Special issue call for papers from Journal of Management Development: *"The use and abuse of storytelling in organizations"*

Guest Editors:
Adrian Carr, Principal Research Fellow, University of Western Sydney, Australia
Cheryl Lapp, President, Labyrinth Consulting, British Columbia, Canada

Description

In 2003, it was estimated that there were some 15,000 full-time and part-time management or leadership coaches world-wide; and growing at a rate of about 40 per cent per year (Arnaud, 2003, p.1133). As a process of adult education in the workplace, the mere need for coaching can be taken to infer that the learner or protégé is somehow deficient: "Subordinates must be advised on how to do their jobs better and to be coached to better performance. Coaching problems are usually caused by lack of ability, insufficient information or understanding, or incompetence on the part of the subordinates" (Whetton and Cameron, 1998/2002, p.222). More and more we can note that workplace adult educators such as coaches use storytelling as learning and development tools to identify these efficiencies. "The shortest route between two people is a story", says Dianna Carr, a senior storyteller at Envisioning + Storytelling, one of the world's most successful story management consultancies (Taylor, 2006, p. 2).

Whilst some are very skeptical about the idea that individual and group performance can be improved through coaching, others have viewed coaching as a panacea for much that causes organizations to fail. Some have even suggested that coaching is a pragmatic way of filling the void that has been created by the failure of management and organization theory to provide managers with unambiguous advice about how to manage. The stories that the coaches draw upon to assist leaders and managers to improve their performance, in our view, is not really storytelling as such, but storyselling (Carr and Lapp, 2005a, b, 2006, 2007; Lapp and Carr, 2007). Much of the management literature about stories and storytelling treats stories as though they are simply "neutral" objects rather than exploring the manner in which the story and dialogue are constructed to persuade the "listener" to accept the story. The crisis of confidence that may be generated by the perceived need to engage a coach, in our view, creates some of the psychological conditions for stories to be effectively "sold" to the listener.

Others have carried cautionary notes and pleas to understand the motivation and psychodynamic processes that are engaged in the telling of stories, in the literature on storytelling. Gabriel (2004), for example, suggests: "Instead of accepting all voices of experience as equally valid and equally worthy of attention, I would argue that it is the job of researchers to interrogate experiences, seeking to examine not only their origins, but also those blind spots, illusions, and self-deceptions that crucially and legitimately make them up. Far from being an unqualified source of knowledge, experience must be treated with the same skepticism and suspicion with which we approach all other sources of authoritative knowledge" (p. 29).

At the present time, what eludes us is breadth and depth of analysis of how coaches use stories and for what reasons. The purpose of this call is to identify and analyse the instrumentality of storytelling in organizations. In so doing, the invitation for contributors is to explore connections among and including but not limited to: storytelling; storyselling; critical theory and psychodynamics as they pertain to leadership and management development in organizations.

It is intended that this special issue of the *Journal of Management Development* will be published in 2010. This is an early call for papers with the Guest Editors requiring submissions no later than **April 30, 2009**. Contributors should send their manuscripts by e-mail to both Adrian Carr (a.carr@uws.edu.au) and Cheryl Lapp (LabyrinthConsulting@shaw.ca).

Contributors should consult the web page for JMD at the Notes for Contributors (which also show how the references should be formatted as required by the publisher). This can be found at: www.emeraldinsight.com/info/journals/jmd/notes.htm

Submitted by:

Dr. Terrence E. Maltbia & Dr. Rachel Ciporen
Department of Organization and Leadership
Teachers College, Columbia University, United States

Date:
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Abstract

Purpose: Literature addressing storytelling in an organizational context is typically framed as a strategic interaction whereby a leader shares a story in order to persuade organizational members of a particular idea or course of action. This article looks at the more "intimate" and relational side of storytelling and proposes that all people have stories about their lives, abilities, and challenges that inform their patterns of interaction and decision making.

We introduce an approach informed by the science of human performance in which coaches partner with clients to explore the stories the client holds about self and others in order to engage in transformative forms of learning targeted at identifying and reframing out-of-date or unhelpful assumptions and related actions to those that are more aligned with client intentions.

Design/methodology/approach: The article is based on one of the author's experience of developing an executive and organizational coaching certification program as well as the authors' combined years working as executive and life coaches.

Findings: The authors conclude that when listening to and working with clients to craft stories, it is important for the coach to attend to the client's context, content, and conduct. Utilizing coaching competencies such as listening, questioning, relating (i.e., building a personal bond), and coach presence (i.e., genuine care and curiosity) supports the work of reframing assumptions through the use of story to help clients enhance personal awareness and achieve their intentions.

Practical implications: Coaches and consultants often hear people's stories. How we use ourselves in those conversations impacts the degree to which we can help a client clarify their intentions, explore options, set attainable goals, and experiment with new and/or expanded ways of thinking and related behaviors. This article outlines how coaches can help clients surface the beliefs embedded in their personal narratives, and when appropriate, reframe those beliefs that are no longer useful.

Originality/value: This article looks at both the intimate and strategic aspects of storytelling and proposes that storytelling is a natural part of meaning making and human interaction. By outlining specific phases and components of the coaching process, this article describes the process through which coaches can assist clients to "reframe" out-of-date or no longer useful stories about themselves and others.

Keywords: strategic learning, storytelling, and executive coaching

Paper type: conceptual

The explosive interest and growth in the field of coaching over the past decade is one response to major shifts occurring in the world of work characterized by globalization, rapid advances in transportation and communication technology, hyper-competition, expectations of shareholders and financial markets, demanding customers, and changing workforce and consumer demographics (Hamel, 2000; Pietersen, 2002). Increasingly, intent on addressing leadership challenges, just-in-time organizations around the world are hiring external executive coaches and utilizing managers and human resource professionals as internal coaches, often as an alterative to executive education and training. In a recent study conducted by The Conference Board, coaching was ranked amongst the top five leadership development best practices behind experience (including field assignments), smart content, action learning, and simulations (WanVeer & Ruthman 2008*).*

Given the price tag—on average $200 to $500/per hour in U.S. dollars—there is a trend for clients and their sponsoring organizations, to inquire about the specific approach and expected value proposition associated with executive coaching. In this article we explore connections between an executive and organizational coaching process informed by the science of human performance, strategic learning, and storytelling as the basis for clearly positioning the value of coaching to clients and sponsors, and importantly, as a framework to help practitioners be more explicit about the philosophical foundations that inform their work.

Much of the literature on storytelling and leadership frames storytelling as a vehicle for a leader to communicate a strategic message to members of their organization (Denning, 2005; Tyler, 2004; Walton, 2004). Tyler (2004) identifies three main themes in the literature on storytelling and leadership: 1) the role of storytelling in organizations, 2) the content and construction of stories; 3) the performance aspect of storytelling. In this article we explore the more organic storytelling that occurs between client and coach, with the client as the story teller and the coach as an experienced listener who supports the client to examine and potentially reframe (Kasl, Marsick, and Dechant, 1997) aspects of their story that may be outdated or no longer useful. In this conception, storytelling can be both an intimate and strategic interaction (Backman, Nevis, and Nevis, 2003) through which the coach and client engage in an exploration of the client's context, content, and conduct in order to bring previously tacit assumptions into awareness so that the client can be more choiceful in their actions. We propose that all people have stories about their lives, abilities, and challenges; the meaning people make of these stories implicitly guides what they attend to, decision making, action, and by extensions blind spots. We introduce the key components of the executive coaching process as a vehicle for the coach to illicit the client's story.

What's in a story?

As Walton (2004, p.5) puts its "We think in stories. Stories filled with pictures—images of life—are literally the language, the currency of our minds." Stories are a way for us to hold together complex pieces of information. But what exactly is a story? The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines a story as 1a: history; 2a: an account of incidents and events. A coaching relationship typically begins with just that – a client's account of their history as well as important incidents and events. Why are stories so important? Tyler (2004) quoting Daloz (1986, p. 22) observes "A good story transforms our vision of the possible, and provides a map for the journey ahead." However, not all stories serve us. Many of our stories are based on ideas and

beliefs about ourselves and others that are untested—our organizations are focused on action and there is very little time for conscious reflection. Thus, the client's story is much more than the objective listing of facts and experiences. The particular behaviors, people, events, that we focus on create a frame – a short cut to meaning making:

"Frames are inevitable; one cannot "avoid" framing. By choosing to define and articulate an aspect of a complex social situation, one has already implicitly "chosen" to use certain frames and ignore others… one can frame a situation based on deeply buried past experiences, deep-seated attitudes and values, or strong emotions" (Lewicki et al., 2005, p. 136). As human beings develop, we uncritically assimilate ideas, beliefs, and values through family, society, and peers. These uncritically assimilated ideas, beliefs, and values combine and create frames through which we perceive the world and make meaning. In many ways, these frames are very valuable. The ability to take in new information with relative ease depends on one's capacity to connect what is new to ideas and concepts that are already familiar.

Kasl et al. (1997, p. 230), define framing as a group or individual's "…initial perception of an issue, situation, person, or object based on past understanding and present input." A coach is listening not only to the content of the story, but also to understand the meaning that the client is making of events—as well as the events and people that the client focuses on or ignores (Whitworth et al., 2007). This kind of deep listening can create a space (a holding environment) for the client to examine behaviors and emotions and begin to experiment with new behaviors.

Reframing – coaching as a transformative learning process

The coaching process can serve as a vehicle for transformative learning by helping clients to "reframe" these initial perceptions through a process of personal awareness, input from others (feedback), and experimentation. Thus, the coach facilitates a process of moving from single to double loop learning where the possibility for transforming old assumptions and beliefs is possible. As Mezirow (2000, p. 20) explains "transformative learning refers to transforming a problematic frame of reference to make it more dependable in our adult life by generating opinions and interpretations that are more justified." By intentionally rewriting aspects of their internal story with the help of a coach, a client can begin imagining a new ways of solving problems (innovation) and interacting with others. The more options a leader has in terms of their behavioral, cognitive, and emotional repertoire, the more successful they will be in responding to the many complex challenges organizations face in this rapidly changing and competitive environment.

Coaching, at its best, is process of learning and change. Argyris and Schon (1996, p. 21) make important distinctions between single-loop and double-loop learning. They define single-loop learning as learning that occurs within the framework of existing values and beliefs. Double-loop learning challenges existing values and behaviors and requires reflection on the effects of these values and behaviors on our strategies and actions. By careful listening, coaches can help the client identify mismatches between their "espoused theories" (e.g., I am open to people who are different from me) and their "theories-in-use" (e.g., feedback shows that I am much more successful working with certain groups than others). They note that: "Almost all of the individuals we have studied hold theories-in use that are systematically counterproductive for double loop learning, especially when the issues are embarrassing or threatening" (p. 76).

The coach, by using self-as-instrument, can help the client examine these mismatches and begin the process of reframing old or no longer useful assumptions. After outdated or counter-productive stories are surfaced, the coach can support the client to generate a new more strategic and supportive storyline that is aligned with the client's hopes and plans for the future. The next section examines trends in executive and organizational coaching and outlines three phases of the coaching process, each of which is linked to a particular aspect of the storytelling process.

The Meaning of Executive and organizational coaching: A brief review of selected literature

During 1990s the term *executive coaching* began to appear (Diedrich, 1996; Kilburg, 1996; Levinson, 1996), with an emphasis on coaching executives and the individuals delivering coaching services to and for organizations. Today, the state of coaching has reached a point where claims made regarding its effectiveness (e.g., improved productivity, reduced turnover, positive behavioral change, and performance enhancement) need to be supported with clear operating philosophy, explicit theory (or conceptual models), and research.

In general, the basic rationale for individuals and organizations engaging in executive coaching are three fold (Maltbia & Power, 2005; Tompson et al, 2008): (1) to raise performance, (2) to develop high potentials, and (3) to adapt to changes in the external environment. Further, as Maltbia and Power (2005) identify, the intended results of executive coaching found in the literature include *individually focused outcomes* (i.e., reaching goals, producing desired results/maximizing performance, increasing personal fulfillment, finding meaning in work, increasing life balance, building capability by becoming more competent) and *collective outcomes* (i.e., clarifying goals and roles, contributing to the organization, delivering business results, producing extraordinary results, having effective conversations across the organization, improving strategic thinking, facilitating change, retaining high potentials, enhancing innovation, increasing customer loyalty and improving overall leadership effectiveness today and in the future).

Maltbia and Power (2005) summarize five key themes that emerged when reviewing the various ways the concept is defined in the literature, including executive coaching as (1) a *process*, (2) a *partnership*, (3) a *balance* between *individual* and *organizational needs*, (4) a *way of working*, and (5) the *new face of leadership* for the 21st century. Executive coaching as a process, specifically a motivational process, involves an intimate, one-on-one relationship often between a senior organizational leader (or high potential) and a coach, generally external to the organization. However, there is increased interest in the role of an internal professional coach (Frish, M. H., 2001). According to a recent survey conducted by the Institute of Executive Development (IED), 16 percent of organizations, and growing, rely on internal coaches.

Coaching processes are designed to unlock the client's potential by setting clear goals, creating action plans, seeing the future with strength and optimism, and reflecting on the outcomes of one's actions to learn and take informed future action. The primary activity of the coaching relationship is dialog about client's values and beliefs, performance issues related to effective leadership, plans and action taken. Executive coaching helps organizational leaders build their capacity to lead, as well as coach within their organizations to "spark learning and build the capabilities needed to succeed" (Hargrove, 2000, p. 5). In the next section, we build on these ideas by describing an integrated coaching process informed by the science of human

performance, action research, and strategic forms of learning.

Executive and organizational coaching framework

One way to frame the practice of executive and organizational coaching is as a form of human performance. Based on the work of Terence Jackson (1991, pp 38-39), building on concepts found in Rom Harré, David Clarke, and Nicola De Carlo (1985, pp. 23-27), executive and organizational coaching is a human phenomenon characterized by the C's of *context*, *content*, and *conduct*.

The power of positioning coaching in this manner is that each "C" represents a distinct, yet critical strategic learning capability embedded in different philosophical orientations resulting in a comprehensive framework that captures both the depth and complexity of this relational form of human interaction. The table below provides brief descriptions of each capability and related philosophical orientation.

Table 1. Coaching as a science of human performance

Strategic Learning Capability	Related Philosophical Orientation and Description
Context *Contextual Awareness*	The strategic learning capability of contextual awareness is grounded in the two philosophical orientations of structuralism and constructivism: ▪ **Structuralism**—is grounded in a recognition that human action is preeminently influenced by social *norms* and organizational *rules*; open system theory posit goals, and the means for goal attainment, are socially defined; in short, part of understanding a client's context requires the coach to consider relevant roles within a given social system (Jackson 1991, pp. 39-40). ▪ **Constructivism**—a balancing ontological perspective that frames "reality" as a human construction that can be seen only through the window of one's implicit or explicit theories through which they make sense of, and experience, the world; as a result multiple, changing realities exist (Guba, 1990 pp. 25-27).
Content *Conceptual Clarity*	The strategic learning capability of conceptual clarity is informed by the philosophical tradition of phenomenology: ▪ **Phenomenology**—is concerned with the *meaning of our actions*; here the focus of the coaching process is on the client's interpretation of various social situations for which they find themselves because action arises from meaning; in short the coaching interaction has the power to motivate clients to *modify*, *change*, and *transform* these social meanings to enhance both performance and personal fulfillment (Jackson, 1991, pp. 41-45).
Conduct *Informed Action*	The strategic learning capability of taking informed action is governed by behaviorism: ▪ **Behaviorism**–is based on the assumption that the relatively *direct*, *observable actions* of a person is in response to stimuli in the environment, and not as the result of an inner cause; in short an act only has meaning within a *social, cultural context* that define what is *skilled performance* based on employing certain *competencies*, *resources* or *knowledge* (Jackson, 1991, pp. 45-48).

Each strategic learning capability aligns with various elements of the storytelling process. Contextual awareness involves scanning the client's external and internal environments. This capability is necessary in order to assist clients and key stakeholders articulate the basic rationale for engaging in the coaching process and to identify the indicators for assessing progress toward personal, professional, and organizational objectives, which provides a platform for determining the overall success of the coaching. The learning emphasis of contextual awareness is learning for expanded perspective and results in deep insight and focus. Insight is often described as the ''Aha'' moment that occurs during the discovery process inherent in learning for contextual awareness. Making the leap from immersion in the challenge, problem, or opportunity at hand to insight represents a shift in the client's initial framing of the situation to a reframe, where the presenting view is transformed into an alternative perceptual view that is often more "expansive and comparatively open, inclusive, discriminating, reflective, and emotionally capable of change" when compared to the opening frame as to increase the range of client choices (Mezirow 2000, pp. 7-8).

Conceptual clarity concentrates on the knowledge areas necessary to partner with clients in achieving the results they truly desire. Conceptual clarity leads to making important strategic choices. These choices are more effective when based on the insight gained through contextual awareness. The emphasis of conceptual clarity is making strategic choices by identifying the ''vital few'' critical success factors. These factors relate directly to ''what we must know'' and ''what must go well'' to realize the aims of the coaching engagement.

The final strategic learning capability—taking informed action (or conduct)—places its emphasis on learning from experience and results in coaches working with clients through a series of planned experimentation that provides a platform for goal attainment, personal fulfillment, and performance excellence. Taking informed action allows clients to quickly implement what works, while making adjustments as a result of leveraging the other two foundational capabilities that contribute to building a capacity to "reflect-in-action." This capability allows clients to take advantage of the many shifts that occur in their internal and external environments from moment-to-moment, in the moment during action.

The reflective potential of learning during and from experience provides a capacity to repeat this cycle of learning for perspective, knowledge, and informed action, over and over again, and can result in personal and organizational renewal and transformation, the essential goals of executive and organizational coaching. While not a linear process, the three strategic learning capabilities of context, content, and conduct provide general directionality to what we've come to understand as a three phase executive and organizational coaching process.

1. What constitutes a science of human performance?

We build on the work of Jackson (1991) and Harré, Clarke and De Carlo (1985) in outlining six criteria for what constitutes a science of human performance applied to the coaching process. The first is "to be useful, a science must discover what would otherwise be hidden" (Jackson 1991, p. 26). This criterion highlights the importance of the coach's use of a relational communication process combined with *traditional feedback* (or a focus on past events and/or behavior), *observational feedback* (or that that is occurring in-the-moment), and feed-forward (action resulting from the anticipation the future), as vehicles for learning and understanding one's own performance—feedback provides a window into stories told, untold, known, and in time, unknown narratives.

Second, “to be acceptable, a science of human performance must start from common sense, be free of jargon, and be capable of practical application in an understandable way” (Jackson 1991, p. 28). This criterion highlights the importance of working with client to learn the new by leveraging the best from the old and reframing perspectives that prove to be no longer productive—the use of stories helps the coach gain access to the client’s use of and patterns in language.

Third, Jackson notes “a science of human performance must be capable of changing the cognitive framework within which we view the world, and on which basis we act” (p. 28). This criterion highlights how one’s way of “framing” our experience has the potential to change one’s perceptions of the world. Further, Jackson notes that “a dialectic process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis” (p. 29) facilitates this shift in worldview construction. In such a dialectic process, one’s current thinking is questioned and then expanded by synthesizing the new with the old, stories provide a natural communication tool for starting with what is known, it’s opposite, and retelling of stories can trigger new possibilities.

Fourth, Jackson observes, “when applied to human action, a science of human performance should enable us to gain control over the processes identified by prediction, intervention or manipulation, and thus enable us to produce results we would not otherwise have produced” (p. 30); here the emphasis of the coaching is on the criticality of making intentional choices informed by both the structuralism (static) and constructivism (dynamic) dimensions of context.

Criterion five asserts, “when applied to human action by human beings, a science of human performance must take account of the pressures related to group conformity, prejudice, bias, cultural differences and other influences” (p. 30), that is the cultural rules of social order. Jackson’s sixth and final criterion states, “the knowledge that a science of human performance generates must be provable to make it valid” (p. 30). Here our thinking is informed by the generally accepted stages of action research, popularized by Kurt Lewin (1946), as a way of guiding the coaching process (see description of the coaching process).

2. Strategic learning capabilities and the executive and organizational coaching process

Given executive coaching’s general aim of balancing the needs and requirements of both the client and the sponsoring organization, devising an approach consistent with strategic forms of learning seem appropriate. Strategic learning is emerging as a specific form of learning with a clear set of characteristics. Strategic learning is intentional, purposeful, and results oriented guided by the strategic objectives of the business and integrated with important business priorities and related initiatives (Maltbia & Power, 2009). Pietersen (2002) defines strategic learning as having ‘‘four key steps—learn, focus, align, and execute—which form a self-reinforcing cycle that combines learning, strategy, and leadership into one organic process’’ (p. 4), an orientation very consistent with the aims of executive coaching engagements. Further, strategic forms of learning aim to foster individual and organizational growth, adaptation, innovation, and renewal to keep pace with changes in the external and internal business environment.

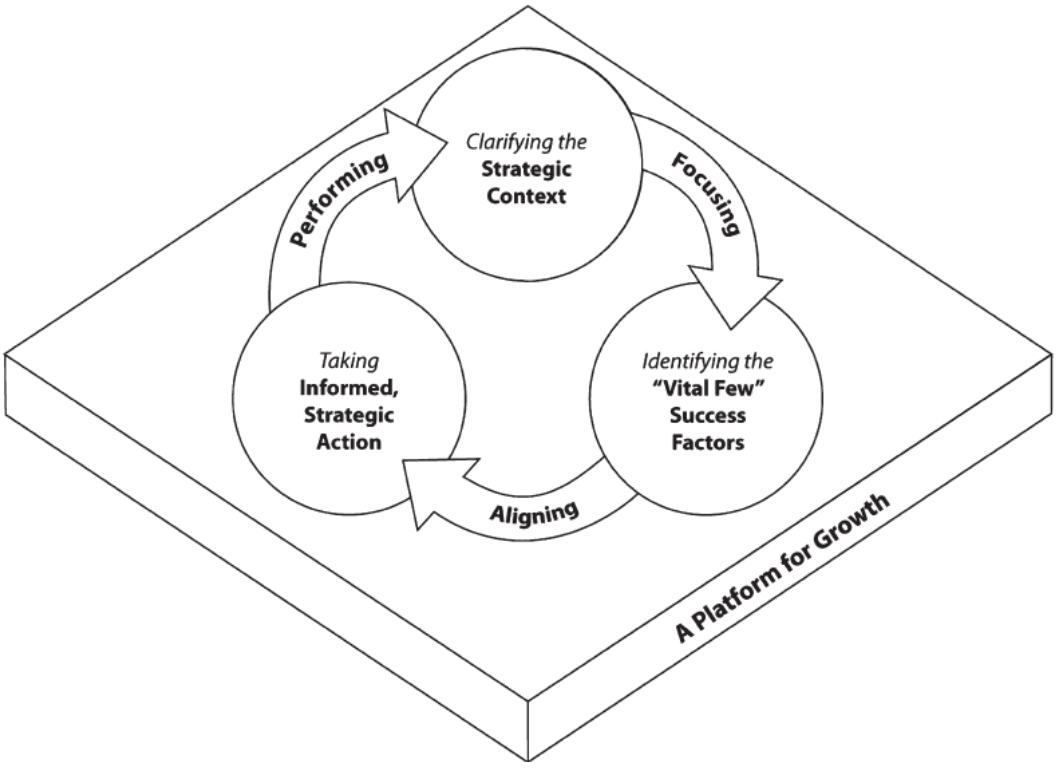
Strategic learning is holistic with cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions. This holistic nature of learning brings focus to the importance of co-creating coaching interactions with the explicit intent of gaining access to the client’s talents, passion, and resources that result in personal fulfillment while meeting the performance requirements of the organization. Our

premise is that coaching processes informed by strategic learning capabilities engage the ‘‘whole person,’’ that is the *head work* (or cognitive), *hand work* (or behavioral), and *heart work* (or affective/emotional/motivational). Building on these ideas, we present Maltbia & Power’s (2009, p. 4) definition of strategic learning capabilities as:

> *Intentional and performance driven learning linked to strategy that clearly defines the knowledge, skills and mindset necessary for current and future organizational success;*
>
> *Involves establishing planning and accountabilities systems to ensure that learning is embedded in the actual work and major business processes of the enterprise.*

The Strategic Learning Model (Figure 1) is based on the assumption that executive and organizational coaching is a process of learning and change intended to enhance personal fulfillment, while achieving performance aims, and facilitating personal and organizational renewal. Renewal is the ability to continuously adapt to the external environment and respond to emerging problems, challenges, and opportunities.

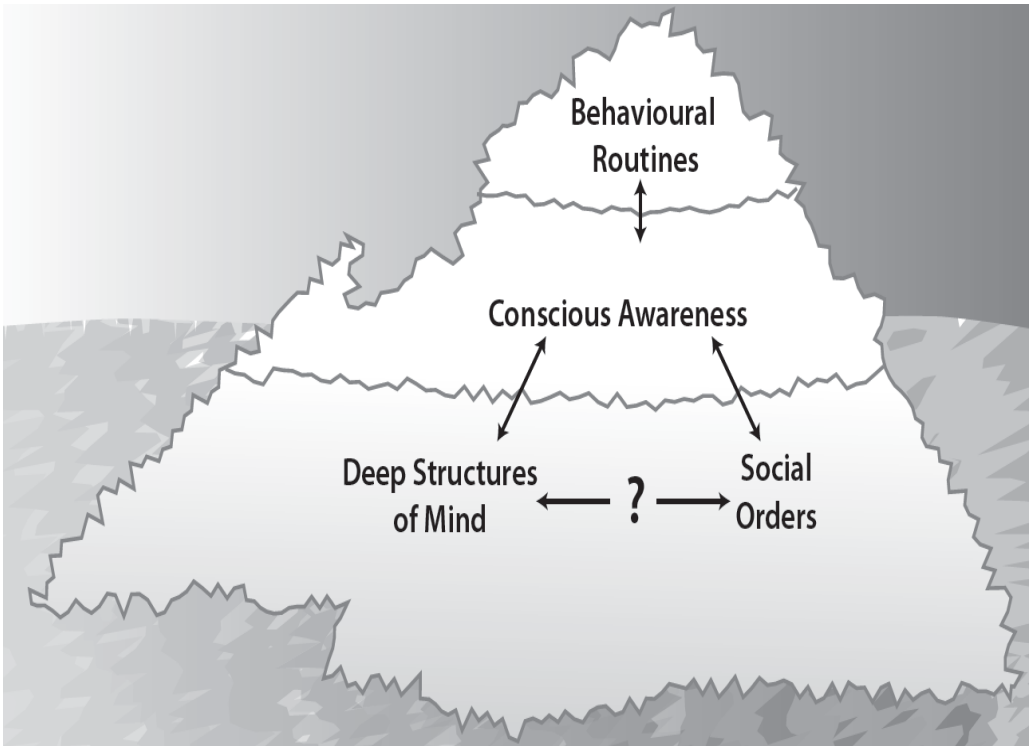
Figure 1. Strategic learning model



3. Levels of control hierarchy as an embedded structure of human interaction

When framing the work of executive and organizational coaching process as a form of human performance characterized by the facilitative and relational dimensions of learning and change, it is useful to consider the multiple levels activated at given time moment during the coaching interaction. Using an "iceberg" metaphor, Figure 2 graphically depicts the hierarchical structures embedded in human performance.

Figure 2. Hierarchical dimensions of human performance



Level 1 (at the bottom of the iceberg) represents the deep structures of the mind, which often operates outside of the realm of conscious awareness. The critical coaching task is to find out what are the deeply embedded, strategic processes that informed Level 2 conscience awareness and the related behavioral manifestations in Level 3 (Harré, Clarke and De Carlo 1985, pp. 27-28). It is the territory of this deep structure that remains to be discovered through the partnership of coaching. The aggregation of individual actions, language, and discourse is a major source of the "programs" which are assimilated into all levels of the software of the mind, and by extension understandings of personal fulfillment and performance.

Level 2 relates to conscious awareness and perceptions (or content) – it is here, the middle of the hierarchy, where the richness of the client's "visual imagery, representations, knowledge, planning, and deliberation" occur that make up the domain of consciousness as the client experiences it (p.27). Our belief is that it the power of Level 2 where highly effectively coaches help client's make connections from the deep structures, often below the level of awareness, and their familiar repertoire of beliefs and behaviors, to ways to take informed actions that are more aligned with their intentions consistently.

Level 3 represents behavioral routines, skills, and action (or conduct) – these are the most visual components of the coaching relationship and the client's performance. In the early phases of the coaching relationship these often reflect the client's automatic, action routines, often unmonitored reflexive responses to situations, depending on their level of self awareness, the accuracy of the client's self appraisal, and their overall self concept (p. 23).

Collectively, this hierarchical structure influences human performance and the results realized. Questions that take the form of "where, who, when, and why" in time, space, and history align with Level 1 (i.e., the deep structures and social orders of the hierarchy-context) and are consistent with what Jack Mezirow calls premise reflection. Question that take the form of "what" (i.e., conscious awareness – content) align with Level 2 and are consistent with content reflection with an emphasis on clarifying client intentions. Lastly, questions that take the form of "how" aligns with Level 3 (i.e., behavioral routines) and is consistent with working with clients to reflect on the process to assess the extent to which their action strategies are congruent with their intentions, in various contexts to which they operate. There appears to be an opportunity for executive and organizational coaches to enhance their practice by integrating knowledge of this three-level hierarchy into their signature approach.

4. The executive coaching process

The processes described in the literature on coaching range from three to ten steps (or phases), with the most common being a five step process (e.g., Diedrich, 1996; Kilburg, 1996). These steps were similar to those outlined in a study conducted by The Corporate Leadership Council in 2000 that included 18 companies (e.g., American Express, Citicorp, Goldman Sachs, IBM, Proctor & Gamble and Unilever): (1) assessment, (2) data analysis and development planning (3) execution of development plan, (4) continuous coaching support and (5) the final coaching session.

A closer look at each step reveals that most coaching processes included several, related sub-categories for each, or coaching tasks, demonstrating both the comprehensive and complex nature of the process. To address this inherent complexity, we used Terence Jackson's (1991) theoretical construct of the Science of Human Performance as an organizing heuristic to integrate the various steps and related sub-categories found in the executive and organizational coaching literature into a comprehensive whole, or visual representation of the process. Figure 3 positions the three strategic learning capabilities of *context*, *content*, and *conduct* as the general phases of the coaching process each with are guiding "meta-question" (i.e., the inner ring) combined with an expanded version of the action research cycle as the described in the adult learning and organizational development literatures (i.e., the outer ring— Coghlan & Brannick, 2005).

Figure 3. The Coaching Process

We added two components to the classic 7-step action research approach: (1) building on the emergence of emotional, social and cultural awareness (or developmental frames) and (2) growth and renewal to make criticality of learning explicit. Table 2 provides three coaching tasks associated with each coaching component by phase, again, informed theoretically by the classic action research process (see the International Coaching Federation's website to compare our framework with their 11 core coaching competencies-http://www.coachfederation.org/research-education/icf-credentials/core-competencies/). Our interest is to leverage the power of story, where appropriate at each stage of the coaching process.

Table 2. Coaching component and related tasks:

CONTEXT	CONTENT	CONDUCT
Entry and Contracting (ICF #1-3)	Feedback (ICF #5-8)	Action Strategies (ICF # 8-9)
Inquiring about the nature of the presenting problem, trigger event, challenge or opportunity	*Inviting* clients to pay attention to observational feedback	*Helping* clients discover opportunities for ongoing learning (sessions/work/life)
Surfacing hopes and concerns	*Urging* clients to summarize and interpret	*Combining* challenge with support
Clarifying expectations about the parameters of the coaching process	*Facilitating* the examination of hunches about potential disparities	*Celebrating* client's successes and capabilities for continued growth
Developmental Frames (ICF #4, 8)	Exploring (ICF #5-9)	Growth & Renewal (ICF #9-11)
Clarifying client's relationship to self and to others	*Asking* provocative questions to stimulate imaginative thinking about the future	*Creating* opportunities for clients to conduct honest, ongoing self-appraisal
Determining emotional & social capacities (strengths & limitations)	*Practicing* "feed-forward" with various options to help clients illuminate possible futures	*Translating* insights about strengths and limitations to focused & aligned commitments
Building the client's capability for growth and change	*Prompting* clients to consider potential benefits and costs of options before taking action	*Findings* ways to promote self-renewal (e.g., work-life balance)
Situation Analysis (ICF #5-6 & 8)	Planning (ICF #10)	Execution (ICF #11)
Engaging clients in the identifying questions to focus data collection and feedback	*Stimulating* clients to integrate insights and define focus	*Holding* client's attention on what's important by following up on commitments
Co-creating data collection strategies to determine what information is needed	*Collaborating* with clients to create a coaching plan and SMART goals, while attending to emergent goals.	*Building* client's capacity to recognize "teachable moments"
Working with clients to diagnose the situation	*Reaffirming* client's agenda (align goals with personal values & organizational priorities)	*Modeling* flexibility and adaptation by moving back and forth (e.g., "big picture" focus & making daily adjustments)

5. A comparison of the science of human performance to other implicit models

The science of human performance advocates an approach to executive and organizational coaching that is integrative of four philosophical orientations (i.e., structuralism, constructivism, phenomenology, and behaviorism) embedded in a three level regulative hierarchy (i.e., a belief that high-order/deeply embedded assumptions in our belief systems determine, often uncritically, subordinate, more conscience goals) and constitutive hierarchy (i.e., the parts of one level, become the whole of another level). We position this framing of the executive and organizational coaching as an opportunity for one's practice to be trans-disciplinary, with the ability to draw from multiple disciplines and models.

For example, structuralism draws on a host of concepts such as systems theory and socio-technical approaches to inform the strategic learning capability of context. Similarly, constructivism can leverage narrative inquiry, grounded theory, and transformative learning theory to deepen the way one understands the complexity of context. Organizational development, process consultation, and organizational behavior are all strategies that in part are guided, at least implicitly by phenomenology. And instructional systems design and social skills/styles approaches find their foundation in behaviorism. This comparatively more integrative orientation contrast, while at the same time consistent with more specialist approaches to coaching, such as the framework proposed by Barner and Higgins (2007), who encourage coaches to make their often implicit models that guide their practice more explicit exploring the degree of alignment amongst four they outline (i.e., clinical, behavioral, systems,

and social constructionist). It is noteworthy to mention that a review of the models outlined in the Barner and Higgins article suggest that many of these ideas on embedded in the framework we present here, yet we reach different conclusions about how to apply the awareness that results from a critical analysis of one's professional practice.

Conclusion

Executive coaching is a strategic process of learning and change. In the executive and organizational coaching context, storytelling offers a platform for exploring clients' current frames. Integrating organic storytelling into the three phases of the coaching process—context, content, and conduct—to help the client reframe out-of-date and no longer useful assumptions is a highly productive way to advance the coaching engagement. The work of the coach is to use the strategic interaction of listening to clients' stories to identify and make explicit the hidden frames that orient the client toward certain behaviors and foci. Storytelling is not only an element in the coaching process that aids in identifying the client's experiences; it can also be an effective tool for shifting and transforming individuals frames and subsequently supporting transformation at other levels in organizations.

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About the authors…

Dr. Terrence E. Maltbia
Faculty Director, Columbia Coaching Certification Program
Senior Lecturer, Department of Organization and Leadership
Teachers College, Columbia University
Maltbia@tc.columbia.edu
525 West 120th Street
New York, NY 10027-6696

Dr. Terrence E. Maltbia is a seasoned professional with over 20 years of diverse experience as an external and internal organizational effectiveness consultant, thought leader and educator. Dr. Maltbia came to Teachers College, Columbia University, after two years of running his own consulting practice, Organizational Effectiveness Consulting and Training (O_{fx}), where he provided research-based solutions to clients in the area of strategy formulation, organization and leadership development and workplace diversity. He currently the Faculty Director for the Columbia Coaching Certification Program and provides coaching and consulting services to both Corporate and University-based Executive Development clients focused on high impact leadership informed by emotional, social, and cultural intelligence.

Dr. Maltbia's research focuses on strategic learning, leadership and organizational development, diversity, cultural Competence, and most recently executive and organizational coaching. He is the 2001 recipient of the *Malcolm S. Knowles Dissertation of the Year Award Recipient*, Academy of Human Resources Development, entitled "The Journey of Becoming a Diversity Practitioner: The Connection Between Experience, Learning and Competence." He was also a member of the *Global Forum Best Symposium Award:* Where's The Reflection in Action Learning? Presenters: Raelin, J. A., Marsick, V., Maltbia, T. E., Yiu, L., Raelin, J. & Mintzberg, H. (2006). Academy of Management, Management Education and Development Division.

About the authors… (continued)

Rachel Ciporen, EdD
Teachers College, Columbia University
Rachel@CiporenConsulting.com
404 – 7th Street
Brooklyn, NY 11215 USA

Dr. Ciporen works with executives across multiple industries, and specializes in helping leaders stretch beyond their habitual thinking, relating, and problem solving patterns. In addition to her private consulting practice, she is on the core instructor team of the Columbia Coaching Certification Program and works in Columbia Business School's Emerging Leaders, Senior Executive, High Impact Leadership, Personal and Social Intelligence, and Not-for-Profit Management programs. She has been working in Columbia's executive education programs since 2004.

Dr. Ciporen's research focuses on supports and barriers to successful learning transfer, best practices related to facilitating transformative learning, and the role of learning communities in executive education programs. Her work has been published in the *Academy of Management Learning and Education* journal, the book *University and Corporate Innovations in Lifetime Learning*, and her writing was included in the "best paper" category of the *Academy of Management 2009 conference proceedings*. In 2008 she received The American Society of Training and Development's (ASTD) Dissertation of the Year award.