

COACHING & REFLECTING

Pocketbook



A pocketful of practical
skills and strategies for
improving performance
and raising attainment at
every level in school

**Peter Hook, Ian McPhail
& Andy Vass**

Copyright Notice – Please Read

The contents of this electronic book (text and graphics) are protected by international copyright law. All rights reserved.

The copying, reproduction, duplication, storage in a retrieval system, distribution (including by email, fax or other electronic means), publication, modification or transmission of the book are **STRICTLY PROHIBITED** unless otherwise agreed in writing between the purchaser/licensee and Teachers' Pocketbooks.

Parts of this electronic book may be printed out by the purchaser/licensee, for their personal use only. Multiple printing/photocopying is **STRICTLY PROHIBITED** unless otherwise agreed in writing between the purchaser and Teachers' Pocketbooks.

If you are in any doubt about the permitted use of this electronic book, or believe that it has come into your possession by means that contravene this copyright notice, please contact us.



TEACHERS' POCKETBOOKS

LAUREL HOUSE, STATION APPROACH,
ALRESFORD, HAMPSHIRE SO24 9JH UK

Telephone: +44 (0)1962 735573
Fax: +44 (0)1962 733637
Email: sales@teacherspocketbooks.co.uk
Web: www.teacherspocketbooks.co.uk

Teachers' Pocketbooks is an imprint of Management Pocketbooks Ltd.

Enjoy the read!

To help you move around this e-Pocketbook we have included a full '**Table of Contents**', with links that take you instantly to the chapter or page of your choice. Be sure to reveal the Table of Contents within the navigation pane (sidebar) of your file viewer.

In addition, we have **embedded links** within the book itself, denoted by coloured arrows ► and text that is underlined. These embedded links will get you swiftly from the Contents page to a specific chapter and from **cross-references** to other parts of the book. A link at the foot of the page ◀ will get you back to where you started.

Other features that will help improve your reading experience include word search, zoom, page view options and printing (see *Copyright Notice* on the previous page).

It is well worth spending some time familiarising yourself with your document viewer in order to get the best from this e-Pocketbook.

Enjoy your reading!

COACHING & REFLECTING

Pocketbook



**By Peter Hook,
Ian McPhail &
Andy Vass**

Cartoons:
Phil Hailstone

Published by:



Teachers' Pocketbooks

Laurel House, Station Approach,
Alresford, Hampshire SO24 9JH, UK

Tel: +44 (0)1962 735573

Fax: +44 (0)1962 733637

E-mail: sales@teacherspocketbooks.co.uk

Website: www.teacherspocketbooks.co.uk

*Teachers' Pocketbooks is an imprint of
Management Pocketbooks Ltd.*

With thanks to Brin Best for his help in launching the series.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publishers.

© Peter Hook, Ian McPhail and
Andy Vass 2006.

This edition published 2006.

Reprinted 2007, 2008, 2010, 2012.

ISBN 978 1 903776 71 1

E-book ISBN 978 1 908284 88 4

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Design, typesetting and graphics by Eflex Ltd.
Printed in UK

Contents

Page



Introduction

Begin with success in mind, what is coaching?, what's in it for me?, case study, where can it be useful?, what isn't coaching?, the coaching continuum, agreed roles, what is good coaching?

7 ►



A Solutions Focus

Changing conversations, feel the difference, solutions-focused thinking vs. problems-focused thinking, case study

19 ►



Solution-focused Tools

Exceptions, miracle question, scaling, case study

29 ►



Coaching Skills

Including: building rapport and trust, a coaching structure – the COACH approach, asking questions, listening at different levels, silences, giving feedback, judgement, opinion, advice, general talk and compliments

43 ►



Setting Goals

Why?, whose?, preferred futures, longer-term and interim goals, criteria for effective goals, turning concerns into goals, 'video talk', example questions for colleagues and children

71 ►



Developing Coaching in Your Own School

Cost or investment?, a touch of realism, some considerations, individual coaching, paired coaching, three-way coaching cycles, expanding the impact, positive deviance and unconscious competence

85 ►



Reflective Practitioner Groups

Connecting coaching and reflection, an explanation of the facilitator's role and the use of protocols, five examples of RP group protocols

107 ►



Further Information

Training, next steps, recommended reading and useful websites

123 ►

Foreword

Coaching is very much part of the language of education today. Strategies from the DfE and programmes from the National College for School Leadership reference and endorse coaching as a method of school improvement at all levels.

One of the reasons that coaching, as a development tool, fits so comfortably in schools is that it has a strong focus on individual learning. Also, because coaching is about holding high quality conversations it taps into the strong interpersonal skills that most teachers naturally demonstrate.

This book explores coaching as a specific set of skills that can be flexibly applied, whether you're doing the coaching or being coached, to help you:

- Connect to your strengths and feel valued as an individual
- Feel confident and supported
- Achieve goals which are relevant to you

Foreword

Schools today operate in a climate where continual improvement is an expectation. To achieve and be able to **sustain** improvements, they need to build increased personal capacity in teachers and children alike. In other words, they must **maximise potential**.

By definition coaching is about maximising potential. It seeks to develop people, helping them to become 'even better' and more 'consciously competent' in their roles.

Set within a relationship of trust and confidence, and having a focus on solutions and personal growth, coaching enables improvements in performance to be generated **internally** within the school and, therefore, to be easily shared with others. This is essentially what capacity building is.

Most schools would claim that people are our most important resource. Coaching offers one way of actually demonstrating that to be true.

Foreword

Because skilled coaching is largely about asking challenging and thought-provoking questions that lead towards positive outcomes, **coaching** and **reflecting** are **mutually supportive processes**.

Every teacher has examples from their own experience where the opportunity to discuss and reflect on their practice with colleagues has brought benefits, eg:

- Gaining a clearer perspective
- Resolving an issue of concern
- Exploring new ideas
- Feeling supported and affirmed in their practice
- Learning from other people's experience

In this book you will find several ground-breaking ideas to support you and your colleagues in reflective practice. You will also find that the coaching skills you gain from reading this book are equally effective in facilitating and adding value to the process of reflection.



Introduction



**A Solutions
Focus**



**Solution-
focused Tools**



Coaching Skills



Setting Goals



**Developing
Coaching in Your
Own School**



**Reflective
Practitioner
Groups**



**Further
Information**



Introduction

Begin with success in mind



We'd like to ask you a few questions because that's what coaches do. What happens when you imagine that this book is really useful to you? That it enhances your ability to hold influential and motivating conversations with colleagues, students and parents? That as a result of reading it now and dipping back in from time to time you become even more confident and even more effective in your work and maybe other areas of your life too?

*How will you recognise that this is happening?
What are you doing differently that pleases you? What else?
Who will notice that things are different and even better?
What are they noticing? What else?
What do these positive changes tell you about yourself?*

These are **solution-focused (SF)** coaching questions. They encourage you to think about future success. Our coaching approach in this book is solution focused.



Copyright protected – Teachers' Pocketbooks

What is coaching?



A definition which fits with our approach is:

*'Unlocking a person's potential to maximise their performance.
It is about helping them learn rather than teaching them.'*

John Whitmore. (See reading recommendations, page 126.)

Coaching seeks to create change. The process of change begins with conversations. These conversations could be ones we have with ourselves (self-talk) or those with colleagues. Often they are a combination of the two. However, it is VERY difficult to ask yourself a question that you don't already know the answer to.

A skilled coach will ask you questions which respectfully challenge your thinking with the aim of helping you to set and achieve goals that help you become even better.

It is the skill of knowing how to ask the most useful question at the most appropriate time and in an empowering and thought-provoking way that distinguishes a really good coach.

What's in it for me?



Coaching, when skilfully and respectfully used, is a powerful learning experience. This is true whether you are coaching or being coached. Teachers who have been involved in coaching with us describe the benefits variously as:

- Thinking more clearly about things
- Feeling valued and listened to
- Recognising and appreciating their skills and resources
- Increasing their range of options
- Clarifying how they'd like things to be as they get even better
- Understanding what they need to do to get there
- Becoming more creative and optimistic
- Feeling more positive and confident about change

Importantly, high quality SF coaching will always place your agenda at the centre of the process making it empowering and motivational.

What's in it for me?



Case study

'Two years ago I was appointed deputy head of a school in extremely challenging circumstances. I had attended a conference on solution-focused coaching just prior to my new appointment and found the ideas a revelation, both in their simplicity and in the potency of their application to school improvement.

I read widely and received additional coach training so that I was not only coaching as an integral part of my role, but becoming confident enough in the knowledge and skills of SF coaching to lead training for other teachers. Although I had spent the previous five years working with challenging schools across an LA, this was a very different experience and one I approached with a radically altered philosophy.

In the past, when working with subject leaders to help them develop I was really quite directional. I was ready with well-intentioned advice backed up with modelling and then monitoring. It was a 'here's what you need to do and here's how you do it' model – efficient and effective but, ultimately, very one-sided and often short-term. Once the monitoring and support were removed, progress slowed down and occasionally ceased.