

**Knowledge For Managers:  
The Quest For Leadership  
In The  
Modern World**

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The knowledge that managers need to function effectively in this new age is vastly different from the prevailing autocratic view of leadership. Warren Bennis states that the

militaristic, command-and-control leadership of the past must give way to a new style of leadership- a style that cultivates, what he refers to as “intellectual capital”. In the post restructuring and reengineering era, “intellectual capital” is the last uncultivated dimension through which functional management practice can evolve. “Intellectual capital means ideas, know how, innovation, knowledge and expertise”. In the epoch following downsizing and flat management, knowledge of a more collaborative approach to management must replace the monarchical view of leadership. Leaders in this dawning age will have to demonstrate more flexibility and take more risks than managers of the old order. Do to the rapid changes in technology and the encroachment of global influence on day-to-day decisions, managers must change their roles considerably – from the exercising of “absolute power” to the promotion of empowerment of others. This paper will outline the nature of the new knowledge needed by managers and how they can be helped to acquire such knowledge that will increase their own “intellectual capital”. (Bennis and Townsend, 1995, pp. 1-3).

In “The Boss as Mentor”, Howard Rothman illustrates the spirit of the new knowledge through the emerging practice of mentoring, whereby, a manager serves as tutor, coach, counselor and guide to a less experienced associate- “ a process by which you can buy into another person’s dream”. Here he quotes Ben Bourne, a Chicago based human resource consultant, who advocates leadership in which a person is seen as valuable and substantial. This view is counter to the archaic boss-on-the pedestal business environment. The new spirit is more about taking care of people rather than forcing them to bend to the manager’s will (Rothman, 1993). In The Practice of Empowerment Dennis Kinlaw refers to this spirit as “competent influence”. Managers need knowledge of “competent influence” to empower individuals and teams in order to achieve continuous improvement in performance. “Buying into the other person’s dream” is a skill that attracts others to increase and contribute their “intellectual capital”. Knowledge of “competent influence” is a way for managers to achieve such leadership capacity. (Kinlaw, 1995)

Kenneth Gergen, the noted social constructionist theorist argues that “the primary source of knowledge is the human capacity for imaginative and creative thought- the ability to construe reality through language myth, metaphor, narrative, and other symbolic means.” This outlook, though, is a relativistic epistemology in that social rather than personal models if learning are primary. Therefore, no absolute truth can be espoused by the “boss” as the one and only way of doing things. Social constructionism seems to be a congruent theoretical base for the new knowledge that contemporary managers need, born out of the work of Piaget and Bruner to name a few. Their position is that knowing comes out of “construction” rather than “accumulation”. Knowledge is consensual and active rather than solitary and static. “Knowledge is not something people possess in their heads, but rather something people do together”. (Lyddon, 1995 and Sharon, 1990, p. 97).

Since knowledge is the condition of understanding acquired by learning, we need to clarify specifically what managers need to know and what choices they have in order to acquire learning in “competent influence”. How can managers learn to help others embrace learning as a lifestyle of continual change towards improvement of performance? Costa and O’Leary quote Vysotsky, “All the higher functions originated as actual relationships between individuals”. They go on to describe “intellectual capital” in their own words to illuminate the

attributes of people who exhibit the “higher functions”. These critical thinkers have at least eight characteristics: persistence, restraining impulsiveness, listening, flexibility, metacognition, precision, ability to ask questions effectively and creativity. (Costa and O’Leary, 1992). Kinlaw says that the mental resources reflected by these indicators are stopped by the rank and command power structure. Lundberg would support this notion. In fact people have a natural tendency to solve problems and improve. People naturally tend to create symbols to combat chaos, clarify direction, establish predictability and resolve confusion. We don’t have to *make* people want to improve but rather clear the way for their natural disposition to do so. Managerial coercion only sets up resistance, causes defensiveness, and results in people withholding their intellectual capital. Managers must support the behavioral indicators of critical thinking in order to *allow* continuous improvement to emerge in the form of self directed learning, such that “imaginative and creative thought” can occur naturally. This is a tall order for those schooled to manage people by getting them to do the “right thing” which is known solely by the “boss”. (Lundberg, 1992 p.42 and Kinlaw, 1995.)

Managers need knowledge on how to see reality differently. They must reorder the knowledge they already have as well as the delivery system for the imparting of such knowledge. Setting up an environment where the proper *social* and *action* functions of learning can occur is the “competent influence” that is most desirable attribute for managers. The manager’s task is to foster critical thinking in organizational culture such that employee “career resilience” becomes the goal rather than what sacrifices they can make in order to prove their worth to the boss. This new perspective is spiritual in nature whereby managers help to release the creativity inside others rather than forcing them to be more productive. (Neal, 1997). Mink describes the transformational spirit of managerial *coaching* as “freeing oneself from the repetitive patterns of old leanings, which may be firmly imbedded in the unconscious, and adopting new mental operations- new mental models or structures that guide performance at work”. This type of empowerment is called “metalearning”. (Mink, 1993, pp. 2-3). Knowles refers to this transforming managerial knowledge in “Making Things Happen by Releasing the Energy of Others” where he highlights the creative leadership qualities in McGregor’s “Theory Y” and Roger’s “unconditional positive regard” assumptions, among many other highly competent sources. (Knowles, 1990 pp. 182-190).

Another way that managers must see the reality of leadership differently is that knowledge must come from experience. They need acclimation to the “experience-than-knowledge model versus the knowledge-than-experience model. This view is more in keeping with the ever increasing flux of organizational culture where ambiguity and uncertainty undermine common traditional approaches to data collection, assessment, problem solving and staff coordination. (Lundberg, 1996). Peter Vaill calls this state of affairs “permanent white water”. In Learning as way of Being he asserts that managers need *technical*, *purposeful*, and *relational* knowledge to provide leadership that can negotiate conditions of “permanent white water”. Purposing generates “vision” and a “mission” in a “continual process of establishing broad directions and specific goals and building clarity, consensus, and commitment regarding what the organizations is going to do“. A leader with relational knowledge makes purposes and technical data meaningful to the “career resilience” of work colleagues. This includes one-to-one rapport, small group team proficiency, and one-to-many capabilities, and it especially means presenting oneself in an authentic and emotionally and spiritually healthy manner. (Vaill, 1996, p. 146). Managers have to learn and act on the “fly”.

The days for a “ready-get-set-go” mentality are over. They must act from a knowledge base of competent influence to facilitate intellectual capital from within the vortex of “permanent white water”.

By examining the dynamics of *coaching*, the essential qualities of competent influence are revealed. The methodologies used to train managers in the art of coaching are relevant to the entire continuum of leadership skills needed by managers to navigate in permanent white water. What is the creative process of coaching that promotes metalearning? What specific knowledge does the manager need in order to coach others in raising their levels of competence? What “constructions” need to be present in the work environment to promote continuous improvement and how can managers best be educated to help others buy into the manager’s dream of mutual empowerment? “The function of the coach is to encourage and enable others to become more competent and to empower themselves to seek ways continuously to improve those work processes they can influence”. Coaches focus on values, knowledge, and skills that result in intelligent self-directed performance.” (Mink, 1993 p. 17).

The three qualities of coaching are *clarity*, *coherence*, and *openness*. For *clarity* the coach creates a hopeful climate where achievement and excellence are viewed as reachable and applicable to the career needs of the learner. *Coherence* is fostered by the modeling of coaches, where by they are always doing what they are saying. They demonstrate goals for achievement by amplifying the learner/coach mutual value system. Coaches are *open* to the learner through empathy, sharing, reflecting, the flexibility to experiment and a commitment that is determined by free and informed choice. (Mink, p.18, 1993). Parsloe suggests four main roles of the coach: *hands on* for working with new learners by giving concrete specific direction; *hands off* when addressing the needs of more experienced learners by skillful questioning to tease out strategies from associates for improving their performance; *supporter* when helping the learner utilize flexible learning packages for self directed continuous learning; and the *qualifier*, for helping learners identify specific performance tasks to pass competency-based standards. He demonstrates effective utilization of case studies and checklists as the learning methodologies for training in his coaching model: “analyze and assess the situation, plan solution, implement the solution and evaluate results”. (Parsloe, 1992, p. 54).

Solman’s Instructional Model shows a creative process that can be used in the classroom or on the job. This skill-based model expands on and provides additional action steps to Parsloe’s coaching model: state the rationale for the skill, define and describe in sensory specific behavior, demonstrate and model, encourage learners to articulate the indicators of the skill being used effectively, provide opportunities for skill practice and with constructive feedback and allow learners to reflect on the performance and applicability of the skill (Soloman, pp. 101-107, 1992). These learning constructions begin to approximate the principles of Adult Learning described by Mink, knowledge of which is a prerequisite for effective coaching. Learning in adults is: continuous outside of the classroom, based on specific needs, problem centered-a job has to be done, meaningful in relation to life style, immediately applicable to learner’s life, vitally dependent on the learner’s experience and is geared toward independence and autonomy. Through manager training that is sensitive to the way adults learn, such empowerment advocates for the “career resiliency” of the learner by the coach. The adult learning model also provides a back drop of patience when implementing innovation, in that the experience of the learner (or associate) will dictate the

rate of learning. The Concerns Based Adoption Model is a methodology that highlights the developmental process of coaching on the job. This road map of empowerment describes the pacing involved in the coach's efforts to *allow* the natural release of learner creativity through predictable stages of response to change. (Mink, 1993, pp. 1313, 137, 27).

Whetten and Clark outline an improved methodology for teaching management skill teaching that is directly applicable to coaching skill education in the classroom- the Integrated Learning Model. Remembering that cognition comes from social construction, they integrate *thinking* and *doing* in a design formula that also integrates *deductive* and *inductive* learning- inductive referring to knowledge-from-experience, such as role play and small groups; and deductive referring to experience-from-knowledge methodologies that start with didactic activities such as lecture/discussion, and the skill development approach. The latter, exhibited earlier in Soloman's Instructional Model, was not based on the experience of the learner, and was therefore, not completely reflective of the adult learning model. And, although it is extremely helpful in generating coaching effectiveness, it loses relevance on the "hands off" end of the coaching continuum as expressed by Parsloe, which is dependent on the experience of the learner. Whetten's earlier work, the Five Step Learning Process is also helpful, yet similar to Soloman's model: skill pre assessment, skill learning, skill analysis, skill practice, and skill application. Whetten points out that, just as in the potential exploitation of case study methods, the skill-based instructor's heavy handedness in controlling what is learned (even if unconsciously so), may discourage prospective coaches from allowing associates to engage in "double loop learning". This is an inductive process of using experience to re-examine past learning and altering its assumptions. To protect "double loop" learning by balancing deductive with inductive methodologies, Whetten and Clark have generated the Integrated Learning Model: "experience, understand, practice, reflect and apply." Their methodology as a whole, incorporates alternating deductive and inductive sub methodologies. Since permanent white water demands that managers acknowledge experience as the beginning of most coaching efforts, this model provides an appropriate format for sequencing methodologies in training designs for coaches.

Yet, the spirit of the Integrated Learning Model is much more than a knowledge base for classroom design. It also serves as a coaching map for metalearning on the job. Managers will need to be mindful of such things as, whether associates need assimilation or application interventions at any given time. Mink would agree that coaches must anticipate the timeliness and quality of associate contact in order to competently influence higher level performance on a day-to-day basis. He uses the Stages of Concern (SOC) to assess associate's change in feelings and perceptions with any routine change. He also monitors the Level of Use (LOU) as an indicator of where associates can be plotted over time in their use of a new skill. (Mink, 1993, pp. 29, 31). Bledsoe stresses the importance of establishing what is the primary communication style of each associate. He uses Carl Jung's psychology types: the thinker, intuitor, feeler, sensor, to find a way for managers to join with the learner from her map of the world (Bledsoe, 1978). These methods are all pointing to a new way of thinking for managers, a reality that challenges "the my way or the highway mentality". Trainers need to help prospective coaches to let go of old beliefs by challenging those archaic realities and help them to embrace the new reality of empowering their associates.

Chris Argyris' methodologies can be used inside or outside the classroom. He would support that effective coaching depends on managers taking the risk of their own "double loop learning". They need to let go of controlling strategies in order to model metalearning for

their learners. He skillfully develops his position in Knowledge For Action using case studies as an effective methodology to show the negative impact of defensive routines emerging from theories-in-use that are self serving, anti learning, and over protective. The results of coaching based on these dysfunctional realities (Model 1) are disastrous- unreality tested attributions, by-passing (or smoothing over) interactive opportunities to test fantasies, explain non-testing by blaming others or caretaking them, make these defensive routines undiscussable under the “no talk rule”, avoidance of self inquiry and resulting loss of authenticity, increased polarization in the work culture, mediocre or no resolution of problems on the job, building false consensus and unreal hopefulness, denial of personal responsibility for errors, increased territoriality with negative references to authority and colleagues and associates, personification of the illusion of self sufficiency and resulting loss of cooperative learning, experience of cynicism about decision making, leadership styles stagnate in a rising mass of unsolved problems and mounting crises, and a collapse of vision and a sense of mission. Unfortunately the results of such failed leadership are more common than not. The answer to this dilemma is to model productive reasoning on the part of the manager. This is no small task. How can we train coaching skills with managers who are already in some level of distress, working in toxic organizational cultures, who are themselves disempowered, and who are operating out of defensive routines (theories-in-use) originating from childhood? (Argyris, 1993 pp. 56,57,20).

After all that, we can understand how managers can wonder whether effective coaching is even remotely possible, in that, defensive organizations create more permanent white water within permanent white water. Argyris presents hopefulness that productive reasoning is possible in the face of managerial doubt and stagnation, by transmission of actional acknowledge. He believes that managers need to experience how they are keeping themselves stuck by perpetuating ineffective learning. They need to risk being witnessed and held accountable for their reasoning strategies. “When individuals use productive reasoning, they supply relatively directly observable data to illustrate the basis of the point being inferred, make all inferences explicit, and craft conclusions in ways that permit others to try to disconfirm them.”

The methodologies of questioning in larger group demonstrations and one-to-one dialogue are prevalent in his work as he demonstrates, what he refers to, as Model 2 behavior. Regarding discussion and dialogue, Brookfield states “discussion is intellectually taxing and emotionally unsettling”. (Brookfield, 1990). Argyris initiates his coaching dialogue with: 1. clarifying the meanings embedded in the words, 3. claiming beliefs imposed on other’s actions that anticipate their intentions, but are perceived as facts and 4. ownership of attributions or evaluations consistent with established theory-in-use (vs. espoused theory) and further confirms its survival value to the manager. Here, Argyris models using double loop learning in a powerful inductive style, based on the trainee’s experience, that teaches managers to become leaders in facilitating double loop learning, allowing Lewin’s vision of “stewardship” or Mink’s and Kinlaw’s notion of “empowerment” to emerge. (Ibid, pp.57 and 10).

Mink also assumes the keystone importance of trainee/learner *experience* in methodologies described in Developing High Performance People: The Art of Coaching. This book describes in the language of empowerment, the actionable knowledge implied in “stewardness”. He shows how the managers defensive routines hinder individual initiative, reduces the associate’s likelihood of addressing errors and discourages the initiation of

corrective action. Contrary to outmoded prescription leadership the empowerment model develops consensus about goals, allows roles to evolve, lets procedures emerge from the coach/learner interaction, emphasizes quality as a life style, collaborates, and affirms internal motivation. (Mink, 1993 p.5).

As he defines leadership- “the ability to get things done by other people”, he exhibits coaching as “leadership in action”. Coaches need to: 1. Co-create a vision of improved performance, 2. Direct the mutually planned activities of learners, 3. Foster confidence in associates, 4. Share and model taking risks and accepting mistakes as a necessary part of learning. Brookfield states that such modeling is “possible for teachers to demonstrate through their actions- particularly through their readiness to admit error and to invite the same critical scrutiny of their own ideas as they do of others”. Mink affords this same quality to outstanding coaches. His methodologies achieve such authenticity include: use of behavioral checklists for coaches (as with SOC and LOU), case studies, goal planning, and personal/inventory survey activities, to shore up strengths in their own continuous learning as well as the other pre- requisites for coaching (aside from familiarity with the Adult Learning Model) that include mastering: the leaning process, instructional design and knowledge of coaching. (Mink, 1994 p.131)

John Bigelow, on classroom methodologies, mirrors Mink’s assumptions about effective coaching skill learning. His perspective is very relevant to Mink’s approach to training in the *modes of coaching*, which are: 1. Modeling, 2. Instructing (teaching and facilitating), 3. Mirroring and 4. Counseling. (Mink, 1993, p. 148). Skill learning in any of these modes of coaching, in the classroom, demands practice in basics, such as, case studies, discussion and short small group methodologies, such as simulations, life experiences and role plays. Bigelow points out that three obstacles must be overcome for learners to engage in skill learning: a *change in learning style*, from passive to active, may be confusing, *self disclosure*, warrants going beyond the normal safety of anonymity risking embarrassment and public failure, and *discomfort* of anxiety, previously leading to loss of confidence and avoidance. These obstacles underscore the necessity for use of effective ice breakers as a part of high quality management skill training in coaching (Bigelow, 1996. p. 306-307 and Berry, 1994).

Like Mink, Bigelow supports the use of self assessments and group assessment (journaling and rating scales) as methods to measure performance levels. He also suggests life application assignments. These along with simulations and role plays would compliment training in the Instructor/Teacher mode of coaching. This includes activities in the Four-step Strategy for Coaching: *Telling*- defining the task, *showing*,- explaining the relevance and demonstrating each task, *doing*,- including skillful questioning to clarify defensive and/or productive reasoning and *correcting*- giving feedback about alternative and accomplishments (Bigelow, 1996 and Swink 1993 and Mink, 1993. p. 148-149).

Along with role play and simulations, the fishbowl methodology (Rinvolucci) would also work well to compliment training for coaching, especially in the delivery of coaching: 1. Preparing for learning, 2. presenting the competency to be leaned, 3. providing opportunities to practice, 4. correction feedback and 5. follow up (Mink, 1993 p.153). Brookfield is convinced that these methodologies “explore dimensions other than purely cognitive” and are also affectively based. They bring “heightened sensations of real life dilemmas, decisions and problems. And because this type of learning process involves the cognitive, emotional and kinesthetic “it tends to be experienced more deeply and remembered longer” (Brookfield,

1990. p. 115). Any of these methodologies would enhance the learning process regarding Mink's *delivery of coaching* skills in a manager training design.

Barbara Davis proposes a variety of choices for the use of role play along with Brookfield that would serve the development of coaching skills in the classroom. Tips, such as, "cutting the role play off at the highpoint" and keeping them to 5-10 minutes, would insure lively discussion regarding *delivery of coaching* or any other function of the Coaching process. (Davis, 1993. pp. 160-161). With four points about simulations Brookfield cautions that: debriefing is as important as the simulation, simulations never stay exactly the same, they are not a way to get out of the hard work of teaching or training, and refrain from use if unfamiliar with the material that is the focus of the exercise. Other helpful coaching methodologies include critical incidents, role reversal, improvisational drama, drawing and audio/visual processing. (Brookfield, 1990. pp. 125- 130). Melven Silberman offers an extensive menu of choices for classroom effectiveness that would lend itself to any training in leadership (Silberman, 1996).

The continuum of leadership skilled needed by managers to survive and excel in permanent white water can only be made more accessible by acquiring skills in coaching. Anne Coyle has authored a comprehensive overview of training strategies that approximates a full description of this continuum in [Leadership: The ASTD Trainer's Sourcebook](#). Her methods are clear and specifically transferable to manager training in the work environment. One can hear the echoes of coaching skills in her description of **leadership characteristics**: *Questioning group think* by: taking risks, being open to diverse opinions, supporting innovations, *Resetting direction* by: selling vision and being vulnerable through asking for help, *Guiding cooperative actions* by: empowering, encouraging initiative, delegating, monitoring, providing feedback, *Walking the talk* by: modeling in persistence, commitment to quality and problem solving, *Motivating others* by: recognizing strengths, celebrating achievement, and reinforcing collaboration. She emphasizes the crucial **elements of leader communications**: *observing* surroundings, personal effects, and mood, *Questioning* through leading and implication questions to challenge beliefs underlying behavior and *listening* by attending, processing, taking notes and practicing memory techniques, *verifying* by rephrasing and checking in with learners to assure they are understood and *explaining* with clear and specific sensory based directions, concrete descriptions of events or possible future events, *presentation of the vision*, in an attractive and compelling way. Any manager will gain knowledge of competent influence by utilizing her work (Coyle, 1997 pp. 14-18)

While acquiring leadership skills managers may need counseling to address a motivational problem. This is a one-to-one empowerment process that invites critical reflection. "*Critical reflection* is a process of recognizing the assumptions underlying our beliefs, judging their appropriateness to objective reality, and choosing to act more effectively." (Mink, 1993. p 167). This renewal facet of coaching demands skill and sensitivity. How can managers be helped to examine unconscious belief systems that they themselves are not yet aware of? Bledsoe's communication style provides part of the answer in getting rapport with the manager by entering her style of processing reality. Mink adds further helpful suggestions in his **performance empowerment model**: 1. Get involved, 2. Find out about current behavior (secondary gains), 4. Become clear about values (consequence vs. assumptions), 5. Develop improvement plan, 6. Obtain a commitment to the plan, 7. Follow up on the plan, 8. Allow for natural consequences (avoid punishment and allow natural outcomes to provide adverse or reinforcement operants for change). 9. Keep working. Don't

give up (use of acknowledgment, active listening, and selective approval, dealing with excuses.) (Ibid., pp. 168-181). Brookfield also gives useful criteria for assessing and cultivating manager's emotional competence. His approach fits nicely with Mink's critical reflection guidelines for counseling (Brookfield, 1993. pp. 55-57).

Kinlaw outlines the payoffs for empowerment: *changes in behavior*- self initiated action, challenging of outdated work realities through a higher frequency of contact and interaction, feedback is given and received more freely and increased investigation, inquiry, and experimentation; *Improvement in systems elements*- work environment promotes continuous learning and openness to change, higher consumer satisfaction, and work processes more efficient; and *continuous improvement*- freedom to be creative, as self esteem and success fuels curiosity about ways to improve resulting in organizations that remain competitive to survive. Empowerment is a leadership style born out of compelling clarity of communication that breeds movement and action rather than a reverence for the status quo. (Kinlaw, 1995 pp. 70-87 and Coyle p. 18).

In one of his latest articles, Chris Argyris further illuminates the tenants of quality leader communication and the call to enhancing effective action, as he teaches micro-intervention to challenge skilled incompetence and establish Model 2 (productive reasoning) as a theory-in-use. He articulates the use of case writing in the form of scripted conversations along with unsaid thoughts and feelings. His methodology does a great service of the knowledge of any manager, by compelling them to examine their own reasoning and call them towards change through metalearning. This knowledge is immediately applicable to the work environment as a force for the kind of flexibility managers need to navigate permanent white water. He gives concreteness to Gergen's notion of continuous "construction" of new knowledge through conversation and critical thinking strategies. His work epitomizes the spirit of coaching' "freeing oneself from the repetitive patterns of old learnings". Along with so many others mentioned, he offers an active way for managers to buy into mutual visions as an everyday occurrence in the life of their associates and reap the harvest of intellectual capital that constitutes the essence of organizational survival in this new age (Argyris, 1997)

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