COGNITIVE COACHING[SM] IN RETROSPECT

WHY IT PERSISTS◦ [1]:

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What causes an innovation to evolve into an educational staple? What is it about some supervisory and professional development practices that sustains them over time? What distinguishes a fad that will fade from a fresh practice that will play many seasons?

In the February 1985 issue of *Educational Leadership*[2] we expressed our earliest thoughts about cognition, teaching and supervision. We described the "invisible" cognitive processes of instruction—what happens inside a teacher's head prior to, during and after teaching. We suggested that changing perceptions and cognition were prerequisite to enhancing instructional behaviors and we suggested coaching interventions intended to engage and transform teacher's thinking.

Eighteen years of development have occurred since that first article. Cognitive Coaching has been taught in university preparation courses for supervisors and administrators and used by thousands of teachers, administrators and staff developers in mentoring, supervision and professional development activities throughout the United States, several provinces in Canada and such disparate places as Latin America, Italy, New Zealand, Syria, Tanzania, Malaysia, Egypt, Israel, Singapore and Saudi Arabia. The first edition of *Cognitive Coaching: A Foundation for Renaissance Schools* has been translated into Arabic and Hebrew. Over 25 thousand copies of the book have been purchased and used in English speaking countries.

At this point in its history, Cognitive Coaching is burgeoning and is an influential model for mentoring, supervision, organizational culture, staff development and classroom instruction. A web search reveals 68,000-entries. What might be contributing to this rigor?

The purpose of this article is to reflect on what has been learned these past few years in an effort to explain the nature of the changes as they might relate to the question of sustainability. We will first, briefly, review the uniqueness of Cognitive Coaching and its mission, report the research, and disclose our most recent insights into the how Cognitive Coaching contributes to deep and permanent changes in teaching effectiveness and school cultures. Next we will share several possible reasons for the persistence and growth of Cognitive Coaching over nearly two decades.

The Roots of Cognitive Coaching

Cognitive Coaching's early roots were drawn from the work of Morris Cogan, Robert Goldhammer and Robert Anderson working at Harvard's Master of Arts in Teaching program in the mid 1950's. Prior to that time, supervisors did the talking and teachers did the listening. Cogan envisioned a "clinical supervision" model in which the purpose was "the development of professionally responsible teachers, who are analytic of their own performance, open to help from others and self-directing." [3] Later, Madeline Hunter borrowed the term "Clinical Supervision" and, using Cogan's structure (which had been conceptualized as early as 1925) of a pre conference, observation and post conference, modified the original practices to be more supervisor directed. As other approaches to supervision have been introduced, they too have been presented within the framework of clinical supervision until the term has lost its original meaning about the particular points of view and practices associated with its use. The practice of both Cogan's and Hunter's models have grown dim in recent years.

Most models, in time, expire. Pajak [4] notes that three original Clinical Supervision models appeared in the 1960's to early 1970's (Goldhammer, Mosher& Purpel, and Cogan), and two Humanistic/Artistic models from mid 1970 to early 1980's(Blumberg and Eisner). From early to mid 1980's three Technical/Didactic models appeared (Acheson & Gall, Hunter and Joyce & Showers. From the mid 1980's to mid 1990's eight Developmental/ Reflective Models appeared (Glickman, Costa & Garmston, Schon, Zeichjner & Liston, Garman, Smyth & Retallick, Bowers & Flinders and Waite).

Cognitive Coaching: A Research-Based Strategy

Numerous studies have investigated the benefits of Cognitive Coaching. [5]Various investigations examined the influence of Cognitive Coaching on teachers' thought processes, conceptual development and reflective thinking. Other studies examined the effects on teachers' self-directed learning, efficacy, craftsmanship, consciousness, flexibility and interdependence. Some studies investigated its effects on students, on school culture, and on the personal and professional lives of teachers. Further, studies examined the use of Cognitive Coaching in supervisory relationships, university classes, and teacher preparation programs. Briefly stated, following are eight major findings:

1. Cognitive Coaching was linked with increased student test scores and other student benefits.
2. Teachers grew in teaching efficacy.
3. Cognitive coaching impacted teacher thinking, causing teachers to be more reflective and to think in more complex ways.
4. Teachers were more satisfied with their positions and with their choice of teaching as a profession.
5. School cultures became more professional.
6. Teachers collaborated more.
7. Cognitive Coaching assisted teachers professionally.
8. Cognitive Coaching benefited teachers personally.

WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

Over the years, with the help of a large number of associates, we've continued to grow and change. We have refined our presentation strategies, become clearer about our purposes, and more able to adroitly articulate the beliefs, values, skills and maps basic to Cognitive Coaching.

Becoming Clearer about Vision and Mission

Originally, coaching goals were three: trust, learning and autonomy. Today we regard these as necessary pathways leading to a larger mission: to produce self-directed persons with the cognitive capacity for excellence both independently and as members of a community. Self-directed people are described as:

- *Self-Managing:* They approach tasks with clarity of outcomes, a strategic plan, and necessary data, and then draw from past experiences, anticipate success indicators, and create alternatives for accomplishment.

- *Self-Monitoring:* They establish metacognitive strategies to alert the perceptions for in-the-moment indicators of whether the strategic plan is working and to assist in the decision-making processes of altering the plan if it is not.
- *Self-Modifying:* They reflect on, evaluate, analyze, and construct meaning from the experience and apply the learning to future activities, tasks, and challenges.

Metacognitive Capabilities of a Mediator

We've become clearer about the meta-cognitive skills of coaching that produce the results described above. Four capabilities, or meta-cognitive skills, inform coach's moment-to-moment decisions in coaching and in other support functions. These are learnable and accelerate one's gaining effectiveness as a coach.

1. Knowing One's Intentions and Choosing Congruent Behaviors

The ultimate goal of Cognitive Coaching is to help an individual become self-mediating. With that end in mind, coaches are clear about their intentions in the moment and consciously choose behaviors that support those intentions. This capability includes the ability to calibrate the effects of coaching behaviors.

2. Setting Aside Unproductive Patterns of Listening, Responding, and Inquiring

Mediators monitor and manage their own listening skills by devoting their mental energies to the other person's verbal and nonverbal communications**.** To listen with such intensity requires holding in abeyance certain tempting, but unproductive behaviors that may interfere with the ability to hear and understand a colleague:

Autobiographical Listening occurs when the brain exercises its associative powers. The colleague's story stimulates us to think of our own experiences. Coaches set this type of listening aside as they become aware their attention has drifted into their own story.

Inquisitive Listening occurs when we become curious about portions of the story that are not relevant to the problem at hand. Knowing what information is and is not important is a critical characteristic of Cognitive Coaching. Curiosity about that which is not relevant to the mediational moment sinks the conversation into a hole of analytical minutiae and cause coach and teacher to lose sight of the larger issues.

Solution Listening is when we serve as a problem solver for another. This is appropriate when consulting but not coaching. When coaching, thinking of solution approaches as your colleague speaks interferes with understanding the situation from the colleague's perspective.

3. **Adjusting One's Own Style Preferences**

Distinct patterns of perceiving and processing information transcend race and culture, are found within males and females, and are observable at all age levels. Conscious of these differences, Cognitive Coaches strive to be flexible communicators. They recognize their own style preferences and adjust their communication to most effectively connect with others who may operate from different cognitive styles.

4. **Navigating Among and Within Coaching Maps and Support Functions**

Humans reference many mental maps to guide their interactions in different settings—problem-solving steps, brainstorming rules, algorithms, and other organizers for procedural knowledge. Three basic maps provide the Cognitive Coach with information about the functions of planning, reflecting, and problem resolving. Coaches make decisions within and across coaching maps, such as the sequence with which elements in a planning conversation are discussed. Coaches are likewise alert to a moment during a reflecting conversation, for example, when it might be appropriate to switch to a problem resolving conversation. In addition, clear intentions and knowing a range of support functions, informs decisions about when to consult, collaborate or coach. (See figure 1 below)

Neuro-Biochemical Affects of Authentic Paraphrasing

Little change has occurred in the interactive tools used for Cognitive Coaching. The response behaviors of rapport, acknowledging, paraphrasing, clarifying and providing data retain their importance as does questioning to mediate thinking. However, significant advancements in understanding neurological and chemical responses to authentic paraphrasing have occurred.

Safety, but not comfort, is prerequisite to reflective thought. Disequilibrium is a common gateway to learning. Even the most penetrating questions provide an ecosystem of cognitive and psychological safety when preceded by authentic paraphrasing.

How? Sensory signals from eye and ear travel first in the brain to the thalamus. They are routed from there in two directions – with lightening speed to the amygdala, a threat detector, then if safe, to the neocortex for the more ponderous processes of thinking. Therefore, if threat, fear, pain in even the most minute portions are perceived, neurological and chemical responses occur which prepare the system for survival, not reflection. With no threat, the input moves to the cortical regions where thinking can occur. Our current understanding is that an authentic paraphrase becomes a heroine in a neuro-biochemical drama. She releases neurotransmitters, allowing neurons to more effectively communicate; peptides, which carry 95 % of the body's information through the blood

stream; and hormones that make the brain more efficient, metaphorically allowing access to the cognitive centers. So, when posing cognitively demanding questions about one's practice, if there is no paraphrase, there will be no thought.

Paraphrasing, it turns out, is not a language skill. It is a listening skill, in supporting reflective thinking its three most common uses are: to clarify and acknowledge, to summarize and organize and to lift the logical level of thought. The *"I hear you saying"* phrase, is perceived as inauthentic and dulls the potential effectiveness of reflective listening. Authentic paraphrasing, increases the complexity of another person's thought, a characteristic of experts in any field. [6]

We Can't Always Coach

Initially we were so enamored with the power of mediation that we concentrated on Cognitive Coaching as a single form of teacher support. Our position has changed. Support providers such as mentors, administrators and supervisors, need repertoire and situational flexibility to achieve the ultimate goal of developing high performing individuals. While there may be a few situations where a person's full-time job is to coach others, most often the coaching function is but a part of many duties. Persons in these roles sometimes coach, sometimes consult, sometimes collaborate, and sometimes evaluate.

Initially we were unclear how a support person could shift from Coaching, to other forms of interaction--to consulting, collaborating or evaluating and maintain psychological safety. Michael Grinder's work in non-verbal aspects of communication,[7] and Laura Lipton and Bruce Wellman's pioneering work in mentoring have helped us understand the distinctly different roles a support provider can play, how to shift functions and still have the default position be supporting self-directed learning. Today we find it essential for support providers to use and clearly distinguish between and among four categories of functions intended to support teacher development. They are elaborated in the figure below.

INSERT TABLE 1: PURPOSES HAVE COACHING, CONSULTING AND EVALUATING ABOUT HERE

A Cognitive Coach's major responsibility is to increase the self-directedness of others. Coaches, to attain psychological safety and cognitive demand, must attend to both learning and relationship. *Whether* to and *how to*

signal a deviation from coaching is a critical question for a coach. [8] Such decisions are largely driven by the coach's attention to the verbal and non-verbal cues that divulge the teacher's thinking and feelings. The coach, reading the colleague's communication, may infer confidence, confusion, or discomfort and may thus infer the need to move to a different stance. Cognitive Coaching remains the *default position* [9] to which we always return and that guides our support intentions.

Weaving Cognitive Coaching Ideals throughout the Culture

Cognitive Coaching has significantly expanded its reach in the last 18 years. Our early work defined Cognitive Coaching as a formal dyadic interactive strategy, initially between a supervisor and teacher, in which the purpose was to support the teacher's cognitive development related to instructional decision- making. Today its use is often less formal and we find that Cognitive Coaching's purposes are less likely to be restricted to those supervisory interactions of planning conversations, classroom observations, reflecting conversations or problem resolving dialogues. Rather, the work is also being used to improve the collaborative work cultures of schools and to imbue to goal of self-directed learning into school aims. [10]

As the practices of Cognitive Coaching spread, its principles, beliefs, values increasingly are being applied in every day, informal communications and at every level within the organization regardless of role --teacher to peers, teacher to child, staff developer to teacher, educator to parent. The settings in which coaches find opportunities to mediate often present themselves spontaneously, such as during a conversation in the faculty room or in the hall or way to class. Neither is coaching exclusively the domain of traditional hierarchical relationships. Mentor teachers are coaching superintendents, teachers coach principals and so on.

The ideals of Cognitive Coaching—its values, beliefs, maps and tools–are valued not only for staff but also for students and the entire organization. Many schools and districts have found that as Cognitive Coaching becomes invested in the culture, all the inhabitants of the school community become increasingly self-directed and more resourceful deliberate, reflective, and skillful.

The Nature of Recent Changes

The changes noted above seem to cluster in two categories. One is work below the surface of what one might see in a mediational interaction. We have worked at the heart of CC, refining our vision and mission. We have learned more about the invisible skills of coaching in such a way that four coaching capabilities are teachable and learnable by aspiring coaches. Deeper understandings of the some of the neuro biochemical patterns in coaching have provided us further insights on how to promote learning.

A second category of change is about context. On the one hand, learning to place Cognitive Coaching in the context of other support services to teachers. On the other hand, expanding the venues in which Cognitive Coaching can be used and devising workable protocols for these new settings. We see today, Cognitive Coaching in conversations related to teaching standards; we see it in classroom instruction, in parent conferences, in public coaching, in shaping collaborative work cultures, in informing school construction and in application in industrial settings and in private enterprise.

What is present in both these dimensions are changes that protect the integrity, complexity, purposes and values of the Cognitive Coaching model. What we do not see are changes that simplify by making practices less rigorous, that cosmetize to make it more attractive to more people, that shorten to make training less arduous, nor do we see marketing to enlist more participants. CC has been a program of attraction and not of enlistment.

WHY COGNITIVE COACHING PERSISTS

We propose at least six possible reasons that might help explain why Cognitive Coaching is moving into its third decade of application.

1. A Unique Mental Model

Differing from other models, Cognitive Coaching focuses not on behaviors but on *the source* of behaviors. Its intent is to mediate the invisible, internal mental resources and intellectual functions related to the teachers' goals. These resources include perceptions, cognitive processes, values and five states of mind as wellsprings of well- being and effective performance. Recipients often claim that Cognitive Coaching has changed their lives, and speak of it with almost missionary zeal. Other forms of coaching tend to focus mostly on behaviors, the lesson, the topic, meeting or activity.

2. Its Roots Provide a Firm Foundation

A second possible reason for Cognitive Coaching's sustainability is that its deep roots penetrate the rich soil of academic excellence in a variety of diverse but related disciplines. The figure below displays the major origins of Cognitive Coaching thought.

INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE FROM PAGE 121 OF 5th EDITION OF CC Learning Guide

3. Adaptivity

A third reason for Cognitive Coaching's continued growth might be its adaptivity to new knowledge, lessons from practice and developments in related disciplines. Adaptivity implies changing form but maintaining or clarifying identity. [11] So throughout its history of modifications, values have been maintained, goals refined and a commitment to human potential realized. Guided by these developmental principles, training designs have evolved, the Cognitive Coaching process refined, and dozens of research studies of its effectiveness conducted, Advances in the neuro-sciences both illuminate the reasons for its effectiveness and guide continuing refinements. Finally, the weight of learning and development has been so strong because its processes involved many people. Communities of learning were formed, expanded, and reformed many times over the course of our history. To these dedicated people, Cognitive Coaching owes its resilience today.

4. A Philosophical Haven in the Greater Culture

A fourth possible dynamic for sustainability is related to the context in which an educational practice exists. At the time Cognitive Coaching was introduced in 1985, the dominant orientation in supervision practices was behavioral, focusing on popularized generalizations about effective teaching practices. Cognitive Coaching represented an alternative, focusing on the cognitive sciences and was valued by some educators, we believe, precisely because it reflected a point of view of adult learning largely absent in the practices of the time.

The early principles and values of Cognitive Coaching have remained constant, foreshadowing current orientations toward teaching and learning. Yet, today's educational context is schizophrenic in several respects. On one hand, there is an emphasis on reflective practice not present in the mid 1980's. Constructivist learning patterns emphasize student goal setting, self- reflection and self- improvement. Staff development, mentoring and supervisory practices expound, and in many cases deliver, developmentally sound work in reflective dialogue around instruction. But at the same time, schools face what Fullan [12] terms a sea of excessive, inconsistent, relentless demands. For the first time in education history, teacher, administrator, school and district approval is being linked to student performance rather than compliance to regulations. [13] Accountability practices are emerging in virtually every state based on external standards for student learning, assessments based on those standards and either sanction provisions for "educationally bankrupt" districts and at a minimum public humiliation through the publication of test scores for those schools that do not live up to political expectations for improvement. Content standards for student learning have become so predominant that, by one account, if teachers were to spend just 30 minutes on each benchmark in standards documents another six years of schooling would be needed.

Cognitive Coaching is a fountain of cool water in a parched landscape. The continuing strength of Cognitive Coaching as a model of professional development, may be that in this period of unremitting pressure on teachers and administrators, the heart seeks what is sound, the mind, once engaged, will entertain to the degree possible, reflective practices as best it can achieve them.

5. Creating an Essential Resource for School Improvement

A ten-year collection of both quantitative and qualitative research on school-community change and its impact on student learning demonstrates that the quality of school relationships operating in and around schools is central to their functioning, and strongly predicts student outcomes.[14] This is consistent with other studies, but goes farther in making specific linkages to student achievement.

Relational trust, this study reveals, is essential, but not sufficient to school improvement. Schools with little or no relational trust have little chance of improving. Matching teacher survey data with scores of the 100

Chicago schools that made the greatest gains on standardized tests of math and reading between 1991 and 1996, they found that schools with a high level of trust at the outset had a 1 in 2 chance of making significant improvements in math and reading. Schools with weak trust relationships had only a 1 in 7 chance of making gains, and the only ones that did gain, strengthened trust over a period of years.

Not only is trust a basic premise in Cognitive Coaching, but the mediational relationship itself communicates positive regard, demonstrates respect, builds competence and is based on integrity, the four contributing factors to relational trust. Furthermore, the social organization of schooling imposes distinct role relationships upon the different sets of school inhabitants. Particular expectations and obligations characterize each role in teacher- to- teacher interactions, teachers to parents, teachers to administrators and administrators to parents. Each is dependent on and to an extent vulnerable to the other. To work together harmoniously, communication skills, and above all, authentic listening are musts.

Would Cognitive Coaching have persisted if no benefits to the social fabric of the school accrued? We think, possibly not. Innovation persistence may depend, in part, on collateral benefits. When what occurs between a principal and a teacher in private conversations can have an affect on others' perceptions of administrative trustworthiness, on the supportive nature of the environment and the commitment to children's needs, it seems bound to be protected and nurtured within that system.

6. Fulfilling an Identity

Many "closeted" reflective practitioners have admitted to us that they yearned for more liberating, holistic and humanistic supervisory practices than those they were employing. They found that Cognitive Coaching fulfilled their "identity" as a mediator of other's inner resources. Many who embraced Cognitive Coaching reported that they felt renewed in their profession and were acting as an educator again, not a compliance technician.

Ralph Waldo Emerson is quoted as saying, "The mind, once stretched by a new idea, never returns to its original dimension". We believe this to be true for those who have experienced the reciprocally powerful relationships of Cognitive Coaching or other mediation interactions. Having been coached, one seeks it. Having coached, one values it.

In Summary

The long-range goal of Cognitive Coaching is acquiring the habits and dispositions of self-directed learning and the automation of the intellectual capacities of effective thinking. We believe that all human beings can continue growing intellectually and thus becoming self-modifying, self-referencing, and self-renewing. In this way, the

intellectual functions and mental processes of effective teaching become internalized. Cognitive Coaches support people in becoming self- directed autonomous agents and self-directed members of a group.[15] These goals may be the deepest reason it prevails. Our aspirations have universal applicability, touch the personal self and professional self, are uplifting, optimistic and freeing.

The learning journey about Cognitive Coaching and its effects is not complete. Knowledge in the field continues to expand. Challenges persist. Transformation for individuals and educational organizations remains a daunting and complex proposition. To build common vision, and liberate each person's self-directedness takes time, wisdom and skills of dedicated professionals. Indeed, as a result of 18 years of experience, we seem now better able to ask more valuable and penetrating questions.

DISTINCTIONS AMONG FOUR SUPPORT SERVICES

Attribute	**Cognitive Coaching**	**Collaborating**	**Consulting**	**Evaluating**
Conversations focus on:	Metacognition, decision making processes, perceptions, values, mental models	Generating information, co-planning, co-teaching, problem solving and action research	Policies, procedures, behaviors, strategies, techniques and events	Professional criteria, expectations, standards and rubrics
The intention is to:	Transform the effectiveness of decision making, mental models, thoughts and perceptions and habituate reflection.	Form ideas, approaches, solutions and focus for inquiry	Inform regarding student needs, pedagogy, curriculum, policies, procedures and provide technical assistance. To apply teaching standards	Conform to a set of standards and criteria adopted by the organization.
The purposes are to:	Enhance and habituate self directed learning: self-managing, self-monitoring, self modifying	Solve instructional problems, to apply and test shared ideas, to learn together	Increase pedagogical and content know-edge and skills; to institutionalize accepted practices and policies.	Judge and rate performance according to understood externally produced standards
The conversations are characterized by:	Mediation, listening, questioning, pausing, paraphrasing, probing, withholding advice, judgments or interpretations "What might be some ways to approach this?"	Mutual brainstorming, clarifying, advocating, deciding, testing, assessing "How should we approach this?"	Rationale, advice, suggestions, demonstrations "Here are several ways to approach this."	Judgments, encouragement, advice, direction, goal setting "Your approach to this was good. Here is why."
The support person's identity in relation to the teacher is:	Mediator of thinking	Colleague	Expert	Boss
The source of empowerment to perform this function stems from:	Trust. Competence in the maps, tools and values of Cognitive Coaching	Trust. Competence in forming partnerships. Knowledge and skills in the areas being explored.	Trust. Competence in consulting skills. Expertise in relevant areas.	Policy. Authority is by position, licensed, authorized by law or by negotiated agreement to evaluate. Evaluators are held accountable for

				judgments and actions regarding work quality.
Source of criteria and judgements about performance (are):	The teacher "How will you know that you are successful?'	The teacher and colleague "How will we know that we are successful?	The consultant "Here's how you'll know that you are successful."	The evaluator in reference to established criteria "Here's how I'll know that you are successful."

[1] This article is drawn from the 2nd edition *of Cognitive Coaching sm: A Foundation for Renaissance Schools* by the authors. (2002) Norwood, MA: Christopher Gordon Publishers

[2] Costa, A. & Garmston, R. (1985, February) "Supervision for Intelligent Teaching." Educational Leadership, 42 (5), 70-80.

[3] Cogan, M. (1973) Clinical Supervision. Boston, MA: Hougton Mifflin Co.

[4] Pajak, E. (2000) Approaches to Clinical Supervision: Alternatives for Improving Instruction. Norwood, MA. Christopher Gordon

[5] We are extremely grateful to Jenny Edwards who has maintained a clearinghouse for studies about Cognitive Coaching and has been an important contributor to our learning. For a full report of her research refer to Chapter 13 *in Cognitive Coaching: A Foundation for Renaissance Schools* cited above. Dr. Edwards can be reached at jedwards@fielding.edu or jedwards23@yahoo.com

[6] We are indebted to our colleagues Laura Lipton and Bruce Wellman for increasing our understandings of paraphrasing. www. Mivavia.com

[7] Grinder, Michael (1993) ENVoY: Your Personal Guide to Classroom Management Battle Ground, Washington. Michael Grinder and Associates.

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[10] Ellison, J. and Hayes, C. (In Press) *Weaving Cognitive Coaching Throughout the Organization: Threads of Learning and Change*. Norwood, MA Christopher Gordon

[11] Garmston, R. & Wellman, B. (1999) *The Adaptive School: A Sourcebook for Developing Collaborative Groups*. Norwood, MA Christopher Gordon

[12] Fullan, M. (2002) The Three Stories of Educational Reform. *Phi Delta Kappan*. April, 2002. V. 81, No. 8 Pages 581-584

[13] Fuhrman, S. (January 1999) *The New Accountability.* Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) University of Pennsylvania • Harvard University • Stanford University • University of Michigan • University of Wisconsin-Madison http: www.upenn.edu/gse/cpre.

[14] Byrk, A. & Schneider, B. (2002*) Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for Improvement*. New York. Russell Sage Foundation

[15] For information concerning Cognitive Coaching sm seminars, leadership training, products, and other services, contact: The Center for Cognitive Coaching sm PO 260860, Highlands Ranch, CO 80163); e-mail: CCClj@Aol.com; Phone: (303) 683-6146; website: www.cognitivecoaching.com.