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Introduction

Training and coaching are not the same, although the actions associated with each may be similar. Training assumes that the learner has gaps in the knowledge base required to fill a role. Similarly, it assumes that there are necessary skills missing from the behavioral repertoire of the learner. The purpose of training is to create a learning environment in which the learner is motivated to create an internalized knowledge base and to achieve sufficient skill mastery so they are able to enact a role.

By contrast, the purpose of coaching is to refine and expand both the knowledge base and the skills repertoire of the learner. It assumes that the learner is currently enacting the role. The learner is a practitioner. The learner wants to become a better practitioner.

Training and coaching can both be provided in one to one (tutorial), or in group settings. Both require the helper (trainer or coach) to create interactive environments that create sufficient tension for learning, but not a degree of tension that causes the learner to back away from the engagement with the helper or the material. Both training and coaching require stimulation and feedback and can utilize multiple techniques of assuring that both stimulation and feedback are present. Both training and coaching might include the use of audio-visual materials, peer feedback, individual reflection, and/or written materials.

Training is time constrained. It can be measured in the number of instructional hours whether they come one right after another or are spread out over weeks or months. By contrast, coaching is often open-ended and the coaching relationship comes to an end only when it reaches a point of diminishing returns. The practitioner may have received everything they can from a particular coach and need to move on to a new coach.

This manual includes materials for both training and coaching. Some of the material is applicable to both. The content that it addresses is Motivational Interviewing. However, it assumes that the reader has already achieved a fairly high level of comfort with both an understanding of, and an ability to practice, Motivational Interviewing.

Because trainers and coaches are often involved in the very beginnings of the employment process, from recruitment to orientation sessions, the manual begins there.
Hiring Motivational Interviewing Practitioners

Grades
Would you believe: the smartest folks still tend to get their undergraduate degrees in the liberal arts. There is an intellectual threshold to learning Motivational Interviewing. We can’t forget that. Screen transcripts for grades. There are a lot of folks who are bright who do not get good grades in school. Nevertheless, people who get good grades in school tend to be bright and, they tend to like to learn. Everyone? Of course not, but grades do tell you about persistence if nothing else.

Degrees
There is no evidence that people with degree “A” do better than people with degree “B” when it comes to Motivational Interviewing. Degrees, however, do indicate what a person is interested in. Beyond degrees, what additional certifications, institutes, etc. did they pursue? Again, they indicate interest. You want people who are interested in what?

Experience
Experience in a particular field is a double-edged sword. It may lead to a hardening of the exploratory arteries. It may also provide invaluable knowledge of a content or organizational area. With experience we have to say, “It all depends.”

WARFOE
WARFOE is absolutely essential in being successful as a Motivational Interviewing practitioner. People who do well with Motivational Interviewing are:

- Warm,
- Affirmative,
- Respectful,
- Fascinated by people,
- Open, and
- Empathic.

Don’t try to train or coach people to develop these characteristics. It is too hard, and too “iffy.” Hire people who are already WARFOE!

Finally, recruit for the function, not the credential. For example, let’s assume you were recruiting nurses, social workers, or health psychologists as health coaches. An advertisement might look like the following:
Become a Health Coach

What’s next? More education, a job, or a new job? Consider becoming a health coach. But first, are you the one who friends and family turn to with their problems because you are a good listener and non-judgmental? Are you fascinated with how people put their lives together and make the decisions they do? Do you like talking to people and getting to know strangers? And, do you see health, both physical and mental, as areas that interest you and hold your attention? If your answers are “Yes” to all of these questions, we have a job for you as a health coach. We provide the training. You provide the energy, the commitment, and the brains. You will get a salary, benefits, and of course we are an equal opportunity employer who values diversity. Go to the following website for more information about the position and instructions on how to apply: www.xxxxxx.com
Screening Process for Health Coach Applicants

The Application
“The best predictor of future behavior is past behavior.”

An amazing amount of valuable information can be gleaned from an application and resume. There are four things that are very important in screening the written materials of health coach candidates.

- Intellectual power. Because Motivational Interviewing is the core intervention strategy, it is critical that we are able to determine whether or not the candidate has the intellectual power, especially abstract reasoning, to master the strategy. The candidate does not have to be brilliant, but there is an intellectual threshold that must be reached. The possession of a college degree is not a proxy for the presence of intellectual power. Neither is the absence of a degree a proxy for a lack of intellectual power. So what can the application and resume reveal?

The resume of a college or high school graduate may list academic honors. It would be unusual for anyone to achieve these honors without having the level of intellectual power that is needed to learn Motivational Interviewing. Specific achievements listed in work history may also reveal intellectual power. Again, the focus is on abstract reasoning. The kinds of positions that the candidate has been successful at in the past will reveal the likelihood that the required intellectual power is present because of the nature of the position. Simply, it takes intellectual power to succeed in that position. Or, it takes intellectual power to get that degree.

- Helping orientation. In large measure health coaches will derive their work satisfaction from helping people. The resume will reveal whether or not the candidate has sought out and acted upon opportunities to help others. This may have been in paid employment or volunteer work. It doesn’t matter.

There is one caveat to this guideline. Sometimes people want to change positions because they have discovered that what they thought was meaningful to them, turned out not to be. This may be revealed in an application letter. As an example, many clergy people have started in other careers.

- Social connectedness. Health coaches will be working within a team structure. This means that their interpersonal skills must be more than one to one. They must be able to function effectively in a team situation. Some people value working in a team environment; others do not. The resume will often reveal the degree to which the candidate has
sought out and thrived in team environments.

Part of an individual’s social connectedness interest comes from the ability to be attracted to and participate in the pursuit of a shared mission. Thus there is a difference between having social skills that enable me to easily meet and greet people, and connecting to a social group in which I become a contributing member of a team and embrace a team mission. Both are important for a health guide.

- Persistence. Persistence is a trait that is often associated with sales situations where people encounter rejection on a consistent basis. However, it is a trait that the health coaches must possess as well. They must be able to maintain and enhance relationships when the other person is “rejecting them” or “ignoring them.” This trait is more difficult to pick up from the resume. However, there are certain jobs, again paid and voluntary, where this trait is important and if a pattern of them is seen on the resume than it indicates that this person does not avoid these positions. However, the absence of these positions is not necessary informative.

There are other indicators of persistence: embracing long terms projects – building a house, getting a doctorate, etc.

**Operationally**

Three people should screen the resumes. They should independently “grade” the applications and resumes using a simple system (Must see, might see, don’t see). These grades should not be exchanged until all, or a group, candidates have been screened. The three should then come together to talk through the results and work towards consensus.

**Telephonic Role Play**

Observing actual behavior is the best indicator of the skills and traits that are in the repertoire of the candidate. Role plays are the best way of detecting the presence or absence of the desired skills and traits. The role plays should not be looking for the presence of specific techniques. Those will be taught. However, there are some generic communication skills and traits that can be observed in people with no training: WARFOE. The presence of these is a good indicator that the person has sufficient emotional IQ to become a health coach. They are what one would expect of a helping orientation. There is a wealth of research supporting these skills as foundational. The first three of these are global in nature. You would expect to see them present in almost all interactions.

- Warmth. Warmth is conveyed primarily through tone (timber) and cadence. It can be detected quite accurately and when multiple observers code it the accuracy is amazing. It has nothing to do with the content of the communication. It is all in the voice.
• Affirming. In the role plays does the candidate affirm the “patient” in the role play? Do they recognize when the “patient” has done something that either moves the patient in a positive direction, or indicates an interest in moving in a positive direction.

• Respect. During the role play does the candidate pay attention to the “patient” and what constraints s/he is struggling with? Does the candidate see and respond to the “patient” as unique with unique needs? A great deal of “professionalism” is simple respect – acting in a manner that leads the other person to feel safe, comfortable, and relaxed (the other person feels taken care of). Does the candidate show respect for interpersonal boundaries that are specific to the roles of the two parties. Thus boundaries are flexible and context specific.

• Fascination. During the role play does the candidate indicate a profound curiosity about the person they are talking to, or are they focused on what they are saying to the other person without concern or interest for the impact they are having. When you are fascinated by another person you track with them. Tracking is based upon listening but goes beyond listening. The candidate will be able to elicit, follow, and reflect an accurate understanding of the thought process as communicated by the other. This doesn’t mean that they won’t get lost at times, but they have the skills to get back on track with the other person.

• Openness. People are different. They have different life experiences, values, quirks, personalities, priorities, and language systems. Is the candidate open and accepting of a wide range of human experience without being thrown or shocked by what a patient says or does? Flexibility is the key ingredient to being open. It is the ability to hear and to adapt language so the “patient” can understand what the candidate is saying. The candidate with this skill will choose words that the other person will feel comfortable with, will use a pace that makes it easy for the other person to process the information, and will be flexible in tone and pitch.

**Operationally:**
1. An appointment will be made with the candidate and they will be told that they will be engaged in an observed telephonic role play.
2. An email will be sent to the candidate giving them the context for the role play and a brief description of the person who they will be speaking with.
3. At the appointed time the candidate will call the telephone number that has been provided and the staff member playing the role of the patient will pick up and have the call on speaker phone or conferenced in to the two observers.
4. The role play will be conducted (about ten minutes).
5. At the conclusion of the call one of the observers will thank the candidate and tell them the next steps in the hiring process.
6. The role player and the two observers will independently score the candidate and then hold a discussion to reach a consensus about their scores.

Role Play (Candidate’s version):

Emily Camilleri

Ms. Camilleri is a 49 year old divorced mother who has three children ranging from 29 to 16. She is obese, diabetic, has high blood pressure, and has been treated on and off for depression. She takes medications for her diabetes and high blood pressure. She is not currently taking any medications for her depression. She currently sees a primary care physician, an endocrinologist for her diabetes, and started going to Weight Watchers but recently stopped because of financial difficulties.

You are calling her to introduce yourself as a health coach for __________ and to find out how she is doing and what her thoughts are about her health and especially her problem with her weight.

Role Play (ROLE PLAYER’s version):

Emily Camilleri

You just turned 49 and it was not an easy birthday. You have now been divorced for close to ten years and with the exception of one six month period of time have not any relationships since the divorce. The birthday brought home to you that you may spend the rest of your life alone. Your sixteen year old son just started his Junior year in High School and you are aware that he will be out of the house in a few years and you will be completely alone. Your parents and younger sister live about 150 miles away and you see them periodically, but your sister and her family have their own life and your parents are beginning to struggle with a lot of health issues and your sister is having to spend time helping them out.

Your job as manager of the baked goods department pays O.K. but you know you have to stay put in this job because of the benefits and especially retirement. You like the job but you are finding it more and more difficult to stay on your feet all day and you are exhausted by the time you get home at night. Your doctors are both after you to lose weight. It’s a joke, though. Look where you work.

One of the joys in your life is your grandson who just turned four. Your twenty-six year old daughter has turned out to be a really good mother and that has sort of surprised you because she wasn’t as easy child growing up. She is pregnant again and they just learned that it is a girl. You are looking forward to having another grandchild. You are not, though, looking forward to the baby shower coming up this Saturday. You feel so fat. You get embarrassed whenever you have to do anything social.
Your twenty-four year old son is in the Army and will be going to New Jersey for his new posting. He’s doing well and has not had to go into a war zone yet because of his specialty, but you still worry about him.

You are beginning to worry about your left hip. By the end of the day it is really sore. The thought of having to get a hip replacement scares you to death. You can’t imagine how on earth you would manage a hip replacement if it would come to that.

### Scoring Sheet for Observers and Role Player

**Candidate________________________**

**Observer or Role Player______________________________________________**

Place a check mark in the appropriate box.

A “Master” has highly developed skills and you were surprised by the degree of proficiency that you observed. The skills are such that you would consider this candidate to be a role model for this skill.

A “Novice” demonstrates a rudimentary skill but it is awkward and stands out because it draws attention to itself. You are concerned about the likelihood that this person could develop the skill to an acceptable level in the time that you have get their performance to an acceptable level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Novice</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<tr>
<td>Affirming</td>
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<td>Respectful</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fascinated</td>
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Personal Interviews

While many organizations rely upon the face to face interview exclusively, experience with health coaches is that it is rare that someone is eliminated during the personal interview if they have succeeded in progressing this far. The goal of the personal interview, then, is threefold:

- It is a disaster check. It enables the organization and the candidate to discuss the role in greater depth and to make sure that there is a fit. It is also an opportunity for both parties to talk about the culture of the organization and to make sure that there is a cultural fit. In person, will this person be happy in this job, in this organization and does the organization want this person in this job.

- It provides an opportunity for other people in the organization to meet the candidate and for the candidate to meet others. This eases the entry in the organization for everyone.

- It provides an opportunity to conduct a behavioral interview. Although it is rare for a candidate to be eliminated at this stage, the behavioral interview can be helpful in understanding the candidate’s background in greater depth and understand what other contributions the candidate might be able to make. There is voluminous writing on the conduct of behavioral interviews so they will not be described here.

Operationally:

1. An appointment is made for the candidate to be interviewed by the members of the selection team. The appointment should be made when others are available to also meet and greet the candidate: executives and people who the candidate will work with.

2. The behavioral interview with the selection team should take place before the meet and greet. It is conceivable that the team may decide not to move forward and so the meet and greet sequence would not take place.

3. It is also possible that the candidate will be offered a position at the end of the meet and greet, pending background checks and salary negotiation.
From Candidate to Contributor

Introduction

The person has been selected, the job offer letter had been sent, they have signed it and returned it, and now what? The first three months of employment will determine how rapidly this new employee makes a contribution to the organization, and whether or not they become a star performer.

Many organizations overlook the complexity of this process and, as a result, suffer from the choices they have made bringing new people into the organization. There are several reasons for this:

- They assume it is easy.
- They assume anyone can do it regardless of their background.
- They manufacture a time crunch to shorten the process that is needed to turn candidates into contributors.

The notes that follow address many, but not all, of the issues that must be addressed in enabling a candidate to become a contributor. These are notes, not an on-boarding or orientation manual. That manual must be developed and will undergo a continuous state of revision as problems are discovered and solved. Because every organization is in a continuous state of evolution, because the environment is continuously changing, and because the state of the art for any competency set is always evolving, the transition process must change every time new people are hired. Some changes will be minor; some revolutionary.

The conceptual frame for these notes is that of transition. Or, every new hire makes a transition from thinking, acting, and feeling one way into a new way of thinking, acting, and feeling. These notes also are designed for programs addressing the needs of the majority of employees. There is another group, a smaller group, whose needs are often left unaddressed – key executives. Too often it is assumed that a new key executive understands the organization they have just joined because several conversations have taken place during the recruiting and hiring process. Key executives require a transition process that is different, but one that is carefully thought out, if their transition is to be successful.

These notes approach the transition from four perspectives:

1. New hires and their needs,
2. The organization and its needs,
3. The supervisor and his/her needs,
4. Work team members and their needs.

Now to the nitty gritty.
Getting the haircut
The military has this right: first things first. In the military it is haircuts, uniforms, equipment, and where you are going to live – for awhile at least -- and then a gazillion forms to be completed. But these are the basic human needs that must be addressed before the higher order needs come into play.

Note, also, the presence of a drill instructor. This is the person who will be your momma and your papa as you go through the process. This is the person who knows the system inside out and who can answer all of your basic needs questions: keys, hours, expense reimbursement, insurance, supplies, where you will sit, park your car. Every form that needs to be signed whether at that point in time, or in the near future, should be presented, collected, and/or discussed.

Much of the information presented during this process will need reinforcement at a later time whether through a manual or online. Consequently, one of the most critical pieces of information that is presented is, “How do I access information.” Accessing information is a skill. Simply telling someone how to do it is insufficient. This is the first skill to be developed and practiced. New employees can be provided problems and asked to solve them. For example:

Problem: “How many vacation days have you accrued after three months?” Use the internet site, or the employee manual, to come up with an answer.

The best way to bring people into familiarity with these tools is to get them to use them to solve specific problems.

In most organizations this part of the transition is the job of the human resources department. One person, though, should be the guide through this process.

Notice: the first task in the transition process is to enable the new employee to manage the organization, not the other way around.

Begin the bonding
People have social needs. Once they feel safe and have some sense of mastery over their physical environment and their own welfare, they are able to venture out and start to form attachments to others.

There are two phases to this process. Phase one, if a group is making the transition together they will form a cohort, whether the organization wants them to or not. They will bond. It is best, then, to form them into a flotilla. Your organization will still seem like foreign ocean to the new people, and it is. You want the group to experience being a flotilla, a flotilla that is navigating unknown waters together. You want them to know one another, what they are capable of, and you want them to exchange information and begin to count on one another to navigate this new environment.

To do this, they have to know who one another is: background, job status, etc. They also need to break bread together and begin to form sub-groups. This is not simply introductions, it is time to talk among one another, form questions, test solutions, provide feedback, etc.
The second phase of the bonding process is to meet and greet the members of the work team they will be joining. This should also be in a social setting and should include the same basic kind of information. What differs is that the team members can identify what they are working on and how they go about doing it. Buddy systems work: pairing the inexperienced with the experienced. If a “buddy system” is to be used, the “buddy” should have some time alone to get to know the person who they will be coaching.

It is also useful, at this point and time, for the supervisor to have a separate meeting with each new person, or people. Are their unique needs that must be addressed but require privacy? The goal of these two phases of the transition is to address the social needs of the new person. It is to begin the process of, “I belong here.” It is also to begin to answer the question: “Who are these people?”

**Why and How Does This Organization Exist**

Too many transition programs have a talking head present the history of the organization, its mission and walk out the door. Clients may be bragged about, but the dots are never connected.

Organizations are problem solving enterprises. They always exist to solve the problems of their clients; that is where the presentation should begin. One organization has a client come in to present the client’s perspective on the organization. They tell a before and after story. Yes, it is one of the “glory” stories, but it gets the attention of the new folks.

Increasingly, organizations must be client centered. In some roles, however, the employee never meets a client. During the early phases of employment and periodically throughout the employment of the individual it is useful to bring clients into the organization to make presentations to the employees. It is also useful to give employees an opportunity to ask clients questions during such sessions. These sessions may cause managers and executives to hold their collective breaths, but they work. In the best of worlds the employee identifies with both the client and the organization.

The history of the organization can be presented as a history of people making choices. Because it is a history of choices and environmental responses to those choices, it is useful to include both good and bad choices. Newcomers will always second guess the history. Why did the organization do “A” instead of “B”? Consequently, it is useful to include a presentation of what the options were at a given choice point and why the choice was made as well as why other options were rejected. This is the real history. Including what was rejected is critical. It presents the organization as thoughtful and clear about its decisions.

Presenting the history this way will present a rational case for the current mission and strategy of the organization. Most transition programs present the mission of the organization. What they often fail to present is the current strategy. What is the theory about why this approach at this point in time is the most likely avenue to lead to organizational success?

Because a strategy excludes actions as well as includes them, by discussing the strategy thoroughly the newcomers will have a framework for how their role will fit into the organization.
The strategy discussion will also lead naturally into a discussion of dominant beliefs and behaviors that comprise the culture of the organization.

**Enculturation**

While there are many different definitions of culture, one thing is clear: every organization has one. Too often it is an accidental culture. This accidental culture may or may not support the mission and strategy of the organization. Consequently, by consciously planning how the organization will enculturate new employees into the organization, the organization is forced into clarifying its existing and desired cultures.

Most definitions of culture define it as a set of shared attitudes, values, goals and practices that govern behavior. We know that organizational culture is primarily developed through modeling. We also know there are a lot of “apple pie and motherhood” statements about “our culture” that have no resemblance to the actual attitudes, values, goals, and practices that are modeled on a day in and day out basis. Consequently, an organization has got to be brutally honest in describing its current culture to a new person. It is possible to acknowledge the warts and talk about what the organization wants by way of culture.

Beware of cynicism. The new employee will talk to current employees. What will they say? The goal is honesty and transparency, not selling. Many people in an organization can talk about its history. The top leaders are the best ones to talk about the organization’s cultural desires.

For organizational joining to occur, people have to know what the behavioral expectations are. These expectations are carried through stories. Telling people about the desired culture is one thing, telling them stories, though, will be more meaningful.

**Example (true story):** XYZ Corporation claimed that one aspect of its culture was the valuing of all contributions regardless of sex, race, age, or sexual orientation. [Yes, it is called following the law.] The organization went on, though, to state a desire to build a workplace dominated by respect for all employees.

The CEO overheard a valued Vice President telling some sexual stories at a corporate training function. In one of the stories he used the name of one of his female managers. The CEO called him aside and talked to him about it. The Vice President tried to laugh it off with a mild apology. The CEO pushed. The Vice President said, “Come on, it’s not that big a deal,” The CEO replied, “It is to me, it is to us as an organization, and now it is to you as someone who is looking for a job. Pack your bags and leave.”

The story spread quickly. The CEO followed it a week later (guided by an attorney) with a general memo to the entire corporation about the meaning of respect without ever mentioning the Vice President. Employees put the two together with no difficulty and the story became part of the culture of the organization.
Stories carry culture. They answer questions about, what will I be rewarded for, praised for, criticized for punished for? Because culture addresses attitudes, values, goals, and practices, it establishes behavioral boundaries.

**Map of the Organization**

It is rare that an organization does not include some presentation(s) about the various products and departments in the organization. Often these presentations are made by a series of department personnel and are of extremely irregular quality. In addition, the presentations are made at the convenience of the departmental personnel so logic flow may be non-existent. Finally, rarely is information included about how the organization thinks about the very nature of an organization.

What follows is a very different way of organizing and presenting this information to new employees. There are two goals:

- Enable the new employee to understand how organization leaders think about the very nature of an organization. Most employees will not have thought about the nature of an organization. The consequence is that organizational dynamics often make no sense to them.

- Enable new employees to see the way the various functions of the organization interact with one another.

As suggested by the goals, there are two components to this part of the transition process, organizational dynamics and organizational functioning.

The following excerpt is an excellent summation of how organizational thinking has changed:

**ON THE NATURE OF ORGANIZATION:**

The first shift of paradigm

*From: Systems Thinking - Managing Chaos and Complexity*

*by Jamshid Gharajedaghi (1999)*

To think about anything requires an image or a concept of it. To think about a thing as complex as an organization requires models of something similar, something simpler, and something more familiar. The three models represent the successive shift in our understanding of the nature of the organization, from a mindless mechanical tool to a uniminded biological being and, finally, to a multiminded organized complexity.

*Mindless Systems: A Mechanistic View*
The mechanistic view of the world that evolved in France after the Renaissance maintains that the universe is a machine that works with a regularity dictated by its internal structure and the causal laws of nature. This worldview provided the basis not only for the Industrial Revolution but also for the development of the machine mode of organizations. In the early stages of industrialization, machines replaced agricultural workers by the thousands. The reservoir of an unemployable army of unskilled agricultural workers threatened the fabric of Western societies. Then came a miracle, an ingenious notion of organizations. It was argued that in the same way a complicated tractor is built by parts, each performing only a simple task of horizontal, vertical, and circular motions, an organization could be created in such a manner that each person performed only a simple task. The mechanistic mode of organization was born as a logical extension of this conception and became instrumental in converting the army of unskilled agricultural laborers to semiskilled industrial workers.

The impact of this simple notion of organizations was so great that in one generation it created a capacity for the production of goods and services that surpassed the previous cumulative capacity of mankind. The essence of the machine mode of organization is simple and elegant: an organization is a mindless system—it has no purpose of its own. It is a tool with a function defined by the user, an instrument for the owner to use to achieve his goal of making profit. The important attribute of this tool is its reliability, and its performance criterion is simply efficiency. The principle that parts should not deviate is at the core of the glamour of tidiness, efficiency, controllability, and predictability of its operation. The parts of a mindless mechanical system, just like the whole, have no choice. Its structure is designed into it, leaving it with no ability to restructure itself. The system functions reactively and can operate effectively only if its environment remains stable or has little effect on it.

See Mechanisms, Organisms and Social Systems" (Gharajedaghi, Ackoff, 1984).

**Uniminded Systems: A Biological View**

The biological view, or living systems paradigm, which led to the concept of the organization as a uniminded system, emerged mainly in Germany and Britain, but then caught fire in the United States. The underlying assumptions and principles of the biological mode of organization are also simple and elegant: an organization is considered a uniminded living system, just like a human being, with a purpose of its own. This purpose, in view of the inherent vulnerability and unstable structure of open systems, is survival. To survive, according to conventional wisdom, biological beings have to grow. To do so, they should exploit their environment to achieve a positive metabolism.
In organizational language, this means that growth is the measure of success, the single most important performance criterion, and that profit is the means to achieve it. Therefore, in contrast to the machine mode, in which profit is an end in itself, profit, for the biological mode, is only a means to an end. The association of profit with growth, considered a social good, gives profit the much needed social acceptability and status compatible with the American way of life.

Although uniminded systems have a choice, their parts do not. They operate based on cybernetics principles as a homeostatic system, reacting to information in the same way as a thermostat. As a matter of fact, the beauty of a uniminded system is that the parts do not have a choice and react only in a predefined manner to the events in their environment. For example, my heart cannot decide on its own that it doesn't want to work for me. My stomach will not get suspicious, thinking "the liver is out to get me." No consciousness, no choice, no conflict. The operation of a uniminded system is totally under the control of a single brain, the executive function, which, by means of a communication network, receives information from a variety of sensing parts and issues directions that activate relevant parts of the system. It is assumed that a malfunctioning of any normal uniminded system is due to a lack of information or noise in the communication channel. Therefore, the perceived answer for most of the problems is more information and better communication. However, if parts of a system develop consciousness and display choice, the system will be in real trouble. Imagine for a moment that the thermostat in your room suddenly develops a mind of its own-when it receives information about the temperature in the room it decides it doesn't like it and wants to sleep on it. The result is a chaotic air conditioning system.

When parts display choice, the central issues become conflict and the ability to deal with it. However, as long as paternalism is the dominant culture, the imperatives of "father knows best" or "give the apple to your sister" become an effective way to handle conflict. Paternalism best approximates the essential characteristics of a uniminded system, and it creates powerful organizations. Corporate giants such as Ford, Du Pont, General Motors, and IBM owe much to their paternalistic founding fathers.

**Multiminded Systems: A Sociocultural View**

Multiminded systems are exemplified by social organizations. A sociocultural view considers the organization a voluntary association of purposeful members who themselves manifest a choice of both ends and means. This is a whole new ball game. Behavior of a system whose parts display a choice cannot be explained by mechanical or biological models. A social system has to be understood on its own terms.
The critical variable here is *purpose*. According to Ackoff (1972), an entity is purposeful if it can produce 1) the same outcome in different ways in the same environment and 2) different outcomes in the same or different environment. Although the ability to make a choice is necessary for purposefulness, it is not sufficient. An entity that can behave differently but produce only one outcome in all environments is goal-seeking, not purposeful. Servomechanisms are coalescing, but people are purposeful. As a purposeful system, an organization is part of a larger purposeful whole, the society. At the same time, it has purposeful individuals as its own members. The result is a hierarchy of purposeful systems of three distinct levels. These three levels are so interconnected that an optimal solution cannot be found at one level independent of the other two. Aligning the interest of the purposeful parts with each other and that of the whole is the main challenge of the system.

In contrast to machines, in which integrating of the parts into a cohesive whole is a one-time proposition, for social organizations the problem of integration is a constant struggle and a continuous process. Effective integration of multilevel purposeful systems requires that the fulfillment of a purposeful part's desires depend on fulfillment of the larger system's requirements, and vice versa. In this context, the purpose of an organization is to serve the purposes of its members while also serving the purposes of its environment.

The elements of mechanical systems are energy-bonded, but those of sociocultural systems are information-bonded. In *energy-bonded systems*, laws of classical physics govern the relationships among the elements. Passive and predictable functioning of parts is a must, until a part breaks down. An automobile yields to its driver regardless of the driver's expertise and dexterity. If a driver decides to run a car into a solid wall, the car will hit the wall without objection.

Riding a horse, however, presents a different perspective. It matters to the horse who the rider is, and a proper ride can be achieved only after a series of information exchanges between the horse and the rider. Horse and rider form an *information-bonded system*, in which guidance and control are achieved by a second-degree agreement (agreement based on a common perception) preceded by a psychological contract.

The members of a sociocultural organization are held together by one or more common objectives and collectively acceptable ways of pursuing them. The members share values that are embedded in their culture. The culture is the cement that integrates the parts into a cohesive whole. Nevertheless, since the parts have a lot to say about the organization of the whole, consensus is essential to the alignment of a multiminded system.

The mechanistic and biological views did make contributions which have held together. Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn created a bridge between the biological and the sociocultural view

In addition to their focus on organizations as open rather than closed systems, two contributions stand out. First, all human organizations have to have five sub-systems to function: Boundary, Adaptive, Management, Maintenance, and Operations.

It is useful, then, rather to having a parade of department personnel marching through the training room, to illuminate how the organization has created itself to address these five organizational tasks.

- The Boundary sub-system manages all of the exchanges with the environment: e.g. purchasing, recruiting talent, public relations, marketing, sales, legal, etc.
- The Adaptive sub-system rejuvenates the organization for the future: e.g. strategic planning, research and development, organization development, etc.
- The Management sub-system coordinates the acquisition and expenditure of resources, information acquisition and diffusion, controls over quantity and quality, and resolves conflicts: e.g. accounting, quality control, I.T., budgeting, etc.
- The maintenance sub-system assures that human and physical resources are functioning at optimal levels: e.g. training and development, compensation systems, personnel policies, buildings and groups, equipment, etc.
- The operations sub-system is the transformational center of the organization that transforms raw materials into the products or services demanded by the environment. The specifics of the operations sub-system change from industry to industry and from organization to organization: e.g. counseling, teaching/learning, manufacturing cars, and generating research can all be operations depending upon the organization.

The second contribution was to define the cellular material of the organization as the “event.” For example, if the assembly line goes down, there are no events to produce the product. If the computers go down, core events (transaction processing) may stop. Notice that this demonstrates the contemporary organization as a socio-technical enterprise. Similarly, if people are too tired to work, sitting around with nothing to do, etc. there are no events taking place.

There are several advantages to helping people understand organizational dynamics and how this organization has addressed them. First, they see how their role fits into the organization. Second, they see how other roles are essential. The interdependencies become obvious. Third, everyone is treated as important. It moves away from the rigid hierarchical view of the organization to one that is more realistic: dynamic and interdependent.

The Common Skills

It is not unusual to find labels like “creative,” “communicate,” “service,” and “team,” on the performance review guidelines for all employees. However, when one backtracks into the
transition and training programs of the organization, rarely do you find training systems to support these skills. The assumption is that the employee has them when hired or has developed them through osmosis while employed.

The challenge for the organization is to determine what skills the organization truly needs every employee to possess and to assure that these skills are developed during the transition period. For example, if *service* is determined to be a core skill for every employee, or *team member*, than training systems must be deployed during the transition period to develop these skills.

**Role Skills**

The training and development programs are then separated into various branches in order to develop the skills that are necessary for specific roles. However, often the skills needed for one role are also needed in another so a matrix develops in which role “A” needs skills “1”, “6” and “8” and role “B” needs skills “6”, “9”, and “13”. Consequently, roles “A” and “B” might be trained together on skill “6.”

Developing the matrix of role skills is intensive and laborious work. This is especially true in a large organization where the number of roles is extensive. However, it is something that takes place over a time and is never ending because role demands change as the environment and organizational strategy change.

**Resources**

The training and development industry is both highly developed and fragmented. The American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) has thousands of members from every industry. The good news is that, for a price, there is very little training that cannot be purchased. Whether the training is face to face or online, it is available and the organization does not have to build everything itself.

On the other hand, many of the components of the transition program have to be specific to the organization and these specifics are what will make the program effective. It is only in the skill building area that outside vendors can function as a valued resource providing “off the shelf” training to the organization.

**Conclusion**

A new employee has needs as does the organization, the supervisor, and the work team. A good transition program addresses all of these needs in order to foster the transition from candidate to contributor. The needs of the employee do exist in a hierarchy and it is useful to address these needs in a pre-determined sequence beginning with safety and belonging needs before moving to an understanding of the organization and the development of competencies necessary to making a contribution.

If the transition process is done well, the new employee will bond quickly to the organization and begin making a contribution early on in their tenure.
Curriculum Development

Introduction

Understanding curriculum and how it relates to learning is essential. The goal of what follows is to get you up and going as a curriculum developer. It assumes that you do not have an advanced degree in curriculum development and are not about to get one. It assumes you are bright and have a need to create a system of planned events in which a learner will change from beginning to end. In short, it is to help you get past the three dreaded “no-noes” that drive curriculum developers to the bar: (1) Winging it and (2) We’ll just follow the learners and go where they want to go, (3) We’ll entertain you.

Why are these “no-noes”? Winging it doesn’t recognize that learners need a structure for learning if they are going to learn in the most parsimonious way. Winging it doesn’t recognize years and years of research about learning, cognition, behavior, etc. Let’s face it: it’s arrogant and disrespectful.

Following the learners may get you where you want to go, but after how many years? Learners often don’t know what they don’t know. And, although they do know how they have learned in the past, they may not know how to learn new skills and new knowledge that they have never encountered before. In addition, they may be embarrassed or threatened by the learning techniques that are essential to learning the subject matter—at least at first: e.g. role playing, watching or listening to video or audio tape of themselves.

Entertainment is great and has a place in learning, but is too often used in place of learning that will ultimately help the learner succeed. Research that has been done in classrooms at all ages indicates that while learners enjoy the antics of trainers who entertain them, they don’t learn as much as they do from the trainers who have high expectations. Similarly, elaborate interactive team based computer simulations are a lot of fun. But then when you go to measure behavior change, it is rarely present.

The real problem is that a lot of folks in the training world don’t take themselves seriously enough. Would you want to be operated on by a surgeon who was trained through winging it? Would you want to fly in a plane with a pilot who was only trained in the areas that interested him or her? I hardly think so. So this manual will definitely get you past these three “no-noes.”

It will also be of use to those of you who have never studied curriculum development but are also way past “winging it” and “whatever the learner wants the learner gets”, and “let’s entertain you”. You already know that learning is serious business and you feel accountable for what
happens as a consequence of your efforts. You recognize that your learners are likely responsible for others and that your curriculum designs have an impact that reaches out to affect the lives of many others.

The manual is organized in the steps that a curriculum developer should take. Notice the word should. A manual should be directive. Of course there are options, but in a manual you want to know a clear step-by-step process for getting going.

This manual is also personal. Because it is brief I have included what I think is important. There is a lot of “me” in the manual and while I refer to sources at times, this is not an academic treatise. The tone is closer to the two of us having coffee together. It assumes that there are things you will disagree with and things you will do differently. It is my best thinking on the topic in a condensed form. It is based on my own curricula successes and failures with several thousands of learners throughout the United States and fourteen other countries that I am aware of. At times I include website addresses where you can get additional information that is referenced in the manual.

Along the way I will offer some definitions and rationales. They will be brief. I will also state some learning principles I believe in. Without these, my recommendations will make no sense.

Values

When you create a curriculum you are creating a world in which real live human beings will live for a period of time. Because we are talking about a planned curriculum, the curriculum designer has an obligation to think deeply about what kind of world s/he is creating. No curriculum is value-free. Content and exercises are selected. Interactions are planned. Materials are created.

Here are the values I try to live up to and that inform this manual:

- **Transparency** Learners should know why they are doing what they are asked to do and how it fits into their own best interests. I don’t believe in games or exercises where the purpose is hidden or misrepresented in order to surprise learners.

- **Respect** There is no reason why learners should be embarrassed or threatened in a learning environment. Yes, tension will be created (no tension; no learning), but the art form is in creating tension that is O.K. for the learner. Sid Simon introduced the IALAC (I am lovable and capable) construct for educators to work with many years ago. It is still with us for one simple reason: it was right and it works. We all want to be lovable and capable and it is easiest to learn in an environment in which we experience being both.

- **Commitment to Learning** It is easy to be entertaining. It is even easier to be boring. There are times when a curriculum might be entertaining or boring (tedious may be a better word). In some learning, drills are necessary. We can try to make them fun. But fun is not always lasting. Commitment to learning must infuse every aspect of a curriculum and the expectations have to be clear and high. You want your learners to succeed.

- **Inclusiveness** This isn’t about being politically correct. It is about learning. If I don’t see myself in your materials or in the trainer, how am I to imagine myself in the role I am try-
ing to learn? Sex, age, skin color, language, economics, etc. Many television shows aimed at children pay attention to this and do an excellent job.

Step One: Know your Learners. Know your trainers. Know your organizational context. Know your budget (time and money).

The Learners
If you don’t want to bore them, you had better know:

- What they already know.
- What they can actually do.
- What their experience has been with this content.
- What do they love and hate about learning and training?
- What do they wonder about and want to be able to do with the material.

Sure they will be all over the lot. That’s why we have statistics: to make some sense of that variety. Of course it is messy.

Depending on the situation you may or may not be able to deliver individualized instruction. Let’s be honest, though, everyone talks about individualized instruction as the Holy Grail and you find very few instances of it in practice. So, you need to know the variance you will be working with. You need to be able to describe who these learners are.

You can be formal about it and administer pre-tests. Not a bad thing to do but it is pretty one-dimensional. I prefer to talk to a sample of learners. I want to know their attitudes, how they like to learn, how they see this fitting into their lives now and in the future. I especially want to know the “hot buttons.” “What would drive you up a wall?” I like interviewing potential learners. I like observing them do what they do. And, I always take what the supervisors say with a grain of salt.

The Trainers
You have to know the same thing about the trainers who will execute the curriculum that you do about the learners who will experience it:

- What do they know?
- How do they train?
- What has their experience been with this content?
- What are they curious about and what are their expectations?
- What do they love to train; what do they hate to train? Why?
They, too, will be all over the place. Again, my preference is to talk to them and to observe them training. What do they need from a curriculum? What would cause them to leave it on the shelf and go off in their own direction?

Striking the right balance with trainers is not easy. Some look at a curriculum that they did not develop as an imposition and a challenge to their professionalism. Some want to work with a curriculum that has everything planned down to the minute with scripts. Handing them a curriculum cold rarely works. No, it never works. Best, then, that you know them. Find out what their “hot buttons” are as well. And, plan on introducing them to the curriculum – yes, training them.

The Organizational Context

The organizational context can often determine whether or not a curriculum will be used or not. There is an evaluation approach, RE-AIM, that addresses critical considerations in the organizational context.

- Reach: are you able to reach the learners who you want to reach?
- Effectiveness: is the curriculum effective in meeting its objectives?
- Adoption: is the organization truly adopting the curriculum and providing the resources that are necessary?
- Implementation: Will the curriculum be implemented the way that it was intended to be implemented?
- Maintenance: will the curriculum be maintained? Will curriculum changes be incorporated? Will trainers be re-trained, developed, and new trainers trained?

Here’s the website for RE-AIM: [http://www.re-aim.org/](http://www.re-aim.org/). The website has a wealth of resources.

In short, is the organization behind the curriculum? The closer the curriculum is to the organization’s mission, the more likely that the organization will successfully support the curriculum – assuming the organization has a mission and is committed to achieving its mission. Not all organizations do. It is worthwhile interviewing organizational leadership to find out how committed the organization is. More importantly, though, look at the organization’s budget. Or, talk is cheap. The budget reflects the organization’s mission and strategy more accurately than any interview can.

Your Budget

There are two elements to the budget: time and money. I prefer to think in terms of instructional hours and independent hours. “Instructional hours” is a pretty straight forward term. How much time is available for interpersonal interaction with an instructor with or without other learners? Independent hours are more difficult to nail down. Reading time is independent time. Time on the internet is independent time. Time practicing an action, observing, etc. can be independent time.
Money may seem easier, but it is not. You need to know how much money is available for:

- Preliminary research
- Designing the curriculum
- Developing materials
- Producing materials
- Pilot testing
- Revising
- Training trainers
- Evaluation
- Revising
- Meetings, meetings, and more meetings
- Telephone calls, telephone calls and more telephone calls

So you begin with learning about the students, the trainers, and the organization. If you don’t do these three things, watch out.

**Step Two: Evaluation Plan – Now**

Yes. You do it now – not at the end of the process. By figuring out how you are going to evaluate things at this point you are more likely to collect the data that you need along the way to assure you can do a decent job of evaluation.

There are many different curriculum evaluation models. This outline of the models comes from Virginia Tech http://www.edtech.vt.edu/edtech/id/eval/eval_models.html.

- **Connoisseurship Evaluation (Eisner)** involves a connoisseur or expert in a field of study estimating the worth of a new innovation. Obvious biases and threats to validity exist. (See Program Evaluation, Venedam).

- **Goals-Oriented/Objectives-Based (Tyler, 1949)** describes whether or not students have met their goals, with the results informing how to handle a new instructional strategy (i.e., revise, adopt, reject). One weakness is the evaluator may overlook unexpected outcomes or benefits of instruction beyond original goals. (See Program Evaluation, Venedam).

- **Goals-Free Evaluation (Scriven)** supplements inherent weaknesses in a goals-oriented approach by providing an unbiased perspective of ongoing events. (See Critique of Accreditation).

- **Judicial/Adversary Evaluation** focuses on comparing or describing all sides of an innovation, both positive and negative. Analogous to the defense and prosecution of a court room. (See Evaluation Exploration, Crawford).

- **Kirkpatrick's 4-Level Model** describes student "reactions" to and "learning" from an innovation, as well as "behavior" changes in real job performance, and other potpourri "re-
results." (See Evaluating Training, Nickols, 1999; and Instructional Systems Evaluation, Clark, 1997).

- **Situated Evaluation** describes the characteristics of varying contexts that cause innovations to fail or succeed differently. Proponents of situated evaluation argue that educational innovations are situated within their context of use. (See Situated evaluation for cooperative systems, Twidale et al., 1994).

- **Stufflebeams' CIPP Model** describes the "context" in which an innovation occurs, the "inputs" of the innovation, the formative "processes" occurring, and the summative "products" or outcomes. (See A Design for Evaluation, Nova; and CIPP Evaluation Model Checklist, Western Michigan University).

All of these models can be applied to learning situations regardless of context: kids, adults, schools work, recreation, etc. However, with all of these models, what’s a person to do? The answer: be a disciplined minimalist. In other words, only go after those elements that are important to somebody. All evaluation requires collecting data so you can describe or compare. For example, in the CIPP model formative evaluation is really describing what takes place during the process of the intervention. The summation often involves comparing what happened at the end of the intervention with the intentions of the intervention.

One of the questions that is rarely asked is: What is going to be done with the information that comes out of the evaluation? If nothing is going to happen, why evaluate?

So to make it easy, or hopefully easier, consider the following:

- Who are the stakeholders and what do they want to know and what will they do with the information? The more specific you can be, the better job you will do. Some examples: The Executive director wants to know if the training led to better outcomes. If it did, s/he will make it mandatory.

- The funding agency wants to know how many people gave the training good grades. If the grades are good they will launch a more extensive evaluation to look at outcomes. The easiest way to do this is to set up a grid like below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Wants to know</th>
<th>And as a result will</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Once the grid is complete it is relatively easy to eyeball it and see the overlaps at both the knowledge and the action level. The evaluation system has to generate that knowledge and the knowledge has to be generated and formatted in such a way that people can act on it. To borrow from the title of Chris Argyris’s book, what you want is “Knowledge for Action.” You are trying to generate knowledge that the stakeholder can use for action.
You want every stakeholder to be able to say: “This is exactly what I need.” Or, they get at least a major chunk of what they need.

- As a curriculum designer I am a stakeholder. I want to know formative, summative, and impact information. My actions are going to be in the areas of refinement and promotion.
  - Was the curriculum administered as it was designed? If not, why not? What was the relative contribution of each element (this can be subjective)? This is all formative stuff. I will use it to redesign the curriculum, change the training of the trainers, change materials, and change timing.
  - To what extent did the outcomes match my intentions? This is summative. Did the changes occur that I was hoping would occur? To what extent?
  - What else happened during the administration of the curriculum that would affect how it was administered (a participant had to be taken to the hospital with food poisoning). What unintended consequences happened as a result of these learners participating in this curriculum? These may be positive; they may be negative. Overall, what has the impact been on the participants, the trainers, and the organizations? Or what differences did this curriculum make? Again, the differences might be positive or negative.

I am only one stakeholder. I have to go through the same exercise for every stakeholder remembering what they want to know will differ and what they will do with the information will differ. Too often only one stakeholder is considered. For example, the evaluation system might be developed for whoever funds the development of the program and no other stakeholders are considered. The danger is that by pleasing only one stakeholder you wind up irritating others. So, you please the provider of the funds and the operations leader says, “This is meaningless to me. I need something totally different if I am to make any decisions about the program. That is not a good scenario for having a curriculum institutionalized within an organization. Push for consensus where stakeholders may be fighting and fussing.

- The data collection process has multiple permutations. Quantitative and qualitative data will be collected. Data collection methods will be all over the place from observation to test scores to portfolios, to testing. As long as the end goal remains clear: actionable data for stakeholders, the data collection activities will be appropriate. There is an easy way to see if you are on target. Before anyone collects any information, predict what the information will look like. It may sound weird, but essentially you are creating a made up, phony report with imagined data and presenting it to the various stakeholders. You then test this out with your stakeholders. Is this what you need? How would you act on this if these were the results?
- Sometimes I use this process as an intervention. For example, most surveys of organizational culture live proudly in storage spaces and are never used for anything except as a
talking point that a CEO can use about how much s/he cares about the culture of the place.

- I do something different if I am asked to do this kind of work. I have the decision makers predict what the respondents are going to say. Since these are usually surveys I get the decision makers to predict the means and the ranges and the variability across populations: hard numbers. I then ask them, “O.K. let’s assume that’s what happens, what changes --if any-- will you make, how will you make those changes, and when will you make them?” We might try out three different scenarios. The point is to get the decision makers to think about action before they see any data.

Now, let’s assume you are heading towards the end of intervention:

- Analyzing the data is technical work whether it is quantitative or qualitative. I am not going to go into the various methodologies that are available to us. I will just suggest one question to keep in mind: when does a difference make a difference?
- Be bold. State your conclusions and back them up with your data. If more than one viewpoint is present, state them and why they differ. The truth is enough!
- Watch how you present. At some point, read Edward Tufte’s work on displaying information. His critique of PowerPoint is very important. Best to be simple and graphic with as view words as possible. Spreadsheets that no one can read should be banned. Pity the poor stakeholders: [http://www.edwardtufte.com/tufte/](http://www.edwardtufte.com/tufte/)

A note: You are not doing research, you are evaluating. The two sometimes use the same technology, but evaluation is a lot messier because it is “in situ” and considers many different things. The RE-AIM formulation is the best I know of to address all of the components and the messiness. I was trained in the CIPP model of curriculum evaluation so I know it the best: the "context" in which an innovation occurs, the "inputs" of the innovation, the formative "processes" occurring, and the summative "products" or outcomes. I learned from Scriven (Goals Free), though, to look for and consider all of the unanticipated consequences of my work.

**Step Three: The Dreaded Objectives**

No, don’t let your eyes glaze over. First, it is not as bad as all that. Second, without them you might as well throw paint against the wall and pretend you’re Jackson Pollock. Given that he died in 1956, no one would believe you. So buck up and forge ahead.

First a definition: *An objective is a condition that will exist at some definite time in the future.* Pinning down the time in the future is the easy part. Describing the condition is where things get complicated. There are several conditions we might want to be different. Some of these are familiar to people who were suckled on the taxonomy of the good Dr. Benjamin Bloom.
Unfortunately, most people stopped at the meta level of the three domains: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. The real work, though, takes place at the multiple levels that exist under the three big buckets of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. Rather than repeat the complete listing, the following link will take you to the next level, the level at which objectives should be framed.

http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/bloom.html

However, let’s delve deeper into each domain.

From the cognitive domain:

**Synthesis**: Builds a structure or pattern from diverse elements. Put parts together to form a whole, with emphasis on creating a new meaning or structure.

**Examples**: Writes a personal plan for how s/he is going to achieve a specific career objective. Designs a curriculum to train a specific task. Integrates training from several sources to solve a problem. Revises a process to improve an outcome.

**Key Words**: categorizes, combines, compiles, composes, creates, devises, designs, explains, generates, modifies, organizes, plans, rearranges, reconstructs, relates, reorganizes, revises, rewrites, summarizes, tells, writes.

From the affective domain:

**Receiving Phenomena**: Awareness, willingness to hear, selected attention.

**Examples**: Listen to others with respect. Listen for and remember the name of newly introduced people.

**Key Words**: asks, chooses, describes, follows, gives, holds, identifies, locates, names, points to, selects, sits, erects, replies, uses.

From the psychomotor domain:

**Mechanism**: This is the intermediate stage in learning a complex skill. Learned responses have become habitual and the movements can be performed with some confidence and proficiency.

**Examples**: Use a personal computer. Repair a leaking faucet. Drive a car.

**Key Words**: assembles, calibrates, constructs, dismantles, displays, fastens, fixes, grinds, heats, manipulates, measures, mends, mixes, organizes, sketches.
All of these examples are from Don Clark’s website cited above.

It is in the realm of objectives that curriculum developers too often retreat into their cubbies and act as though they are the only ones in the world. Remember the learners, the prospective trainers, and the organization? And then, most importantly: what does the learner need to succeed in the future? Oh yes, and don’t forget the budget: you have only a certain amount of instructional and independent hours and money at your disposal.

A caution. Be aware of “content experts.” They will want to load five times as many objectives into a curriculum as the curriculum can handle. There is not a slide that a content expert won’t want to include. If you are the content expert, become an exemplar of the art of self-discipline. Or, KISS – keep it simple stupid!

Some thoughts to keep in mind in walking the objectives tight rope:

- You want the learners to be motivated.
- You want the trainers to be motivated.
- You want the organization to be motivated.

Your job is to speak for the future. What is needed for the learner to succeed? Here is the area in which you must become an expert. Almost all learning is about role development. The roles are myriad, but if you keep your eye on role development, it helps guide the formation of objectives. Roger Schank has developed an entire learning technology around the story telling of exemplars. Who are the exemplars? These are the people who are the acknowledged masters. They exemplify what the role is all about. Get to know them well. Observe them. Interview them. Read about them. What do they know? What are their attitudes? What are they able to do? How did they develop? Get some evidence for this and you become the authority at the objective setting table. A simple, perhaps too simple, way of thinking about objectives is to say that you are going to close the gap, or a portion of the gap, between where your learners are currently and what the exemplars demonstrate. So, you have to know your learners and the exemplars. For example, if Michael Jordan is an exemplar in the world of professional basketball, what do I have to do to become a Michael Jordan? What are the gaps; what is the route I have to take?

If you are designing a program for an organization and the curriculum will be used many times prepare, yourself for a lot of meetings. Setting the objectives becomes an iterative process in which you will feel like you are a diplomat at the United Nations trying to forge consensus when resources are scarce and the consequences are important.

Some things to consider from the negotiation literature: What is your bottom line? What are the absolute minimal musts? What conditions must exist at the conclusion of the planned educational program? Your understanding of the role exemplars can be the key to figuring out what the “musts” are. Again, watch out for those pesky content experts.

If you are able to get consensus you need to move into the hierarchies of objectives. My mentor Mal Shaw would push me with the following question, “What has to happen before this objective will be achieved?” Yep: instrumental and terminal objectives. Mal wanted terminal ob-
jectives, but he also wanted the instrumental objectives that would get us there. An example from the world of schooling.

To have any chance at succeeding kids from lower SES neighborhoods must graduate from high school. We now know enough to watch three instrumental objectives The ABCs: Are they showing up for school (attendance), are they staying out of trouble at school (discipline records), and are they learning to read and do math problems (course performance)? You can see the way you can easily form instrumental objectives in each area. What has to happen to improve attendance and so on?

In the best of worlds you wind up with a grid of objectives with the instrumental objectives feeding into the terminal objectives. Given the time constraints, you can now figure out when during the curriculum each one of these instrumental objectives has to be achieved. Or, miss the instrumental objective and you decrease the likelihood of getting to your terminal objective and what “must happen” will be a bust instead.

Always, the constraints of time and money must be considered – especially time. As another mentor, Ed Lynch, used to say: “You don’t try to take a 747 off on a runway built for a Piper Cub.” I have seen a lot of curricula crash and burn because people tried to do too much. Then they retrench and come up with a cop out to using sound judgment: “We are building awareness.” Yuk!

A total aside: if you don’t like Bloom’s nomenclature, try Schank’s paradigm. From Schank:

THE TWELVE COGNITIVE PROCESSES THAT UNDERLIE LEARNING

The following cognitive skills are developed gradually over time. This is the stuff that we need to learn how to do in order to function well in the world. The more proficient you are at these skills, the smarter you appear and the more you can learn:

Conceptual Processes

1. **Prediction**: Making a prediction about the outcome of actions
2. **Modeling**: Building a conscious model of a process
3. **Experimentation**: Finding out for oneself what works and what doesn’t
4. **Evaluation**: Improving our ability to determine the value of something on many different dimensions

Analytic Processes

5. **Diagnosis**: Making a diagnosis of a complex situation by identifying relevant factors and seeking causal explanations
6. **Planning**: Learning to plan and do needs analysis as well as acquiring a conscious and subconscious understanding of what goals are satisfied by what plans
7. **Causation**: Detecting what has caused a sequence of events to occur by relying upon a case base of previous knowledge of similar situations

8. **Judgment**: Making an objective judgment

**Social Processes**

9. **Influence**: Understanding how others respond to your requests and recognizing consciously and unconsciously how to improve the process

10. **Teamwork**: Learning how to achieve goals by using a team, consciously allocating roles, managing inputs from others, coordinating actors, and handling conflicts; managing operations using a model of processes and handling real time issues

11. **Negotiation**: Making a deal; negotiation/contracts; resolving goal conflicts

12. **Describing**: Creating conscious descriptions of situations to explain them to others in writing and orally


**Step Four: Choose a Curriculum Strategy**

Unfortunately, a lot of curriculum is developed without the benefit of having an overall strategy. School systems with their focus on lesson plans almost make sure that there will not be a strategy. Instead, you get isolated episodes of instruction. A definition: a strategy is a theory of how an enterprise will most effectively pursue its mission.

A strategy is a theory. Hopefully it has some evidence behind it. Because it is a theory it will have some beliefs about the nature of the enterprise (strengths and weaknesses) and about the environment in which the enterprise will function (opportunities and threats).

In the world of curriculum development the enterprise is the creation and deployment of a learning system to achieve those wonderful terminal objectives we just developed. Our theory, our strategy, is that this is the best way to make sure those conditions come into existence in this particular environment, with these learners, these trainers, and these organizational realities.

There have been some brilliant curriculum strategists. I start with Jerome Bruner. Bruner suggests that we understand the structure of the discipline to be taught. He suggests that we shouldn’t be teaching history as such but how to be a historian. In other words, what is the structure of the thinking that a historian uses to understand history? In other words, all learning is role taking.

Bruner also suggests that we understand the levels of thought that are required to achieve mastery. In this he is like Bloom. Bruner referred to it as scaffolding. One of his major contributions in this area is the notion of the spiral curriculum. You come back to the same dominant themes of the discipline over and over again with increasing levels of complexity.
Bruner approaches learning as narration (stories) and paradigms. In narration instruction recognizes the function of stories as the mediator of thought: the particulars, outcomes, time sequences. In the paradigmatic mode instruction recognizes propositions, corollaries, and applications.

Another theorist, Robert Gagne’ emphasizes the building block approach. Note: Gagne’ developed the curriculum for Army Air Force pilots during WWII. The basic curriculum structure is still in use in all pilot training. In Conditions of Learning Gagne’ proposes the following types of learning outcomes:

- Each outcome may have prerequisite knowledge or skills that must be identified. Identify the internal conditions or processes the learner must have to achieve the outcomes
- Identify the external conditions or instruction needed to achieve the outcomes
- Specify the learning context
- Record the characteristics of the learners
- Select the media for instruction
- Plan to motivate the learners
- The instruction is tested with learners in the form of formative evaluation
- After the instruction has been used, summative evaluation is used to judge the effectiveness of the instruction

Clearly this is similar to Bloom and Burner’s scaffolding but without Bruner’s narrative emphasis.

Roger Schank focuses on the narrative, the story telling along with the role taking.

Now for some real world examples of curriculum strategies.

Learning Law The case method has been used in training lawyers for many years. Some business schools also use this approach. Let me suggest that in law it is totally appropriate. I am not at all sure that it is in business schools. Why the difference? Think Burner. The discipline of law is based upon the creation of logic trains that use previous cases as the building blocks of the argument. Argumentation and negotiation are two of the critical skills of the lawyer. Cases are truncated stories. So you have three elements present in the case method: storytelling, role taking, and the very structure of the thought process of lawyers. Curriculum strategy: case method.
This is not the case in business where strategic thinking and interpersonal relations become more critical.

**Learning Medicine**

For many years all medical schools devoted the first two years to the basic sciences and the last two years to clinical applications. That’s not how doctors work or think, however. So curriculum planners started to deploy a different curriculum strategy: problem-based learning. Doctors problem-solve. They use facts, they manipulate facts, they develop hypotheses and test these hypotheses, and they select remedies. Problem-based learning presents medical problems early in the life of the medical student. The student has to learn the basic science in order to solve the problem. You can imagine how the basic sciences faculties—used to slide shows and labs—felt about that! So it was tested. Which strategy was better? When it came to the tests both groups did about the same. However, when it came to residencies, the problem-based learning students did better. Curriculum strategy: problem-based learning.

Now both of these strategies—case method and problem-based learning—can use scaffolding and spiraling as well. Developmental skills are taught along the way and cases or problems increase in complexity and can be cycled back upon.

**Managing a Chronic Disease**

Many curricula are focused on the development of a specific set of life skills that must be applied immediately. For example, learning how to fly an airplane, drive a car, and even managing a chronic disease like diabetes or asthma. Historically, health educators would use a fire hose approach. Open mouth, insert hose, turn on the faucet and flood the patient with information. To say that results from the fire hose approach have been less than optimal is an understatement.

All of this took place, of course, within the confines of specific expertise. You have diabetes educators. And they do know everything about diabetes. Unfortunately, they know very little about how people learn or how to develop a curriculum strategy. Along comes Kate Lorig from Stanford University. Lorig turns it all on its head. She identifies core skills that successful chronic disease managers (exemplars) use and develops those skills.

Subjects covered include: 1) techniques to deal with problems such as frustration, fatigue, pain and isolation, 2) appropriate exercise for maintaining and improving strength, flexibility, and endurance, 3) appropriate use of medications, 4) communicating effectively with family, friends, and health professionals, 5) nutrition, and, 6) how to evaluate new treatments.

http://patienteducation.stanford.edu/programs/cdsmp.html

The research is clear-cut: it is a better approach than the fire hose from the experts. The courses are taught by a team: a person successfully managing a chronic disease and a health professional. The courses are highly interactive in a group setting. People from multiple diseases are in the group because the focus is on the skills, not the disease. Note the role-taking emphasis in
combination with skill development. Two and one half hours a week for six weeks: fifteen hours of instructional time.

I use this example last because the strategy draws upon several curriculum strategy approaches. Note that you have to get the objectives right. The objective is to manage the disease, not learn about it.

Years ago I worked in the education department at the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Note the difference between these two objectives: learn how to manage your fertility or learn about birth control. Any time a curriculum designer hears the word “about” they should start screaming.

The Lorig strategy scaffolds the order of the content. The order, though, is not based upon complexity, but upon immediacy. Where is the hurt? These are single skills training events: each week a different topic. This is not a spiral curriculum with one exception – role-taking about management of the disease. That is the constant theme. The doctor doesn’t have the disease, you do.

There are other curriculum strategies. Most of them, though, are based upon some concept of scaffolding whether or not it is simple-to-complex, historical order, cause to effect, etc. The examples I have used above all focus on learning that takes place with adults because that is who I am writing for.

Now, what happens when there is no curriculum strategy? You get a hodgepodge of unrelated episodes that usually demonstrate an ignorance of learning on the part of the trainers. Go to a convention and any presentations related to learning activities or new exercises will be well attended. And the constant theme will be, “They really liked this one.” In other words: entertainment not education. Yuk! Similarly, the expectation that every trainer has the knowledge to design a curriculum based upon a strategy is absurd. Consequently, there is a lot of hodgepodge training going on.

So risk it. Choose a curriculum strategy for your masterpiece and stick with it. When in doubt, scaffold.

**Step Five: Plan it and Write it**

This is the fun part for most curriculum writers. The illusion of control pervades as you sit at your computer or draw on a white board or newsprint. If it weren’t for those pesky learners, trainers, and organizations, life would be so simple. But still, for now you can enjoy the illusion of control.

As we move through this section I have emphasized some areas of common problems.

**Sequencing**

Sometimes the sequencing of action will fall out of the curriculum strategy naturally. So, for example, if you are using a scaffolding strategy and are working from simple to complex, your instructional sequence will demonstrate this. There are many different kinds of sequencing approaches. For example, one of my curriculum mentors, Malcolm E. Shaw, used the following sequence over and over again in the curricula he designed:
1. Concept clarification (ideas, skills, etc.)
   a. Use some input mechanism to provide information about the concepts to be mastered. The input mechanism might be a lecture, a film or videotape, or a computer program. New vocabulary was often introduced as well as new concepts.

   b. Administer exercises that called upon the learners to use the concepts to demonstrate understanding. Provide them with feedback and a chance to discuss the concepts. He would often use a team task that had people take a test individually (true/false, multiple choice, fill in the blanks) and then take the test again as a member of a team where they could discuss their answers and the reasons for them. If you had multiple teams you could then compare how well the teams moved from the average scores of individuals at work to the team score. The goal was to have the team beat the score of any individual in the group. This forced discussion and “clarification” of the concepts.

2. Abstract application
   a. The next step was to apply the concepts in an abstract setting. Think of simulations and abbreviated case studies in which the cases were compressed. Sometimes the cases were over the top and simply fun: Jack and Jill have a problem of getting up the hill. A bunch of complications would then be built in to getting over the hill and the only way the team could get them over the hill is to change the paradigm.

   b. Feedback and discussion after the application task was a constant. In addition, and it’s a big addition, there was always a second chance with a different application task while still working on the same concepts or skills. This is critical. The learners must be challenged to figure out what they will do differently to improve their performance on subsequent iterations. In some situations the same simulation can be repeated so the learner can experience what happens if they do something differently. Too often learners are given feedback about what they just did, have formed an idea about how they would improve their performance, but do not have an opportunity to try it out. In other words, there is no opportunity to practice. The consequence is no transfer of learning because they never had an opportunity to change their behavior – learn.

3. Realistic application
   a. The concepts are now applied in a realistic setting. You get to fly the plane not the simulator. If it is a case study, the case is a real one with real data. Usually the time periods get expanded to more accurately reflect the reality the learner will experience. Sometimes computer simulations can be the best of both worlds. Lots
of use of real life data but compressed time so many iterations are possible. Again, practice.

b. Feedback, discussion and additional trials continue, but there is a difference in the feedback. The feedback relies increasingly on self-evaluation and reflection. Coaching may come into play at this point, sometimes by a peer.

The big sequencing choice: linear or spiral

Mal Shaw chose to spiral. All of the concepts would be introduced at the beginning of the curriculum. He might go linear in the abstract application phase, but he always came back with the total concept map at the realistic application phase. He was designing curricula primarily for managers. The skills and concepts neatly bucketed into two domains: interpersonal and planning.

By contrast, Kate Lorig’s curriculum for chronic disease management is linear. Each session focuses on one idea and one skill. However the sequence is according to need and experienced stress of the participants based on a great deal of experience working with this population.

Note that you can sequence in different ways from within the same strategy. For example, you could use a case study strategy and sequence using a linear or a spiral approach. If you were to use a spiral strategy, it would mean finding cases with the same concept components in each case.

In many sequences the movement is from simple to complex. That certainly was core to Shaw’s approach.

Time can be used as a sequencing approach. For example, in real life, what is the learner going to have to do first, second, third, etc.? O.K., sequence the instruction that way. Think of training someone to drive: First you turn on the motor, etc.

And let’s not forget Gagne’. What must precede before the learner can proceed? Does this content require building blocks? The training of mathematics has changed dramatically as educators have figured out what students need to know before they can move to the next step.

Many hodgepodge training sessions have no curriculum strategy, nor sequencing rationale. Activities are stuck in almost at random. But then, given how much work it is to figure out a curriculum strategy and sequencing approach, it makes sense not to bother.

Input, Stimulus, Action, Feedback, Evaluation (I am SAFE)

Learning is change in behavior. I learn how to drive a car, fly a plane, read, speak, write, do therapy, manage an organization, etc. Change occurs. If I do the same thing today that I did yesterday I haven’t learned anything. The learning may be taking place inside my head and not apparent to the eye or it may be external and you can see it. What is constant is change. Change happens in and out of planned learning environments. Regardless of the environment, the process of change tends to be similar. So, how does change happen?
One way of thinking about learning is to use the concept of equilibrium. If I am in a state of equilibrium nothing is changing. Introduce novelty into my life space and you may get my attention. This novelty can be introduced through a variety of methods. I might simply observe how others are doing things and it is new to me (see Bandura and social learning theory). I see what works and doesn’t work for others and vicariously I “learn” because I now “know” how I am going to do it. My learning isn’t complete until I actually do it and determine that in fact I can do it and it works.

The novelty might be introduced by a trainer telling me exactly how to hold the golf club in my hands. It may feel awkward at first. With repetition and success, though, I change my grip and I have learned how to hold a golf club.

Sometimes I generate my own input. For example, I might try a recipe different ways until I finally get it exactly how I want it. I then discard the old ways. So I try something until I find success.

My brother shows me how to tie a bowline and shows me over and over again until finally I see how he is doing it and I can replicate his actions successfully.

Observation, instruction, trial and error, and demonstration are some of the ways that novelty is introduced into my life space. The input will create some tension in me. Tension is not a negative thing. I may experience it as excitement. The equilibrium has been disturbed or perturbed, though.

I may go into search mode on my own (trial and error), or I may try it the way my brother is showing me how to do it, or I may go into an internal thought process about whether or not this makes sense to me. I am active, though. That input has in some way disrupted my equilibrium and has got me going. If the tension is too great I’ll bow out of the encounter. If the tension is too low I will also bow out because I will become bored. Or, there has to be sufficient novelty to get my juices going but not so much that I get flooded with feelings that are too uncomfortable to sustain. It’s nice that the acronym I am SAFE (Input, Stimulus, Action, Feedback, Evaluation) works without stretching. I have to feel safe if I am going to learn.

Let’s put on a different set of glasses. Historically, people have talked about learning in two different ways: experience and instruction. These are gross distinctions, but they can be helpful.

Plato is reported to have said that experience teaches the worst flute players as well as the best. It is practice that teaches the best. Practice involves reflection, experimentation, and repetition. Experience, by itself, is pretty neutral when you are trying to learn.

Discovery approaches are a way of producing input. Experiments are designed to instruct and/or perturb. Discovery learning takes place when what we expected to happen doesn’t happen, or when it actually does happen as we expected.

There is a lovely story about Jonas Salk. Over the years he had tried two hundred different ways to develop a vaccine to prevent polio. Once he developed a vaccine that worked, the press was clamoring for interviews. During one of these interviews a reporter asked, “Dr. Salk,
what was it like to have tried and failed two hundred times? “Salk responded, “In my family we weren’t allowed to use the word failure. I didn’t fail 200 times; I discovered 200 ways how not to make a polio vaccine.”

And then there are those experiences in which we are surprised. You go to a foreign country (say France for Americans). You have read your Frommer’s and have a good sense of where you are going and what you are going to do when we get there. But then, as you are walking around Mont St-Michel in France, you meet a physicist, a poet, and a politician and you start to chat and your view of existence will never be the same. I just put you into Capra’s movie Mindwalk.

Experiential learning is real, whether it is through practice, experimentation, or simply living. Something new comes into my experience (novelty) and disrupts how I had experienced and seen the world (disequilibrium) and I must search for a new frame with which to create my reality. We also do learn through being taught directly. Yes lectures can be stimulating. They have been since the beginning of civilization. A good lecturer can hold an audience “spellbound” as the lecturer illuminates a topic and brings insight and hope to an area of cloudiness and impossibility. The lecturer stimulates us. We pay attention.

Story telling can be a novel input. Dilemmas can be raised. Almost every religious tradition uses stories to instruct from the parables of Jesus to the teaching stories of Buddhist Monks:

Two monks were returning to the monastery in the evening. It had rained and there were puddles of water on the road sides. At one place a beautiful young woman was standing unable to walk across because of a puddle of water. The elder of the two monks went up to her lifted her in his arms and left her on the other side of the road, and continued his way to the monastery.

In the evening the younger monk came to the elder monk and said, "Sir, as monks, we cannot touch a woman?"

The elder monk answered "yes, brother".

Then the younger monk asks again, " but then Sir, how is that you lifted that woman on the roadside?"

The elder monk smiled at him and told him, "I left her on the other side of the road, but you are still carrying her."

There are many ways, then, in which our equilibrium can be shaken up sufficiently to cause us to attend, to look harder, to reach out, and to learn. These inputs must provide something that is new to me, novelty, if they are to work from a learning perspective. They can come in a wide variety of forms and delivery systems from a walk with strangers, to a carefully planned DVD, to a lecture, to a story.

The “I” in I-SAFE, the input, must be planned and must attend to the opportunities and constraints imposed by the learners, the trainers, and the organization. Beware of the content expert in you. It is not just building slides or using any other kind of input device. It is creating novelty for the learner.
Stimulus: The Right Problems at the Right Time

Inputs may stir us up, but we still need to act for learning to occur and for that to happen we usually need some kind of stimulus. In almost every situation the stimulus is a problem of some kind. It might be a math problem, a case study, interacting with a colleague, etc. What prompts me to act is the problem. I am called upon to solve it. In some situations I may frame the problem myself: for example I may discover a problem as a result of writing in a journal. In most situations, though, the curriculum developer has chosen the problems.

Curriculum developers have a lot of fun creating problems for learners to solve. However, the learner may already have problems that they want to use to learn from. For example, the curriculum might ask learners to complete the following statement, “I have to figure out how to…..” The learner generated problems may be the stimulus that is used for the entire curriculum or at the end, or the beginning.

Is the problem one that is constructed as a test bed to try something out? I have some new input. Is the problem designed to call upon me to use that input in an abstract or realistic problem setting? In other words, is the problem calling upon me to apply something I have just heard about through some input mechanism?

Or, the problem might be one in which I will discover something. I am not applying some concept or skill to the problem, the problem is created in such a way that by solving it I will discover concepts or principles. Laboratory problems are created this way. Some simple team building exercises do the same thing: I discover that the team generates better answers than any one of us.

If the problems are too complicated or would take more time than is available, the learner will be frustrated and retreat. Similarly, if the problems are too easy or can be completed in far less than the allotted time, the learner will become bored. So, the problem should generate sufficient disequilibrium to make me stretch but not to frustrate or bore me. It is an art form.

For learning to occur the problem must call upon me to generate something new. My current set of cognitions and skills must be insufficient to the task. I have to try this new idea that I just heard about (application problems) or I must discover that my usual way of doing things won’t work and I have to try something new.

For the learning to be transferable, I must be able to do it at will and must be able to repeat it under different circumstances. I get there, not just by being stimulated by a challenging problem, but by acting in a responsive environment that presents many problems in different contexts.

The Stimulus in I-SAFE is a problem. The problem prompts me to act, but is not the action.

Action

There are two parts to the action: (a) the action itself and (b) the environment in which the action takes place. The action has to be predictable within certain ranges of behavior. In other words, the curriculum designer should have a pretty good idea of how the learners are going to
respond to the problem stimulus. In addition, there has to be an opportunity to act in such a way that the problem can be solved successfully.

Some problems are traps. I personally don’t like them. The nine dots problem where you have to connect all nine dots using four straight lines or less without lifting your pencil off the paper is an example. The problem is designed to illustrate the way in which we tend to include only certain kinds of solutions in our perceptual field and typically do not think “outside the box.” While we can certainly learn from failure experiences, do we want to program for failures as the method of learning? Again think “I am Safe.”

The box problem is not a terribly noxious example of where my actions may embarrass me. I will have a lot of company which makes it more acceptable. Other problems are far worse in this regard. Chris Argyris reminds us that people get defensive when they feel embarrassed or threatened. The problems need to keep these emotions to a minimum if learning is to occur.

I could teach the notion of divergent thinking through a variety of mechanisms other than the popular nine dot puzzle. Stories that exemplify divergent thinking might be used: e.g. the creation of the “post it.” Problems that call for team action rather than individual action can be developed. A case is presented, the convergent solution is acknowledged and then blocked – you can’t use that one.

Thus, the problem should stimulate action that is potentially successful without creating threat or embarrassment. This requires environmental management: time, materials, equipment, colleagues, etc.

- Time. The amount of time for an action should be sufficient for the average learner to solve the problem. If the problem is a group problem with rotating roles, the time should be sufficient for all members of the group to enact all of the roles.
- Materials. Materials should be readily available and arranged in such a way that time is not wasted by the learners assembling the materials unless that is part of the problem.
- Equipment. Equipment should be tested to assure that it is working. As with materials, equipment should be readily available.
- Work mates function as part of the environment for the learner. If group tasks are used, the selection of group members becomes critical. How are they assigned to a group? A group that doesn’t function effectively will disrupt any learning as people struggle with the interpersonal dynamics rather than the problem. Sometimes solving the interpersonal problems is part of the task. In these cases, attending to the group dynamics is critical. There has to be opportunity and sufficient resources available to make solving the interpersonal problems possible.

Above all, the environment has to be responsive to the actions of the learner(s).
A story: A group of middle school children were taken bowling. They were given money to bowl but were told that any money they did not spend they could keep. Half of the lanes were free. They had to pay if they wanted to play on the other half. The children all rushed to the free lanes and started to bowl. They were shocked though when the minute their bowling bowl got half way towards the pins a curtain dropped and they could not see what happened although they could hear the balls striking pins.

Within a short period of time either of two things happened. Most of the children started to spend their money in the lanes that functioned normally. A few, though, stayed in the free lanes but they created a new game. Who could get the ball over one of the marks on the alley and get the ball to a second mark just where the curtain came down. They changed the environment so it would be responsive.

Feedback

The environment has to be responsive. It has to provide feedback to the learner of two kinds. What did the learner do? What were the consequences of what the learner did?

Feedback is a fascinating topic. The use of the word itself was a major step forward in many endeavors because it promoted the use of information in a context that was not based on goodness and badness. The field of Cybernetics gave the concept of feedback a scientific basis that emphasized the use of information for adaptation. In the world of cybernetics some organism or machine emits behaviors or actions that impact a responsive environment which returns signals to the organism or machine which then adapts its behaviors based upon the signals it has received. This action/impact/feedback/adapt loop is continuous as in a thermostat. Now, to the learners.

• Coding

Feedback is only useful if a learner can process the information. The feedback must come to the learner in a coding system that the learner can decode. If you give me feedback in a language I do not understand it will be useless. Two errors tend to enter here.

o Feedback error one: the feedback is so general that I cannot use it. The general formulation of “When you did ______, ______ is what happened” is useful only if the blanks are filled in with information that is specific enough that the learner can both understand it and act on it. “When you acted like an idiot I tuned out,” is not great feedback. By contrast, when you were jumping up and down and shouting I didn’t feel like I could talk to you so stopped paying attention.

o Feedback error two: the information is given in a code (a language) that I do not understand or I understand differently than you do: e.g. the error messages my computer will send me on occasion are meaningless to me, “BDOS error.” Is it feedback? Yes. Can I use the information? No. Another example: you understand and code empathy one way and I understand it and code it differ-
ently.

- **Amount**
  If I am given too much feedback my brain simply will not be able to process the information. Most of us can stretch to holding about five constructs in short term memory. For learning, though, we really like one or two things at a time. So feedback should be limited so I can process it. Since it is difficult for me to change more than one behavior at a time, feedback should be limited to that which I am expected to work on.

- **Climate**
  Safety first. All of the rules for feedback emphasize that it should be descriptive, not evaluative. That’s nice to say. It is not always experienced that way even when the feedback is descriptive. Often the experience of feedback is that it is corrective. However, on the emotional scale correction is very close to criticism. Consequently, it is important to make the feedback as objective and actionable as possible and to introduce the entire subject in a way that frames it as essential and helpful. Asking the person where they would like feedback and/or to offer their own assessments first may help create a positive climate for feedback.

- **Proximity**
  The closer the feedback is to the action that I have generated the more useful will the feedback become for me. The quicker the linkage between what I did and the consequences of my actions, the more likely the feedback is to reinforce what I did or to create disequilibrium and prompt me to go into search mode.

A personal story: the best feedback system I have experienced was during my marriage and family therapy training. I would be with a family in a therapy room where one wall had a one way mirror. My trainer and my learning partner would be able to hear and see me. I could not see or hear them; neither could the family although the family knew they were there. My learning partner would also be video recording the session. In addition, I would be wearing a receiver in my ear. They could speak to me from behind the one way mirror at any time during the session or they could ask me to leave the room for consultation.

As a brand new therapist it was not unusual for me to get lost even though I had a strategy and plan before going into the room. Either I would execute the plan poorly, or the family would throw me off of my game plan. I wasn’t yet sophisticated enough to always be able to read the family’s subtle feedback in the room. Or, even if I did, I might not know how to adapt.

That’s where the folks behind the one way mirror came in. My trainer could make suggestions through my earpiece or literally tell me what to say. I became her mouthpiece, but an alert one. I could see what was happening to the family in front of me as I mouthed her words. Then, as I would take over and start to be effective, she would give me positive feedback in process, or make a suggestion.
After the session we would review the videotape and debrief the experience. We would discuss what was happening with the family, what was happening with me, and what was happening with my trainer and my partner. We also talked about how I was responding to the feedback. It is hard to get more immediate feedback than that.

Back to curriculum design and feedback. One of the reasons that games are so entertaining is because of the immediate feedback. What they often lack is the ability to convey to the learner what the learner was doing which led to the feedback. Receiving outcome feedback without process feedback (what happened but not what I did to make it happen) doesn’t help me as much as receiving both elements of the feedback. The adaptive capacity has to be part of the feedback process. Think Cybernetics.

The same principles apply whether the feedback is coming from a grade on a paper or from a team. What is critical when we consider feedback is what happens next. If the feedback is not acted upon, any learning derived from the feedback will be lost.

Feedback contributes to learning when the information is delivered quickly, understood, and immediately acted upon and results in outcomes that are more satisfying. Practice requires feedback.

**Evaluation**

This section might have been labeled “reflection” but since Evaluation completes the word SAFE “reflection” lost out. The idea, though, is the same.

In two books, *The Reflective Practitioner* and *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*, the late Donald Schön illuminated how practitioners learn and develop throughout their careers.

The practitioner allows himself to experience surprise, puzzlement, or confusion in a situation which he finds uncertain or unique. He reflects on the phenomenon before him, and on the prior understandings which have been implicit in his behavior. He carries out an experiment which serves to generate both a new understanding of the phenomenon and a change in the situation. (Schön 1983)

There is much behind this statement. The concepts of espoused theory and theory in use, and single- and double-loop learning, are ideas that Schön developed with Chris Argyris over years of collaboration. The central idea, though, is that feedback and adaptation are not enough for learning. It is necessary to reflect upon, and to evaluate, the implicit beliefs that led to the behavior. In other words, I can adapt to produce better feedback, but if I don’t change my implicit assumptions the chances are that I will return to my previous ways of acting when the tight feedback loops are removed.

If you ask someone, “What were you thinking when you…,” it is unlikely that they will be able to articulate the implicit assumptions that prompted the behavior – the assumptions are implicit. This is the area Argyris and Schön call the Theory in Use. That is different from the Espoused Theory which is what I publicly talk about and have available to me consciously.
How, then, does one get at this deeper level, this theory in use that is driving my behavior? It is through dialog, deep reflection, and willingness to experiment. As Schön writes about the practitioner: “He reflects on the phenomenon before him, and on the prior understandings which have been implicit in his behavior.”

There are some techniques for facilitating this evaluation of our own learning and behavior.

- Coaching. A good coach will insist upon this level of exploration because a good coach is willing to get close to us (this is intimate work) and they want us to succeed.
- Small group discussion. The format of the consciousness raising group popularized during the early days of the feminist movement prompted this kind of reflection and evaluation.
- Individually watching or listening to examples of our own work and allowing ourselves to be surprised, puzzled, and dismayed.
- Going off the reservation. A long walk. A good novel. Any wholesome distraction that allows the mind to regroup and focus on something else so we can get insights from our peripheral vision.
- The evaluation process is one that is often overlooked in the development of curriculum. However, if long lasting change is to be made, it is a critical step.

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A bit of fun: How do people learn skills?
Step Six: Produce the materials

This is the easy part.

Audio-Visual

Begin by gathering together other people’s materials that you are going to use: DVDs, audio recordings, etc. Be sure that you screen or listen to everything to make sure that it does what you want it to do. Is it for input – stories, information, etc., or is it a problem(s) to be solved? There are wonderful materials available for most content areas. However, it is possible that you will have to make your own.

If you are going to build your own, give yourself plenty of time and then double your initial estimate. Building our own is expensive in time, very expensive. Think about it six times before committing to it.

If you are going to use slides, read Edward Tufte’s article on The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint. Read it twice before you build your slide show. There are several guidelines out there for building PowerPoint slides. They are worthwhile reading. Microsoft has learned and their 12 tips presentation is a good place to start.

http://www.microsoft.com/atwork/skills/presentations.aspx
Written Materials

- Make it easy for the learners. Spiral bound books (whether the spirals are made of plastic or metal) that can lay flat and are easy to write in are much easier than bulky three ring binders or lots of scattered handouts that get lost or take up time having to be “handed out.”

- Use a format that is consistent for all activities. One is included here with an example. It comes from work I have done training people in Motivational Interviewing. In the sequence of the training process it takes place at the end of five days of training. The goal is to create an opportunity to summarize what has been learned but to do so in a fun way. The idea is a direct steal form the television show *Criminal Minds*. The basic format could be used with many different roles.

- Note the transparency in this way of writing a task. This particular task has an element of lightness to it as a way of framing what could feel like a tedious task.

- However, tasks don’t work if people don’t do the tasks. **One of the biggest jobs for the trainer is being a task master.**
Exercise  **Stop the MIP**

**Perspective**  You have been studying and practicing Motivational Interviewing for a week. It has been in preparation for this monumental task.

Our country needs your help. We have a serious problem. There are threats to the status quo. We must have a profile for the person who has been called by the press the Motivational Interviewing Practitioner or “The MIP” for short. Lately, this person has been causing problems for several industries: tobacco, fast food, television, distillers, and distributors of street drugs. We also suspect that the MIP is at work reducing recidivism in corrections. Think of the lost jobs. People who spend time with the MIP change, whether it is in person or on the telephone. The MIP is causing problems for these industries, serious problems, and must be stopped. We considered giving the task to the FBI’s Behavioral Profiling Unit based in Quantico, Virginia but they were busy chasing a serial killer. So, it is up to you.

Be careful. There may be more than one MIP out there. We have some intelligence that suggests there may be a whole network of MIPs. There is another problem: It appears that the MIP is evolving with time.

The MIP should be considered dangerous! In fact, a previous team of profilers found themselves changing just by pursuing the MIP and learning about him/her. We trust that will not happen to you.

**Purpose**  You have to stop the MIPs. To do so:

First create a profile of the MIP so he, she, or they can be identified. Develop a description of the MIP that an average person will recognize.

Second, how are you going to stop the MIP? What are you going to do to disrupt the MIP’s nefarious practice?

If you can do both of these it will indicate that you know at a deep level what a MIP is and how they function. Importantly we will be able to stop them.
Procedure

1. This is clearly a team activity. No one person should be asked to do this alone. Your leader will assign you to a team. Your team will have to work quickly, though. A profile of the MIP and a plan to stop them is needed by ____:____.

2. Select one of your team members to present your profile and your plan to the rest of the group. Because the hunt for the MIP(s) must get underway, the person you choose to present will have only _____ minutes to make the presentation.

3. As you listen to the presentations of the other teams, jot down any things that your team missed or did not emphasize sufficiently.

4. After all the teams have presented you will gather again in your team. You have will have three tasks: (a) discuss among yourselves what you missed, (b) discuss why you think you missed it, and (c) select which of the other teams you believe did the most complete job.

Product

It is critical that you get inside the head of the MIP. How does s/he think? Tell us as much as you can about the beliefs of the MIP. How does the MIP put his/her world together? Tell us what the MIP likes and dislikes.

Also, tell us how the MIP acts. If we see the MIP at work, how will we know it is the MIP? What can we expect to see and not see?

Where does the MIP derive his/her power? How is it that all of these industries with all of the advertising dollars they spend, with all of the short term pleasure they spread about still fail when confronted by the MIP?

How are you going to stop them? How do you disrupt a MIP?

Finally, you will reflect on your own work and the work of others.

Problems

You have to get specific and down to earth or our investigators won’t be able to find the MIP. The more abstract you are, the more likely it is that the MIP will keep on doing what s/he is doing now.
Describe the MIP

Stop the MIP
What did we miss?

Why did we miss it?

Who did the most complete work and what makes it complete?
Step Seven Take a bath, have a drink, go for a walk.

You deserve it. You have just completed creating and writing a curriculum.
Coaching

Introduction

To understand coaching, one has to understand and appreciate the complexity of human performance. It doesn’t matter what the performance is. What is helpful is that for those of us who work with health behavior, there is a parallel process at work. We can view health as a performance and apply the same techniques as a health coach that we apply coaching health coaches.

Most of us are fascinated by a performance that exceeds our expectations or our own capabilities. We pay to watch star athletes “make it look easy.” We stand in line for tickets to dance, music and dramatic performances. At work we are aware of those people who shine, who stand out. Often, they, too, make it look easy. We openly say, “I could never do that.” Rarely, though, do we stand back to ask ourselves questions about the nature of human performance or how to develop it. What goes into the exemplary performance that we marvel at? How did it come about? It is easy, too easy, to chalk it up to raw talent, to discipline, or to getting the breaks. At some level, we know that it is more complicated than that.

For those of us who are responsible for enhancing another person’s performance, whether as supervisor, coach, teacher, or mentor, the nature of human performance is a critical topic. It is important for us to understand performance so we can enhance it. The following notes present a model of human performance. They address five interdependent factors that comprise performance. The model can be applied to all forms of human endeavor whether it be the workplace, the studio, the playing field, or the stage.

My goal is to present a map of human performance so that those of us who are responsible for enhancing performance can easily attend to the various facets of human experience that lead to excellence. Since the model addresses five components, the model is called "Star Performance" to create a graphic image of the concepts. Simplistically, if all five components are functioning effectively, the likelihood is that the person will be a "Star."

We use a variety of labels to identify the person who is responsible for enhancing the performance of another: supervisor, manager, boss, coach, teacher, mentor, preceptor. In this paper the word coach is used. No other word is quite as clear in its concern for enhancing performance. The converse is also true. We speak of performers, students, subordinates, and clients. To retain the focus on performance, the label “performer” is used in this paper.

The Star model can be used diagnostically and prescriptively. Diagnostically, it can help the coach understand the causal components of performance by calling attention to all facets of a performer’s effort. Without some kind of analytic tool that encourages multiple perspectives, it is difficult for the coach to attend to all facets of a person’s performance. The tendency is to focus on only one or two aspects of a performance, usually those that the coach is most comfortable addressing. However, if performance is to be improved, it is necessary to understand, analyze, and act upon all component parts of the performance. A graphic
representation, then, is a simple way to help a coach view performance and consider a wide range of possible interventions to improve the individual’s performance.

Because the model is analytic, and thus reductionistic by nature, there are two important caveats. First, performance difficulties and successes can rarely be attributed to a single component. The coach, then, must be prepared to consider and address all components of performance. Second, the components of performance interact with one another. For example, developing mastery of a skill will often increase motivation; being an introvert, a trait, makes it more difficult to enact the role of greeter at a social gathering.

Excellence in performance is realized when all components of the performance are working together. Robert Frost was once asked when a poem was finished. He replied that it was complete when it functioned like a well matched team of horses: "... all the words are working together and moving easy in harness." This is not dissimilar from what psychologists have called "flow" and what athletes refer to as being in the "zone." At some point all components of the performance move harmoniously and produce excellence, a star.

The Five Components

The five components of human performance are:

Skills

Motivation

Talents and Traits

Roles

The socio-technical system
In the following notes definitions will be provided for these five components as well as examples of how the components contribute to and detract from performance. Diagnostic and prescriptive suggestions will be provided for each component.

**Skills**

**Definition** A skill is a purposeful sequence of actions that can be repeated at will. Note the various elements of the definition. A skill is not a single action or movement. Instead, it is an action chain that leads towards some goal. Think of the numerous components of hitting a golf ball successfully. Some instructors have dissected the golf swing into twelve different elements. No one element comprises the skill. For example, having a good back swing is not the skill. The skill is the swing. It is possible to go from skill to skill and identify action chains. Some action chains are relatively brief.

For example, communicating empathy is a skill. I think of the action chain as having three parts: listening carefully to what the other person is saying and hinting at, letting this inhaled experience of the “other” resonate within the imagination of the listener, and then saying something in language that can be understood by the “other” that informs the other of what we understand his or her experience to be. The skill requires all three links in the chain. Take away any one of them and there is no skill.

If something is a skill, it can be repeated at will. For example, once in a great while I will hit a good back hand shot in tennis. But I can't count on it. I can't say to myself beforehand: "O.K. this is going to be a great shot.” It is unfortunate but true, my once in a while brilliant backhand shot is pure luck -- not skill. The identifier “lucky shot” is well deserved. On the other hand, it is rare that I cannot sail a boat up to a mooring or a dock and make a decent landing on the first try. I know that I can do this. I don't worry about it unless there is something
unique going on in my environment, like a big storm, that makes it particularly difficult. My ability to land a sailboat is a skill, not luck.

Skills can become habits that are executed without conscious thought. I don’t think about how I drive a car down to the store to pick up milk. For a new driver to accomplish the same task, many conscious skills must be brought on line. Experienced drivers, on the other hand, may only be conscious of their driving skills if it is snowing, or they have to navigate around construction work.

This definition of a skill is important when coaching a performer. For example, if you ask the question, “Can this performer consistently create a well constructed budget when the performer tries?” and the answer is yes, then the performer has one of the core skills of an administrator. The skill may not be a habit yet, but it resides in the skill repertoire of the performer. It is present to be drawn upon at will. If there is a performance problem, then, the difficulty is elsewhere, with one of the other four components of the model: traits, motivation, roles, or the socio-technical system.

Skills, of course, exist on a continuum. One of the tasks of the coach is to assess the position of the skill on the continuum. When a performer is trying her or his hardest and when the environment is not especially challenging, how skilled is this person?

Skills are applied to a challenge. Some sports integrate the challenge to the skill with an assessment of the skill in determining excellence. In diving, for example, dives are assigned different degrees of difficulty. The challenges (degree of difficulty plus execution of the dive) are then combined in the scoring. Intuitively, we understand that there is a difference between teaching English to a class of thirty-five public high school students who don’t view school as essential to their survival because of their environment, and teaching English to a class of ten college preparatory students in a private school who are striving to get good grades to meet college entrance requirements. The actual teaching skills are similar, but the challenges are very different. Ask anyone who has done both!

Skills, then, interact with challenges. As a performer I must be sufficiently progressed along the skills continuum to even interact with some challenges. For example, my serve return in tennis is not sufficient to even respond to the serves of someone like Pete Sampras. The same service return skill, though, may be sufficient to engage in a lively game of weekend doubles on my local town tennis court. The mediocre English teacher at the prep school might not last a week in the inner city high school.

To improve performance, then, we must consider both the presence or absence of a skill and the degree of mastery. We must assess the performer’s skill and then diagnose the cause of the difficulty if there is a skill problem.

Too often, people are put into learning situations when they already possess the skills that the learning situation was designed to develop. The result, of course, is a bored performer. Actually the performer may go beyond being bored to becoming cynical. The coach who made the decision to inflict this upon the performer may be viewed as incompetent, or worse, uncaring. This unfortunate situation develops when coaches don’t assess degree of mastery or don’t look
beyond skills at the other factors that affect performance. Simply, poor performance does not mean a skills deficit.

However, knowing about a skill does not mean that the person has the skill. I might be able to lecture on the intricacies of a golf swing and know everything there is to know about the dynamics and forces at work and still not be able to consistently execute a decent swing. One of the major assessment problems that coaches face is discriminating between what the performer knows, and what the performer is able to do. Performance requires possessing the skill, not knowing about the skill. Too often, though, attempts to develop skills fall into the trap that psychiatrist Fritz Perls called “aboutism.” It can be disastrous. We want a pilot to be able to fly the plane, not know about flying. Certainly pilots talk about flying, but time in the cockpit or simulator consciously working to develop skills is much more critical than time in the classroom talking about skills. It is interesting to point out that this paper, by definition, is “aboutism.” It is about developing performance rather than developing a given performance. The only way to move from “aboutism” to actual performance is by asking performers to perform, observing how they do, interacting with them about their own perceptions, creating improvement plans, and then executing those plans to solidify the performance improvement. More succinctly, to improve performance we must help people perform, not talk or write “about” performing.

The Performance Image

Fortunately, we know a great deal about developing skills. In most situations it is possible to think of skill improvement as moving through three phases: (1) image creation, (2) action generation, (3) refinement and integration. These three phases cycle and recycle as performers progress. The coach must retain awareness of the three phases and work closely with performers to understand what is taking place in the performer’s learning cycle at any given point in time.

Words become burdensome at this point. Some skills can be seen directly: a foul shot in basketball. Some skills can be heard: a cellist playing a difficult Bach passage. Some skills, though, must be inferred because they are mental processes: strategic thinking, diagnostic reasoning, idea generation. Regardless of skill, we know that it is useful if the individual has some mental picture of how the skill is supposed to be executed to be effective. This is the point at which most skill development begins.

There are a variety of ways to help a performer develop a mental image of the skill:

1. Observation The psychologist Albert Bandura has done a great deal to teach us about the importance of models. Much of the time we inhale our images of how to perform from watching others. It is an unconscious process. It can also be a conscious process in which a coach guides us through an observation process. We are told what to look for.

2. Demonstration We can have others demonstrate for us. Unlike observations, demonstrations slow the pace down and isolate all of the actions that comprise the sequence of the skill. While observations take place in real time, demonstrations take place in what might be called training time. Demonstrations can be repeated over and over again. Witness the number of videotapes on the market that demonstrate skills.
3. **Story telling** We can listen to or read about how others do it. Stories have always been used to help create mental images for learners. The stories can be told in the first person, or they can be told about a person. Again, witness the number of magazines that tell about the performances of stars whether it is a profile in *Business Week* or *Rolling Stone*. Learning theorist Roger Shank considers story telling to be critical in image formation. We can also listen to or read stories about exceptional performances. These stories focus on the performance rather than the performer. Military strategy is taught in this way. The story is about the performer, but the focus is on a given performance. To a lesser extent one finds these stories in sports and theater. These stories create both mental images and inspiration (motivation).

4. **Instruction** We can be instructed in how to execute the skill. In this approach a coach talks the performer through the action sequence. The goal is to guide the performer slowly and carefully through the generation of the action sequence. In some situations, for example when a physical skill is being taught, the coach actually moves the performer’s body into the correct positions and motions. A dance teacher moves the limbs of the student into the correct position. With cognitive skills the coach may talk the performer through the sequence: “Start to think about the different possibilities that are consistent with a rash of this kind.”

5. **Questions** The essence of the Socratic method is the well-formed question that stimulates the performer to create a mental image of the skill. This image can then be tested through trial and error. The assumption is that because the performer created the image, it will be integrated more readily than it would be if the performer obtained it through observation, demonstration, etc. This is the core idealistic/realistic debate that separated Plato and Aristotle. Discovery learning takes place with and without a coach.

6. **Experiments** Another form of discovery learning is the use of pre-planned experiments that place the performer in an active environment in which the performer must engage in search behavior to solve specific problems. As they do so they create mental images which they immediately test out, or they reach conclusions based upon their experience manipulating the environment in which they find themselves. The chemistry laboratory and the Tavistock training group use this kind of learning approach. The downside of this kind of image formation is that it is possible to generalize from very limited experience and/or reach erroneous conclusions based upon the observation of particulars. Magical thinking develops in this way. On the other hand, personal experience is very powerful and makes a strong impression on memory.

These are all important activities in developing mental images. Once the mental picture is there, performers can begin the process of trying to generate the skill. They may and,
frequently do, discover that the image they have created is inadequate and needs refinement. An iterative process takes place between the trials of the performer to generate the action and the emerging mental image of the skill. The coach recycles frequently during this process between encouraging trial generations and imaging the skill through the techniques described above.

**Action Generation** Once the performer is able to self-consciously demonstrate the skill, it is important for the person to have multiple opportunities to practice the skill and to receive immediate feedback on his or her performance. In the best of worlds, feedback is followed by an immediate opportunity to correct any skill deficit that was discovered. During this phase of skill development an experienced coach will use drills and exercises that are aimed at correcting specific deficiencies in the action chain.

**Drills** Drills are usually designed to work on one particular action or action sequence rather than the entire action chain which constitutes the skill. A drill calls for repetition of one or more of the actions in the action chain. A marching band will repeat certain movements over and over again until they become fluid.

Memorization is usually achieved through a drill-like process. It is useful to have processes and facts stored in memory for many cognitive skills. The use of the “Star” image in this paper is a device to help hold constructs in memory because it “chunks” multiple concepts into groups. A stage actor moves back and forth between understanding a character and memorization drills to, “get the lines down.” A tennis coach may have a beginner run to various spots around the court holding his or her racket back. This drill helps to imprint (physical memory) the feel of running with the racket back so the beginner will not wait until he or she is upon the ball to take this critical action.

**Exercises** An exercise is usually some activity that builds the physical, cognitive, or emotional readiness or ability to engage in the performance, or is an activity that functions as an analogue for some aspect of the performance. For example, the author John Steinbeck often began a writing session by composing a letter to a friend or family member as a way of drawing his attention to the act of writing; a warm-up exercise. He saw good writing as story telling and believed it was critical to constantly have his audience in mind. He believed that his letter writing warm-up exercise drew his attention to the presence of an audience – an analogue.

Doing scales on a piano is a device that prompts the student to move his or her fingers in a set pattern as well as tune the ear to a particular sequence of sounds. Art students are sometimes asked to paint with their opposite hand as an exercise to have them draw attention to seeing what it is they are attempting to capture on paper.

It is interesting that drills and exercises are viewed more positively in the worlds of athletics and performing arts than they are in the classroom or training room. Drills and exercises can be tedious, and yes, boring. However, rarely does a performer achieve excellence without employing them.

Drills and exercises, then, enable the performer to master the various links in the action chain so they can move beyond struggling with the parts and begin to master the skill as a whole.
with some degree of fluidity and competence. This makes it possible to derive benefit from the next phase of the skill development process.

**Practice** As we were all taught by our music teachers, what is needed to develop artistry is practice, practice, practice so the skill becomes a habit, one we can use as a basis for perfection and improvisation. Because practice calls for the execution of the entire action chain, both simulations and experience are used as challenges to the skill. When practice is done with feedback mechanisms (e.g. television, observation, etc.) it becomes possible to develop good skill habits rather than bad ones. During the process of mastery the coach continues to help the learner refine the mental image, execute the desired behavior in a self-conscious way, and then move it into habit through guided practice with feedback and repeated opportunities for correction.

The rehearsal for the budget presentation, the scrimmage, the flight simulator are all practice opportunities in which it is possible to stop the action, make corrections, and perfect the performance. Typically the action is allowed to continue in a practice environment until an improvement possibility is detected or it is clear that the skill is working effectively and repetition or continuance is no longer profitable.

**Complex Skills** With skills that are complex and used in complex environments, it is essential to utilize the same instructional practices that are used for lower order skills. For example, in training a psychotherapist it is not sufficient to have the person attend lectures and read books. Neither is it sufficient to watch videotapes of sessions and provide positive and negative feedback. We must first assure that the fledgling therapist has the appropriate mental images, and is developing the capacity for generating appropriate behavior before we can rely on feedback devices. Demonstrating or modeling the desired behavior is essential. Videotapes of masters can be shown. The performer can watch from behind a one way mirror as experienced therapists or instructors conduct sessions.

It is also possible to instruct the person (tell them what to do step by step) as they move through a complex interaction. This is the reason that some training programs for psychotherapists have the beginning therapist wear a miniature receiver in his or her ear so the trainer (from behind a one way mirror) can talk to him or her as he or she conducts a session.

Exercises can be used to assure that the new therapist understands the concepts she or he is working with. Scrimmages can be conducted with fellow novices or simulated patients. Practice is the process of perfecting. It will never stop.

To summarize, the three aspects of skill developmental are cyclical. The spiral from mental construct through action generation to practice and finally performance simply repeats itself at increasingly higher levels of complexity and excellence.
Coaching Application

**Diagnosis.** The key questions to ask are, “When this person tries to demonstrate the skill, can he or she do it?” If the answer is yes, then the skill exists in the behavioral repertoire of the individual and half the battle is over. The next question is, “Can the person demonstrate the skill consistently and self-correct when a less than adequate performance is demonstrated?” If the answer is yes, then the skill is not simply available in the repertoire of the person’s behavior, it is available at will. The next question is, “Can the person vary the execution of the skill to respond effectively to varied environments?” If the answer is yes, then the skill is developed sufficiently so the person can be said to possess it.

When the answer is no to any one of these questions, the coach and the performer can begin to explore what is actually happening and why it is ineffective. This requires observation and discussion. The unique expertise of the coach now comes into full force.

**Prescription.** If the person cannot demonstrate the behavior no matter how hard she or he tries, then it does not exist in the performer’s behavioral repertoire and the task of the coach is to develop the skill. What is called for is a process that moves from image formation through to practice and mastery. This may mean modeling or demonstration followed by instruction until the person is able to self-consciously, and often awkwardly, demonstrate the skill. It is useful during this process to have an on-going dialog with the performer so he or she learns to reflect on his or her action and his or her learning of the action. There are times when it is necessary to physically guide a person through an action. The task for the coach at this point can be broken down into two steps. Step one is to help the performer develop a mental image of the correct action. Step two is to help the performer generate the appropriate action.

Once the behavior is in the performer’s repertoire and the difficulty is with control, it is time to move to a combination of goal setting, exercises and drills, action, self-reflection and feedback. Performers can be engaged in mutual goal setting at this point because they are becoming sufficiently expert to know what they are struggling with. Instruction and modeling

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do not disappear, but the task is now to refine the awkwardness of the new skill rather than to introduce it. As the performer is increasingly able to control the skill, the nature of the conversation between coach and performer changes to collaborative problem solving, the selection or development of specific drills and exercises, feedback, and self-reflection.

Finally, once control has been established the goal is now refinement and extension into more difficult domains. The observation powers of the coach and the coach’s experience become increasingly more valuable. It is not unusual at this point for performer and coach to seriously consider how far the coach can bring the performer. The coach must have the skills to take the performer to the next stages of mastery and complexity. Because the central template of the skill is present, the task now is to adapt the skill to the strengths and weaknesses of the performer and the peculiarities of the environment in which the skill will be demonstrated. This is a very different task than introducing the performer to a new skill. It requires a different set of skills on the part of the coach. Now critical observation becomes increasingly important as does an exploration of optional approaches to the skill based upon the uniqueness of the performer and the environment. For example, voice coaches will consider the actual and potential range, timber, and power of their students and help them to use their own unique attributes.

Trials of different approaches are commonplace during this phase of skill development. The performer is typically at a level where they are capable of introducing variation into their repertoire without losing the core skill. The variation may bring about awkwardness, but it is tolerable. The coach may be looking for subtle changes in behavior that refine performance. At times the task is to correct bad habits that have developed through the constant practice of less than effective approaches.

**Maintaining Skills** Skills must be maintained. They can be lost. We talk about a person becoming “rusty” when skills are not used. Dancers must take classes on a continuous basis to maintain strength, flexibility, and precision of movement. Surgeons must perform a certain number of procedures each year to be considered proficient. Maintaining and enhancing skills doesn’t end because a performer has reached the height of his or her career. We change and our environments change. The need for adaptation is constant. While our coaches may change during our career, our need for coaching doesn’t.

**Motivation**

**Definition** Motivation is the application of energy to act in pursuit of some perceived good. Again there are several aspects of the definition that are noteworthy. First, being motivated doesn’t mean being skillful. The mother and father who rush into the water to save their child from an undertow may not be able to swim. Second, perceived good is not the same as absolute good. The overweight person exhausted at the end of the day reaches for a bar of candy because it tastes good and makes him or her feel like he or she has been rewarded for a hard day’s work. Third, thinking about doing something is not the same as being motivated to do it. The Henry James short story, *Madonna of the Future*, tells the tale of an artist who has a vision of a Madonna that he wants to paint, but he never picks up a brush: he never puts energy into action.
There are several theories of human motivation. All of them contribute something to our understanding of motivation and are therefore worthwhile mentioning. Skinner and his colleagues would have us believe that we do things based upon the rewards that we receive as a consequence of our actions. Skinner developed an elaborate construct referred to as contingencies of reinforcement. At its most basic level, behaviorism posits that when the performer makes the connection between a reward and a behavior, motivation and thus learning occurs. This approach has been used successfully in training animals and in some training of humans. With people it is successfully used in many situations to bring about desired behavior when other attempts fail. For example, behaviorism is used extensively with autistic and acting out children. On the scale of intrinsic to extrinsic motivation, behaviorism is at the far end of extrinsic motivation. Two of the biggest contributions of behaviorism are the interactional nature of motivation (organism and environment) and the stronger efficacy of positive reinforcement compared with punishment.

Maslow, on the other hand, would have us believe that we act in order to satisfy specific human needs that are the same for all of us. Maslow believed that these needs exist in a hierarchy and that we only act to satisfy a particular level of need when other, lower order needs, are already satisfied. Maslow posited that physical, survival needs come first followed by our need for safety and security. Our needs for social belonging are said to be next in the hierarchy followed by the need to satisfy our ego, our independence. Finally, Maslow believed that we have a need for self actualization, to explore the limits of our potential. Maslow’s hierarchy helps us to understand that motivation is not a fixed amount, nor a stable phenomenon. When I am sick or physically threatened, what motivates me, what is important to me, is different than when I am well and feeling safe and secure.

McLelland, another "need" motivational theorist believes that within organizations the needs for power, affiliation, and achievement are the critical needs that an organization can satisfy. He believes that people differ in their need for these “goods” and it is, therefore, important to understand the unique need configuration of the individual. Based upon this understanding, jobs can be analyzed for what kinds of needs they can satisfy and individuals can be matched to jobs or jobs changed to fit individuals. McLelland believed that it was possible to measure the strength of these different needs through survey instruments. McLelland does not see the organization as capable of responding to all needs. He also demonstrated that needs differ from individual to individual.

Freud, on the other hand, believed that there were instinctual drives in humans and that we acted because of these drives. The two dominant drives that Freud talked about were Eros and thanatos. He saw these as constructive and destructive drives, towards life or towards death. An elaborate schema has developed in psychoanalysis in an attempt to translate these drives into operational constructs that can be used to understand how people are motivated. Within this construct, the devices used by the human organism to protect or defend itself from perceived threat become critical in understanding why people are energized (motivated) to act the way they
do. Freud’s understanding of the infinite ways in which we defend our sense of self normalized actions that otherwise would appear to be irrational.

A more contemporary motivational theory was developed by a group working at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan. Vroom and Lawler have written on what they refer to as expectancy theory. Simply, we act to do something when we expect that we can take the desired action and our action will lead to a result that we value. Thus we have to see an opportunity to act, believe we can take the action, believe that the action will lead to a predictable result, and we have to believe that this result will obtain for us something that we value. This perceptual chain can be broken in a number of different places. The theory does account for variation in human values while positing a common process of perception and action. Our expectations, then, are critical within this construct. What are the performers expectations throughout this chain of perception?

Prochaska, DiClemente, and Norcross think of different stages of motivation which they refer to as the “stages of change.” In their approach, we experience motivation as existing in a variety of stages which they call pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance, and termination. They conceive of these stages as states of being and perceiving related to a given behavior. They also believe that these are not fixed stages but that people move forward and backward through the stages. They believe that this stage model applies to a wide range of human behavior and they refer to it as a transtheoretical model that draws upon and is consistent with what we have learned about motivation from many different theorists. While these stages are anything but fixed, the contribution of this theory is that performers don’t move from thinking about something to acting on it. There are intermediate stages. Progress from one stage to another is still progress.

Miller and Rollnick believe that motivation is not purely intrinsic. They view it as relational in nature. For example, most of us have had the experience of working hard for a teacher in one scholastic year and then not working for a different teacher the following year. The subject matter may remain relatively constant. We haven’t changed all that much. But our relationship with our teacher changed dramatically. These findings about the relational nature of motivation are critical and will be addressed more specifically in the discussion of the sociotechnical system later in this paper. The power of relationship in the motivation of the performer is a critical finding and speaks directly to the importance of the coach and the coach’s behavior.

Bandura, believes that self-efficacy is the dominant force behind motivation: If I believe that I can do something that I want to do I am more likely to act (be motivated) than if I feel like I can’t do it. Bandura, therefore, holds self-perception as an important construct and sees learning as a social phenomenon in which we are constantly scanning our environment to learn what works and doesn’t work from models who come into our world. We relate ourselves to these models as a method of self assessment and decision making about what we are willing to do and not do. In this way Bandura thinks of motivation as social in formation, but as ultimately perceptual.
Deci and Ryan have articulated a theory of motivation which they call self-determination theory. Autonomy, competency, and relationship are the three key ingredients in their way of thinking. They point out that it is important to look at not only the source of motivation, but the kind of motivation. They are at the opposite pole from the behaviorists. Deci and Ryan believe that intrinsic sources of motivation are the most compelling. They believe that there is an intrinsic force within the person that moves towards health and wholeness. Motivation can be blocked by internal and external factors; it can also be released.

Expectancy theory, favored by this author, incorporates some, but not all, of these theoretical constructs. For example, one task of the coach working from the perspective of expectancy theory, is to convince the person that s/he has an opportunity to act, and can take the action. This is done through encouragement, by pointing out the successes of others, by demonstrating the action, and by supporting trial behavior. The coach must also help the person to see the relationship between the action and the results.

There is a wonderful story of two groups of middle-school students who were brought to a bowling alley for an afternoon. One group was told that they could bowl for free, but every time the ball was half way down the alley a curtain dropped so they couldn't see what happened. After awhile they lost all interest in bowling. They couldn't establish a linkage between their actions and results. Meanwhile, another group of students who did get feedback continued to bowl. It is interesting to examine this scenario from the standpoint of the various theories mentioned above. While they would use different explanations, none would be surprised that the kids stopped bowling.

Finally, the coach must assure that the results lead to something that we truly value. This is idiosyncratic. For example, I travel a great deal. If you say to me that there is a chance to go for a long weekend to San Francisco to work on a project, I am not going to be very enthused. I can see the opportunity to purchase a ticket, I know how to arrange for a trip, I believe that the airplane will get me there, but I don’t want to go. Someone else might be absolutely delighted. I have been to San Francisco many times. Yes, I enjoy it, but I'd rather stay home with my friends and family because I travel more than I want to. A person who does not travel much and has a sense of wanderlust might see such a trip as an answer to their prayers and would be willing to go at the drop of a hat. Results are not enough; they must be valued by the individual.

My colleague Maysel Kemp White and I have tried to simplify these various approaches to motivation into a couple of key concepts which we call the conviction/confidence model. We believe that motivation does take place within a relational context. Our premises are:

1. A performer is most likely to be motivated within a supportive environment in which the performer believes that the coach is interested in helping him or her achieve something of value to the performer and is willing to work hard to help the performer achieve the goal. Without this relational environment, motivation will be inhibited.
2. The performer must be convinced that the action will lead to a result that is in the best interest of the performer. The performer must choose this performance and the performance level because the performer believes it is in his or her best interest.
They must be convinced, have conviction, that the course of action makes sense to him or her.

3. The performer must have confidence that he or she can achieve a satisfactory level of mastery if he or she is to be motivated to perform. The performer has to experience mastery and causality if the performer is to experience self-efficacy. The performer must have confidence that they can do what is necessary to achieve the desired result.

The combination of these two factors yields four possibilities. We find that there are emotional states that tend to be associated with each possibility. Consequently, these emotional responses can be useful to the coach in helping to understand the underlying dynamics that are present.

The coach, then, must work to understand several things about their performers. The coach must understand the performer’s values. It presents a real challenge to an organization whether it is a basketball team, a global corporation, or a cast of a musical. What are rewards to one person are not necessarily rewards to another. Fortunately, we know that people are drawn to organizations where there are rewards that they value. Still, the coach must be open to a discussion of values and help the person realistically appraise the situation.

Rewards are often delayed. One of the tasks for a coach, then, is to keep the rewards present for the performers through anticipation if not actuality. Encouraging and supporting delay of gratification and discipline are coaching responsibilities. To be motivated the performer must be convinced that engaging in specific actions is in their best interest.
We hear about coaches getting their teams “up” for a game or a director getting a cast “up” for a performance. Confidence is critical. The coach can help to instill confidence that success is possible.

**Coaching Application**

**Diagnosis** To investigate the motivation of the performer the coach has to establish a relationship with the performer that contains sufficient rapport for the performer to accurately report to the coach how the performer sees the world. If this kind of relationship does not exist, the performer will be tempted to tell the coach what the performer thinks that the coach wants to hear. If this rapport exists, the coach can explore the motivational dynamics at work within the performer. Diagnostically, then, is the relationship sufficiently developed so that the performer tells the coach things that the coach was hoping did not exist?

**Conviction** The first factor the coach has to consider is the level of conviction present within the performer that the target performance is important to the performer. This can be asked directly and can be asked in a numerical manner. “On a scale of one to ten, how important is it to you to master the filing system?” If the performer answers from an intrinsic base (“It is a real challenge and I’d like to do it well; I’d give it an eight) there is a greater likelihood of sustained motivation present then if the person answers from an extrinsic base (I know you want me to do it and to do it well; so I’ll give it an eight).

Another factor that has to be considered can be called the consequential chain. It, too, will affect conviction. Simply, “How convinced is the performer that action “A” will lead to result “B” which is consistent with value “C?” If the performer thinks that the action will not lead to the result, the internal assessment will be “Why bother?” If the result is not one that the performer values, the internal assessment will be, “I don’t care.”

So, the kind of motivation, intrinsic or extrinsic, and the chain of expectancies will both come together to determine the performer’s conviction that doing something is in the performer’s best interest. This can only be discovered by talking about it and asking questions and listening carefully to the performer’s assessment.

**Confidence** The second diagnostic factor that must be considered is the performer’s confidence that the performer can engage in and eventually obtain a level of mastery that is sufficient to produce the desired results: self-efficacy. This also can be approached directly if the performer and coach have an open relationship in which trust and rapport are present: “On a scale of one to ten, how confident are you that you can do this?” Notice that the confidence is in taking the action, not in the entire expectancy chain. For example, I am confident that I can pick up a hammer and nail and hit the nail with the hammer. But I may not be at all convinced (conviction) that I can penetrate this steel wall with the nail (result) and I don’t care whether I do or not anyway (value). So, I can have high confidence and low conviction.

Or, I may think it is critical to put a hole through this steel wall so we can attach a thermostat to the wall and get the air conditioning started. It is extremely hot. I am uncomfortable. I really want to get the air conditioning working, but I don’t believe I am strong
enough, or the nail hard and sharp enough, to do the job. So I am frustrated and I don’t see any reason to even try. So I have high conviction and low confidence.

The diagnostic tasks, then, are to create a relationship marked by rapport, work to understand the world the way the performer sees it, and assess the degree of conviction and confidence present in the performer.

**Prescription** Conviction and confidence can be increased through collaborative dialogue and planning between coach and performer. There are several ways to increase confidence:

1. Remind the performer of successes that the performer has had in the past, especially when things looked bleak. Emphasize the resources that the performer called upon to be successful during those times.

2. Emphasize the autonomy of the performer to choose to take on this challenge or not to take it on. Sometimes the autonomy is in the attitude that the performer can choose to adopt. The psychologist Viktor Frankle has taught us that what helped prisoners in the concentration camps during the Holocaust to survive was the attitude that they chose. They found something of meaning at a deep personal level to live for.

3. Encourage the performer to take “doable” steps that are likely to lead to success. Most tasks are not binary in nature (you do or you don’t). Instead forward movement can be broken down into smaller steps that lead in a direction. Getting moving is often the biggest challenge.

Conviction can also be addressed by the coach. Most people are ambivalent about situations that are challenging. The dilemma, by its very nature, has pros and cons with either approach.

1. The coach can acknowledge the dilemma and support the performer’s right to have the dilemma. The dilemma can be voiced: “It sounds like the way you are seeing this you are caught between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand if you take on this challenge it could really excite you and might even lead to a promotion. On the other hand, it would mean a spending a lot of extra time here at work and you are concerned that your family would suffer because of it. I can understand why you aren’t totally convinced that taking it on is in your best interest. Let’s talk about each side of the dilemma a bit and see how things might be different.”

2. Sometimes conviction can be increased by providing the performer with information, new information. Repeating old information over and over again is not helpful. In fact it is disrespectful and usually leads to a poor outcome—the coach is selling a bill of goods. In providing new information it is best to ask the performer’s permission: “Would you like to learn more about the bonus structure and how it might affect you in the years ahead?”

3. A performer may have fallen into a trap in which the actions that the performer is taking are not consistent with the performer’s goals. Continuously discussing the goals and assuring that they remain “top of mind” and then assessing the consistency or inconsistency between the performer’s actions and the goals may surface disjointed
thinking. It is possible that the goals are not goals that the performer really cares about. Or, the action plan and thus the actions may be inappropriate to the goals.

4. Values exist in hierarchies. Frequently performers have not clarified how their values fit together so they are unable to decide upon the trade-offs and sacrifices that are always necessary. The coach can talk through the value hierarchies with the performer and help the performer to do an analysis of the performer’s values so that some decisions can be made. Asking direct questions is important: “Tell me which is more important to you “A” or “B.”

Motivation is not something that exists in a person like a trait that is immutable. It is intimately linked to the performer’s perception of the world and the performer’s perception of self. It is also related to the interpersonal environment that exists between performer and coach. All three of these are subject to change and are within the province of the coaching relationship.

**Traits and Talents**

**Definition** A trait is a stable predisposition of the individual which influences how she or he perceives and acts upon his or her environment. Similar to a trait, a talent is a predisposition to be able to perform certain behaviors exceptionally well. Traits and talents can often be recognized at an early age. The child prodigy is given a great deal of recognition for demonstrating talent at an exceptionally young age. Parents discriminate between children who are outgoing as babies and those who are not. Traits and talents are the tendencies and abilities that someone is born with.

**Traits** Some traits are genetic in nature. Eye color and height, for example, are probabilities directly affected by our biological parents. Some traits seem to be less controlled by genetics: for example, sociability. Nevertheless, they appear early in the development process and are stable throughout the life span of the individual.

The minute we begin to discuss traits and talents the nurture/nature controversy immediately comes to mind. Some theorists believe that it is a specious conflict. They resolve the argument with an analogy. They liken traits and talents to a canal that water might flow through. There are banks to the canal. Yet there is room for a boat to move within the canal. Using this concept of canalization, they are able to easily combine the two constructs without losing the power of either. For example, intelligence is a trait. While testing will sometimes show different scores over time, measures of intelligence are quite stable. Viewing intelligence from the perspective of canalization, when we are born our intelligence is established (nature) within a range, the canal. Nurture then comes along and through experience positions our intellectual abilities within that potential range. If we have had an intellectually challenging environment with a lot of support for and experience with intellectual tasks it is likely that measures of our intellectual abilities will place us at the high end of the range, closer to one bank of the canal rather than the other. An environment deficient in intellectual stimulation and support would lead us to arrive at the opposite bank of the canal.
As a way of expanding our concept of intelligence as a trait, Gardner has articulated a theory of multiple intelligences which includes such abilities as athletics, aesthetic pursuits, etc. While this expands the way we think of intelligence, it doesn’t mitigate against the presence of ranges or canals. Instead, it recognizes that athletic and aesthetic talents also exist within the range provided by nature. Nurture then brings specificity to the trait or talent.

We see tendencies in the human physiology as well. If several people in your immediate family have had coronary artery disease at an early age, it is more likely that you will have the disease as well. However, nurture can have something to say about it: diet, exercise, and stress management. The canal analogy is a useful construct, then, to understand how nature and nurture operate within the individual.

The University of Minnesota studies of twins have provided us with a great deal of information about traits and talents. Twins separated at or shortly after birth and raised in different environments emerge years later with amazing similarities: jobs, interests, even personalities of spouses. The similarities are much stronger than with non-twinned siblings. These studies have helped us to understand the various contributions of nature and nurture and what we can call a trait or a talent and what is learned behavior.

In some organizational venues, trait testing has been done extensively. Perhaps no trait measuring device has been used more frequently than the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI). Using just one of the scales, introversion/extroversion, research on the MBTI has demonstrated how stable this trait is over time. Introverts at one extreme of the scale are not likely to ever become extroverts at the other end of the scale. Taking it another step, some organizations have assessed the traits of their top performers and attempted to create trait profiles of these individuals. They then use testing devices like the MBTI to screen candidates in an attempt to identify and select those candidates whose type profiles most closely match the top performers. However, variance among top performers and lack of predictability have challenged but not eliminated the use of this approach. On the other hand, occupational groups definitely demonstrate a preponderance of one type profile over another. For example, and staying with the MBTI, you will find more extroverts than introverts among social directors on cruise ships.

One of the nasty truths about traits is that they do matter. This conflicts with some cherished values: egalitarianism and self-reliance. As a result, testing people usually add a caveat “You find successful people with a wide variety of profiles.” While true, what is missing from this statement is that there is usually a preponderance of a given range among successful people in a given performance arena. For example, while there may be some lawyers who have been successful who have intellectual abilities that score below 100 when measured by conventional IQ tests, they are rare. While some passive people have probably been successful leaders, it is not as likely that they will emerge as successful leaders as assertive performers.

**Interests and Values** Interests and values are also stable over time although they are not quite as fixed as traits. They can also be critical in predicting successful performance. For example, studies have shown that effective high school teachers are fascinated with their subject, scrupulously fair in their dealings with their students, and gain satisfaction from the success of
their students. The high school teacher who doesn’t care about the subject he or she is teaching, has favorites in the classroom, and is more interested in his or her own success and centrality than that of the students is not going to do too well. Intuitively, we know that changing interests (from not caring about physics to being fascinated with physics), and changing core value systems like fairness, and reward structures is not too likely. There is debate about the source of interests and values. We do know that they are stable. The twin studies have shown the power of genes to influence them. However, we also see them influenced by parenting and social environment. It is probably, best, therefore, to consider the canalization construct as the best paradigm to use in understanding how nature and nurture interact to influence interests and values.

**Talents** While similar to traits in some ways, we use the word talent to describe competencies. The unhappy truth is, no matter what I do by way of practice and instruction, I will never have the voice of Pavorotti or the athletic ability of Michael Jordan. We recognize talent as a matter of course in athletics and the performing arts. It is also possible, though, to see talents manifest themselves in other spheres. Some people believe that entrepreneurship is a talent and that it manifests itself quite early in life. One piece of evidence for this is that efforts to train entrepreneurs have been unsuccessful. Similarly, one sibling learns languages easily with a minimum of study while their sibling works endless hours with little to show for it by way of language competence.

In an egalitarian society we often don’t want to admit that traits and talents exist. Equal opportunity gets confused with equal ability. The downside of this misunderstood egalitarianism is that the wrong people get hired for jobs and children are pushed into activities that they don’t like and don’t succeed at. The intuitive truth about traits and talents is ignored leading to an Alice-in-Wonderland world in which authorities make proclamations that we can be and do anything we want to. Sometimes the opposite attitude causes problems. Decision makers place too much confidence in trait and talent measurements that assumes absolutely fixed and specific capacities and ignores the influence of environment to shape where in the canal we find ourselves swimming, or that we can swim.

A coach, then, must try to clarify what the limits are, the canal banks, of the person he or she is working with for each of the specific traits or talents that are critical to the performance that is being asked for. Individual coaching plans then take on a new meaning.

Pat Riley is certainly one of the most successful basketball coaches of all time. One of the first things he did when he took over the New York Knicks was to change the way feedback was provided. Rather than comparing team members with one another, he gave them data based upon their own performances. The goal was not to be better than the next person, but to realize and increase one's personal best. The player was taught to stretch within his own canal.

One coach I know looks first and foremost for athletic ability. He believes that he can teach someone the skills. He feels he has to have the raw talent to begin with. He views selection as the critical task and spends a great deal of time observing candidates in different
settings doing different things. His focus, though, is on potential rather than existing performance capability.

**Coaching Applications**

**Diagnosis** The most common way of approaching selection is through profiling. We must answer three questions.

1. What are the traits and talents common to excellent performers?
2. How can we measure these traits and talents in a predictable way?
3. Can we use these devices to screen candidates so we know the people we hire have the raw material with which to be successful?

This is a multiple step process with possibilities for error during each step of the process. Are we sure we have accurately identified what contributes to excellence? How valid and reliable are the measuring devices we are using? Do our measuring devices work with the people we are screening and can we use them legally and ethically? Because these questions can become so sticky, organizations are not hesitant to use others to do this task for them or to use surrogate measurements.

Mechanisms like the use of academic degrees, grades, and attendance at specific academic institutions are often used as surrogates. The assumption is made that specific schools attract people with certain kinds of traits, that grades at these schools give evidence of traits of intelligence and persistence, and that the choice of a major demonstrates a stable interest. Some management consulting firms only recruit MBAs from a small number of business schools. This practice has gotten them in trouble some of the time. For example, sociability may not be a valued trait by the schools; but it is by clients. By ignoring the social skills of their recruits these firms made a mistake in identifying the traits that top performers needed. They hired super bright people who made their clients angry because arrogance.

Medical education has experienced the same problem. The selection, the schooling, and the training of physicians focuses on intellectual abilities. Healing, though, requires an interpersonal relationship between physician and patient that involves trust, empathy, and the capacity to obtain and provide information in a manner that is understandable to patient and physician alike. As one dean put it, we are set up to train scientists not doctors.

Traits and talents pose two problems for the coach. The first is the impact of expectancy on performance. If the coach assumes the canal has one shape, he or she will coach for that shape. This may be too limiting or too demanding for the performer. Either can create stress for the performer. The expectancy studies of Rosenthal and his colleagues have shown the way expectancy can yield behavior regardless of the capacities that are present in the performer. Accuracy, then, is key. This requires data, observation skills and imagination on the part of the coach. The right traits and talents must be identified and ways developed to detect their presence in the individual performer.

Second, it puts the emphasis on selection and placement rather than correction. It is impossible to instill raw talent in someone, the coaching job is to recognize it. However, it is
often the case that a person may be screened for one position and found wanting, but may be exactly right for another position requiring different things. Or, a role can be built around an individual. The diagnostic task, then is not stop with the question, “Does this person have what it takes?” but to also ask, “What does this person have?”

**Prescription** The first step is to simply analyze top performers and work to identify the traits and talents possessed by these people recognizing that the larger the pool, the better the chances of doing an effective job of identification. The second step is to figure how these traits and talents can be identified among candidates. Measurement expense comes into play. Paper and pencil tests are cheaper than simulations. Simulations are cheaper than watching people in action on their own turf.

Selection can be made based not only on the presence or absence of a trait, but upon an assessment of the degree to which the individual has reached his or her potential within that trait. The concept of canalization helps us to understand the goal. How far will this person be able to stretch? Maturation also comes into play, especially with young performers. How will they develop with time?

Adaptation is possible. It is work, but usually necessary. How can a performer adapt to make up for the absence of a trait or for being marginal with a particular talent? A superintendent of schools once reported to me that he was a closet introvert and had to push himself to perform at public gatherings. He said that he used a mind game. He pretended he was the host of a party for all of the people who were present at a gathering and he imagined that they felt as awkward as he did being there. His task was to welcome them and make them feel at home. He said that it worked. I never did ask him who helped him develop this adaptive strategy.

Finally, it is important to move beyond selection as the only concern and consider placement as well.

**Roles**

**Definition** A role is a collection of predictable and inter-related behaviors exhibited by an individual (or a group) that affects another individual(s) or group(s). There are several elements in this definition that need exploration. First, when we discuss a person's role we must talk about behavior not intentions, labels or values. A person may intend to "parent," may be called a “parent,” may value "parenting," but may not exhibit the behaviors that instruct, protect, and nurture a child. Such a person is not carrying out the role of parent. His or her child is not parented.

This is a critical concept in the definition. The use by an individual or by others of the descriptive label, "parent," does not mean that parenting is taking place. A role is a collection of actual behaviors that one can predict will occur and thus "count on." A role is not a label, an intention, or a value.

A role is not one behavior. It is a group of behaviors and these behaviors are related to one another. The actions are bound together by some purpose. In this way a role contributes a function to a social system. There is purposefulness to role behavior even though the role taker
and members of the role system may disagree about the desirability, description, and effectiveness of the role being enacted. In fact, the purposefulness of the role may escape all members of the role system. In family dynamics an acting-out child is often unconsciously serving a systemic purpose: acting as a magnet for attention and energy, thus preventing mom and dad from examining a faltering marriage and choosing to change the marital system.

Because a role affects others, it stimulates others to act and thus a role system (a social system) is formed. For example, I drive up to a toll gate on a highway and give the toll collector my money. The toll collector responds by reaching out to take the money. Once the toll collector gives me my change I drive away. Predictable interactions have taken place in which we are both role takers in a role system. If instead of handing the toll collector money I presented a flower, it would disrupt the role system and confuse the collector. In retrospect, much of the turmoil of the 1960’s in this country was built around the disruption of roles.

A role provides predictability. We expect a person to behave in specific ways when he or she assumes a role. At a holiday party I attended a middle-aged man became dizzy and passed out. Many of us were afraid he had experienced a heart attack. Fortunately, he quickly regained consciousness and claimed he was fine. He wouldn't hear of going to a doctor. Shortly afterward another guest, a physician, arrived at the party and examined him. While all of this was taking place, another guest at the party, also a physician, stood in the background as a spectator. I was surprised and offended by the spectator physician's inaction. I expected the behavior of the "Good Samaritan" physician. My sense of a physician's role includes being the Good Samaritan. Note, I had cast the spectator physician (an obstetrician) in the role. My casting, though, was of no consequence. All that mattered was her actual behavior.

Another example may help to clarify the importance of predictability in understanding roles. I used to tell my teenage son, "I expect you to take out the garbage without being asked." I "cast" him in the role of self-initiating garbage taker-outer. The truth is I would have been surprised if he took the garbage out without being reminded to do so. His lack of initiation stimulated me to remind him. The result was a role system in which I was the "reminder" and he was the "hauler." I could predict that he would take it out when reminded. He could predict that I would remind him. These were the roles we actually assumed. Again, my "casting" aspirations didn't mean much. Similarly, most advocacy groups “remind” agencies and institutions of what their roles are supposed to be.

It is important to discriminate between the role we want people to assume (our intention), the role they say they will assume (their intention), and the actual role they carry out. Again, roles are collections of predictable behaviors, not intentions, labels or values.

When a person doesn't carry out a role we are surprised. We are usually surprised for one of two reasons. The person may do something new or different (outside the behavioral parameters predicted for the role). An executive director of a non-profit organization was surprised when the new board president began to show up at staff meetings. No other president had done that. Or, the surprise may come when a person doesn't do something that is expected. A vice president of sales was surprised when a new salesperson didn't file expense reports so she
could be reimbursed. Our experience of surprise and prediction are better indicators of the true nature of a role system than labels, stated intentions, values, or casting aspirations.

Our ability to predict the behavior of another enables us to focus on other things. Thus, a role system is more than a collection of interactions. It also enables action. Because I could count on my son to haul the garbage when reminded, I was free to take on a role totally independent of him -- like writing a paper. Our role system not only prompted me to behave in certain ways, it allowed me to take on other roles in my life.

Enabling others to act may cause interdependence as well as independence. The staff in the financial management department of a consulting organization is responsible (the company counts on them) for getting the billing out. Members of the department can't do this until they receive time sheets from the consultants. The staff must "count on" the organization's consultants to communicate their billable time. The actions of the professional staff enable the financial management department to act. True interdependence exists.

It is this "counting on" others that leads to issues of accountability. As we raise issues of accountability we find ourselves making judgments. Roles, then, lead to accountability and accountability leads to judgments. Shoulds, oughts, rights, wrongs, and musts become considerations. The behavioral definition of a role does not eliminate the ethical dimensions of the role. Ethical judgments are made. I judged the spectator physician to be a "bad" Samaritan even though I was the one who had cast her in the role.

Although the intensity of role awareness shifts from system to system, the following dynamic is always present. By agreeing to take on a role, to behave in specific ways, we accept responsibility for a function within the system. This function empowers others to act in ways that are in their self-interest or the collective interest of the system. If we do not act as we have agreed to, we are "irresponsible" (not responding according to role). Our irresponsibility limits the capacity of others to pursue their interests. Our actions or inaction affects them and they judge our behavior to be right/wrong, good/bad, ethical/unethical.

Because roles are reciprocal, our acceptance of responsibility also entitles us to pursue our self-interest. We demand certain behaviors in return, certain "rights." These are in our self-interest. If others act in ways inconsistent with our rights, they take away from our self-interest. Ethics, fundamentally, is the concern for right and wrong in how we treat one another. There is no way to enter into an examination of roles, role problems, and strategies for resolving role problems without recognizing the ethical context that is present. This ethical context is one reason why role problems have the capacity to generate such intense emotional responses.

It is within this highly charged context that the coach takes on the task of being the role expert. Through a variety of mechanisms, it is up to the coach to understand, communicate, clarify, and rectify all of the problems associated with roles. This requires a profound understanding of the nature of roles.

The Origins of a Role Role taking occurs through several different processes. Understanding the origins of a particular role can help us discover how a role problem has developed and how to approach resolving the difficulty. Fortunately, coaches are often in a
position to shape the formation of the roles which he or she will be working with. Following are some examples of attempts to form roles.

*Contracting* The project would take different members of the team to the Southwest for an extended period of time. Only two members of the team had worked together before. The other six members were strangers. Their skills were different in some areas but there were as many overlaps as there were differences.

The team met for two days to develop their roles. The meeting began by clarifying the mission of the project. Ultimately, what had to happen? This was broken down into tasks that would have to be undertaken if the project was to be completed successfully. Team members were then asked to articulate their own interests in the various tasks as well as their areas of expertise. As this process unfolded the question was asked again and again: "What should we count on you for?"

Some tasks were assigned to sub-groups -- a pair would be counted on to complete a task. Organizational tasks were also identified: leadership, feedback, problem-solving, monitoring of morale, resolving conflicts, distributing resources, and initiating improvements, etc. These tasks were assigned -- some to individuals, some to sub-groups, and some to the team as a whole. By the end of the two days every member of the team was asked to write out his or her contract with the team. The entire team then reviewed all of the contracts. Was anyone's plate too full? Were any talents not being used? Were any tasks overlooked? Did everyone feel that tasks were distributed fairly? Checkpoints were agreed upon at which time the contracts would be reviewed.

In two days a coach had managed a process in which an organization was created that could move effectively, respond to individual and mission needs, apply resources appropriately and adapt once the work began. It was clearly an "intentional" organization, a designed system. Role contracts were established for both mission and maintenance tasks.

Too often organizations act as though job descriptions are sufficient to clarify and communicate a role. It is misplaced confidence. Job descriptions do not address many of the most critical role issues. Typically, job descriptions confine themselves to "output" tasks. However, interpersonal behavior, expressed attitudes, etc. also define an individual's role. For example, an item in a teacher’s job description may say, "Communicates with parents." This doesn't indicate whether the communication is to be high pressure or low pressure. There is a vast range of possibilities between these poles. For the strategy of the organization to be implemented and for the culture of the school to be enhanced, the teacher must have the role more clearly defined. Similarly, some organizations thrive on a culture that includes rolled up shirt sleeves, first names, open doors, and easy confrontation. Other organizations choose to be more buttoned up in their approach. These issues influence the role a person takes since the role of "culture maintainer" is constant. (An organization rarely hires a culture breaker -- at least consciously.)
Role requirements also exist for team contributions: training and developing others, team building, etc. Rarely, though, do job descriptions move beyond work tasks. Still, there is a vast array of social system tasks that are critical to harmonious role development.

The job description, then, is too weak a vehicle to provide more than one component of a role contract. While the complete role contract need not be written down, it must be articulated, understood, agreed upon, and reinforced. Face to face meetings among the participants of the role system are required to accomplish this.

As with learning skills, roles must be learned: “What is expected of me?” Some of the techniques that are used to develop skills can also be used to develop roles. However, the emphasis is shifted towards expectations. Sometimes the shift is quite subtle.

As job descriptions are too weak to contain the actuality of a role, so are labels. Saying that someone is the guard on the basketball team does little to explain what the role actually entails for this player on this team. Plays, players, history, coach all combine to generate expectations for the role that vary greatly from team to team. Watching some old game films of a predecessor will clarify more than the label.

Modeling Chip off the old block," "mentor," "coach," etc. are but a few of the much used words giving witness to the power of modeling in the development of a role. Humans are imitators. It is a time saving way to learn. It is also a way to learn that is relatively safe. We observe how someone else has survived in the situation and we do likewise. It saves us from many lumps.

Modeling takes place in different ways. We may watch what another person does and try to copy the behavior. "Watch me!" may be a spoken or unspoken demand. The observation may be from afar followed by hours spent imitating the model. Thousands of young people have learned to dance by watching T.V. The observation can be up close -- a boy watches his older brother play a video game and then copies his moves, his grimaces and his grunts.

We may be instructed by another. The instruction can be formal or informal. Informally, the instruction can be in the form of stories and histories. The model tells stories directly to us, and/or we may overhear the model telling stories to his or her peers. An intern listens to the stories of the second year residents. More formally, the instruction may come through demonstration, explanation, and guided exploration.

We may get both positive and negative feedback from the model. The model may tell us how learning takes place: "You can learn a lot through doing this.” "I don't think anyone ever learned anything doing that." Sometimes we rebel and the role development takes place through a conscious decision not to act like the model.

The contribution of the model is especially powerful if the model is someone we are dependent upon (e.g. a parent), a person we love, or someone for whom we have a great deal of respect. In all three instances our own sense of self-worth becomes associated with the model and this individual has enormous power to influence our behavior.

The power of role modeling can also cause difficulties. The role taker may not be aware of his or her own boundaries relative to the model. First, the influence of the role model may be
so pervasive that it inhibits the active deliberation of the role taker. Components of the role may be accepted without question. The junior associate in the law firm never questions the workaholic behavior of the partner and just assumes that this is what life as a lawyer is all about.

Second, the role taker often sees the role model survive, but may not see the model struggle and fall. A partial role may be learned. A young salesman quit after his fifth month because of a poor sales record. He couldn't understand why he was doing so badly compared with the sales manager who had trained him. He had only seen the sales manager excel with clients who had been developed over years. He never witnessed the beginning stages of client development.

Third, the model may be significant, a survivor, and a success in the eyes of the role taker, but less than adequate using objective criteria. The role model may not be competent, simply available. The mother of an acting-out teenager could not understand what was going wrong. She was treating her son just as her mother had treated her. She had never associated her own difficulties as a teenager with the behavior of her mother.

Even with these potential problems, it is through modeling that most of our role development takes place. Life would be more difficult without it. Every coach must acknowledge and utilize this influence. At times it is an awesome power and responsibility.

**Exploring** There are times when a role model is not available and members of the role system are inadequate to enter into a contractual process because of an equal lack of familiarity with the role. The role taker has to become a role maker. The coach can enter into an on-going dialogue as the two of them forge the role together.

It is not unusual for this situation to exist in an innovative setting that has no history with a given role. During the early days of the Peace Corps many volunteers found themselves in situations where their stateside training was inappropriate for the setting in which they found themselves; and, the communities in which they were working had no experience to utilize in helping the volunteers develop their roles. There were no models. Roles had to be developed in a void.

Role making calls upon the performer and the coach to build a hypothesis, test it, pay attention to feedback, and adapt until they have arrived at a cluster of behaviors that produces the desired impact on others and satisfies the individual. In this kind of situation the "purpose" or "function" of the role is as fluid as the behaviors. There is no clear cut "mission" to use in defining tasks. History and guidelines don't exist. Throughout the process the role maker and coach enter into a behavioral dialog with others, acting and reacting, risking and evaluating, initiating and adapting. The goal is to discover a group of behaviors others want to count on the role maker to demonstrate again and again. These actions must also satisfy the role maker's needs and values.

**Some Human Concerns** It was several years ago. I was washing the car when the two five year olds and one six year old walked up to me and asked where my daughter was. I told them she was at a birthday party and would be home later. They asked if they could
play on Sarah's swing set. I said sure. Turning around and walking towards the swings I heard the six year old add credibility to my permission, "It's O.K., that's Sarah's daddy."

I wasn't Vaughn Keller, I was a role -- Sarah's Daddy. I could be expected to act in certain ways and had certain rights and privileges (as well as responsibilities) as a consequence of my role. Most important to these three, my role included the authority to say "yes" or "no" to their use of the swing set. These three were relating to my role, not to me. They could have cared less about my needs, values, dreams, struggles, etc. Our relationship didn't include that content. I wasn't supposed to tell them about any of that and they weren't going to worry about it.

A role excludes as well as includes. Consequently, role problems may emerge from what is excluded as well as what is included. One possible result of the exclusionary process is its impact on our awareness and sensitivity to the totality of the other as a person. The role may be defined so narrowly that we overlook the humanity of another. Human caring may be excluded from the role. In organizations, families, and communities these boundaries are the cause of many disputes. Should an employee "count on" an employer to pay an equitable wage without being forced to? Should an employer "count on" an employee to report problems when they occur? Should the mother and father of a retarded child "count on" the community to help with special education for their child? Should a patient expect his/her physician to be empathic? The questions around roles are endless and probe our deepest understandings of the human condition. Always, the questions of boundaries are present: What is included and excluded from the role? What does it mean when a man talks about "the wife?" What is included and excluded?

In our attempt to promote performance of the highest caliber we can abstract roles to the loftiest levels of generalization and miss the flesh and blood drama taking place before our eyes.

I sat with a colleague on the commuter train going to New York City and listened as he discussed a consulting project he was working on. He and his firm were helping to reorganize a Fortune 500 company. They were changing the role structure of the organization. The outcome would be lost jobs, uprooted families, and a great deal of anxiety for several senior executives. The goal was to create a role structure that would be more efficient and less costly. Our level of discussion was in the stratosphere of organizational functions and market positioning. It was conceptually exciting and valid.

My colleague claimed he was "rationalizing" the structure. What was missing was an appreciation of the importance of the roles to the people who would be losing them. That was dismissed with an off handed comment, "Of course we’ll provide out placement services for those people."

From Freud to the present, psychologists have studied the nature of human happiness, satisfaction, and contentment. Consistently two themes emerge: work and relationships. As human beings we need some degree of satisfaction in each to be content. Roles involve both since they include the work people take on and the relationships they form. Both may be highly significant. My colleague was not simply juggling a role structure to make it more efficient and
cost effective, he was juggling with the meaning in people's lives. He was juggling with their happiness. He remarked, with a laugh, "There are going to be a lot of unhappy people because of this." Obviously no one, including him, was "counting on" him to worry about people's misery as a result of his actions.

The conclusion is simple. The meaning and happiness we derive in our lives is associated with the roles we assume. A role system can provide meaning or misery or something in between. In working with roles we are tinkering with the stuff of life. Coaches need to keep this in mind as they confront role problems.

**Diagnosis and Prescription**

Six kinds of role problems can be identified. As with the analysis of any dynamic phenomena, the process of classification has as much power to obscure as it does to clarify. It is necessary, though, to create categories so we can bring some precision to the investigation.

The word “performer” will again be used to label the role taker or role maker in the following discussion. Using performer helps keep our attention focused on behavior and off the label assigned to the role (i.e., lawyer, teacher, etc.) In all cases, the role of the coach is critical in resolving the problems.

**PROBLEM ONE: Role Confusion, or, "What do you want from me anyway?"

Role confusion creates a void. The performer simply does not know what others in the role system want him or her to do. What will please the others? What will displease them? The performer doesn't know how others perceive him or her. What are they counting on him or her to do? The performer is standing on a stage without a script. The other performers and audience wait for lines and actions that are unknown to the performer. Several dysfunctional behaviors may emerge:

- The performer scrambles all over the place trying to find something to do without any sense of priorities or linkages.
- The performer trespasses onto other people's turf, causing embarrassment, negative responses, and sometimes conflict.
- The performer puts all of his/her energies into associated but marginal tasks: getting equipment, meeting people, etc.
- The performer hides from others trying to "psyche out" the situation before he or she gets involved.

It is critical to discriminate between honest role confusion and three other possibilities that are often called role confusion but are not.
1. Role confusion is not role disagreement. Often people state that there is role confusion when there is really role disagreement. Handling disagreement makes them more tense than handling confusion so they say they are confused. This is important because disagreement and confusion call for different resolution strategies.

2. Role confusion is not a lack of motivation or initiative. With role confusion the performer honestly doesn't know what to do. It has nothing to do with interest, energy, or motives.

3. Role confusion is not a lack of skill. Sometimes a performer who is not confident of his or her skills, or who knows he or she is in a role beyond his or her capacity will claim role confusion. Again, role confusion can be real, but it is different from a lack of skills.

However, even if role confusion is not present, if it is the articulated problem it may be necessary to begin the resolution process as though confusion were the central issue and switch to a more appropriate strategy later.

Roles evolve. Sometimes the evolutionary process is slow and unarticulated. The consequence can be confusion for the members of the role system as well as the performer.

Susan was an excellent administrative assistant. Her boss, head of purchasing for the organization, was offered a position in another company. He asked Susan to come with him. He promised her a promotion to assistant purchasing agent within a relatively short period of time. She was hesitant to go, but the lure of a promotion was tempting. Instead she decided to stay and approached her new boss about the promotion. He granted it assuming Susan knew what the job entailed. She didn’t.

Susan soon realized she was still viewed as a member of the support staff not the professional staff by her former peers. Her new boss waited her to take hold in the new job. Instead, she spent more and more of her time helping her former peers. She was surprised when they then became resentful and went to the boss because she was getting paid more than they were.

Susan’s new boss did not function as her coach and help her and her work group move into the new role alignment. Instead, he was an observer to the dynamic taking place before him and people were getting hurt. Meetings with the group and some one on one coaching with Susan would have reduced if not eliminate the problems

Resolution, Strategy: Role Clarification

Clarifying an performer's role can be relatively easy. However, to avoid another problem, role disagreement, the role system must understand the role. To do this, all of the performers within the system must understand the requirements of the role.
At times it is useful to engage the role system in the development of the new role. One way of approaching this is to ask each performer in the system to respond to the following prompts.

1. "I want the performer to promise he or she will..."
2. "I want the performer to promise he or she won't..."
3. "If the performer does the following I will be pleased..."
4. "If the performer does the following I will be displeased..."

True clarification exists when the system can send a committed and consistent message to the performer.

Role clarification is a two way street. What are the needs, values, interests, and skills of the performer? Role clarification always requires negotiation, not just with the performer, but with the entire team.

To accomplish this, the prompts given above can be asked of the performer.

1. "I promise I will ..."
2. "I promise I won't ..."
3. "If members of the system do the following I will be pleased ..."
4. "If members of the system do the following I will be displeased ..."

The word "promise" brings questions of commitment, expectation, and accountability into focus. Note that the promise is about behavior, not results. I can promise to make cold sales calls. I can't promise I will get a sale every time. Similarly, using "please" and "displease" emphasizes the impact of role interdependence on job satisfaction.

These prompts may seem a bit artificial. It is difficult to imagine members of some groups being asked to proclaim their employment vows. However, they demonstrate the ultimate goal of role clarification -- an exchange of promises. The rhetoric used to arrive at this goal may vary but the goal does not.

When a role is new to a system, or substantially modified, all members of the role system must analyze how the new role will influence each of the roles they have been taking. You don't change a role. You change a role system. What changes does each member have to make in his or her role? Without this systemic agreement, the next kind of role problem begins to emerge.

**PROBLEM TWO: Role Disagreement, or "Why can't you folks make up your mind?" and "I don't want to do it!"**

Role disagreement exists most clearly when two or more members of the role system disagree about what the performer's role "ought" to be. When disagreement is present, one
member of the role system may be pleased by an action and another member of the system very displeased. One member may see the performer's behavior as predictable and satisfying; another member may see the behavior as surprising and disappointing.

The disagreement can also be between the performer and members of the role system. The performer may say, "I am not going to do that," or, "I want to do something else," and members of the role system say, "You have to do it," or "You can't do it."

The disagreement may be completely honest and in no way reflect hostile or manipulative intentions. The disagreements may reflect authentic and incompatible needs. Unfortunately, the response to the disagreements may be negative and the system may find itself spiraling into a conflictual mode which becomes habit. Fighting, ignoring, dismissing, and devaluing can become the routine.

Times were not good at the advertising agency. The president brought the senior people together and announced that everyone was going to have to bring in clients or the agency was going under. The senior copywriter didn't say anything in the meeting but, over drinks with one of the art directors that evening, complained bitterly about the situation. "I was hired to write, not sell. It's his job to sell and he had better admit he's doing a lousy job of it. What he should do is hire someone who can sell even if it means giving up a chunk of his own salary."

A performer involved in role disagreement may engage in a variety of dysfunctional behaviors:

- The performer chooses who will be pleased and stays away from everyone else.
- The performer runs back and forth from one person to another, changing hats as he or she switches alliances, never finishing anything and eventually becoming frustrated by a lack of achievement, recognition, and rewards.
- The performer does as little as possible to avoid offending anyone. One member of the role system is told that another person is doing the work. The same story is then told in reverse elsewhere in the role system.
- The performer plays one person off against another acting as spy, gossip columnist, and/or victim.
- The performer tries to enlist the sympathy of others by telling them that the job the coach wants done is not the job the performer was hired to do.

Resolution Strategy: Confrontation

The problem must be seen as belonging to the system and not to a particular performer. In family therapy the concept of the identified patient or symptom bearer is central. Caught up in a web of family intrigues, conflicts, and outrage this person -- often a child -- is fingered as
having the problem. Family members often spend a great deal of energy getting the child to change while the family remains the same. This usually succeeds in reinforcing the problem. The habitual way of attempting to solve the problem, becomes the major problem. Lies and secrets are powerful "solutions" that become enormous problems. The same concept applies to all social systems, including teams and organizations. The person experiencing or expressing the greatest conflict may not be the locus of the primary problem. Consequently, resolution strategies must engage the relevant role system not just the individual. An open mind must be maintained that the expressed problem may not be the real cause of tension.

There are disagreements present. These may be between two parties, or there may be several performers involved. There may be one or two issues, or there may be several issues. Inevitably there are communication misfires:

- People misrepresent what others are saying in order to protect their own positions.
- People avoid communicating with one another.
- People accuse one another of (a) incompetence, (b) a lack of commitment, and/or (c) a lack of ethical standards.
- People withhold information about what they want and what they believe.

If positions have been fixed for a period of time there will be an investment in being "right." People will experience a "cost" in giving up their position. The system must confront its disagreements. There are several principles to consider in bringing about movement on the issues.

1. At some point all members of the system must be involved and must support the changes that are developed. The coach must bring about the confrontation. Consultants from within or without the system can be helpful at times. There must be some initiation. The coach must also assure that follow-up takes place.

2. It is possible that there is a conflict of needs present that cannot be resolved. The system will have to re-form if trade-offs are not possible.

3. Separation of one or more people from the system may be called for.

4. If the disagreement has existed for some time, habitual ways of attending to the conflict have developed. These coping mechanisms may cause more trouble than the actual disagreements. Resolution is not complete until these troublesome mechanisms are altered. Confrontation sessions cannot be confused with actual change in the system. The change takes place as people act and feel differently.

5. Role change requires reciprocity. The likelihood that I will change is in part dependent upon the likelihood that you will change.

6. Suspicions and doubts are to be expected. So are lapses. People will return to habitual ways of being. Consequently, attention must be drawn to progress, tolerance exhibited toward regression, and encouragement provided for effort. This cannot be accomplished without planned follow-up.
7. Since the changes affect everyone in the system, the impact must be anticipated, integrated, and supported. The impact on others can be both negative and positive.
8. Although distasteful, it may be necessary to put negative consequences into place in case agreements are not carried out. Sometimes these negative consequences can be of a token nature. Penalties can be part of the "new" contract.
9. People may sabotage the change effort. It is not uncommon for people to ask for a change and then sabotage efforts to bring the change about because it would make them more vulnerable. They'd have nothing to complain about. They wouldn't be able to maintain a "one up" position. They'd have no excuses for their own performance problems.

Role disagreements may be simple and matter of fact. At times there is simply a misunderstanding, an adherence to an old but unimportant pattern, or a question of priorities that can be easily re-negotiated. There are times, though, when the disagreements are serious and require skilled handling. The reward is that when a situation is resolved, a great deal of energy is released for more productive work and relationships. While the process can be difficult and uncomfortable, the initial discomfort of the confrontation is far easier to live through than the ongoing anxiety, hostility, and/or disengagement that accompany role disagreements which are allowed to fester.

PROBLEM THREE: Role Bombardment, or "Enough already!

If one were to seek out archetypes for role bombardment, there are two readily at hand: the working single parent and the entrepreneur in a small business. Too many people in too many role systems are bombarding them with too many demands. Since these "demanders" are rarely interacting with each other, there is no control point other than the performer to handle scheduling, priorities, etc. A single working father can't ask his coach to negotiate priorities with his son and daughter. An entrepreneur can't ask her clients to wait while she negotiates with her banker. The networks are disconnected. Often the performer doesn't recognize that the coach might be of help. Too often, the coach doesn't recognize that there is a problem until it is late in the downward spiral.

That is but part of the problem. The performer in this situation is usually asked to demonstrate an enormous range of skills on an incredible number of tasks. As this takes place, the performer is compared with people who have far more time to devote to one particular skill. Under role bombardment skill mastery is difficult.

Under bombardment the performer feels mildly competent at many things and able to reach closure on nothing. The emotional experience is often that of feeling overwhelmed and trapped. Dysfunctional behavior can result:

- The performer can parade as a victim, encouraging everyone to feel guilty because they are making demands.
- The performer can respond only to urgency and miss priorities.
• The performer can become an excuse machine for poor and incomplete work.
• The performer can neglect his or her health and well being leading to illness and depression.
• The performer can retreat into passivity meandering from activity to activity, or the performer may do nothing. The tent is folded.

Resolution Strategy: Positioning and Timing

The performer suffering from role bombardment is usually the focal point of a disconnected network. Connecting the disparate elements of the network is often inappropriate or impossible. Resolution, must often be at the performer's initiation. If the performer waits for other parties to move, the problem will not be resolved because the other parties are not in a position to see the situation and do not have access to the different parts of the system. The coach is often in a difficult situation because of the nature of the role bombardment. Some of the forces may seem to be outside of the coach’s role to discuss with the performer. However, the coach can still do some things: offer help (sometimes from others), empathize, restructure the role under the coach’s responsibility, and hang in there communicating confidence in the performer’s ability to get control.

One of the major obstacles to change is the emotional state of the performer. Feeling trapped, often drained of energy and a sense of possibility, the additional energy needed to move into a problem solving mode may be difficult to muster. Nevertheless, it is critical that the performer realize there is no cavalry over the horizon. The performer may have to initiate the change effort unilaterally.

Some roles may have to be shed or assigned to others. In most situations this requires some form of confrontation or negotiation. Two considerations should be present. First, the performer must position each of the roles in his or her life space. Positioning is not simply a matter of priorities. It is easy to confuse priority with urgency. The following questions can help position the different roles.

• How did each role develop originally?
• What is the future scenario for each role?
• How rewarding is each role now and in the future?
• What is the risk to the performer of shedding each role?
• What, if any, risk is there to others if the performer sheds a given role?

Too often, roles are assumed beyond their utility to the individual or the role system. The role may have been both necessary and nurturing to the individual when it was accepted, but it may have degenerated into obligation. In fact, the obligation may not be serving anyone's needs. Peter Drucker, America's renaissance management consultant, has made the point that a manager's problem is usually not with priorities, but with posteriorities. What will be done last, or not done?
Timing is critical to a performer in shedding roles. Some roles have natural closure points when they can be shed with little disruption. There are times when the demands of a role can be rescheduled. What is the (a) importance, (b) duration, and (c) intensity of a given demand? When would it fit best into a person's demand schedule -- what hour, day, week, year? Realistically, what is the demand schedule of the other people in the system? Can assignments be made to others?

A role may inappropriately be viewed as a fixed construct rather than an intentional and dynamic contract among people. As some people conceive of the parental role, it is one that no mere mortal could enact successfully. Each behavior must be examined for what is essential and what is peripheral. Most people would agree that listening is essential to the parental role while baking cookies is not. From this perspective, the person undergoing role bombardment will find it necessary to examine each role, decide upon what is essential, and negotiate the rest.

Thus, there are four routes of extrication from the overwhelmed feeling of role bombardment:

- Shed some roles totally.
- Assign roles or components of a role to others.
- Change the schedule of role demands so it is more realistic.
- Prune some or all of the roles to the essential actions.

The rub is that the performer must accept responsibility for any of these actions. Initially, this may require an extra expenditure of energy and an acceptance of tension. An observant and wise coach will be available throughout this process offering help, empathizing, and problem solving when appropriate.

**PROBLEM FOUR: Role Limitations, or "I don't like living in this box!"**

Role limitations present the flip side of the coin to role bombardment. Rather than feeling overwhelmed, the person feels bored. Numerous studies have been done on role limitations with assembly line workers, clerical workers, and narrowly defined professional positions. The problem with a too limited role is that it restricts the development and implementation of potential skills after mastery of the core skills has taken place. There is not sufficient variety. A desire for mastery no longer functions as a stimulus because mastery has taken place. Sometimes coaches confuse mastery of a skill with motivation to use a skill. A person may have mastered a skill and not be motivated to use it because he or she is bored.

In some situations the variety of human interactions is limited. A closed social system has been created. A sameness of talk develops in which content is repeated, emotional distance is maintained, and responses are highly predictable. The social roles are as limiting as the task roles.

The limitations on the role act as bars in a prison. Children in school experience it as do physicians working exclusively in restricted areas of sub-specialties. A sense of meaning
disappears. "What am I doing to myself?" often becomes the question. "I am wasting my life," may be the conclusion.

Performers caught in this situation engage in dysfunctional behaviors:

- Concentration comes and goes, leading to erratic quality in task accomplishment.
- The performer generates a fantasy in order to keep going. The fantasy might be a simple daydream or an elaborate scenario. This can affect the quality of work. The fantasy also permits the performer to avoid the problem.
- The performer can engage in sabotage in order to stimulate excitement. Errors are committed to create an emergency to which the performer can respond.
- A performer can trespass onto another person's turf for variety.
- Internal battles can be fought over who does the most and who is best. Status changes can become the only excitement around.
- The performer and accomplices can create an internal soap opera with elaborate intrigues to create excitement and something to talk about.

Resolution Strategy: Expanding, Alternating, and Timing

Variation must be achieved. When roles are highly limited, it is usually to serve the perceived needs of the organization or the control needs of an insecure coach. From the perspective of the organization or coach, the narrowing of a role may be highly successful. Consequently, it becomes necessary for the performer or the performer's champion to stimulate the change.

In some instances it is difficult to ascertain who is being served by the limited nature of the role. In one situation the performer's champion, the union, was the force reluctant to expand a role. The union had fought hard for a job classification system that was universally judged as equitable. Expanding roles would have required a complete revision of the job classification system -- or so the union leaders believed. There may be times when a coach is hesitant to expand a role. As people become more skilled and capable of contributing many things to the organization their value increases. Some coaches perceive this as narrowing the value gap between coach and worker.

There are actually three ways to approach the problem of restrictive role limitations. One obvious way is to expand the behaviors associated with the role. Simply, give the performer more and different things to do. Count on the performer for more. Nowhere has this been demonstrated more effectively than in automobile assembly plants in which teams assemble a car from beginning to end. There is no assembly line as such. Myth has it that when the system was first introduced at one Volvo plant, teams scratched their initials into the under body -- proudly signing their work -- before applying the undercoating.

The second approach is to rotate the roles. On Tuesday and Thursday the performer does one set of tasks. On Monday, Wednesday and Friday another set of tasks is completed. Rotation may take place on an hourly basis or on a monthly basis. The notion of the academic sabbatical is recognition of the need for variety to stimulate growth.
The third approach is to recognize the limitations of certain roles, and make sure a performer is not asked to enact a role beyond a certain period of time. The armed forces have acknowledged this problem with many positions. One can only serve on an ice pack in the Arctic for so many months before being relieved. A job contains only so much room for growth. Similarly, it makes demands that are tolerable for a finite period of time. Rotation is not enough with these jobs -- people never want to go back to them. They will only do them once.

The problem of role limitation is often difficult to see. Boredom may creep up slowly and dysfunctional responses may take a long period of time to emerge. Of all the role problems, it may be the most difficult to diagnose. The performers are the best source of information about the problem. Consequently the coach has to constantly monitor what performers are feeling about their jobs. Making the issue “discussable” is important because performers may have moved so gradually into role rigidity that they are only dimly aware of it. While they may not recognize the negative effects of the role limitations, they will recognize the absence of excitement, the absence of challenge, and the absence of meaning. Expansion, rotation, and relief must be considered. The coach may need to raise and explore the possibilities with the performer.

**PROBLEM FIVE: Role Jumping, or "Who am I now?"

Role transitions constantly occur. While there may be difficulties associated with the transition, time and exposure often take care of them. Some role transitions, however, are so dramatic that they can cause major dislocation. There is literally a jump from one role to another without a series of transitional steps.

To understand these role jumps we have to recall that a role is a cluster of actual behaviors associated with some purpose. A role, then, calls for a behavioral repertoire -- behaviors the performer can exhibit. Since doing familiar things in a comfortable pattern reinforces our personal identity, a role jump can disrupt this stability. It is not just competence that is threatened, the performer's identity can be threatened as well.

A newly released prisoner experiences a role jump. The role of prisoner and the role of citizen call for very different behaviors. The environments are very different. So are the appropriate responses. Similarly, new parents often experience a role jump with their first child. In organizations there may be a role jump from worker to supervisor, from employee to entrepreneur, and from managing in a local office to managing in a corporate office.

The difficulty associated with a role jump is often overlooked or seen as simply a problem of change in environment. Actually, when we examine the behavioral repertoire of an individual, we may find the person already possesses each of the behaviors needed in the new role. The problem is that the performer has neither experienced nor exercised these behaviors together as a unique group. Individual behaviors are familiar but the pattern is not.

The performer may be conceptually clear about the new role, have no disagreement with it, feel neither bombarded nor bored by the role, have each of the required skills, be motivated to take it on and still have difficulty because of the size of the role jump required.
With a role jump, approaches that were once applauded may now be punished. Patterns that once were comfortable no longer exist. The difficulty for the performer is the lack of transition. No transitional steps have been provided. Understandably, dysfunctional behaviors may emerge.

- Performers may be angry at the new role system for not accepting actions that are normal to the performer. The performer may fight the system.
- The performer may withdraw from the new system rather than adapt to it.
- The performer may seek out a sub-culture that is accepting and comfortable even if it is ultimately self-destructive.

Resolution Strategy: Anticipate, Train & Support

Half way houses for prisoners and de-institutionalized mental patients have been developed. Training and orientation programs for new supervisors are commonplace. Lamaze groups and "new parent" programs help parents anticipate and learn about the new role they are assuming.

What is common throughout these programs is the focus on anticipation of a new situation and on the practice of new behaviors. In addition, performers are encouraged to explore their often conflicted feelings associated with the change they are about to encounter.

A second approach is the assignment of a "buddy" to the performer. The function of the buddy is not so much to anticipate difficulties as to be supportive when the difficulties arise. The buddy normalizes the difficulty. The buddy is usually someone who has undergone the same transition -- successfully and recently. Recognizing the difficulties of the role jump from high school student living at home to college freshman living away, many colleges and universities assign "big brothers" or "big sisters" to incoming freshmen. Some organizations have adopted a similar approach with management trainees coming to work right from academia.

A third approach is the use of the support group during the transition period. Groups are formed of people going through the role jump. They meet periodically to discuss the experience, share strategies for handling new situations, and support each other through the process. In the community, it is not unusual to find groups for the newly widowed or divorced. One national health organization forms support groups for new managers.

In highly organized situations it is not unusual to find these three approaches co-existing: transition training, buddy system, and support groups.

PROBLEM SIX: Role Incompatibility, or "Which hat am I wearing now?"

Jerome Bruner in The Process of Education identified the importance of the discipline of a subject. According to Bruner, every subject has not only content, but a way of knowing -- a unique epistemology. A person trained in the epistemology of one discipline may find it difficult to move into another discipline. A poet may find it hard to be an accountant. An entrepreneur may find it difficult to be a staff manager in a large corporation.

There are times when an performer is asked or wants to enact roles that appear to be incompatible. An engineer is asked to sell. An educator wants to teach and manage a school. A
writer finds he has to write advertising copy to make ends meet. The incompatibility is caused by behavioral clusters that differ and by different approaches to thinking about the work -- different epistemologies.

The president of a small engineering consulting firm knew he provided the firm's primary sales effort. He enjoyed selling. Meeting new people, listening to the problems they were going through, giving them new ways to think about their problems, and experiencing the reward of a new client relying on him and his firm for help excited him. He also liked to get involved in the actual generation and execution of a solution. He wanted to see things through to the final steps. His difficulty was shifting gears. As he explained it:

I am different when I sell and when I solve problems. I feel different, I don't act the same, and I worry about different things. What happens is I go on a selling streak for awhile, we get work in, and then I spend all of my time working on projects. Then we get scared because there is no new work and I go out selling but feel lousy at first because I haven't completed a project. For some reason I can't seem to sell and work on projects at the same time.

Role incompatibility is a unique role problem. It may exist in spite of clarity about expectations, agreement with what is needed, motivation to proceed, and the required range of skills. It can lead to dysfunctional behavior:

- The performer may ignore one role in favor of another.
- The performer may become completely frustrated and fight both roles.
- The performer may try to avoid accountability for either role blaming the other role as the culprit.
- The performer may use the incompatibility as a vehicle for avoiding the challenge of mastery in either. "If only I didn't have to ..." becomes the theme.
- The performer may protest that s/he wants only one role but do nothing to make it possible.

Some people are able to handle tremendous role disparity. Leonardo De Vinci was heroic in the range of endeavors he mastered. He seemed capable of handling endless disciplines -- all at the same time. For most people, however, role incompatibility is difficult and may be a source of distress.

**Resolution Strategy: Boundary Setting**

First, a choice must be made. Does the performer want to maintain the incompatible roles, or must the performer negotiate the situation? Assuming multiple roles are to be maintained, the following strategies are useful.

The difficulty is the absence or inadequacy of the boundaries between the roles. The unfinished business of one role spills anxiety into the other role. The jolt of moving back and forth from one set of behaviors to another is too rapid and/or too great. Shifting back and forth
from one way of thinking to another puts too much of a demand on memory and attention. The task, then, is to create boundaries.

Physical setting is associated with roles and can create boundaries. The artist has a studio, the scientist a laboratory, the manager an office. It may be possible to separate the roles so they are enacted in different settings. This need not be as elaborate as Hemingway's solution - he converted a lighthouse on his property to a studio where he could write. Different rooms may provide a sufficient sense of boundary. Some people find it possible to cause separation with different work stations within one room much as an open classroom has different areas for art, science, etc.

Time is associated with roles. As a boundary it can be as powerful as setting. Seasons are especially powerful boundaries for roles. Months, weeks, days, and even hours can create the necessary separation between roles. The eventual solution for the engineer mentioned previously was to spend mornings on project activity when he was especially alert and able to concentrate. Afternoons were spent in sales activities when the interaction of talking to other people kept him energized.

Colleagues can help to maintain barriers between roles. John Kennedy had a small group of friends with whom he could relax at the White House. A different group provided him with advice and counsel. Groups can be joined or formed around given roles in an effort to maintain role separation. Frequently this kind of separation includes establishing unique times and settings for each role. These mechanisms amplify the boundaries between roles.

Whatever means is used, if a person experiences roles as incompatible, the strategy for working with the distress is to create boundaries between the roles so they do not weave together. A lack of closure and a lack of concentration are the usual outcomes of role incompatibility. Only barriers and tough choices ease the distress.

**Final Thoughts About Roles** Our roles produce both meaning and misery. Independence and interdependence come from our participation in role systems. The roles we enact are so central to our lives as social beings that it is a disservice to ourselves and others to approach them passively. Roles are not mysterious creatures evolved from primordial laws. They are dynamic, potentially conscious choices subject to our control.

Roles can cause distress. The distress can sap energy, elevate tension, and stimulate dysfunction. We observe a reluctance to act even in the presence of distress. Changing roles necessitates the disruption of a role system. Uncertainty is a constant. Change means risk. The current system may provide benefits to some members of the system. Resistance is predictable.

The temptation is to hope that time will relieve distress. Time, though, has no commitment to direction. Time can lead to an increase in distress as easily as to a resolution of the problem. Positive action, accepting the givens of uncertainty and resistance, is a more hopeful choice.

Thus, it is necessary to accept that (a) role problems are normal; (b) as long as individuals and environments change, roles must change; and (c) role problems can cause distress. The task
is clear. The coach must be prepared to act. The coach must act utilizing an understanding of the existing ethical context. Most importantly, the coach must act based upon respect for ourselves and others because we are juggling the very stuff of human meaning and happiness.

The tasks for the coach in juggling roles are many and varied. First, the coach must be aware of the naturalness of role problems and be constantly on the look out for them. Rather than seeing them as disruptions, the coach must view them with an attitude of “of course.” Second, the coach must recognize the potential damage that role problems can create as performance, productivity, morale, and well-being are affected. Third, the coach must diagnose the problem and then act to resolve it. Time can exacerbate role problems as well as diminish them.

The Socio-technical System

Definition A socio-technical system is an interdependent complex of culture, structure, tools, processes, information, and setting which influences performance. Performance takes place in a context, a unique environment. This environment contributes or detracts from performance. Examples of this are common. An athlete moves from one team to another and his or her performance changes dramatically. A student changes from one college to another. These interplays of performer and environment are idiosyncratic to some degree, but some elements can be identified and addressed that are common to all environments.

Culture There is the work culture itself. This is the complex of expectations, social system rules, values, and communication networks that make a social system unique. It is the culture of the workplace. Some people thrive in one culture and die in another. There is a question of fit, of matching personalities and needs with a particular setting. This is not to suggest that people can’t adapt, but it is important to recognize that there are limits to adaptation and that even with adaptation, a person may not thrive as a performer. Some people love the excitement and riskiness of small entrepreneurial organizations; other people find it too stressful. They would prefer the stability and security of a larger organization that is bureaucratic in nature.

The function of the coach is to understand the culture of the organization and be able to communicate it. It is also to understand the needs of the individual performer and to question the issue of fit. Frequently the coach must explain, "How things are done around here.” Every organization imposes formal and informal sanctions on deviant behavior. In most situations, when sanctions are imposed, performance suffers unless the performer agrees wholeheartedly with the "rules" and the sanctions.

The coach is a prime mover in establishing the environment for the performer. Their relationship is the most critical. The performer must count on the coach to bring out his or her best. Consequently, the performer looks to the coach for knowledge, wisdom, and understanding of performance.

The coach also functions as a champion for the performer. The coach tries to get the organization to respond to the needs of the performer. The coach is, thus, always in the middle between the performer and the organization. The performer is dependent upon the coach for this role. The performer’s performance will be affected by how much confidence he or she has in his or her coach as a champion.
Structure  Organizations distribute decision making authority, group functions together, and allocate resources to prevent chaos and to maximize effectiveness. In reality, politics, history, personalities, and prejudices come into play to create less than perfect structures. The performer may be helped or stymied by structure. They may have too much or too little power. They may be starved for resources. They may not have access to people they need to collaborate with. All of these, and more, will affect their performance. The coach, again, must be champion for the performer, but must also shape the system in such a way that promotes the performer’s freedom to perform.

Tools  The technical part of the system also affects performance. This is seen in three distinct ways. First, most of us need tools to do our work. If we have inadequate tools, our performance suffers. I am more productive and perform better working with my computer than I would be if you asked me to go back to using an old-fashioned typewriter. Sometimes the tool/performer interface is difficult to separate. How, for example, do you separate the contributions made by the race car and the race car driver? The best driver in the world can’t win with a slow car. The fastest car doesn’t come in first at the hands of a poor driver. The coach assembles the finest tools possible for the performer to work with.

Processes  Second, technical work processes affect performance. A sports analogy from football exemplifies this. An offensive play is a well choreographed dance in which every player has a task, a route, and a sequence in which he or she is to move. If the choreography is inept, people will bump into one another, stand around waiting for things to happen, and make one another vulnerable. Work processes always affect performance. The task for the coach is to assure that the process of performance is effective.

Information  Third, information is a critical technical consideration. Many tasks require doing something to information, manipulating it in some way. Sometimes information signals the beginning or ending of a process. Garbage in, garbage out is not just a truism with computers. Information functions technically to enhance or detract from performance. The effective coach attends to the information needs of the performers. What data is needed, when, and in what form to enhance performance?

Setting  Maintenance engineers claim that if you don’t remove grafitti immediately, you get more. The Hawthorn experiments changed performance by changing light levels. Physical setting affects all of us. Frequently status is associated with setting: corner offices, what floor the office is on, who has the window. Sometimes it is simple comfort: furniture, heat, light, noise. The immediate surroundings also matter. The burned out neighborhood versus the corporate park produce different feelings about going to work. Again, the function of the coach is to champion the needs of the performers within the system. It is to recognize the impact of setting on performance and to advocate for what is necessary to achieve optimal performance.

Diagnosis  The easiest way for the coach to examine the socio-technical system for components that inhibit performance is to work with the performers to examine the components of the system: culture, structure, tools, processes, information, tools, and setting. This can be done on a systematic basis. Some settings will use surveys periodically to examine the impact of
the system on performers. Unfortunately though, the linkage is rarely made to performance. Performers are asked to make judgments about the system rather than asked to describe how the system components affect their performance. For example, I know of one setting where people rush to leave work a little early to beat traffic. That affects performance. Surveys don’t ask about that.

In a less formal manner, coaches can ask on a one on one basis or in small groups, “What does our organization do or not do that interferes with your performance?” “What could the organization do that would enhance your performance?”

The coach can also take time on a periodic basis to sit back and examine all of the components of the system. What does the coach believe to be the needs of the performers?

Prescription The coach is the champion for the performers. Advocate, salesperson, pain the neck, nag and even less flattering labels might be applied to the coach who recognizes that it is part of the role of coach to create the socio-techical system that will produce star performance. Obviously this will demand negotiation and trade-offs. It assumes, though, that the socio-techical system is not a “given.” It assumes that it is a social creation and thus can be re-created to be more effective.

The coach must also recognize that the performers are watching the coach and assessing the performance of the coach in this regard. The performers are counting on the coach to enact this role. They depend on the coach to perform. And thus it comes full circle.

Final Thoughts About The Socio-technical System The socio-techical system is often overlooked when examining performance. Unfortunately, the socio-techical system is often viewed as a given, rather than a variable to be shaped. The performer is often expected to perform well in spite of the system problems. The most skilled and motivated performer will fail given a horrendous socio-techical system. The coach, though, can function as a champion to shape the system so that it demands and supports excellent performance.

Coaching It is the contention of this paper that the role of the coach is critical throughout all five factors which contribute to performance: skills, traits, motivation, roles, and the socio-techical system. Thus, coaching is not only the most critical component in work satisfaction, it makes a contribution to all facets of performance.

Summary

Performance is a consequence of multiple factors: skills, motives, traits and talents, roles, and the work system itself. Performance is a not a unitary phenomenon. The concept of "flow" and being in the "zone" are wonderful metaphors to describe what takes place when all of the components are working together and,"...moving easy in harness."

The coach is a critical force in enabling performers to reach this place. We are used to marveling at the performer who makes things look easy. It is also possible to marvel at the
coach who consistently brings individuals and groups of individuals into the zone. They also make things look easy. But only some of the time. Observe the faces of the coaches at the Olympics. Striving for star performance is tough work, requires a tremendous investment on the part of the coach, and affects the person of the coach. Both performer and coach share the wonder of growth.
Coaching Roles

Introduction

Preceptor and student, manager and performer etc. are all relationships, regardless of title, in which one person has the responsibility for helping another person to develop his or her career in an organization and to reach the highest possible level of performance. The words coach and performer can be used as generic labels that describe one aspect of this relationship -- the focus on developing excellent performance. The research that has been conducted on this relationship, whether at the level of top executives or front line workers, indicates that it is the nature of the relationship that is the critical variable not the level at which it occurs. The relationship of drama coach to actor is not unlike the relationship between defensive coach and linebacker of a football team.

It is difficult to over emphasize the importance of a coach's impact upon the performance of a performer. We are critically aware of this relationship in many different spheres of endeavor. For example, in athletics there are winning coaches and managers who are able to turn out winning athletes and teams year after year. Over a period of time a winning coach's record is clear evidence of his or her superior skills at coaching. The same phenomenon holds true in the worlds of the arts and entertainment. People will wait months, even years, to be able to study with a particular dance teacher or work with a drama coach. Within the business community there has been a rediscovery of the importance of the coaching relationship in developing the potential of an individual. This is more than a hierarchical relationship. It is a relationship built upon respect and a mutual commitment towards growth. Whatever the term used, the relationship between a coach and performer is critical. It affects the energy that performers are willing to expend, the attention they give to perfecting their work, and their long-term career plans.

Recent research on supervision has emphasized some additional elements as well. First, there is striking evidence that demonstrates the significant impact that coaches have on the stress levels of their performers. Unrealistic expectations, lack of emotional contact, and inconsistent coaching behavior escalate the amount or stress experienced by the performer. The research points out that coaches who are demanding, fair and supportive do not produce the same kind of elevated stress level. Another finding has to do with career plans. A coach is the field’s ambassador to the performer. And, just as a potential client often judges the quality or a product or service based upon the performance of the firm's representative, so do performers often judge the quality of work life in a field based upon the performance of the coach. Research with physicians, for example, has shown that specialty choices are often made based upon the experience with residents and attending physicians during clerkship. The people rather than the work often motivates choice of specialty.

It does not matter whether the coach/performer relationship is on an ad hoc basis as in a project management system, or whether the relationship is long term as in work group situations. The relationship is an important one. Consequently, organizations are again recognizing the need to
examine the effectiveness of the coaching being provided to performers. More than that, many organizations are seeking out ways to improve it.

Performance as a coach, as in any performance, is comprised of five elements: roles, skills, motivation, traits and talents, and the work system in which the person performs. This paper will focus on the roles that a coach plays or might play. In doing so it will touch upon concerns for traits, skills, motivation, and work system, but the focus will be on the role of the coach. A system for describing different roles will be presented to enable a coach to see the different consequences of different role orientations and to explore the role position that the coach would like to adopt. Once a role position has been chosen, it becomes much easier to develop the skills and motivation necessary to carry out the role.

Definition of a Role

We use the word role all of the time. "I'm not sure what my role is." "There is a real conflict of roles." "He doesn't have a role of play." A definition can be helpful to launch into an exploration of the concept: A role is a cluster of expected behaviors. A role is not one behavior but a group of behaviors that is bound together either because of the person carrying out the role, or the demands of the situation. The real problem comes with the word expected.

If a person is carrying out a role we are able to predict what is going to take place -- we expect him or her to act in a specific way. For example, if I say that it is the role of the gas station attendant to clean my windows, but I am surprised if he does so, then, in fact, it is not his role. It may be what I want his role to be, but if I was surprised that he cleaned my windows, then it is not his role. Roles deal with actual expectations rather than with desired behavior. Because I can predict certain behavior I begin to count on the person for these actions. Since I can count on him or her, I alter my behavior and we thus form a role system where we both adjust to what we can count on the other to do. If it is productive then all are happy. If it is counterproductive it causes stress for everyone in the system. Thus, it is the role system that exists between coach and performer that is the concern of this paper. What can each count on the other for?

A coach will define his or her role based upon several factors. First, the individual's own history as a coach will enter in. What approaches does the coach believe work best? A coach will tend to follow the models set for him or her. That is why any given organization tends to develop a coaching style. Models are set and repeated thus establishing a coaching tradition. Third, the organization may make certain demands and will have its own rewards and punishments that shape the coach's behavior. Specific coaching behaviors are exhibited because all of the incentives support these actions (or inaction). All coaches respond to some extent to the, "What's in it for me?" concern.

Roles are subject to change, however. The change can come about dramatically because a new situation calls for new behavior and the option to change is disaster. Or, a personal commitment to a new way of behaving may prompt the change. New learning may encourage change. Incentives that were not present previously may now exist and stimulate change. For example, the coach may get a new boss who makes different demands. The notion that role systems are fixed does not turn out to be consistent with human experience.
Concepts About The Coaching Role

Coaches that are successful have a motivational pattern that is somewhat different from that of a pure practitioner. The practitioner derives a personal sense of satisfaction and success from mastery of whatever the profession is that they practice. Mastering the craft and personally excelling is critical for the master practitioner. The coach may have this goal, but it also stretches beyond himself or herself. The successful coach derives satisfaction from the success of someone else. Pride, therefore, is not just in personal accomplishment. The successful coach is able to derive a sense of pride from the success of another person who s/he has helped.

Second, successful coaches are not cynical. They may be realistic and able to accurately assess a situation, but they value what they are involved in and have a clear set of values and priorities that guide them in their efforts. Another way of expressing it is to say they have a clear-cut sense of mission about the work that is to be performed. This sense of mission is articulated easily. It sets the tone for the work group.

Third, successful coaches treat performers as individuals not as objects. They are aware of differences among people. They see the unique in people. They respond to this openly through feedback. When they give recognition it is honest, in a timely manner, and without hesitation. They do not withhold praise. Recognition is exhibited generously.

Fourth, successful coaches are tinkerers. They are constantly trying to figure out ways to improve things. Sometimes this can be distracting, but it tends to earn the respect of performers. Successful coaches don't gloss over problems and hide their heads in the sand. They have a personal commitment to doing things as well as possible in a given situation. Coaches are problem-centered. They love to improve performance.

It is possible to go on and list many other factors that are associated with successful supervision but these are the four elements that tend to emerge in the studies that have been done of successful coaches. They are expressed in many different ways, but they all speak to the role that the coach plays.

Possible Roles

In understanding the role options available to coaches, two factors dominate the possibilities. The results that a coach pursues and the kind of personal connection that the coach makes to the performer help organize a consideration of coaching roles. Results

In order to develop a model, these two concerns can be represented by intersecting lines. One line represents the coach’s approach to the results that are to be pursued in the role of coach. One end of the line is a position that represents the goal of promoting success. The coach wants the performer to be more than adequate. Excellence is viewed as a legitimate goal. The coach operating from this position sees this pursuit as a collaborative effort. The coach is willing to take on the task of developing the performer so that success and excellence are possible.
The other end of the results line represents the goal on the part of a coach of avoiding failure. The coach operating from this position is usually willing to accept adequate performance. However, this coach does not want the performer to fail. Errors, mistakes, lapses in performance, deviating from policies and procedures are all behaviors that are to be caught and corrected when working at this position. The coach seeking these results tends to focus on external standards and to measure performers against these standards to assure that minimal requirements are met. The coach becomes active when these standards are missed. The activity is aimed at correcting deviations. Explaining negative consequences often dominates discussions.

The second concern in defining a coach's role is that of connection. What kind of human connection is the coach willing to make with the performer. The concept of interpersonal connection is used in many different settings. We talk about families that are very close or distant. We describe feeling that a parent was involved in our development and knew us as a unique person, or was distant from us. This concern is also present in the relationship between performer and a coach.

The second line, then, represents connection. At one end of the line is involvement. High involvement usually includes a relatively high frequency or contact, an awareness of the individual as a person, discriminating between this individual and others, seeing uniqueness, and a willingness to communicate about specifics. There is a lot of content in the communications that take place. Some of it may be non-work related but this is not necessarily the case. It could be all work related.

The other end of the line represents distance. Communications are general. Membership in the group overrides individuality. There is no sign that the coach's welfare is linked to that of the performer. Contact is peripheral, often short, and possibly infrequent.

These two concerns are always present - results and connection - but every coach carves out a unique role in responding to them. Each of these two concerns functions as a continuum. Rarely does a coach's approach fall at any of the poles. Similarly, it is typical that a coach will change his or her approach over time, or according to the situation. Nevertheless, there is a strong tendency to favor one end of each dimension over another. This makes it possible to represent the two elements in a graphic model.
Since both concerns are always present it is possible to use a circle to indicate the positioning of a coach, and to borrow some labels from other experiences to describe the role options available to a coach.

The **League Commissioner**: The role of the commissioner as it relates to performers is concerned with appropriate behavior, following procedures, and adhering to policy, but it is done from a position of interpersonal distance. The results the commissioner pursues are concerned with system maintenance for the most part. There is not a great deal of concern for individuals and their experience. In fact, the commissioner tends to communicate somewhat formally and from a distance even when working in close proximity to a performer. To the performer, the commissioner often seems to be a removed and distant authority representing the system. The performer feels that he or she doesn't know the commissioner and the commissioner doesn't know him or her. The league commissioner will communicate in writing more often than any of the other potential roles. A memo may start off with, "It has come to my attention that….."

The **Cheerleader**: The role of cheerleader is primarily focused on providing support and encouragement. The cheerleader wants to win. The cheerleader wants the performer to succeed, but does so from the sidelines. Recognition is enthusiastically given. Groans at problems are also
heard but not in a hostile manner: "Bad break," "That's a shame." The cheerleader observes and applauds but doesn't get involved. Help is not offered. Problems are not dug into. The cheerleader operates from a distance. To the performer the cheerleader often seems to provide encouragement and recognition indiscriminately. The performer often feels that the cheerleader doesn't understand what the problems are and doesn't want to know.

The Referee: The referee watches what takes place very carefully. Always on the look out for deviance from rules, procedures, etc., the referee is close to performers. Contacts are frequent. The referee knows what is happening and discriminates clearly among employees. Doing the work cleanly and in a timely fashion are the major concerns. The referee feels a personal investment in things going well and stays on tope of every detail. To the performer the referee often seems omnipresent and uninterested in any kind of innovation. The performer often feels that doing an adequate job is simply expected and not deserving of recognition. True feedback seems to come only in negative situations. The experience of the performer is often, "I'm left alone if I don't make any glaring mistakes."

The Coach: The coach believes that his or her own rewards will come from the excellence achieved by performers. Consequently, the results that are important to the coach are those of successful performance on the part of performers. The coach does not hesitate to instruct, problem solve, tinker with systems or do whatever else it takes to contribute to successful performance. Similarly, the coach is heavily involved in being aware of the differences among performers. Contact is frequent. Encouragement and recognition flow easily. To the performer the coach seems to have the performer's best interest in mind. The demands may at times seem to be too challenging and beyond the aspirations of the performer. The performer at times feels the loyalty bond to be a bit too tight and sometimes there is a tension around independence. The performer "knows" though that the coach wants him or her to succeed.

Thus, each of these roles presents some drawbacks to performers. There are also personal goal issues for the coach: "Is excellence necessary?" "How involved do I want to be in contributing to the performance of another?" Still, the research on coach/performer relationships indicates that in the long run the role of coach holds the greatest potential for the performer, the coach, and the organization.

Drawbacks to Being a Coach

There are some drawbacks, though, to being a coach. It requires time. It takes time to observe and listen to a performer and to then collaborate on how the performance is to be improved. In addition, the organization may not reward the coach for being a good coach. If measurements of the coach are not tied to productivity and human resources development, the coach may legitimately question, "What's in it for me?" An organization that rewards coaches for the absence of problems rather than for quality, productivity, and morale will probably not reward coaches.

However, even with the time constraints and the absence of organizational rewards, the coaching role still has benefits for the coach. Simply, good performance is more likely to occur.
This makes the coach's job easier as well as leading to the personal satisfaction of helping people develop. To move in this direction, however, the coach's own capacity for satisfaction often has to be stretched. The, "I'd rather do it myself," mentality, or the, "Sure you can do it," pat on the back must be stretched to include an interest and commitment to another person's success and to helping him or her achieve that success. Without organizational incentives, coaching only makes sense to a person who gets a kick out of helping other people grow.

In addition to time, another drawback is the investment of emotional energy. Every relationship requires emotional energy and people who find this difficult may find coaching a difficult role to take. The model, however, doesn't have to be as dramatic as Knute Rockne. There are tremendous rewards on a personal level for the coach who risks making an emotional connection with the performer.

Probably, the biggest drawback is seen when the questions of time and energy come together. When being a coach is only one of multiple roles, the coach justifiably asks, "When do I get my own work done?" The answer to that is both personal and organizational. The bottom line response is clear: "This is the work of coaching -- it takes time." The organization and the individual coach must both believe that.

Summary

There is a significant body of literature on the nature of coaching. The results emphasize that coaching affects performance, productivity, stress levels, and morale. The elements associated with superior coaching have also been identified. They include: (1) being able to gain personal rewards from the accomplishment of another, (2) having a strong sense of mission and being able to articulate it, (3) being aware of differences among people and able to give recognition generously, and (4) being problem centered and not hesitant to tinker. To explore the roles available to a coach, a model was introduced based upon a coach's understanding of the results he or she wants to achieve, and the connection he or she wants to make to a performer. Within this construct, four possible roles were described: league commissioner, cheerleader, referee, and coach. Finally, while there are drawbacks to the coaching role, there are also benefits for the coach. For the performer and the organization to pursue excellence, the coaching role is significantly more effective than the other roles that were presented.
Coaching Tips

1. Be a lover. Know and love the game. Know and love your learners.
2. Know how important you are. They'll talk about you years later.
3. Form the agenda collaboratively.
4. Use multiple sources of information to identify areas in need of improvement: surveys, peers, supervisors, patients, coaching observations, reflections of the learner.
5. Identify one or two things to work on that will be noticed by the learner and will develop fundamental skills.
6. Assess first. Why can't the person do it right now? The answer will be an interaction among: roles, skills, motivation, traits and talents, and the social system.
7. Begin the assessment with role. Does the person believe the desired performance is a legitimate part of their job? Do they want to be counted on to do "it."
8. Motivate by building conviction and confidence. Ask people to scale each dimension. On a scale of 1 to 10…. 
9. Ask the person to demonstrate the behavior in a safe environment to test out whether or not the skills already exist in their repertoire of skills. If they can't then you know you have a skill deficit problem. If they can, the problem is elsewhere: roles, social-system, motivation.
10. Begin skill development by assuring that the learner has an image of what the desired performance looks like.
11. Develop an image by using demonstrations. The coach can demonstrate. A videotape demonstration can be used. Another person can demonstrate. Explain what is being done so the learner becomes an informed observer.
12. The coach can instruct the learner through the sequences, step by step until the learner gets a sense of the ideal performance.
15. Make "Reflective Practice" an expectation and an on-going experience.
16. Use the full power of the SP process: freeze frame, repeating, and providing feedback.