

Coached UPDATE

AUGUST 2022

Enhancing the quality of conversations in education communities

Short Read

TIME TO READ: 5MINS

HELPING PEOPLE REDISCOVER WELLBEING IN WORK

Staff wellbeing in schools has arguably never been more topical with a teaching profession currently globally awash in overwhelm.

The 2021 Australian Principal Occupational Health and Wellbeing Survey found Burnout and Cognitive Stress at their highest levels since the survey began with the most significant stress facing school leaders being "sheer quantity of work".

So, how can a people-centric school leader effectively enhance wellbeing in work for every employee in their school?

Right now, right away.

Without weighing staff further down with new or additional work, or expensive, cumbersome performance frameworks that require significant navigation to understand let alone implement? In the day-to-day realities of severe teacher shortages, cascading systemic demands that feel more like a flood, and the increasing multi-layered support needs being called out by traumatised school communities?

With communication continuing to be the #1 issue affecting employee wellbeing, for school leaders, getting people 'on the same page', even for positive change, has become a lot more complicated. And feelings of failure, fear, isolation, hopelessness and self-doubt can significantly erode any leader's attempts to lead with clarity and purpose.

Few would argue that the way we interact at work can have a positive or negative impact on the wellbeing of others. Few would argue that the way talk occurs in schools matters to the wellbeing of our students, our staff and to the reputation of the school within its community.

As merchants of literacy, talk is the educator's first currency. Words are our tools of trade, or weapons, depending on how we choose to use them, and we make those choices every day. My words, your words and 'our' words matter.

When we workshop how talk occurs in schools, four main areas consistently emerge - talking to, talking with, talking about and talking at. These can be depicted as a quadrant and can be powerfully mapped to any issue being talked about in a school.

As with coaching, powerful questions inform a strategy to cut through the overwhelm for school leaders seeking to enhance the wellbeing of their staff in work.

Talking to and talking with naturally emerge as the most desirable talking activities in schools. Talking includes transactions, introductions, parent enquiries, inductions, instructing students and taking coffee or canteen orders. For many staff, being talked to means being included - at minimum standard.

When staff begin to list talking with activities in schools, the atmosphere warms, and the importance of trusting relationships surfaces.

Coaching always presents early as a highly valued talking with activity, helpful for developing a side by side, high-trust organisational culture. Coaching conversations, described by Dr Jim Knight as "unpacking purpose in life-giving ways", and investing in coaching, creates an irresistible invitation for positivity to run rampant through the school and achieve stickability that may not be realised by a leader working alone. Coaching as a talking with activity creates the opportunity for deep listening and being curious, tentative and humble, reducing potential knowledge-experience and status gaps.

Particularly relevant in talking to and talking with is, conversely, silence. In coaching, silence allows the holding of space for a coachee to do their deepest work. Silence does not mean the space is empty. The words are there, whether spoken or unspoken; the pictures that rise to the conscious mind require expression and interpretation. Silence is conversation's secret friend.

Talking about and talking at always present, at first, with potentially negative implications. Talking at is called out as a frustrated leadership behaviour, usually resulting in the most aligned team members experiencing anxiety around 'is it me?' while the targeted group continues blissfully unaware.

Talking about activity is most likely to negatively impact on wellbeing. Archetypal labels such as the 'runt of the litter' or 'chosen one' are both products of talking about in the workplace, assigning status and value without permission. Gossip and being talked about behind one's back are regularly listed as talking about activities that, whether deliberate or not, cause harm, hurt and isolation.

When we realise that the way we choose to talk can change the way we work, what we work on and our wellbeing in work, the invitation to amplify positive talk in schools becomes pressing.

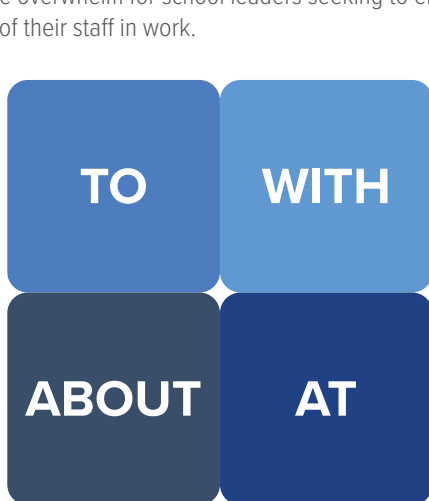
The super-power of this framework is its transferability, portability and generativity to personal, as well as professional, domains. It offers a solutions-focused approach to find out what's wanted, what's working and what's next (Jackson & McKergow, 2007). While the quadrants are neutral in themselves, where the talk originates in the quadrants seems to inform its probable positive or negative impact.

For a school wanting to improve staff wellbeing, it can be helpful to use this framework to collectively consider its main issues, usually what people are talking about, identify strengths and interests, canvass the thinking of all and invite new, more energising contribution and participation from everyone in the organisation.

The leader's lot is to take their school, and staff, from where they are to where they need to be - deep work that can be nocturnally interruptive. For the leader who co-creates the conditions for staff to find increased meaning and wellbeing in their work, benefits include clawing back teaching and learning time and better distribution of work as part of 'the way we do things here'.

Why wouldn't you be an educational leader?

References:
Institute for Positive Psychology. (2021). The Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey 2021 Data. Australian Catholic University, Australia.
Jackson, P.Z. & McKergow, M. (2007). The Solutions Focus – Making Coaching and Change Simple. (2nd edition). Nicholas Brealey International, London.



Debbie Lowe (2021)

- Talking to:**
- How do we talk to people at work? What do we talk to people at work about?
- Talking with:**
- How do we talk with people at work? What is this talk like compared to the other quadrants?
- Talking at:**
- How do we talk at people at work? What does this type of talk sound like? What is its impact?
- Talking about:**
- What do we talk about at work? What forms does this type of talk take? What are we talking about at work? Are better options than talking about available?

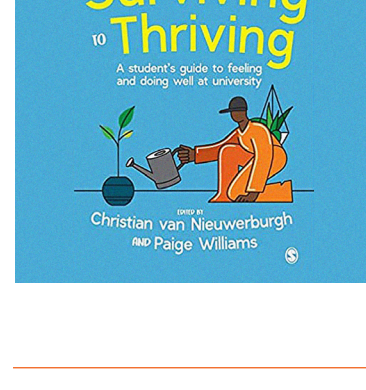
Debbie Lowe, Senior Consultant, GCI

Resources



Coaching in Education Podcast

Our featured resource is the latest episode of our GCI Coaching in Education podcast.



FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING AT UNIVERSITY

From surviving to thriving. A student's guide to feeling and doing well at university. Join Richard Reid in conversation with our very own Global Director – Professor Christian Van Nieuwerburgh, where in this episode they take a sidestep into the field of positive psychology to discuss Christian's latest book, co-edited by Paige Williams. Listen in as they consider how university students can access strategies, insights and hacks from some of the leading academics in the field of positive psychology as they navigate their way not only through university life but in their life beyond education as well.

[Listen to the Podcast here.](#)

TOWARDS A 'WAY OF BEING'

The most effective coaches are humble.

Humility is an important attribute for a coach. Without humility, it is difficult to enter into equal relationships. Humility allows a person to constantly be a learner. Status games have no place in the coaching arena.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Upcoming Courses



REGISTRATION FOR THE FOLLOWING ONLINE AND FACE-TO-FACE COURSES IS CLOSING SOON:



- **The Impact Cycle**
Delivered by GCI in partnership with the Instructional Coaching Group (ICG), this 2 day course aims to support educators in establishing instructional coaching cycles that lead to improved teaching and student learning. The course is for anyone who works alongside teachers to help them develop their practice. The Impact Cycle also provides educational leaders with a model of instructional leadership that enables teacher agency. Hear about the course from ICG's Senior Partner [Jim Knight](#). For course dates and to register, click [here](#)

• Online Coaching Accreditation Program

Our flagship coach training course with Prof. Christian van Nieuwerburgh, delivered fully ONLINE over 6 months with a GLOBAL cohort and a pathway to individual European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) credentials. Hurry, our next cohort is commencing this **September!** For more information and to secure your place, click [here](#)

<p>Online:</p> <p>A Coaching Approach to Mentoring Commencing 7 September 2022 - 1 Day workshop*</p> <p>Online Coaching Accreditation Program FEATURED Commencing 28 September 2022 - 6 Month Program</p> <p>Introduction to Leadership Coaching Intensive FEATURED 6 x 2hr online workshops - 8:00am - 10:00am and 11:00am - 1:00pm over 3 days (AEDT) 5 - 7 October 2022</p> <p>A Coaching Approach to Managing Challenging Conversations 30 August 2022</p>	<p>Coaching and Supervision Scheduled to suit you</p> <p>Solutions Focus Coaching Masterclass 13 & 20 October 2022</p> <p>Introduction to Leadership Coaching UK - Introduction to Leadership Coaching 4:00pm - 6:00pm Weekly workshops (BST/GMT)</p> <p>Better Conversations 2 x 1 Day online workshops - 6 x 2hr sessions 9:00am - 5:00pm (AEDT) 25 - 26 August 2022</p>
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*Please ensure you meet eligibility requirements of the course prior to registering.

[Click here for NZ courses](#)

<p>In-person:</p> <p>Coaching Accreditation Program Phase 1-3 (4-days) Perth - Commencing 18 August 2022 Geelong - Commencing 22 August 2022 FEATURED Brisbane - Commencing 29 August 2022 Sydney & Melbourne - Commencing 31 August 2022 FEATURED</p> <p>The Impact Cycle Program 2-day Adelaide - Commencing 18 August 2022 Brisbane - Commencing 18 August 2022 Perth - Commencing 8 September 2022</p> <p>Solutions Focus Coaching Masterclass Brisbane - Commencing 22 August 2022</p>	<p>Introduction to Leadership Coaching 2-day Alice Springs - Commencing 18 August 2022 Perth - Commencing 22 August 2022 Northern Ireland - Commencing 29 September 2022</p> <p>A Coaching Approach to Managing Challenging Conversations Perth - Commencing 8 August 2022 Brisbane - Commencing 12 August 2022</p>
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Be sure to **click on the dates** to visit the registration pages!

Complimentary Professional Learning



FREE Curious Convos Webinar: True Transformation with Ben Calleja

When: 30th August 2022, 7:00pm AEST

Join Ben Calleja, Director of Growth Coaching International in WA, SA & NT, as he discusses how **embedding coaching** across all levels of an organisation can **create lasting change**. More details to follow shortly.

[Register Now](#)

Coming Soon

#Coached2023 | coachedconference.com

7TH - 9TH MARCH 2023

An **online event** bringing together **global education communities**

GCI is pleased to announce the Coaching in Education Conference is returning on **7-9 March 2023**. This will be a completely **online, global** event running across multiple time zones!

Further to this, we are also thrilled to confirm our first three keynote speakers of **#Coached2023**:

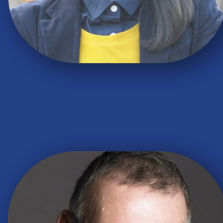
MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER

Michael Bungay Stanier is at the forefront of shaping how organisations around the world make being coach-like an essential leadership competency. His book *The Coaching Habit* is the best-selling coaching book of this century, with over a million copies sold and thousands of five-star reviews on Amazon. In 2019, he was named the #1 thought leader in coaching.



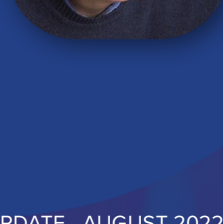
HAESUN MOON

Haesun Moon, Ph.D., is a communication scientist, an educator, and author of *Coaching A to Z: The Extraordinary Use of Ordinary Words* and several collaborative books. She cares about people experiencing better conversations at home and at work - and she does that by training, coaching, and consulting. She believes that conversations can change the world, and she defines this process as hosting dialogic conditions in which people participate to imagineer and perform their preferred change.



JIM KNIGHT

Jim Knight, Senior Partner of the Instructional Coaching Group, is a research associate at the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning. He has spent more than two decades studying professional learning and instructional coaching, and written several books on the instructional coaching including *Instructional Coaching: A Partnership Approach to Improving Instruction* (2007), *Unmistakable Impact: A Partnership Approach for Dramatically Improving Instruction* (2011), *High-Impact Instruction* (2013), *Focus on Teaching* (2014), *Better Conversations* (2015), and *The Impact Cycle* (2018).



Stay tuned for further information and event announcements!

Express your interest via our site www.coachedconference.com