

# Cognitive Coaching

*a foundation for*  
Renaissance  
Schools



by Arthur L. Costa  
and Robert J. Garmston

---

# **Cognitive Coaching: A Foundation for Renaissance Schools**

**Arthur L. Costa, Ed.D.  
and  
Robert J. Garmston, Ed.D.**

**Professors Emeriti  
California State University, Sacramento  
and  
Co-Directors  
The Institute for Intelligent Behavior**

---

## CREDITS

Excerpt from "Fighting for Life in Third Period," in *Diversity in the Classroom: A Casebook for Teachers and Teacher Educators*, copyright © 1993 by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. Reprinted by permission.

Quote from "Reflective Pedagogical Thinking: How Can We Promote it and Measure it?" in *Journal of Teacher Education*, Volume 41, Number 4, copyright © 1990 by Georgea M. Langer. Reprinted by permission.

Select material from "Linking Ways of Knowing With Ways of Being Practical," in *Curriculum Inquiry*, Volume 6, Number 3, copyright © 1978 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Reprinted by permission of John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Every effort has been made to contact copyright holders for permission to reprint borrowed material where necessary. We apologize for any oversights and would be happy to rectify them in future printings.

Copyright © 1994 by Christopher-Gordon Publishers, Inc.

All rights reserved. Except for review purposes, no part of this material protected by this copyright notice may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information and retrieval system, without the express written permission of the publisher or copyright owner.

Christopher-Gordon Publishers, Inc.  
1502 Providence Highway, Suite 12  
Norwood, MA 02062  
1-800-934-8322

Printed in the United States of America

20 21 22 23 EB 01 02 03 04

ISBN: 0-926842-37-4

## Foreward

In the late 1970s, I spent much of my research time studying interactions between supervisors and teachers. I noted that most of the literature in supervision was void of the personal, cognitive, and developmental nature of human interactions. My own work in developmental supervision was an attempt to address this void by putting humans, with all their magnificent complexities, into the supervision equation. I believed supervision should enhance the thinking of professional educators rather than make them conform to particular practices. My initial attempts were limited, though, and I knew that additional information, techniques, and skills were needed to move clinical supervision beyond the ordinary recipes, steps, and external procedures being advocated.

In the early 1980s, I came across the work of Art Costa and Bob Garmston. Many school practitioners raved to me about attending their workshops and using the information presented there to make practical applications to their work. I immediately set about making the acquaintance of Professors Costa and Garmston, realizing that they were onto something important in redefining supervision as “cognitive coaching.” Their command of counseling, clinical supervision, organizational development, teaching effectiveness, and cognitive psychology was impressive. Little did I know that their work was a harbinger of new educational demands, expectations, and reforms in the 1990s.

As my own research moved away from individual supervisor-supervisee interactions to a focus on schools working together for democratic renewal, I saw even more clearly the importance of Costa and Garmston’s work in remaking teaching as a dignified and thoughtful profession. I am so pleased that they have put their years of studies and applications into a highly accessible book for all school leaders: teachers, supervisors, and administrators.

Readers will find *Cognitive Coaching* to be an intellectually stimulating resource for assisting individuals and groups in becoming more thoughtful and purposeful about the core of our profession: teaching and learning. If I were asked to refer school practitioners to the definitive guide for enriching

thinking about teaching practice, this would be the source. The challenge of remaking public schools to educate all students must begin with each one of us. Costa and Garmston show us how to move from theory to practice. They give us direction for how we as individuals can think, speak, and behave toward one another to create the thoughtful educational environments that all our children deserve.

Carl Glickman

*Professor, Department of Educational Leadership*

*Executive Director, Program for School Improvement*

*University of Georgia at Athens*

## *An Introductory Note*

This book takes the reader on an extensive intellectual (and emotional) tour, with many interesting side trips and many marvelous opportunities to do some broad-gauged idea-collecting and shopping along the way. There is, however, a well-defined destination and your tour guides have a surpassing command of the terrain plus a passionate commitment to it. No reader can travel this journey without being invigorated.

Writing an introduction for a book written by personal friends is a bit tricky, since one must balance objectivity (one's obligation to the profession at large) with the admiration that has built up over years of colleagueship. Fortunately in this case, my cognitive responses to the material were never in conflict with my cheerleading tendencies: this is, simply stated, a very fine book. I envy the readers, especially those in early stages of the professional awareness that these authors seek to define, who will be transported to the high terrain on which tomorrow's schools—Renaissance schools—will hopefully be built.

The three goals of Cognitive Coaching as identified by Art and Bob are TRUST, LEARNING AND HOLONOMY. The latter term, borrowed from Arthur Koestler, is skillfully used to represent the twin goals of individual autonomy, on the one hand, and collaboration (working interdependently with others), on the other. The simultaneity of these behaviors is seen as crucial, and the coach's role in helping individuals to thrive, not only on their own terms but also as members of the professional community, is a recurring theme in the book.

The history and underpinnings of cognitive coaching are well developed in the opening chapter. The stage is set for a major message for coaches, namely that their work mediates individual growth toward the "five states of mind" on which the volume concentrates: efficacy, flexibility, craftsmanship, consciousness, and interdependence. These states of mind, sources of holonomy, are particularly developed in the seventh chapter and illustrated in the eighth.

The concept of renaissance refers to reinvention; new vision; a new paradigm. The term, which is built into the book title, is predominant in the text and serves as a symbol for the vitalization and redefinition of schools as well as the human beings who serve in them, or are served by them. The term is apt, since most persons use "renaissance" in a positive and salutatory manner. All the same, it may be useful for me to observe that the wonderful schools Art and Bob seek to describe and promote have never before existed. Rather than a "rebirth" of excellent schooling, they are in fact anticipating an educational genesis or origination. Granted, many elements of intelligent and enlightened practice can be found in educational history, but full-fledged and authentic models are yet to be developed. We should all be grateful to Art and Bob for providing such practical and persuasive advice as we pursue this developmental opportunity.

Having been continuously involved for more than thirty years in definitions and applications of growth-oriented supervision, or coaching (much the better term), I found myself stretched and re-educated by much that is in this volume. Art and Bob take us to a higher level, or in their terms they have made a quantum leap, in understanding the role and the power of coaching. The adjective "cognitive" is very appropriate, and in addition the dimensions of trust and caring within the coaching function seem increasingly relevant when elaborated by these obviously caring authors. This book reads well. It is a nice mixture of informal, conversational material and scholarly depth. The breadth and the currency of referenced works confirm that the authors are well in command of the expanding literature. The skill with which they have selected quotes and ideas from that literature confirms their excellent sense of what really matters as we think about improving the educational world we inhabit. That world will be a better place if we take their views seriously.

Robert H. Anderson  
*Anchin Center Professor*  
*University of South Florida*



## *Origins of Cognitive Coaching*

Cognitive coaching has its source in the confluence of the professional experiences of Arthur L. Costa and Robert J. Garmston, who both began their educational careers in the late 1950s, a time of great ferment in American education.

In the early 1970s, Nabuo Watanabe, then Director of Curriculum Services of the Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools Office, convened a group of California educators to develop a strategy for assisting school administrators in their understanding and application of humanistic principles of teacher evaluation. Art was a member of that group. Based on the clinical supervision model of Cogan and Goldhammer, the group outlined the basic structure of the pre- and post-conference. They also identified three goals of evaluation: trust, learning, and autonomy, goals and processes that foreshadowed key concepts in cognitive coaching.

At about the same time, Bob was a consultant and principal for the Arabian American Oil Company Schools in Saudi Arabia. He was implementing a system-wide innovation in computer assisted individualized instruction which cast the teacher in the roles of facilitator and mediator for student learning. Simultaneously, he and his colleagues were applying the pioneer work in clinical supervision developed by Cogan, Goldhammer, and Anderson at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Additionally, Bob was teaching communication courses in Parent and Teacher Effectiveness Training, developed by psychologist Thomas Gordon and a forerunner to some of the nonjudgmental verbal skills found in cognitive coaching today.

In his early years as a teacher and curriculum consultant, Art was highly influenced by leaders in education and cognitive development. Art's doctoral work at the University of California, Berkeley, emphasized curriculum, instruction, and developmental psychology. He conducted courses based on the curriculum and instructional theories of J. Richard Suchman, Hilda Taba, Jerome Bruner, and Reuven Feuerstein. Bob's early pedagogical mentors included an exceptional group of professors at San Francisco State University, Santa Rosa Center, who operated as an interdis-



ciplinary team and the national leaders in humanistic psychology. After 20 years in the roles of teacher, principal, director of instruction, and district superintendent, Bob completed a doctorate at the University of Southern California with an emphasis on educational administration, sociology, and staff development.

About the same time that the emphases of cognition, instruction, and supervision were beginning to coalesce for Art, Bob was piecing together principles of counseling practices and strategies of group dynamics for school improvement. He joined the faculty at California State University as Professor of Educational Administration, and taught courses in curriculum development, school improvement, supervision, and neuro-linguistics. Art was also teaching curriculum and supervision of instruction at California State University, and he and Bob were assigned to the same office. They developed the first formal expression of cognitive coaching one summer afternoon while sailing near Sacramento, and that December they tested their ideas with staff developers in a presentation at a statewide conference. The enthusiastic reception led to further conceptual work and publications as well as invitations to present seven-day "trainings" to educators.

By the summer of 1985, it became clear that the interest in cognitive coaching far exceeded Art and Bob's capacities to inform others about it. This stimulated the formation of the Institute for Intelligent Behavior, an association of persons dedicated to enabling educational and corporate agencies to support their members' growth toward the five states of mind. Currently, six Senior Associates and approximately 30 Associates provide seminar programs in cognitive coaching to interested school districts and private-sector organizations throughout North America, Europe, and the Far East.

For information concerning Cognitive Coaching seminars and other services provided by the Institute, contact:

Institute for Intelligent Behavior  
720 Grizzly Peak Blvd.  
Berkeley, CA 94708  
(510) 528-8678

## *Acknowledgments*

This book evolved from the work of many people, particularly Senior Associates of the Institute for Intelligent Behavior who have contributed to the continuing evolution of cognitive coaching concepts and practices.

Diane Zimmerman, principal at West Davis Intermediate School in Davis, California, contributed to our original thinking when she was a graduate student with us at California State University in Sacramento. She and other Senior Associates continue to test, refine, and develop these concepts as they conduct seminars in cognitive coaching, work directly in schools, and provide assistance to educators throughout North America.

Together, we and the Senior Associates have dedicated ourselves to living the principles of the Renaissance organization described in this book. We feel especially fortunate to be working with and learning from such exceptional people. They each enjoy demanding roles in a variety of educational pursuits in addition to their Institute responsibilities.

Bill Baker, Director of Group Dynamics Associates, provides management services to the Institute. Formerly of the Alameda County Superintendent of Schools office, he and Stan Shalit have provided the most concentrated and comprehensive cognitive coaching training services in any location to date.

Laura Lipton, Director of Educational Consulting Services in Yorktown, New York, has extensive expertise in instruction, thinking skills, and organizational development. She constantly focuses us on the critical questions we should be posing and links the group's explorations to current literature in a variety of fields.

Peg Luidens is an educational consultant from Holland, Michigan, who, in addition to cognitive coaching, specializes in helping teachers develop expertise in the writing process and is deeply involved in leading several school restructuring efforts. She adds keen intelligence, grace, and invaluable courage and social consciousness to the group.

John Prieskorn is President of Leadership in Human Behavior, a consulting firm specializing in self-esteem for adults and leadership development programs. John brings to the Institute his gifts in neurolinguistics and his rich experience as a superintendent. He skillfully redirects us to practical matters whenever we get lost in obtuse theoretical rhetoric.

Bruce Wellman is Director of Science Resources, a consulting firm in Lincoln, Massachusetts. He consults with school systems, professional organizations, and publishers on teaching methods and materials in science, thinking skills, skillful teaching, and facilitating learning organizations. He keeps us laughing, committed to quality, and focused on the big picture.

Taken together, this group of senior associates is as bright, talented, and diverse a group as either of us has ever had the pleasure of working with. We are extremely grateful for our association with them, what we learn together, and what we create together.

A host of other colleagues have added to our understandings: Linda Lambert and Marilyn Tabor have made special and enduring contributions; Bill Sommers has been generous with editing, quotations, and bibliographic material. We have learned from each of our esteemed colleagues in the "Leather Apron Club," too numerous to mention, but they know who they are. Rosemarie Liebmann has assisted via her doctoral dissertation and has offered validation through her conversations with Peter Senge and research of Arthur Koestler's concept of holonomy. We also wish to acknowledge and celebrate the growing numbers of dedicated people who are infusing the principles and practices of cognitive coaching in their classrooms, schools, districts, and communities.

We are indebted to scholars, practitioners, and researchers in many fields whose work has informed us, raised provocative questions, and guided our search. Most notably, we would like to thank Carl Glickman, at the University of Georgia, for his scholarship, inspiration, modeling, encouragement, and friendship.

Anne Meek graciously donated her time in editing an early version of the book, René Bahrenfuss saw us through

several later versions, and Ardie Christian, Debbi Miller, and Mary Yaeger gave untold hours of professional assistance in formatting, typing, and correcting numerous drafts of the manuscript. We are grateful for their patience and skills. Undoubtedly, the two persons who have been the most patient with us, and have continuously extended their support and love, are our wives, Nancy and Sue.

—Art Costa and Bob Garmston  
November 1993

## Contents

<b>Foreward by Carl Glickman .....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>An Introductory Note by Robert H. Anderson .....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Origins of Cognitive Coaching .....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>Acknowledgments .....</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>1 What Is Cognitive Coaching? .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 Basics of the Coaching Process .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>3 Developing and Maintaining Trust .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>4 Flexibility in Coaching .....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>5 Cognition and Instruction .....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>6 Coaching Tools for Cognition .....</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>7 Achieving Holonomy .....</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>8 Assessing the Effects of Cognitive Coaching .....</b>	<b>153</b>
<b>9 Renaissance Schools As Holonomous Organizations .....</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix A: A Metacognitive Strategy for Setting Aside Bias in Cross-Cultural Communications .....</b>	<b>211</b>
<b>Appendix B: Teachers and Time .....</b>	<b>220</b>
<b>Appendix C: The Language of Coaching: Questioning .....</b>	<b>222</b>
<b>Appendix D: Some Verbal Strategies .....</b>	<b>226</b>
<b>Appendix E: Taxonomies to Assess Growth in Reflectivity .....</b>	<b>230</b>
<b>Index .....</b>	<b>237</b>

## What Is Cognitive Coaching?

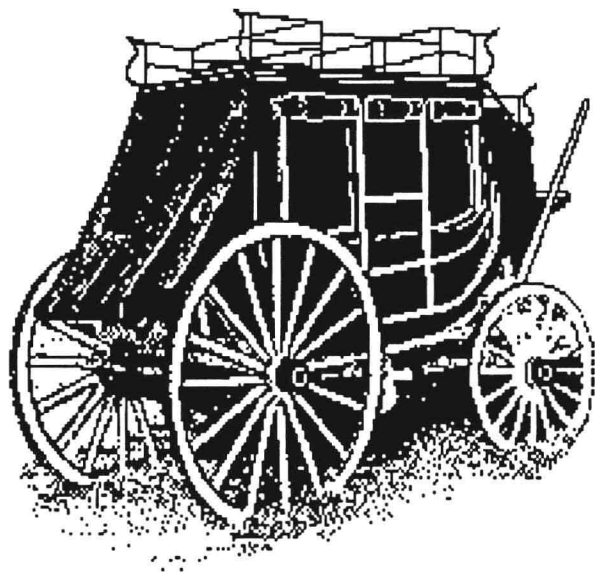
*The Butterfly Effect: A butterfly stirring the air today in Peking can transform storm systems next month in New York.<sup>1</sup>*

Like the tiny air disturbances created by the butterfly's wings, very small and often invisible adjustments to a system can radically redirect its entire course. A physical therapist, for example, will sometimes spend an entire session massaging a foot, knowing that the spine, muscles, and tendons will make corresponding adjustments toward alignment in the week that follows.

Schools and educational organizations are also systems, influenced by a wide range of dynamics that shape the direction, capacities, and production of those who work within them. Enlightened educators who seek to influence far beyond the moment create, ever so gently, minuscule turbulences like those of the butterfly's wings. Cognitive coaching is one such consistent, positive disturbance that can bring profound changes to the classroom, school, district, and community.

## Metaphors for Coaching

Think of the term *coaching*, and you may envision an athletic coach, but we have quite a different metaphor. To us, coaching is a conveyance, like a stagecoach. *"To coach means to convey a valued colleague from where he or she is to where he or she wants to be."*<sup>2</sup> Skillful cognitive coaches apply specific strategies to enhance another person's perceptions, decisions, and intellectual functions. Changing these inner thought processes is prerequisite to improving overt behaviors that, in turn, enhance student learning.



Cognitive coaching is a nonjudgmental process—built around a planning conference, observation, and a reflecting conference. Anyone in the educational setting can become a cognitive coach—teachers, administrators, department chairs, or support personnel. A coaching relationship may be established between teachers and teachers, administrators and teachers, and/or administrators and fellow administrators. When a cognitive coaching relationship is established between two professionals with similar roles, or *peers*, it can be referred to as *peer coaching*.



In an increasing number of educational communities, custodians, school secretaries, bus drivers, parents, students, and cafeteria workers are learning the skills of cognitive coaching. In one Michigan school district, the director of maintenance coaches an elementary principal, who in turn coaches a teacher. While it is important to recognize the value of cognitive coaching for everyone in the educational community, we have chosen to use the principal and teacher relationship to illustrate the coaching process.

### Three Goals

Cognitive coaching is organized around three major goals:

- establishing and maintaining *trust*, an assured reliance on the character, ability, or strength of someone or something;
- facilitating mutual *learning*, which is the engagement and transformation of mental processes and perceptions;
- and enhancing growth toward *holonomy*,<sup>3</sup> which we define in two parts: individuals acting *autonomously* while simultaneously acting *interdependently* with the group.

Developing and maintaining trust is fundamental to achieving the other two goals because it creates a safe atmosphere where learning and change can occur. Trust is not an end in itself, but it is prerequisite for success in the coaching relationship. We discuss the issue of trust in greater depth in Chapter 3.

Learning—by the teacher *and* the coach—is perhaps the obvious goal of cognitive coaching. Cognitive coaches encourage and support individuals as they move beyond their present capacities into new behaviors and skills. To achieve the goal of learning, the coaching process incorporates the basic principles of knowledge construction by Jerome Bruner, Jean Piaget, and Hilda Taba; the adult learning theories of Malcolm Knowles; human development sequences based upon the work of Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, Frances Fuller, and Eric Erickson; the neurolinguistic studies of Richard Bandler and John Grinder; and the mediational theories of Reuven Feuerstein. Chapter 5 details the coach's role in facilitating learning.

The heart provides a useful example of the third goal, holonomy, which is derived from two Greek words: *holos* meaning whole and *on* meaning part. The heart performs a unique function with its own intricate rhythm and pattern of functioning. Even when it is transferred to another body, the heart asserts its characteristic pattern of activity. Yet the heart's activities are regulated or modified by the autonomic nervous system, hormones, and other influences. The individuality of the heart operates within the wholeness of a larger system, and, in turn, affects the entire system.

Likewise, the most effective teachers are autonomous individuals—self-asserting, self-perpetuating, and self-modifying. However, teachers are also part of a larger whole—the school—and are influenced by its attitudes, values, and behaviors. (And in turn, the school is an autonomous unit interacting within the influence of the district and the community.)

The goal of developing holonomy consists of two outcomes: parts and whole. The first outcome is to support people in becoming autonomous and self-actualizing. The second outcome is for members of the school community to function interdependently, recognizing their capacity to both self-regulate and be regulated by the norms, values, and concerns of the larger system. And, of equal importance, recognizing their capacity to influence the values, norms and practices of the entire system. Five states of mind provide the energy sources for the actualization of holonomy, which we will discuss more in Chapter 6: efficacy, flexibility, craftsmanship, consciousness, and interdependence.

### *Toward a Renaissance Definition of Coaching*

*The current management culture, with its focus on controlling behavior, needs to be replaced by a management culture in which skillful coaching creates the climate, environment, and context that empowers employees and teams to generate results. . . . Coaching...that conversation which creates the new management culture, not as a technique within the*