

THE USE OF COACHING SKILLS FOR BETTER TEACHING AND EDUCATIONAL RESULTS

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Abstract:

The purpose of the article is to show how knowledge of coaching skills can help achieve the desired results in pedagogical practice faster and more efficiently. When coaching skills are known by a team of teachers, these teachers can offer each other support in personal and professional growth (collegial coaching). They do not necessarily have to be professional coaches. It is essential that the teacher acting as a coach uses specifically selected questions. These need to encourage their interlocutor to think and find their own solutions to achieve the goal. They must be open and nonsuggestive. In this way, the interlocutor will come up with solutions that they would have come to with a lot more difficulty or even not at all. Conversation, guided by coaching questions, can also help learners in the difficulties they encounter. It is important that the interlocutor wants to solve the problem, the challenge. The case study shows how to use coaching skills, especially coaching questions, in pedagogical practice.

Keywords: coaching, collegial coaching, coaching questions, teacher-as a motivator

INTRODUCTION

"There is no good teaching. There are only good teachers. In other words, teaching is realized only in teachers; it does not exist on its own" (Richards, 1994, in Cvetek, 2004, p. 145). I believe that the teacher is more effective in teaching if he has colleagues who provide support when he needs it. A group of five teachers from our school attended the seminar Collegial Support With the Help of Coaching Skills. Coaching is "One of the most promising approaches for promoting personal and professional development" (Rutar Ilc, 2014, <http://www.delo.si/zgodbe/nedeljskobranje/kolegialni-coaching-s-preizprasevanjem-iz-precepa.html>). The objectives of the program were to promote and strengthen the culture of collegial support and good relations between teachers, to strengthen the social competences and communication skills of teachers, to contribute to greater efficiency and goal orientation of teachers. During the program implementation, the participants adopted basic coaching skills. The training was led by Zora Rutar Ilc, Brigita Žarkovič Adlešič and Blanka Tacer, who are also authors of Collegial Coaching, a manual for professional and personal development. The authors strive to spread the knowledge of the approach and awareness of the importance and value of their skills in everyday life. For many who find themselves in a clutch situation, the coaching process makes it possible for them to help themselves or others with the "checking techniques" (right there).

People usually do not think about their problems, challenges, out loud. When we do that, the interlocutors quickly start giving us advice and solutions. They begin to talk about a similar situation that they themselves have experienced. Of course, these are their solutions, not ours. "Coaching as a method of learning goes beyond that. It gives a person an opportunity to think about the challenge he is dealing with at a specific point in time. Mastering its basic

skills can thus raise the level of communication throughout a collective or community. This is an approach in which you work with your interlocutor in such a way that you encourage him to explore and find the solutions that are best for him. Coaching should shake off its own assumptions and beliefs and support a colleague or client in his world, on his way of finding his own solutions"(right there).

After completing the training, I came to the realization that the teacher can be more successful in his work if he knows coaching skills: active listening, summarizing, mirroring and paraphrasing, feedback, creating trust, monitoring and good contact, spreading awareness and promoting response, empathy, coaching questions. I find using the latter extremely useful for professional growth. The questions must be open, clear, short, with a single denial at most (What are you not willing to give up?), content free, with research interest, without interpretations, nonsuggestive, considerate, researching, targeted (Rutar Ilc, Tacer, Žarkovič Adlešič, 2014).

The purpose of the case study was to determine how coaching issues can be used in pedagogical practice and what are the effects on coaching process participants.

APPLICATION OF COACHING SKILLS IN PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE

"Undoubtedly, the knowledge of pupils depends not only on the school system, but even more so on the teaching staff, on their diligence and ability" (Šifrer, <http://www.dlib.si/stream/URN:NBN:SI:doc...4f94.../PDF>, p. 340).

Headmasters often ascribe importance to motivating students, but forget that a motivated teacher can sometimes do wonders for pupils. I am referring primarily to the inner motivation of a teacher who wants to grow professionally. Such a teacher is often self-empowered and does not even need the supervision of the headmaster, as he is usually quite self-critical. In any case, however, such a teacher, too, finds the encouraging words of the headmaster very meaningful and a source of additional encouragement.

Each educational process is also a communication between the student and the teacher. Lately, coaching is increasingly paving its way into the economy, education, as well as numerous other areas. "Coaching is one of the most promising ways of supporting individuals and groups in personal and professional development" (Rutar Ilc, Tacer, Žarkovič Adlešič, 2014, p. 8). Knowing coaching skills can help the teacher make his messages to pupils more encouraging. Simson (2000, p. 35) in the book *Promoting Excellence*, describes a conversation about Miss Alexander. "Why was she your favourite teacher?" "She expected me to do good. She cared about me. I do not remember what she taught me, I only remember the good feelings I had in her classroom. " "Do you therefore want to say that it does not matter what we have learned, but from whom have we learned it?" Sarah asked. "Yes, I think so. That year my grades improved. She helped me get those good grades. I simply felt nice there. " "Have you attempted something risky in her classes?" Sarah asked. "I could try anything with her. I knew she would never yell at me or humiliate me, even if I made a mistake ... " I have also come to the realization myself that the teacher who knows how to listen to, encourage, guide, tolerate mistakes of the pupils, is genuinely interested in pupils' achievements and their distress, has a positive influence on the pupils. Knowing coaching skills helps us in communicating with students.

Coaching models help us conduct a conversation. The GROW model (Whitemore, 2009, summarized by Rutar Ilc and others, 2014) is one of the most famous models. The abbreviation originates from the words Goal, Reality, Options, Will. In the first phase, the client specifies exactly what he wants. In the second phase, the coach encourages the client to think about the current situation. In the third phase, the coach helps the client explore alternative options. The

final stage is for planning, the first action steps. The solution must come from the client. It will only work if the client invests an appropriate level of energy into it.

The SCORE model is also well-known, a.k.a. Dilts's model. Abbreviation comes from words *Symptom, Cause, Outcome, Resource, Effect*. *Firstly, we highlight the existing situation in detail. We then encourage the interlocutor to explore the causes. In the third phase we encourage the interlocutor to raise awareness, reflect on what they want to change. What follows is an awareness of resources, potentials, strategies. Finally, we help the interlocutor to get to know the desired effects (right there).*

COACHING SKILLS HELPFUL TO A TEACHER

Self-coaching

Self-coaching allows us to develop a better insight into ourselves. It is easier to understand what is happening to us, what is the reason for our reaction. We are aware that things can be done better and we find the best way for us, which will lead us to change. Thus, the mistakes we make are easier to accept and repair. It helps us to get rid of the feeling of helplessness, or the feeling that we're stuck. Our attitude towards ourselves, events, which is unconstructive or even negative, can be transformed into a constructive, positive one.

In self-coaching I am always helped by questions. I'm asking questions that begin with the letter W (e.g. What do I want to change? What is the current state? What can I do? What is my plan for introducing change? The flow of thought leads me from a clearly defined goal, the current state, possibilities, and will or the steps I will take to achieve the goal.

Such thinking always helps to make a more constructive and effective self-evaluation.

Supporting a Colleague

When I find myself facing challenges that I do not know how to solve, or if I want to solve them better in the future, I turn to my colleague who provides me with support, leading me to the goal with questions. Without giving advice. Our relationship is based on an alliance. Through our alliance, we learn and develop coaching skills while working on ourselves. In a coaching conversation, I point out the problem that has been burdening me lately. The most valuable thing to me is that I think about the problem loudly. At that time, in our conversation, I do not think about the role of the coach how would I ask if I was in the role of coach, but only about my own solution to the problem to which my colleague leads me through coaching questions. It means a lot to me that he really listens to me. This way of communication makes me calm. When my colleague hears my plans, I feel an even greater need, a desire to really make my plans real. My colleague as a coach also gives me some encouraging feedback that motivates me for the first steps towards solving the problem. Of course, the support is mutual. I also offer support when my colleague asks me for it. Constructive, positive feedback works encouragingly. It is appropriate to use it in coaching when we see progress in the client, and we want to praise him, when the client wants to hear our feedback, when the client does not advance with his thoughts towards the solution and ends up in a vicious circle. Feedback can also provide a new look at the solution to the problem and can be very useful for the person in question. A teacher as a coach can give feedback when he has enough information. Feedback in coaching would be dangerous when our feedback would be an excuse to the interlocutor not to assume responsibility and when the coach would assume a level of control with it.

Help in Class

The teacher who presents the learning material with the intention to explain and direct students to active learning may find coaching questions helpful. Similarly, coaching questions help us with problem tasks when we want to identify the problem core and create a plan for solving a problem task. Through open questions (W-H questions), pupils show a better understanding of learning material and real knowledge. Questions that only require recall do not provide such insight.

Allow me to provide an example

The teacher discussed the new teaching material in the field of natural science. In doing so, he set up an introduction or a different approach as regards asking questions.

The lesson or the class itself was basically set up as a challenge, whereby it stemmed from the student, that is, his knowledge, behaviour, beliefs and, last but not least, the desire to discover and acquire new knowledge.

25 years ago, when said teacher taught or performed a lesson with the same content (the topic was: Why do we have one year?) At one of the Ljubljana primary schools, he used, in his set of questions, mostly those that started with WHY.

At that time, this form of questions was considered very strong and very appropriate in the classroom, especially in the problem-oriented treatment of the learning material.

Today, after so many years, this learning material (content or fact have not changed) began to be introduced with other questions and with the knowledge he gained in the field of coaching skills.

All questions that once started with the word why, were now asked as questions starting with W or H.

He used these questions both in determining the pupil's knowledge, and later on the problem-based explanation of the teaching material, where he did not want to a classic presentation of the teaching material, information that would force the student to factually memorize. Instead, with skilfully asked questions, he acquired, coaxed them ... from the already known facts, which the pupils knew from before or merely linked them to the current ones.

He also used questions of this kind and his skill in tackling certain beliefs, especially if they were wrong. These thought-oriented questions are dealt with at all levels of the class, both in the presentation and in the consolidation.

The findings that were generated by this were encouraging, since pupils were not only active listeners during the self-examination of the learning material, but were primarily active in thinking and engaging in the conversation, explanation, in short, in the process that was led by open W-H questions.

At the same time, the student got a more considerable feeling that he also contributed to the explanation of the learning material himself.

Understanding is increased primarily on account of active work during self-explanation, conversation, ...

Concrete elements from this class:

WHY do we have 7 days in a week?

(one closed question - one answer)

The answer to this question could only be given by a student who already has considerable knowledge of this part of astronomy.

This question is broken up into several open W questions.

What happens to our Moon when it circles around the Earth?

What is it like?

What changes in its image?

How many times does its image change?

(4 phases: 1st crescent, no moon, last crescent, full moon)

How long does the moon need to circle the Earth?

Sub-questions:

How many months do we have in a year?

How many times does the Moon circle the Earth in one year?

Back to the main questions:

How many days roughly does the Moon need to travel around the Earth?

What do I get if I divide the number of days with the number of lunar phases?

How much do I get if I divide 28 by 4?

What is the number 7 in our calendar?

What is connected to the number 7?

In this way, students are led through active thinking. In doing so they use the knowledge that they already have and connect it to the currently acquired knowledge, information, and new knowledge.

The teacher subsequently found out that the knowledge and behaviour acquired by pupils in this way was much better. Above all, it was acquired based on reason.

Collegial Demonstration Class

The Organization and Financing of Education Act (ZOFVI, <https://www.uradni-list.si/1/content?id=78530>), in Article 49, instructs the head teacher as a pedagogical leader to attend the educational work of teachers, monitor their work, advise and encourage professional education and training of professional staff. Collegial demonstration classes are being put into practice more and more. Teachers expect from collegial demonstration classes that they will exchange experiences, help with professional dilemmas and cross-curricular integration, engage in joint planning and analysis (Pajer Šemrl 2005, p. 78). Collegial demonstration classes should also be organized according to a premade plan. Tomičeva (2002, p. 123) defines three steps: 1. planning in the form of a meeting where the aim of observation is set and the instrumentation is produced, 2. observation in the classroom with data gathering, 3. feedback with the exchange of information and planning of improvements.

Pajer Šemrl (2005, p. 80) states that teachers are even less fond of collegial demonstration classes than to those of the headmasters, as they are not willing to share their experiences, exchange opinions, work as a team, and, above all, fear criticism. In addition, he draws atten-

tion to the problem of closing individual teachers to their classrooms and the incompatibility with the changes in modern times.

Collegial demonstration classes can be of great help to us teachers, because our colleague who guides us helps us to evaluate our lessons more easily and find solutions regarding what and how to improve. However, the desire for such cooperation must come from us. Kemp and Gosling (2014) have identified the following characteristics of successful mutual demonstration classes:

- based on dialogue, questioning,
- not intended for judgments,
- they are focused on changing and developing practice,
- they take the professional autonomy of observers and observed into account,
- they promote mutual learning.

The condition for the implementation of collegial demonstration classes is a secure environment based on respect. A well-conducted demonstration class can benefit the teacher and the observer in their professional development. Otherwise, a kind of hostility, resentment and mistrust may develop (Wragg, 1994). I myself, in my role as a teacher, want the feedback of my colleague with whom I feel well and appreciate his opinion.

Team Search for Solutions

Teamwork enables division of tasks, responsibilities, a greater set of ideas, comprehensive solutions. Good communication is of great importance for teamwork. It is important that the team members trust one another, otherwise the time and energy may be inadequately used, and the information flow may be inhibited. Instead of finding common solutions, individuals will be directed towards mutual checking and protecting their own interests. Disagreement can quickly be understood as deliberate.

Mutual support of colleagues can be shown as assistance in performing or assuming work tasks, giving feedback, coaching.

When a team that understands each other wants to come up with common solutions, knowledge of coaching skills can significantly influence a more effective search for solutions. A conversation moderator can also be a member of the team that knows coaching skills (coaching questions). Team members need to be familiar with the coaching process and agree with it. Knowing coaching skills contributes to a more positive and productive dialogue. In teams where there is no trust and general positive climate, such a way to find solutions is not appropriate. Provided that all members of the team want change, a solution, here only a professional coach can help.

Help With Educational Issues

The use of methods and approaches with which it is easiest to establish order does not contribute to the sustainable development of discipline and self-control. The teacher needs a "wide action repertoire that enables him to quickly and appropriately decide in complex learning situations. It is about managing diverse, especially interactive learning methods, communication models with pupils, ways of thinking and emotionally activating, motivating, disciplining, establishing cooperative relationships / .../" (Bauer, 2000, in Marentič Požarnik, 2003, p. 183).

In the case of learning and educational problems, coaching questions can help us, but students must be prepared to make changes and find solutions. The following questions are the most helpful ones:

What do you want to achieve?

When did you manage something similar?
How did you do it?
What will help you get started differently?
Who can help you with it?

With similar questions, pupils came to their own solutions of behaviour change. Their solutions were completely different.

The use of coaching questions was also helpful in the overall self-evaluation of a class which was more difficult to handle. The teacher as a coach can help the pupils develop the feeling that they have the opportunity and responsibility to make a significant contribution to a positive class climate. Every day at the end of the lesson (last five minutes) we made an evaluation with the pupils. We remembered above all the observance of class rules.

The key questions that helped us with self-evaluation were:

What have we done well?
What could we have done better?
How can we achieve that?

Pupils only respond appropriately when they take control of their behaviour and not because they want to please the teacher. The correct decisions must be internalized. Coaching questions can help them find solutions with more ease.

COACHING SKILLS HELPFUL FOR STUDENTS

Help With Learning Difficulties

Sometimes students find it difficult to see what causes them problems with learning. The teacher can propose a conversation to the student and, if the student is ready, offers support in finding solutions that will lead to better learning outcomes.

When thinking, we help the student with the questions:

What are the things you want to be different?
Where do you have problems?
What have you tried so far?
What else can you do?
What will be the next step?
Now we write it down ... by what time (date) you intend to do ...

Dislodging Negative Beliefs

Coaching questions were also a great help in tackling the negative beliefs of a second-grade student about his own inability to write stories.

Where does your belief come from?
When do not you think of yourself like that?
Imagine that writing stories is not troublesome for you. What would it look like if writing would not be problem?
What hinders you so that it is not the way you imagine it?
Who / what can help you with this?
What will be your first step?

Jurišević (1999) says that pupils need to be provided with opportunities where they will also adopt, test and use constructive strategies that contribute to the formation of healthy self-esteem. *The interlocutor (student) solves the problem by means of coaching questions, and at the same time adopts different views of himself.*

Help in solving the problems that hinders a student

Example of a conversation with a pupil of the fourth grade (age-10 years). With the help of coaching questions, I provided the pupil with support in finding her own solutions.

A (teacher): What do you want to be different?

B (pupil): To not forget homework.

A: How often do you happen to forget your homework?

B: Quite often. Once a week.

A: When do you not have problems with forgetting?

B: I did not forget the homework at the beginning of the school year.

A: What was different then?

B: I do not know.

A: What could you do to not have a problem with forgetting?

B: I do not know.

A: How did it work for you then?

B: I was less forgetful.

A: What do you think causes forgetfulness?

B: I do not write it down.

A: How was it before, when you did it without difficulty? What helped you at that time?

B: I listened more. I used to write it down.

A: What could you do to make it different?

B: I would listen again and write it down?

A: How could this be achieved?

B: To more closely follow the explanation, what the homework is. I usually do not listen well.

A: What leads you to not listen?

B: I often get distracted by something.

A: Tell me more about this.

B: I constantly grab things, I draw ... and I stop listening.

A: If I understand you correctly, this grabbing of items discourages your attention, so you do not listen anymore.

B: Yes, right.

A: What then do you feel when you begin to grab things during the explanation?

B: I'm restless.

A: What makes you restless?

B: I cannot wait for the end of class.

A: What is it you can't wait for after class?

B: That I can get up and draw and play with other pupils.

A: What is different now, as was the case at the beginning of the school year.

B: At that time, I was also restless, but I found it easier to focus.

A: How did you do it?

B: I calmed down more easily.

A: What is happening now is that makes it harder to calm down.

B: I have too much work to do.

A: Can you tell me more about this?

B: I have more classes, more homework, more difficult practice in music school ...

A: If I understand you correctly, do you have the feeling now that you are overburdened?

B: Yes.

A: What causes your feeling of being overburdened?

B: I do not feel like doing anything. But when I want to work, I remember what I should do and I do not know where to start. Then I prefer to do nothing.

A: What could you change?

B: I could do my homework right after lunch. The longer I wait with the homework and studying, the less I want to do anything for school.

A: What could help you not to get distracted in class?

B: If I felt that I was being anxious, I would put my hands behind the chair and try to listen as much as possible. I think it would help me.

A: Now let's write this down...

Such was the solution for this pupil. She said that she felt well after the conversation and that she had the feeling that she would really succeed. We later discussed the realization of her plans. She did it!

CONCLUSION




Coaching creates a relationship in which the interlocutor (in the role of a client) feels that we care about him. The headmaster can create conditions in which the teachers are willing to introduce changes in the teaching where the desire for professional growth will be accepted. The coaching process in the school allows the teacher to fully utilize his potentials. A team of teachers that offers mutual support to each other, works more easily and with greater motivation. The pupils respond in a similar manner. Pupils who feel that the teacher accepts, stimulates, directs, tolerates mistakes, helps them with their own solutions, achieve progress quicker.

Coaching, however, is not to be used to solve every problem. "In short, wisdom is to know when someone benefits more from coaching, an approach that encourages the search for one's own solution, and when some other method is necessary" (Rutar Ilc, 2014, <http://www.delo.si/zgodbe/nedeljskobranje/kolegialni-coaching-s-preizprasevanjem-iz-precepa.html>).

Coaching questions should begin with the letters W-H. Such questions are sufficiently open and help in self-evaluation of the teacher as well as the learner (self-coaching), testing new teaching techniques, collegial demonstration classes, solving problems that arise at the workplace, giving encouraging feedback, conversation with students who have a problem and want to solve it. Together with my colleagues, I find that knowledge of coaching skills (especially coaching questions) helps in the educational process itself, as well as in interaction with colleagues (see table). Conversation following coaching models can also help learners to find priorities. I am referring here to vocational guidance and gifted students who have a difficulty in deciding which activities will devote their energy to when they are simply not able to do

everything, they are interested in. Coaching skills: active listening, good follow-up, asking strong questions (W-H questions), dislodging limiting beliefs, giving encouraging feedback, etc. are of great help in communication when we can judge if their use is sensible. It's not necessary to be a professional coach. It's about a way of thinking that helps us to look at things from a different perspective.

Table: Coaching process as help for teacher and pupil

COACHING PROCESS	WHEN?	OBJECTIVE
TEACHER (COACH ROLE)  TEACHER (CLIENT ROLE)	TESTING NEW TEACHING TECHNIQUES	SELF-EVALUATION
	COLLEGIAL DEMONSTRATION CLASSES	
	PROBLEMS IN CLASS	PROBLEM SOLVING
	PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGES	INSIGHT INTO VARIOUS POSSIBILITIES
	CLASSES	GREATER INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS
TEACHER (COACH ROLE)  TEAM OF TEACHERS (ROLE OF CLIENTS)	DIFFERENT OPINIONS IN TEAM	SEARCH FOR COMMON SOLUTIONS
TEACHER (COACH ROLE)  STUDENT (CLIENT ROLE)	LEARNING PROBLEMS	PROBLEM SOLVING (search for possible solutions / action plan / solution of the problem)
	EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS	
	WISHES TO CHANGE (habits, bad habits, relations ...)	
	VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE	BEST PERSONAL CHOICE
	SUPPORT OF GIFTED STUDENTS (search for priorities)	SELECTION OF ACTIVITIES
	EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE	SELF-EVALUATION
	NEGATIVE BELIEFS	DISLOGDING OF BELIEFS, IMPROVING SELF-IMAGE

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Koriščenje vještine *coachinga* za bolje poučavanje i obrazovne rezultate

Sažetak: Svrha članka je pokazati kako poznavanje vještine *coachinga* može brže i učinkovitije doprinijeti željenim ishodima u obrazovnoj praksi. Ako tim učitelja posjeduje vještine *coachinga* onda oni mogu jedni drugima pružiti podršku u osobnom i profesionalnom razvoju (*kolegijalni coaching*). Ne moraju biti profesionalni *coacheri*, ali je ključno da učitelji koji djeluju kao *coacheri* koriste specifična pitanja. Oni trebaju potaknuti sugovornika na razmišljanje i pronalaženje vlastitih rješenja te put do cilja. U tu svrhu moraju biti otvoreni i bez sugestija. Na taj način sugovornici dolaze do rješenja koja bi inače smatrali teškim ili nemogućim. Razgovor vođen pitanjima učitelja također može pomoći učenicima u poteškoćama s kojima se susreću. Važno je da sugovornik pokaže volju da riješi problem, tj. izazov. Studija slučaja pokazuje kako koristiti vještine *coachinga* i to posebno pitanja *coachinga* u obrazovnoj praksi.

Cljučne riječi: *coaching*, kolegijalni *coaching*, pitanja mentora, učitelj kao motivator

Zu besseren Lehr - und Bildungsergebnissen durch Coaching-Fertigkeiten

Zusammenfassung: Zweck dieser Arbeit ist zu zeigen wie Kenntnisse von Coaching-Fertigkeiten schneller und effektiver zu erwünschten Ergebnissen in der pädagogischen Praxis beitragen können. Wenn ein Team von Lehrern über Coaching-Kenntnisse verfügt, können diese Lehrer bei der persönlichen und professionellen Entwicklung einander Unterstützung bieten (*kollegiales Coaching*). Dazu müssen sie nicht professionelle Coaches sein, es ist jedoch entscheidend, dass der als Coach handelnde Lehrer spezifisch ausgewählte Fragen verwendet. Diese dienen dazu, ihren Gesprächspartner zum Nachdenken und Finden eigener Lösungen und Wege zum Ziel zu ermuntern. Zu diesem Zweck müssen die Fragen offen sein und keine Hinweise enthalten. Auf diese Weise gelangen die Gesprächspartner zu Lösungsmöglichkeiten, zu denen sie andernfalls nur schwer oder gar nicht gelangt wären. Mithilfe von Coaching-Fragen geführte Gespräche können Lernern ebenfalls bei möglichen Schwierigkeiten helfen. Wichtig ist, dass der Gesprächspartner den Willen zur Lösung des Problems, der Herausforderung zeigt. Die Fallstudie zeigt wie man Coaching-Fertigkeiten und insbesondere Coaching-Fragen in der pädagogischen Praxis einsetzt.

Schlüsselwörter: Coaching, kollegiales Coaching, Coaching Fragen, Lehrer als Motivierer