that coaching in education has a clear purpose: improved outcomes for learners. While the focus is on the success and wellbeing of learners, coaching is used to support everyone in the educational community. We believe that the success and wellbeing of teachers, lecturers, educational leaders is essential if we are to provide better learning opportunities for students.

### WHERE CAN COACHING BE USED IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS?

Broadly speaking, there are four areas where coaching is being used currently in schools, colleges and universities: to support educational leadership; to improve the professional practice of educators; to support students directly; and to connect educational institutions to their communities. In addition to formal coaching opportunities, educational leaders and educators are starting to adopt a “coaching approach” in a wide variety of their interactions with others, and many institutions are intentionally working towards embedding a “coaching philosophy” into their organisational culture. This can be understood as a culture that encourages autonomy, self-determination and ambition in a respectful and supportive climate.

## WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF HOW COACHING IS BEING USED EFFECTIVELY IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS?

- In the US, instructional coaches are working with teachers to help them improving their teaching practice.
- In Australia, educational leaders are learning coaching skills to enhance their leadership skills.
- In the UK, educational leaders are receiving coaching to support their wellbeing and leadership performance.
- In New Zealand, students are trained to provide coaching support to one another.

These are just a few examples. A wide range of case studies can be found on the [websites](#) listed at the end of this document.

## IS THERE ANY RESEARCH TO SUPPORT THE USE OF COACHING IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS?

Yes, there is a growing body of research into coaching in education. The research suggests that in addition to helping people to achieve self-selected goals, coaching in educational settings can:

- Improve wellbeing
- Enhance resilience
- Increase hopefulness
- Build self confidence
- Improve academic performance
- Increase emotional intelligence
- Improve teaching practice
- Support leadership development

## WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

### COACHING IN EDUCATION BLOGS

- [Coaching in Education Blog](#)
- [Radical Learners blog](#)
- [The Edu Flaneuse](#)

### ON TWITTER

- Search for #educoach
- Follow @gcieducation
- Follow @collectivEd1
- Follow @learningforward

### FREE DOWNLOADABLE RESOURCES

- Lofthouse, R., Leat, D. & Towler, C. (2010). Coaching for teaching and learning: A practical guide for schools. CfBT Education Trust. ([free resource that can be found online](#))
- Lofthouse, R. (Ed). CollectivED Working Papers. Carnegie School of Education, Leeds Beckett University. ([free, open-access online academic journal](#))
- van Nieuwerburgh, C. & Barr, M. (Eds) (2019). Resources for Coaching in Education: Useful Research and References. (article in CollectivED)

### BOOKS FOR PRACTITIONERS

- van Nieuwerburgh, C. (2012). Coaching in Education: Getting Better Results for Students, Educators and Parents. London: Karnac.
- Campbell, J. & van Nieuwerburgh, C. (2017). The Leader's Guide to Coaching in Schools: Creating Conditions for Effective Learning. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Knight, J. (2007). Instructional Coaching: A Partnership Approach to Improving Instruction. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Knight, J. (2017). The Impact Cycle: What Instructional Coaches Should Do to Foster Powerful Improvements in Teaching. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

### WEBSITES WITH FREE RESOURCES AND USEFUL CONTENT

- [www.growthcoaching.com.au](http://www.growthcoaching.com.au)
- [www.instructionalcoaching.com](http://www.instructionalcoaching.com)