



# Bringing a Research Lens to Our Work Through Coaching

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# Theory - Practice



“Practice alone is, of course, not enough, without some co-ordinating theory, some inter-connected ideas, purely practical subjects can ossify and degenerate into congeries of rules-of-thumb and obsession with technique. Practice without theory can become basely conservative; theory without practice can become arcane, unintelligible or simply trivial.”

**Goodlad (1990)**

# Best Practice - Next Practice



“...there needs to be a mix of committing to **best practice** (existing practices that already have a good degree of widely agreed effectiveness) and having the freedom, space, and resources to create **next practice** (innovative approaches that often begin with teachers themselves and that will sometimes turn out to be the best practices in the future). Best practice without next practice just drives teachers through implementing and fine-tuning what already exists. Next practice without best practice has no way of sorting out the strong emerging ideas from the weak ones.”

**Hargreaves & Fullan (2012)**

# Critical Reflection

“Critically reflective teaching happens when we identify and scrutinize assumptions that undergird how we work. The most effective way to become aware of these assumptions is to view our practice from different perspectives. Seeing how we think and work through different lenses is the core process of reflective practice.”

**Brookfield (1995)**

# We Can't Do it Alone

“Very few of us can get very far doing this on our own. No matter how much we may think we have an accurate sense of ourselves, we are stymied by the fact that we are using our own interpretive filters to become aware of our own interpretive filters – the pedagogic equivalent of trying to see the back of one’s head while looking in the bathroom mirror.”

**Brookfield (1995)**

# Brookfield's Lenses



**Autobiographical** – our own experiences as learners and teachers



**Students** – our students' perceptions and experiences of what we do



**Colleagues** – our colleagues' perceptions and experiences of what we do



**Literature** – alternative theoretical frameworks and research from inside and outside of our field

Adapted from Brookfield, S. D. (1995)

# Theoretical Literature as a Lens



Provides multiple interpretations of familiar situations



Helps us to make sense of our experiences and practices by “naming” them



Illuminates generic aspects of what we thought were idiosyncratic events and processes



Helps us gain perspective on our practice and clarify what is within (and out-with) our sphere of control

# Respect for Context

The idea that academic literature and research provide a **lens** on our practice rather than a definitive 'playbook' tends to land more respectfully with teachers and **honours their contextual insight.**



# Conversation and Change

“Conversation is the fundamental unit of change. If you change the conversation, then there’s every chance you’ll change everything that surrounds it.”

**Jackson & Waldman (2011)**

# Coaching: a Definition

“A one-to-one conversation that focuses on the **enhancement** of learning and development through increasing **self-awareness** and a sense of personal **responsibility**, where the coach facilitates the self-directed learning of the coachee through questioning, active listening, and appropriate challenge in a supportive and encouraging environment.”

**van Nieuwerburgh (2012)**

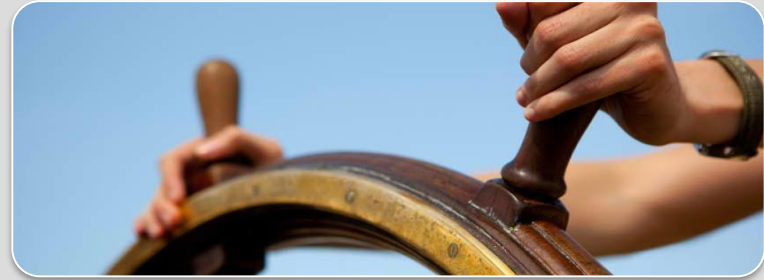
## Two Key Outcomes of Coaching

### Awareness



Growing awareness changes the game. It moves us from being **acted upon** to being in a position to **act on** the issue or challenge.

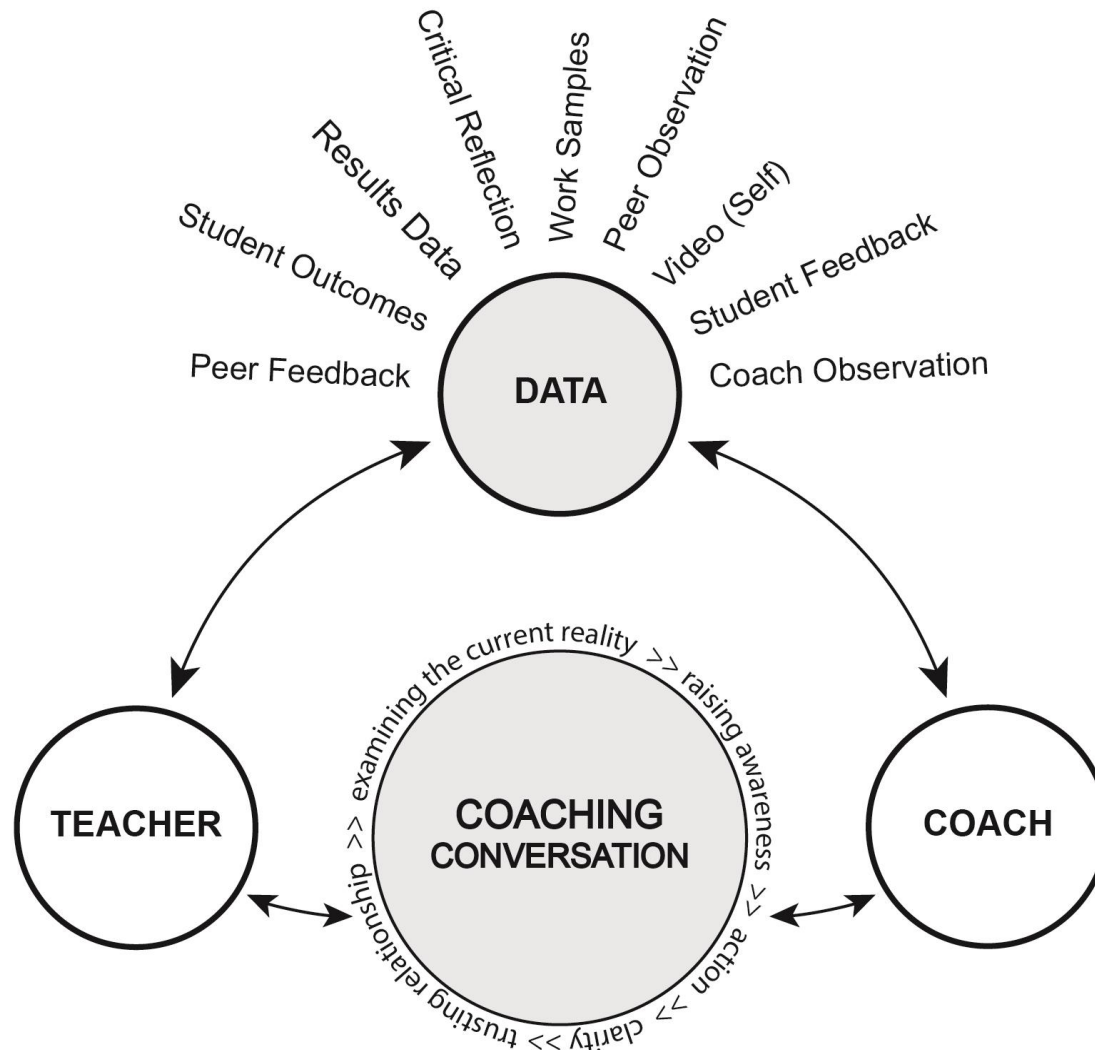
### Responsibility



Commitment & performance arises from **choice**

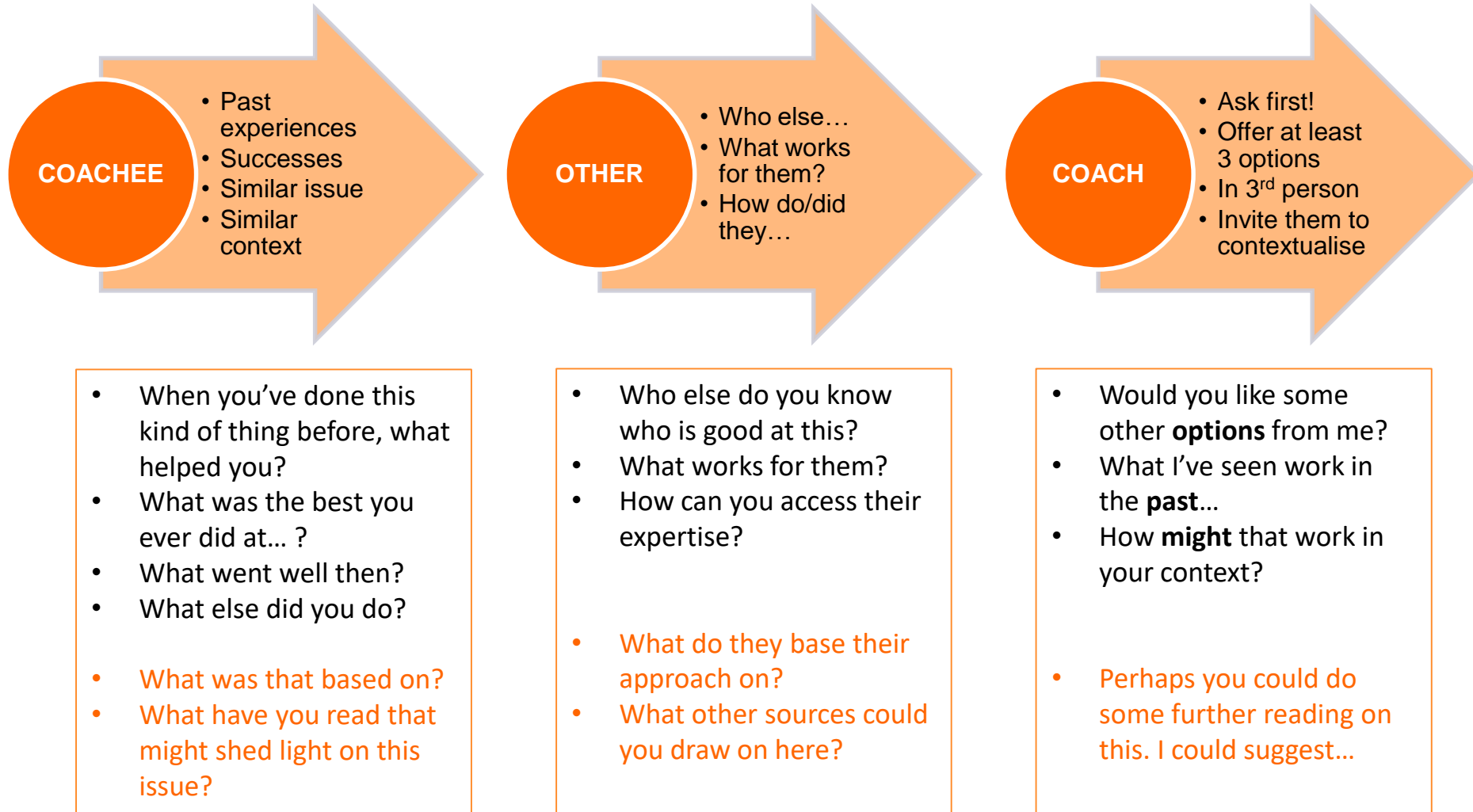
Taking **responsibility & ownership** for change

# Points of Reference in a Coaching Conversation



# The 'Know-How' Continuum in Coaching

Adapted from McKergow (2009)



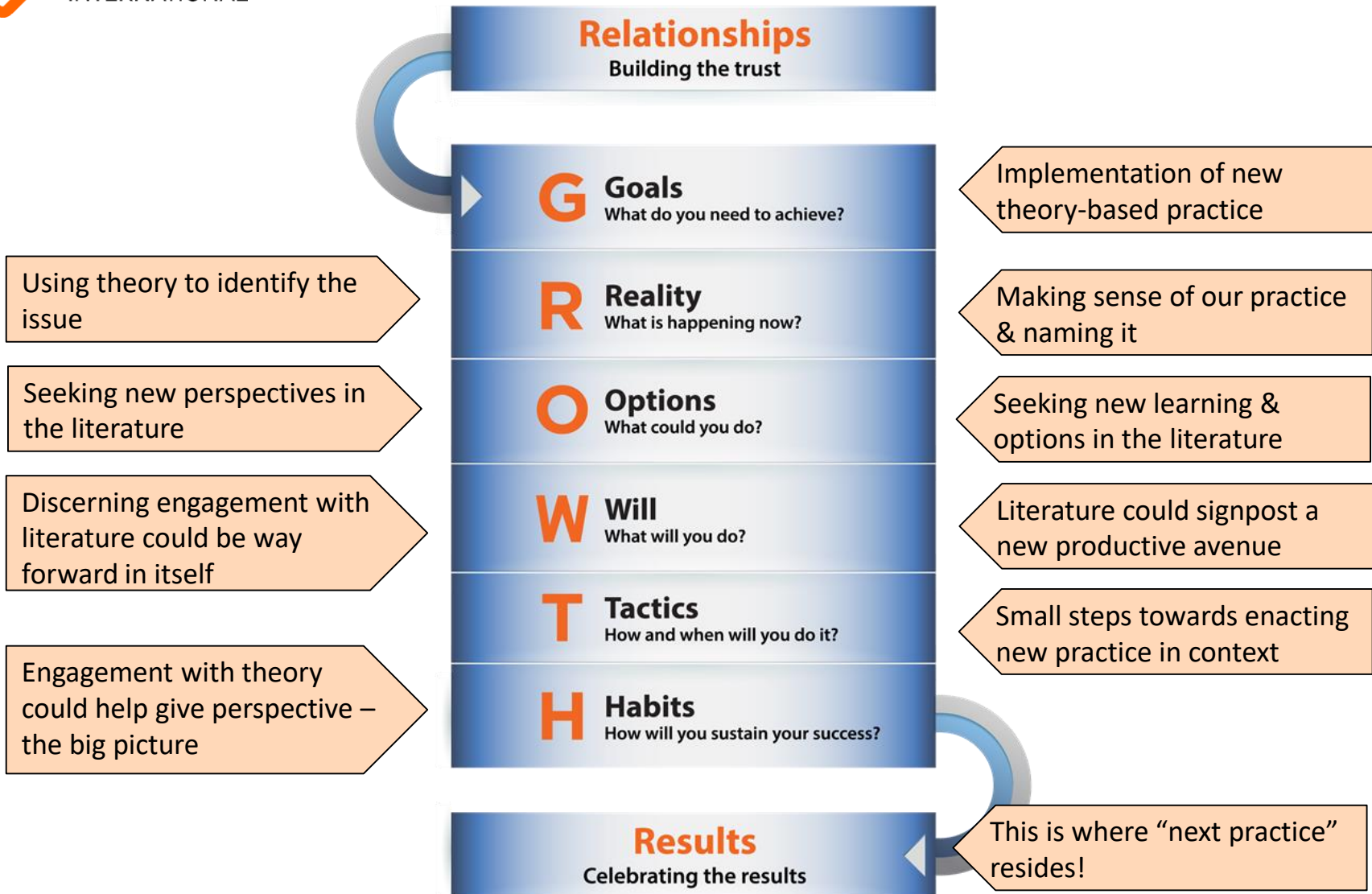
# Advice, Blame and Responsibility



If I give you advice and it fails, you will blame me. I have traded my advice for your responsibility and that is seldom a good deal.

**Whitmore (2009)**

# Theoretical Lens in GROWTH Coaching



Ref: Campbell, J. (2016)

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# So What Works?

“Those who want to determine what works in education are doomed to fail, because in education, ‘What works?’ is rarely the right question, for the simple reason that in education, just about everything works somewhere, and nothing works everywhere.”

**William (2016)**



# Research as Signposts



“...research will never be able to tell teachers what to do, because the contexts in which teachers work are so variable. What research can do is identify which **directions** are likely to be the **most profitable avenues** for teachers to explore.”

**William (2016)**

# Want More Information About Coaching?

*I'm always happy to talk with individual schools and advise on both in-house training options and implementation strategy.*

- Email me: [cmunro@growthcoaching.com.au](mailto:cmunro@growthcoaching.com.au)
- Connect with me on Twitter: [@CmunroOz](https://twitter.com/CmunroOz)
- Access coaching in education **resources** here:  
<http://www.growthcoaching.com.au/resources/articles?country=au>
- Request a free **Coaching in Education Newsletter** and find out about our programs on our website:  
[www.growthcoaching.com.au](http://www.growthcoaching.com.au)

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